147

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Bernard Emile La Berge entitled "The Freedom of Obedience: The Political Thought of William Tyndale." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

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THE FREEDOM OF OBEDIENCE: THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF WILLIAM TYNDALE

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

The University of Tennessee

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Bernard Emile La Berge

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the political thought of William Tyndale and its relationship to other important expressions of political thought during the English Reformation. The first three chapters are devoted to a detailed analysis of certain aspects of Tyndale's political thought: his discussion of the origin and nature of authority; his theory of law in its political sense; and his consideration of the problem of church and state. The four remaining chapters of this dissertation clarify the relationship of Tyndale's political thought to the revival of Lollardy; to the thought of one Henrician apologist; to the intellectual current of Renaissance humanism as represented by the Utopia of Thomas More; and finally to the thought of one commonwealth man and Puritan, Robert Crowley.

Tyndale discussed questions such as the nature of authority and the problem of church and state by applying his theology to his vision of politics. Thus, his earlier treatment of these topics was greatly influenced by Luther's thought. Tyndale's sense of authority was Lutheran in inspiration and Pauline in content. Likewise, his theory of law as expressed in his Obedience of a Christian man was decidedly Lutheran. Tyndale always remained heavily indebted to the German reformer for his concept of law in its political sense. His preferred sense of natural law was also Luther's.

Tyndale borrowed from other reformers as well as from Luther to formulate his political thought. When he wrote his Practyse of Prelates,

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he looked to Vadianus and used his work of ye old God and the newe extensively in his discussion of the problems of church and state. However, after 1530, Tyndale began to apply his own theology and his own ecclesiology to the political problems of the Reformation. With regard to the problem of church and state, Tyndale's new-found definition of the word "church" which he offered to More in his Answere to More's dialoge meant that he no longer considered this problem in terms of institutions, but rather in terms of individuals. After 1530, the church appeared to Tyndale as a multitude of professing Christians, and he became more interested in the relationship of the individual Christian to the temporal regiment. With regard to his vision of government, after 1533, Tyndale viewed government as a covenant between God and man in which God gave man his ability to maintain a political organization in return for obedience to all temporal laws. Tyndale had applied his own unique covenant theology to his vision of the Christian commonwealth.

Tyndale participated in the general revival of Lollardy during the sixteenth century, and Chapter IV of this study explores the political thought of Tyndale, Wyclif and the Lollards. Tyndale viewed his own career in light of those "unknown men" who had gone before him and on several occasions he resurrected Lollard complaints against the established church.

The relationship of Tyndale's political thought to the intellectual current of Renaissance humanism as expressed by Thomas More in his Utopia is the subject of Chapter V of this study. Tyndale's failure to be affected by humanism and conciliarism meant that his

vision of government was drastically different from that of his arch rival, Thomas More.

Chapter VI considers the relationship of Tyndale's thoughts to the thought of one Henrician apologist, Christopher St. German. In the past, Tyndale has been styled as a Henrician apologist, yet the degree and type of royal control over the church which he advocated fell far short of St. German's ideas on this question. As royal control of the church forms the essence of the thought and arguments of the Henrician apologists, the usual description of Tyndale as a Henrician apologist is certainly questionable.

Robert Crowley also participated in the revival of Lollardy during the sixteenth century through his activities as a printer, but there are more significant links between the thought of this vocal Puritan and the thought of Tyndale. It has been shown elsewhere that Tyndale was a pioneer in the procedure of applying Christian principles to the totality of a Christian society and that Crowley and the commonwealth men followed in the footsteps of the man who gave English Puritanism its first theological expression. This connection is discussed in Chapter VII of this dissertation. However, Chapter VII also reveals that Crowley was indebted to Tyndale for several of his arguments concerning the all-important question of the king's authority over the church.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
INTRODUCTION		1
I.	WILLIAM TYNDALE AND THE PROBLEMS OF AUTHORITY	7
	The Problem of Political Authority	9
	On the Duty of the Christian Prince	13
	The Problem of the Limitation of Authority	20
	The Problem of Authority and the Church	31
II.	WILLIAM TYNDALE AND THE LAW	52
	Tyndale and the Theory of Law	54
	Tyndale, the Christian, and the Law	74
III.	TYNDALE AND THE PERDURABLE PROBLEM OF CHURCH AND STATE	85
	Church and State: The Problems of Definition	90
	On the Temporal Authority and the Institutional Church of History	96
	The King, the Church, and the Problem of Positive Religious Reform	108
	The King, the Temporal Regiment, and the True Church	116
	Church and State in Retrospect	123
IV.	TYNDALE, WYCLIF, AND THE LOLLARDS	127
	Introduction	127
	On Dominion	133
	On the Powers of the Pope	148
	The King, the Church, and the Heretics	161

CHAPTER PAGE

V. WILLIAM TYNDALE AND THE UTOPIA OF THOMAS MORE 181

Tyndale and More: Political Theory and Political Science 182

Tyndale and the Vision of Actuality 187

Tyndale and More: On Royal Authority 201

Tyndale, More, and the Theory and Practice of Law 207

The Problems of a Christian Society 219

VI. WILLIAM TYNDALE AND A TUDOR LAWYER 233

The Problems of Authority 237

Tyndale and St. German: The King and the Church 245

Tyndale, St. German and the Law 270

VII. A COMMONWEALTH MAN IN RETROSPECT: WILLIAM TYNDALE AND ROBERT CROWLEY 285

Tyndale, Crowley, and the Problems of Authority 289

Tyndale, Crowley, and the Christian Commonwealth 298

Tyndale and Crowley: The King and the Church 316

VIII. CONCLUSION 328

BIBLIOGRAPHY 357

VITA 366

INTRODUCTION

William Tyndale was one of the more elusive figures of the Reformation. Even today there are large dark places in his life which plague the most competent biographer. Tyndale left us with no precise record of his movements and at times during his life he even attempted to conceal his identity. Like many of the reformers, he was a hunted man. Still there are numerous biographies of Tyndale and for the most part they discuss his role as a translator. This was probably the way in which Tyndale thought of his own career, although once again he left no precise record telling us that this was the case. But his works do speak for themselves, and his abilities as a translator form the basis of his importance in English history. By the time of his death in 1536 at the hands of the Imperial authorities, Tyndale had written a series of influential tracts in English and a translation of the Bible into the vernacular. His translation became the basis of the Matthew Bible of 1537. Large portions of his translation were also incorporated into the famous King James Version of 1611. Unknowingly, Tyndale contributed greatly to the Englishmen's sense of scripture and to the development of their language.

This dissertation is a study of another aspect of Tyndale's work--his political thought. However, the topic of this study requires some justification. It cannot be claimed that the political tracts which Tyndale wrote during his self-imposed exile had as great an influence on the development of English political thought as did his Biblical

translations on the development of English religious thought. Nevertheless, there are several good justifications for studying his political thought. C. H. Williams, Tyndale's most recent biographer, has written:

> Just as in translations of the Scriptures and the advocacy of religious reform he was a pioneer, so too, in his reaction to some political problems he was early in the field of bringing to the notice of his countrymen some of the ideas already becoming commonplaces of continental thought.[1]

Professor Williams' claim is considerably strengthened by the findings of another scholar, which point to Tyndale's influence upon the development of Reformation history and Reformation polemics.[2] Even in those areas of his career which did not receive his concentrated attention, Tyndale left his mark.

There are other reasons for studying Tyndale's political thought. Historians cannot agree on the exact nature of the English Reformation or on the exact manner in which it changed the face of England. But they do agree that these changes were revolutionary. Behind the actual physical changes: the dissolution of the monasteries, the enormous transfer of land and wealth, the change in the religious habits of a nation, there is hidden the phenomenon of events driving men to deal with things which under normal circumstances they would have left untouched. Political theory was one of the topics forced upon the men of the sixteenth century. The reformers on the one hand, and the men of the Counter Reformation on the other, were all forced to deal with old questions which

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[1] C. H. Williams, William Tyndale (London, 1969), 137.

[2] Rainer Pineas, Thomas More and Tudor Polemics (London, 1968), 68.

had become crucial to their age. Tyndale himself was forced to ask important questions concerning the nature of authority, the nature of law in its political sense, and the age-old problem of the correct relationship between the church and the state. For him it was not a problem of the relationship of the church to the state but of the churches to the state. Things had become more complex. The answers which Tyndale gave to these questions are important, for they form a little studied aspect of his thought. This is not to say that he was able to give satisfactory answers to every question which he considered. The contrary is true. Tyndale's lack of training in the realm of political theory is evident in almost everything which came from his pen. He was rarely precise, and frequently his answers lacked clarity. These factors must be accepted as part of his political thought, the product of a lack of training and a greater interest in theology and the translation of the scriptures.

Tyndale did not face the pressures of the Reformation alone. Some of the other men whose works have been discussed and compared with Tyndale's in the second half of this study must have felt the same necessity, the same sense of urgency which forced Tyndale to deal with political theory. At least one of these men, Robert Crowley, the Puritan poet, printer, and polemicist, approached the problems brought forth by the Reformation with an imprecision similar to Tyndale's. For Crowley, like Tyndale, political theory was the application of an understanding of theology. Other men, especially Christopher St. German and Thomas More, both common lawyers, were able to give more precise and sophisticated answers to the questions they asked. But like Tyndale, they were driven by the pressure of the events to ponder the questions.

The fact that these men were driven by the same forces to consider the same questions which Tyndale also considered in his political tracts would not be sufficient to warrant their inclusion in a study of Tyndale's political thought. But a study of Tyndale's political thought would be incomplete without some attempt to place his ideas within the context of his age. Thus following the example of Professor Baumer in his study, The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship, Chapter IV of this dissertation is devoted to an examination of Tyndale's relationship to ideas already existent in England before the Reformation. This chapter, "Tyndale, Wyclif and the Lollards," considers Tyndale's relationship to the Lollard tradition. How did the political thought of these "unknown men" relate to Tyndale's? Given the recent reevaluation of the persistence of Lollard opinions in the sixteenth century, the findings of Professor A. G. Dickens, and Tyndale's own high regard for Wyclif, the inclusion of a chapter on Tyndale and the Lollards appears justified.

The inclusion of a chapter dealing with the political thought of Tyndale and Thomas More is also justifiable. The debate between these two giants of the English Reformation was one of the most significant exchanges which took place during the sixteenth century and it is only now receiving the attention which it deserves. Was the distance which separated these two men in the realm of theology as great in the realm of political theory? This aspect of the Tyndale/More controversy has escaped the attention of numerous scholars. In the chapter, "Tyndale and the Utopia of Thomas More," I have attempted to deal with this problem. Also important here, however, is Tyndale's relationship to the important intellectual current of Renaissance humanism. The comparison of Tyndale's

political thought with that of his arch rival, Thomas More, clearly demonstrates Tyndale's immunity to the humanists' conceptions of political theory.

Equally as important as Tyndale's relationship to the intellectual current of Renaissance Humanism is the relationship of his political thought to that of the Henrician apologists. This question was not considered by Baumer or by any other historian who has considered Tyndale's political thought. In the belief that it could best be answered by a detailed analysis of the work of one man rather than by a survey of the works of many men, I have chosen to examine the political philosophy of Christopher St. German and compare it to Tyndale's. The choice of St. German was not fanciful. Probably more than any other political theorist, St. German realized the full implications of Henry's assault on the church. Whether he was justifying this assault after the fact or determining its nature through his writings has yet to be established by contemporary historians. Nevertheless, the analysis of St. German's political thought and a comparison of his ideas on the problem of authority in the church with Tyndale's thoughts on this problem is interesting and revealing. On the basis of conclusions presented below, the usual description of Tyndale as an "Henrician apologist" must now be qualified.

The final chapter of this dissertation deals with Tyndale's relationship to the commonwealth men, especially to Robert Crowley. Crowley wrote a decade after Tyndale's death and for the most part after the Elizabethan settlement. But no historian has ever claimed that the Elizabethan settlement settled very much. Crowley was very much concerned with the problems of church and state and his solutions to this problem

bear an interesting resemblance to Tyndale's. Furthermore, as Professor Williams has noted, Tyndale was a pioneer in the attempt to evolve a view of society which was based uniquely on Christian principles.[3] The commonwealth men and Robert Crowley did the very same thing. Thus a comparison of the problems which these two men considered and the solutions they offered is both interesting and informative.

The initial inspiration to study Tyndale's political thought came from Professor Richard Marius who suggested that "a dissertation on Tyndale's concept of the state would be extremely interesting." As Tyndale did not have a concept of state per se, I was obliged to look elsewhere: to Tyndale's conception of authority, to his conception of law in its political sense, and finally to his treatment of the traditional problem of church and state. Nevertheless, the decision to deal with Tyndale's political thought was confirmed by the fact that there is no good analysis of his political thought, and by the belief that a dissertation should fill a void in contemporary scholarship. It is hoped that the three chapters on Tyndale's political thought will fill this void. It is to Tyndale's political thought and first to his consideration of the problem of authority that we now turn our attention.

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[3]Williams, William Tyndale, 145.

CHAPTER I

WILLIAM TYNDALE AND THE PROBLEMS OF AUTHORITY

William Tyndale frequently discussed the nature of authority. He discussed the authority of kings and emperors and he discussed the authority which the popes had usurped from them during the past centuries. He also discussed the authority of husbands over their wives and children. Finally, he discussed the authority of and within the historical institution of the church. For Tyndale, like other men of the sixteenth century, the word "authority" had numerous connotations.

Political theorists discuss the nature of authority because it is the essence of their subject matter. This was true for Tyndale, also. But Tyndale also had to wrestle with the problems of authority for other reasons, and here the facts of his life become important. The year 1524 must have been a disappointing one for the reformer. He had graduated from Oxford eight years earlier and had since gone to Cambridge where he had become exposed to the program of Erasmian reform.[1] Sometime after his stay at Cambridge, Tyndale realized the necessity of a vernacular translation of the Bible, but he found, much to his displeasure, that he could not achieve this goal as long as he remained in England. For this reason he left England for Hamburg sometime during May, 1524.[2]

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[1]The chronology followed here is C. H. Williams', William Tyndale, 2-6.

[2]Ibid., 15.

Tyndale's flight to the continent had placed him in a peculiar position. He had left England illegally and was therefore forced to consider the problem of the king's commands versus the Christian conscience. This particular aspect of the problem of authority remained a constant theme in his works. Tyndale realized that it was not only his personal problem but also one which faced many people during the Reformation.

There were other reasons which compelled Tyndale to consider the problem of authority; namely, the politics of the Reformation. Quite early in his career, Tyndale realized that the success of his own program of reform or any other program of reform in England depended on the king's attitude. He also realized that the association of sedition with the creed of the reformers was detrimental to the most important aspect of his own vision of the Reformation, a vernacular translation of the Bible. Tyndale's awareness of these two considerations weighed heavily in the composition of his "political works," and especially in the composition of his Obedience of a Christian Man.

Thus for both personal reasons and because of the politics of the Reformation, Tyndale was forced to address himself to the problems of authority. But he did so in an unsystematic fashion. He did not write one tract dedicated to an explanation of the origin and nature of authority. His ideas on this question must be extracted from the corpus of his works, from his controversial tracts, from his "political works," the Obedience and the Practyse of Prelates, and from his expository works. With regard to Tyndale's discussion of the problems of authority, there is no convenient starting place. A topical approach which takes into account the chronology of Tyndale's works is necessary. The logical

place to begin the analysis of his ideas on the nature of authority is with his consideration of the problem of political authority.

The Problem of Political Authority

Any discussion of Tyndale's conception of political authority must be prefaced by a few remarks on his conception of authority as a whole. Although Tyndale talked about different aspects of authority, the authority of kings, magistrates, etc., he never made these divisions concrete. In one sense these types of authority were real, and in another sense they were not. The cornerstone of Tyndale's political theory and of his concept of authority was the text found in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Tyndale never grew weary of repeating this text:

> Let every soul submit himselfe vnto the authorite off the hyer powers. There is no power but of God. The powers yt be are ordered off God. Whosoever resysteth ye power resysteth ye ordinaunce of God.[3]

Tyndale could not have spoken of the king's authority if by that phrase it was meant that the king himself exercised his own authority. The authority was clearly God's and this fact reveals one of the most important and essential characteristics of Tyndale's political thought and his concept of authority. It was completely theocentric. To talk of the king's authority or the authority of any magistrate in the commonwealth as his own would have detracted from the sovereignty of God. To Tyndale, God was ultimately and personally responsible for the well-being of any commonwealth and for the form of government which was employed by

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[3]William Tyndale, The Obedience of a Christian man and how Christian Rulers ought to governe (Antwerp, 1528), sig. D. 6.

the men of that commonwealth. Nowhere in his works is there any discussion of the best form of government or any speculation concerning the best state of the commonwealth. This fact in itself separates his political thought from the humanists' expressions of political thought in the sixteenth century. Tyndale thought only in terms of monarchy. In the Obedience, Tyndale wrote:

> God hath made the kinge in every realme iudge over all/ and over him is there no iudge. They iudgeth the kinge iudgeth God & he that resisteth the kinge resisteth God . . .[4]

Earlier in the same work, Tyndale also wrote, "one kynge . . . is Gods ordinaunce in every realme."[5] He gave us these thoughts in 1528 and throughout his career as translator, controversialist, and political theorist, he remained firm in his belief in monarchy as the only form of government.

Several factors explain Tyndale's reliance upon monarchy as the only form of government. First, there was the reality of the political situation in England and his awareness of the importance of the king's role in the progress of the Reformation. However, this is not to suggest that Tyndale's adoption of monarchy was forced upon him by external circumstances. Behind the reality of the political situation in England stood the example of Old Testament kingship. Tyndale believed that he and the other men of the sixteenth century were living in the presence of the same God of the Old Testament and that God's actions and desires were a constant factor in human history. Thus, although Tyndale probably knew of other forms of government, to him monarchy was the one form of

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[4] Ibid., sigs. D. 7^{v} - D. 8. [5] Ibid., sig. K. 6^{v}.

government originally ordained by God.[6] Here his increased interest in and reliance upon the Old Testament throughout his theological development would have strengthened this preference for monarchy.[7] Finally, Tyndale's actual conception of the function of the king and his views on the sinful nature of man probably prevented his approval of any form of government other than monarchy.

Tyndale offered his readers so many passages pertaining to the nature of kingship that it is clearly impossible to consider each one separately. Frequently he spoke of the "room of God" or his "office," suggesting that the king was placed by God into a position of authority to maintain the welfare of the people. The king became God's "vicar on earth," His minister to carry out His desires. In 1528, Tyndale wrote:

> Kynges were ordened then/ as I before said/ and they swerde put in their handes to take vengeaunce of evill doers/ that other myghte feare/. . . .[8]

He also wrote:

> For he is the minister of God for thi wealth: to defende the from a thousande inconvenientes/ from theves/ murders and them that wolde defile thy wife/ thy doughter and take from the all that thou hast.[9]

There are three important points to be made here. First, Tyndale was not the first person in the history of political thought to suggest

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[6]There is little doubt that Tyndale was familiar with Plato's Republic if not through his own education certainly through his reading of More's Utopia. However he never mentioned Plato. On Tyndale's relationship to Aristotle's polity, see below.

[7]On this point see William A. Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants (New Haven, 1964), 154-9.

[8]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. E. 6. [9]Ibid., sig. E.1^{v}.

that the king was placed in God's room as his minister on earth. This conception was widely held during the Middle Ages. Secondly, Tyndale made these observations with the notion of the sinful nature of man in plain view. Kings were ordained by God as His ministers to punish man's transgressions of the divine law. It was the king's Christian duty to punish sin, and Tyndale frequently warned his readers that kings "beareth not a swerde for nought."[10] For Tyndale, the king was not the only pillar of order within a Christian society. Parents, he thought, should discipline their children and if their children persisted in their disobedience, they should be submitted to the elders of the community and after the example of the Old Testament they should be stoned to death.[11] Nevertheless, he thought that the king's office was the single most important office within society. And he may have believed that without the ever-present coercive power of the monarch to judge the transgressions of divine law, with the vengeance of the Old Testament as his guide, society would disintegrate into mere, sinful chaos. Finally, it is important to note that in his explanation of the nature of kingship, Tyndale drew heavily from the ideas of Luther. Much has been said concerning the sources of Tyndale's theology while far less has been said about the sources of his political thought. But in the latter realm, there is little doubt that Luther remained a figure of positive inspiration and influence. This influence is especially evident in Tyndale's use of the concept of the king's office. Like Luther, Tyndale erected a dualism between the office of kingship and the ruler himself. There was no

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[10] Ibid., sig. D. 5.

[11] Ibid., sig. D.2.

difference between the office of a Christian ruler and the office of a non-Christian ruler. To Tyndale, the difference lay in the person who held the office but the same degree of respect and obedience was due both men because of their office.[12] This dualism applied to Christian kings in another fashion. In time of judgment, Tyndale suggested that the king's actions should be framed by the Old Testament law of vengeance. At other times, the king's actions should be framed by the all-embracing law of love.[13] In the development of his political thought, Tyndale never dropped the idea of the office within a Christian society. This in itself is a testament to the continual influence of Luther upon Tyndale. However, Tyndale did modify his position on justice in his later years and lessened the emphasis on the harsh, severe justice of the Old Testament. In his later years, he saw more room for the idea of love, even in the realm of judgment.[14]

On the Duty of the Christian Prince

Tyndale's theocentric idea of authority and his concept of office were influential in the formation of his ideas on a traditional theme of sixteenth century political thought and of medieval political thought in general, the duty of the Christian prince. Both the idea of office and

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[12]Gordon Rupp, The English Protestant Tradition (Cambridge, 1949), 80.

[13]Ibid., 81.

[14]William Tyndale, An exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew (Antwerp, 1533), sigs. C 5 - C 5^{v}.

Tyndale's theocentricism, in combination with a healthy Augustinianism, gave his treatment of the importance of the prince in a Christian society a distinctive flavor. In other words, Tyndale's theological bearing caused him to depart from the more traditional approach to this problem as expressed in both the works of Machiavelli and Erasmus. There is no reason to suppose that he had had heard of Machiavelli but there is every indication that Tyndale was intimately familiar with the works of Erasmus, including his Education of a Christian Prince. Here Erasmus reflected the underlying assumptions of the mirror of princes genre of literature combined with the humanists' idea of the perfectibility of man through education. Erasmus looked to the figure of the Christian prince in the hopes that his admirable qualities would be reflected onto the commonwealth. In part, the emphasis was placed on the personality, education, and spirituality of the prince. In Erasmus' work, however, there was an equally strong tendency to throw out seemingly endless platitudes concerning the correct Christian manner of rule.

Tyndale himself offered his readers his share of platitudes, but he also parted company with men like Erasmus over the question of the importance of the personality of the prince within the actual mirror of princes ideal. The most obvious departure was his depersonalized view of the character of the prince. Kings and princes were instruments of God, held tightly in His hand, for the correction of His children. Like other Christians, they were also passive creatures, thoroughly dependent upon God's word and His wishes. In 1528, Tyndale told his readers:

> Heedes and governers are ordened off God and are even the gyft of God/ whether they be good or bad. And what so ever is done vnto us by them/ that doeth God. be it good or bad. Yf they be

> evill whi are ye evill? verely for oure wekednesse sake are they evyll. . . . If we submitte oure selves vnto ye chastysinge of God & mekely knowleage oure sinnes for which we are scorged/ and kysse the rodde/ and mende oure living: then will God take the rodde awaye. that is he will give the rulers a better herte. . . .[15]

Here Tyndale was assuming that God made a king a tyrant because society as a whole was corrupt. In making this assumption, he reversed the traditional mirror of princes ideal as expressed by Erasmus. While Erasmus maintained that "as went the prince so went the society," Tyndale reversed the formula to read, "as went the people, so went the prince."

This reversal which was largely Augustinian in inspiration did not prevent Tyndale from discussing the ideal Christian manner of governing a kingdom. Here, he was not contradicting himself but rather addressing himself to political reality. There is little doubt that when Tyndale made his numerous suggestions for good, Christian governance, he had Henry in mind. Tyndale's initial warning to all kings was probably made for Henry's benefit:

> He (God) promysed David a kyngdome and immediately stered up Kynge Saul agenst him/ to persecute him/ to hunt him as men doo hares with grehoundes . . . to make hym mercyfull/ to make hym understonde that he was made kynge to mynister and to serve his bretherne and that he shuld not think that his subiectes were made to mynister vnto his lustes/ and that it were lawful for hym to take awaye from lyfe and goodes at his pleasure.[16]

Throughout his career, Tyndale frequently restated this idea. The people were not the king's but God's, and a king was not placed in God's

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[15]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. F. 4^{v} - F. 6.

[16]Ibid., sigs. A. 5^{v} - A. 6.

office to rule after his own lusts. Like other political theorists of the sixteenth century, Tyndale also singled out specific abuses of kings and princes. There is nothing remarkable about his thoughts on this question except for the fact that here he was very much in sympathy with the aims of the humanists like More and Erasmus. For example, Tyndale was particularly concerned with the aggressive foreign policy of the princes during the decades of the Reformation. The effects of their foreign policies were everywhere evident. He noted that:

> then cometh the hole host home beggarde both greate and small. And the poore that can not sodenlye gett worke falle to stealinge and be hanged at home. This coude More tell in his Vtopia before he was the cardinalles sworne secretarye and fallen at his fete to betraye ye truth for to gette promocyon.[17]

Probably Tyndale had already begun his Answere to More's Dialoge when he composed these lines. The last sentence appears to justify this assumption. Nevertheless, it is important to note that here Tyndale was not just reaching for something with which to attack More. There are too many references in his works to the evils of war and their effects on society to allow us to accuse Tyndale of this. He firmly believed that wars led to greater social evil, to overtaxation, and to the use of forced loans which were never repaid.[18]

At times Tyndale's thoughts on peace and war were very close to those expressed by Erasmus and More. Like both of these men Tyndale

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[17]William Tyndale, The Practyse of Prelates. Whether the kinges grace maye be separated from hys quene by cause she was his brothers wyfe (Marborch, 1530), sig. G 1.

[18]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. E. 7.

believed that much of the turmoil in the Europe of his own day was caused by the king's attitude towards treaties. Treaties were useless if they were only signed and then ignored by those rulers who called themselves Christians. This observation led Erasmus to advocate the termination of all treaties.[19] Tyndale's solution was different. Keep treaties, he suggested, but at the same time give all treaties a sacramental quality which would insure the good faith of the men who signed them.[20]

Tyndale's most significant criticism of the conduct of both foreign and domestic policy in his own day was the result of an idée fixe--his belief in the vast conspiracy of the prelates to undermine the authority of kings and emperors.[21] To Tyndale, there was no limit to the size of the prelates' conspiracy. He saw them actively at work on the international political scene and on the domestic scene as well. This vision led him to make two specific complaints. First, he noted that:

> In all councels and perlamentes are they the chefe. Without them maye no kynge be crowned/ nether vntill he be sworne to their liberties. . . . All kynges are compelled to submitte them selves to them.[22]

He also observed that:

> The craft of ye bissops is to entitle one Kynge with an others realme. He is called kinge of Denmarke/ and of Englande/ he is kinge of Englonde and of Fraunce. Then to blinde ye lordes and

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[19]Desiderius Erasmus, The Education of a Christian Prince, trans. Lester K. Born (New York, 1965), 239.

[20]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. F 8.

[21]Rainer Pineas, "Tyndale's Use of History as a Weapon of Religious Controversy," Harvard Theological Review LV (1962), 121-141.

[22]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. L. 6.

> the commons/ the kinge must calenge his right. Then must the lande be taxed and every man paye/ and treasure borne out of the realme and the londe beggarde.[23]

There is no need to discuss the accuracy of Tyndale's analysis of sixteenth century politics in detail. Undoubtedly he overestimated the size of the clerical conspiracy and underestimated the foolishness of Henry's foreign policy in general. Nonetheless, this idée fixe of the clerical conspiracy did lead Tyndale to make some concrete proposals concerning the privileges and the authority of the prelates. The first and most important of these in terms of the subsequent history of the English Reformation pertained not to foreign affairs but to domestic policy. In 1528 Tyndale wrote:

> Moare over one kynge/ one law is gods ordinaunce in every realme. Therefore ought not the kynge to suffer them to have a severall lawe by them selves and to drawe his subiectes thither.[24]

The exact meaning of this statement is not immediately clear, especially in view of the statement concerning law which Tyndale gave his readers on the very same page of the Obedience. Here he appears to be giving complete divine sanction to all positive law.[25] Nevertheless, it is beyond question that by the phrase "one law" in the above quotation, Tyndale was at least calling for the end of the jurisdiction of canon law in England.

Tyndale made other suggestions for Henry in the realm of domestic policy. He called for the end of all special privileges for the clergy.[26]

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[23] Ibid., sig. E. 7.

[24] Ibid., sigs. K. 6^{v} - K. 7.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., sig. V. 1.

He also suggested and no doubt believed that the course of good government could be restored through the use of lay advisors in preference to clerics who frequently advised the king. He thought it a "shame that no man shulde be founde able to governe a worldly kingdome save Bisshoppes and prelates," and advocated that kings should "rule their Realmes themselves with the helpe of laye men that are sage wise/ lerned & experte."[27]

In the realm of foreign policy Tyndale had few concrete proposals to make. Of course, he believed that only when the king had stopped the machinations of the prelates would some degree of equilibrium return to the international scene. However, rather than offering Henry helpful suggestions with regard to the conduct of foreign affairs and the actions of the prelates, Tyndale preferred to interpret the lessons of history for him. The chronicles, when they could be trusted, well documented the various schemes of the popes and bishops to usurp the authority of the kings and emperors. History, Tyndale told Henry, taught several lessons. There had never been any peace or unity as long as the prelates had been active, and he accused the papacy of having been responsible for the initial breach in Christian unity, the division between east and west. Tyndale also blamed the fall of Constantinople on the prelates. Closer to home, he pointed to the story of King John who had attempted to resist the designs of the papacy. Finally, he took a close look at the historical association of the papacy and the weak, effeminate, and thoroughly evil kings. Was Henry to be another Charlemagne?[28]

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[27] Ibid., sigs. G. 7 - G. 7[v].

[28] Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, passim. Tyndale's treatment of Charlemagne deserves more comment than it has received by scholars,

To Tyndale there was no absolute breach between the past and the present. He knew that the papacy was still actively pursuing its policy of subverting the authority of kings and emperors by clever deceit and constant warfare. The servant of servants was, in fact, the real master of Europe, and in Tyndale's opinion, this situation could only be corrected by the temporal authorities' thrusting the papacy back into its correct place.[29]

The Problem of the Limitation of Authority

Tyndale's observations concerning the duties of a Christian prince and his reflections on legitimate policy were actually part of the larger problem of the limitation of royal authority. In Tyndale's political thought, to what degree was the king's authority limited? Tyndale's political thought has not attracted enough attention to cause any

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especially those attempting to deal with the sources of his knowledge of history. In the Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale actually argued against the traditional reason for Charlemagne's decision to remain at Aachen--its proximity to the hot baths alluded to in the Chanson de Roland. He suggested instead that Charlemagne remained there because of the evil spell of an old whore whom he had embalmed for obvious reasons. Charlemagne's lords discovered the actual source of the spell to have been not the whore but the ring on her finger, and having grown tired of transporting the embalmed body around Europe, threw both the body and the ring in a well--not before one of the lords had put on the ring himself and had attracted the attentions of Charlemagne, a fact which made him guilty of both homosexuality and necrophilia. Nevertheless, once both the body of the whore and the ring were in the well, Charlemagne was unable to leave Aachen. Tyndale never gave us enough of this story to trace its origins with complete certainty but it appears that he went to its source, the Karl Meinet, a 14th century poem. On the significance of this story see Folz, Le Souvenir et La Legende de Charlemagne (Paris, 1950), 324-8. I am grateful to Professor H. Homeyer for calling my attention to Folz's fine treatment of the sins of Charlemagne genre of literature.

[29]See below, Chapter III.

controversy, but in the historiography of Reformation political thought there has been much controversy over this very issue. In part this controversy is the result of the general tendency to associate Protestantism with the divine right of kings,[30] and as the issue is far from settled, it appears profitable to consider this issue with regard to Tyndale's own thought.

Like many problems of this kind, part of the disagreement comes from the failure to define terms in a satisfactory manner. Before discovering if Tyndale believed in the limitation of royal authority or in the divine right of kings, the term "divine right of kings" must be defined. Here the research of J. W. Allen might be helpful. On the thorny problem of definition, he remarked:

> Any theory which can accurately be dignified by this hackneyed phrase must, it appears to me, satisfy two conditions. It must, in the first place, have specific and exclusive reference to monarchies. . . . In the second place, while admitting, as it could not avoid doing, that a people can and does confer actual coercive power or force, the theory must assert that moral obligation to obey the monarch is the result of a divine grant of real authority. It must deny that such obligation could possibly be created by any human arrangements.[31]

The particular way in which Professor Allen defined the theory of the divine right of kinds led him to conclude that, "at the close of the sixteenth century a theory was being developed which may, with sufficient

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[30]See, for example, J. N. Figgis, The Divine Right of Kings (Cambridge, 1914).

[31]J. W. Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (New York, 1960), 268.

accuracy, be termed 'the theory of divine right of kings.' But it was not formulated in England."[32] And in reference to the political thought of the earlier sixteenth century, especially to that of the Henrician apologists, Professor Allen denied that there could be found anything which resembled such a theory.[33]

It is interesting to apply the criteria employed by Professor Allen to Tyndale's political thought. To claim that Tyndale advocated the divine right concept of kingship on the basis of his concept of authority would be a mistake. It would ignore the warning which Professor Allen gave students of political thought. For Tyndale, all authority was divine. Yet this in itself is not sufficient reason to call his theory of kingship "divine right." To quote Professor Allen once again:

> Theories of divine right exist everywhere in the structure of sixteenth century political thought. But to speak of this way of thinking as a "theory of divine right of kings" is evidently absurd.[34]

It is immediately evident, even to the casual reader of Tyndale's political thought, that his thought satisfies the first of the two conditions set out by Professor Allen and quoted on the previous page. Tyndale never thought of government in any terms other than monarchy. In short, his political thought does contain "specific and exclusive reference to monarchies."

Professor Allen's second criterion presents more of a problem. Did Tyndale affirm that the moral obligation of obedience to the monarch was the result of a "divine grant of real authority?" Here, it is

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[32] Ibid. [33] Ibid., 122-4. [34] Ibid., 123.

necessary to pause momentarily, for the meaning of the words "real authority" is not clear. If Professor Allen wished to imply that the authority must exist independent of God--that the authority was real in itself apart from the authority given the king by God, then Tyndale's political thought falls short of the concept of divine right of kings at this very point. But it is doubtful if Professor Allen meant this or if the idea of the divine right of kings ever implied this idea. In Tyndale's concept of authority, the king exercised the authority given him by God and the authority inherent in his office. For Tyndale, that was the only source of authority, and it was real enough.

Finally, did Tyndale believe that the duty of obedience was created by human arrangements? Again, Tyndale's thought rings true. For Tyndale, there was nothing contractual about the nature of government or kingship in the sense that government was an agreement among men. Men obeyed their king because he was chosen by God, and his authority did not depend upon the consent of the people in any way. Tyndale made the following statement late in his career. But it does not contradict anything which he said or evidently believed in the years prior to 1533:

> I answer God (and not the comen people) choseth the prynce, though he chose him by them. For Dutero. xvi. God commaundeth to chose and set vp offycers: and therefore is God chefe choser and setter vp of them, and so must he be the chefe put downe agayne. . . . And vnto youre arguments Cuius est ligare, eius est soluere, I answere: he that byndeth with absolute power and without any hyer auctorvte, his is the myght to lowse agayne . . . As they of london chose them a mayre: But maye not put him down agayne how euell so euer he be without the auctoryte of him with whose lycence they chose him.[35]

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[35]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sigs. G 7^{v} - G 8.

The idea of the contractual nature of government can be found in Tyndale's political thought. However, he viewed this contract not as an agreement among several men but as an agreement between men and God. Men fulfilled their part of the contract by absolute obedience to the authorities which God himself had established. The duty of obedience was not created by human arrangement. It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of this belief in the structure of Tyndale's political thought, for evidently he came to believe, at least in his later years, that the maintenance of any form of political association depended upon this bargain between God and men. In his exposicion vppon Mathew, he suggested

> sayeth not Paul. Rom. i. of the hethen: Sicut non probauerunt habere deum in noticia, ita traditit illos Deus . . . euen so God gaue them vp to folow their awne blyndnesse, and took his spirit and grace from them, and wolde no lenger rule their wittes. Euen so if we cast of vs, the yocke of oure temporall lawes which are the lawes of God and drawen out of the ten commaundementes and law naturall . . . God shall cast vs of and let vs slyppe, to folowe oure awne witte. And then shall al goo agaynst vs, whatso euer we take in hande: in so moche that when we gather a parliament to reforme or amende ought, that we there determe shallbe oure awne snare, confusion and vtter distruction, so that all the ennemyes we hauve vnder heauen coulde not wishe vs so greate myscheue as oure awne councell shall do vs, God shall so blynde the wisdome of the wise.[36]

Accordingly, the very possibility of a political society or of any government rested on man's keeping the temporal laws for which God gave him wisdom to return. Nowhere in Tyndale's political thought was there

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[36] Ibid., sig. F 5. This idea of the contractual nature of government can be found in Tyndale's earlier works but the bargain between God and men was not essential. In the Obedience, he suggested that worldly prosperity would result from obedience to all temporal love. See Obedience, sig. D. 6.

any room for the idea that obedience was due a king because of a contractual arrangement among men, nor was there any place for the idea that the king's authority was limited by the consent of the people.

Even in light of Professor Allen's research on the question of divine right kingship, it is still difficult to determine if Tyndale's ideas on the nature of kingship can correctly be called "divine right." On the one hand, his ideas as expressed above certainly fulfill the two criteria set up by Professor Allen. On the other hand, there is a strong impulse in Tyndale's thought which severely limited the king's authority and makes the concept of divine right appear inapplicable to his political thought. The solution to this particular problem does not rest with the old question of definition of terms but rather with a certain ambiguity which is very real in Tyndale's political thought. The total effect of his thoughts on the nature of the king's authority was to heighten that sense of authority no matter how frequently he mentioned the restrictions. Here Tyndale's political thought was very much in line with the general tendency of Protestantism to increase royal authority. Like other Protestants, Tyndale denied the right of any individual to judge the validity of a king.[37] The traditional idea of lèse majesté which was so important to medieval political thought became obsolete at the hands of men like Tyndale. For him a tyrant enjoyed the same divine

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[37]Here Tyndale was not completely consistent for he himself felt qualified to judge the validity of King Richard II. He interpreted the destruction caused by the Wars of the Roses as divine justice for Richard's downfall. See exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sigs. F 4 - F 4^{v}.

sanction as did the most Christian king.[38] Nevertheless, the restrictions which he placed on the king's authority were very real and important. Essentially they came from two sources: his understanding of the nature of law; and his use of the concept of Christian office. Each one of these two restrictions should be investigated separately.

In the sixteenth century, it was generally assumed that the king's authority was limited by the concepts of natural law, divine law, or by both. Tyndale assumed this, although even here his words generate some confusion. In his Obedience, Tyndale remarked:

> The kynge is in the rowme of God/ and his lawe is Gods lawe and no things but the lawe of nature and naturall equite which god graven in the hertes of men.[39]

If these words can be taken at face value, then law cannot be considered as a possible source of limitation on the king's authority. However, Tyndale did think of law as a limiting factor, for there are too many other references to this belief in the corpus of his works. In the above case, it must be concluded that Tyndale was saying more than he really meant. The following quotation, also taken from his Obedience, is far more in line with what Tyndale really meant and advocated throughout most of his career:

> And even in lyke maner as god maketh ye kinge heed over his realme even so geveth hym comaundment to execute the lawes apon all men indifferently. For the law is Gods and not the kinges. The kynge is but a servaunte to execute the law of god and not to rule after his own imaginacion.[40]

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[38] Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. A. 4^{v}, E. 1^{v} - E. 2.

[39] Ibid., sigs. V. 1^{v} - V. 2.

[40] Ibid., sig. K. 6^{v}.

For Tyndale, the king's duty to enforce God's law always remained one of the essential restrictions on his actions and his authority. And for the most part, when he suggested that the king should execute God's law, he was suggesting that the king punish sin.

Tyndale also believed that the king's authority and his actions were limited by the traditional idea of natural law. In question here was the precise relationship between natural law and positive law. Tyndale, like other men of the sixteenth century, believed that the king's laws or his actions could not contradict the content of natural law and still be binding on the Christian conscience.[41] He usually summarized the content of natural law by the phrase, "love thy neighbor as thyself."

Tyndale placed one more restriction on the king's authority, a restriction which he derived from his understanding of law, scripture, and the important concept of Christian office. For Tyndale, all offices within a Christian society carried with them the weight of divine recognition. This was true not only for the office of the king, but also for that of parents, magistrates, judges, etc. Tyndale evidently believed that God would not have instituted these offices without giving the people who were to fill them sufficient guidance for performing their Christian duty. This belief, in conjunction with his ideas on scripture, led Tyndale to affirm the sufficiency of God's law, as found especially in the Old Testament, for the governing of any Christian commonwealth or kingdom.

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[41]This aspect of Tyndale's thought is explored in Chapter II, "William Tyndale and the Law."

There is much to be said about this point. First and most important, the impulse here is slightly different from that of the traditional restraint on the king's authority, natural law. During the sixteenth century the idea of natural law was given a multiplicity of definitions, a fact which has led one historian to suggest that the entire concept of natural law was a mere carry-over from the Middle Ages, so vaguely defined, that if it meant anything at all, it meant an appeal to the individual's conscience.[42] Now Tyndale made exactly this type of appeal, and it was by the precepts of natural law that the individual Christian was supposed to decide which temporal laws were just and which were not.[43] Thus the concept of natural law became the normative standard for all law. However, the concept of natural law was not an explicit guide for the officers of any kingdom or commonwealth to follow. And for Tyndale, this was what they needed.

Tyndale evidently believed that God had already given the king and his magistrates such a guide. Here his prologues to the various books of the Old Testament are very important. To be a Christian king meant following the example of Moses. Thus he remarked:

> And make not Moses a figure of Christ with Rochestre: but an ensample vnto all princes and to all that are in authoritie, how

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[42]Perry Williams and G. L. Harriss, "A Revolution in Tudor History?" Past and Present XXV (July, 1963), 2-58. This idea figures prominently in their criticisms of Elton's thesis on the Tudor revolution in government.

[43]William Tyndale, An Answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge (Antwerp, 1531), sig. A 2.

> to rule vnto goodes pleasure and their neyghbours profette. For there is not a perfecter lyffe in this world. . . .[44]

For both the magistrate and the judge, Tyndale believed that the author of the book of Deuteronomy had something important to say:

> he endeth in a lowe of loue and equite: forbiddyinge to condemne an man vnder less than two witnesses at the lest and commaundeth to bringe the trespacers vnto the open gate of the citye where all men goo in and out, that all men might heare the cause and se that he had but right.[45]

Earlier in his career, especially in 1528, Tyndale had frequently suggested that Christians in positions of authority should not rule after their own imaginations for the subjects were not theirs but God's. He meant that any office in a commonwealth or kingdom carried with it certain restrictions and limitations. In the course of his theological development Tyndale's vision of these limitations became clearer and more certain. The "good examples" of his earlier years became in fact absolutes. Here we see the influence of Tyndale's legalism upon his political theory in general, and in particular on his concept of limited authority. Professor Clebsch, who has studied Tyndale's legalism in considerable depth, remarked:

> God's law as the central theme of the pentateuch established itself as a second focus of his thought. The shape of his theology became elliptical. Alongside the benign promises of a gracious God willing to restore undeserving man to favor, Tyndale set the moral code demanded by a stern God whose pleasure was evoked by man's efforts to live out divine prescriptions for goodness. . . . Adherence to the moral law of the Old Testament replaced the free

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[44]William Tyndale, A Prologue in to the Seconde boke of Moses called Exodus in Mombert, ed., The Pentateuch (Sussex, 1967), 162.

[45]William Tyndale, A Prologue in to the fifte boke of Moses called Deuternonmye in ibid., 520.

> striving after the welfare of the neighbor as a pattern of life justified by faith.[46]

There are several points to be made here. As late as 1533 in his exposicion vppon Mathew, Tyndale was still advocating the role of a Christian in society which took into account the well-being of one's neighbor.[47] This was the meaning of natural law and Tyndale always believed that it bound the individual to follow certain actions. Furthermore, this legalism, in conjunction with other important currents in Tyndale's thought, an almost intense literalism, and a belief in the sufficiency of the Old Testament as a guide for princes and magistrates, left little doubt as to the proper and mandatory course of action for them to follow. God's wishes appeared quite clear, and the restrictions and limitations on the authority of those chosen by Him to serve were well defined.

Tyndale's concept of political authority changed very little during his career. In spite of his vision of government as a contract between man and God, his own view of authority remained quite static, even rigid. God's ministers wielded an authority which was not theirs, after a fashion clearly set out by Him. The tyranny of the saints was not too far off in the distance.

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[46]Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants, 154.

[47]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, passim.

The Problem of Authority and the Church

No study of Tyndale's concept of authority would be complete without some comment on his idea of authority as it existed within the historical institution of the church. Throughout his career, Tyndale discussed this problem from two points of view. He discussed the problem of authority within the church. He also discussed the problem of the authority of the church. For Tyndale, the first topic, the problem of authority within the church, meant primarily a consideration of the power of the popes and other officials within the historical church. The second topic, the problem of the authority of the church, meant a consideration of the authority of the members of the church over kings, emperors, and other members of the temporal regiment, as well as the authority of the church to interpret scripture. In both areas Tyndale's ideas were strikingly negative. Tyndale, like the other reformers, was writing in reaction to hundreds of years of medieval papalism and against the authority of an institution which had centuries of divinely accepted precedent at its service. He was forced to discredit by appeals to scripture, to canon law, and to the thought of the Church Fathers, the structure of ideas which the Catholic Church had erected in the distant past. Tyndale's use of these weapons and his general understanding of the authority of the church is worthy of close examination. This will be followed by a consideration of his understanding of the problems of authority within the church.

For Tyndale and the other reformers the problem of the authority of the church was a very important matter. At the bottom of this issue

which became the focal point of many Reformation debates, polemics, and lengthy political tracts like Tyndale's own Practyse of Prelates, stood two important questions: first, the authority of the church as an historical institution over kings, princes, and those men who constituted the temporal regiment; secondly, the authority of the church to interpret scripture. Tyndale argued against the church's authority in both of these matters. Of the two, he devoted less time to the latter problem but this cannot be considered an accurate measure of its importance. For Catholic controversialists like Thomas More, the authority of the church to interpret scripture was fundamental to its existence. Tyndale reacted strongly to this accepted aspect of the church's authority, telling More in his Answere to Mores dialoge:

> Another like blynde reason they haue where in is all their trust. As we come out of them & they not of vs/ so we receaue the scripture of them & they not of vs. How know we that it is the scripture of god and true but because they teach vs so. How can we believe/ excepte we first beleue y^{t} they be the church and can not erre in any thynge y^{t} perteyneth vn to oure soules healthe. . . . This wise reason is their shorteancre and al their hold/ their refuge/ to flight and chefe stone in their fundacion/ whereon they haue bilt all their lies and all their mischeue that they haue wrought this viii. hundred years.[48]

Tyndale knew that the church had made the interpretations of scripture during the past eight hundred years. They had confounded the true meaning of the texts with false glosses of the scholastics like Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas, a man whom Tyndale accused of making the pope a false God.[49]

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[48]Tyndale, Answere, sig. D 2^{v}.

[49]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. F 1.

Tyndale saw at the basis of the church's claim to interpret scripture the larger question of infallibility. Like a ship in a storm, the Catholics had thrown out this idea in a last-ditch effort, exalting their own authority over the authority of God and scripture. He said to More:

> And when the scripture cometh to light and is restored vn to the true vnderstonding and their iuglinge spied/ and they like to sofre shippwracke/ then they cast out this ancre/ they be the church and can not erre/ their actorite is greater then the scripture/ and the scripture is not tru/ but because they saye so and admitte it.[50]

Tyndale attacked the church and More on three grounds. First, he went to a text frequently employed by More to support the right of the church to interpret scripture. This text, a passage found in Augustine's letter against the Manichees, reads, "Ego vero Evangelio non crederam nisi me catholicae Ecclesiae commoverst auctoritas."[51] Tyndale was compelled by More to reinterpret this text, and his reinterpretation is remarkable for several reasons. Tyndale did not wish to attack Augustine himself simply because Augustine was one of the only Church Fathers for whom he had a high degree of respect.[52] Thus he attacked More's use of the text, saying:

> I answere as they abuse the sayenge of the holy men/ even so they allege al the scripture and all that they bringe from them/ even in a false sens.[53]

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[50]Tyndale, Answere, sig. D 2^{v}.

[51]Augustine, Contra Epistolam Manichaei, cited in J. P. Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus (221 vols., Paris, 1845), XLII, 176.

[52]For a brief statement on Tyndale's use of Augustine and the fathers, see Yost, "Tyndale's use of the Fathers," Moreana XXI (Fev, 1969), 3-13.

[53]Tyndale, Answere, sig. D 5.

As the Catholics abused the scripture, so did they abuse the thought of the Fathers. Tyndale countered More's interpretation by suggesting that what Augustine really meant in his letter against the Manichees was that the Christians had been persuasive for him by their example of "godly liuynge," "for many are winne with godly liuynge/ which at the first ether will not heare or can not beleue. And this is the auctorite what S. Augustine ment."[54]

The source of Tyndale's reinterpretation of Augustine is also important. The definitive work on the numerous sources which Tyndale employed throughout his career as a reformer has yet to be written, and only gradually is his debt to those reformers other than Luther being exposed.[55] But in this particular case, Tyndale was looking to the Swiss theologian and brother-in-law of Conrad Grebel, Joachim Vadianus. His debt to Vadianus was significant, and Vadianus' interpretation of Augustine's saying is so close to Tyndale's that there can be no doubt that it was the source of Tyndale's own interpretation:

> I wold not beleue the gospell, onies the auctoryte of the chirche (y^{t} is to say, of the chrysten men, whych by the meanes of the gospel haue growen vp in so commendable a lyfe) dyd compell me/ as though he should say, seeing y^{t} so honest men & vertuous, so good so charytable, & louing among themselves . . . it can not be otherwise but that the doctryne of the gospell is true and iuste.[56]

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[54] Ibid.

[55] The historiography of Tyndale's debt to Luther and the other reformers is too lengthy to deal with here. But see Clebsch's section on Tyndale's originality: England's Earliest Protestants, 195-204. See also: C. H. Williams, William Tyndale, 157-65; and Trinterud, "A Reappraisal of Tyndale's Debt to Luther," Church History XXXI (1962), 22-45.

[56] Joachim Vadianus, A worke entytled of ye old god & the newe, trans. William Turner (London, 1534), sigs. C 7^{v} - C 8.

Tyndale, however, did not rest his case against More and the church simply on a reinterpretation of Augustine. He also argued against the idea of the consensus of belief, an important point for More. Numbers might have had some meaning for More, but not for Tyndale. The mere fact that a large number of professing Christians believed that the church had the authority to interpret scripture did not make that belief correct. Tyndale argued that:

> thou seist that gods trueth dependeth not of man. . . . And Christ also saith him self Ihon v. I receaue no witnesse of man. For if the multitude of mans witnesse of man. For if the multitude of mans witnesse might make ought true/ then were ye doctrine of Mahomete truer than Christes.[57]

In a similar fashion, Tyndale also singled out the examples of the prophet Elias and John the Baptist. In his opinion, both men had stood against the consent of countless thousands of others:

> This man (More) is of a ferre other complexion then was the prophete Elias. for he beleued a lone as thought/ agenst the consent by all likelyhod/ of ix. or x. hundred thousand beleuers. And yet. M. Mores church is in no nother condicion vnder the pope/ then was that church agenst whose consent Elias beleued a lone vnder ye kinges of Samary.[58]

Besides affirming the right of the individual dissenting Christian against the weight of the majority opinion, Tyndale was also arguing that the condition of the church in general proved that the notion of consensus was false. Here, Tyndale called More's attention to the diversity of theological beliefs among the various universities and countries of Europe in his own day:

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[57]Tyndale, Answere, sig. B 5^{v}.

[58]Ibid., sig. G 7^{v}.

> Now sir if you gather a generall counsell for y^{t} matter/ the churches of fraunce and Italye will not beleue the churches of spayne & dochlonde because they so saye: but will aske how they proue it. Neyther will louayne beleue Parise/ because they say that they can not erre.[59]

Finally, Tyndale taunted More with some simple logic. For Tyndale, scripture and the gospel existed before the church. It was a problem which was as hard to solve, "as whether the father be elder then ye sonne or ye sonne elder than his father," and this assumption that the scripture existed before the church meant that the church could not determine its truths.[60]

To Tyndale, then, the church was not an infallible historical institution which had the authority to determine the truths or the validity of scripture. There were too many dissenting and differing opinions within that church, so Tyndale thought, to allow More to claim that the church stood united. God did not err but his creatures frequently did, and to Tyndale, More's sense of authority in the church meant that the truths of God had become dependent upon the wisdom of men. Finally, scripture had existed before the church and thus the church did not have the right to interpret it.[61]

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[59] Ibid., sig. H 4^{v}.

[60] Ibid., sig. B 5.

[61] More, of course, had replies to all Tyndale's arguments except for his remark concerning the numerical superiority of Islam. For an analysis of More's responses to Tyndale, see Professor Marius' introduction to More's Confutation in The Complete Works of Saint Thomas More (7 vols., New Haven, 1972), VII. Stated in simple terms, More's attitude was that God in his loving wisdom and mercy would not have allowed so many people to stray so far from the truth as Tyndale and the other Protestants suggested he must have done.

Tyndale was also concerned with the authority of the church in relation to its role in secular politics. For him the actions of the church throughout history represented the intrusion of the church into an area of activity where it did not belong, and he actually devoted more time to a consideration of this aspect of the church's authority than he did to the important question of its right to interpret scripture. His thoughts on this question deserve close examination.

Throughout his career as a reformer and a polemicist, Tyndale came down hard on the confusion of authority. In his Obedience, he remarked:

> To preach Gods worde is to moche for half a man. And to minister a temporall kingdome is to moch to half a man also. Ether other requireth an hole man. One therefore can not well doo both.[62]

This remained a constant theme in his work. At certain times, for example, during his controversy with More, it received less emphasis than it did at other times. And in the course of his theological development, this simple, straightforward attitude was modified slightly so that in Tyndale's later works his consideration of this topic does not appear as simplistic. Nevertheless, in one form or another, Tyndale always condemned the confusion of the temporal realm with the spiritual realm. God, he thought, had clearly ordained these two realms to be separate in some ways and to be joined in others.

Tyndale saw two aspects of this confusion of the secular and the spiritual realms. First, the church, through an accident of history, had become exempt from the power of the secular sword. Thus he called

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[62]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. E. 7[v].

his readers' attention to important biblical passages which clearly gave the emperor jurisdiction over the church. He also interpreted the thought of Paul for their benefit:

> God did not put peter only vnder the temporall swerde/ but also Christ himselfe. As it appereth in the fourth chapter of the Galathiens. . . . Yf they hed be vnder the temporall swerde. how can the members be excepted?[63]

The other source of confusion stemmed from the fact that God did not intend for the members of the church to exercise temporal dominion over the members of a Christian society. It was for this purpose, he thought, that God had instituted the temporal authorities, and in the Practyse of Prelates he advocated the complete separation between the members of Christ's church whose duty it was to preach and those members of society who by virtue of their office compelled others to obedience through violence. Tyndale concluded:

> Thus ye se that Christes kingdome is all together spirituall/ and the bearynge of rule in it is cleane contrarye vnto the bearynge of rule temporallye. Wherfore none that beareth rule in it maye have temporall iurisdiction or ministre any temporall office that requyreh violence to compell withall.[64]

Thus Tyndale's two basic arguments concerning the problem of the authority of the church were simple: the original authority given by God to emperors and kings included jurisdiction over the clergy; and the church's authority did not include temporal jurisdiction.[65] However,

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[63] Ibid., sig. E. 7^{v}.

[64] Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. A 8^{v}.

[65] Both of these assumptions are explored in considerable detail in Chapter III of this study.

his consideration of this problem was complex, and the complexity stemmed from his historical account of the exact manner in which the church had gone astray. Tyndale's understanding of history was an important part of his consideration of the problem of the authority of the church, and some comments about his understanding and use of history are necessary.

The first thing to be noted about Tyndale's use and understanding of history is simply that it was in this area of his thought that he was most unoriginal. Much of Tyndale's knowledge of the history of the period with which he dealt, his knowledge of the sections of canon law which applied to that period, and his knowledge of the pope's lives he took from Vadianus.[66] There is even some evidence that Tyndale's knowledge of Platina's Historici Liber de vita christi: Ac Pontificium omnium and the arguments of this book were learned by way of Vadianus' own use of this work.[67]

In his historical analysis of the church gone wrong, Tyndale frequently referred to the date of eight hundred years before his own time, or roughly 730, and he appeared to believe that it was then that the church had deviated from the path of truth.[68] The fact that the idea of the fall of the church found its way into Tyndale's ecclesiology is

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[66]Professor Clebsch was the first to realize the extent of Tyndale's use of Vadianus. See England's Earliest Protestants, 195-204.

[67]Bartholomew Platina, Historici Liber de vita christi: Ac Pontificum omnium (Venetiis, 1479). This work became a source of papal history for many reformers including Vadianus and Christopher St. German.

[68]Tyndale, Answere, sig. D 2; Practyse of Prelates, sig. C 1^{v}.

important because with regard to two specific problems, the relationship of church and state and the problem of the authority of the church, Tyndale used his knowledge of the church as it had existed in the past to judge the church in his own day. In other words, Tyndale probably desired to reform the church by restoring it to the way it had been before the fall. Thus, the actual reasoning by which the reformer arrived at the figure of eight hundred years becomes very important.

Tyndale offered his readers two reasons to explain the fall of the church: the greed of the deacons, and the ability of the papacy to assert its authority over the emperor.[69] Probably he considered the latter reason more important than the former, and in his historical treatment of this idea he paid particular attention to the figure of Pope Boniface III. It is fairly clear from his discussion of Pope Boniface's actions that to him, Boniface's pontificate was the beginning of the tragedy. He remarked:

> And from hence forth with the helpe of his bishopes which were sworne to be true ligemen vnto him/ when before tyme they were admitted to their bisshoprykes of ye Emperoures and kynges/ he began to ley abayte to catche the hole Empyre in his handes also.[70]

Tyndale believed that the decline had begun with the pontificate of Boniface III, but he was unsure of the time when the papacy had completed its unholy business. He emphasized several dates and events: the year

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[69]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sigs. B 4^{v} - B 5; B 7 - B 8.

[70]Ibid., sig. B 8.

740 and the Franco-papal alliance,[71] the pontificate of Adrian III,[72] and in a contradictory fashion, even the pontificate of Boniface III. Tyndale was not clear on this important point.

Tyndale, as several scholars have noted, made a major error of historical interpretation in his discussion of the papacy's successful claim to secular power. He confused Pope Boniface III, who had been made pope by the Emperor Phocas in 607, with his namesake who had sponsored the missionary trips across the Rhine. This error in itself would account for his use of the figure "eight hundred years agone."[73] It is also possible that he dated the fall of the church from the Franco-papal alliance, for he viewed this unholy bargain as one of the cardinal factors of medieval history. Of the two possibilities, the first gives us a more exact account in terms of the chronology of medieval history and is therefore preferable.

There is a third possibility, and here Tyndale's reliance upon Vadianus was important. While the error was partially the result of Tyndale's lack of familiarity with medieval history, it is noteworthy that the original confusion probably came from his reading of Vadianus' _of ye old god & the newe_. Vadianus had written:

> But Bonafice after he had obteyned and goten the privlege of the emperor y^{t} he myght call hym selfe pope: this recompence he made to caesar to acquite him his kindnes withal, he dyd pauely

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[71] _Ibid._, sig. B 8.

[72] _Ibid._, sig. C 1.

[73] Richard C. Marius, "Thomas More and the Church Fathers," _Traditio_ XXIV (1968), 394-5.

> derogate and minyshe the emperours maiestie and prerogatiue/ and presumed to be lorde and ruler ouer the same emperoure of whom . . . he had obteyned the pryulege of primacy and preeminence aboue other bishopps.[74]

When these sentiments are compared with Tyndale's ideas concerning the control of the bishops by the papacy, it becomes evident that the confusion in Tyndale's mind came from his reading of the above passage in conjunction with a faulty knowledge of history.[75]

Tyndale's use of history in dealing with the important topic of authority _of_ the church was also influential in his consideration of the problem of authority _within_ the church for the following reason. If historically those orders within the church had perverted the correct order of society initially and continually intended by God, then it was clear that those same orders could have no share of the rightful authority in that church which Tyndale saw as the goal of his reforming activities. This point of view led him to argue against the authority of the papacy, against the authority of the general council of the church, and with a certain degree of ambivalence against the authority of the bishops. Tyndale's negative attitude toward each institution within the church should be investigated separately.

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[74] Vadianus, _A worke entytled of ye old god & the newe_, sigs. F 4^{v} - F 5.

[75] Vadianus maintained that the turning point in the church was the pontificate of Gregory the Great for he was the last bishop of Rome to follow the apostles and martyrs in "liugnge and doctrine." _A worke entytled of ye old god & the newe_, sig. F 1^{v}.

While Tyndale's attitude toward the bishops was largely negative, it was also imprecise. Indeed, it is difficult to determine what place he had for them in the church of his own design. Concerning Tyndale's incomplete denunciation of the bishops, Flesseman-van Leer has remarked:

> Tyndale concedes that the office of an apostle, bishop, priest, deacon and widow are of God and he intimates that the present day orders are the continuation of the office instituted by the apostles. On the other hand he seems to deny the significance of these orders as something sui generis. . . .[76]

Tyndale believed that the bishops were responsible for many of the unholy actions of the unreformed church. He blamed them for corrupting the ideal of penance in the early church. The original function of penance was to tame the flesh and it was carried out with the consent of the congregation. The bishops, however:

> beganne to set vp their crestes and to rainge over them as princes & to enioynde for penance small trifeles/ namli if ought were done agaynst their pleasure.[77]

Tyndale also saw the bishops as allies of the papacy, actively engaged in the politics of the Holy Roman Empire.[78]

Tyndale had considerably less to say about the positive functions of the bishops with the church. Earlier in his career he adopted the Lutheran conception of their office, suggesting that "a Byshops part is

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[76]E. Flesseman-van Leer, "The Controversy about Ecclesiology between Thomas More and William Tyndale," Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis XLIV (1960), 81.

[77]William Tyndale, The Exposicion of the fyrste Epistle of seynt Ihon with a prologge before it (Antwerp, 1531), sig. C 2^{v}.

[78]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. E. 6^{v}.

euer to watche and to laboure in the Gospell."[79] Later in his career Tyndale did not discuss this problem at all. This silence is especially striking in his exposicion vppon Mathew, because in this work Tyndale applied his understanding of the church to Christian society as a whole.[80] Two conclusions can be made concerning Tyndale and the bishops. First, he did not completely reject Luther's conception of their function within the church. Secondly, Tyndale was unable to define the precise relationship between the invisible church and its visible counterpart.

Tyndale's attitude toward the general council of the church was purely negative. He stood aside from the reforming impulse of conciliarism, refusing to admit to More that as an institution within the church the council possessed any authority of its own. He also refused to believe that the council could maintain doctrinal purity within the church.[81] Here Tyndale's attitude was the result of some simple logic, and it was a logic which applied to all representative institutions, to church councils, and to Parliament alike. Those institutions, he thought, had only the worth of the people who sat in them but no intrinsic value of their own. Thus, Tyndale distrusted Parliament because he saw an

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[79]William Tyndale, The Prologue vpon the second Epistle of Saint Paule vnto Timothe, in John Foxe, ed., The Whole workes of W. Tyndale, Iohn Frith and doct. Barnes . . . collected and compiled in one Tome together (London, 1573), sig. J. ii.

[80]One possible reason for Tyndale's silence in this work might be the degree to which he looked to the king as a spiritual guide for the church and society. See exposicion vppon the v. vi. vii. chapters of Mathew, sigs. D 5^{v}, L 2^{v}.

[81]Tyndale, Answere, sig. H 4^{v}.

institution which was dominated by the prelates.[82] His condemnation of the church councils was similar. Throughout history the councils had been dominated by men of no virtue, and to paraphrase an analogy frequently employed by Tyndale himself, good fruit can never come forth from a barren tree. The fact that the papacy had controlled the church councils during the past centuries led Tyndale to react to the institution of the church councils with an almost contemptuous silence, divesting it of all its authority. And with regard to Parliament, the activities of the bishops and prelates probably led Tyndale to view that institution as an appendage of the historical church and a hindrance to his or any other program of reform.

Tyndale's negativism was most pronounced when he discussed the authority of the papacy within the church. For him this was a topic of immense importance and he wrote very few works in which he did not argue against papal authority in one way or another. While it is impossible to consider every argument which he employed against the papacy, it is important to clarify his negativism. Some general observations are helpful.

Tyndale's repudiation of the papacy was never complete in any one work. In his earlier tracts Tyndale was willing to grant this institution some small degree of authority within the church. It was only gradually, over the course of several years, that he evolved a conception of the church in which the papacy had been deprived of all authority. In 1528, Tyndale wrote, "yf therefore ye pope be peters successoure/ his duty is

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[82]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. L. 6.

to preach Christe only and other authorite hath he none."[83] By 1531, it is doubtful if Tyndale would have accepted his own words on this question. In his Answere to More, Tyndale applied the distinction between the historical faith and the feeling faith against the papacy. This was an important step in the evolution of his thoughts on the authority of the papacy. Tyndale told More that the historical faith:

> hangeth of the trueth and honestie of the teller of the comen same and consent of many. As if one told me that the turke had wonne a citie and I beleved it moved with the honestie of the man.[84]

By 1531, Tyndale believed that the papacy upheld this definition of the faith. Its preaching was dependent upon its honesty, and the strength of its faith measured by the moral example it set for others.[85] For Tyndale the papacy counted for nothing in a positive sense, for it could no longer preach Christ in a believable way.

From 1528, when Tyndale wrote the Obedience, to 1531, when he finished his Answere to More's dialoge, it is possible to see some general trends in his arguments against the authority of the papacy within the church. First, he consistently argued against the authority of one bishop over another and the papal primacy which had resulted from the superior position of the Bishop of Rome.[86] In the original church Tyndale saw a situation in which no apostle was superior to another. He believed that Christ had wanted a situation of equality among the

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[83] Ibid., sig. S. 6^{v}. [84] Tyndale, Answere, sig. D 5^{v}.

[85] Ibid., sig. D 6^{v}.

[86] Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. G. 8, H. 7, T. 2^{v}, T. 4; Practyse of Prelates, sigs. A 7 - A 7^{v}, A 8^{v} - B 2.

apostles, and he could find no text which indicated that it should be otherwise in his own time. Tyndale also employed the full weight of patristic authority and tradition within the early church to sustain his beliefs.[87]

Secondly, Tyndale argued against any authority of Peter or the apostles, other than the authority to preach Christ.[88] To support this argument Tyndale relied solely upon scripture. His aim was to whittle away the exalted powers which the papacy had claimed for itself based upon its interpretation of Matthew xviii.[89]

Finally, Tyndale's use of canon law against papal authority is worthy of some comment. Unlike Luther in his early career as a reformer, Tyndale never claimed that the papacy had overstepped its authority according to the laws of the church. Throughout the seemingly endless array of anti-papal arguments which Tyndale used, he only employed canon law against papal authority three times. In the Obedience, he offered his readers one distinction from the Decretum, "in presentis maioris cessat potestas minoris,"[90] and used it to argue that the early church had accorded Paul equal authority with Peter.[91] In his Practyse of

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[87]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. H 7. For a brief comment on Tyndale's use of the thought of the Church Fathers, see Henry Walter, ed., Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures (Cambridge, 1868), 216-9.

[88]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. S. 6^{v}.

[89]Ibid., sigs. H. 3 - H. 3^{v}; Practyse of Prelates, sigs. A 7^{v}, E 2^{v}.

[90]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. G. 8.

[91]Ibid., sig. G. 8^{v}.

Prelates, Tyndale relied upon the same text to prove that the authority of Jerusalem should eclipse the authority of Rome since the most important martyr of all, Christ, had died there.[92] Generally, however, Tyndale was very reluctant to use anti-papal arguments based upon canon law, and this reluctance probably stemmed from two factors; first, Tyndale was not well acquainted with this body of law; secondly, he viewed canon law with a great deal of contempt. Canon law represented the culmination of the papacy's domination of the temporal order, and in his Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale charged that:

> because that christes doctryne was contrarye vnto all soch kyngdomes/ and therfore had no lawe therin how to rule it/ he went and made him severall lawes of his awne makynge which passed in crueltye and tyrannye the lawes of all hethen princes.[93]

With the exception of the arguments which were based upon canon law, Tyndale repeated many of these arguments against the papacy regularly throughout the years 1528 to 1531. But it is interesting to note that his controversy with Thomas More forced him to evolve three new arguments against papal authority within the church. None of these arguments appear before the controversy with More, and since Tyndale said very little concerning the papacy after 1531, it can be assumed that the new arguments found in his Answere represent Tyndale's last thoughts on this important topic.

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[92] Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. E 4.

[93] Ibid., sig. D 7^{v}.

Tyndale's use of the distinction between the feeling faith and the historical faith has already been noted. It is important to emphasize that in terms of the progression of his thought, Tyndale was probably going against his earlier ideas on the nature of papal authority. By the year 1531, he even doubted if the papacy had the potential to preach God's word in the spirit of truth.

Tyndale's defense and explanation of his church to More ended with his offering More some novel ideas on Peter. Tyndale's earlier discussion of Peter was remarkable for his attempt to diminish Peter's authority. In 1531, in reaction to More's discussion of Peter's faith, Tyndale defended Peter. He told More:

> And thus ye se that peters fayth fauled not/ though yt were oppressed for a tyme: so that we neade to seke no gloses for the texte that Christe sayd to peter how that hys fayth shulde fayle.[94]

More had forced Tyndale to end his discussion of the "chefe apostle" on an ambivalent note. For those who were writing against papal authority, based upon Peter's primacy, the obvious reply was one which affirmed the idea that Peter's faith had failed.

More's conception of history forced Tyndale to evolve one more argument against the papacy. More claimed that God in His kindness would not allow His church to be led astray for so long a period of time. It was a good argument, but Tyndale found a reply. He assumed that the papacy and its church was corrupt, but that God's church was not. He said to More:

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[94]Tyndale, Answere, sig. C 6.

> God sofereth not his church to be disceaued: But he sofereth the popes church because they haue no loue vnto the trouth/ to liue after the lawes of god/ but consent to all iniquite/ as he sofred the church of Mahomete.[95]

If God could tolerate the infidel, he could tolerate More, the pope, and their church.

Tyndale offered his readers one further criticism of the papacy as an historical institution. He did not offer it in response to any specific argument used by More, but it formed the essence of much of his thinking concerning that institution. God had ordained a specific and continuing order of society. He had ordained, so thought Tyndale, certain institutions and offices to govern that society and to maintain the correct and natural order of things. The papacy was, and continued to be, a threat to that same order and to the Christian faith. To use Tyndale's words, it had "turned the rootes of the trees uppwarde." It had "peruerted the order of the worlde."[96] Tyndale told More:

> in the later dayes there shalbe perelous times for ther shalbe men y^{t} loue themselues/couetous/ hye minded/ proud/ raylers/ disobedient to father & mother/ vnthankful/ vngodly/ churlish/ promisebreakers accusars or pickquareles . . . hauynge an apperaunce of godlynesse/ but denienge ye power therof. And by power I vnderstonde the pure faith in gods worde which is the power & pith of all godlynesse & whence all y^{t} pleaseth god springeth.[97]

Tyndale placed the pure faith in God's word and "authentic scripture" over, above, and against those institutions of the church which had

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[95] Ibid., sig. L 1.

[96] Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. D 2.

[97] Tyndale, Answere, sigs. H 7^{v} - H 8.

exercised authority. For Tyndale God's word and authentic scripture stood above the papacy, above the general council of the church, and above the bishops.

In the course of this chapter, I have considered Tyndale's treatment of some of the important aspects of the problems of authority. Elsewhere, some of these same topics are discussed in greater detail and from a slightly different perspective.[98] Questions concerning the origins and nature of authority were also important for the problem of church and state. For the moment, it is necessary to thrust aside the questions of authority and to consider a topic of equal importance to Tyndale's political thought, the law.

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[98] See below, Chapter III,"Tyndale and the Perdurable Problem of Church and State."

CHAPTER II

WILLIAM TYNDALE AND THE LAW

The question of law was immensely important to William Tyndale. He dealt with it throughout his career as a reformer, translator, and theologian. But it was not the sense of law normally encountered in the study of the political thought of any Reformation political theorist. It was law in its theological sense. Tyndale studied the relationship of the individual Christian to the law as it was expressed in both the Old Testament and the New. He studied the relationship between the law and the gospel, and between the law and the grace which God gave to man to fulfill that law. These problems were far more important to him than questions which pertained to law in its traditional, political sense.

However, Tyndale also discussed law in its political sense, for it would have been impossible to deal with political theory without some consideration of the traditional categories of law: the law of God, the law of nature, positive law, and, less important for Tyndale, canon law. A consideration of these categories of law was forced upon Tyndale, and he might well have undertaken his explanation of law in its political sense feeling slightly uncomfortable with the entire topic. At this point, some comparisons with other major reformers are helpful. Tyndale came closest to Luther in his overall attitude toward law in its political sense. He stood furthest away from someone like Christopher St. German, the Tudor lawyer who became very much involved in the progress

of the English Reformation. Luther was shocked by the complexity of the law in the Holy Roman Empire. His celebrated phrase, "the wilderness of the law," demonstrated that sense of bewilderment, and tracts like his Address to the German Nobility showed his resentment against the involvement of the canon law in the Holy Roman Empire. But in spite of his resentment, Luther never discussed the important relationship of the laws of the church to those of the Empire in any systematic way. And when he finally addressed himself to the meaning of the Reformation in terms of the existing political authority, he only talked about natural law at the very end of his treatise.[1] The subject of law in its political sense was one which the German reformer considered only hesitantly, and one which he viewed as having been beyond his capacity to deal with adequately.

The similarities between Luther and Tyndale are striking. Like Luther, Tyndale discussed the topic of law in its political sense only because he had to. But any sense of urgency is lacking on his part. Tyndale never devoted one work to a discussion of this problem. For him the law of God and the individual Christian's relation to it was always a subject of greater interest and concern.

Tyndale stood furthest away from a man like St. German or even Thomas More. Both of these men were involved in the turmoil of the law in the sixteenth century. More carried this involvement with him into his Utopia. St. German, on the other hand, was more concerned with arriving at a practical solution to the confusion caused by the various

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[1]Martin Luther, Temporal Authority: To what extent it should be obeyed, in Luther's Works, eds. Pelikan and Lehrmann (55 vols., Philadelphia, 1955), VL, 127-8.

systems of law which existed in England during his day. Yet both men were personally concerned with the theory and practice of law in its political sense. Tyndale was not. He stood outside the "wilderness of the law" and looked in. St. German and More stood on the inside and looked out.

Tyndale discussed the problems of law in the same fashion that he discussed the problems of authority--randomly. There is no convenient place in his works to begin an analysis of his thoughts on law, for his thoughts must be extracted from the corpus of his works, from his numerous Biblical commentaries, from his polemics, and from his political tracts. Once again a topical approach is necessary, and the most important topic is Tyndale's theory of law.

Tyndale and the Theory of Law

In the sixteenth century any discussion of the nature of law meant a consideration of the relationship of several types of law to the laws of God. Discussing the nature of law meant considering the precise relationship of both positive law and natural law to the laws of God. It also meant discussing the relationship of positive law to natural law, since frequently the concept of natural law was equated with the law of God. Finally, it meant finding a place for the laws of the church in this complex hierarchy of law. Most political theorists of the sixteenth century approached the study of law in this way. Tyndale did also. Just as he never talked about political authority without relating it to God's

authority, so he never talked about "temporal laws" without giving his readers some sense of their relationship to the laws of God.[2]

There was another factor which led Tyndale to focus upon the laws of God--his legalism. Tyndale, as Professor Clebsch has told us, viewed the everyday life of a Christian in relation to his ability to live out the moral law of the Old Testament with demanding exactitude.[3] For Tyndale the laws of God were just more important than the laws of man.[4]

These two important considerations, Tyndale's belief that the laws of God were the basis for all law, and his legalism, suggest that an analysis of Tyndale's theory of law should begin with his ideas on the law of God. In his Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale discussed the various parts of the law of God as found in the Old Testament. While it may not have been his sole purpose to analyze the law of God in this work, his thoughts expressed in the Practyse of Prelates merit some consideration.

In an attempt to render a judgment on Henry's divorce, Tyndale divided the law of the Old Testament into three categories: the law of ceremonies, the law of penalty, and the law of nature.[5] All three senses

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[2]Tyndale always used the phrase "temporal law" to mean positive law.

[3]Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants, 154.

[4]In the following analysis, I intend to deal with Tyndale's theological understanding of the law only as far as it affected his understanding of law in a political sense. For a discussion of Tyndale's theology of the law, see Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants, 137-204.

[5]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sigs. H 7 - J 1.

of law had some bearing on Tyndale's view of law in its political sense, even the law of ceremonies which had ceased to be valid with the coming of Christ. Tyndale remarked:

> Parte of his lawes are ceremonyes/ that is to saye signes that put men in remembraunce other of the benefites of god done all ready . . . or signes that testifye Vnto the people that the wrath of god is peaced and their synnes forgeuen . . . which all cease assone as christ had offered vpp the sacrifyce of his bodye and bloude for vs. And in steade of them/ come the open preachinge of christe and oure signes which we call sacramentes.[6]

Here, for the first time, Tyndale may have been expressing the germ of his covenant theology which had an important bearing on his political thought. As previously noted, the application of this understanding of theology led Tyndale to believe that man's very ability to erect a political order was dependent upon his keeping of the covenant and his obedience to all temporal laws.[7] For Tyndale the open preaching of Christ was also important politically, since he probably believed that man could not obey without it.

The second category of the Mosaic law was the law of penalty to avenge sin. In Tyndale's estimation this law was not binding on either the gentile or the heathen. His words on this are important for they too have some bearing upon his concept of law in its political sense.

> . . . and we hethen or gentils are not bounde vnto them/ that we shuld punish their trespasers at it semeth best for the comem welth there/ some of one maner/ some of a nother.[8]

For Tyndale, in 1530, the belief that the secular authority should punish sin was not a new discovery. The same sentiment was also expressed in

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[6] Ibid., sig.s H 8 - H 8[v]. [7] See above, Chapter I, 23-4.

[8] Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. H 8[v].

the Obedience. But in discussing the law of penalty in his Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale was probably contradicting himself, for in the Obedience he had asserted that the king should punish the transgression of the divine law with the vengeance of the Old Testament as his guide. And his legalism would have merely reinforced this point of view. For Tyndale, then, it was not the business of the secular authorities to punish sin in whatever manner they chose. God had already given the magistrate a guide to follow.

The third and most important aspect of the Mosaic law was the "law natural." In discussing Henry's divorce Tyndale gave us his most explicit statement on natural law, and it is worth quoting in spite of its great length:

> Another parte parteyne vnto faith and loue: as that a man beleue how that there is but one god and that he is true/ good and mercy-full in all thinges: & therfore ought to be beleued/ trusted/ & loued with all a mans herte/ Soule/ minde and strength: and that a man loue his neyghboure as him selfe for goddes sake which hath created him and made him. And this is the lawe of nature and pertayneth vnto all nacyons indifferentlye with all that dependeth or followeth therof. This lawe was also before Moses: In so moch that though Moses had never wryten it/ yet had the Jewes bene no lesse bounde therto by nature and by naturall right and equite. . . . Moreover who soever hath this lawe graven in his harte/ this same kepeth all lawes/ and who soever hath it not written in his harte/ the same kepeth no lawe.[9]

While Tyndale's understanding of the law of God went through certain well-defined periods of development and change, his understanding of natural law remained largely unchanged after 1528. But the year 1528 was pivotal, for earlier Tyndale had expressly denied this sense of law. The ever-present battle of every Christian against the forces of sin

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[9] Ibid., sigs. H 8^{v} - J. 1.

loomed large in Tyndale's mind, and this sense of sin had led him to deny that in terms of keeping the law, natural law meant anything at all. In his parable of the wicked mammon, a work which he wrote before the Obedience, Tyndale claimed that:

> Paule proveth that the lawe naturall holpe not the gentyles. For the lawe of God was written in the hertes of the gentyles (as it appereth by the lawes/ statutes and ordinaunces which they made inther cytes) yet kepte they them not. . . .[10]

In the Obedience, the Practyse of Prelates, and in other works which Tyndale wrote after 1528, natural law became a positive force within a Christian society. Tyndale's new understanding of the workings of natural law made it an important factor in the actual governing of all kingdoms. Natural law now had an important bearing upon law in its political sense.

After 1528, Tyndale's understanding of natural law made it important with regard to the Christian in society and the necessity of having laws. Tyndale was always careful to say that not every Christian had the law of nature engraved upon his heart. In any Christian kingdom there were those who possessed this gift and obeyed "temporal laws" willingly as a consequence. But there were also those who did not, and therefore could not obey willingly. This belief in itself necessitated the view of secular authority as being responsible for the coercion of the Christian to obedience. In his Obedience, Tyndale remarked:

> for ye childrene of fayth are vnder no lawe (as thou seist in the Pistles to the Romayns to the Galathiens/ and in the firste of Timoth. but are fre. The spirite of Christ hath written the lively lawe of love in their hertes which driveth them to worke of their

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[10]William Tyndale, parable of the wicked mammon (Antwerp, 1528), sig. H 3.

> awne accorde frely & willingly/ for the greate loves sake only which they se in Christe/ and therfore nede they no law to compell them.[11]

Luther's influence upon Tyndale is clear. Those people with the gift of faith and the law of nature written on their hearts needed no law to compel them. This reasoning led both Tyndale and Luther to claim that in a perfect, Christian kingdom, no laws would be necessary.[12] However, no kingdom consisted of only the true believers, and Tyndale thought that it was the duty of a Christian king to punish sin. The fact that natural law was not universal meant for Tyndale that there must be some "temporal laws" and some coercive authority in every Christian society.

Natural law was also important because of its special relationship to all "temporal laws." Tyndale, like many other figures of the sixteenth century, believed that both the laws of God and nature were to be used as a normative standard for all law. This purpose of natural law was expressly stated in Tyndale's Answere to More's dialoge:

> And on the other syde he that loueth his neyboure as him selfe vnderstondeth all lawes and can iudge betwene good and evell right and wronge/ godly and vngodly in all conuersacion/ dedes/ lawes/ bargens/ couenauntes/ ordinaunces and decrees of men/ & knoweth the office of euery degre and the due honoure of euery person.[13]

Here Tyndale was following the consensus of sixteenth century political thought. All human laws and decrees were dependent upon the content of the law of nature for their validity. But for Tyndale this use of natural

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[11] Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. Q. 4 - Q. 4^{v}.

[12] Luther, op. cit., 89: "If all the world were composed of real Christians, that is, true believers, there would be no need or benefits from prince, lord, sword, or law."

[13] Tyndale, Answere, sigs. E 1 - E 1^{v}.

law was far more important than it was for many other figures of his time, since he thought that the laws of God and nature were the only guide for the Christian to follow. For him, custom and precedent counted for nothing, and this belief caused an interesting source of tension which was also felt by other men of his time. In his exposicion vppon Mathew, Tyndale asked:

> How be it all maner of swerynge is not here forbodden, no moare then all maner of kyllynge, when the commaundement sayth, kill not: for iudges and rulers must kyll.[14]

More had asked the same question seventeen years earlier in his Utopia.

The concept of natural law was also important politically as a restriction upon the king's authority. In this regard, Tyndale saw it acting in two distinct ways. First, he thought that the content of natural law should be a guiding inspiration for all men who were responsible for enacting laws which governed a society. Secondly, Tyndale thought that its precepts were binding upon the actions of all people, even kings, and he proved this point to his own satisfaction in the Practyse of Prelates. Should a man marry his brother's wife--that which is commanded in Deuteronomy but forbidden in Leviticus? Tyndale rigorously scrutinized the precepts of each law code in accordance with his own classification of Old Testament law and concluded against the king's cause. The law of ceremonies and the law of vengeance were not applicable, but the law of nature was. Tyndale concluded that Henry's marriage

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[14]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. F 7^{v}.

was valid, according to his understanding of the law of nature, as long as Henry's brother had been dead when the marriage took place.[15]

Tyndale defined natural law in one other way which inevitably gave it an important political sense. Most frequently he equated the contents of natural law with the golden rule. Yet in the Obedience, and it might be added only in that work, he defined natural law in a completely different fashion. Referring to the Turks and the infidel whom he believed not to be under the laws of Christ, Tyndale remarked:

> Yet are they vnder the testamente of the lawe naturall which is the lawes of every londe made for the comen wealth there and for peace and vnite that one maye lyve by another. In which lawes the infideles (yf they kepe them) have promyses of worldly thinges. Who soever therefore hindereth a very infidell from the right of that lawe/ synneth agenst God and of hym will God be avenged.[16]

There is much to be said about Tyndale's definition of natural law. His sentiments are not expressed in sufficient detail to allow us to trace their origin with any degree of certainty. Nevertheless, Tyndale appears to be offering his readers one sense of natural law that was first employed by Ulpian, an important Byzantine jurist who left his mark on the Western legal tradition through his discussions of natural law, and through the compilation of Justinian's Institutes. A similar definition of natural law was also used by Christopher St. German.[17] Furthermore, while it is impossible to identify Tyndale's source, it is remarkable

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[15]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. J 3. The definitive work on the divorce is now J. J. Scarisbrick's Henry VIII (London, 1971), 263-316.

[16]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. G. 5.

[17]See below, Chapter VI, "Tyndale and a Tudor Lawyer."

that this is the only instance when he employed an idea taken from Roman law. Finally, in the above quoted passage from the Obedience, Tyndale appears to be expressing sentiments which are normally associated with later developments in natural law philosophy. By the eighteenth century natural law had lost many of its uniquely Christian connotations and had become associated with those inalienable rights shared by all.[18] Tyndale appears to be suggesting this much by informing all those who planned to fight against the infidel that they too had certain rights guaranteed to them by natural law.

Previously, with regard to the laws of the king, Tyndale once said more than he really believed. This same fact must be considered here with regard to the idea of natural law. In this case, however, another text, also from the Obedience, substantiates Tyndale's belief in this definition of natural law. Elsewhere in the Obedience, he had remarked that God was:

> iudge over all and will have all iudged by his lawe indifferently and to have the righte of his lawe/ and will avenge the wronge done vnto the turke and sareson.[19]

The sentiments expressed here are exactly the same as those expressed previously. In all probability Tyndale was not saying more than he actually believed with regard to natural law and the infidel.

Finally, some consideration of the motives which moved Tyndale to include the interesting passages on natural law and the infidel seems

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[18] On the development of this aspect of natural law, see Passerin D'Entreves, Natural Law: a Historical Survey (New York, 1965), 48-64.

[19] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. G. 4^{v}.

appropriate. Once again his activities as a polemicist may have been important. While Tyndale never openly condemned the crusade against the Turks, he was deeply suspicious of the crusading ideal in general. He probably viewed it as the foreign policy of an unreformed and aggressive papacy.[20] Previously Tyndale had accused the papacy of spreading disobedience by denying that the heathen prince was due the same obedience as the most Christian prince.[21] He may have made his observations on natural law and the infidel in a similar spirit. If this was the case, then Tyndale's use of this definition of natural law was also a backhanded attack on the Catholic church and the papacy.

Tyndale discussed two other important types of law: canon law and "temporal law." But in comparison with his discussions of the laws of God and natural law, his discussions of canon law and "temporal law" are relatively brief. The first task is not an analysis of his thoughts on these two important aspects of law, but rather a discussion of his general silence and his brevity.

Tyndale had very little to say about canon law and its relationship to positive law and to the laws of God. Here he showed himself to be out of touch with one of the essential aspects of the English Reformation. One would expect that as a polemicist, Tyndale would have been more concerned with canon law, and that the hostility of the English people

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[20]For a convenient summary of Tyndale's view of the papacy's foreign policy, its aims and achievements, see Pineas, "Tyndale's Use of History as a Weapon of Religious Controversy," passim.

[21]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. D. 8^{v}. The source of this belief was Luther's concept of office.

as a whole would have found its way into his works. It did, but only to a limited degree. For example, Tyndale criticized the actual legal proceedings employed against heretics.[22] These criticisms may have been his own contribution to the widespread dissatisfaction caused by the legal proceeding ex officio. However, Tyndale only used canon law against the authority of the church on three occasions, and he only discussed it in a general fashion on two other occasions. Two things can be inferred from his silence. First, as previously stated, Tyndale remained afar from the legal turmoil of the English Reformation. Most probably, his own self-imposed exile on the continent explains this. Secondly, from his general silence on canon law, it appears safe to assume that Tyndale was just not that familiar with this body of law. But this point needs clarification.

Tyndale probably came into contact with at least the basic essentials of canon law during his years at Cambridge. Yet it is remarkable that other remnants of his academic experience which were, by his own admission, very distasteful to him, appear more frequently in his works than do references to canon law. Remarks concerning Aristotle and scholasticism are frequent, and Tyndale also resorted to logical arguments, using natural metaphors to make his point clearer. For example, in the parable of the wicked mammon, he attempted to prove that works declare love by comparing the process to an eclipse. One saw that the moon was

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[22]These criticisms are found in several places in his works but they are most pronounced in his introduction to the Lollard tracts which he edited. See, for example, THE EXAMINATION OF Master William Thorpe preste accused of heresye before Thomas Arundell/ Archebishop of Canterbury/ the yere of ower Lorde M.CCCC. and seuen (1530), sig. A 1.

dark and reasoned that the earth was between the sun and the moon. One could not reason that the darkness of the moon was the "natural cause" of the fact that the earth was between the two bodies. Darkness was only the "cause declarative" or the effect.[23] Arguments and analogies of this type appear frequently in Tyndale's works, and their presence suggests that he left university having learned more logic than canon law.

In spite of Tyndale's scanty references to canon law, his attitude toward this body of law is perfectly clear. To him it was the antithesis of the law of God, something completely fabricated by the papacy to insure the papacy's continual domination of the temporal authorities. Canon law was the instrument by which the popes perpetuated the tyranny of their unholiness. Tyndale remarked that:

> because that christes doctryne was contrarye vnto all soch kyngdomes/ and therfore had no lawe therin how to rule it/ he went and made him a severall lawe of his awne makynge which passed in crueltye and tyrannye the lawes of all hethen princes.[24]

To Tyndale canon law was just like any other law which contradicted the dictates of the laws of God and nature. It was not binding upon the individual Christian.[25]

Tyndale offered his readers one more reason for the invalidity of canon law. In the Obedience, while passing judgment on the clergy, he remarked:

> when we loke on your deades/ we se that ye are all sworne and have separated yourselves from the laye people/ & have a severall

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[23]Tyndale, parable of the wicked mammon, sig. B 8[v].

[24]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. D 7.

[25]Tyndale never expressly stated this point of view but he certainly implied it. It is in keeping with his thoughts on the validity of all laws.

> kingdome amonge your selves and several lawes of youre owne makynge/ where with ye violently bynde the laye people that never consented vnto the makynge of them. A thowsande thynges forbydde ye which Christ made free/[26]

This is a very interesting remark for it points to a dichotomy that existed between Tyndale's view of law in its theological sense, his view of law in its political sense, and those sentiments which he was willing to use against the church. When he talked about law in its theological sense, he always assumed that man consented to it. In his earlier years he assumed that man consented to a law which proclaimed his damnation. That same law demonstrated man's hopelessly sinful nature.[27] Under his later understanding of the law Tyndale thought that man consented to the law through his attempt to live out its moral requirements. However, man's consent or his failure to consent had no bearing on the validity of God's law. To a lesser degree and in a slightly different fashion the same was true of man's relationship to "temporal law." But in this case it must be noted that the word "consent" was used by Tyndale in an equivocal manner. Man, of course, consented to obedience and was rewarded, or he chose to disobey the "temporal laws" and was duly punished. Man's consent might imply the validity of a "temporal law" and his dissent might imply that the law was unjust because it contradicted the laws of God and nature. Tyndale always believed that the individual Christian should judge the validity of positive law. But in neither case,

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[26]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. B. 6[v].

[27]Once again, this point of view is implied in the Obedience and expressly stated in Tyndale's earlier theological works. On this problem, see Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants, 137-8 and passim.

either in the case of "temporal law," or in the case of the law of God, was man's participation in the actual making of these laws a criterion for judging their validity. And this was exactly what Tyndale was affirming with regard to canon law. This was obviously true with regards to the laws of God. And as far as the laws of man were concerned, Tyndale never assumed anywhere in his works that the overall consent of a group of people was necessary before a law could be binding. He never assumed to be true for the laws of God or man the sentiment which he was willing to use against the church. The old medieval idea, well enshrined in the tradition of English law through the works of Fortescue, Tyndale employed only as a polemical weapon against the authority of the church.[28]

Tyndale also demonstrated a general reluctance to discuss the question of "temporal law." But this reluctance was of a slightly different sort than his reluctance to deal with canon law. Tyndale only shied away from discussing the theoretical aspects of "temporal law." Questions such as the relationship of "temporal law" to natural law and the law of God, Tyndale only discussed briefly. Questions concerning the nature of customary law and statute law, he did not discuss at all. In fact, there is no mention of either one of these two types of law.

Tyndale's reluctance is not difficult to explain. Any question dealing with the nature of customary law or statute law probably stood on the very periphery of his interests. With the one exception of the problem of the relationship of "temporal law" to the laws of God and

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[28]In all probability, Tyndale borrowed this idea not from Fortescue but from Luther.

nature, Tyndale probably saw no need to discuss these theoretical aspects of law. He only considered the relationship of "temporal law" to the laws of God and nature because this was one important aspect of something which did interest him--the relationship of the individual Christian to the temporal authority.

There were other reasons which probably led Tyndale to remain largely silent on the important question of the theory of "temporal law." As was the case with the laws of the church, it is probable that Tyndale knew very little about this question. Tyndale's silence may have also been the result of the general way in which he viewed "temporal law." "Temporal law" was closely related to the temporal regiment. The fact that he always used the term "temporal law" instead of the term "positive law" is indicative of the close association that he saw between man's laws and the temporal regiment. This view made it inevitable that he would be more concerned with the application and use of "temporal law" than with the theory that lay behind it.

Tyndale did not completely ignore the theory of "temporal law." Like other men of the sixteenth century he was concerned with the problem of the validity of positive law. As previously noted, Tyndale always believed that the laws of man were valid only as far as the laws of God and nature allowed.[29] However, many of Tyndale's other ideas on the nature of positive law were far more theocentric than those of other political theorists of the time. The various manifestations of Tyndale's

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[29]Tyndale, Answere, sig. A 2. Tyndale expressed this belief in numerous other works as well.

theocentrism and the influence of his theology on his theory of positive law require careful consideration.

To Tyndale, just as the king's authority was part of the "divine economy," so were "temporal laws."[30] Political theorists of the Middle Ages and the Reformation all believed that there was a close relationship between positive law and the laws of God. This relationship was established by the belief that all human law should enact in some way precepts drawn from the laws of God. Tyndale believed this too, although he usually expressed this belief in the converse fashion. But while other political theorists were willing to affirm the fact that human law had other foundations than the laws of God and nature, Tyndale was not. He failed to discuss any basis for "temporal law" other than the laws of nature and God, and he usually equated these two types of law. He failed to discuss custom as a basis for law, and in his Answere to More's dialoge he argued against the idea that continued use of something could insure its validity.[31] He also refused to believe that the members of Parliament could enact "good laws" without the assistance of God.[32] Tyndale flatly denied the validity of two important sources of positive law in the sixteenth century.

Tyndale did not feel compelled to discuss the origins of "temporal law." Once again, his lack of legal training becomes important. But he

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[30]Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants, 147.

[31]Tyndale, Answere, sig. H 4^{v}.

[32]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. F 5.

did consider this problem indirectly, and he appears to have assumed that "temporal law" originated from the temporal regiment, and that this in itself gave "temporal law" a certain validity. Within the rather vague structure of his political thought it is difficult to see any other possible origin of positive law. It certainly did not originate from the consent of those governed for Tyndale's sense of authority prevented him from adopting this position. With the one exception of Parliament, when it acted in those times which God had chosen to give its members a certain degree of wisdom, the temporal regiment was probably the only source of positive law in Tyndale's Christian society.

The idea of "temporal law" as an important part of the divine economy is also evident in the close relationship that Tyndale saw between "temporal law" and sin. There is little doubt that Luther's theological influence on Tyndale was largely responsible for Tyndale's theological treatment of positive law. In the Obedience Tyndale said that a truly Christian society could operate without laws. In making this statement Tyndale was defining law in a Lutheran, theological fashion. Since law proclaimed man's evil, without evil there would be no need for law. However, Tyndale was also assuming that laws were necessary for the punishment of sin. Once again the association of law with the king's office becomes significant. Since kings were ordained by God to punish sin, "temporal law" took on the same function.

Finally, the theological orientation of Tyndale's treatment of "temporal law" is evident in the fact that he gave the Christian's obedience to all "temporal law" both a political and a theological significance. This was a late development in his political thought, but as

previously noted, he came to view government as a contract between God and man in which man fulfilled his part of the bargain by obedience to the "temporal laws."[33] In his own unique, theological way, Tyndale expressed one of the most commonly held ideas in the Tudor age--that society could not function without the obedience of the various orders within it to king, prince, magistrate, or to whomever else God had commanded obedience.

To Tyndale, "temporal law" had one other function: it was supposed to guarantee a certain degree of individualism within society. Tyndale only expressed this idea indirectly by suggesting that the king and his law should protect the worldly goods of all Christians.[34] There is nothing remarkable about his view of this function of law, except for the fact that it was the sole instance when he discussed "temporal law" apart from theological considerations.

Although "temporal laws" were an important part of the divine economy, Tyndale's thoughts on their importance relative to the well-being of the Christian commonwealth did not remain static. Certain factors led him to minimize the importance of "temporal laws" for the commonwealth; others led him to re-evaluate their importance with a dramatic shift in emphasis. These directions in Tyndale's thought and the factors which influenced him should be carefully examined.

Of the several factors which come to mind, two stand out above the rest: first, Tyndale's theological development and his break with Luther over the question of the law; secondly, his complete rejection of

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[33] Ibid., sig. F 5.

[34] Ibid., sig. F 5^{v}.

Aristotle's sense of law. As long as Tyndale labored under Luther's influence, the association of law with sin was extremely well pronounced in his thought. The function of "temporal law" and of the temporal regiment was to punish sin. In short, there was a strong, negative strain which disappeared to a large degree with his theological maturity. Tyndale's idea of a king in his exposicion of Mathew is more one of a monarch who sets a positive moral example and leads his people by "salt and light." Tyndale said:

> This lyght and salt partayned not then to the apostles and now to oure bysshopes and spyritualtye onlye. No, it partayneth to the temporall men also. For all the kynges and rulers are bounde to be salt and lyght not onlye in theyr exsample of lyuynge, but also in teachynge of doctryne vnto theyr subiectes, as well as they be bounde to punyshe euell doers.[35]

Law no longer proclaimed sin, and the emphasis in Tyndale's exposicion vppon Mathew was not upon a king who punished transgressions of divine law with the vengeance of the Old Testament as his guide. Tyndale's discussion of the nature and function of "temporal law" was so theologically oriented that when his theology changed, so did his views on "temporal law." "Temporal law" was now important not so much because it prevented sin. Theologically and politically it was important because man's obedience to it fulfilled the covenant between man and God.

Other theological developments, however, and his complete rejection of Aristotle's sense of law led Tyndale to minimize the importance of "temporal laws" within a Christian commonwealth. Again, Tyndale's legalism becomes important, and his legalism, acting in harmony with his

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[35] Ibid., sig. D 5.

rejection of Aristotle's sense of law, led him to minimize the importance of "temporal law." Tyndale, like the Renaissance humanists, was interested in the problem of what it meant to be Christian. To be a Christian meant being a moral individual, and it meant following the moral injunctions of the law. However, Tyndale never assumed that "temporal law" could lead men to morality or virtue. "Temporal law" either restrained man from evil or, at times, coerced him to do good. But it had no moral dimension of its own. His rejection of this idea was one aspect of his rejection of Aristotle's polity. Political organization was not natural in the sense that it would bring out the best in man. The mere keeping of the "temporal laws" led to either material prosperity or to a fulfillment of the political covenant between God and man. But it did not make man virtuous. For Tyndale, man's rigid adherence to the moral precepts of the law meant a rigid adherence to the law of the Old Testament. The laws of God were just more important than the laws of man.

But were the laws of God more important politically than the laws of man? In the final analysis the problem of the importance of "temporal law" rests on the answer to this question, and Tyndale never gave his readers a precise answer. His readers are required to weigh carefully the importance of one idea against another. On the one hand, "temporal law" appears to have been more important to him simply because he believed that government was a covenant between man and God, and that the keeping of all "temporal laws" fulfilled this covenant. On the other hand, the law of the Old Testament was extremely important politically, since it provided Tyndale with the very organization of the Christian kingdom. No reader can help but be impressed by the importance of Old Testament

example in Tyndale's Obedience of a Christian man. Finally, there is a strong impulse in Tyndale's writings which suggests that he may have believed that the Christian lived in a Christian kingdom in spite of the king and his laws. In other words, the existence of "temporal laws" provided Tyndale with some problems, and he was greatly concerned about the possibility of a Christian living in a Christian manner within the political association that had been formed at the initial inspiration and command of God. Tyndale did not rehearse for his readers the contents of the laws of God and nature because "temporal laws" were so just. He did so because their very existence presented a problem for every Christian.

The amount of time which Tyndale devoted to the examination of the topic of the relationship of every Christian to the "temporal laws" is a convenient measure of its importance to him. He was far more concerned with discussing this problem than he was with discussing the theoretical aspects of positive law. His thoughts on this question and the motivations which led him to consider it deserve at least passing consideration.

Tyndale, the Christian, and the Law

Several factors led Tyndale to consider the relationship of Christians to "temporal laws."[36] In spite of the fact that "temporal laws" were not supposed to contradict the laws of God and nature, it was

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[36]Once again, I intend to discuss this topic almost exclusively from the point of view of temporal law and law in its political sense, referring to Tyndale's theological understanding of the law only when it has a direct bearing on the question.

apparent to Tyndale that they frequently did. Tyndale knew that the existence of the laws of man provided a problem for every Christian. He gave us one answer to this problem through his actions. He became an "obedient rebel." He left England illegally and on several occasions furthered his disobedience through his refusal to return at the command of the temporal authorities.[37] However, he also attempted to deal with the problem in his polemics. The answers he gave through his actions and the answers which he suggested to others were not the same. For others, he suggested what one historian has called "the religious duty of obedience."[38] But here Tyndale attempted to be precise. Probably he felt that merely to say that God commanded obedience, based upon the Pauline text which he employed so frequently in his early years, "let every soul submit himself vnto the authoritie off the hyer powers," did not give the individual Christian a precise enough guide.[39] To Tyndale, this is what was needed.

Another important factor which led Tyndale to consider this topic of the Christian and the law was Luther's theological influence. The same considerations which were important with regard to Luther's influence upon Tyndale's theory of "temporal law" are also important here. Law was closely equated with sin. Law in its theological sense proclaimed sin, and man consented to that law only hesitantly, even unwillingly. Tyndale apparently believed that man reacted to "temporal law" in the same fashion.

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[37]Williams, William Tyndale, 37-43.

[38]Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century, 123-4.

[39]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. D. 5.

Obedience was not something which came easily, and Tyndale's early discussion of the problem of the Christian and the "temporal laws," beyond merely affirming the duty of obedience, was an analysis of the various types of obedience. The attempt to define the exact limits of obedience as well as some sort of precise guide for the Christian in everyday life came later.[40]

Essentially, Tyndale saw two types of obedience. Within any society there could be found those who obeyed the "temporal law" in a spiritual fashion, and those who obeyed it in a carnal fashion. This distinction corresponded closely to Tyndale's two types of scriptural interpretation. In both cases he preferred the spiritual way. The people who obeyed spiritually were those who had the law of God written in their hearts and obeyed naturally. These people, he said, "neade nether of kinge ner officers to drive them/ nether that any man profer them any rewarde for to kepe the lawe."[41] These people were Luther's true Christians and a minority within any society. There were also those people who obeyed the temporal authority carnally. They kept the law but did not understand the spirit which lay behind it. Tyndale believed that their motives were imperfect. They looked for material prosperity as their reward for obedience.[42]

Tyndale offered one other variation of the types of obedience. It was not radically different from the ideas of obedience as outlined above,

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[40]Tyndale's exposicion of the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew is especially important in this regard, and he did not write it until 1533.

[41]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. E. 2^{v} - E. 3. [42]Ibid., sig. E. 3.

but he appeared to find this variation useful. People obeyed out of the fear of vengeance and punishment. This obedience was as imperfect as carnal obedience. But the Christian also obeyed as a result of the calling of the conscience. And the conscience called from two directions: from the direction of the individual Christian himself, and from the direction of the Christian and his neighbor.[43] To Tyndale, this last point was extremely important. It became the foundation of his application of Christian principles to society in its totality in the attempt to reform it along Christian lines.[44] It was also his application of his understanding of the contents of natural law and the law of God to the individual Christian. As such, it was extremely important with regard to the problem of the Christian and the "temporal law."[45] In his Answere to More Tyndale said:

> And when he is commaunded to loue his neyghboure as him silfe/ he sercheth that his neyghboure is created of God and bought with Christes bloude and so forth/ and therfore he loveth him out of his harte. . . . And by these vnderstondeth he in the lawes of man/ which are right and which tirannie.[46]

This perfect love of one's neighbor which Tyndale equated with the law of nature became the starting point for his ideas on the Christian in society and one of the fundamental guides for the Christian and his relationship with the temporal authority. Tyndale believed that this

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[43] Ibid., sigs. F. 1[v] - F. 2.

[44] See below, Chapter VII, where this point is discussed in detail.

[45] It was also important theologically. See Obedience, sig. E. 3.

[46] Tyndale, Answere, sig. A 2.

type of obedience was the quintessence of a perfect Christian society. Yet he never assumed for a moment that every Christian was capable of this type of obedience or that England represented the perfect Christian society.

In his discussion of the Christian and the temporal regiment, Tyndale applied this duty of obedience on a broad scale. He was always interested in the obedience of subjects to their king, and it was an interest which was to a small degree the product of polemical necessity. Nevertheless, within a Christian society and within the temporal regiment there were other offices instituted by God which required the same obedience given to the king. Several considerations prompted Tyndale to adopt this point of view. Generally his belief that "in the temporal regiment is husbande, wife, father, mother," was the product of the same considerations which led him to think of government exclusively in terms of monarchy.[47] While God had originally ordained monarchy as the only form of government, he had also invested other segments of society with authority. He had instituted the offices of lord, judge, elder, parent, etc., and the same logic which led Tyndale to look toward monarchy as the only form of government also led him to respect these other offices. Christians, by God's ordinance, had to submit to the king's judgment.[48] But in Tyndale's hierarchical view of society

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[47]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sigs. G 3 - G 3^{v}.

[48]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. D. 6.

the judgment of parents for children, lords for servants, judges for those about to be judged, and elders for the rest of the community, counted almost equally with the judgment of the king. He believed that God had commanded obedience to all.[49]

Tyndale's application of this duty of obedience to all officers in a society and in the temporal regiment was also the product of certain theological considerations. Quite probably, his view of man as a helplessly sinful creature forced him to believe that the coercive authority of only one man was not sufficient to prevent society from disintegrating into sinful chaos. Tyndale certainly gave his readers this impression in his Obedience, and it is important to note that in his own theological way he was following the trends of sixteenth century political thought in general. People in the sixteenth century, as Professor Hexter has observed, either sought the maintenance of society in the figure of a king, or they looked beyond him to other institutions of that society.[50] Machiavelli, along with Erasmus and his Education of a Christian Prince, are the best representatives of the former view, while More's Utopia is the clearest expression of the latter. But Tyndale's treatment of these themes is more striking, since he appealed in both directions at the same time. He looked towards the king as well as toward the other offices instituted by God for the preservation, and to some degree, the governing of that society.

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[49] Ibid., passim.

[50] J. H. Hexter, "Utopia and Its Historical Milieu," in The Complete Works of Saint Thomas More, V, 118.

Tyndale approached the problem of the limitation of Christian obedience from two points of view: from the point of view of the Christian and the "temporal law," and from the point of view of the Christian and his duty as a member of the temporal regiment. Generally he was concerned with the first problem in the early years of his career, while the latter problem concerned him more during those years which were marked by his maturity as a theologian. In neither case were his thoughts remarkable for their originality, but they deserve passing comment nonetheless.

Tyndale's lack of originality is especially evident in his consideration of the problem of the Christian and the "temporal law." He affirmed the idea which was echoed throughout the previous centuries, that a just law must be obeyed and an unjust one met with passive resistance. For Tyndale this included the most important aspect of obedience and resistance during the Reformation: resistance for the word of God. In the Obedience he told his readers who might have thought it lawful to resist for the word of God:

> Where ye peaceable doctrine of Christ teacheth to obey & to sofre for the worde of god& to remit ye vengeaunce & the defence of ye worde of god which is mighty and able to defende it. . . .[51]

It was not until fairly late in his career that Tyndale considered the question of obedience and Christian duty. This question which he explored largely in his exposicion vppon Mathew was different from the simple problem of resistance to an unjust law because Tyndale had to

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[51]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. E. 8 - E. 8^{v}.

wrestle with seemingly contradictory sources of instruction. Could the Christian remain a good Christian and perform his duty? Tyndale's words in Mathew speak for themselves:

> as a person for thyselfe alone and christes disciple, you can and must resist violence and revenge. There thou must loue. But in the worldly state, there thou art no priuate man, but a person in respecte of other, thou not onlye mayst, but also must and art bounde vnder payne of dampnacion to execute thyne office. . . .[52]

Tyndale gave the following example to make his case clearer:

> And so hath the ruler power over the, to send the to vse violence vpon thy neyboure, to take him, to prison him and happlie to kill him to. And thou must euer loue thy neyboure in thyne harte by the reason that he is thy brother in the first state, and yet obeye thy ruler and goo with the constable or like officer . . . and if he will not yelde in the kynges name, thou must laye on him and smite him to the grounde till he be subdued. . . .[53]

Finally:

> if thy lorde or prynce sende they a warfare in to a nother lande, thou must obey Gods commaundement and goo and aduenge thy princes quarell which thou knowest not but that it is right. . . .[54]

The dualism which Tyndale erected between a Christian existing as a Christian and the Christian within the temporal regiment needs further comment. Tyndale's thought here can be regarded as a practical solution to the problem, or no solution at all, depending on the point of view one takes. Obviously, people like the Anabaptists would have claimed no solution at all. But more important than value judgments of this sort are a few mundane observations. First and most important, Tyndale has solved the problem of the Christian and the temporal regiment by

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[52]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. G 5.

[53]Ibid., sigs. G 5 - G 5[v]. [54]Ibid., sig. G 6.

giving preference to the king's authority and his law. This is not to say that with one stroke of the pen he was able to eradicate the tension between natural law and "temporal law." He saw this tension as being real, and in the same work he remarked:

> How be it all maner of swerynge is not here forbodden, no moare then all maner of kyllynge, when the commaundement sayth, kill not:[55]

Nevertheless, for the Christian serving in the temporal regiment Tyndale did greatly minimize this tension. However, the same was not true for the Christian who existed in the "regiment of the gospel."[56] Here the Christian was commanded by the all-embracing law of love and by the laws of God and nature to live in harmony with his neighbor, "to love his neighbour as himself," and to bear patiently the malices of all. The Christian in the regiment of the gospel was a passive fellow, existing hopefully in the state of obedience and action, with his neighbor's well-being in mind at all times.

No one would argue that Tyndale's concept of law was unimportant to his theology. To a slightly lesser degree the same is true of his political thought. With regard to the structure of his political thought his ideas on law were probably less important than his ideas on authority. They were perhaps even less important than his ideas pertaining to the problems of church and state. But this is a quantitative judgment based upon the amount of time he spent discussing each topic. Nevertheless, having extracted his ideas on law from his various works, some conclusions seem in order at this point.

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[55] Ibid., sig. F 7[v].

[56] Ibid., sig. G 3.

In Tyndale's discussion of the theory of law in its political sense, three factors stand out above all other considerations: first, his basic theological orientation; secondly, the theocentric nature of his thought; and thirdly, his lack of legal training. Tyndale's general theological bearing is everywhere evident in his discussion of law. He spent more time discussing the law of God than any other type of law. He spent an almost equal amount of time discussing the law of nature, but of course, to him, the affinities between the law of God and the law of nature were exceedingly great. Probably he spent the least amount of time discussing the laws of the church and the theory of "temporal law." The latter two topics he was ill-equipped to deal with, and his basic lack of familiarity with both bodies of law is evident in his discussions of them. While no student of Tyndale's thought should be surprised by his lack of expertise in dealing with the theory of "temporal law," the same lack of expertise with regard to canon law is surprising.[57]

Although Tyndale's theological bearing is readily apparent, the theocentric nature of his thought is fairly well hidden. Its most important manifestation cannot be found in what Tyndale said, but rather in what he failed to say. This is not to argue that the more obvious manifestations of Tyndale's theocentrism are unimportant: law as an important part of the divine economy, etc. Rather, his failure to give "temporal law" any basis other than the laws of God, and his failure to discuss statute law, the legislative process of Parliament, and the force of

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[57]On this problem in general see R. J. Schoeck, "Canon Law on the Eve of the Reformation," Medieval Studies XXV (1963), 125-147.

custom, are two of the most significant aspects of his theory of "temporal law." If one were looking for the place where Tyndale's lack of training as a political theorist was most evident, this would be the place--at least with regard to his theory of law.

Concerning Tyndale's treatment of the Christian and his relationship to the "temporal laws," it has been noted that he thought in terms of various types of obedience. Obedience was the cornerstone, since when he discussed the problem of Christian duty, he could find no instance when the law of God would prevent a Christian from fulfilling his duty within the temporal regiment. In a real sense the freedom of the Christian was, for Tyndale, the freedom of obedience. He may have begun his emphasis on this idea through his involvement with Reformation polemics, but the duty of obedience came to mean much more to him in his later years. When he wrote his exposicion vppon Mathew, he cannot be accused of attempting to impress a king whom he had already alienated through past deeds. Obedience to the "temporal law" became the foundation of the political covenant between man and God.

Without losing sight of the problems of the individual Christian, obedience, and the temporal regiment, it is now necessary to move away from Tyndale's treatment of the law and to consider his treatment of the problems of church and state. The level of discussion shifts from individuals to institutions. But the shift is incomplete and the problems of the Christian and the temporal regiment again become important in Tyndale's later discussion of the problem of church and state.

CHAPTER III

TYNDALE AND THE PERDURABLE PROBLEM OF CHURCH AND STATE

For William Tyndale the problem of church and state was as important as the problem of authority. It may have been more important for him than the question of law in its political sense. He was very much concerned with the problem of church and state when he wrote his first political tract, the Obedience of a Christian man, in 1528. This problem was also central to his second and last political tract, the Practyse of Prelates, written in 1530. But he also discussed it in his exposicion of the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, and gave the problem passing mention in several other tracts. His interest in the problem of church and state remained fairly constant throughout his career, and the first question to be considered should not be what he had to say about this problem but rather an examination of the reasons which led him to consider it so consistently. Once again the events of Tyndale's life become important.

One of the most important facts concerning Tyndale's early career is that he was carrying on the Reformation in England before the actual Reformation had begun. In his early years there is no doubt that his works established an essential link between the religious dissatisfaction that had existed for centuries in England and the thoughts of Luther and the German reformers.[1] With his New Testament of 1524-5 came a new

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[1] I have explored this connection in the following chapter, "Tyndale, Wyclif, and the Lollards."

theology and the partial fulfillment of a centuries-old appeal for a vernacular scripture.[2] However, Tyndale never devoted all his energy to a translation of the scripture into the vernacular. He became an active polemicist, not only exploiting the strong currents of religious dissent in England, but also mapping out his own program of reform. His Practyse of Prelates was largely negative, but both his Obedience and his exposicion vppon Mathew contain statements of his own vision of the Reformation. Arguing against the historical role of the papacy or outlining his own program of reform, Tyndale had to consider the relationship of church and state.

It is also helpful to consider the attitude of the reformer when he discussed the problems of church and state. Tyndale's program of reform meant changing the existing relationship between the church and the state. It meant working against a tide of reactionary sentiment which was largely a product of opposition to Luther. Tyndale was aware of the strength of the forces which blocked the way to reform, and in his Obedience he devoted several pages to a refutation of Fisher's refutation of Luther.[3] Quite probably, he was pessimistic about his chances of success with regard to the problem of church and state.

One of the most interesting factors concerning Tyndale's career as a polemicist and reformer is that the tone of his works did not change greatly as the Reformation progressed. In 1530, he decided against the

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[2]On this point, see the fine little book by Margaret Deansely, The Significance of the Lollard Bible (London, 1951).

[3]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. H. 5 - H. 5[v].

royal divorce, and from that date forward, according to one scholar, he can no longer be called an "Henrician apologist."[4] But the definition of the word apologist is crucial. Tyndale always favored some form of reformation at the hands of the king of England, and he outlined his ideas in a fairly clear fashion in the Obedience and in the Practyse of Prelates. Yet when the actual course of the Reformation went in a direction which must have displeased him to some degree, Tyndale continued to map out his own ideas for a complete program of reform. His earlier negativism which was expressed largely against the established church did not disappear. However, there is no hint of any new negativism on his part against the Henrician settlement. The tone of his exposicion vppon Mathew is almost exactly the same as that of his Obedience, written five years earlier. This evenness of tone is an important aspect of Tyndale's attitude toward the problems of church and state, and there are several factors which explain it.

Part of the explanation can be found in the fact that Tyndale's view of the progress of the Reformation was not totally unfavorable. If the Reformation Parliament failed to do anything else, it had ended the separate jurisdiction of the clergy. Tyndale had advocated this measure in 1528.[5] The dissolution of the monasteries was also in line with his ideals. He had called the vast wealth of the church to Henry's attention in the Obedience.[6]

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[4]Franklin Baumer, The Early Tudor Theory of Kingship (New Haven, 1940), appendix.

[5]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. K. 6[v]. [6]Ibid., sig. K. 4.

As important as these measures were, for Tyndale they were not the end of the Reformation. He judged the progress of the Reformation not in terms of the statutes which had been enacted but rather in terms of what still had to be done. Quite probably the sweeping legal assault of Henry and Cromwell against the church was, for Tyndale, a secondary consideration. For him, the Reformation was still incomplete until that moment when a vernacular scripture would be available to every English Christian. It was on this ground that he refused to return to England at the request of Vaughan, an agent of Cromwell: Tyndale's words, as reported by Vaughan, are worth quoting:

> What gracious words are these! I assure you, saith he, if it would stand with the king's most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of the Scriptures to be put forth among his people, like it is put forth among the subjects of the Emperor in these parts, and other Christian princes, be it a translation of what person soever shall please his Majesty, I shall immediately make faithful promise never to write more, nor abide two days in these parts after the same, but immediately repair unto his realm, and there most humbly submit myself at the feet of his royal Majesty, offering my body to suffer what pain of torture, yea, what death his Grace will, so that this be obtained. And till that time I will abide the asperity of all chances, whatsoever shall come, and endure my life in as much pains as it is able to bear and suffer.[7]

Tyndale's words shed some light on his attitude toward the events in England from the time of his departure in 1524 until 1531. He mistrusted Henry, and wisely enough, for Henry was extremely hostile to Tyndale, in spite of his potential value to Henry's program of reform. Yet Tyndale was more concerned about his own goal and his personal safety, and he refused to ally himself with Henry's forces until he saw some progress toward that goal. The problems of church and state were secondary. In

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[7]Vaughan to Cromwell, cited in Williams, William Tyndale, 42.

subsequent meetings between Tyndale and Vaughan, Tyndale's attitude became ever clearer. He still refused to retract his opinion on the divorce. He thought that Henry was clearly in the wrong on this issue and that the king had violated the sanctity of marriage. But he was not completely unaccommodating. Tyndale agreed to stay clear of English politics. He also agreed to refrain from writing any more works like the Practyse of Prelates, even though he could not understand why this particular work had proven so offensive to the king.[8]

In view of these negotiations between Tyndale and Vaughan, it becomes apparent that Tyndale's lack of negativism toward Henry's solutions to the problems of church and state did not constitute a silent approval of the Henrician revolution. The great statutes of the years 1529-1534 had little real meaning for Tyndale, and he was willing to refrain from commenting upon these matters if his silence would be of some benefit to his primary aim--the acceptance of a vernacular scripture. Of course, the cruel death which Tyndale suffered at the hands of the Imperial authorities denied him the vision of the acceptance of his work by Henry, Cromwell, and his circle of propagandists.[9]

One other reason accounts for the evenness of tone in Tyndale's consideration of the problem of church and state. Whether he was writing a polemic like the Obedience or an expository work like the exposicion

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[8] Ibid., 44.

[9] The exact debt which the Matthew Bible owed to Tyndale's efforts is a matter of some contention. For opposing views, see Williams, William Tyndale, and James McConica, English Humanists and Reformation Politics (Oxford, 1965).

vppon Mathew, his source of information on the problem of church and state remained largely the same, namely, his own understanding of scripture, especially the New Testament. Tyndale's understanding of scripture and his concept of authority, both of which were important for his ideas on the correct relationship of church and state, remained largely unchanged throughout his career. Unlike this thoughts on the nature of law which changed drastically during his career, his basic understanding of the question of church and state did not. This is not to say that his ideas remained completely static. They did not. In fact, his ideas on the problem of church and state changed greatly as his understanding of the word "church" became well defined. Nevertheless, Tyndale continually viewed this problem with certain assumptions fixed in his mind, and many of these assumptions he held until the very end of his career.

Certainly an understanding of the attitude in which Tyndale viewed the progress of the Reformation greatly facilitates an understanding of his rather intricate thoughts on the problem of church and state. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to attempt to trace the development of his thought without first clearing up the single greatest source of confusion which surrounds this particular problem--the definitions of the terms "church" and "state." Any discussion of Tyndale's thoughts on the problem of church and state would be meaningless without first examining the ways in which he employed these two words.

Church and State: The Problems of Definition

Historians of medieval political thought and medieval ecclesiology frequently caution us that to speak of the controversy of "church and state" is an anachronism which can only lead to confusion and

misunderstanding of the real issues involved. They tell us that men like Gregory VII and Henry IV were not fighting for control of the church and the state respectively, but for control of one entire Christian commonwealth to which both these institutions were equally bound. Tyndale viewed the problem in this way also. He did not see one Christian commonwealth with two independent institutions, but rather one commonwealth in which these institutions were joined and functioned in a manner which Christ himself had made perfectly clear. Tyndale's commonwealth was not identical to Gregory's or to Henry's. It was far less universal. But it was a commonwealth nonetheless.

Tyndale employed several terms to describe the government, but he never once employed the term "state." The question must be asked: did Tyndale have a conception of the state? He never discussed the problem with the eye of a political theorist, but it is fairly clear that to him, something called the "state" did not exist. Certainly, he did not see in society some order which man formed out of his own volition to facilitate harmony or to promote virtue. This conception, which Aristotle gave to the western legal tradition and which was extremely important to many humanists, was foreign to Tyndale's way of thinking.

Tyndale did, nevertheless, see an order within society which had originally been instituted by God and which was preserved by man's obedience to that order. Most frequently he spoke of this order as the "temporal regiment."[10] He thought it was instituted by God to prevent

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[10]Tyndale employed this term in several places but it was most frequently used in his exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew. See sigs. G 1 - G 1^{v} where the precise meaning is explained.

man from avenging his own cause, whether right was on his side or not. But not every man belonged to the temporal regiment in the same sense that every man was a citizen of a state. Some men were born into the temporal regiment, and others might be elected to it. Participation was not automatic for every Christian. No one derived any benefit from being in the temporal regiment as they might have from being a member of the state. In fact, the life of a Christian who served in the temporal regiment was frequently more difficult than the life of a Christian who was just a member of the "regiment of the Gospel."[11] The point to be made by all these comparisons between the state and the temporal regiment is that in their conceptions and functions the two were vastly different.

Tyndale also talked about the commonwealth. Apparently, this was a larger order than the temporal regiment, and Tyndale may have employed this term in a general way to describe all orders of society within one country. The head of the commonwealth and of the temporal regiment was the king. The relationship of various orders within the commonwealth to him and to the temporal regiment in general was rather static and unchanging. As a sick patient awaited the doctor's knife, so the members of the commonwealth awaited the correction of the ruler. "Rulers," he said, "are the instrumentes where with God chastiseth vs."[12] The basis of this remark was Tyndale's belief that the people who made up this commonwealth were living examples of a long list of traditional sins: greed, pride, covetousness, and an inherent propensity to disobedience.

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[11] Ibid., sigs. G 4 - G 6.

[12] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. F. 7.

And the people whom Tyndale saw on the vanguard of this sinful parade were the members of the church.

There is little confusion surrounding Tyndale's use of terms such as "temporal regiment" or "commonwealth." But there is much confusion surrounding his use of the word "church." He used the word "church" equivocally. There was the historical church, which Tyndale considered an aberration of the true church. There was also the church of his own design and understanding. Earlier in his career as a reformer Tyndale usually referred to the church in the first sense of the word, for he only gradually evolved his own understanding of the word. It was probably not until the years 1530 or 1531 that he arrived at a complete understanding of the church. The clearest pronouncement which he made about the various meanings of the word "church," including his own, is found in his Answere to Sir Thomas Mores dialoge. His thoughts in this particular work have an extremely important bearing upon his consideration of the problem of "church and state."

In his Answere to More's dialoge, Tyndale suggested that the word "church" had various "signifycayons," He could enumerate three of them for More:

> First it signifyeth a place or housse/ whether christen people were wont in the olde time to resorte at tymes conuenient/ for to heare ye worde of doctryne/ the lawe of God and the faith of oure sauioure Iheus Christ/[13]

Here Tyndale appears to be defining the word "church" in only its visible sense. He was least concerned with the church in this sense.

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[13]Tyndale, Answere, sig. A 5.

Tyndale's second "signifycayon" of the word "church" also pertained to the uniquely visible church, but it was that part of the visible church which had led it astray. He said, "In another signification it is abused and mystaken for a multitude of shaven shorn and oyled whych we now calle the spirytualtye and clergye."[14] Tyndale had a lot to say about this "church," for the people who made it up were not only responsible for its decay, but also for inverting the correct order of the relationship between the church and the temporal authorities.

It was the third and final definition of the word "church" which most concerned Tyndale:

> It hath or shuld haue a nother signifycacyon little knowen amonge the comen people now a dayes. That is to witt/ it signifieth a congregacion a multitude of a company gathered to gether in one/ of all degrees of people. As a man wold say/ the church of london/ meaning not the spiritualite onlye (as they wilbe called) . . . but the holy body of the cytye/ of all kyndes condicions and degrees . . . And in this third significaction is the church of god or Christ taken in scripture.euen for the whole multitude of all them that receue the name of christe to beleue in him and not for the clergye onlye.[15]

There is much to be noted about this "signifycacyon" of the word "church." As described by Tyndale in the above passage, it could have been a visible church or an invisible one. The reader is never quite clear on this point. However, Tyndale also suggested that the "church" had both a carnal and a spiritual sense, and in making this distinction, he probably established his preference for the church in an invisible sense.[16] Furthermore, the membership of Tyndale's church does not appear to have been exclusive.

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[14] Ibid., sig. A 5^{v}.

[15] Ibid., sig. A 5.

[16] Ibid., sig. D 7^{v}.

While it can safely be assumed that the mass of "shaven shorn and oyled" were not to be found in his church, Tyndale's church was comprised of both the elect and the regular professing Christians. The regular Christians who made up the visible church were those who could be observed by the senses. However, the elect were known only to God. They were not only those Christians who professed Christ, but also those "in whose hertes God hath written his lawe with his hold spirit and geuen . . . a feeling faith of the mercy that is in christ Jesu our lorde."[17] Tyndale probably assumed that these poeple were a small minority of all Christians. Finally, it should be noted that the members of this congregation, both the elect and the regular professing Christians, existed in a congregation which was "somewhere" within the historical church, but their relationship to that church was never clearly defined.[18]

Certainly, more could be said about Tyndale's conception of the church, but it is important to note that when he talked about the problems of church and state, so-called, he talked about the church in all of its senses and "signifycacyons." Tyndale's preference for the invisible church did not mean that he dismissed the visible, historical church from his mind. A large portion of his discussion of the proper relationship of the church to the temporal authority consisted of an analysis of the role the historical church had played in the past centuries of time and in his own day. Tyndale's discussion of this relationship and his

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[17] Ibid., sig. A 5.

[18] Richard Marius, "Thomas More's View of the Church," The Complete Works of Saint Thomas More, VII, 1289.

thoughts on the visible, historical church are the best place to begin the consideration of the problem of "church and state."

On The Temporal Authority and the Institutional Church of History

There are several interesting points to be made about Tyndale's discussion of the relationship between the church in this sense and the temporal authority. First, Tyndale was primarily concerned with this problem only in his early years as a reformer. The reason for this can be found in his theological development. After he had developed his own definition of the word "church," problems concerning the relationship of the institutional church of history to the temporal regiment were not as important to him. In his exposicion vppon Mathew, a work which Tyndale wrote well after his Answere to More, he was primarily concerned with the relationship of the temporal regiment to the church of his own design, and one looks almost in vain for references to the institutional church.[19]

There is another interesting division within Tyndale's thoughts on the relationship of the historical church to the temporal authority. Tyndale was interested in the relationship of that church to the temporal authority in England, and he dealt with it largely in his Obedience. He was also interested in the relationship of the church to the Emperor, and he discussed this relationship primarily in the Practyse of Prelates. This division was not so concrete that references to England cannot be

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[19]As far as I can determine, there is only one reference to the historical church in this work. See exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sigs. E 2 - E 2^{v}.

found in the latter work. Nevertheless, when Tyndale considered the latter aspect of the problem, his method was different. He may well have viewed the relationship of the historical church to the temporal regiment in England and to the Emperor as two fairly distinct problems.

Finally, Tyndale's concept of authority was extremely important in his discussion of the relationship of the historical church to the temporal authority. His concept of authority was extremely narrow. There was only type of authority and it came from God. Tyndale evidently believed that when God had made his original delegation of authority, he had given the temporal authority certain duties to perform. God had also given the members of the church certain duties. To neglect these duties or to act in any way other than the way that God had originally intended the members of each "regiment" to act was to abuse God's authority. Man's use of God's authority was valid only as far as the design of God permitted. With regard to the temporal authority, the problem became: how far did its authority reach?

The first instance when Tyndale treated this problem at some length was in 1528, in the Obedience. Here he was talking largely about England, and he first expressed numerous sentiments which he continually affirmed throughout his career. God had instituted the temporal authorities, especially the king, to rule in His stead over overybody in the commonwealth. He could find no exceptions to this rule. Not even the "shaven shorn and oyled" were exempt from the king's authority, and Tyndale told Henry that as a result of lengthy historical precedents, he was in fact only ruling about one-half of his kingdom. Tyndale was thinking of the vast amount of land which had become part of the church,

as well as those laws which placed the members of the church above the king's law.[20] To him these were restrictions on the king's authority which God himself had not intended. However, the restrictions worked both ways. In the closing pages of the Obedience, Tyndale remarked:

> I have proved also that no kynge hath power to graunte them (the clergy) soch libertie: but are well damned for their gevinge/ as they for their false purchasinge.[21]

Henry was not willing to rob Peter to pay Paul. But he was willing to rob Peter to pay Henry, and Tyndale's suggestions concerning the wealth of the clergy and their special privileges probably made their mark on the king's imagination.[22]

One of the crucial legal questions during the Reformation in England was a precise definition of the king's powers over the church, and Tyndale had much to say about this problem, although not from a purely legal point of view. Generally, he thought that Henry's power over the church was greater than the king himself realized. He affirmed the authority of the king over the church in a legal sense through his suggestion that canon law should be abolished.[23] He also suggested that the king had authority over what was frequently referred to as "temporal things," although he himself did not use this term. However, one of the most important areas of the king's authority over the church pertained to the question of heresy and sin. Who should distinguish heresy from

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[20]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. K. 4 - K. 6. [21]Ibid., sig. V. 1.

[22]Williams, William Tyndale, 36-37; and Rainer Pineas, Thomas More and Tudor Polemics, 68.

[23]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. K. 6^{v}.

orthodoxy, and who should have the authority to punish heretics and the sinful rabble. In 1528, Tyndale wrote:

> another conclusion is this/ that no person nether anye degree maye be exempte from this ordinaunce of God. Nether can the prosession of monkes and freres or anye things that the pope or Bisshopes can laie for themselves/ excepte them from the swerde of the Emperoure or kinges/ yf they break the lawes. . . . Here is no man excepte/ but all soules must obey. The hier powers are the temporall kinges and princes vnto whom God hath geuen the swerde to puneshe who so ever sinneth.[24]

As God had given the temporal authority the right to punish sin, the clergy did not have any authority in this realm. Their function was to preach, and through preaching to prevent sin.[25] Yet it is remarkable that Tyndale treated this whole question of punishment by the temporal authorities with a certain degree of ambivalence. This ambivalence became more pronounced as his conception of the church became well formulated. But even in the Obedience, there were other people in the commonwealth who had the right to punish sin. He also saw some authority to punish sin residing within each congregation. This became evident when he discussed the meaning of excommunication.

> Vnderstonde therefore/ the power ot excommunication is this. Yf any man synne openly and amendeth not when his is warned: then ought he to be rebuked openly before all the paresh. And the priest ought to prove by the scripture/ that all soch have no parte with christ.[26]

While certain other members of the commonwealth, like elders, parents, judges, etc., might have belonged to the temporal regiment, clearly all members of every congregation did not. Yet Tyndale was willing to give them a hand in the punishment of sin.

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[24] Ibid., sig. E. 1.

[25] Ibid., sig. K. 6[v].

[26] Ibid., sig. N. 8.

Tyndale's ambivalence did not reach down to the problem of heretics, and in this regard he gave the king rather extensive authority. Of course, the king had the right to punish heretics, but he had always exercised this right, even in the past. Tyndale also believed, however, that the king could, within limits, decide what was heresy and what not. The layman also had some authority. Tyndale said:

> If any question arose aboute the fath or of the scripture. then let them iudge by the manyfest and open scriptures/ not excludinge the laye men which are as wise as the officers.[27]

Several important considerations guided Tyndale's pen when he wrote these lines, and probably the single most important of them was the control of the church over heresy proceedings. Tyndale reacted strongly to this both in the Obedience and in other works, but his reaction was not strong enough to allow him to affirm that the individual Christian should decide if he had erred in matters of faith.[28] Nor was he willing to affirm that there was no need for some means of establishing and maintaining uniformity in the church. But he was saying that the means were not the sole property of the established church. Christ, Tyndale thought, had instructed the apostles to preach the scripture to all men, and once the church began its task anew, then all men would be in an equal position to make judgments about these matters.

Also important, however, were the means by which the control was maintained. For Tyndale this meant proof by scripture, "by the manyfest and open scripture," and by "open" he may have been suggesting the literal

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[27] Ibid., sig. K. 7[v].

[28] Ibid.

sense of scripture.[29] Nevertheless, in the Obedience, he did not advocate the complete termination of all heresy trials. His words on this are not completely clear, but he appears to have wanted the king to take over the necessary proceedings:

> The kinge ought to loke in the scripture and se whether it were truely condemned or no/ Yf he will punesh it. Yf the kynge or his officer for him will slee me so ought ye kinge or his officer iudge me. The kinge can not/ but vnto his damnation lend his swerde to kyll whom he iudgeth not by his awne lawes.[30]

With regard to the king's control of the church, Tyndale argued in two directions. First he argued that the king should have control over heresy proceedings. He also argued that the king or anybody else had as much authority to judge heresy as the clergy. Both arguments pointed toward a greater control over the activities of the church by the temporal authority. Tyndale's beliefs in this particular matter remained unchanged until 1531, at which time he concluded that the authority of the king and prince did not include the determination of dogma. His words were:

> And al indifferent thinges that nether healpe ner hurte faith and loue/ ar hole in the handes of father/ mother master/ lorde and prince.[31]

As Tyndale made these observations after he had arrived at his own understanding of the church, he was probably not applying them to the institutional church of history, but rather to the temporal regiment and the true church.

The other important source of Tyndale's thoughts on the problems between the institutional church of history and the temporal authorities

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[29] Ibid., sig. N. 8. [30] Ibid., sig. L. 7.

[31] William Tyndale, The Exposition of the Fyrste Epistle of Seynt Ihon with a Prologge before it (1531), sig. E 5.

in his Practyse of Prelates. Like the Obedience, this work dates from early in Tyndale's career and from a time when he was still largely concerned with the institutional church. Unlike the Obedience, however, the focus of this work is the relationship of the church to the Empire. Tyndale was largely concerned with tracing the history of the papacy and documenting the steps of which the papacy had seized control of the church and the Empire. Important here was his frequent reference to the figure of eight hundred years and his apparent belief that sometime during the eighth or early ninth centuries, the church had gone wrong. With regard to the problems of church and the temporal authority, to go wrong probably meant to Tyndale that the church had established its own authority over that of the temporal authorities, and consequently, over God's word. For him, this idea of the fall of the church might also have included the belief that the situation should be set aright by returning to the status quo ante-lapsum, and by reforming the pattern of church-state relationship in such a way that the precedents of the eight hundred years of papal tyranny would be cast aside. While it is impossible to prove beyond all doubt that this is what Tyndale had in mind when he offered his readers his analysis of church history, there are a few indications which make this assumption appear justified.

Tyndale used two periodizations of church history. Considerably earlier in his career he had employed a periodization which had no application to the problems of church and state. This particular scheme appeared in his Prologue to the Second Epistle of Peter. In this work Tyndale suggested that history was comprised of three times: the time when the Gospel first appeared in its true and pure form; the time of the

papacy and a false belief in men's doctrines; and finally, the time when men would believe nothing, nor even fear God in the least.[32] This particular periodization appeared only in this work, and Tyndale did virtually nothing with it.

Tyndale relied upon the figure of eight hundred years considerably more. He referred to this figure in his Answere to More's dialoge, but his use of this figure here had little bearing on the problems of the church and the temporal authority. Tyndale only used it to date the time when the church had confounded the true meaning of scripture with its false "juglinge."[33] Tyndale's sole use of the figure of eight hundred years in a political sense was in his Practyse of Prelates. After 1531, he stopped using this figure probably because he was no longer concerned with the reform of the institutional church. In the church of his own design, a church which was connected to the institutional church in only a vague and uncertain way, the figure of eight hundred years would have been of no value whatsoever.

Assuming that Tyndale still looked for the reform of the historical church when he wrote his Practyse of Prelates, a close examination of the exact nature of its fall should reveal the nature of the changes which Tyndale would have liked to have seen realized, probably at the hands of the Imperial authorities.[34]

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[32]William Tyndale, A Prologue vppon the second Epistle of S. Peter, in The Whole workes of W. Tyndale, sig. J. 4.

[33]Tyndale, Answere, sigs. D 2 - D 2^{v}.

[34]Tyndale was at least sympathetic to the Holy Roman Emperors' cause in the international struggles of the Reformation era. See Practyse of Prelates, sigs. G 2 - H 1.

Three facts of Tyndale's treatment of the ills of the church in the Practyse of Prelates stand out above all the rest: the type of separation which he advocated between the church and the temporal authorities; his failure to dismiss completely the papacy or the church council as authorities within the church; and the degree of control which he thought the Emperor should have over the church. Each fact is worthy of careful consideration, beginning with his treatment of the separation of the church and the temporal authority.

In the opening pages of the Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale remarked:

> Then christes vicars whiche ministre his kingdome here in his bodelye absence/ and have the oversight of his flocks maye be none emperours/ kinges/ dukes/ lordes/ knyghtes/ temporall iudges/ or any temporall officer/ or vnder false names have any soche dominion or ministre any soche office as requyreth violence.[35]

Tyndale had also voiced a similar protest in his Obedience. To him, the ministers of Christ's church had no business in the affairs of government in England or anywhere else. The reform of the historical church meant the end of the confusion of responsibilities.

In spite of the fact that Tyndale was not willing to allow kings and emperors to minister Christ's church, he was willing to grant them a fair measure of control over the church. In Tyndale's treatment of the fall of the church historically, the reversal of those factors which had led to the end of the divinely appointed order of things implied a dramatic increase in the Emperor's control. For example, one of the events which he used to represent the final emasculation of the Emperor's authority over the church was the ability of the papacy to choose its own

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[35] Ibid., sig. A 7.

candidates. Tyndale thought that the Emperor had lost this right, as well as the right to convene a general council of the church, during the pontificate of Adrian III.[36] A reversal of this fact of history would have given the current Emperor control over the papacy and over the general council.

Another aspect of the church's decline pertained to the authority of the bishops in the various kingdoms of medieval Europe. Tyndale noted that:

> as the Pope played with the Emperoure/ so did his braunches and his members the bisshopes playe in every kingdom Duckdom and lordshyppe: in so moch that ye verye heyres of them by whome they camme vpp/ hold now their londes of them and take them for their chefe lordes. And as the Emperoure is sworne to the Pope.even so every kynge is sworne to the bisshopes and prelates of his royalme.[37]

Tyndale attacked the bishops in other passages, too. He suggested that Charlemagne had exercised control over his bishops as well as over the popes.[38] He also discussed the relationship of Pope Boniface III and the Emperor Phocas and suggested that the loss of control over the bishops by Phocas was another step in the loss of rightful power of the temporal authority over the church.[39] By referring to the example of Charlemagne and relating the story of Phocas, Tyndale might have been suggesting that the control of the bishops should have been returned to the Emperor and kings.

Tyndale also believed that at one time the temporal authorities had been responsible for the morality of the clergy. The change came after the reign of Louis the Pious. Tyndale observed that after Louis'

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[36] Ibid., sig. C 6.

[37] Ibid., sig. D 2.

[38] Ibid., sig. C 2.

[39] Ibid., sig. B 7^{v}.

reign, there was no one who could correct the "outrages vices of ye spiritualtye."[40] Tyndale was probably implying that the Emperor's authority included the right to maintain the moral level of the clergy.

Finally, Tyndale discussed the general problem of church property with regard to the question of the decline of the church, and with regard to the question of church and state. In the Obedience, largely for polemical reasons, he had called the vast areas of the church's wealth to Henry's attention. In the Practyse of Prelates, this polemical point took on more meaning. The control of large areas of land by the bishops was one of those points specifically mentioned by Tyndale with the obvious implication that they should be forced to curtail their involvement in the feudal order.[41] Tyndale also suggested that the original association of wealth and property with the church was one of the causes of its decline. With the wealth came the greed of the prelates, especially of the deacons, and the association of bishoprics with immense wealth.[42] He then directed his readers' attention to the example set by Isacius, a deputy of one of the Emperors of history, who had confiscated this wealth.[43] This example was probably acceptable to Tyndale, and his belief in the confiscation of the church's wealth in the form of land should be regarded as part of his program for both the restoration of the church and the authority of the emperors.

In 1530, Tyndale's program for the reformation of the church and for the correction of the imbalance between it and the temporal authorities

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[40] Ibid., sig. C 5^{v}.

[41] Ibid., sig. D 2.

[42] Ibid., sig. B 4^{v}.

[43] Ibid., sig. B 5.

did not include a complete denial of the authority of the papacy. Clearly, the papacy had overstepped the authority given to it by Christ, since the pope, as Bishop of Rome, did not have any authority over the bishops, nor did he have any authority over the Emperor.[44] Interestingly enough, however, Tyndale did not inform his readers exactly what powers he thought that the papacy did possess. The clearest statement of this is found in the Obedience:

> ought they to preach purely and spiritually and to fascion their lives after and with all ensample of Godly lyvinge and longe sofering/ to drawe all to Christe.[45]

In 1528, this was the authority which Tyndale thought that Christ had given his apostles, including Peter. He probably believed the very same thing in 1530, when he wrote the Practyse of Prelates.

It is frequently observed that Protestants wrote their political thought in a spirit of complete reaction to the vast powers which the church had assumed during the past centuries of time. This is true of Tyndale, especially with regard to his consideration of the relationship of the institutional church to the temporal authorities. And whether one takes the suggestions he made to Henry in the Obedience at face value, or reverses the trends and events which he used to carefully document the church's unholy quest for power over the emperors, the results are the same. In those years when he wrote the Obedience and the Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale was willing to give the temporal authorities control over the church. This was done because he believed that they had originally exercised this control, and also because he hoped that the

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[44] Ibid., passim. [45] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. G. 8.

temporal authorities would carry out a reformation. The control which he gave them was incomplete, as the previous analysis of his thoughts clearly demonstrates. But it was sufficient in the sense that it allowed them enough control to do what Tyndale hoped that they would do. With works like the Obedience and the Practyse of Prelates as their guide, he hoped that the road to reform would be clear of all obstacles.

The King, the Church, and the Problem of Positive Religious Reform

Up to this point Tyndale's consideration of the problems of the church and its relationship to the temporal authority has been largely negative. Tyndale wanted a reformation in this area. He wanted to correct the imbalance of authority that the church exercised over the temporal authorities. He wanted the kings and emperors to reduce drastically the power of the institutional church. However, Tyndale also considered the problem of the role of the kings and emperors in a program of positive religious reform. This was true of the time when he still thought it possible to reform the institutional church, and of the time when he was no longer greatly concerned with that church but rather with the "true church." In both cases his thoughts on the figure of the king in a program of positive religious reform had important political implications as well as an important bearing on the problem of the relationship of the church to the temporal authority.

In the Obedience, Tyndale had written that:

> to preach Gods word is to moche for half a man. And to minister a temporal kingdome is to moch for half a man also. ether other requireth an hole man. One therfore can not well doo both.[46]

Since he equated the office of a priest with the duty to preach Christ, Tyndale was implying that the king should not attempt to preach and administer a temporal kingdom at the same time. However, in the Obedience, Tyndale also implied that it was the duty of the monarch to support Christ's true religion, and the single most important source of that support consisted of adopting a vernacular scripture. This was the most important aspect of Tyndale's program of positive religious reform. He judged the progress of the Reformation in England by the success or failure of this fact.[47]

Like the other part of Tyndale's program for a reformation of the church, the translation of scripture into the vernacular had important political implications--implications which affected the thought and lives of the reformers in a general way. This particular aspect of Tyndale's proposed reformation also affected the power of the monarch over the church and the power of the church itself. Each of these considerations will be examined individually.

By the early decades of the sixteenth century the translation of the scripture into the vernacular had become associated with social instability, revolt, and even revolution. In England this association of sedition and a vernacular Bible was only partially the result of the example of Luther and the German peasants. Sir John Oldcastle and his Lollard followers had rebelled a century before Tyndale's own translation

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[46] Ibid., sig. G. 7[v].

[47] Williams, William Tyndale, 42.

appeared to haunt the authorities.[48] Tyndale knew his history as well as did the authorities, and his knowledge of past events had a considerable bearing upon his own arguments for a vernacular translation of the scriptures. More specifically, his knowledge of past events forced him to devise four arguments, all tailored to make his own project of reform appear more respectable. First, of course, Tyndale affirmed the religious duty of obedience. Secondly, he did what he could to improve Wyclif's reputation. In his explication of the Prophet Jones, he said:

> Wicleffe preached repentence vn to oure fathers not longe sens: they repented not for their hertes were indurat & theyr eyes blinded with their awne Pope holy rightwesnesse wherwith they had made theyr soules geye agenst the receauinge agaune of ye weked spirite that bringeth,viii. worse then hym selfe with him & maketh ye later ende worse then the beginninge: for in open sinnes there is hope of repententaunce/ but in holy ypocrisie none at all. But what followed? they slew their true & right kinge and sett vpp.iii. wronge kinges arow/ vnder which all the noble bloude was slayne upp and halfe the comens therto/[49]

Tyndale was asserting that the disorder which followed Wyclif's preaching was not his fault or even the fault of the Lollards, but rather the fault of those who had adamantly refused to hear the true word of God. Behind the disorders which plagued England stood not the innocent Christians, but the ever-present figure of the prelates. In the Practyse of Prelates Tyndale had made the same accusation.[50] He was attempting to defend his

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[48]A good summary of the history of Lollardy and the reaction of the authorities to it is J. A. F. Thompson, The Later Lollards: 1415-1520 (Oxford, 1965).

[49]William Tyndale, The Prophete Jonas with an introduction before teachinge to understonde him (Antwerp, 1531), sigs. B 3 - B 3^{v}.

[50]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sigs. F 3^{v} - F 4.

own progress of religious reform by placing the blame for social disorder on the clergy.

Finally, Tyndale attempted to promote his own program of reform by demonstrating the historicity of the idea itself. He appealed in two directions simultaneously: to the example of the church in patristic and Old Testament times; and to the example of the English monarchy before the Normal conquest. Tyndale's arguments with regard to church history were straightforward, and he merely cited the examples of Moses and Saint Jerome.[51] However, Tyndale's arguments based upon the history of the English monarchy were very subtle. Tyndale believed, incorrectly, that King Adelstone, ruler of England from 895 to 940, had made a vernacular translation of scripture.[52] By appealing to his example, Tyndale was making another backhanded attack on the past policy of the prelates. He was implying that the scriptures had come to light only to be snuffed out by the coming of the Normans, a military enterprise which had the pope's blessing.[53]

Both Tyndale and the church hierarchy realized that a translation of the scripture into the vernacular would considerably weaken the authority of the church. This was one of the most important "political" aspects of his program of reform. But it is especially interesting to note that Tyndale did not deny this point. He readily affirmed it. He started arguing from the basic premise that the church did not have the right to determine the meaning of scripture.[54] Anyone who possessed the

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[51] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. B. 7^{v}.

[52] Ibid., sigs. B. 4^{v}, B. 7^{v}.

[53] Ibid., sig. B. 4^{v}.

[54] Tyndale, Answere, passim.

gift of the Holy Spirit was capable of interpreting scripture. Eventually Tyndale did limit this ability to such a degree that he probably believed that only those within the "true church" could interpret scripture.[55] However, a scripture in the vernacular was fundamental to this whole line of reasoning. Once scripture was no longer the sole possession of the clergy, then it could be employed as a guide to judge the veracity of both the preaching and the activities of the clergy. This was exactly what Tyndale wanted, and a study of his application of these ideas clearly shows the effect of his program of reform on the power of the institutional church.

Tyndale wanted to use scripture to judge the validity of the church's own interpretation of scripture. Here he was reacting not only to the clerical monopoly of the interpretation of scripture, but also to the manner in which the historical church had confounded its true meaning with the subtleties of scholastic philosophy. This last criticism aside, he was claiming for himself and the members of Christ's true church the right to determine the correctness of the church's own interpretations. In the Obedience he asked:

> Why shal not I lyke wise se/ whether it be the scripture y^{t} thou allegest: yee shall I not se the scripture and the circumstances and what goeth before and after/ that I may knowe whether thyne interpretacion be the right sense. . . .[56]

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[55] Ibid., sig. D 5^{v}. This much was probably implied when Tyndale used the distinction between the two types of faith against the church.

[56] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. B. 6.

Tyndale was correct; but so was More, and so were the members of the church hierarchy. The right of the individual Christian to interpret scripture would seriously damage the church's authority.

Tyndale applied these basic ideas on the authority of scripture and its widespread use in the vernacular to support his arguments against the control of the clergy by the church hierarchy. Once again he argued in two directions simultaneously but with a certain degree of confusion. In his Obedience, Tyndale first argued against the necessity of any organized body of clergy whose function was to provide an essential link between man and God. His words echoed Luther's own thought, "of what maner is Christe a prieste for ever and all we priestes thorow him and neade no moare any soche priestes on erth to be a meane for vs vnto God."[57] But at the same time, he used his idea of the authority of scripture in the vernacular to judge the veracity of priests. During the Middle Ages bishops had maintained some degree of control over preaching in their dioceses through licensing, although at times this control was threatened by various monastic groups and by mendicants. Tyndale blatantly ridiculed this practise of licensing and in its place substituted conformity to scripture. Addressing the church hierarchy, he said:

> Yf Gods worde bearne recorde that I saye throuth/ why shuld any man doute/ but that God the father of trueth and of light hath sente me as the father of lyes and of darkness hath sente you. . . .[58]

Tyndale's words were deliberately meant to recall the example of Christ.

Tyndale further reduced the bishops' control over the priesthood by investing the congregation with the authority to choose one person to

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[57] Ibid., sigs. M. 3 - M. 3[v]. [58] Ibid., sig. O. 8.

preach. Clearly, he thought, God did not intend that every man in a congregation be allowed to preach, any more than he intended that every man in London should be the mayor of that city, or every man in the realm king of England. Therefore, one man should be chosen and he alone should be permitted to preach. As he was chosen by the congregation, so was he to be judged by them, and Tyndale thought that ultimately the preacher was responsible to all the members of the congregation who used the open text of scripture in their common possession to judge the veracity of his words.[59]

No consideration of the "political" implications of Tyndale's program of a vernacular scripture would be complete without some discussion of its effect on the authority of the king over the church. It is essential to note that Tyndale's willingness to decrease the authority of the institutional church did not automatically mean the increased authority of the king over that institution. This was especially true, since Henry never was given any exclusive powers to interpret scripture.[60] In fact, after 1531, Tyndale thought that the king's authority over matters of the faith pertained only to those things which were "indifferent."[61] Furthermore, while Tyndale did accord Henry the right to determine to a degree what was heresy, and to punish heretics and sinners,

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[59] Ibid., sigs. O. 8 - O. 8[v].

[60] This important point was discussed by the Henrician apologist, Christopher St. German, who thought that the king in Parliament could interpret scripture. See below, Chapter VI.

[61] Tyndale, Exposition of the Fyrste Epistle of Seynt Ihon, sig. E 5.

this was not the king's exclusive right. For Tyndale, some authority rested in the congregation. Nevertheless, he did increase the king's authority over the church and he did so indirectly. Tyndale was willing to allow Henry to choose the translation of the scripture that was to be accepted in his realm.[62] Different translations imparted different theologies. Tyndale was certainly aware of this fact, and to give Henry control over the choice of translations was in fact to give him a great deal of control over the theology of the church.

Tyndale probably saw one other "political" implication connected with his program of a vernacular scripture. To him the very possibility of any government rested on man's fulfillment of the covenant. In his later years Tyndale thought that this covenant was fulfilled by man's obedience to all "temporal laws,"[63] Now obedience was not something which came easily to man. Although God gave man the potential to obey, man learned obedience through education, and Tyndale thought that those officers within the temporal regiment responsible for a Christian education had a tremendously important duty to perform. How could they teach obedience to both God and man when the scripture was written in a language little understood by all, and when the masses of ignorant, immoral clergy provided only negative examples to follow?[64] A vernacular scripture would not directly increase the king's authority; Tyndale was

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[62]Williams, William Tyndale, 42.

[63]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. F 5.

[64]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. B. 5 and passim.

not arguing this. But far from leading to social disorder, it would result in a better, Christian commonwealth.

When Tyndale discussed the king's role in a program of positive religious reform of the institutional church, he dwelled on the vernacular scripture. After he had redefined the word "church," his ideas on the responsibilities of the monarch in a program of reform and towards the church in general became much clearer and more developed. But Tyndale also changed his mind on several important issues as well. No consideration of his thoughts on the problem of the church and the temporal regiment would be complete without some discussion of his thoughts on the relationship of the temporal regiment to the "true church."

The King, the Temporal Regiment, and the True Church

After Tyndale had redefined the word "church" in such a way that for the most part it no longer included the visible, institutional church of history, he was compelled to reconsider the relationship of his church to the temporal authority. As previously noted, he arrived at his own understanding of the word "church" sometime after 1530 and offered it to More in his Answere to More's dialoge. Approximately two years later he discussed the relationship of his church to the temporal regiment. His exposicion vppon Mathew was largely devoted to this task, and as it is the very last thing which he wrote dealing with this problem. the following analysis is restricted largely to this work.

When Tyndale considered the problem of the relationship of the temporal authority to the church of history, he considered the relationship of the divinely instituted offices of a commonwealth to an

institution which had gone astray in the past centuries of time. When he considered the relationship of the temporal authority to the "true church," his discussion centered not on a Christian institution but rather on the Christian individual. This is one of the most significant differences between Tyndale's earlier and later discussions of the problem of the church and the temporal regiment. This new emphasis was partially a result of the subject matter of the tract itself. Any exposition of the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of the Gospel of Matthew would naturally deal with the role of the individual and the state. However, a similar emphasis on the individual can also be found in Tyndale's Answere to More's dialoge, and in both tracts, the crucial consideration was the new way in which Tyndale was defining the word "church." In his exposicion vppon Mathew, he noted:

> The church of Christ then, is the multitude of all them that beleue in Christe for the remission of sinne, and of a thankfullnes for that mercie, loue the lawe of God purely and without gloses and of hate they haue to the sinne of this world, longe for the life to come.[65]

To Tyndale, the true church did not appear necessarily as an institution, but rather as a multitude of professing Christians. However, the same imprecision which was characteristic of Tyndale's treatment of the true church in his Answere to More comes back to plague us here.[66] What was the relationship of this congregation of Christians to the visible, institutional church? One is never sure, and Tyndale himself complicated

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[65]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, Sig. B 1^{v}.

[66]Tyndale, Answere, sigs. A 5 - A 5^{v}.

this issue in his exposicion vppon Mathew by a reference to the church hierarchy and its function of maintaining the level of the clergy.[67] At the same time, it is apparent that he also believed that some degree of authority resided within every congregation, and that election by the congregation gave a priest the authority to perform his duties.[68] In spite of these difficulties which surround Tyndale's definition of the word "church," Tyndale was primarily interested in individuals and not institutions, and he reconsidered the relationship of the temporal authorities to the individual Christian.

Two other important considerations separate his earlier and later treatments of the problems of the church and the temporal authority. First and most important, Tyndale conceived of the king's role in the church in a different light than he had earlier in his career. This is not to say that he had given the king greater control over the church, but rather that he viewed the king's role in the church and in society differently in the exposicion vppon Mathew than he had in the Obedience. Secondly, one looks in vain for any elaborate arguments concerning the importance of the vernacular scripture, or even suggestions that the king should promote this aspect of reform. Considering Tyndale's dedication to this ideal and the importance it played in his career as a reformer, this is a curious omission on his part. The very last thing which came from his pen dealing with this important topic dated from 1530, and this was a re-edition of an old Lollard tract probably

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[67] Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. C 3^{v}.

[68] Ibid., sig. D 5^{v}.

originally written by John Purvey.[69] But there is no mention of this problem in his Answere to More or in his exposicion vppon Mathew. As the official attitude toward a vernacular scripture did not change until sometime during 1534, Tyndale's silence is even harder to explain. Indeed, no explanations are readily available.

In his exposicion vppon Mathew, Tyndale considered the relationship of the monarch to the church. While earlier, in the Obedience, he had said:

> to preach Gods word is to moche for half a man. And to minister a temporal kingdome is to moche for half a man also. Ether other requireth an hole man.[70]

In his exposicion vppon Mathew, he offered his readers the following sentiments:

> This light and salt pertayned not then to the apostles and now to oure bysshopes and spiritualtye onlye. No, it partayneth to the temporall men also. For all Kynges and all rulers are bounde to be salt and lyght not onlye in exsample of lyuynge, but also in teachynge of doctryne vnto theyr subiectes, as well as they be bounde to punyshe euell doers. Dothe not the scripture testyfye that kinge Dauid was chosen to be as shepared & to feade his people with Godes worde.[71]

It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of Tyndale's words. Several aspects of his sentiments as expressed above deserve closer examination in light of his theological development and in light

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[69]William Tyndale, ed., A Compendious Olde Treatyse: Shewynge howe that we ought to haue the Scripture in Englyshe (Marburg, Hesse, 1530) in Edward Aber, English Reprints (London, 1871). Many scholars are hesitant to ascribe this work to Tyndale. On the basis of the style of the introduction to the reader, I feel that it is safe to regard it as his work.

[70]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. G. 7^{v}.

[71]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. D 5.

of earlier statements which he made concerning the duty of the king towards the church.

In 1533, Tyndale had decided that the king should take an active hand in teaching doctrine to the members of the church. The difference between this idea and the one he expressed in 1528, in the Obedience, is apparent. Earlier, Tyndale did not believe that the king's duties included the preaching of the word of God. Furthermore, in the Obedience the overwhelming emphasis on the role of the king in society was as a member of the temporal regiment who punished sin. In the exposicion vppon Mathew, Tyndale still believed that this was part of the king's Christian duty. However, to Tyndale in 1533, this aspect of the king's duty appeared less urgent, even less necessary. The reason for this can be found in Tyndale's theological development. By the time Tyndale had written his exposicion vppon Mathew, he had arrived at a new understanding of the law. He now believed that the individual could keep the all-important covenant between man and God. The individual Christian in Tyndale's church still sinned. But somehow the necessity of a coercive figure, punishing the transgressions of the divine law with the vengeance of the Old Testament as his guide, had disappeared.

It is also important to examine the sentiments which Tyndale expressed in his exposicion vppon Mathew concerning the king in relation to his control over the church. Although he said that the king should preach doctrine, he did not say that the king could determine it. Tyndale's sense of authority in the church would have prevented him from suggesting this. In the Obedience, Tyndale had suggested that the king was responsible for maintaining some degree of doctrinal purity within

the institutional church. To a degree, the king could decide what constituted heresy and what did not. However, the basis of that decision was not the king's fancy, but his understanding of scripture. In other words scripture was the final guide, and the king should base his decisions on an understanding of the texts. Although Tyndale did not state this in his exposicion vppon Mathew, he probably assumed the same thing with regard to the king's preaching. Whether he preached as a member of the "temporal regiment" or as a member of the "regiment of the gospel," his preaching was subject to the open text of scripture in the common possession of all the members of the congregation.

In his exposicion of Mathew, Tyndale did not completely dismiss the church hierarchy from his mind, and it is important to note that he believed that the king shared control over the church with certain members of that hierarchy. In 1533, Tyndale wrote:

> All the world can beare recorde what payne ye take and how ye care for the temporall comune wealth, that ii degrees therein dyd and had their dutie: and how ye put youre liues in aduenture to preache the truthe. and to enforme lordes and princes & to crie vpon them to feare God and to be lerned, and to mynistre their offices trulye vnto their subiectes, and to be mercifull and a-exsample of vertue vnto them . . . And howprouide ye that youre prestes be all lerned, and preach and do their duties truely euery man his paryshe? how prouide ye that sectes arise not to polle the people and leade them out of the waye vnder a coloure of longue prayenge and ypocriti be holynesse, lyuynge them selues ydle and beynge vtterlye vnto the comen wealthe improfitable? . . .[72]

It is not crystal clear who Tyndale was addressing in this important passage, but he appears to be speaking to members of the visible, institutional church, and what is even more important, he appears to be giving them some degree of authority and responsibility for maintaining proper standards of faith within the Christian commonwealth. If both of these

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[72] Ibid., sig. C 3[v].

assumptions are correct, then they demonstrate two important things about Tyndale's thought on the church and the commonwealth. First, he never completely dismissed this aspect of the church from his mind. And secondly, in spite of his polemical debate with More, both he and his arch rival firmly believed that the level of the clergy was crucial to both the church and the commonwealth. The marginal gloss beside this passage clearly substantiates Tyndale's belief in this last point. It reads, "how the spyrtualtie care for the temporal comen wealth."[73] Both of these considerations, however, are overshadowed by the fact that Tyndale believed that the "spiritualitie" as well as the temporal authority was responsible for the maintenance of the church. It is noteworthy that by the end of his career, especially by the year 1533 when he wrote his exposicion vppon Mathew, Tyndale was no longer telling the clergy what they should not do and he was no longer castigating the prelates for their attempts to overturn the temporal order. In part, this may have been a result of his decision to stay clear of English politics, a decision which dated from the year 1531. However, this change in tone was also a result of the fact that when he sat down to analyze a Christian commonwealth, as he did in 1533, he saw a necessary degree of harmony between the temporal regiment and the members of the "spiritualitie."

Tyndale, as noted, considered the problem of the relationship of the church to the temporal regiment in the exposicion vppon Mathew by considering the relationship of the individual Christian as a member of the "regiment of the gospel" to the relationship of the individual

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[73] Ibid., sig. C 3^{v}.

Christian as a member of the "temporal regiment." In spite of the dramatic shift in Tyndale's interests from a concern with institutions to a concern with individuals, it would be incorrect to overemphasize the break in his thoughts. Throughout his career he stressed the religious obligation of obedience, and obedience was still very important to him in 1533. As a member of the regiment of the gospel, the individual Christian was obedient to the commands which came from those members of the temporal regiment. However, in 1533, as noted, Tyndale had further defined both the problem and the answers by evolving a concept of Christian duty as it pertained to membership in the temporal regiment. To him it was also part of the problem of the relationship of the Christian to the laws of God and man, as well as part of the problem of church and state. Speaking to the individual, Tyndale suggested that he should serve willingly in the temporal regiment and perform those duties demanded of him by virtue of membership in that regiment or by command of the king. He saw no contradiction between the commands of man and God.[74] Thus, alongside of the harmony among the temporal regiment, the king, and the spirituality, Tyndale placed a dualism of love and duty for the individual Christian.

Church and State in Retrospect

Tyndale's consideration of the problem of church and state carried him from a discussion of institutions to individuals, and from a discussion of the institutional and historical church and its usurpation of

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[74] Ibid., sigs. G 3 - G 6.

rightful authority from kings and emperors to a discussion of the Christian's duty as a member both of the church and of the temporal regiment. In his later career, Tyndale still argued against the papacy, but he ceased to be concerned with this institution after his Answere to More's dialoge. The earlier mood of outright reaction had given way to one of constructive vision in the attempt to relate the ever-present problem of conflicting allegiances to the individual Christian. Both moods were characteristic of Tyndale's thoughts on the problems of church and state, but at different times in his career. Tyndale had been concerned with the historical role of the institutional church and he took a grim view of its usurpation of rightful authority from the kings and emperors of history. It would be incorrect to minimize his aversion to the church on this issue since it is so strongly expressed in both of his early works, the Obedience and the Practyse of Prelates. And while he labored under the hope of reforming the institutional church, it appears that he might have been willing to reverse the very historical process which he analyzed in such a biased fashion, and to give both the king and the Emperor far greater control over the institutional church. However, when that reversal was accomplished in some degree, it passed virtually unnoticed by Tyndale. It is impossible to say what Tyndale thought about the sweeping legislation of Cromwell against the church. He may have viewed it almost indifferently. He certainly considered it less important than the translation and acceptance of a vernacular scripture.

Although Tyndale's thoughts on the various aspects of the problem of church and state changed considerably, it would be misleading to

overemphasize these changes. There was a large measure of continuity in his thoughts on this matter, and part of that continuity is attributable to the fact that his sense of authority changed little during his career. In the closing pages of his exposicion vppon Mathew, he said:

> Nether ought anye creature to seke any moare in this worlde then to be a brother, till thou haue put him in office: then . . . let him execute thi power. Nether maye anye man take auctorite of him selfe, till God haue chosen him: that is to wete, till he be chosen by the ordinaunce that God hath set in the worlde, to rule it. Finally, no kinge, lorde, Master or what ruler it be, hath absolute power in this worlde, and is the very thinge which he is called:[75]

Of course, Tyndale always believed that God had ordained two regiments and that every officer within each regiment had his divinely ordained function. To alter those functions or to act in any way that was not meant by God in His original grant of authority was to act against the wishes of God. Tyndale continued to believe that the members of the temporal regiment, especially the king, governed in God's place. Their function, Tyndale thought, was to provide order through the temporal sword. He believed until the very last that "Christ medleth not with the temporal regiment."[76] The function of the members of the "regiment of the gospel" or the church was to preach and to prevent that which the members of the temporal regiment were supposed to punish--sin.[77] In any Christian commonwealth adherence to the design and wishes of God was necessary for the preservation of that commonwealth.

Although Tyndale thought that God had originally ordained two regiments to be separate in some ways and joined in others, he never came

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[75] Ibid., sigs. K 2 - K 2^{v}.

[76] Ibid., sig. G 1^{v}.

[77] Ibid., sig. L 2^{v}.

to grips with the problem of church and state in the sense of defining the exact nature and limits of the king's control over the church. That he stood against the separate privileges of the clergy is clear from his works. It is also clear that he did not think that the king's control over the church included questions of dogma. However, between the simple belief in the end of all clerical privileges and the belief that the king's authority did not include the determination of doctrine, there was a large area to be covered, and Tyndale left much unsaid. It is probable that he was willing to allow Henry some form of administrative control over the church, but the exact nature of that control, its extent and its limits, cannot be learned on the basis of anything that Tyndale said. It is always possible to speculate, to read things into what Tyndale said or did not say. Indeed, a fair measure of speculation has already found its way into this study. But speculation is often misleading. It is probably more desirable to let Tyndale's imprecision stand on its own and to accept it as part of his vision of the Reformation.

CHAPTER IV

TYNDALE, WYCLIF, AND THE LOLLARDS

Introduction

The focal point of this chapter as well as the three remaining chapters of this dissertation is not any one particular aspect of Tyndale's political thought, but rather the relationship of his political thought to important intellectual currents of his age. The next four chapters explore Tyndale's political thought in relation to the intellectual current of humanism, the thought of one Henrician apologist, the thought of the commonwealth men, and as the title of this chapter implies, to the political thought of Wyclif and the Lollards.

Intellectual biography is a valid approach to the study of history, for this method illuminates the mentality of any age. Nevertheless, the following chapters are meant to be more than the intellectual biography of one man or of one idea. To devote so much time to the study of Tyndale's political thought without attempting to place it within the context of his age would be an exercise of limited value. The currents of thought discussed in the following chapters were important to their time. They also have an important bearing on Tyndale's political thought. The analysis of one man's thought may reveal the different orientation of Tyndale's thought, or it may demonstrate the influence of Tyndale's political thought on others of his age. Finally, the analysis of a continuing current of ideas will reveal the similarity and influence

of important existing ideas in England on Tyndale's political thought. It is to the study of a continuing current of ideas, the thought of Wyclif and the Lollards, that we first turn our attention.

The enigmatic figure of John Wyclif has always presented something of a problem for the Reformation historian. Was he the first "Protestant," the harbinger of the great movement of the Reformation? Or did Wyclif fail and Luther succeed? It is certainly possible to find both points of view expressed with equal conviction. However, today, one point is admitted by most scholars of the period. Wyclif's ideas and those of his followers survived the pogroms of the fifteenth century only to plague the authorities in the sixteenth century. Several factors account for the survival of his ideas. First, Wyclif's ideas survived in their original form in his Latin works. All of them were not destroyed by the church hierarchy, for this was clearly an impossible task. Many of the manuscripts were carried to Prague by Wyclif's followers and by the followers of Hus.[1] In this regard, it would probably have been easier for Tyndale to read Wyclif in the original on the continent than in England. Nevertheless, the outlines of Wyclif's thought were never forgotten in England, and there was enough there to allow Foxe to put together a good summary in his Actes and Monumentes of the Church.[2]

Wyclif's ideas also survived in the works of his opponents. Necker, his major antagonist, is said to have remarked that it was futile

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[1] L. Daly, The Political Theory of John Wyclif (Chicago, 1962), 151.

[2] Johne Foxe, Actes and Monumentes of the Church (London, 1576), 420-455.

merely to burn Wyclif's works, since he had precisely stated Wyclif's opinion on a certain matter before refuting it.[3] This particular form of continuity of Wyclif's ideas is of little interest here.

The most important source of continuity and preservation of Wyclif's ideas was in the writings of his followers, the Lollards. Lollardy was not an academic heresy which remained within the confines of the university, but a popular movement which originated in the teaching of Wyclif and some of his associates, notably John Purvey, and which passed down only a simplistic and vulgar form of Wyclif's original ideas. Occasionally, the Lollards even distorted aspects of the master's original teaching. They emphasized the practical, spiritual nature of his works at the expense of his scholastic subtlety. As a popular heresy, Lollardy defies concise summary simply because there was no one spokesman for the movement, nor was there any apparent theological organization. Certain general trends are evident. It was blatantly anti-clerical and anti-papal, and to a degree even nationalistic. However, one of the aims of this chapter is to come to an understanding of its essential nature and to an understanding of its relationship to other important ideas which were current during the Reformation.

Wyclif's thoughts and the writings of the Lollards not only survived down to the Reformation,[4] but were also revived during the

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[3]Michael Hurley, S.J., "Scripture Sola: Wyclif and His Critics," Traditio XVI (1960), 275-352.

[4]A. G. Dickens, Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York: 1509-1559 (Oxford, 1959). This work clearly demonstrates this fact.

Reformation.[5] And both their survival and their revival had important consequences for the Reformation as a whole and for certain of the reformers themselves, especially for Tyndale. As Professor Dickens has noted:

> One direct result of the English heresy has an intimate connection with Tyndale's success. Lollardy had long ago imbued the bishops with a terror of the vernacular Bible and a hostility towards it. . . . Since Englishmen had so overwhelming a desire to read the Scriptures in English, the way was clearly opened to Tyndale, Thomas Cromwell and a Protestant presentation of the English Bible.[6]

Of course, the survival of Lollard sentiments did more than to insure the success of one man or of an individual project. To quote Professor Dickens once again:

> Whatever their theological background the Lollards had always advocated the same practical steps as those dictated by envious secular anticlericalism. Decade after decade, Lollard propaganda had been permeating the atmosphere and touching the minds of men who were little attracted by doctrinal heresy.[7]

Whether one chooses to view the English Reformation as an act of state, pace Dickens, or as a movement of thought, the survival and revival of Lollard sentiments provided an important base for the events of the sixteenth century.

Lollardy as a movement of religious dissent could not have been the sole force behind a movement of the scope of the English Reformation.

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[5] Margaret Aston, "Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival," History IL (1964), 149-170.

[6] A. G. Dickens, "Heresy and the Origins of English Protestantism," Britain and the Netherlands II (1962), 57.

[7] Ibid., 61.

Although most scholars today would admit that its actual dimensions are largely unappreciated, the fact remains that it was only in conjunction with religious dissatisfaction imported from abroad that this movement could take on truly national significance. Without new theological direction and new life, Lollardy would have remained a form of "surreptitious congregationalism" with little significance.[8] However, new and vital links were formed between the old heresy and the new, between the thought of the Lollards and the thought of the continental reformers. Tyndale himself provided some of these links.

The much studied connection between Tyndale's translation of the Bible and this aspect of the Lollard creed provided only one of these links. Tyndale was also one of the first of the Protestants during the sixteenth century to rescue Wyclif's reputation.[9] He also made good use of the strong anti-clerical aspect of Lollard thought. His own treatment of the church hierarchy in his Practyse of Prelates was remarkably similar to Wyclif's continual assault on the "caesarean clergy." Tyndale's initial solution to the problem of church and state also bears an interesting resemblance to Wyclif's. Finally, Tyndale showed his approval of various aspects of the Lollard program of reform by reediting four Lollard tracts. His prefaces to these tracts show that to some degree he viewed his own program of reform in light of theirs. He did

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[8] Ibid., 48.

[9] On this problem see Margaret Aston, "John Wyclif's Reformation Reputation," Past and Present XXX (1965), 23-51.

his own share in the general revival of Lollardy during the sixteenth century.

To appreciate the nature of these ties which connected Tyndale to Wyclif and the Lollards, it is necessary to study both the old and the new. It is necessary to study some of Wyclif's ideas which had a clear bearing on the events of the Reformation, some of the ideas of his followers, and the way in which both currents of ideas merged into the thought of Tyndale and the general undercurrent of religious dissatisfaction in England. The focus of the following analysis is the political thought of Tyndale, Wyclif and the Lollards, and the logical place to begin is with the political thought of John Wyclif.

No brief treatment of Wyclif's political thought can do justice to his vision of this topic. He discussed his political theory at great length and with a complexity which has confused many modern scholars. As a result of the work of the Wyclif Society, more of his work is readily available than most people would care to examine. However, the availability of all his major works has not aided scholars in arriving at a consensus concerning the significance of many of his most important ideas.[10] Even today, only the broad outlines of his thought are clear.

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[10]The best example of this is the controversy surrounding the significance of Wyclif's idea of dominion and scriptura sola. The later problem is complicated by those who want to see him as a forerunner of the Reformation. See Gordon Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages (2 vols., New York, 1967), II, 523. Here Leff denies that Wyclif believed in scripture as the only authority. But see also, Michael Hurley, "Scripture Sola," 275-352, where the contrary is affirmed, and Hurley allows Necker to speak for himself. The dissent is as great with regard to the problem of dominion. Scholars generally agree that this idea was the center of his political theory, but there is no agreement on the actual significance of it. The points of view range from Howard Kaminsky's belief that it

Wyclif himself was largely to blame for this confusion. On page after page, he led his readers through a labyrinth of complex arguments without providing them with a solution. However, the task at hand is made simpler by the fact that it is not necessary to consider Wyclif's political thought in its entirety but only to select portions of it which became important to his followers and to the climate of opinion in the sixteenth century. Of particular importance are his views on the problem of authority within the church, on the problem of the relationship between the regnum and the sacerdotium, his attacks on the clergy, parts of his ecclesiology, and in general, his idea of dominion. Since the last point is conceded to have been the foundation of his political theory, and since the broad outlines of this idea were well appreciated by his followers, it is preferable to start with a consideration of his thoughts on this important point.

On Dominion

The idea of dominion was not original to the philosophy of Wyclif, and this was a fact that he himself would have been perfectly willing to admit. The idea of dominion was first used by Giles of Rome, a papal apologist who employed it to the opposite and which Wyclif was later to employ it. Giles bequeathed it to FitzRalph, another papal apologist, and

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was an "ideology of revolution," "Wyclifism as Ideology of Revolution," Church History XXXII (1963), 57-74; to Michael Wilks' suggestion that Wyclif was doing no more than erecting the old idea of a theocratic monarchy. "Predestination, Property and Power: Wyclif's theory of dominion and grace," Studies in Church History II (1965), 220-236.

it was from him that Wyclif learned its value. Stated in the simplest terms possible, the idea of dominion or the right to confer the sacraments, to hold property, to govern, or to exercise power, was dependent upon grace. While the papacy had used this concept to destroy the potential of private property and to insure its control over the lands of heretics, Wyclif used it against the church. Although the idea of dominion pertained to the English king and secular lords in the same manner as it pertained to the church, the actual direction of Wyclif's arguments made it useful only against the church. The problems of application of this concept of dominion were always great, since no one could be certain who was in a state of grace and who was not. Wyclif affirmed this point. However, he thought that there were certain fairly reliable guides which showed the clergy to have been out of a state of grace. Under the rules of dominion they had no right to hold property, and Wyclif called for the temporal lords to expropriate the church's lands. The result of this appeal to the lords is obvious. It was impossible to apply this theory against the very people who had the responsibility of carrying it out. As Wyclif's thought developed, it is even arguable that he had no intention of applying the idea of dominion to any institution other than to the churcb, since he came to believe that propety and power pertained to the nature of kingship but not to the nature of the church.[11]

Once again, the disagreement concerning Wyclif's philosophy surfaces, and at this very point. Many scholars do not admit that the direction and development of his thought rendered parts of his theory of

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[11]Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, II, 544.

dominion academic, even impotent.[12] However, two facts speak with considerably more force than the arguments of scholars who attempt to defend Wyclif's thought on this issue. First, Wyclif's followers applied the idea of dominion only to the church. Now it is possible to suggest that they failed to understand a major portion of their master's ideas. However, there is more sophistication in the Lollard tracts than first meets the eye. Once the Lollards fell prey to the persecutions of the secular authorities in the fifteenth century, they were provided with an ideal opportunity to employ the concept of dominion against the lords. What better mark of the anti-Christ could there have been than the actions of people who persecuted the members of Christ's church? Probably they did not apply it against the lords, because Wyclif himself applied it largely against the church and very rarely against the secular lords. His application of the idea of dominion against the church and its similar use by his followers formed an important basis of anti-clerical sentiment in pre-Reformation religious dissent. Leaving aside the debate on the academic nature of his theory of dominion, the task becomes a careful analysis of his application of this idea against the church.

The idea of civil dominion as it applied to the church formed an important aspect of Wyclif's ecclesiology and his condemnation of the entire church hierarchy. Crucial to his discussion of dominion as it applied to the church was his distinction between use and civil dominion. Wyclif believed that civil dominion or lordship over property was totally inconsistent with the nature of the priesthood, but he thought that the mere use of property was not. Christ had given Peter and his apostles

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[12]Wilks, "Predestination, Property, and Power," 229.

the use of property and this was one of the characteristics of the Apostolic Church. Christ had not given his apostles civil dominion.[13] The end of this particular line of reasoning carried Wyclif to a belief that the English king should confiscate the worldly endowments of the church in an attempt to bring it back to a pure state.[14]

Wyclif reached these conclusions through a process of long and intricate argumentation. Part of his arguments concerning the clergy and civil dominion were based on the premise that although Christ had been simultaneously king and priest, he had not confused the very nature of the authority which he had held.[15] Furthermore, Wyclif suggested that he had not transferred his power to Peter or to his vicars.[16] However, Wyclif also based the right of the English king to end forcibly the clergy's use of dominion on the fact that there were two types of authority, that of a priest and that of a king. Although the authority of a priest

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[13]Iohannis Wyclif, Tractus De Ecclesia, ed., J. Loserth (London, 1886), 365: Tercio notandum quod Deus dedit beato Petri et toti generi suo secundum spiritualem imitationem dominacionen evangelicam et usufructum super omnia bona mundi, non autem dominacionen vel usum civilem. . . .

[14]Ibid., 189: Et patet quod sepe non est privlegium vocata dotacio cleri in temporalibus, et per consequens auferendo a clero ista non oportet quod auferantur ab eo privilegia, sed pocius armoto prohibente sit ecclesia apostolica restituta ad vera privilegia primitava; quod ego credo dominos temporales in casudebere facere sub pena dampnacionis gravissime.

[15]Ibid., 316: Christus autem servans inseparabiliter summum gladium innocencie, scivit sene defectu vel confusione utrumque gladium regulare et utriusque status honores accepere . . . nec potuit cum istis statibus civiliter dominari.

[16]Ibid., 315: Christus autem fuit simul rex et sacerdos, habens in se subiective utrumque gladium, modo quo impossible fuit ut Petro vel eius vicario communicetier. . . .

was greater, involvement with lordship was involvement with sin, and the king had the duty of maintaining the purity of the clergy.[17]

The fact that the clergy had taken the powers of lordship and used property in a spirit other than one of Christian charity contributed to Wyclif's hostile criticism of the clergy of his own day. To him both actions were the mark of a "caesarean clergy," of a clergy which was venal and corrupt. However, Wyclif used the association of the clergy with civil dominion and lordship in another fashion which established important links with the thought of the Lollards and with the thought of Tyndale. Here, the clergy's actions became important for Wyclif's idea of the fall of the church.

The outlines of Wyclif's ecclesiology are well known, for his ecclesiology is one of the few aspects of his thought that is not debated by scholars. Wyclif, an Augustinian and a thoroughgoing realist, evolved his conception of the church through a literal interpretation of Augustine's City of God.[18] The church consisted of only the elect and it was not a physical entity. In fact, the visible church bore no relationship to the true church. The true church was timeless and stood wherever the elect could be found. Of course, the same problem which was important to his idea of dominion was also important to his idea of the true church.

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[17] Ibid., 12. Here Wyclif was drawing from the thought of St. Bernard and he stated eight cases when the king had the right to correct the clergy. The clergy's involvement with sin was frequently employed by Wyclif as justification for the king's control over the clergy in England.

[18] Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, II, 519.

Only God knew who were among the elect and who stood among the damned. The direction of this line of thinking was a severe condemnation of the entire visible church and its hierarchy. As Gordon Leff has noted:

> If only those who were chosen by God belonged to the church, and they could not be known, there was no reason for accepting any visible authority or for recognizing the claims of those who exercised it. Even more, there was no reason for such authority at all.[19]

Several scholars, among them, Professor Leff, consider this the most damaging aspect of Wyclif's entire attack on the church. By his very ecclesiology, Wyclif had done away with the necessity of any visible church. However, he did not rest his case upon only this aspect of his ecclesiology. He further discredited the church hierarchy by developing an elaborate notion of the fall of the visible church, and this was a notion which was built upon the ever-present connection of the clergy with property and lordship.

Wyclif did not believe that Christ had given Peter or any of his vicars the right of dominion. He appears to have believed that although Christ had possessed this power, its very nature prevented it from being transferred to someone of an inferior status.[20] Thus he concluded that it came from another source, namely, the close association of the Bishop of Rome with the Emperor. Wyclif, who was writing before Valla had exposed the spurious nature of the Donation of Constantine, believed it to have been a valid document. And one of the essential steps in the decline of the church was the acceptance of the document by the Bishop of Rome. He linked the original schism of the church to this document.

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[19] Ibid., 519.

[20] Ibid., 302.

He also believed that it was the Donation which had facilitated the papacy's preeminence over the other members of the church.[21] Finally, with regard to this document, he argued that it was not binding upon the English king, since at that time, England had not been under the Roman Imperium.[22]

In spite of the importance Wyclif attached to the Donation, he did not cite its acceptance as the beginning of the decline of the church. Like Tyndale, he was never clear on the exact date which marked the decline of the church. Elsewhere, in his work on the nature of kingship, he cited the endowment of the clergy with land as the beginning of the decline, and this had taken place approximately three hundred years after the death of Christ. The reader is left with the opinion that Wyclif thought the decline of the church took place sometime during the fourth century.[23] Wyclif's treatment of this topic was similar to Tyndale's. There is no evidence to allow for a precise dating of the decline.

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[21]Iohannis Wyclif, Tractus de Potestate Pape, ed. J. Loserth (London, 1907), 232: Constantius imperator quarto die sui baptismi privlegium Romane ecclesia pontifici contulit ut in toto orbe pontificis ita hunc caput habeant sicut iudices regem. . . . Tribuimus ei potestatem atque vigorem et honorificeniciam imperialem, decertentes ut principatum teneat tam super quator sedes: Alexandriam, antiochinam, Jerosolinutanem et constantpolitanum. . . . Propter hoc quidam vocant hanc potestatem iurisdictionis indulgencias et alia privlegia paparum cesarea.

[22]Wyclif, de ecclesia, 352.

[23]Iohannis Wyclif, Tractus de Officio Regis, eds. Pollard and Sayle (London, 1887), 63: Christus qui veriit non legem subore sed sed implere . . . docuit quimodo ipse, sui apostoli et eorum vicarii debent vivere pauperem vitam exproprietarie, quod duravit per ccc annos amplier suque ad dotacionem caesarem. . . .

Wyclif's beliefs that the association of the clergy with civil dominion, and the actual endowment of the church with land constituted the primary reasons for the decline of the church, form important links with the hostile anti-clericalism of the Lollards and with the political thought of Tyndale. There is no convenient summary of Lollard beliefs. However, in the Twenty-Five Points, a fairly comprehensive statement of the Lollard creed, the author said:

> For tho gospel sais, of his kyngedome schal be no end; and in tho gospel of jon he seis, My kyngedome is not of this worlde. Ne no worldly preste excuse his heresie of possessions hauynge by his ypocrisie, that thai bene not lordis of ther godis but onely procuratouris. . . .[24]

He then suggested that the lords should immediately dispossess the clergy of all their endowments.[25] This sentiment was much in keeping with Wyclif's own appeal for the purification of the church.

A similar appeal is found in one of the Lollard tracts which Tyndale edited for the sixteenth century believer. The author is unknown, and in spite of its title, it appears to have been written sometime after 1400. In this work, the author summarized the second commandment in such a way as to prohibit all lordship:

> The seconde commaundement is of mekenesse, in the whiche Christe chargeth vs to forsake lordshippe vpon our brethern and other worldye worshippes and so he dyd him selfe.[26]

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[24] Ihonnis Wyclif, Select English Works, ed., Thomas Arnold (3 vols., London, 1869), III, 477. I have used our own letters th to represent the Anglo-Saxon letters for which there is no equivalent in our own alphabet.

[25] Ibid., 478-9.

[26] William Tyndale, ed., THE Prayer and complaynte of the PLoweman vnto Christ: written nat longe after the yere of our Lorde. M.& thre hundred (Antwerp, 1531), sig. B 1.

In some of the Lollard tracts Wyclif's distinction between use and lordship was lost, with the result that their authors called for the immediate seizure of all property. In other Lollard tracts, notably one of the ones which Tyndale had edited to establish the historicity of the actions of the prelates, the author made the clear distinction between mere possession and use of property. After having accused the papacy of being ignorant of the virtue of Christian charity, he said:

> For who that beth in charite possesseth thy goodes in comen and not in proper at his neyghbours nede. And them shall there none of him seggen/ this is myne/ but it is goddes that god graunteth to us to spend it to his worship . . . Yef I se brother in nede/ Ych am ye holden by charyte to part with him of the goodes to his nede/ & yef he svendeth hem well to the worship of god.[27]

A similar attitude is found in Tyndale's own Practyse of Prelates where he stated:

> for in ye congregacion of Christ love maketh every mans gifte and goodes comune vnto the necessyte of his neyghboure.[28]

Tyndale also suggested the confiscation of church lands, a point which has been noted previously, but he made his suggestion, at least in the Obedience, with the idea in mind that the church lands diminished the authority of the king.[29] Wyclif's suggestion that the king should confiscate the church's lands was also made with this consideration in mind.[30]

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[27] Ibid., sig. E 2^{v}.

[28] Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. B 4.

[29] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. K. 4.

[30] Wyclif, de Ecclesia, 338: Si omnia illa bona quibus dotatur nostra ecclesia immediate et directe pertinerent ad papam, sic quod rex non habeat interesse in possessionibus vel personis, cum plus quam quarta

The evils of the association of the clergy with lordship were not lost upon Wyclif's disciples. The essentials of his ecclesiology were also well appreciated by his followers. One would naturally expect that the strong, metaphysical character of Wyclif's own treatment of this topic would have been lost in the transformation of his heresy from an academic phenomenon to a popular phenomenon. For the most part, this was the case. However, the general tendency of his ecclesiology to render an organized church hierarchy unnecessary found its expression in various Lollard tracts, including the ones which Tyndale edited. For example, in the Complaint, this anti-sacerdotalism was well pronounced. The author remarked:

> A lorde thou forgaue sometyme Peter his synnes & also Mary Magdelen and other many synful men withouten shriuyng to prestes/ & takynge penance of preestes for her synnes. And lorde thou are as mightye nowe/ as thou were that tyme.[31]

This particular sentiment was expressed in connection with the necessity of penance. Tyndale never expressed this particular complaint in quite this fashion, but he was not above arguing that an organized priesthood was unnecessary in the church.[32] His source was Luther and not Wyclif. However, Wyclif's ecclesiology and the anti-sacerdotalism of his followers probably provided a strong foundation for similar attitudes which were exported from the continent to England by reformers like Tyndale.

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pars regni sit devoluta ad manum mortuam, sequitur quod rex noster non sit rex tocius Anglie, cum plus quam quarta pars in manu mortua est decisa.

[31]Tyndale, Complaint, sig. B 3.

[32]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. M. 3 - M. 3[v].

Wyclif's followers also put his idea of the fall of the church to good use. The author of the Twenty-Five Points stated that "Urban the sixth was antichrist himself," a claim interesting enough in itself, and proceeded to tell his readers that there had been "no verrey pope . . . from the time of Silvester pope."[33] By making this accusation, he appears to have accepted Wyclif's idea of the fall of the church from the time of the Donation of Constantine.

A more interesting idea of the fall of the church was presented by the unknown author of one of the tracts which Tyndale edited, The examination of the honorable knight Sye Ihon Oldcastell. First, when asked by his examiners, this Lollard commented on the necessary qualities of a true pope:

> Who that foloweth next Peter in linyng is next hym in succession/ but your liuyng refufeth poore peters liuyng and many other popes that were martirs in Rome that foloweth peter in maner of liung whos condicions ye haue clene forsakyn.[34]

He thus linked the idea of a practical Christianity to the fall of the church. He also commented on dominion and possessions:

> For then cried an angess/ wo/ wo/ wo/ this day is venyme shed into the chirche of god for: before that tyme wer many martirs of popis/ and sins I can tell of none: but so the it is syns y^{t}tyme one hath put downe a nother & one hath slayne a nother/ and one hath cursed a nother as the cronicles tess.[35]

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[33]Wyclif, English Works, III, 455.

[34]William Tyndale, ed., The examination of the honorable knight Sye Ihon Oldcastell Lorde Cobban/ burnt bi the said Archebishop/ in the fyifte uere of Kynge Henry the fyfth (Antwerp, 1530), sig. J. iii.

[35]Ibid., sigs. J. i^{v} - J. ii.

Apparently, he thought that the actual possessions of the church were responsible for the unholy deeds of the prelates.

The sentiments expressed in the two previous quotations are extremely important, for they provide the student of Reformation history with visible evidence of the link between the old and the new heresies. In this instance Tyndale's activity formed only part of the link. The other part was formed by the collaborative efforts of Vadianus and Turner. Vadianus was largely responsible for both the form and much of the content of Tyndale's Practyse of Prelates. In spite of his influence, however, Tyndale never accepted his theory of the fall of the church.[36] Vadianus had dated the fall from the Pontificate of Gregory the Great, saying that:

> vntyll the tyme of Gregory, after whom they dyd utterly close and shytte vp ye gospell boke breakyng in by saluatations into the courtes of princes openly.[37]

Vadianus also suggested that Gregory was the last pope to follow in the footsteps of the martyrs and apostles in both "lyugnge and doctrine."[38] While Vadianus had expressed certain ideas which were foreign to the Lollard conception of the fall of the church, the emphasis on judgment by living example was the same. It would be impossible to say exactly

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[36] See above, pp. 41-2, where Tyndale's dissent from Vadianus is explored in detail.

[37] Joachim Vadianus, A worke entytled of ye old god & the newe, sig. F 2.

[38] Ibid., sig. F 1v.

when this idea was first used against the church and the papacy. However, within the scope of this study, its appearance in an anonymous fifteenth century Lollard tract, the reedition of this tract by Tyndale in 1530, and similar sentiments expressed in a work by a Swiss reformer which was translated by one of Cromwell's paid propagandists in 1534, clearly demonstrates the unique confluence of old and new ideas.

Tyndale's own ecclesiology was also important in this mixture of the old and the new. It would be foolish to suggest that Tyndale based his ecclesiology, or even large portions of it, on Wyclif's writings. His final vision of the church was probably his own, while the conception of the church which he employed before he arrived at his own understanding of the church was usually taken from the writings of the reformer who was influencing him at that time. Now one of Tyndale's most interesting and most important treatments of the church is found in his Practyse of Prelates, and there is little doubt that at the time when he wrote this particular work, Vadianus was his primary inspiration. Nevertheless, in that tract Tyndale expressed ideas which had an interesting relationship to Lollard beliefs. Tyndale, as previously suggested, based the fall of the church upon two issues. First, he cited the actions of the prelates who had usurped the rightful authority from kings and emperors. In making this claim, Tyndale was employing Vadianus' ideas, even to the extent of suggesting that the prelates' actions had reversed the natural order of society. This too was the Swiss reformer's point of view and he clearly expressed it in that work which Tyndale used as his guide to

church history.[39] However, in the opening pages of the Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale made an accusation against the clergy which was very similar to Wyclif's and the Lollards' use of the idea of dominion against the clergy. Tyndale said:

> . . . then christes vicars whiche ministre his kingdome here in his bodelye absence/ and have the oversight of his flocke may be none emperours/ kinges/ Dukes/ lordes/ Knightes/ temporall iudges, or any temporall officer/ or vnder false names have any soche dominion or ministre any soche office as requyreth violence.[40]

Whether the inspiration which led Tyndale to make this statement came from the Lollards or from Vadianus will never be known. However, Tyndale has expressed the same conviction which was held by Wyclif and his followers for centuries. Civil dominion also meant the right to hold and exercise authority. Tyndale, Wyclif, and the Lollards all denied that the members of Christ's church had this right. Furthermore, Tyndale's use of the word "dominion" may have been intentional. The first of the Lollard tracts which he edited for a Reformation audience appeared in the same year that he published the Practyse of Prelates. At that time Vadianus' influence was probably still important as a source of Tyndale's thought. However, he had begun to view his own work in light of those who had gone before him, and he may have wished to use a term

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[39] Ibid., sigs. J 7 - J 7[v]. Two points are noteworthy. First, the use of natural metaphors to describe the usurpation of the emperor's authority was Tyndale's own poetic device. Secondly, Vadianus's treatment of Constantine's importance in the history of the early church differed greatly from Wyclif's and that of his followers.

[40] Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. A 7.

which had long been associated with the abuses of the prelates of England.[41]

Tyndale also blamed the fall of the church on its connection with property, and in view of the fact that this emphasis is not present in Vadianus' work, Tyndale's emphasis takes on considerable importance. In the Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale blamed the fall of the church on the greed of its members, especially the bishops and the deacons who, by virtue of their office, had been invested with the control of church property.[42] He also appears to have believed that the mere association of the church with property and wealth was an important factor in its decline. Thus Tyndale's point of view is remarkably similar to that of the unknown Lollard whose tract he edited in 1530.[43] Unlike the Lollards, however, in the Practyse of Prelates Tyndale never openly called for the expropriation of the church's lands. But he did recount, with rather obvious delight, the story of the deputy of the emperor who had confiscated the church's wealth which he had found in St. John Lateran in Rome. Probably, in 1530, Tyndale's own program of reform included the confiscation of church lands, and his attitude towards property in the early church establishes another link between the old heresy and the new. In this particular case, the link was also important with regard to Tyndale's own thought.

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[41]The term "dominion" occurs only in the Practyse of Prelates, and here, only twice. In both instances, Tyndale employed the term in the above sense.

[42]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. B 4^{v}.

[43]Tyndale, Examination of Sye Ihon Oldcastell, sigs. J. i^{v} - J. ii.

On the Powers of the Pope

Wyclif's treatment of the papacy formed one of the most obvious links between his heresy, the heretical conceptions of his followers, and the thought of the sixteenth century reformers. Well known to every student of the Reformation is his characterization of the pope as the anti-Christ, one which he developed during his years as an anti-papal antagonist, and one which eventually became, at the hands of the reformers of the sixteenth century, a weapon of immense value.[44] Tyndale himself made frequent references to this idea and in his Answere to More's dialoge spent several pages developing it more fully.[45] In the same work he also established further links with those who had gone before him. His actual use of the text II Peter:2 formed one of these links for this was one of the favorite texts of the Lollards.[46] Tyndale also told More that the members of the true church and the elect would always know persecution and suffering.[47] This point was affirmed by many Lollards, once they felt the pressures of the church officials in the fifteenth century. All these links are interesting and well worth exploring in detail. However, they appear less significant at the moment than Tyndale's relationship to Wyclif and to his followers on the important question of the authority of the papacy.

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[44] Wyclif developed this idea at great length in his Tractus de Potestate Pape, ed., Loserth (London, 1907), 120-25.

[45] Tyndale, Answere, sigs. H 6^{v} - H 7^{v}.

[46] Ibid., sig. H 6^{v}.

[47] Ibid., sig. H 7^{v}.

This particular area of investigation, although important, is by no means a simple task. Wyclif argued against the papacy with all the complexity and subtlety which was characteristic of his political thought in general. Furthermore, an understanding of his ideas on this question presupposes a general familiarity with his career, the chronology of his writings, and his progress as a heretic. By the year 1379, Wyclif had finished his multi-volume work, Tractus de Dominio Civili. This was an important work in the structure of his thought, and it is replete with an anti-clericalism for which Wyclif has become famous. However, anti-clericalism was not anti-sacerdotalism. In 1378, Wyclif had not yet completely repudiated the church hierarchy.[48] However, that repudiation came very quickly. In the following year, he composed his Tractus de Ecclesia. Of course, his conception of the church in this work was heretical, and it was a conception which completely undermined the necessity of any church hierarchy whatsoever. This work in itself was a serious attack on the powers of the papacy, although Wyclif was not concerned with that institution in a specific sense. However, in the same year, he also composed his Tractus de Potestate Pape. In this work he was concerned with the papacy per se, but he also presupposed that his readers remembered what he had said concerning the very nature of the church. In short, during his career, Wyclif attacked the papacy from two directions: from one direction which seriously questioned the necessity of any church hierarchy whatsoever; and from the other, which was a frontal assault on the powers of the popes.

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[48]Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, II, 511.

In searching for links with Tyndale's treatment of the papacy, one must look in the two directions which Wyclif himself had looked. Beginning with their ecclesiologies in general, both men evolved a conception of the church which rendered a pope unnecessary. This is not to argue that Tyndale borrowed his own conception of the church from Wyclif. He didn't. His own conception of the church was far less damaging to the church hierarchy's position than was Wyclif's. For Tyndale, there appears to have been some place in his church for the members of the church hierarchy, although this place was never clear or well defined. For Wyclif, there was no place for them. However, in spite of the fact that both men evolved ecclesiologies which seriously undermined the authority of the papacy, they both devoted much time to a frontal assault on that institution. Tyndale did this fairly consistently during his career while Wyclif appears to have preferred to put all his specific anti-papal arguments in one work. While their ecclesiologies were linked only by the direction and force of the logic with regard to the authority or necessity of the papacy, the links between their respective anti-papal arguments are much stronger.

One of the principal weapons which Wyclif employed against the papacy was doubt. What makes the pope in Rome a valid pope? At one point in his career Tyndale apparently believed that the personal actions of the pope were a fairly sure guide.[49] But Wycliff thought that one

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[49]For Tyndale, personal example always counted for something, and he probably accepted Vadianus' idea that the popes were valid as long as they followed Peter in living and doctrine.

could never be sure without the benefit of special revelation.[50] This remark had its origin in his view of the church as a special predestinate body known only to God. The pope's actions counted for nothing in a positive sense, and neither did the fact that he had been elected. At the very end of his lengthy diatribe against the papacy he listed twelve abuses of the papacy, and the actual method of election was first on the list. But it is important to note that Wyclif's condemnation of the method of election was not merely the result of the Great Schism. He finally came to believe that no pope could be chosen by human election since this was a human contrivance and worth nothing before God.[51] Wyclif had moved from doubt to a rather negative form of certainty.

This last point was very important to the structure of Wyclif's anti-papal thought. Many of the arguments he employed were based upon the premise that the pope's office and his powers were of human and not divine origin. This impulse led him to conclude that a person could be a Bishop of Rome and not pope, a point which must have left his readers in more doubt than before.[52] All power had to come from God, and he thought that man should be careful to avoid ascribing something to his own power when it was God's power which enabled him to perform many

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[50]Wyclif, de ecclesia, 5: Prima quod nullus vicarius christi debet presumere. assere se esse caput ecclesia sancte catholice, ymmo nisi habuirit specialem revelacionem, non asseret se esse aliquod membrum eius. . . . Sicut igitur homo sine speciali revelacione non asseret . . . se esse membrum et per consequens, non caput illius ecclesie.

[51]Wyclif, de Potestate Pape, 175: Sed videtur michi quod eleccio qua quis eligeratur in papam vel summum pontificum non subiacet potestati vel eleccioni humane.

[52]Ibid., 178.

acts.[53] On this premise, he concluded that no priest had the power to forgive sin unless God had done so first.[54]

Wyclif applied these same sentiments to the hierarchy of the church as well. He argued that all gradations of authority within the church were meaningless since they were of human origin. Wyclif thought that man had erred and that the various gradiations of authority within the church were actually the result of man's failure to understand properly the nature of grace.[55] In the church he thought there were only priests of one rank, and that the power of every priest in the sense of the potestas ordinis was equal.[56] On this basis he denied the popes and cardinals the extensive jurisdictional authority which they had claimed for themselves in the past.

Tyndale's repudiation of the church hierarchy was never as complete as Wyclif's, and this fact becomes important in light of Wyclif's views on the gradations of authority within the church. Tyndale was

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[53] Ibid., 30: ubi autem dubitant de sue opere, debent vere religiose secure totam accionem Deo ascribere, sum oportet eum facere omnem accionem creature.

[54] Ibid., 30.

[55] Ibid., 116: Sed tercio michi infundabiliter loquuntur quidam de auctoritate, ut dicit maioritatem santitatis vel carismatum multitudinis, et quia illud est nobis incognitum, transferunt auctoritatem generaliter ad ordinacionem humananum, ut quolibet gradus ponunt in papa, archiepiscopo, rectore et simplici sacerdote. . . .

[56] Ibid., 95: Sed potestas ordinis, que est par in quolibit sacerdotes, est potestas quam clericus habet in quantum est christi sacerdotes. . . . Oportet igitur docere quod officium Petro conveniat et quid sit ab eo vetitium. . . . Unde Deum contestor, nec ex scripture nec ex santis doctoribus fundari video istius iurisdicionis extensionem tam vanam sed ex ritu gentilium sicut institucionem pape et cardinalium introductam.

imprecise in his consideration of the authority of bishops and other members of the church. On the one hand, he appears to have believed that they had some jurisdictional authority, at least he implied this in his exposicion vppon Mathew.[57] On the other hand, he denied that the Bishop of Rome, as pope, had any authority other than the authority of every priest--to preach Christ.[58] Like Wyclif, he believed that the elaborate jurisdictional authority which the pope claimed over the members of the church was of human derivation. Both men studied the growth of this authority historically, and their ideas here bear an interesting resemblance to one another.

Both Tyndale and Wyclif accepted the fact that the situation among Christ's apostles had been one of absolute equality. And both men thought that Rome had gained its primacy in conjunction with the actions of the emperors. However, they viewed their history slightly differently. Wyclif was concerned with the active role of the emperors in the early church, especially Constantine. It was with his assistance that the Bishop of Rome had been able to establish his illicit authority over the other bishops. He saw this process as having begun at Nicaea and as having continued over the years.[59] He also thought that the emperor

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[57]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. C 3^{v}.

[58]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. G. 6^{v}.

[59]Wyclif, de Potestate Pape, 177: Nycena, inquit, synodus hoc contulit privilegium Romano pontifici, ut sicut augustus preceteris regibus, ita Romanus preceteris pontifex haberetur episcopis et papa velut principis pater vocaretur.

Phocas had played a crucial role, as he had allowed Boniface IV to call himself pope.[60]

Tyndale too emphasized the role of the emperors in the growth of the papacy's power, but he saw that role in a different light. The papacy had been able to gain preeminence over the other members of the church, not solely because of the active assistance of men like Phocas, but also because the successive generations of emperors had fallen prey to the designs of that unholy institution.[61] Here two factors were probably influencing Tyndale's point of view: first and most important, his knowledge of Vadianus. His debt to this reformer has already been discussed in considerable detail, and there is no necessity to elaborate upon it. Also important, however, was Tyndale's tendency to view kings in a passive light. This particular point of view originated from Luther's concept of the office of a king, and it remained pronounced in Tyndale's political thought.

The concern with the growth of the papacy's authority over the other members of the church was based upon the idea that the situation before these developments occurred was the proper situation within the early church. Both Tyndsle and Wyclif thought that this situation had been characterized by the absolute equality of the apostles, and both men offered their respective readers arguments which supported this

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[60] Ibid., 178: Bonaficius IV impetravit a Foca cesare, ut ecclesia beati Perti Rome caput esse ecclesiarum, quia caput ecclesie constantinopolitane se scripsit papam.

[61] Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sigs. B 8 - C 7.

contention. The resemblance between Wyclif's arguments and the ones employed by Tyndale more than a century later is striking.

Neither Tyndale nor Wyclif believed that the See of Rome had originally possessed any more authority than the other episcopal centers of the early church. Both men saw this particular claim as having been linked to the rather dubious claim that Peter's death in Rome gave Rome preeminence over the other bishoprics in the early church. They rejected Rome's assertion of greatness, but used the same logic of that assertion against the papacy. If martyrdom in one particular city gave that city more authority than another city, then Jerusalem and not Rome would be the greatest city, since the most important of all martyrs had died there.[62]

The resemblance between Wyclif's and Tyndale's treatment of Peter as the "chefe apostle" is also striking. Early in the de Potestate Pape, Wyclif had addressed himself to the task of determining who, if anyone, had primacy over the apostles. Once again, he left his readers in doubt by suggesting that both logic as well as sacred scripture would appear to suggest that one person should have more authority than another. But he may well have been playing a game of cat and mouse with his readers, for the overwhelming sentiment in this work is against Peter's primacy over the other apostles. Wyclif thought that Christ had given Peter no

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[62]Wyclif, de Potestate Pape, 172: Similiter, si sanctitas martyrum fugat facimus et locum santificat, Jerusalem foret locus sanctissimus, cum ibi predicavit et passum fuit caput martyrum. . . . Tyndale made the same observation in his Practyse of Prelates, sig. E 4.

command or charge over the others.[63] Futhermore, scripture testified that Peter himself was subject to the authority of the others. He had been sent to Samaria by them.[64] Tyndale interpreted this fact in the same way and used it to support the idea that some degree of authority resided in the congregation. In the Practyse of Prelates, he noted:

> Peter was sent of ye other apostles vnto the Samaritanes/ whiche is an evident token that he had no iurisdiccion over them (for then they could not have sent him). But rather (as the truth is) ye congregacion had auctorite over him. . . .[65]

Both Tyndale and Wyclif devoted much time to a reinterpretation of those texts which apparently granted Peter authority over the other apostles. Of particular concern here was the text in which Peter had received the keys of heaven from Christ. Wyclif handled the reinterpretation of this particular text in a very interesting manner. He suggested that the keys which Peter had received at the hands of Christ were the keys of knowledge and power. He then came very close to saying that in effect Christ himself had erred because with regards to knowledge and power, Paul and not Peter, was the greatest of the apostles.[66]

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[63] Ibid., 79: Non enim dicit singulariter Petro: vade tu et singulariter predica toti mundo limitaque ceteros apostolos quantum sub iurisdicione sua de terra vel populo subiacebit. . . .

[64] Ibid., 99: Petrus eciam post ascensionen fuit missus a sociis aim Johanne in Samariam.

[65] Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. B 2^{v}.

[66] Wyclif, de Potestate Pape, 140: Sunt enim dicte claves potestas et sciencia ad edificandum eeclesiam, que signanter debent esse in quolibet sacerdote et (ut credo) erant in Paulo excellencius quam in Petro. Cum enim impium videtur sine racione ponere in Petro ocium et potestatis abusam, Paulus autem ex fide scripture prima Cor XV, 10 plus omnibus laboravit, videtur quod habuit amplius potestatis.

Wyclif's preference for Paul over Peter establishes another interesting link with Tyndale's own treatment of this question. When Tyndale argued against Peter's authority, his own observations were remarkably similar to Wyclif's, and like Wyclif, he affirmed his preferance for Paul. The basis for his preference was very similar to Wyclif's, too. In the Obedience, he remarked:

> Now is there moare Gospell in one pystle of Paul/ that is to saye/ Christe is moare clearly preached and mor promises rehersed in one pistle of Paul/ then in y^{e}iii Evangelistes Mathew/ Marke & Luke.[67]

He also remarked that when Peter was compared to Paul, that Peter was "founde a greate waye inferior." In the Practyse of Prelates, he employed the metaphor of feeding the sheep to prove the superiority of Paul over Peter. He asked:

> howe cometh that the Pope by that auctorite chalengeth to be greatest/ and yet this.viii. hundred yeres fedeth not at all: but poyseneth their pasture.[68]

By the time that Tyndale was writing against the authority of the papacy, there was a vast storehouse of anti-papal arguments from which many of the reformers could have taken their arguments. Wyclif certainly did more than his share in building this arsenal of ideas, and Tyndale may have gone to his works as a source. But it is always impossible to make a concrete judgment on questions such as these. Mere coincidence, Tyndale's debt to Luther and to others, the actual availability of Wyclif's writings: these factors must be weighed and considered carefully. Nevertheless, Tyndale's deliberate appeal to the

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[67]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. H. 5.

[68]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. D 8^{v}.

Lollard tradition and his high regard for Wyclif himself give the similarities a little more force.

Few scholars today would minimize the effects of the continuing line of anti-papal sentiment in England on the Reformation and on the success of Henry's and Cromwell's program against the papacy. However, to appreciate its real significance, it is necessary to pause for a moment and to consider the nature of the propaganda campaign launched by Cromwell against the church and some of the idea of the pro-Henrician apologists. Now Christopher St. German was never successfully conscripted by Cromwell, but in spite of this fact, the similarity of his thoughts to the official legislation of the years 1529-34 has not escaped the attention of scholars.[69] It is extremely important to note that St. German's arguments led in the very opposite direction of the anti-papal arguments employed by Tyndale and Wyclif. Rather than using the arguments of these two men, which were clearly of limited value, he went to the thought of Marsilius of Padua. Marsilius had started out with a clear conception of the state and on the basis of scripture and Aristotelian teleology proceeded to make the church an appendage of the state. St. German's arguments in favor of the Henrician legislation tended to follow Marsilius' logic, for he came to view the church as part of the state also. Wyclif and Tyndale both lacked a theory of the state, and it is certainly arguable, especially in Wyclif's case, that the entire direction of his thought was exactly the reverse of Marsilius' as expressed in the Defensor Pacis. In short, he attempted to reduce the

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[69]See Schoeck, "Canon Law on the Eve of the Reformation," 125-147.

temporal order to a divine one. To quote one authority on Wyclif's thought:

> His English polity based on the law of God was the actual political and social order of England pried loose in theory from its foundation in custom, power, and scholastic political thought; it was now theoretically based on divine grace and the redemptive mission of the Christian faith. King remained king, lord remained lord, but their titles to office, based now not on self-justifying tradition but on virtue and grace lacked stability. The office themselves were the important things, as instruments to promote the law of God. . . .[70]

With Tyndale the case is less clear, but both he and Wyclif stayed away from Aristotelian teleology and preferred the Pauline conception within the temporal order.[71] The rationale of the king's duty to punish sin was a useful one in arguing for a greater degree of control over the church, and Wyclif used it to this end. Tyndale implied it, but he never actually suggested that the king had control over the church by reason of the sins of the clergy. Nevertheless, this approach to the control over the church was of limited value in justifying the type of control which St. German advocated, and was of no value in reducing the church to a component part of the state. These facts, in conjunction with the extreme anti-sacerdotalism found in Wyclif's ecclesiology, meant that Cromwell's propagandists and St. German had to look outside their native England for ideas to justify the Henrician revolution in the church.

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[70] Howard Kaminsky, "Wyclifism as Ideology of Revolution," 69.

[71] Wyclif was not above employing Aristotelian distinctions, and he found them quite useful for clarifying such things as the nature of power. But the Pauline emphasis is also very pronounced in his work. See de Potestate Pape, 19.

These considerations are valuable for putting the continuity of anti-papal sentiment between Wyclif, the Lollards, and Tyndale into somewhat better perspective. It would be incorrect to assume that none of Wyclif's original anti-papal arguments would have been of any value to the people justifying the English Reformation. Anti-papalism was part of the larger movement of anti-clericalism which provided the architects of the Reformation a sound foundation upon which to build. Yet in a certain sense, the arguments of Wyclif, Tyndale, and the Lollards always remained outside of the mainstream of "acceptable sentiment." In the introduction to two Lollard tracts which he edited for the sixteenth century audience, Tyndale made appeals linking his own position to those people who had historically stood outside of the church, and who had also suffered at the hands of the temporal authorities. He said:

> Now good reder/ that thou mayst se playnly that it is no newe thynge/ but an old practyse of oure prelates lerned of their fathers the bysshops/ pharyses & prestes of the olde lawe to defame the doctrine of Christ with the name of newe lernynge/ and the techers thereof with the name of new maisters. I haue put forth here in printe this prayer and complaynte of the plowman. . . . I desyre the to rede it with descrecion and ernestly or euer thou iudge/ and if thou funde any thinge in it when thou has conferred it with the scriptures to thy edifycation or lernynge/ gyue god thankes. . . .[72]

His appeal in the introduction to the Examination of Master William Thorpe preste was similar. Tyndale called his readers' attention to the example of the prelates who examined people accused of heresy in "darkness," only to suffer the inevitable fate at the hands of the temporal authorities.[73]

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[72]Tyndale, Complaint, sig. A iii^{v}.

[73]Tyndale, examination of William Thorpe, sigs. A ii - A ii^{v}.

The persecutions of the Lollards by church and secular officials formed an important chapter in the history of the movement, even apart from affecting its overall influence. From the persecutions of the fifteenth century came some unique pronouncements concerning the relationship of the individual to the temporal authorities and concerning the relationship of the king to the church. These matters were carefully discussed by Wyclif and his followers, and their treatment of them established another important link with Tyndale's political thought.

The King, the Church, and the Heretics

The link between Tyndale's political thought and the thought of Wyclif and the Lollards concerning the problem of the king, the church, and the existence of heretics is very complex. Both Tyndale and Wyclif looked to the monarchy to reform the church, and there is a certain similarity in their ideas on this important issue. Tyndale also appealed to the figure of Wyclif and to his program of reform. To him it was one of the first instances when the light of the pure gospel had shown through the vain sophistry of the prelates' perversion of scripture.[74] Tyndale's appeal to the Lollards was of a slightly different nature. He looked to them because as a group, their existence and their relationship with the temporal and ecclesiastical authorities had been remarkably similar to his. The essential aspect of his appeal is evident in the various complaints which he found in Lollard tracts and which he aired for the members of the church who were being persecuted in his own time. Each

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[74]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. F 4.

aspect of this link between Tyndale, Wyclif, and the Lollards warrants careful investigation, beginning with the actual problem of the reform of the church by the monarchy. Once again, it is necessary to become involved in the complexities of Wyclif's political thought.

Wyclif's thoughts on the duty of the king to reform both his realm and the church are very significant with regard to the structure and the development of his thought. Again his essential pragmatism becomes important. The same sense of pragmatism which caused him to render ineffective his theory of dominion as it applied to the temporal lords was also very important with regard to the problem of the reform of the church. Should the temporal authorities await the actions of the papacy for a reformation of the church? Wyclif appeared to believe that a true pope was one who followed the example of the martyrs and fulfilled his pastoral duties with diligence and care.[75] But there were no such popes to be seen, and he replied that for many reasons, one should look to the king rather than the pope for any reformation. The man who saw the visible church as having been venal and corrupt did not expect too much from its members by way of reform.[76] Furthermore, it is arguable that his appeal to the monarchy rather than to the papacy was a result of his desire to limit severely the papacy's jurisdictional authority. One cannot advocate reform without first admitting that the person responsible for that reform had the jurisdictional authority to carry it out. And this was exactly what Wyclif denied with regard to the papacy and

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[75]Wyclif made this observation in spite of his ecclesiology.

[76]Wyclif, de Ecclesia, 352.

England.[77] This denial was, however, incomplete. He did not believe that the papacy had the jurisdictional authority to reform the church in England, but he did believe that the pope should advise the king on the proper use of his authority, especially with regard to the church.[78] If this advise was not forthcoming, then Wyclif suggested that the English king treat the pope as anti-Christ.

Just as he was forced to discredit the authority of the pope over the church in England, so was he forced to clarify the nature of the king's authority in this realm. Wyclif was fairly precise in this matter. The king, Wyclif suggested, wielded civil power which was not originally his, but which came from God. One aspect of this civil power in itself gave the king the authority to dominate the church and to bring its rebels into line.[79] He thought this to be true especially when the power of the church was lacking.[80] He also thought that it was necessary for the king to regulate the morals of all this subjects, and like Tyndale, he thought that "all" included the clergy. Wyclif based

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[77]Wyclif, de Potestate Pape, 227: Notet igitur home cartam caesaris de dotacione ecclesie XCVI distinccione constantinus cum allis cronicis, et videbit quod regnum nostrum, sicut non subiugatur imperio, sic nec Romano pontifici. . . .

[78]Wyclif, de Officio Regis, 245: Papa ergo debet regis instruere quomodo dedent ad honoren dei et edificacionem ecclesie ut huismodi potestate; quod si nitatur potestatem illam tam sacram a Deo singuliter datum diripere, rex cum gente sua debet sibi resistere tamquam pessimo antichristo.

[79]Wyclif, de Potestate Pape, 4: Potestas autem civilis est potestas dominative ad cohercendum rebelles ecclesie. . . .

[80]Wyclif, de Officio Regis, 6: Oportet enim quando branchium spirituale est insufficiens corripere obstinatos quod branchium seculare ipsos coherceat.

this aspect of the king's authority on the same rationale which Tyndale employed: Paul's idea that God had given the king the temporal sword to punish sin.[81] The forces of sin stood against order, and Wyclif thought that it was the duty of the king to protect order, not only within the church, but also within the totality of a Christian society.

This summary of Wyclif's thoughts on this question constitutes only a small fraction of his thoughts on the relationship of the king's authority to the church. However, even in their simplest form, his thoughts form an important link with Tyndale's thought. Wyclif never denied that the spiritual element of society exercised some degree of authority, and like many medieval political theorists, he was groping for some form of parallelism. But it was a parallelism which was very favorable to royal authority.[82] Wyclif was writing with centuries of papal hierocratic theory in plain view, and he deliberately placed the institution of kingship on the divine footing which he believed it should

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[81] Ibid., 119: Nec dubium quin potestas iurediccionis regis se extendit per totum regnum suum, super omnes legios suos, et in causa qualicunque super qua cadit viantis iudicum quod induceret pacem regni . . . Nam constat ex fide scripture quod nemo potest peccare nisi delibitata vel turbata fuerit pax cum deo et per consequens cum qualibit creature . . . rex potest et debet cognoscere in quocunque facto vel defectu sui regnicole per quod pacis tranquilitas turbaretur; et huismodi est qualecumque peccatum sui regnicole; ergo conclusio.

[82] Ibid., 13: Oportet ergo deum habere in ecclesia duos vicarios, scilicet regem in temporalibus et sacerdotem in spiritualibus. Rex autem debet severe cohercere rebellum, sicut fecit deitas in Vestari testamento. Sacerdos vero debet ministare preceptum neiti modo humilibus tempore legis gracie sicut fecit humanitas christi qui simul fuit rex et sacerdos.

have.[83] In this regard Tyndale's own statement that he intended to resurrect the honor and authority of the king's office is most significant.[84] Both men were reacting to the theory and practice of papal monarchy by exalting the king's office. It is impossible to discover from what source, if any, Wyclif took his concept of office. Tyndale found his by way of Luther. But for both men, with regard to the king, it meant the very same thing. God had placed a king in his office to fulfill the duties of that office. The office itself enjoyed divine sanction.

To be precise with regard to the king's authority and the church meant defining the actual limits of that authority. Both Wyclif and Tyndale attempted to do this, although Wyclif was considerably more precise than was Tyndale over one century later. For both men, that authority included the control over temporal things.[85] This became a very important issue during the English Reformation, and for Tyndale it meant just church lands. Wyclif was considerably more precise on this issue and dealt with the complex question of the king's law and

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[83] Ibid., 4: Rex enim est dei vicarius quem proximo dictum est esse timendum, ideo necesse est sibi sevari honorificendiam in eius vicarius. Wyclif used a variety of texts to support this but Tyndale's much used one in Paul's Epistle to the Romans appeared frequently.

[84] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. L. 4: we wolde have them vpp agayne & restored vnto the rowme and authorite which God hath geuen them.

[85] Wyclif, de Officio Regis, 66: Ex quo sequitur cum verio quod rex dominatur super omni clero suo legio quo ad corpus et per consequens super omnibus temporalibus bonis suis. Nam super omnibus homibus legiis et quibis cunque bonis eorum temporalibus dominatur.

sanctuaries of the church. His solution was favorable to royal authority.

Wyclif also believed that the king's authority allowed him to take control over certain areas which had previously been under the control of the church hierarchy, and through law, to enact certain reforms. First, he thought that the king should pass legislation insuring the residence of bishops in their dioceses.[86] By similar legislation, the king should also enforce residence of priests in all parishes.[87] Finally, he thought that the king should facilitate the study of theology.[88]

In some degree, Wyclif's ideas on the duty and authority of the king over the church must have changed simply because the work in which most of these considerations are found, de Officio Regis, was written before his de Potestate Pape. In this later work, as previously mentioned, Wyclif did away with the entire church hierarchy and with all gradations of authority within the church. These suggestions would have had an obvious effect upon his thoughts concerning the authority of the king over the church and even upon his specific proposals for a reformation of the church. The type of control which Wyclif believed that the king exercised over the church was largely administrative, and it is

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[86] Ibid., 152: Prima quod episcopi necessitentur in sua diocesi secundum foram legem ecclesie ad statum cleri sui attendere, defectus cleri corrigere, iniurias emendare et virtutes eorum secundum debitum premium commendere.

[87] Ibid., 163: Secundo lex est unde redderetur regno stabilitas quod rex ordinet per suos episcopos ut in cunctis suis ecclesiis parochialibus resideant curati qui sunt docti et animati in officio pastorali.

[88] Ibid., 176: Tercia lex regum stabilens foret dilatacio, defensio et rectificario theologice facultatis.

difficult to reconcile the development of his ecclesiology with this type of control. The parallels with Tyndale's thought are great. Earlier in his career Tyndale too believed that the king, by virtue of his office, had a certain degree of administrative control over the church. However, the vagueness of certain facets of his ecclesiology makes it difficult to assess the limits of that control. Yet one fact is clear: both Tyndale and Wyclif refused to grant the king any doctrinal authority within the church. Their senses of scripture prevented them from making this assertion.

It is also very interesting to compare Tyndale's thoughts on the question of royal control of the church with those of Wyclif's followers. The degree of control which Wyclif gave to the king in his de Officio Regis did not find its way into the Lollard beliefs, and the reason for this is readily apparent. The Lollards were not about to invest the authority to control the church in someone who was persecuting them at the time. However, the basic Lollard ecclesiology was also important in this rejection of administrative control. In one of the tracts which Tyndale edited its major figure was asked in his examination for heretical beliefs by what authority he claimed to preach. He replied:

> Syr by authorite of gods law & also of seintes & doctours I am lerned to deme/ ỳt it is euery priestes office and dutie for to preache besily frely and truely ỳe word of god.[89]

And in reply to the examiner's remark about the necessity of a license to preach, Thorpe said:

> for as mekess as we haue taken vpon vs ỳe office of priesthode . . . we come & purpose to fulfyll it with ỳe helpe of god by

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[89]Tyndale, Examination of William Thorpe, sig. C. iii.

> authorite of his owne lawe/ and by witnesse of great doctours & seintes accordingly herto trusting stedfastly in ye mercye of god. For he commaundeth vs to do the office of priesthode/ he will be oure sufficient letters & witnesse/ if we by example of his holy lyuing & teaching specially occupye vs faithfully to do our office iustly . . .[90]

This common Lollard opinion that a priest should perform his duties apart from any episcopal jurisdiction found its way into Tyndale's own thought.[91] For Tyndale, of course, the institutional church could not determine religious truths, nor could it determine the veracity of a priest.[92] Yet it is important to note that Tyndale's agreement with the Lollards on this issue was not complete, since he clearly did not believe that every man had the authority to preach.[93] This last point was a frequent assertion in many Lollard tracts.

For both Wyclif and his followers, another important aspect of the relationship between the king and the church pertained to the question of law. Here Wyclif was not thinking in terms of the jurisdiction of the king's law over the church clergy and its sanctuaries, but rather in terms of the relationship of the laws of God to the laws of the realm. With his followers, this problem became more narrowly defined, and they became concerned with law in the one sense which they usually encountered it on a day-to-day basis, namely, the king's justice and laws against heresy. However, the Lollards were also concerned with canon law and

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[90] Ibid., sig. C. iiii.

[91] This idea is also presented in James Todd, ed., An Apology for Lollard Doctrines Attributed to Wyclif (London, 1842), 5; and The Twenty-Five Points, in Arnold, III, 464.

[92] Tyndale, Answere, passim; Obedience, sig. O. 8.

[93] Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. O. 8 - O. 8^v^.

its relationship to the laws of God. Once again, certain aspects of their thought established important links with Tyndale's thought.

In the closing pages of his de Ecclesia, Wyclif discussed the problem of authority in the church, and he made an important pronouncement on the problem of law. The head of the church, he suggested, was Christ in his divinity. However, Christ in his humanity had left his testimony in sacred scripture for the regulation of the church. Man's regulation of Christ's church had to conform exactly to Christ's testimony.[94] Wyclif was probably implying that the papacy had ceased to make its actions conform with that testimony and had substituted a law of its own making instead--canon law.[95] This was one mark of the anti-Christ. This legalism, if the term can be used here, was also applied to law in its positive sense. Wyclif always expressed a healthy contempt for civil law, and it was a contempt which was based upon several considerations.

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[94]Wyclif, de Ecclesia, 562-3: ad tercium argumentum dicitur quod minor est falsa, cum deitas christi, scripture sacra et beatus petrus relecti sunt in ecclesia militante ad ipsam regulandam et eius dubia decidendum que tria secundum singulium non sunt vicarii santi Petri. Christus enim in asensione sua dereliquit humanitas deitatem suam in terris, sed non devisit cum corpulatus est sibi ypostatice, ubiqunque fuerit humanitas, et ipsa deitas et caput ecclesie. Christus autem humanitas relinquit testamentim suum in terris per quod voluit suam ecclesiam regulari, nec voluit quod crederetur alicui Petri vicario, nisi de quanto vivit et docet conformitur illi legi. Unde quiconque saderdos ecclesie post mortem Petri vivens et docens testamento illi conformiter potest racionabiliter dici Petri vicarius, sed specialiter ille qui vevit Petro conformius et ad istam doctriniam testamenti christi similius; et ille supponitur esse Romanus episcopus sed in synodis pro dubius dedidendis non est credendum ciucunque vivanti, nisi de quanto dictum suum fundaverit in scripture.

[95]Wyclif, de Potestate Pape, 121: ubi christus . . . gravi prohibuit quod non adderetur aliquid impertinenso; ego sue . . . iste Pseudo fabricant leges novas, que nusquam reperiuntur in scripture sacra.

First of all, he thought that civil law permitted too much evil. In other words, its conformity with the laws of God was not exact enough.[96] He also thought that it was too complex, too difficult to understand, and that the sheer number of civil laws in England detracted from the laws of God.[97] These considerations led Wyclif to advocate a measure of reform which in itself established an important link with the sixteenth century, and probably with the thought of Tyndale. In any Christian state the number of civil laws should be reduced.[98]

The idea that a Christian state required only few temporal laws was frequently expressed by reformers, humanists, and legal theorists of the sixteenth century. Probably, it should be viewed as a manifestation of a general dissatisfaction with positive law during the sixteenth century. Of course, different men expressed this dissatisfaction with different points of view in mind. Nevertheless, both Tyndale and Wyclif stood apart from the humanists who believed that only a few laws were necessary because somehow man could spontaneously keep the laws of the state. Both Tyndale and Wyclif rested their case against a multiplicity of civil laws on the ideas that they detracted

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[96]Wyclif, de Officio Regis, 190: Sed error multiplex est in lege civili sum permittit usuras exigere, meretrices uti in civitate sua arte, nec attendit in conquestibus, in iudiciis vel conversacionibus civium iusticiam ewangelice. This last point became very important in the Lollard beliefs concerning justice.

[97]Ibid., 56: Et patet prudencia quod leges ille sint pauce. Prime quia sunt principales execedentes statum innocentie, de talibus autem oportet servos dei solum necessariis contentari, quia super habundancia distraheret multipliciter a legi dei. Secundo quia multitudinis legum talum generacet confusionem. . . .

[98]Ibid., 190.

from the laws of God, and that in certain cases God's laws were in themselves sufficient for the operation of the Christian commonwealth. The two men shared remarkably similar sentiments concerning the worth of the Book of Deuteronomy and the law code which it contained.[99] Quite probably, the thoughts of Tyndale and Wyclif on the necessity of few temporal laws were part of a larger impulse in their thought which held, generally, that a commonwealth could be made truly Christian through the application of those laws which God himself had ordained for use in a Christian society.

This idea of the necessity of few laws of human origin for a Christian commonwealth was seemingly lost upon Wyclif's followers. In most Lollard tracts there is a decided shift in emphasis concerning the general problems of law, and one looks almost in vain for a treatment of the relationship of the laws of God to positive law. Instead, the Lollards concentrated on the relationship of canon law to the laws of God. They were also concerned with what they thought to be low standards of justice in the England of their own day. In both of these concerns their thought established important links with Tyndale's thought.

Many of the Lollard tracts displayed a knowledge of canon law which was remarkable, given the fact that Lollardy was a popular heresy and not a movement which was confined to the narrow enclaves of the

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[99]Wyclif, de Officio Regis, 49: Unde Deutronomium dicitur lex segunda et Deutronomis dicitur liber vel noticia. Ideo pertinent regibus habere Deutronomius huius legis. Unde quia lex ista est per se sufficiens ad regendum quam cumque rem publicam induditque. Tyndale's point of view here was remarkably similar. See his Prologue to the fifth book of Moses called Dueteronomye.

universities. In one of these tracts, An Apology for Lollard Doctrines, attributed to Wyclif, but almost certainly the work of one of his followers, the author presented some complaints which were echoed by Tyndale over a century later. Like Wyclif, the unknown author affirmed that:

> law canoun is contrary to Goddis lawe and that decretists, as to that part of wysdam that thei haue of the wordlis wisdam, are Egypciens.[100]

The reference to the decretals and the decretalists is unmistakable, and the hostility to them formed an essential aspect of the Lollards' rejection of canon law. The Lollards objected to the decretals, especially those entered into canon law between the years 1298 and 1326, because of the exemptions claimed for priests in them. Thus, in regard to the immunity from secular jurisdiction in general, the unknown author made two specific complaints:

> Tho gospel biddeth al men geld to th emperor thingis that are his, and to God tho thingis that are goddis, and Christ obeyed to princes of the world vndergoing the dede. . . . But now new law techith that no piest or clerk ow to soget to no seculer lord.[101]

He also remarked that:

> christ payid tribut for him and for Petre, and Ambrose accordith that feldis of the kirk pay tribut. But nowe newe lawe techith that with out consent of th bichop of Rome thei schal pay no tributis or taliagis.[102]

In the above passage the author has singled out provisions of the collection of papal decretals, Clementine Constitutis, which were added to the corpus of canon law by Pope John XXII in 1317.[103] In particular,

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[100] James Todd, ed., An Apology for Lollard Doctrines, Attributed to Wyclif (London, 1842), 73.

[101] Ibid., 76. [102] Ibid., 76. [103] Ibid., editor's note, 79.

he appears to have been referring to Clementinarum, lib IV.tit.xvii, de immunitate ecclesiarum, a provision which clearly claimed jurisdictional immunity for the clergy.[104] The unknown author also knew his Augustine, because he proceeded to complain that the enactments of Clementine Constitutis violated not only sacred scripture, but also the thought of the fathers of the church. Augustine, he told his readers, believed that "it pertineth to secular princes to punisch theis that synneth opinly."[105] In the Twenty-Five Points, an important statement of the Lollard creed, the author was less specific with regard to canon law. However, he suggested that canon law led to disobedience of the priests to secular lords.[106]

As previously noted, Tyndale had little to say about canon law, except in his Practyse of Prelates. But the criticisms which he made there were similar to those given by the Lollards over a century before. Like the Lollards, he thought that as a law it was not binding upon the Christian conscience, because it contradicted the laws of God. Canon law was the means by which the prelates and the popes ruled their temporal dominions.[107] He also thought that the prelates, through their actions and their separate laws, fostered a situation in the Christian commonwealth which led to disobedience, and which by its very nature, had not

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[104]Corpus Iuris Canonici, ed., Friedburg (Lipisae, 1879): Quod clericus apud seculares iudices accusandus non sit, Gaius papa . . . scribit dicens: nemo unquam episcopum aut reliquos clericos apud secularem accusare presumat.

[105]Todd, Apology, 76. [106]Twenty-Five Points, in Arnold, III, 460.

[107]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. D 7.

originally been intended by God. Like the Lollards, Tyndale believed that all men were subject to the authority of the king.[108]

A more significant link between Tyndale's thought and the thought of the Lollards is found in their attitudes towards the king's justice. The pogroms which the Lollards suffered at the hands of the church and temporal authorities gave rise to interesting complaints concerning the nature of heresy trial proceedings employed by the church, and in general, concerning the standard of the king's justice. Philosophically, the Lollards based their arguments on the premise that civil justice should correspond to divine justice since civil law corresponded to divine law. The point which they affirmed here was not that God never judged anyone, but rather that he never erred in his judgment. This premise led the authors of various Lollard tracts to some important conclusions. First, it was affirmed that any judge who passed judgment on an innocent man sinned mortally.[109] Furthermore, the idea that civil justice should correspond to divine justice led the Lollards to condemn the actual trial proceedings used by church courts. The author of the Apology said:

> God biddeth thee shalt not sey fals witnes . . . nor deme iniustly . . . (but) if a man be falsly accused bi two witnesses, if he deney it th he is accusid of, and graunt the soth, then he schal be condempned ther of as gilty.[110]

The exact nature of the author's protest is not crystal clear. However, the reference to two witnesses might imply that he was criticizing the proceeding ex officio. Under the rules of this proceeding, it was

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[108] Tyndale, Obedience, passim.

[109] Todd, Apology, 60.

[110] Ibid., 79.

possible to be charged with heresy by two witnesses for the church and to be convicted without knowing their names. It was also possible to be condemned for heresy if two witnesses would not attest to one's innocence. Finally, it was possible to be condemned on the basis of testimony given by a witness who had first testified in behalf of the defendant, then changed his mind.[111] It would appear that the author of this particular complaint has singled out the last aspect of the ex officio proceeding. Whether he was complaining against one particular aspect of the ex officio proceeding or against that proceeding in general, it is important to note that complaints of this sort were resurrected during the Reformation by a man who spoke in favor of modification of the heresy proceedings.

Tyndale picked up several of these Lollard complaints and employed them against the authority of the church. His arguments were designed with the idea in mind that the king should take control of the heresy proceedings, and that he, and not the clergy, should punish sin. His words on this matter were:

> Moare over the spiritual officer ought to punesh no synne/ but and yf any synne breake out the kynge is ordened to punesh it and they not: but to preach and exorte them to feare God and that they synne not.[112]

Tyndale made other suggestions on this matter which were in line with Lollard sentiments expressed in the tracts which he edited in 1530 and 1531, as well as in other important statements of Lollardy. First, Tyndale picked up the Lollard concern with justice. This was a rather

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[111]Christopher St. German, a dialogue betwixte two englyshemen, wherof one was called Salem, and the other Bizance (Londini, 1533), passim.

[112]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. K. 6^{v}.

selfish concern on his part. However, dissatisfaction with the justice of the church courts was an important aspect of Reformation anti-clericalism. Tyndale insisted that all judges were obligated to perform their functions impartially, "for the law was gods and not theirs."[113] This particular suggestion is vaguely reminiscent of the Lollard emphasis on the necessity of a close correlation between divine and human justice, although Tyndale's motivation for making this particular remark was probably his and Luther's concept of office. Tyndale also suggested that any king who carried out sentence upon a condemned person without first verifying the findings of the church courts was himself damned by God.[114] This idea is also very close to the position adopted by many Lollards. Finally, Tyndale suggested that persons being tried for heresy should be given the same legal advantages as those people being tried for treason.[115] This is a very interesting suggestion, simply because in one sense it separated Tyndale's thought from Lollard opinions, and in another, it took him very close to the position of Christopher St. German. In all probability, it did not occur to the Lollards to suggest that heresy procedures should correspond to other civil trials. They thought only in terms of human and divine justice. But it did occur to St. German, who thought that all heresy trial procedure should correspond to common law procedure.[116] Thus, Tyndale's thoughts on justice

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[113] Ibid., sig. G. 4[v].

[114] Ibid., sig. L. 7.

[115] Tyndale, examination of William Thorpe, sig. A. i.

[116] This idea forms one of the bases of St. German's attack on the heresy proceedings used by the church and their defense by Thomas More.

for heretics formed an important link not only with pre-Reformation dissent and the opinions of the Lollards, but also with the thought of another sixteenth century reformer, Christopher St. German.

This chapter has been a study of the continuity of ideas: ideas which first came from the pen of Wyclif and which were picked up by his followers in one form or another, only to be passed down to Tyndale. Several concluding remarks should be made concerning this continuity. First, that it existed is extremely important in itself, and most Reformation scholars are indebted to the research of Professor Dickens, who was the first person to realize the true dimensions of this unique undercurrent of thought. Professor Dickens has shown us, largely in concrete, quantitative terms, the nature of this undercurrent of thought. He has also shown us how the old heresy flowed together with the new.[117] Connections of this type, while undoubtedly significant, do little to illustrate the academic nature of the old heresy and the way in which it was related to the new. This particular problem has been the focal point of this chapter. The analysis of some of Wyclif's ideas, those of his followers, and a comparison of his ideas with certain aspects of Tyndale's thought has illuminated the intellectual aspect of this continuity. Important ideas were passed down from teacher to pupil, and from the pupils to the sixteenth century reformer, William Tyndale. These ideas included Wyclif's theory of dominion, his idea of the fall of the church, a hostility toward church property and civil law, and finally, a dissatisfaction with canon law and the low standards of

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[117]Dickens, "Heresy and the Origins of English Protestanism," 60.

justice in church courts. The analysis of these ideas has done much to clarify the nature of the anti-clericalism which was such an important part of Reformation political thought.

Two questions remain to be answered. First, how important was this anti-clericalism for the actual success of the English Reformation as a whole? Secondly, how important was this continuing current of ideas with regard to Tyndale's political thought? Undoubtedly, the anti-clericalism which has been the focus of much of this chapter contributed to the actual success of the Reformation in England and to the successful repudiation of papal power by Henry and Cromwell. However, there is a degree of truth to one historian's view of Wyclif's and the Lollards' achievements:

> Nothing is to be gained by overestimating the extent of the English heresiarch's achievement. His excesses and still more, those of his disciples made reform disreputable and prepared the way for the easy triumph of reaction. Lollardy had always appealed most strongly to the lower middle class; after 1414 that class monopolized it completely. That is why it had very little influence on the reformation when it came.[118]

These words were written twenty years ago and since that time the methodology of history has become very sophisticated. Now the assertion that Lollardy was a "lower class movement" would not go unchallenged. Nevertheless, the ever-present association of that creed with sedition did the Lollard movement such damage that it was rejected by the aristocracy and other influential members of the classes in England who were in a position to carry out a reformation. For this reason and others

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[118] K. B. McFarlane, John Wyclif and the Beginnings of English Non-Conformity (London, 1952), 186-7.

noted during the course of this discussion, Lollardy always remained outside of the mainstream of acceptable opinion. In all probability, it survived both the purges of the fifteenth century and of the Reformation to form the religious consciousness of English nonconformity.[119] It is interesting that the same is true with regard to Tyndale's achievements. In spite of the Matthew Bible and the King James Version, both of which owed a considerable literary debt to Tyndale's abilities as a translator, his theology contributed greatly to the English movement of Puritanism. This is not the place to discuss the history of Puritanism subsequent to its brief taste of power during the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, it probably stood, along with nonconformity, outside of acceptable sentiment.

It is a simpler task to evaluate Tyndale's debt to the Lollards. There would be no point in attempting to transform Tyndale into the figure of a sixteenth century Lollard, and there is no way to deny the debt which he owed to Luther, Erasmus, Vadianus and others. Somewhere among these men rest the figures of Wyclif and his associates. However, while the men of the sixteenth century played an important role in the formation of Tyndale's thought, Wyclif and the Lollards did not. This judgement is based, admittedly, on an incomplete investigation of Tyndale's theology in light of the Lollard creed. And while there are certain similarities, any evidence of a direct influence or large-scale borrowing on Tyndale's part is very, very slight. Furthermore, in the structure of his thought in its entirety, the development of his legalism and of his covenant

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[119] Ibid., passim.

theology is far more significant than any of the Lollard opinions which he used, primarily against the authority of the church. During the years 1530 and 1531, Tyndale looked back into history to find experiences similar to his own, and he was drawn to the figure of those unknown men. He used some of their ideas as weapons of controversy. He also interpreted his own experiences in light of theirs. During those years, the Lollards were important to Tyndale, and in my opinion, the tracts which he edited for a Reformation audience form an important part of his literary output.

The focus of this dissertation now shifts from a study of the continuity of ideas, of similarities and influences, to the study of the fsmous antagonism between Tyndale and Thomas More. Here the concern will not be an analysis of these two men's controversial works, More's dialogue concerning heresies and Tyndale's Answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge, but rather an analysis of the relationship of Tyndale's political thought to the intellectual current of Renaissance humanism and to the humanism of Thomas More and his Utopia.

CHAPTER V

WILLIAM TYNDALE AND THE UTOPIA OF THOMAS MORE

Does an investigation of More's Utopia belong in a dissertation on Tyndale's political thought? Within certain limits, yes. It is doubtful if any history of sixteenth century political thought has ever been written without its author devoting considerable effort to an analysis of the Utopia. In its own day and throughout the succeeding centuries, Utopia has remained one of the most celebrated visions of a Renaissance humanist, a milestone in the history of political thought.[1] No attempt to place Tyndale's political thought within the context of sixteenth century political thought would be complete without a consideration of More's Utopia, and without a comparison of the political thought of England's leading humanist with the thought of a man who remained largely untouched by the intellectual current of Renaissance humanism. This essential difference between Tyndale and More is also important with regard to the Tyndale/More controversy in its entirety. However, thus far, the problem of the relationship of Tyndale's political

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[1]There is some disagreement concerning the "humanism" in the Utopia because of the different ways in which this word is defined. Furthermore, like all great works of literature, the Utopia can be viewed in several ways: as the expression of a Renaissance Humanist; as a thoroughly medieval expression of political thought; or as a modern work. On this problem in general, see Professor Hexter's introduction to Utopia, "Utopia and Its Historical Milieu," in The Complete Works of Saint Thomas More, IV, 15-124. On More's humanism and its place in his controversial works, see Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants, 298-304.

thought to More's political thought as expressed in the Utopia has not been considered by those scholars currently involved in the "More Renaissance." The investigation of More's Utopia in light of Tyndale's political thought is justified, and the logical place to begin this investigation is with an analysis of Tyndale's and More's methods of dealing with political thought.

Tyndale and More: Political Theory and Political Science

One of the basic differences between the approaches of Tyndale and More to what is generally termed "political thought" lies in the different meanings of the two words "theory" and "science." When More published his Utopia in 1516, he produced a work of both political "science" and political "theory." When Tyndale wrote his Obedience of a Christian Man and his Practyse of Prelates in the years 1528 and 1530, respectively, he wrote works of political "theory." Now the difference between "theory" and "science" is not related to those qualities of precision or imprecision, although More was precise in the realm of political thought, while Tyndale was not. When More wrote book two of his Utopia, he constructed an abstract model of the best state of the commonwealth. To write political "science," most students of that discipline would tell us, means to construct a model, and More's model was Utopia, a place where the people had evolved solutions to those problems which plagued the members of a Christian commonwealth in the Europe of More's own day. Tyndale never did this. He never constructed a model of an ideal state. Under this definition of the term political "science," Tyndale never wrote anything like it. He was concerned with the theory of monarchy,

with the theory of authority in its general sense, and with the component parts of a Christian society. Tyndale wrote political theory.

However, Thomas More's approach was not restricted to only political "science," and his Utopia is at once both a work of political "science" and political "theory." Not all of the Utopia is a description of the best state of the commonwealth. Book one, which More composed after he had completed book two, consists largely of a dialogue in which the speakers appear determined to discuss the theory of humanism as it applied to the Europe of their own day.[2] It deserves the title of political "theory" more than political "science."

Like most distinctions of this sort, it would be a mistake to make the distinction between political "science" and political "theory" so absolute that as a result the essential unity of the Utopia would be sacrificed. In both sections of the book More was concerned with similar problems which can be generally called social philosophy. Nevertheless, the distinction between political "science" and political "theory" is real enough that it not only affected More's treatment of these problems in each book, but it also affected Tyndale's reaction to the Utopia. For example, with regard to More's political philosophy, in book one there is no indication that any of the speakers were thinking of government in any terms other than monarchy. More even said in the course of the dialogue, "from the monarch, as from a river . . . flows a stream of all

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[2]Professor Hexter has dealt extensively with the dating and the composition of the Utopia in a convincing fashion. See Utopia, The Complete Works of Saint Thomas More, IV, "Utopia and Its Historical Milieu." Unless otherwise stated, all references are to this edition of More's Utopia.

that is good or evil over the whole nation."[3] This is a medieval conception. However in book two, in Utopia, there is no king, and the country is governed by popularly elected officials. Utopia is a representative democracy. The point to be made here is that while More's own sense of authority was such that it led him to a preference for representative democracy as a form of government, the structure of the Utopia and the method he followed in writing book one caused him to adopt monarchy as the form of government in the dialogue.

The difference in methods also had an effect on Tyndale's reaction to More's Utopia. And to understand exactly how it affected him, one needs only look at the two criticisms of Utopia which Tyndale made during his career. In his Practyse of Prelates, while he himself was treating the evils of war, he remarked in passing:

> Then cometh the hole host home beggarde both greate and small. And the poore that cannot sodenlye gett worke falle to stealing and be hanged at home. This coude More tell in his Vtopia before he was the cardinalles sworne secretarye and fallen at his fote to betraye ye truth to gette promocyon.[4]

Three years later, in his exposicion vppon Mathew, Tyndale said:

> If I were come whome out of a lande where neuer man was before, and were sure neuer man shuld come, I might tell as manye wonders as Master More doethe of Vtopia, and no man rebuke me.[5]

Tyndale's criticisms of More's Utopia merit careful consideration. Two things are immediately clear. First, Tyndale had read the Utopia.

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[3]More, Utopia, 57.

[4]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. G 1.

[5]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. K 1.

Secondly, Tyndale's criticisms of More and his book follow fairly closely the structure of the Utopia itself. The first criticism is more a criticism of More himself. It forms part of the basis for the myth of the two Mores, the humane, tolerant humanist and the hunter of heretics. Tyndale was probably one of the very first to make this accusation, and with the help of John Foxe and others, it has followed More down to this very day. However, while Tyndale attacked More, he did not attack what More had to say. He was using him as a source to buttress his own thoughts on the evils of war. Nevertheless, his silence concerning More's work in the first quotation becomes extremely significant in light of what Tyndale had to say in his second criticism.

Tyndale gave us this second criticism approximately three years after the first, and he was attacking not More in person but his work. More particularly, he was attacking book two of the Utopia. There are two possible explanations for the different angles of attack used by Tyndale in the Practyse of Prelates and in the exposicion vppon Mathew. When he was writing the Practyse of Prelates, it is apparent that he had also begun his Answere to More's dialoge. A criticism of Utopia would have been out of place in this work, but a personal attack on More himself was easy to fit in. Thus he used More's thought, but attacked him in person. By the time that Tyndale wrote his exposicion vppon Mathew, he had finished his polemical debate with More. But then why would he have reached back seventeen years into the past to attack More's work? In his exposicion vppon Mathew, Tyndale was concerned with the problems of a Christian society, just as More had been in his Utopia. Perhaps personal animosity had given way to an honest attack on More's method.

Tyndale was working on a different level and using a different method than the one adopted by More in book two. Tyndale was concerned with England as it was and not with an imaginary society located somewhere on the other side of the Atlantic. Quite possibly, Tyndale attacked More's work, in particular book two, because in 1533 he was concerned with similar problems, and he found More's method of discussing these problems unsatisfactory. It is also possible, however, that Tyndale never attacked book one of More's work because he was in general agreement with large portions of it. In other words, beneath the criticism of a man and his work given us by Tyndale, is found an approval of book one of the Utopia and a condemnation of book two.

It is unfortunate that Tyndale considered book two of the Utopia as More's personal flight into the realm of imaginative fancy, for it means that in all probability, Tyndale failed to understand More's subtle irony and his portrayal of a non-Christian people's behavior as being more "Christian" than their Christian counterparts. If this was the case, and his criticism of More's work in his exposicion vppon Mathew indicates this much, then Tyndale also failed to comprehend the essential unity of the Utopia. Nevertheless, Tyndale's use of More's ideas in the first part of the Utopia and his apparent sympathy for More's aims in that part provide the student of Tyndale and More with the hint that it would be profitable to explore book one in light of Tyndale's own social and political philosophy.

Tyndale and the Vision of Actuality

One of the essential differences between the two books of More's Utopia is simply that book one discusses England as it actually was in the sixteenth century, while book two is More's vision of England as it should have been.[6] Like the division between political "science" and political "theory," this particular division is also important. It affords the student of Tyndale and the Utopia the unique opportunity to compare the humanist's view of England in his own time with Tyndale's own view, since Tyndale was always concerned with England as it existed. In other words, Tyndale, in his numerous works, was concerned with the same England which More and his humanist associates spent a great deal of time discussing in book one of the Utopia.

Of the several topics which More and Tyndale treated in common, none was more important than the topic of good government. The ideal of good government was very important to the entire dialogue of counsel, one of the crucial sections of book one. Fundamental to this dialogue was the crisis of civic service. To serve or not to serve, this was the question hotly debated by More, Giles, and their associates. Their concern was directly related to the two problems which stood out in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; the general problem of good government, and the problem of counsel.[7] By the men of these times,

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[6]Edward Surtz, S.J., "Utopia as a Work of Literary Art," in Utopia, cxxv-cxxx.

[7]J. H. Hexter, More's Utopia: The Biography of an Idea (New York: 1965), 110.

both issues were considered critical for the well being of any commonwealth. The way in which humanists like More and Giles discussed these problems and the answers which they gave throughout book one are worth careful investigation, since Tyndale was also concerned with these two problems.

In book one of the Utopia when More equated the king with a spring from which "flows a stream of all that is good or evil over the whole nation," he was giving in part the response of men of the fifteenth centuries to the problem of good government.[8] For the humanist and the nonhumanist alike, a concern for good government generally meant a concern for a well-functioning monarchy. Humanists thought of government in terms other than monarchy also, but in the first book of the Utopia, More stood close to the attitude of Erasmus whose Education of a Christian Prince was published in the same year as the Utopia. More, when he made the above statement, was also echoing the familiar medieval idea of the mirror of princes genre of political analysis which equated the health of a commonwealth with the wisdom of the prince. More, of course, transcended this idea in the second book of his Utopia.[9] But in book one, the reality of the situation led him and the other humanists to equate the health of the country with the figure of the prince.

Humanists like More and Erasmus did not inherit this mirror of princes idea of political analysis without developing it in a substantial way. First, given their emphasis on education and their belief in the

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[8]More, Utopia, 57.

[9]Hexter, "Utopia and Its Historical Milieu," cxviii.

improvement of man through the educational process, they were led to write treatises dealing with the education of the prince. Here, the fundamental idea was that if the prince received a good, humanist education as a child, he would be better equipped to govern in a more civilized manner. In line with More's own statement, this they thought would ultimately benefit the entire kingdom.[10] The second humanist development of this idea of the importance of the prince for the commonwealth is summed up by More's own words to Raphael in the dialogue of counsel:

> But it seems to me that you will do what is worthy of you and this generous and truly philosophic spirit of yours if you so order your life as to apply your talent and industry to the public interest, even if it involves some personal disadvantage to yourself.[11]

The call to service which More himself eventually recognized was not seen by the humanists as an alternative to the education of a prince, but rather as another step which would bring better government to a kingdom. The humanists, then, suggested both the education of the prince and the use of humanistically trained advisors as their response to the general problem of good government in the sixteenth century.

More treated both of these themes in his Utopia. However, one of the truly interesting things about the entire dialogue of counsel and book one in general is that More did not emphasize the role of the education of the prince with regard to the problem of good government. Several reasons account for his failure to accord this traditional

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[10] These were the assumptions of Erasmus when he wrote the Education of a Christian Prince.

[11] More, Utopia, 57.

humanist idea a place of importance in book one of the Utopia. First, it would appear that the structure of the book itself and especially the structure of the dialogue of counsel did not lend itself to a long diatribe on the virtues of education and the proper program of studies for a prince to follow. Secondly, when More wrote most of book one upon his return from the Netherlands, the call to service and the entire humanist dilemma of the active versus the contemplative life loomed large in his mind. As a result of this, one need not be surprised that this theme and in general the problems of counsel should have been accorded a place of importance in book one, even at the expense of the humanist emphasis on education. Finally, it is possible that More was slightly disillusioned with the very potential of education itself. For the humanists, Henry's decision to take the old way rather than the new and to renew the Hundred Years War with a vigor characteristic of his love of the martial arts, was a distressing one. By November, 1511, any illusions in the humanist circles concerning the positive results of Henry's humanist education must have been dispelled.[12] The case of More's own disillusionment with the educational process is strengthened by other considerations in the Utopia: his decision to seek other sources for the guidance of the society rather than the usual humanist stress on the prince himself; his use of law in its Aristotelian sense, and his belief that it should lead men to virtue; finally, in book two, his decision to make

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[12]J. J. Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, 40.

man's basic rationality a more important factor in Utopian society than education itself.[13]

Given More's general silence concerning education in book one of the Utopia, the entire problem of good counsel becomes even more significant. There is no need to retrace the elaborate arguments which More and the speakers used in favor of and against the active participation in the affairs of government. Important, however, is More's philosophy and his decision to serve. His own philosophy is summed up by his own words to his humanist associates:

> If you cannot pluck up wrongheaded opinions by the root, if you cannot cure according to your heart's desire vices of long standing, yet you must not on that account desert the commonwealth. You must not abandon the ship in a storm because you cannot control the winds.[14]

It appears that we are finally presented with a rather pessimistic solution to the general problem of good government. Without the traditional, humanist belief in the education of the prince, and with this pessimistic view of the ability of a humanist-trained councillor to influence the course of government, we are left only with the actual duty of those qualified to serve to attempt to remedy the ills of government.

A comparison of More's views on the humanist and the commonwealth, and the humanist development of the mirror of princes ideal with Tyndale's own thoughts on good government is interesting. Tyndale, like the

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[13]See below where I have argued that in Utopia itself, man's basic rationality is more important to Utopian society than the products of education. Utopia appears to be founded on a type of rationality which cannot be gained through instruction.

[14]More, Utopia, 99.

speakers in the first book of the Utopia, considered this problem of good government only in relationship to monarchy. His motivation was partially like that of the speakers in book one. At times, Tyndale was a political realist, and he recognized the importance of the king to his own program of reform and to the Reformation in general. However, his realism was also reinforced by certain theological assumptions which led him to think of government only in terms of monarchy. The numerous impulses which influenced Tyndale's thought have been discussed previously.[15] Unlike the humanists who had other examples of government to choose from, drawn from the writings of the political philosophers of antiquity, Tyndale regarded monarchy as the only divinely instituted form of government. Thus, his belief in monarchy was considerably stronger than that of the humanists who speak to us in the first book of the Utopia. And as will be seen, Tyndale's actual conception of monarchy was distant from the one which More advocated in book one.

Tyndale's treatment of the mirror of princes ideal of government established another important difference between his thought and the thought of the humanists. Essentially, Tyndale used two variations of this idea. Later in his career, in his exposicion vppon Mathew, he viewed the king in such a way that he stood within a reasonable distance of the humanists' treatment of him. In that work, the king provided an important spiritual example for the entire commonwealth to follow.[16]

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[15]See above, Chapter I, 10-11, where I have explored this aspect of Tyndale's thought in detail.

[16]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, passim.

The distance between him and someone like Erasmus was not that great. However, earlier in his career, Tyndale's treatment of the mirror of princes ideal was remarkably different from that of the humanists. Tyndale's Augustinianism was extremely pronounced at times, and this dependence upon Augustine's thought was one of the factors which led him to conceive of the mirror of princes ideal in the opposite way in which it was normally understood during the sixteenth century. Tyndale's belief that the ever-present hand of God was waiting to punish the transgressors of divine law and his belief that kings were mere instruments of God who implemented His justice, led him to reverse the mirror of princes ideal. Tyndale maintained that the overall spiritual state of the commonwealth influenced the actions of the prince. For him, the equation became not, as the prince went, so went the commonwealth, but rather as the commonwealth went, so went the prince.

Tyndale's reversal of this traditional equation of the mirror of princes type of analysis did not prevent him from affirming some of the very same points which the humanists themselves thought germane to the problems of good government. In the Obedience this similarity to the humanists' position was not very pronounced, and Tyndale only mentioned in passing that numerous kings of history had perished because of their lack of learning.[17] However, by the time that Tyndale had begun to write his Practyse of Prelates, his humanism had become more significant. One of the assumptions which he made throughout that work was that history did teach a lesson, a common humanist belief, and that the kings and

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[17]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. K. 8.

emperors should guide their own policies towards the church with the misdeeds of the popes and prelates in mind.[18]

Tyndale also dealt with the problem of counsel and the importance of good royal advisors for the welfare of a commonwealth. Once again, his treatment of a topic also discussed by the speakers in the first book of the Utopia becomes the substance of an interesting and revealing comparison of the political outlook of Tyndale and More.

One of the problems attacked by the speakers in the dialogue pertained to the actions of royal advisors. Probably echoing his own view of the situation, More had Raphael say:

> Besides privy councillors are either too wise to need, or too conceited to take advice from anyone else--though of course they're always prepared to sup up to the king's special favorites by agreeing with the silliest things they say. After all, it's a natural instinct to be charmed by own productions.[19]

More, indirectly through the figure of Raphael, has lodged two complaints concerning the practices of royal advisors. His words should be seen as part of a large, general hostility towards the ever-present flatterer and the practice of giving advice with only one's personal gain in mind. In the above passage, More was also complaining about the prevalence of the king's favorites at court, since they were able to exert a considerable measure of influence on royal policy. Finally, he was stating in his own pessimistic fashion, the belief that there was no room for philosophy at the king's court.

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[18]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, passim.

[19]Thomas More, Utopia, trans. Peter Turner (London, 1965), 42.

Given the prevalence of the complaints against the evils of flattery during the sixteenth century, it is hardly surprising that a political theorist of even the unschooled sort, like Tyndale, would have included some condemnation of them in his own works.[20] Nor is it surprising that his complaints pertaining to this traditional evil should take on the characteristics of his own view of history--the domination of the prelates in the affairs of government. The nature of Tyndale's view of flattery established one of the essential differences between his and More's discussion of this important topic. To understand this difference, it is necessary to consider the various points which Tyndale made concerning the ascendancy of the prelates at court, then to explain More's silence on this very point.

In his Answere to Mores dialoge, Tyndale charged that:

> the general counsels of the spiritualtye ar of no nother maner sens the pope was a god then the generall parlamentes of^{ye} temporaltie. Where no man dare saye his mynde frely and liberally for feare of some one of his flaterars.[21]

In Tyndale's mind, all flatterers were prelates, and those people who plagued the court of kings and the representative assemblies of the church were loyal, not to the kings or to the church, but rather to the pope. Tyndale thought that they played an important part in the contemporary political alignment of Europe, since by design they hoped to keep the temporal kingdoms weak, and thus allow for the easy triumph of the pope's

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[20]Tyndale gave us complaints against them in both his Obedience and his Answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge.

[21]Tyndale, Answere, sig. N 3.

own foreign policy.[22] Internally, with regard to countries like Germany and England, these same men were responsible for numerous social ills, as well as for the evils of war. Good government was not possible as long as they were in power simply because by casting "a supersticious feare apon the worlde of christen men," they were able to keep the wise laymen away from the king.[23] To Tyndale, then, the return of good government in England and elsewhere was dependent upon the expulsion of the prelates from the courts and councils of the kings. If that could not be arranged, then probably he would have agreed that the expulsion of just one prelate, Cardinal Wolsey, would have been a good start in the right direction.

These beliefs which Tyndale developed over the course of the two years in which he wrote both the Obedience and the Practyse of Prelates, and the special consideration which he gave to Wolsey are significant for two reasons. First, in regard to the subsequent historiography of the Reformation, there is no doubt that Tyndale made his mark on the interpretation of Wolsey's career. While it is doubtful if a historian of the stature of A. F. Pollard would have taken Tyndale's hostile anticlericalism at face value, there is a great deal of similarity between this eminent historian's treatment of Wolsey and Tyndale's own view of him. Tyndale had charged Wolsey with having pursued a separate foreign policy which was the result of his crowning ambition to become pope. War

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[22]These charges and others are put into perspective by Pineas, "Tyndale's Use of History as a Weapon of Religious Controversy," 121-141.

[23]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. J. 5^{v}.

and separate foreign policies were Wolsey's instruments of ambition.[24] Both of these points were emphasized by Pollard.[25] Tyndale's anti-clericalism and his own hatred of Wolsey also caused him to view the entire divorce as having been part of Wolsey's foreign policy. He thought that since the emperor had refused him his desire, Wolsey had planned the divorce as a personal vendetta against Charles and his family.[26]

Tyndale's treatment of the prelates and of Wolsey is also significant in view of More's silence about the same subjects in his Utopia. Part of this silence is undoubtedly related to the fact that Tyndale was writing about Wolsey at the end of his career and had more information to draw from, while More wrote his Utopia before Wolsey's stars were solidly fixed in the heavens. However, this explanation is not totally adequate since Wolsey, through his life style and his rise to power, in part as Henry's quartermaster for the French campaign, would have offended More's belief in a deep, pervasive spirituality as well as his appreciation of pacifism. Wolsey's foreign policy might have been geared towards peace, but a pervasive spirituality was never one of his better qualities. In spite of these considerations, there is no apparent shortage of explanations for More's silence concerning Wolsey, although no one has bothered to explain his silence on the activities of the prelates.

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[24]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sigs. H 3^{v} - H 5^{v}.

[25]Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, 72-75. In his treatment of Wolsey, Professor Scarisbrick provides us with an interesting and useful summary of Pollard's thesis.

[26]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sigs. H 3^{v} - H 5^{v}.

There are two explanations concerning More's silence over the figure of Wolsey which deserve close consideration. The first, given us by Professor Scarisbrick, has a great deal of merit, since it puts Wolsey into the perspective of More's own life. Mr. Scarisbrick, arguing against Pollard's accepted explanation of Wolsey's foreign policy, suggests that in fact his aim was not war but peace; that his aspirations to the papacy did not exist--that they were really Henry's aspirations; and that More probably considered Wolsey as a member of his own humanist community. Mr. Scarisbrick further suggests that Wolsey's actual presence in the government might have assisted More in making his own fateful decision to serve.[27]

Professor Hexter has also dealt convincingly with the problem of More's silence concerning the figure of Wolsey. He maintains that More did not criticize Wolsey because More was in essential agreement with his domestic policy. One of the groups of people whom More scorned in his Utopia was the nobility. He saw them as a useless warrior class, and Professor Hexter believes that Wolsey's program of social justice and his attempt to curb the powers of that class would naturally have affected More's opinion of the Cardinal.[28]

Neither Professor Scarisbrick nor Professor Hexter had any reason to be concerned with More's silence concerning the activities of the prelates, and little of what they said about Wolsey is applicable to this

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[27]Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, 75.

[28]Hexter; More's Utopia, 146.

problem. Tyndale's complaints about the prelates' activities were the result of his view of authority. It was both narrow and static, and it included the belief that God had originally ordained the two orders of society to be separate in some ways and joined in others. He also believed that any man who filled God's offices could exercise only the authority of that office. The authority of the office of priest or bishop was to preach Christ, not to rule a temporal kingdom. All these considerations were responsible for Tyndale's complaints about the activities of the prelates in government.[29]

More, at least in his Utopia, did not uphold this narrow sense of authority. In fact, the consideration of the heights and limits of royal authority as it pertained to the church, or of the authority of the church over kings and emperors, did not concern More in 1516. Nevertheless, he was probably in sympathy with Tyndale's actual criticism of the clergy, especially of the bishops, who could not find the time to pursue their pastoral duties because of their involvement with politics.[30] Both Tyndale and More agreed that the level of the clergy was important for the church and the commonwealth, and both men were critical of the clergy in a general sense. But the difference between Tyndale and More, at least in the Utopia, was that Tyndale stressed the deficiency of the higher orders of the clergy, while More preferred to concentrate on the faults of the lower orders. Tyndale was critical of the bishops not only for

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[29]Tyndale, Obedience, passim.

[30]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. E. 6.

their interference in secular politics, but also for their failure to perform their appointed function within the church. However, in book one of the Utopia, Cardinal Morton participates in the dialogue, gives respectable comments, and obviously has the respect of his associates. A friar does not fare so well. In fact, in the dialogue between Cardinal Morton and the friar, it is clear that More's sympathies rest with the Cardinal. More makes the friar seem like an uneducated fool.[31]

The previous comments by Professor Hexter reveal still another difference between the ideas of Tyndale and More concerning the problems of flattery and the duties of leadership. Tyndale's basic complaint against the prelates, apart from the considerations of authority, was not unlike Raphael's. Raphael had complained that the presence of self-rewarding councillors prevented the better ones from having any effect on the course of government. Tyndale, of course, made these same charges against the prelates. But Tyndale, unlike More, assumed that the nobility as a whole were the people who were most capable of advising the king. And this was precisely the class of people which More most detested and which he thought guilty of creating much social disturbance. Tyndale's sympathy for this class of people was almost as great as his opponent's dislike of them. Not only did he view the nobility and not necessarily the humanists as having possessed the necessary qualities for royal service, although he never told us what those qualities were in any detail, his sympathy for them as a class was as great as his sympathy for the common man. Tyndale thought that both groups suffered as a result of the

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[31]More, Utopia, trans. Turner, 55-56.

prelates' bellicose foreign policy. The poor were taxed mercilessly, and the nobility were obliged to sell their lands.[32] Tyndale's sympathy for the nobility, his belief that their ranks should provide the royal councillors, his concern with the activities of the prelates, his equation of their activities with the ever-present plague of flattery, all these considerations establish important differences between his and More's views of the mundane problems of government. The enormous distance which separated the thoughts of these two men with regard to the problem of government becomes even clearer with an analysis of their respective ideas on the nature of kingship.

Tyndale and More: On Royal Authority

In book one of the Utopia, More and his associates consistently speak of government only in terms of monarchy. However, in the course of their discussion, they evolved a theory of monarchy which was drastically different from Tyndale's. These differences were partially the result of the different orientations of each man. More, the humanist, evolved a concept of monarchy which was, like Tyndale's, severely limited. However, it was limited by considerations which were foreign to Tyndale's mind. In short, More's theory of kingship was "people" orientated, but Tyndale's theory of kingship was decidedly theocentric. Pace Paul Oskar Kristeller, the word "humanism" does imply a concern with things human, and an investigation of certain passages in the Utopia

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[32]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. F 8^{v}.

demonstrates the effects of More's humanism and Tyndale's theocentricism upon their concepts of kingship.

More made several interesting pronouncements concerning the theory on monarchy which established his own thoughts on a different level from Tyndale's. When he discussed the theory of monarchy, there is no doubt that he considered it to have been severely limited by several factors. In the course of the dialogue of counsel, Raphael made this important and lengthy statement:

> At this point, suppose I were again to rise and maintain that these counsels are both dishonorable and dangerous for the king. . . . Suppose I should show that they (the people) choose a king for their own sake and not for his--to be plain, that by their labor and effort they may live well and safe from injustice and wrong. For this very reason, it belongs to the king to take more care for the welfare of his people than for his own, just as it is the duty of the shepherd, insofar as he is a shepherd, to feed his sheep rather than himself.[33]

There is much of importance here. Raphael was probably speaking for More himself. And apart from suggesting that the kind had the duty of taking care of his people, a point commonly affirmed by both More and Tyndale, Raphael has obliquely suggested that it is the people who choose the king and that his authority came not from God directly, but rather mediately through the people.[34] Elsewhere, More himself remarked that a king should not have the authority to govern for "one instant longer than his subjects wished."[35]

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[33] More, Utopia, 95.

[34] More's use of the verb "deligere" in the Latin text is indicative of this concept of authority. Editors' note, Utopia, 366.

[35] Ibid., 366. The quotation is taken from his Epigrams.

Before examining the great distance which these thoughts established between the political philosophies of More and Tyndale, it is important to put them into perspective with what More had to say about monarchy in book two of the Utopia. In Utopia there was no king, for More had made the original conqueror of the island conveniently disappear. This fact in itself established More's clear preference for a representative form of government. It also made the distance between him and Tyndale even greater. However, in book one where More was forced by his method and by the structure of the book itself to work within the existing political framework of England and Europe, he could do only the next best thing to doing away with monarchy altogether. He made it dependent upon the wishes and the authority of the people.

The two alternatives which More offered as theories of government, a popular democracy and a monarchy in which the authority was derived from the consent of the people, were both far removed from Tyndale's conception of government. Tyndale never thought of government in any other terms than monarchy, a fact which has been emphasized in the course of this dissertation. However, his monarchy, although as limited as was More's, was limited by considerations other than by the consent of the people. Tyndale always thought of the monarchy in the terms of office. This was a Lutheran idea which he first used in his Obedience and which he continued to employ throughout his career. Like More, Tyndale did not believe that the king's authority came directly from God, although other aspects of his thought made Tyndale's sense of authority mean essentially the same thing. He thought that the authority which any king used was given to him by God, indirectly, through the office

which he filled. The king was responsible directly to God since the authority which he used was God's, and the king had the responsibility of using that authority in the way that God intended it to be used. However, in this chain of authority, there was no room for the wishes of the people. Tyndale frequently warned his king that the people were not his but God's.[36] The meaning of these words is clear. Tyndale believed, unlike More, that the king owed his authority to God and not to the consent of the people. The king was responsible _for_ the people but not _to_ the people. More, in the first book of the _Utopia_, did not make this distinction.

The applications of these two different senses of authority by Tyndale, and by More in the first book of the _Utopia_, are as important as the theories themselves. Much of what Tyndale had to say concerning the political responsibility of subjects to their king is characterized by his emphasis on obedience, so much so that the title of this study, _The Freedom of Obedience_, is descriptive of his political thought. Tyndale refused to see this relationship between subject and ruler in any other light. True, it was a light which was shaded by important theological overtones. However, in one of the very last things which he wrote, he explicitly denied that any contractual relationship between king and subject existed in the sense that the wishes of the people were binding on the actions of the king. For Tyndale, obedience and the duty

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[36] Tyndale, _Obedience_, sig. V. 1 - V. 1^{v}.

of obedience did not include the right to change any aspect of government.[37]

More also applied his own sense of authority in book one of the Utopia. Raphael, through his reference to Nolandia, at once gives us a glimpse of life in the new world and applied More's sense of authority. In Nolandia, we are told by Raphael, a situation developed in which a king by conquest had gained two kingdoms to govern and as a result was governing both badly. At this point, the Nolandians:

> seeing that this hopeless situation would continue indefinitely, if they didn't do something about it . . . finally decided on a course of action, which was to ask the king quite politely, which kingdom he wanted to keep. "You can't keep them both," they explained, "because there are too many of us to be governed by half a king."[38]

The problem was resolved, at least to the satisfaction of the subjects, for the king was obedient to the wishes of his subjects and gave the newly conquered kingdom to a friend.[39] Here, More has applied his sense of authority in such a way to allow the voice of the people to prevail in government. While the Nolandians had not actually rebelled against their king, they had done something which was totally against Tyndale's theory of government. Subjects did not choose their rulers and make them swear to keep their laws, and to maintain their privileges and their liberties. "I answer youre argument is nought," Tyndale replied

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[37]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sigs. F 4 - F 4^{v}.

[38]More, Utopia, trans. Turner, 59.

[39]Ibid., 59-60.

to those people like More who upheld this argument.[40] Rather, he maintained that:

> For the husband swereth to his wyfe: yet though he forswere him selffe. she hath no power to compell him. also though a master kepe not couenaunt with his servaunt, or one neyboure with another: yet hath nether seruaunt, no ner yet neyboure . . . power to aduenge: But the vengeaunce pertayneth euer to an hyer offycer, to whome thou must complayne.[41]

Contrasting these sentiments with those expressed by Raphael in book one of the Utopia, another important difference between the philosophies of Tyndale and More becomes evident. Tyndale's own sense of authority was so static and hierarchical that it precluded any individual participation in government, based upon the consent of those governed. More's view was exactly the opposite. Without the consent of those governed, without their participation in government, he evidently believed that the road to tyranny was close at hand.[42]

Whether Tyndale and More were discussing the theory of monarchy or applying their theories to the everyday problems of political life, the results were the same--a broadening of the distance which separated the political philosophy of the two men. To some degree, this difference was a result of More's humanism and Tyndale's theocentrism. However, it was also a result of Tyndale's failure to be affected by the Renaissance current of conciliarism as well as that of humanism.

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[40]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. G 7^{v}.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Richard Marius, "Thomas More's View of the Church," The Complete Works of Saint Thomas More, VII, passim.

More was a conciliarist to the very end, and his belief that government should be dependent upon the consent of those governed was a manifestation of his conciliarism. As Professor Marius has shown us, More feared the tyranny which he thought would result from Tyndale's very sense of authority as much as he feared death.[43] Ultimately, Tyndale believed in a monarchy that was as restricted as More's in the first book of the Utopia. But it was restricted by God's word and one man's understanding of that word. Tyndale's legalism and his literalism might have persuaded him that the word was clear to all. However, the subsequent history of the Reformation showed this not to have been the case.

Tyndale, More, and the Theory and Practice of Law

Another interesting and important area of investigation is Tyndale and More's ideas on the nature of law. Tyndale was not well versed in the laws of England, but Thomas More was. This was his job, and as a common lawyer, judge, and Lord Chancellor of the realm, he worked daily with the considerable body of law which had developed in England. He was well aware of its content and also of the procedural aspects of this complicated body of law.[44] He probably knew his canon law better than did Tyndale.[45] Finally, he was certainly well aware of the deficiencies

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[43] Ibid.

[44] This particular aspect of More's knowledge of the law figured prominently in his controversy with St. German. See The Debellacyon of Salem and Bizance (London, 1533), sigs. G 7 - H 5.

[45] See Schoeck, "Canon Law on the Eve of the Reformation," 125-147. Of course, this is no great compliment to More since Tyndale's knowledge of canon law was slight.

of the English legal system. With the exception of canon law, More carried his knowledge of English law with him into his Utopia. The question of the theory of positive law, its validity, and its use figures prominently in book one. And as is the case with other important ideas which are discussed in the dialogue, More applied the underlying theory in book two.

It was not More's purpose to explain systematically the various types of law and their relationship to each other in the first book of the Utopia. Nevertheless, reading through this section of the Utopia, one finds mention of the usual categories of law which were employed during the sixteenth century, and during the Middle Ages, in an attempt to classify it. One finds reference to the law of God in a general sense, which More, like his medieval counterpart, thought to have been one of the bases for all law. More specifically, one also finds reference to the law of Moses which was seen as one aspect of the law of God. Finally, there are several references to the laws of man or positive law. But in the first book of the Utopia, More appeared to have been most concerned with positive law, and he discussed it without any reference to natural law. This is unusual. The first consideration should be an attempt to explain More's preoccupation with the laws of man and his apparent lack of concern with natural law.

In part, More's decision to concentrate on the laws of man was probably a result of his own practice as a lawyer. Certainly, he was most familiar with this body of law, for he worked with it daily. More important still was probably his actual discontent with the laws of men. They were not leading man to virtue, nor were they leading to justice.

Rather, they were leading to greater injustice and to greater social evil. The man who realized that it was necessary to change the institutions of society in order to perfect that society would certainly have concentrated on law, because it was one of the most important institutions. This was exactly what More did, and in terms of the structure of his social thought, the decision in book two to have only a few laws corresponds to the decision to abolish all private property. More upheld a belief in law in its Aristotelian sense. It was supposed to lead men to virtue.[46] Since the Utopians were themselves so virtuous and so well educated, only few laws were required.[47]

More's failure to use the traditional category of natural law in book one of the Utopia is harder to explain. Quite possibly, in a manner very close to Tyndale's own thoughts on this matter, More equated the law of nature with the law of God. Now in the first book, he clearly believed that the laws of God should be used to judge the laws of man. This was also a traditional function of natural law, and if More did equate the two, then it would explain his failure to discuss this important aspect of law.

There is one other explanation for the absence of references to natural law in book one of the Utopia. Any explanation of More's sense of natural law must take into account the way that he employed it in book two. In book two, More employed the idea of natural law in an

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[46] More, Utopia, passim. This idea is implied throughout the first book.

[47] Ibid., 195.

extremely broad sense. Utopians were natural men insofar as they lived by, and their institutions were founded upon natural law in the sense of human reason.[48] The Utopians were the best of men, partially because they were so reasonable. There, in Utopia, one finds only few laws as only few were needed, no contradiction between the dictates of natural law and the laws of man, and a situation where the punishment for a crime was not predetermined, but decided by the Senate.[49] The one exception to this procedure was for the crime of adultery which carried with it the mandatory death penalty, and here, More was probably echoing the complaints of Erasmus and other humanists that a man could be more severely punished for a minor crime like theft than for an act so contrary to the Christian faith.

More's thoughts on the nature and function of law in book two should be compared with his complaints about England's system of law in book one. In book one, the penalties inflicted for a crime bore no relationship to the seriousness of the crime and there was a great contradiction between the laws of God and the laws of man in the actual application of the law. Given More's views on law and justice in Utopia which represented England as it should have been and his complaints concerning law and justice in the England of reality, need one be surprised that More did not stress the traditional idea of natural law? In other words, in a place where men were not at all reasonable and in which their laws reflected this same fault, why even talk about natural law when it was equated with reason? To More, the only people

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[48]Hexter, More's Utopia, 60. [49]More, Utopia, 191.

who seemed rational might have been his own select group of humanist associates, the same men who ruled Utopia in his famous dream.[50] Once More moved outside of that select group of people, the very idea of natural law might have seemed incongruous to him.

Given More's interest in and concern with the laws of man, it is not surprising that important parts of the dialogue in book one were given over to a discussion of this topic. And probably the most important aspect of these discussions concerned the question of the validity of positive law. What made a law of man valid? Again, More's idea of consent of the governed became important. However, more significant than that idea was the relationship of the laws of God to a positive law. This particular relationship was explored in great detail by Raphael who remarked during the course of the dialogue:

> God has said, "thou shalt not kill," and shall we so lightly kill a man for taking a bit of small change? But if the divine command against killing be held not to apply where human law justifies killing, what prevents men equally from arranging with one another how far rape, adultery, and perjury are admissible. . . . But if this agreement among men is to have such force as to exempt their henchmen from the obligation of the commandment, although without any precedent set by God they take the life of those who have been rendered by human enactment to be put to death, will not the law of God then be valid only so far as the law of man permits?[51]

Raphael has raised one of the fundamental questions debated by the men of the sixteenth century, and one not totally foreign to our own times. The same question was also raised by Tyndale in a slightly different form.[52] It would seem that the solution for this problem, if there was any

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[50]Hexter, "Utopia and Its Historical Milieu," lxxxi.

[51]More, Utopia, 73.

[52]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. F 7^{v}.

possible solution, does not only lie in the assertion that there was always a conflict between the laws of God, natural law, and the laws of man. In effect, this solution merely restates the problem which Raphael has posed. Furthermore, in the prevailing beliefs of the time, it was generally held that no law which contradicted the tenets of natural law or of the laws of God had the force of law. Theoretically, there was probably no solution to Raphael's problem. But practically there was, and this solution is offered partially in book one and partially in book two.

In book one Raphael made another important statement which partially answered the problem which he had originally posed. His solution might have been More's as well. He said:

> Finally the law of Moses, though severe and harsh--being intended for slaves and those of a stubborn breed--nevertheless punished theft by fine and not by death. Let us not suppose that God, in the new law of mercy in which he gives commands as a father to his sons, has allowed us greater license to be cruel to one another.[53]

Before making too much over Raphael's remark, it is important to note that at the end of the discussion of this problem, Raphael came out in favor of the Roman system of penalty, which meant servitude for life.[54] More, on the other hand, preferred a system of servitude in which the condemned had the chance to gain their freedom, but which was beneficial to the commonwealth as well.[55] In effect, More then has offered his readers a variety of solutions to the harsh standards of justice employed in the England of his own time--solutions which not only drew from the humanists' knowledge of antiquity, but which also heralded the Utopian

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[53]More, Utopia, 75. [54]Ibid., 75. [55]Ibid., 75.

solution to this problem as well. In Utopia, slavery was the prevailing form of punishment, although capital punishment was imposed for certain offenses. However, Utopia was England as it should have been, and one must wonder if More himself believed this possible for the England of the sixteenth century. Probably not, and this belief partially explains Raphael's allusion to the law of Moses and to the laws of mercy. Here, More was probably saying that in the England of his own day, there would always be a necessity for laws, and as there would also always be crime, a necessity for punishment as well.[56] Given the reality of the situation, why then should not the punishments of man be carried out in accordance with the laws of God, and especially the laws of Moses and mercy? Carrying the logic of Raphael's statement still further, More may have been willing to abolish the death penalty for the majority of the crimes committed in England.[57] Finally, in regard to the problem of the tension between the tenets of the divine law and the laws of man, More may have believed that this tension would always exist--that in theory there was no solution to the problem which Raphael had posed, but that this tension could certainly be minimized by the application of the law of Moses and the laws of mercy to the practice of law in England.

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[56]Thomas More, The Workes of Sir Thomas More wrytten by him in the English tonge (London, 1557), Debellacyon, sig. V. 1.

[57]More, in his controversial works, condoned the burning of heretics and, of course, denied that heresy laws were subject to the idea of consent. See Debellacyon, secunde parte, sig. U 4^{v}.

The second basis for the validity of positive law employed by More in his Utopia was the important notion of consent. More thought that the consent of those governed was necessary before any law could be binding upon the subject of a commonwealth. His attitude here is much more pronounced in book two of the Utopia. In Utopia, it is noted that the Utopians, "hold that laws for distribution of vital commodities, the matter of pleasure, provided they have been justly promulgated by a good king with the consent of the people."[58] The words "justly promulgated" probably refer to the actual legislative process itself and the Utopians' practice not to enact laws which were based on hasty and rash consideration. In the first book of Utopia, this idea of the necessity of consent is only mentioned indirectly, in connection with the ancient practice of resurrecting "old and moth eaten laws" for the purpose of gaining additional revenue.[59] The complaint here was not only that these laws had only a "mask of justice" about them, but also that they were invalid because of long non-enforcement."[60] More may have been arguing that the subjects who fell prey to these old statutes had not actually consented to them, and thus the statutes were invalid.

This brief analysis of More's thoughts concerning the theory and practice of law does not do justice to the complexity with which he treated the topic, but it does supply ample information to make a comparison with Tyndale's thought on the nature of law interesting and rewarding. Once again, the distance which separated these two men was exceedingly great. Differences between their legal philosophies are

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[58]More, Utopia, 165. [59]Ibid., 165. [60]Ibid., 165.

noticeable in three specific areas: in the actual aspect of the law with which each man was concerned; in their basic attitudes towards the function of law within a commonwealth; and in their thoughts on the validity of positive law. A measure of the differences which separated the thoughts of Tyndale and More on the law was a result of different interests and training. As a lawyer, More was naturally more interested in the laws of man and the practice of law in a commonwealth. Tyndale's overwhelming concern was with the laws of God and not the laws of man, in either their theoretical or practical aspects, and it was a concern which grew stronger as his legalism developed. However, with regard to the problems of law, More's humanism and Tyndale's immunity to this intellectual current were also important. This basic difference is evident in the two men's views on the function of positive law within a commonwealth.

Unlike More, Tyndale closely identified the temporal law with the forces of sin. He believed that one of the primary functions of the laws of man was to punish sin. As previously stated, Tyndale's dependence upon Luther early in his career was also important. Law proclaimed man's inadequacies, and as long as Tyndale labored under Luther's influence, the connection between temporal law and evil was a natural one to make. Now in book two of the Utopia, More also assumed that law in its positive sense punished sin. However, he did not emphasize this point as Tyndale was to do some years later. Tyndale further increased the distance here by his refusal to adopt the humanists' position that law both could and should lead men to virtue. This assumption, which was Aristotelian in origin, found no favor with Tyndale for several reasons. First, he was extremely hostile to Aristotle. His rejection

of Aristotle's sense of law was part of his rejection of Aristotle's polity. Secondly, Tyndale's overbearing concern with the laws of God and his belief in their self-sufficiency for governing a commonwealth led him further away from positive law in an Aristotelian sense, and consequently from More's use of positive law in the Utopia. In other words, Tyndale's legalism further separated him from More and his humanism. Even if the laws of man could lead men to virtue, a proposition which Tyndale would have denied, the laws of God, the source of all goodness and moral example, could do it better.

Nevertheless, Tyndale did express an idea which was similar to More's idea on the necessity of few laws in a commonwealth. In book two of the Utopia More gave the Utopians the belief that only a few laws were necessary since they, as people, were so virtuous, and since a multiplicity of laws within a commonwealth only created confusion. Raphael observed the Utopian vision of law and at the same time indirectly criticized the laws of England:

> They have very few laws because very few are needed for persons so educated. The chief fault they find with other peoples is that almost innumerable books of law and commentaries are not sufficient. They themselves think it most unfair that any group of men should be bound by laws which are either too numerous to read through or too obscure to be understood by anyone.[61]

Tyndale picked up one of these impulses, but expressed it in different terms. Writing under the influence of Luther, he maintained that a kingdom where the law of God was written in the hearts of every man would not need temporal law. The idea here was that people would be able to keep

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[61]More, Utopia., 195.

the law without any coercive force.[62] For Tyndale, this was a conditional statement, although More did not interpret it as such. If all Christians had this gift, then no law would be necessary, and the parallels with More's use of temporal law in book two of the Utopia are exceedingly great. The Utopians needed few laws because they were so virtuous. If Christians were the same, so thought Tyndale, the same would be true. But they weren't, and hence the necessity of laws. Tyndale stated in theological terms the same assumption which guided More in his discussion of the Utopian legal system.

Raphael's second criticism concerning the multiplicity of laws is also worth considering. A prejudice against a multiplicity of laws in a kingdom had existed in England for centuries. With the scope of this study, it was first voiced by Wyclif who apparently arrived at the idea through an exegesis of Augustine's letter to Boniface, De Correctione Donatistarum.[63] But the impulse here was not only that too many laws were too difficult to comprehend, but also that too many laws of human derivation detracted from the efficiency of God's laws.[64] Erasmus in his Education of a Christian Prince voiced a similar protest.[65] Tyndale never complained about the complexity of too many laws, or at least he never made this complaint a major issue. However, his legalism did lead him to believe that the laws of God were more important than the laws of

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[62]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. E. 2^{v} - E. 3.

[63]Cited in Migne, Patrologicae Latina, XXXIII, 793-815.

[64]Wyclif, de Officio Regis, 56, 190.

[65]Erasmus, Education of a Christian Prince, 222.

man for the governing of a kingdom. This reasoning may also have carried him to the belief that the better the Christian kingdom the fewer the temporal laws. In Tyndale's thought the case is not clear. However, there are numerous passages in his works which are difficult to interpret in any fashion other than as a desire to minimize the number and importance of the laws of man. For example, even before his legalism had become an important factor in his political thought, he said:

> The rowme that they are in and the lawe that they execute are Gods/ which as he hath made all & is god of all and all are his sonnes: even so is he iudge over all and will have all iudged by his lawe indifferently and to have the righte of his lawe/ and will avenge the wronge done vnto the turke and the sareson.[66]

The sentiments of this passage and of others in the Obedience lead one to suspect that Tyndale was far more concerned with God's law and its enforcement than he was with "temporal law." Obedience of the Christian to the "temporal laws" was always important for Tyndale, and he insisted that all Christians be aware of their existence. However, there is a certain sense in Tyndale's thought on law which allows us to conclude that Tyndale believed the Christian in society acted like a good Christian in spite of laws of human derivation.

The final problem which was treated by Tyndale and More in common pertains to the validity of positive law. In the sixteenth century, this was an immensely important topic, and the normal modes of thought, in combination with Tyndale's concern for the relationship of the Christian to the temporal regiment, probably forced Tyndale to discuss this problem. Once again, the differences between his and More's

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[66]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. G. 4^{v}.

treatment were great. Tyndale refused to sanction the idea of the consent of those governed as a measure for the validity of positive law. But he did believe that the validity of "temporal law" was based upon its relationship to both the laws of God and nature. However, Tyndale defined the law of nature differently from More. More appeared to equate this sense of law with human reason, and in book two of Utopia, the Utopians themselves did not feel the ever-present tension between the laws of man and the law of nature, since they were reasonable. Reasonable men make reasonable laws. Tyndale, however, was never convinced of the worth of human reason, and he preferred to equate the law of nature not with human reason as did More, but with the dictum, "love thy neighbor as theyself." This was Luther's definition of natural law, and Tyndale employed it throughout his career. It meant that, although both Tyndale and More thought that natural law should define the validity of the laws of man, they used essentially different yardsticks to measure that validity.

The Problems of a Christian Society

People who have read More's Utopia down through the centuries have not done so because of his philosophy of law, or because of his sense of authority, or even because of his thoughts on the problems of government. For most people, the ideas which have been considered thus far would appear secondary to More's brilliant vision of a society in which the prevalent ills of his own time had been plucked up by their roots. No treatment of More's Utopia and its relationship to Tyndale's thought would be complete without some discussion and comparison of their

considerations of the problems of erecting and maintaining a truly Christian society.

But was More really trying to do this in his Utopia? The question has been pondered by numerous scholars. In the first book the problem is greatly simplified by the fact that the speakers were discussing England and a society which was Christian. However, in book two, the problem is considerably more complex, since Utopia did not have the benefit of Christian revelation, and since its citizens had never heard the name of Christ until they received the imaginary voyagers from the old world. The answer to this problem, Professor Hexter tells us, is to be found in More's sense of irony and his humanist vision which made a "pagan" people act in a more Christian fashion than did their European counterparts.[67]

Professor Hexter's solution to this problem, while accurate, merely raises another problem. If the Utopians were more Christian in thought and deed than their European counterparts, what did this say about More's own beliefs of the possibility of having a Christian society, and how did More's procedure of dividing Utopia into two books affect the comparison of his vision with Tyndale's vision of a Christian society? Leaving aside the first part of the question momentarily, let us consider the second part first.

Tyndale worked with the idea of a Christian society. Like More and the other Christian humanists, he too was concerned with the problem of what it meant to be a Christian. Tyndale went a different way from the humanists like Erasmus who wrote moral treatises on this problem,

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[67]Hexter, "Utopia and Its Historical Milieu," lxxvii.

although he partook of this approach by translating Erasmus's own Handbook of a Christian Knight.[68] Tyndale's response to this problem was twofold. First, he evolved his sense of legalism, a strict and rigid adherence to the law by the individual Christian in the attempt to fulfill its dictates. He also applied in a fairly systematic manner his understanding of natural law to various aspects of society in the attempt to render that society more Christian. Both of his responses to this problem established an important difference between his own solutions and the one used by More. Tyndale looked for his solutions to the problem of a Christian society within the framework of existing institutions in European society: the church, monarchy, and the system of property holding which had been adopted in western Europe. More did not accept any of these things, if we can take their absence at face value in book two, and thought that a truly Christian society could not be built upon these institutions. This interpretation might be reading too much into the Utopia. But it seems arguable that the fact that the Utopians were not Christian might have been a result of the fact that More had lost some degree of faith in the possibility of the church's remaking society according to the vision of the Christian humanists; that there was no private property in Utopia because More was convinced that as long as it existed, so would inequality and injustice exist; that as long as the law was administered in a way which More knew very well,

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[68] See Professor Marius's review article of Clebsch's England's Earliest Protestants," Moreana, V (Mai, 1965). Here he explores the relationship between Erasmian Humanism and Tyndale's response to the problem.

there would always be injustice; and finally, that the best state of the commonwealth was one in which the people would not be continually plagued with the bellicose stupidity of kings who were immune to the civilizing forces of humanism.[69] To have a Christian commonwealth, More probably believed that it was necessary to transcend those institutions which were responsible for the ills of European society. This is exactly what he did in book two of the Utopia.

Book two of the Utopia was not the England of More's day, and the question still remains, to what degree did he believe that England could become a truly Christian society, a society in which the people acted in a Christian fashion and did not merely perform the dictates of religion in a dumb, ritualistic manner? The answer to this question is speculative at best, but quite possibly, he was extremely pessimistic on this issue. Looking at the actual structure of book one, it is noteworthy that many of the arguments given us by Raphael, which pointed to the solutions used by the Utopians, were countered by either More or by Cardinal Morton. The reader is left with an impasse of sorts. However, more significant than this impasse is a statement by Raphael in which he explained to More how the Utopians had been able to develop their society. Referring to some survivors of a shipwreck who settled in Utopia, Raphael remarked:

> Now this will give you some idea what good use they make of their opportunities. There wasn't a single useful technique practised anywhere in the Roman Empire that they didn't either learn from these survivors, or else work out for themselves. . . . They got

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[69]This brief survey is essentially a summary of those institutions which the Utopians have or lack in comparison with their European counterparts. It is by no means exhaustive.

> all that from just one contact from our hemisphere. But if, by any similar accident, a Utopian has ever found his way over here, we've completely forgotten about it, as I dare any people will soon forget that I was ever there. On the strength of our first meeting they immediately adopted all the best ideas that Europe has produced--but I doubt if we'de be quite so quick to take over any of their arrangements which are better than ours.[70]

This particular statement by Raphael would seem to indicate More's clear belief in the virtue of change and the virtue of the Utopians themselves who were not too dogmatic to look outside their own civilization for ideas with which to improve their society.[71] But this was not a characteristic of European people, and More might have been saying here that the members of his own society were doomed to a continual suffering of the injustices which were so obvious to the members of his own humanist group. Whether or not More was correct is not the issue. But for the purposes of this study, it is important to note that Tyndale acted in a way which More himself and Raphael appear to have predicted. He refused to look outside the institutions which were characteristic of his own society, and as a result, his own solutions to the problems of a Christian society fell drastically short of More's.

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[70] More, Utopia, trans. Turner, 68.

[71] Once again, More's attitude here should be contrasted with the later position of entrenched conservatism which he adopted against St. German. True, the issue was the fate of heretics, but his words are worth quoting nonetheless: When thys good man cometh now forth, and vppon his own bare reasons as bare as ever I herd yet in all my lyfe, bycause onely that an innocente may somtyme take harme, whyche may happen vppon lawe that ever all the world can make . . . he byddeth every man consyder nowe whyther the lawe be iuste or not,& if it be not, byddeth every man put to theyr handes to have yt broken and make a better . . . and in stede of a better law, make a new mych worse . . . if his devise were followed . . . heresyes shoulde grow vp on heyght, and the catholyque fayth decaye. Debellacyon, secunde parte, sig. E 7 - E 7^{v}.

Although Tyndale's treatment of the problems of a Christian society lacked the vision of More's in book two of the Utopia, it cannot be dismissed as an unimportant aspect of his thought. Furthermore, even though his method was different, he discussed many of the same problems which also concerned More. It is worthwhile to note the similarity of the topics which they discussed, as well as the different answers the two men gave to essentially the same problems.

Like More, Tyndale discussed the agrarian problem and in general, the problem of private property. For Tyndale, neither problem was as important as it had been for More. His treatment of these problems lacked the sense of urgency which accompanied More's discussion of them. Quite probably, both issues remained on the periphery of Tyndale's interests. Nevertheless, at least with regard to the agrarian problem, both men advocated similar remedies. Like More, Tyndale also thought that enclosures were a great social evil, and he suggested that landlords should be content with the rents due them by the force of custom.[72] More, of course, during the course of book one, gave almost every argument against enclosures.[73] To him, as to Tyndale, part of the ills of the country were due to the greed of a few men. Raphael remarked:

> In all those parts of the realm where the finest and therefore the costliest wool is produced, there are noble men, gentlemen, and even some abbots, though otherwise holy men, who are not satisfied with the annual revenues and profits. . . . They are not content by leading an idle and sumptious life, to do no good to their country, they must also do it positive harm. . . . Thus, the unscrupulous greed of a few is ruining the very thing by virtue of which your island was once counted fortunate in the extreme.[74]

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[72]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. G. 2[v]. [73]More, Utopia, 65.

[74]Ibid., 67-69.

Overtones of a continuing medievalism were characteristic of both Tyndale's and More's approach to this problem. Economics was, and remained even for More in book two, a branch of metaphysics. In a sense More did reach modernity through his decision to abolish all private property, which he saw as the basis for this greed. Tyndale never did. He merely attempted to restrain this avarice, primarily through the application of the contents of natural law to all aspects of a Christian society. This basic difference between the approaches of Tyndale and More becomes even more apparent in relation to the question of private property, which was, in itself, related to the concern for the problem of avarice.

More's solution to this question of private property is almost too well known to be repeated here. Indeed, Utopia has endured throughout the ages because of its communism. Interestingly enough, More later charged Tyndale with advocating communism--a false charge to be sure.[75] Tyndale's consistent answer to this question was, in effect, a communism in attitude but not in law. Pace More, who was never above twisting his opponents words to build a stronger case against their heresies, Tyndale merely said that by the law of God and nature, men should consider what they own to be another person's property in time of need. Tyndale's beliefs on this question probably appear most clearly in his parable of the wicked mammon, where he remarked:

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[75]More made this charge in his Confutation of Tyndale's Answer: And so ye may see that Tyndale affirmeth . . . that no man should have anything proper of his own, but that all lands and all goods ought by God's law to be all men's in common. . . . Works, sig. tt. iiij^{v}.

> . . . for yf my neybour nede and I geve hym not/ nether depart lyberally with hym/ of that which I have: than wythhold I from hym Vnrighteously that which is hys awne. For as moch as I am bownden to helpe hym by the lawe of nature. which is/ what so ever thou woldest that a nother dyd to the that do thou also to hym. And christ Mathei.v. geVe to eVery man that desireth the.[76]

Christian charity and the application of the contents of the law of nature were a far cry from the communism of More's Utopia, and these were the differences which separated Tyndale and More on this important issue.

Just as both men concerned themselves with the notions of property and greed, so did they concern themselves with the roles of education and the family in a Christian commonwealth. Several things are important about More's treatment of these two items. First, his inclusion of them in Utopian society is important, simply because the presence of both seriously modifies the modernity of his vision. In book two, More looked beyond the institutions of the society in his own day. In Utopia, there was no monarchy, no private property, a unique sense of law, and a religion which was conspiciously lacking in Christian revelation. However, the Utopians also had a humanist's regard for education, and they attributed an importance to the family which was characteristic of More's own society.[77] Now it would be foolish to argue that no aspects of his own society should have found their way into Utopia. However, More's use of these ideas forms the basis for an interesting comparison with Tyndale's own use of them, largely in his Obedience.

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[76]Tyndale, parable of the wicked mammon, sig. C 8^{v}. See also below, Chapter VII.

[77]Hexter, "Utopia and Its Historical Milieu," xli. Professor Hexter was the first to recognize the importance of the family in Utopia. He said that it made the work "at once premedieval and post-Renaissance."

For both Tyndale and More belief in the family structure was exceptionally strong. Indeed, the words of Professor Stone are equally applicable to the thought of both men:

> Firm belief in subjection of children to parental control was natural in a society in which family discipline was the main guarantee of public order.[78]

To appreciate the correctness of Professor Stone's observation, it is only necessary to reflect for a moment on the actual structure of Tyndale's Obedience. In that work, although he spent more time discussing the duties of "political" obedience--the obedience of subjects to kings and magistrates, he treated the duty of obedience of children to parents first.[79] Parents were, to use Professor Stone's phrase, "the main guarantee of public order," and Tyndale entrusted them with the all-important task of Christian education. He also looked to them to promote those virtues in their children upon which the overall health of the society depended. They were, to Tyndale, both the guardians of virtue and the suppressors of pride and greed.[80]

When compared with Tyndale's treatment of the importance of the family in a Christian commonwealth, More's treatment is strikingly political. Utopia, a representative democracy, was based upon the basic family unit. Each group of thirty families chose one phylark annually.[81] In Utopia, the responsibilities of parents for their children were similar to the ones which Tyndale discussed, and there was the same

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[78]Quoted in Hexter, "Utopia and Its Historical Milieu," xliii.

[79]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. D. 1 - D. 1^{v}.

[80]Ibid., sigs. G. 1 - G. 1^{v}. [81]More, Utopia, trans. Turner, 78.

emphasis upon correction of the children, as well as the duty of the children to serve their elders. However, in one sense, the role of the parent in Utopia was not as important as it was in Tyndale's vision of society, simply because education was not carried out by the parents but by the priests. All in all, however, the family was equally as important to both Tyndale and to More, and it did guarantee a degree of public order.

More also carried his humanist's regard for the importance of education with him into Utopia. Indeed, the most acceptable interpretation of the work is one which sees it as the expression par excellance of a Christian humanist.[82] Numerous manifestations of More's humanism had already been noted in the course of this study. However, More's treatment of education in book two is very interesting when compared with Tyndale's similar concern for education. But how similar was their concern for education? The answer to this question can be found by examining the role of education in Utopia and in Tyndale's own vision of a Christian society.

Tyndale was not a humanist, but he was concerned with education nonetheless. His own program of reform was directly related to a belief in the necessity of a Christian education. In a situation in which the prelates had abdicated their spiritual responsibilities, and in which the scripture was written in a language little understood by the people,

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[82]Both Professor Hexter and Father Surtz have dealt with this aspect of More's Utopia in their introductions to the Yale edition of this work.

how could society be Christian? How could a parent fulfill his duty of providing a Christian education for his children when he himself could not read God's word? And to Tyndale, God's word was clearly the basis of a Christian education. Perhaps this is reading too much into the Obedience.[83] Perhaps it is taking Tyndale's complaints in that book in too literal a sense. However, his career as a translator and remarks which he made in works other than the Obedience allow us to interpret his complaints more or less at their face value. For Tyndale, there were essentially three ways to make a society Christian: first, make sure that the parents could fulfill their duties of Christian education; secondly, insure that the unadulterated word of God would be available to the members of every congregation; and finally, look at the Word in a spirit of legalism. These three factors represent Tyndale's program of reform for a Christian society, and it was a program of reform in which education played an important role.

It is interesting to compare Tyndale's view of education with that of More in his Utopia. Here, book two is the most important source of information for this comparison since apart from the numerous humanistic references to the authors of antiquity in book one, More did not stress education.

Exactly how important was education in Utopia? More's humanism appears at first glance to shine forth unimpaired. Education, we are told, is very important, since it is one of the sources of Utopian virtue.

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[83]Tyndale, Obedience, passim.

Utopians were virtuous because they were so well educated.[84] Yet it is impossible to discover what the Utopian program of education consisted of. It is apparent that Utopians were instructed by priests to form "good opinions," but this is only a vague description of their educational program. They were introduced to the study of Greek and mastered it with facility.[85] However, were the Utopians totally dependent upon this vague program of education as their only source of virtue? The answer is no, and it is an important negation. Unlike European peoples, More made his Utopians natural people who lived according to the laws of nature and reason. The dictates of the law of nature and reason were furthered by the state and by elected officials insofar as through the proper distribution of labor, the people were left free to pursue that which they would have pursued naturally without any guidance.[86] They pursued pleasure, which was a rational pursuit, and most of all, they pursued the pleasures of the mind, which they held to be the most rational pursuit of all. It was considered to be the essence of happiness. But the same logic which led them to pursue the pleasures of the mind, also bid them not to further their own advantages at the expense of others.[87] This too was a very important point, since More believed that self-interest was one of the evils which plagued England during his own time. Looking at book two in the broadest possible way, one is left with an impasse of sorts with regard to the necessity and importance of education in Utopia. Utopia was the best state which could be erected upon human reason, a place

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[84] More, Utopia, 195.

[85] Ibid., 229.

[86] Ibid., 135.

[87] Ibid.

where the inhabitants were virtuous because they were so well educated, but also virtuous because nature led them in that very direction, unassisted by either the state or by education. Their natural virtue allowed for the harmonious functioning of the commonwealth, since an important part of their natural virtue taught the Utopians not to do things which ignored the interest of others. People might have been taught "good opinions" which were beneficial to the commonwealth. But they were not taught natural reason, and above all, Utopia worked on the principle of natural reason.[88]

It would appear that on the basis of this analysis, we are left with an interesting contradiction. More, a Christian humanist and a member of an international community which placed so much emphasis on education, has created an ideal state which could continue to function without education. Tyndale, on the other hand, never a member of that humanistic community and remaining largely untouched by that intellectual current, conceived of a Christian society which could be that way only when its people were educated in the essence of God's law. Within his own scheme of an "ideal" society, it is certainly arguable that education was more important to that society than it was to the Utopia of Thomas More.

It cannot be said that every aspect of Tyndale's and More's political thought has been explored in this chapter. This task would require an excessive number of pages and would probably prove most

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[88]Of course, there were faults in the Utopian's natural reason. Even the best state in the commonwealth had its capital punishment, its crime, and its censors of morals.

tedious to all concerned. However, in this chapter some attempt has been made to judge the distance which separated the political thought of these two men. As a result of the publication of the Complete Works of Saint Thomas More, a greater understanding of the theological differences between Tyndale and More is now enjoyed by students of the Reformation. Little attention has been paid to their political thought, and on the basis of the analysis presented above, the exact nature of their differences with regard to political theory is now clearer. It would not be incorrect to stress the influence of More's humanism and Tyndale's failure to be affected by that movement as an essential, and all-important factor which on several occasions accounted for the different approaches and different responses which the two men gave to such topics as the problem of good government, the use of law in a commonwealth, and the problems of authority.

In the following chapter, the concern is not with Tyndale's relationship to humanism, or to any other current of thought. Rather, the focal point of this chapter will be a comparison of Tyndale's political thought with that of another of Thomas More's polemical rivals, Christopher St. German. Like More, St. German was a lawyer. But unlike him, St. German did not justify the old order. He spoke for the new, and he did so with unusual precision. As one of the more perceptive of the Henrician apologists, St. German's views of the Reformation, his thoughts on the nature of authority, and the nature of law, all demand close examination.

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM TYNDALE AND A TUDOR LAWYER

The purpose of this chapter is to compare the political thought of William Tyndale with that of one of the most important of the Henrician apologists, Christopher St. German. Such a comparison immediately reveals an essential difference between the political thought of a man trained in theology and a man trained in law. Tyndale was imprecise when he wrote his political thought, but St. German was not. He justified the Henrician revolution in the church with rigorous exactitude. His vision of the Reformation was clear, and he employed arguments to support the work of Henry and Cromwell, which had never occurred to Tyndale. Only when the structure of St. German's political thought is understood and his precision duly appreciated can it be decided if, and to what degree, Tyndale can be considered as a Henrician apologist himself.

There are two other reasons for studying St. German's political thought. Like Tyndale, St. German was forced by circumstances to deal with problems which under normal conditions he would have left untouched. Law was his field, but scripture was not, and his use of scripture in his consideration of the problem of authority in the church forms the basis for an interesting comparison with Tyndale's treatment of this problem. Finally, in his own way, St. German contributed as much to the development of English law in the sixteenth century as did any other single individual, yet he remains one of the most understudied figures

of the period.[1] Thus it is hoped that an examination of his political thought will increase the level of understanding of a man who spoke for his age. It is also hoped that such a study will help place Tyndale's own political thought in the context of the legal turmoil of the sixteenth century and the English Reformation.

Little is known about St. German's life. He was born in 1460 at Shilton, and was educated at Exeter College, Oxford.[2] He entered the Inner Temple at an unknown date and was called to the bar. At a time when England was racked with political turmoil and religious uncertainty, St. German remained comparatively aloof. It is fairly certain that he was approached by Cromwell's agents in the attempt to conscript his talents against the church, but there is no evidence to support the assertion that he wrote under Cromwell's patronage. Only in his controversy with Thomas More did St. German actually enter into the polemics and politics of the Reformation. This controversy was sparked by the

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[1]There is no biography of St. German nor is there a modern edition of his works. One of his tracts, A treatise concernynge the Diuision betwene the spirytualtie and temporaltie, is included in Taft's edition of More's Apology. A monograph dealing with his political thought is also lacking. Several historians have considered it in passing. J. W. Allen's History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century is worthwhile. S. B. Chrimes, English Constitutional Ideas in the Fifteenth Century (New York, 1966) is also valuable; as is Holdsworth's A History of English Law (16 vols., London, 1937). Finally, F. Baumer's article, "The Political Philosophy of a Tudor Lawyer," American Historical Review, XLII (July, 1937), 631-651, is of considerable interest.

[2]Much of the following is taken from A. F. Pollard's article in the Dictionary of National Biography, eds., Stephen and Lee (22 vols., London, 1921-2), XVII, 127-8. Professor Pollard's article represents the sum of our knowledge of St. German's life.

publication of St. German's diuision betwene the spirytualtie and temporaltie, in 1532. More attacked his work in the Apology. St. German then responded in considerably more moderate terms with his dialogue betwixte two englyshemen, wherof one was called Salem, and the other Bizance, which was published in 1533. As with Tyndale, so with St. German--More ended the controversy with the publication of his Debellacyon of Salem and Bizance.

Although More had gained the benefit of the last work in their polemical debate, St. German proceeded to write a series of anonymous tracts, all of which defended the new order. These were written during the years 1534-1535. St. German appears to have written nothing after 1535. That he remained silent in the five years before his death in 1540 is not unlikely. He was seventy-two when he began his debate with More.[3]

Apart from the works which St. German produced during his controversy with More and the five tracts which he wrote following it, he wrote one other work of major importance, Dialogus de fundamentis legum et conscientia, first published in 1523. This particular work was reedited several times, twice by St. German himself. Two editions of the work are very important: the 1530 edition, which was also a translation into English, and the 1531 edition, in which the author made several important additions. Some of these additions were placed at the ends of various chapters of the Dyaloge. However, the most important addition

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[3]Between the publication of his Dyalogue in 1523 and 1535, St. German wrote many other works which have since been lost. See Baumer, "Political Philosophy of a Tudor Lawyer," 633.

took the form of an appendix in which St. German considered in exacting fashion the relationship between the authority of Parliament and the authority of the ecclesiastical courts. Although this problem was considered elsewhere in the Dyaloge, the addition of a separate appendix is a convenient measure of the direction in which St. German's interests were being drawn by the forces of the English Reformation.

There is no convenient place to begin the analysis of St. German's political thought, nor is there any one work which can be regarded as an adequate summary of the ideas which he developed over the twelve years in which he wrote.[4] On the other hand, there is a real degree of unity to his thoughts, and this unity can best be seen through a topical and chronological approach to the various problems which he dealt with throughout his career.

St. German concerned himself with four problems. Some of them were legacies of the Middle Ages and others were forced upon him by the turmoil of the English Reformation. Like Tyndale, he was forced to consider the problem of authority, and like Tyndale, he asked similar questions. For both men, this was a very important topic. St. German also considered the nature of law. Like the men of the sixteenth century, he was interested in the classification of law into various categories. For him, this meant not only finding a place in the scheme of law for the laws which had become accepted through custom, it also meant finding a place for the laws of the church. Thirdly, throughout

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[4]Allen considers his Answere to a letter, published in 1535, as a convenient summary. For the purpose of a broad survey, this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable here.

his career, St. German considered the relationship of the individual to the law. This particular aspect of his interests became important in his controversy with Thomas More. Finally, St. German was forced to reconsider the old medieval problem of the relationship between the two orders of the Christian society, the regnum and the sacerdotium. In a very real sense this last problem was for St. German one aspect of the problem of authority, and he treated it as such. Because of the limitations of space it is clearly impossible to discuss each one of these topics. However, it is essential to consider the first two: the nature of law, and more important, the question of authority, including the question of the authority of the king over the church. St. German's treatment of each topic forms the basis for an interesting and revealing comparison with Tyndale's own discussion of them.

The Problems of Authority

The analysis of Tyndale's political thought has demonstrated that in the sixteenth century the problem of authority was no simple matter. Different institutions possessed different but equally valid senses of authority. There was the king's authority, the authority of the church, the authority of Parliament, and the authority of the general council of the church. St. German discussed these various senses of authority throughout his career, but he paid particular attention to the problem of the origin of authority. He gave his readers this important statement late in his career, and it was in response to this problem of the origin of authority:

> Non est enim potestas nisi a deo. Que autem sunt/ a deo ordinate sunt. Itaque/ que resistit potestati dei ordinationi resistit. Que autem resistunt ipi sibi dampnationem acquirunt.& nam principes non sunt timori boni operis sed mali . . . dei enim minister est tibi in bonum/ si autem malum faceris time non enim sine causa gladium portat.[5]

This particular text which was taken from Paul's Epistle to the Romans was the foundation of Tyndale's political thought. His thoughts on the duties and authority of the king were largely based upon it. This was not the case for St. German. In the same work he offered his readers other texts which gave an even more exalted sense of royal authority.[6] Furthermore, with regard to St. German's use of this text and his treatment of the origin of authority, two other factors are significant. First, earlier in his career, St. German was intent on being more precise with regard to this origin of authority and suggested that the lex aeterna originated in the will rather than in the reason of God.[7] In making this suggestion he was employing a scholastic distinction which he had borrowed from the medieval Nominalist philosopher, Jean Gerson.[8] However, as his career progressed, St. German became less

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[5]Christopher St. German, a treatyse concerninge the power of the Clergye and the lawes of the Realme, sig. A 2^{v}. There is no date or place of publication given. On this problem see Baumer, "Political Philosophy of a Tudor Lawyer," 635.

[6]For example, "Diuinatioin labiis regis in iuditio non errabit of eius," power of the clergye, sig. A 4. St. German offered no interpretation, and I frankly doubt if he believed this statement.

[7]Christopher St. German, The Fyrste dyaloge in Englyshe/with newe Addycyons (London, 1531), sigs. A 3^{v} - A 4.

[8]St. German's debt to Gerson was considerable. Part of it will be discussed below but for a full explanation of it see Paul Vinogradoff's essay, "Reason and Conscience in 16th Century Jurisprudence," Collected Papers (2 vols., Oxford, 1928), II, 190-204.

dependent upon the scholastic mode of thought. Secondly, St. German also looked for the origin of the king's authority outside of the biblical frame of reference which was so important to Tyndale.

When St. German moved outside of the biblical frame of reference, he reverted to the political theory of the Middle Ages. Kings, he told his readers, have two kinds of authority, the Ius Regale and the Ius Regale Politicium. He translated the term Ius Regale as "kyngly gouernaunce" and described it as:

> that power with his counsell to make lawes to bynde his subiectes/ and also make declaration of Scrypture for the good order of his subiectes. . . .[9]

He described the Ius Regale Politicium as being

> the most noble power that any prince hath ouer his subiectes/ and he that ruleth by that power/ maye make no lawe to bynde his subiectes without their assent but by their assent he maye so that lawes that he maketh be nat agaynste the lawe of God/ nor the lawe of reason. . . .[10]

This particular distinction is thoroughly medieval, and St. German appears to have borrowed it from the thought of Sir John Fortescue.[11] More important, however, than St. German's use of ideas from the past is the fact that he tempered the hierocratic sense of authority which came from his use of the Bible with the medieval idea of the consent of those governed. He found the idea of consent most useful in attacking the heresy laws of the Catholic Church, and he employed the idea of consent against the laws of the church in the very same way that More had used

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[9]Christopher St. German, An Answere to a letter (London, 1535), sig. G 5[v].

[10]Ibid., sig. G 6.

[11]Baumer, "Political Philosophy of a Tudor Lawyer," 637.

this idea as one measure of the validity of positive law. He said:

> . . . the lawes affirmed by vsage and agremente of the people be the lawes of fastynge and kepynge of holydays, and suche other as the people of their free argement accepte and agree vnto: but these lawes made for punyshement of heresies were neuer agreed by a common assent of the people.[12]

More, who was very skillful at identifying the source of his opponents' "errors," failed to attribute St. German's use of this distinction to the work of Fortescue. He only commented that to argue that a law:

> was neuer ratyfyed in theys realme, because the heretykes y^{t} are for heresye punyshed, be burned agaynste theyre wyll, and agree not themselfe therto. This reason wil I neuer labour to confute.[13]

Tyndale, as previously noted, was willing to employ similar sentiments against the laws of the church.[14] For him this was an affirmation which was based solely upon polemical necessities. Unlike St. German, Tyndale did not believe in its validity in an overall sense.

Apart from the fact that St. German was willing to use consent as a basis for law, it is difficult to discover exactly how far he was willing to temper the hierocratic sense of authority with this idea of government based upon the consent of those governed, or with a representative impulse in general. The question is an important one for any comparison of Tyndale's vision of authority with St. German's. And the answer can be found in a chronological examination of the corpus of his works.

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[12]St. German, Salem and Bizance, sigs. L 2^{v} - L 3.

[13]Thomas More, The Debellacyon of Salem and Bizance (London, 1533), secunde parte, sig. U 4^{v}.

[14]See above, Chapter II, 65-67.

Unlike his later works, both the Fyrst and Secunde dyaloges have little to say about the subject of authority in either sense. One cannot find in their pages the exalted sense of the king's authority which St. German developed in his later works. St. German was little concerned with royal authority in these dialogues. One looks in vain for any hint of a hierocratic sense of authority. On the other hand, there are numerous references to authority in a general, representative sense, and in particular to the authority of Parliament. Indeed, part of St. German's reason for writing both dialogues was to resolve the problem of overlapping jurisdiction between Parliament and the ecclesiastical courts of the realm. Thus, it is important to note that in his earliest work, St. German was concerned with authority in its "ascending" sense and not with authority in any hierocratic sense.

In the successive editions of both dialogues, St. German became even more concerned with authority in a representative sense. In the 1531 edition of the Secunde dyaloge, he added an important appendix discussing the authority of the Parliament and its relationship to the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church. Once again, any hint of authority in a hierocratic sense is lacking. Probably, the pressures of the English Reformation had forced him to develop further this representative sense of authority, but they had not yet forced him to deal with authority in its hierocratic sense.

On the basis of a careful examination of the various editions of his dialogues of 1523, it seems safe to conclude that St. German's preference lay with authority in its representative sense and not its hierocratic sense. And in 1532, when he wrote a treatise concernynge

the diuision betwene the spirutualte and temporaltie, his preference appears to have remained unchanged. In this work, St. German accorded Parliament more authority over spiritual matters than he had previously, but there is still no discussion of the king's authority over the church. The same is also true of his work of the following year, Salem and Bizance. Although St. German discussed the king's authority in a hierocratic sense through his treatment of the Ius Regale, in effect he interjected another representative element into his thought, the concept of the Ius Regale Politicium, and his preference probably lay with the latter sense of authority.[15]

In his anonymous tracts of the years 1534-5, St. German clearly stated a representative sense of authority at the same time that he presented his readers with the exalted, hierocratic sense of royal authority. We find contradictions and not St. German's usual logical consistency, and it was his use of two different sources, each embodying a different sense of authority, that was responsible for this contradiction. St. German was probably driven by the forces of the Reformation, especially by the Act of Supremacy of 1534, to find theoretical justifications for the exalted powers which Henry was claiming for himself. Two avenues of approach were open to him, and he took both. First, he attempted to discredit the forces of the papal monarchy which had been erected by a successive line of ambitious popes. To accomplish this he attempted to increase both the king's authority and his prestige. In this regard he found the sentiments expressed in the Old and New

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[15]Baumer, "Political Philosophy of a Tudor Lawyer," passim.

Testaments very useful. However, St. German also had to justify the type of control over the church that Henry was claiming to be rightfully his, and he turned to the thought of Marsilius of Padua, the fourteenth century apostle of Reformation Erastianism. Of course, the thought of Marsilius interjected yet another representation impulse into St. German's thought. In 1534-5, the representative impulses in his thought were the products of St. German's basic belief in Parliament, combined with both the thought of Marsilius of Padua and Fortescue. The following quotation, taken from one of his works of that period, clearly show this mixture of thought:

> Therefore it seme that Kynges & princes whom the people haue chosen & agreed to be their rulers & gouernours/ and which haue the whole voyces of ye people/ maye with their counsell spirytuall & temporall make exposycyon of suche scripture as it doutful.[16]

When it is remembered that in his later tracts, St. German also continually affirmed the Pauline sense of authority which held that the authority of kings and princes came directly from God and not mediately through the people or the church, the contradictory aspect of St. German's treatment of the problem of authority becomes crystal clear. However, St. German did not attempt to explain this contradiction. Thus dual sense of authority in his later works is one of the only bits of confusion in his political thought, and it is interesting to note that the actual source of this confusion was probably the necessity of justifying the Henrician Act of Supremacy. Like Tyndale, in 1534-35 St. German was willing to use everything possible against the forces of the church and the papacy--even at the expense of a certain logical consistency.

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[16]St. German, Answere, sig. G 5.

On the basis of the preceding examination of St. German's ideas on the origins and nature of authority, several interesting comparisons with Tyndale's own sense of authority come to mind. Unlike St. German's, Tyndale's sense of authority was totally hierocratic. God was the only source of authority, this narrowness of vision being the product of the overwhelming theocentricism in Tyndale's thought. St. German was not above using Tyndale's sense of authority as a weapon of controversy against the church. However, his preferred sense of authority was exactly the opposite of Tyndale's.

The analysis of St. German's discussion of the nature and origin of authority provides the basis for another interesting comparison with Tyndale's treatment of this subject. Tyndale would never have considered the problem of authority had it not been for the Reformation. This aspect of his thought would have remained hidden in his mind had he not been compelled by the politics of the time to deal with authority in its political sense. St. German also felt the pressures of Reformation politics, but they had the opposite effect on his thought. His earlier treatment of the problem of authority was clearer in one sense than was his later treatment of this topic. While the Reformation had forced St. German to define his thoughts further, it also forced him into the realm of inconsistency and logical contradiction.

Finally, the preceding analysis reveals one other essential difference between the political thought of Tyndale and St. German. Tyndale's sense of authority did not permit him to believe in the value of representative institutions. St. German possessed the same basic faith which Tyndale lacked. He believed in government by a king who took

into consideration the consent of those governed. For him consent rested primarily in Parliament, and it was to the king in Parliament that St. German awarded control of the church. His thoughts on the nature and the extent of that control were an important aspect of his treatment of the problem of authority. Like Tyndale, in one sense St. German was also carrying on the Reformation before it actually had begun, for he had considered this problem as early as 1523. However, during the twelve-year period in which he was an active polemicist, his thoughts on this question developed considerably. No treatment of St. German's political thought or of his treatment of the problem of authority would be complete without a careful examination of his thoughts on the king and the church.

Tyndale and St. German: The King and the Church

When St. German looked at the authority of the king in 1535, he commented:

> The Kynge/ by that he is recognysed by the parliamente to the supreme heed vnder god vpon erth/ of ye church of Englande/ hath as I take it no newe power gyuen him in any thinge but that lyke as before that recognisyon made/ he had all such power ouer his subiectes spirytuall and temporall/ as to a kynge belongeth by the lawe of god.[17]

Statements similar to this one were made by other Henrician apologists besides St. German. But in his case, he probably did not believe it. Certainly it will not stand up under the comparison of his earlier works in which he considered the jurisdiction of king and Parliament over the church. How far did the authority of king and Parliament reach? During

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[17] Ibid., sig. A 3.

those twelve years in which he wrote his extant works, he gave his readers two answers to this question. In his earlier years, he suggested that their authority pertained to "temporal things." During the period in which he wrote his anonymous works he broadened this idea of temporal things to include also the spiritual element. Once again, a chronological consideration of St. German's works provides the student with a precise and concise guide to the development of his thoughts on the authority of the king and Parliament over the church.

In his Fyrste dyaloge, St. German defined what he meant by "temporal things":

> al the canon of the popes nor theyr decres/ be not the lawe of god. For many of them be made onely for the polytycall conversacyon of the people. And yf any man wyll saye be not all the good of the churche sprytuall for they belong to the sprytualtytie and feed to the sprytualtie/ we answere that in the hole polytycall conversacyon of the people/ there be some specyally deputed and dycate to the seruyce of god/ the which most specially as by an excellencie are called sprytuall men as relygyous men are. And other though they walke in the waye of god. Yet neuertheles bycause theyr offyce is most specyally to be occupyed aboute suche thynges as pertayne to the common wealth/ and to the good ordre of the people/ they be therfore called secular men or lay men/ neuertheles the goodes of the fyrste may no more be called sprytual then the good of the other for they be thynges mere temporall and kepyng the body as they doo in the other.[18]

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[18] St German, Fyrste dyaloge, sigs. B 3 - B 3^{v}. This passage is almost an exact translation of the third corollary, second lesson of Gerson's De Vita Spirituali Animae. Gerson also said: Simili ratione leges ordinantes ecclesiasticam politicam dicuntur plerumque spirituales sue divinae quamvis improprie, et aliae civiles et humanae. Et hoc loco falluntur et fallunt crebro quidam canonistarum praesertim in materia quam tractavimus, et de simonia similiter, ubi spiritualia judicant illa que esse carnalia et materialia nullus nescit. Corollarium Tertium in Gerson, Oevres Completes, ed., P. Glorieux (7 vols., Tournai, 1962), III, 120-1. St. German also faithfully translated this part of Gerson's thought but it is interesting that he never used this idea against the church, apart from mentioning it in his dyaloge.

St. German's dependence upon the works of Jean Gerson was complete, and the sentiments expressed above became the basis by which the student of the laws of England defined the limits of secular jurisdiction over the church. The same sentiment was also applied frequently in the Secunde dyaloge and the addycons. In 1531, St. German was primarily concerned with the authority of Parliament over the church, and he applied this idea of "temporal things" to cases of ecclesiastical abuse which greatly contributed to the anti-clericalism of the Reformation. For example, concerning the important problem of mortuary fees, the doctor of divinity who spoke for the church asked the student of the laws of England if Parliament could rightfully regulate these fees. The student replied, basing his argument on control of "temporal things":

> that the parlyament may enacte/ that there shall nat be layde vpon a deade person but suche a cloth, or this many tapers or candles set vp about hym.[19]

Another issue raised by the doctor, if the church could confiscate the lands of a convicted heretic, was also important during the Reformation. To the doctor's claim that "it belongeth to the chyrch to determyne what punysshement he shal haue for his heresye," the student responded, "nay veryly for they be temporall and belonge to the iudgment of the Kynges courte. . . ."[20] The parallels with Tyndale's thought are worth noting. Throughout his career, Tyndale always thought that it was the duty of the king to punish heresy, and that this authority which the church

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[19]Christopher St. German, The Secunde dyaloge in englysshe/ with new addycons (London, 1531), sig. A 3^{v}.

[20]St. German, Secunde dyaloge, sigs. K 8^{v} - L 1.

claimed for herself had been illicitly taken from the temporal regiment.[21]

It is also worth noting that St. German's attitude in the Fyrste and Secunde dyaloges and in the addycons was essentially conservative. This conservatism manifested itself in several areas of his thought. First, he did not award the king and Parliament the sweeping jurisdictional authority which he came to believe it possessed by the years 1534-5. In the year 1531, St. German's attitude was constructive, and with one exception, he asked for the cooperation of the two orders of the Christian society in the attempt to reform that society. This constructive vision is apparent in the following statement, made by St. German in his addycons to the Secunde dyaloge:

> . . . the parlyament may ordeyne many good lawes for strength of the fayth, and for the good ordre of all the people as well spirituall as temporall, though it iudge nat vpon the ryght of thynges that be mere spirituall. . . . They that be lerned in the lawes of the realme . . . may enstructe the parlyment when nede shall require, what they maye lawfully do concernynge the spirituall iurisdiction/ and what nat.[22]

In 1531, St. German placed particular emphasis on the role of Parliament as a force which could restore the spiritual strength of the realm. Alluding to the time of the Great Schism, he remarked that:

> If the parliament can heal such a division in the time of Richard. i.i., why can they not now serche the cause of suche division/ as is nowe in the realme by diuersities of sectes and opinions.[23]

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[21] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. K. 6^{v}.

[22] St. German, Secunde dyaloge, addycons, sig. C 5^{v}.

[23] Ibid., sig. B 7.

St. German's conservatism is also evident in the theological aspects of his thought, and here the comparisons with Tyndale's approach to the Reformation are striking. More had never clearly identified St. German as a Protestant, for their debate centered so frequently on legal technicalities and a precise understanding of the procedural aspects of common law, that any thought of the theological heresies of men like Tyndale probably remained distant from his mind. Nevertheless, for whatever reason More failed to make the connection between St. German and the Protestant theology of the reformers, he was probably correct in not doing so. In his dyaloges, St. German believed that if the abuses within the church were halted, this in itself would end the religious divisions in England. Thus, with regard to the problems of purgatory, he remarked that if Parliament would enact a law prohibiting masses for the dead that were said for a fee, "in a shorte tyme there wolde be but a fewe, that wolde saye, that there was no purgatorie."[24] St. German's belief here bore no relationship to the aims of the reformers like Tyndale. Before Tyndale had even attempted to promote his reformation in England, he had been converted to a theology which was, in itself, a frontal attack on the power of the church. To this theology, he added considerations of a legal sort--the authority of the king over the church, its lands, and its special members.[25] Whether Tyndale was attempting to

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[24] Ibid., sig. B 6[v].

[25] This is based upon the general direction of Tyndale's early career as a reformer. His first work, his translation of Luther's Prologues, his mammon, as well as his translation of the New Testament, were all theologically oriented. It was not until 1528 and the Obedience that Tyndale began to consider the legal aspects of the Reformation.

reform the old church or promote the new, his reformation always included a theology which was unacceptable to the church hierarchy.

The one exception to the apprent conservatism of the Fyrst and Secunde dyaloges pertained to the authority of the papacy in England. What if, the doctor demanded, there was a schism in the church; what could the king and Parliament do? To this important question, the student replied that:

> . . . the Kynge in his parlyament/ as the hyghe soueraygne ouer the people/ which hath nat onely charge on the bodies, but also on the soules of his subiectes/ hath power for the quietenes and suretie of his realme to ordeyne and determyne, who shall be in this realme holden for rightwyse pope, and maye commande, that no man spirituall nor temporall shall name any other to be pope, but hym that is so auctorysed in the parlyament. . . .[26]

Quite probably, the papacy had received as serious a challenge from the conciliarists, and there were many conciliarists living during St. German's time, among them Thomas More. They affirmed the superiority of the general council of the church over the authority of the papacy. However, this was a challenge of a different sort, for it came from outside of the church. St. German was not appealing to the conciliarist tradition when he made this remark. Instead, he was appealing to English statute law and in particular to a statute passed in the eleventh year of the reign of Richard II. In effect, he was giving statute law more authority in the case of schism than most conciliarists would have been willing to admit that it possessed.[27]

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[26] St. German, Secunde dyaloge, addycons, sig. B 6^{v}.

[27] Two works are worth consulting on this problem of the authority of the council over the papacy: Brian Tierney, The Foundations of Conciliar Theory (Ithaca, 1955); and Francis Oakley, The Political Thought of Pierre D'Ailly (New Haven, 1965).

Equally as important as St. German's assertions of the powers of the king in Parliament during a time of crisis in the church was his repudiation of papal law in England. This question remained unconsidered in the first two dialogues. However, in the addycons, St. German employed Gerson's opening statement in his Third Corollary of De Vita Spirituali Animae, "non omnes canones summorum pontificum vel decreta sunt de lege divine," against the authority of papal law. For him papal law no longer enjoyed divine sanction. He then applied Gerson's distinction of "temporal things" to the lands of the church, and affirmed the king's control over all sanctuaries and churches in England.[28]

After completion of the addycons to the 1531 edition of the Secunde dyaloge, St. German lost interest in the expansion of the king's authority based upon the rationale of temporal things. Instead, he turned his attention to the relationship of the ecclesiastical law to common law, and it was his concern for the possibility of an individual's finding justice in an ecclesiastical court that sparked his controversy with Thomas More. In St. German's following works, the diuision and Salem and Bizance, there is no mention of temporal things for this was not the real issue. It was not until 1535 that he again became concerned with the king's jurisdiction over the church.

In terms of the progression of his thought, the year 1535 marked the completion of a gradual expansion of the king's jurisdiction over the church, and the maturation of the Erastian elements in St. German's thought as well. By 1535, he was no longer strictly concerned with

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[28]St. German, Secunde dyaloge, addycons, sig. B 1.

temporal things. He had broadened his interests to include jurisdiction over spiritual matters. A continued concern with temporal matters, a new interest in the spiritual, a redefinition of what exactly constituted "spiritual things," and the use of Marsilius of Padua's thought to place the matter beyond all doubt: all these things are found in his treatise, An Answere to a letter. Quite probably, this was St. German's single most important piece of work with regard to the problem of the king's and Parliament's jurisdiction over the church.

Published in 1535, the Answere was written in the form of a reply to a friend's letter concerning the recent legislation passed by Parliament. This would have been the Act of Supremacy, but St. German offered his readers no further clues as to the identity of the friend or the circumstances under which this work was written. Considering the actual pronouncements which he made during the course of this treatise, whether or not it was a blind appears to be of little real significance.

In the first few pages of the work St. German discussed the relationship of the king to the church. As previously noted, he denied that the king had taken any new powers or any "auctority that oure lorde gaue only to his apostles or discyples/ in Spirytuall ministration to the people."[29] There were some things which belonged to the king's prerogative even if they were considered to be spiritual. "For a more playne declaration of this matter," he said:

> it is to be consydered/ that there are some thynges that are called mere spirytuall/ and that be so indeed. and ther be some that haue ben called mere spirituall/ whiche neuerthelesse perteygne to the power of Kynges and princes.[30]

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[29]St. German, Answere, sig. A 3^{v}. [30]Ibid., sig. A 3^{v}.

St. German proceeded to list seven aspects of this spiritual jurisdiction which had been the sole responsibility of the spirituality in the past, and which now were to be considered as belonging to the king's prerogative. These included: the right of the king to control the visitation of bishops; the right of taxation of the clergy; the complete control over sanctuaries and churchyards, an item of jurisdiction which he had awarded the king previously; the ordination of bishops without the consent of the papacy; the correction of certain abuses pertaining to the morality of the clergy; and finally, a flat denial that the papacy had any control over the "spirituall promocyons."[31]

With the exception for the provision of the ordination of the bishops without the consent of the papacy, St. German was primarily concerned with the potestas iurisdictionis of the papacy in England. And while the items listed above were important for the Reformation itself, they represented a half-way mark in St. German's journey towards advocating an unprecedented control of the king and Parliament over the church. Actually, he went two steps further in that journey: he reconsidered the entire question of the authority within the church, which meant a detailed and logical attack both on the papacy and the general council of the church; and he also awarded to the king and Parliament the authority to interpret scripture. His thoughts on both of these problems are found in his Answere. For a man trained in law, his thoughts in this work represent a logical complement to his simple affirmation that the king now had jurisdictional control over the church.

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[31] Ibid., sigs. A 5 - A 6.

St. German's consideration of the authority of the papacy and of the church council, and his decision to grant the king and Parliament the right to determine scripture are all important to the structure of his thought. These aspects of his thought are also significant for a comparison of his treatment of the problems of king and church with that of Tyndale. In his general consideration of the powers of the papacy and his anti-papal thought, St. German came closest to Tyndale's own views. However, in his overall solution to this problem of the jurisdiction of the king over the church and his discussion of authority within the church, the distance which separated the thoughts of the two men was considerable.

Like Tyndale, St. German realized that two forces could be brought to bear against the papacy: history and the reinterpretation of scripture. He employed both, although he devoted more time to the latter than to the former. Nonetheless, the historical aspect of his arguments is important, for, like Tyndale, he desired to prove that at certain times during the past the papacy had been under the control of the Emperor, and that it had actually received some authority from him. Hence, St. German offered his readers a familiar lesson of history:

> It was ordeyned in the tyme of focas the emperor/ that Rome were Bonyface the third was then bishop shulde be the heed of all churches/ whervpon it folowed that the seyd Bonyface shulde be taken as heed of all byshops and prestes.[32]

St. German then made the appropriate and familiar observations. Phocas had given Boniface III some degree of authority and not the other way around. Moreover, during that time, there had been no pretensions on

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[32] Ibid., sig. B 1.

the part of the Bishop of Rome to jurisdictional authority over the universal church, and any such pretense would have greatly displeased the emperor. If the Bishop of Rome "shulde haue pretended to haue ben heed ouer the seyde emperour focas," St. German said, "it is nat to thinke that the seyde focas wolde haue assented therto."[33]

There are several important things to be noted about St. German's use of this particular story, and in general about his and Tyndale's use of history against the papacy. First, St. German's use of this particular episode of history and Tyndale's emphasis on it was probably little more than coincidence. While the story was an extremely useful one to repeat, it is highly doubtful if St. German went to Tyndale's Practyse of Prelates to learn about Phocas and Boniface. This work would have been an unlikely source of information for any Henrician apologist because of the position which Tyndale had taken on the divorce. Also, Tyndale had interpreted the story differently, confusing this Boniface with the cleric who had led the missionary expeditions across the Rhine. St. German did not make this mistake. Now it is possible that both he and Tyndale employed the same source for their information: Vadianus' a worke entytled on the olde God & the newe, which had been translated into English as part of Cromwell's propaganda campaign in 1534. However, it is more likely that St. German went to the source of many of these historical anecdotes, Platina's Lives of the Popes.[34] Elsewhere in the

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[33] Ibid., sig. B 1^{v}.

[34] Platina, Platinae Historici Liber De Vita Christi: Ac Pontificivm Omnivm, sigs. H i - H i^{v}.

Answere, as well as in other works which date from these years, St. German used Platina's work extensively, and it is probable that he used it to learn about Boniface and Phocas too. Thus, unlike Tyndale who was content for the most part to learn about the history of the popes from Vadianus, who himself had used Platina, St. German used the work of the Italian humanist in the original.

St. German introduced other historical incidents to discredit the authority of the papacy over kings and emperors. Many of these were similar to incidents employed by Tyndale inasmuch as they all clearly showed the papacy in a pre-Investiture Controversy light. Once again, there is no evidence to sustain the belief that St. German might have used Tyndale's Practyse of Prelates as his source. Many of these arguments were so well known that during the Reformation they must have become almost common property.[35] Furthermore, although Tyndale and St. German at times employed similar historical incidents against the church, St. German was much more sophisticated in his interpretation of them. In short, St. German's training in law influenced his approach to the use of history against the church. The following example makes this very clear:

> after the passyon of christ the successours of the apostles and dyscyples were appoynted to use their power within a certayn circuite/ but that appoyntment was onely by the power & law of man & nat by y^t^ imediat power of god.[36]

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[35]For example, he affirmed the original equality of the apostles, as well as the superiority of the sees of Alexandria and Constantinople over the see of Rome. Answere, sigs. A 8 - A 8^v^.

[36]St. German, Answere, sig. A 8.

For a man schooled in the subtleties of the law, this was a very important distinction to make. In terms of the politics of the Reformation, the logic of this statement implied that the duties of the clergy came under the jurisdiction of the king, since the original apostles had carried out their duties under the Emperor's jurisdiction. Carrying the logic of St. German's statement still further, it also implied that whatever activities the members of the church performed, they did so under the authority of the laws of man and not the laws of God. And to St. German, Parliament and the king were one of the sources of positive law. This particular interpretation had never occurred to Tyndale, and it clearly demonstrates the different orientation of the two men, as well as the different manner in which they used history against the authority of the papacy.

The second part of St. German's attack on the authority of the papacy consisted of his attempt to neutralize whatever advantages the papacy had gained through the support of important passages of scripture. For St. German, this meant doing two things. First, it meant reinterpreting the traditional texts which the papacy had employed in the past to buttress its power. The similarities of his method with Tyndale's are noticeable, although it is doubtful if St. German went to Tyndale's works to find his interpretation. While it is probable that a man educated in law and not in theology would have felt the necessity of going to some source to learn Biblical exegesis, any evidence of his debt to Tyndale is very slight. Like Tyndale, however, St. German also attempted to break the clerical stranglehold on the interpretation of scripture itself. Tyndale had affirmed the right of the individual professing Christian to judge the validity of the church's interpretation

of all texts. St. German's procedure was different, and rather than investing this right in the individual Christian, he looked to Parliament. He also employed the thought of Marsilius of Padua. The Henrician apologist's dependence upon his thought, and his belief that Parliament had the right to interpret scripture, established important differences between his ecclesiology, his treatment of the problem of authority in the church, and Tyndale's own thoughts on these matters. Finally, in his usual thorough manner, St. German considered the problem of the authority of the general council of the Christian church. Tyndale had also considered this problem. However, once again, St. German's use of the thought of Marsilius of Padua established important differences between his own treatment of a problem and Tyndale's treatment of the same problem.

St. German began his consideration, quite necessarily, with a discussion of the nature and senses of scripture. To him there were two types of scripture: scripture which contained passages in which the meaning was readily apparent; and scripture which contained passages in which the meaning was not easily understandable. "It is to be vnderstande," he said:

> that there be some textes of scrypture that be so open & playne in themselves that euery man is bounde to gyue full credence vnto them: for the lyterall sense is the playne exposytion in it selfe.[37]

On the other hand, he said:

> there be some other textes . . . which be nat so euydente and playne . . . and yet if they be truly vnderstande/ accordynge

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[37] Ibid., sigs. F 6^{v} - F 7.

> to the mynde of the maker/ that is to say/ of our maister christe/ the lyterall sense of them is as true as the other that be most playne.[38]

Now St. German probably did not believe this, for beneath this concern for the literal sense of scripture, a concern which he got from Augustine and Jerome and not from Tyndale, stood the realizations that the literal sense could be damaging to his own purpose, and that people could do anything they wanted to with scripture. Thus he remarked:

> But there be some other textes in the scrypture that concerne the auctoritie/ power/ iurisdiction/ and rychesse of byshhops & prestes . . . and if a man were in dout vpon these textes (or) if there fall any varyance or unquyetnesse ther vpon amonge the people . . . that in all these cases/ kynges and princes shalbe iudges & haue power to pacyfye all suche unquyetnesse. for it appereth in Psal.ii. that it is said thus to kynges & princes O ye kynges/ vnderstande ye; be ye lerned that Iudge the worlde.[39]

St. German proceeded to offer his readers two pages of these texts, and all of them were the traditional texts which supported the papacy's claim to authority.[40] To kings and princes alone belonged the right to interpret them.

However, St. German did not rest his case upon one biblical quotation, nor did he restrict the right to deal with difficult passages only to kings and princes. This right also belonged to Parliament, and to prove this point he started with the accepted statement that "the catholyque churche maye expounde scrypture."[41] Then using the Marsilian definition of the word "church," he proved to his own satisfaction that to the king and to Parliament belonged the right to interpret scripture.

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[38] Ibid., sigs. F 7 - F 7^{v}.

[39] Ibid., sigs. G 1 - G 3.

[40] Ibid., sigs. G 1^{v} - G 3.

[41] Ibid., sig. G 4^{v}.

In a lengthy passage which is certainly one of the most significant in the entire treatise, he suggested that:

> if the clergye can prove that they be the Catholyke church/ than it belongeth to them to expounde it. But yf the emperours. kynges & princes/ with their people/ as well of the clergye . . . make the catholique church . . . then may the emperoure/ kynge & princes with their people expounde it.[42]

Three things are important. First, St. German appeared willing to give Parliament not only the right to interpret those passages of scripture which pertained to the authority of the pope, but also the right to interpret any passage that was "doutfull."[43] Secondly, St. German was also attempting to break the power of Convocation. Parliament represented the church while Convocation did not. The latter represented only the "state of the clergy."[44] Finally, while certain aspects of Marsilius' thought, especially his definition of the word "church," were useful to St. German, other aspects of his thought presented the Henrician apologists in general, and St. German in particular, with a serious problem. Marsilius, like More, was a conciliarist, and in his Defensor Pacis he had attempted to prove that:

> the principal authority, direct or indirect, for such determination of doubtful questions belongs only to a general council composed of all Christians or to the weightier part of them, or to those persons who have been granted such authority by the whole body of Christian believers.[45]

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[42] Ibid., sigs. G 4^{v} - G 5.. [43] Ibid., sig. G 5.

[44] Ibid., sig. G 6^{v}.

[45] Marsilius of Padua, The Defender of Peace, trans. Alan Gewirth (New York, 1967), 279.

St. German was thus obliged to spend much time refuting the ideas of conciliarism. He had given the same authority which had been possessed by the general council of the church to Parliament, and he had to justify this grant of authority. He also desired to prove that the council as an institution within the church was not as useful as Parliament, and that the authority of the council presented no contradiction to the authority of the king and Parliament in matters of faith.

To combat the historical claims of the general council and to clarify the relationship of the king and Parliament to the council, St. German cleverly used part of Marsilius' arguments against the authority of the councils in England. Exactly how far was a decree of the council binding on the actions of the king? Not at all, he suggested _if_, "any Prince or countrey were nat warned to be there."[46] This was the reverse of what Marsilius had said concerning the proper method of assembling a general council:

> The procedure is as follows: Let all the notable provinces or communities of the world, in accordance with the determination of their human legislators whether one or many, and according to their proportion in quantity and quality of persons, elect faithful men, first priests and then non-priests, suitable persons of the most blameless lives and the greatest experience in divine law.[47]

Marsilius was probably attempting to wrest control of the right to convene a general council away from the papacy. St. German was using the similar sentiment but stating it in the opposite fashion in the attempt to elevate the king's authority over that of the council.

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[46] St. German, _Answere_, sigs. B 7 - B 7^{v}.

[47] Marsilius of Padua, _The Defender of Peace_, 280.

St. German also attacked the very usefulness of the institution of the council itself. Here his method was closer to Tyndale's, when he told More that in view of the differing pronouncements which came forth from various councils, no council should presume to have authority over God's word.[48] Once again, however, St. German looked to Parliament and not to the individual's interpretation of scripture:

> It is well knowen that popes in tyme past haue delayed suche generall counseyls. . . . Therfore if the wronges done by popes/ shulde nat be reformed before a generall counsell/ the people mighte be longe greued. . . . And there is no reason why they shuld susteyne wronge any one daye specyally by him that dysserreth the meanes whereby they might haue a remedye. And therfore the parlyament hath good auctoritye to remoue such wronges in this realme: and so haue all other Realmes that be in lyke maner greued as this realme was.[49]

The origin of this particular argument is not readily apparent. However, it is quite possible that St. German was applying the logic of an argument which he had used earlier in his career against the ecclesiastical courts. Throughout his Diuision, St. German suggested that secular courts had the authority to correct the abuses of the ecclesiastical courts.[50] In 1535, he was applying the same sentiment to church councils. Since the councils had been so negligent in the past, Parliament should be allowed to assume their jurisdiction.

Thus in 1535, St. German looked to Parliament as the reforming institution in England. But what gave Parliament the same infallibility

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[48]Tyndale, Answere, sig. H 4^{v}.

[49]St. German, Answere, sig. B 8.

[50]Christopher St. German, A Treatise concernynge the Diuision betwene the spiritualtie and temporaltie (London, 1532), passim.

which traditionally had been accorded to the general council of the Christian church? St. German never discussed this problem in a satisfactory manner. He saw the need for some institution to further religious uniformity, and he assumed that Parliament was that institution. These two points of his treatment of this question are clear. However, it is difficult to say exactly what else he believed. Apparently, he thought that Parliament could err, for he said that subjects were not bound to obey if Parliament did something contrary to the law of God. But the same law of God also implied that all subjects were obliged to follow the scriptural interpretations which Parliament made. God in His infinite goodness would not allow his people to linger in doubt over the correct interpretation of scripture. He had provided them with an institution to make scripture clear, and Parliament was this institution.[51] St. German left his readers with both an affirmation and a nonaffirmation of the infallibility of Parliament.

All this was very distant from the thoughts and desires of Tyndale. Tyndale never had much to say about Parliament, because the sense and orientation of his political thought was so theological that a detailed consideration of that institution was never part of his vision of the Reformation. Tyndale did say enough, however, to make it clear that he had no inherent trust in any institution like Parliament or the general council of the Christian church, and he refused to believe that either institution had any intrinsic worth of its own. Furthermore, Tyndale did not view Parliament as an institution which could determine scripture

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[51]St. German, Answere, sigs. B 6 - G 5^{v}.

or maintain doctrinal purity within the church. He believed that it was the right of the individual Christian to determine religious truth based on a literal interpretation of scripture. The man who wrote the Pathway to the Holy Scripture as a guide for the professing Christian, and who also fought against the authority of the institutional church to determine religious truths, would not have been willing to give that same authority to another institution which was comprised of equally sinful people.[52]

The second aspect of St. German's consideration of the problems of authority in the church consisted of his refutation of those specific passages which traditionally had been the pillar of the papacy's strength. These were the same passages which he had earlier suggested should be left to Parliament's consideration, and it is not easy to understand why St. German entered into this particular aspect of the problems of the Reformation. His treatment of this problem lacks the consistency of his usual approach to those problems posed by the Henrician Revolution in the church.

St. German began his refutation of the traditional texts which supported the papacy's claim to supremacy with an examination of the proper manner of interpreting scripture. His primary concern was for the literal sense of scripture, "for the lyterall sense is the playne exposytion in it selfe."[53] However, when he began to refute certain

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[52]A large measure of Tyndale's hostility to Parliament stemmed from his belief that this particular institution was dominated by the same prelates who plagued Christian kings and kingdoms. See both his Obedience and his Practyse of Prelates where the exact nature of his complaints against Parliament is evident. This problem is also discussed above, Chapter I.

[53]St. German, Answere, sigs. F 6^{v} - F 7.

passages, he soon realized the impracticality of his dependence upon this literal sense. This realization came to him when he was in the process of examining the important passage, "what so euer ye bynde vpon erthe shalbe bounde in heuyn/ and what so euer ye lose vpon erthe/ shalbe losed in heuen."[54] In this case the literal sense was far more damaging than useful, and St. German was obliged to seek other means of exegesis. To those people who say that this text gave the prelates power to make laws whereby the secular authority would be bound to obedience, he said:

> it may be answered that holye scrypture is nat to be expounded onely after the lyteral sense of the texte/ that is written in/ but after other textes of scrypture concerning the same mater.[55]

There were other passages in which the sense contradicted the sense of the text given above. "Reddite que sunt Cesaris Cesari. Et que sunt dei deo."[56] However, the meaning of these other texts bothered St. German even more because it seemed to imply that scripture was contradicting itself. And like the other reformers of the sixteenth century, this was something that St. German did not wish to believe.[57] He thought that scripture could be explicated in such a way that there would be no contradiction. Consequently, he introduced still another criterion for the proper interpretation of these texts--the idea of intent.

To St. German there were many passages in which the meaning was not clear, and in which the literal sense of scripture was of no value. Neither was the interpretation of these passages in light of others.

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[54] St. German, power of the clergye, sig. C 4^{v}.

[55] Ibid., sig. C 4^{v}.

[56] Ibid., sigs. C 6^{v} - C 7.

[57] Ibid., sig. C 5.

He considered two texts in Luke and Matthew, "if anyman take fro the that is thyne/ aske it nat agayne," and "thou shalte do no thefte."[58] Looking at these two texts, he concluded that either you have a contradiction or, to use his words, the destruction of the commonwealth for, "if all propertie were put awaye/ and lawes and iustice concerninge goodes shulde nothing be regarded/ the whole common welth shulde be destroied."[59] However, he suggested, it was not the intent of Christ that all commonwealths should be destroyed, nor was it his intent that the legitimate secular authorities should be subjected to the authority of the church. Thus, he remarked:

> There be dyuers auctorityes of Scripture/ whereby it appereth that oure lorde neuer intended by his commyng in to this world to take any power fro princes/ but that shulde haue lyke power ouer their subiectes after his commyng as they hadde before.[60]

This idea of intent became St. German's most useful weapon of exegesis against those interpretations of the traditional texts which supported the papacy's claim to authority, especially over the temporal regiment. It is worth a moment of speculation to consider the possible origins of this particular method of exegesis. In St. German's extant works, there are very vew apparent affinities with the intellectual current of Christian humanism. with one important exception. Both St. German and the Christian humanists were interested in precision. The Christian humanists were concerned with a philological and exegetal precision. Besides their well-known interest in pure, uncorrupted texts the Christian humanists also carefully studied the historical circumstances which

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[58] Ibid., sig. C 5. [59] Ibid., sig. C 5. [60] Ibid., sig. C 7.

surrounded the composition of a certain text in an effort to understand the intent of its author. St. German was interested in a precise exegesis of texts, albeit for polemical purposes, and his method appears to parallel that of the Christian humanists. However, St. German was also interested in precision as it applied to the study of law, and it is possible that he applied the tools of legal precision to the study of scripture. The old cliché that the punishment should fit the crime greatly concerned St. German. One of his greatest contributions to the growth of the English law pertained to this problem. To make the punishment fit the seriousness of the crime he wrote endless pages on the idea of equity. Earlier in his career he had defined this idea of equity as "a ryght sysennes that consideryth all the ptyculer circumstaunces of the dede. . . ."[61] Once again, the parallels with the methods of the Christian humanist are interesting, for his interest in equity forced him to consider carefully the intent of all deeds. St. German was also interested in Christ's intentions, and again and again, he affirmed the idea that Christ had no intention of subverting the authority of the kings and emperors, nor had he intended to alter the nature of kingship. This application of the idea of intent, with an inconsistent reliance upon a use of the literal sense of scripture, made up the procedure which St. German followed for a rebuttal of any interpretations of scripture which supported the contentions of the papacy.

The parallels between St. German's and Tyndale's exegesis of scripture are worth considering. In his Obedience, Tyndale made two very

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[61]St. German, Fyrste dyaloge, sig. J 4.

important statements which have a bearing on this problem. First, concerning the literal sense of scripture, he said:

> God is a spirite and all his wordes are spirituall. His literall sense is spirituall and all his wordes are spirituall. When thou readest.Mathei.1. she shall beare a sonne and thou shalt call his name Jesus.for he shall save his people from their synnes. This leterall sense is spirituall and everlastinge lyfe vnto as many as beleve it.[62]

He also remarked:

> No place of the scripture maye have a private exposition/ that is it maye not be expounde after the will of man or after the will of y flesh or drawne vnto a worldly purpose contrary vnto the open textes and the generall articles of the fayth and the whole course of the scripture and contrary to the lyvinge and practisynge of Christe and the Apostles and holy prophetes. For as they came not by the will of man: but as they came by the holy goost/ somust they be expounde and vnderstonde by the holy goost.[63]

Like St. German, Tyndale fully realized the problems of a dependence upon the literal sense in arguing against the powers of the papacy. And the sentiments expressed above provided him with a convenient alternative. Unlike St. German, however, Tyndale was not interested in Christ's intent, but rather in the "lyvinge and practisynge of Christe and the Apostles and holy prophetes." Thus, instead of suggesting that it was not Christ's intention to change the nature of kingship, Tyndale suggested that in living and in practice Christ had placed himself and his apostles under the temporal sword. His followers should follow the example of Christ.[64] Tyndale also brought the spiritual aspect of the literal sense to bear against the interpretations of the church. The rock upon which Christ had built his church was not the apostle Peter or his vicars for "sayeth all the scripture that the rock is Christe/ the fayth and Gods word."[65]

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[62] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. R. 6^{v}.

[63] Ibid., sigs. S. 5 - S. 5^{v}.

[64] Ibid., sig. E. 1^{v}.

[65] Ibid., sig. S. 6^{v}.

St. German was not concerned with this particular method of exegesis. Finally, Tyndale had found the method of interpreting one text in light of others more useful than did St. German. While for St. German this procedure appeared to lead to contradictions in the meanings of scripture, for Tyndale it led to the correct interpretation.[66]

With the exception of the fact that both men found a strict dependence upon the literal sense of scripture damaging to their own designs, and also the fact that the actual basis of the papacy's authority forced them to deal with the same texts, there is very little similarity between Tyndale's and St. German's approach to polemical exegesis. And when it is remembered that the interpretation of individual texts made up only one part of St. German's treatment of the problem of authority in the church, the other part being his dependence upon the thought of Marsilius of Padua, these differences appear even greater. It is impossible to know which aspect of his treatment of this problem St. German placed more stock in. Nevertheless, beneath his lengthy consideration of the various texts stood the awareness that if royal supremacy meant anything at all, it meant the right of the Parliament and of the king to interpret scripture. It also meant the obligation of the people to follow their interpretations. To be anti-papal is one thing, but to be a consistent Henrician apologist is something again. St. German, unlike Tyndale, was a consistent Henrician apologist.

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[66] Ibid., sig. l. 4^{v}.

Tyndale, St. German and the Law

In 1528, Tyndale wrote, "one king and one law is god's ordinaunce in euery realme."[67] The naïve simplicity of his statement would have amazed St. German, for its substance bore only a small relation to the status of the legal profession in England during the sixteenth century. To quote one authority:

> The political and legal fabric of feudalism, the authority of the medieval church, the comprehensive system of scholastic philosophy, were found equally wanting, and modern thought made its way in all spheres of life. Legal studies and legal institutions were not exempted from the effects of the general commotion.[68]

St. German was really concerned with this commotion in legal studies. The interpretation of scripture, the problem of authority in the church--these interests were dictated to him by his involvement in the Reformation. He was interested in law, and it was not the same aspect of law which interested Tyndale. His interests lay in the law as it applied to England, and as it was used daily by lawyers. He was interested in its procedural aspects. Like the scholastics, St. German was also seeking methods of classification in the attempt to solve the important problem of the relationship of differing types of law to each other. What was the relationship of customary law to statute law; of ecclesiastical law to statute law? Where did common law and the laws of God and nature fit into this confusing hierarchy of law? These were the questions which St. German attempted to answer in his two dialogues concerning the laws of England. Of course, questions such as these stood on the

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[68] Paul Vinogradoff, "Reason and Equity in sixteenth century Jurisprudence," Collected Papers, II, 190.

periphery of Tyndale's concern with law. However, St. German's thoughts on these matters warrant careful consideration if, for no other reason than to place Tyndale's own understanding of law in its political sense within the context of the turbulence of the law in sixteenth century England.

In his Fyrste dyaloge, St. German discerned four distinct types of law: the lawe eternal, the lawe of nature of reasonable creatures, the lawe of god, and the law of man.[69] He commenced his discussion with a consideration of the law eternal. "This lawe eternall," he said, "is called the fyrste lawe/ . . . for it was before all other lawes. and all other lawes be deryued of it."[70] St. German then proceeded to set out an epistemology of law which became very important in his attempt to relate the other senses of law to the law eternal. Only the blessed souls in heaven seeing God face to face can know the law eternal in a direct fashion. But for the other creatures God made his law known in a variety of ways: first, by the "lyght of natural reason"; secondly, by "heaunely revelacyon"; thirdly, by the "ordre of a prince."[71] These means by which God made his law known to man served as the primary classification for all laws. St. German said:

> and whan the lawe eternall or the wyll of god is knowen to his creatures reasonably by the lyght of naturall understandynge/ or by the lyght of naturall reason/ then it is called the lawe of reason. and when it is shewed by heaunely revelacion . . . then it is called the lawe of god . . . and when it is shewed vnto hym by the ordre of a prynce/ or of any other secundarye gouernoure that hath power to set a lawe vpon his subgettes. then it is called the lawe of man.[72]

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[69] St. German, Fyrste dyaloge, sig. A 3. [70] Ibid., sig. A 3.

[71] Ibid., sig. A 4^{v}. [72] Ibid., sigs. A 3^{v} - A 4.

St. German's discussion of each type of law as it was derived from the law eternal is of considerable interest. Although set in the Renaissance motif of the dialogue, the words of the two speakers reflect thoroughly medieval sentiments, with many of the distinctions coming either from the Decretum, or from the work of Ulpian.[73] His treatment of the classification of law is also interesting because of its imbalance. Clearly, St. German did not hold all forms of law to be of equal importance, and in his discussion he dismissed the law of God in a few sentences. He suggested that it originated in the will of God, a distinction which he borrowed from the Nominalist philosopher, Jean Gerson. However, the immediacy or relevance of this scholastic distinction never becomes apparent in his consideration of this type of law.[74] St. German's preference appears to have rested with the two other types of law, natural law and positive law. While no explanation of his reluctance to discuss the laws of God can be found, it is not surprising that a lawyer would have been more interested in both natural law and positive law.

Men of the sixteenth century offered a myriad of definitions for the concept of natural law, and as previously noted, Tyndale made his own contribution to this vast store of definitions. To St. German, natural law had two senses: the general and the specific. Once again, his treatment was imbalanced, and he dismissed the first or general

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[73] S. B. Chrimes, English Constitutional Thought in the Fifteenth Century, 205.

[74] In the successive editions of the dyaloges, St. German deleted many of the scholastic distinctions so that the English editions of 1530 and 1531 are considerably less complex than the Latin edition of 1523.

sense of natural law in a few words. To him, this sense of law merely meant that all creatures, both rational and irrational, should agree to live under a certain rule necessary for the conservation of their being. This particular distinction St. German took from Ulpian.[75]

The second sense of natural law was clearly the sense which interested him more, and this sense he termed the law "of nature of reasonable creatures." This was a law, he said, "which ought to be kept as well amonge the Jewes & gentyls . . . and . . . is always good ryght-wyse stryng . . . a man to good and &abhorynge evyl."[76] The law of nature of reasonable creatures taught that "thou shalte do to another y thou woldest another shuld do to the," and that "good is to be loued, evil fled."[77] Defined in this particular way, this sense of law became for St. German a normative standard of law, to be used to judge the validity of the laws of man.[78]

The law of nature of reasonable creatures was important to St. German's thought not only because it was one of the yardsticks with which to measure the validity of positive law, but also because for him it was the necessary starting point for a consideration of positive law. Why was there any necessity for the laws of a prince? This was the opening question which the student of the laws of England asked the doctor of divinity. At issue here was the matter of original sin. Had it not

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[75]Chrimes, English Constitutional Thought in the Fifteenth Century, 205.

[76]St. German, Fyrste dyaloge, sig. A 4^{v}.

[77]Ibid., sig. B 1.

[78]Ibid., sig. A 4^{v}.

been for original sin, man might have been able to discern what was good from what was bad. But he could not always do this, and hence it was necessary "for the good ordre of the people to haue many thyng added to the lawe of reason as well by the churche: as by secular prynces."[79] To this common medieval response St. German added the thought of Aristotle: law in its positive sense should lead men to virtue.[80]

St. German used several criteria to judge the validity of the laws of man. As previously noted, he used the contents of natural law to this end. He also used the law of God as a standard for the laws of man.[81] Finally, he suggested that it had to be "made" by those who were in a position of authority to make law. Any positive law which did not contradict any of these limitations had to be obeyed.[82]

Once St. German had discussed the nature of positive law and its relationship to the laws of God and nature or reasons, he attempted to determine the exact grounds for the laws of England. His discussion of the various grounds for the laws of England is lengthy and tedious, and a few general observations will suffice. First, many of the same considerations which St. German had made concerning the theory of different

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[79] Ibid., sig. B 1.

[80] Ibid., sig. C 2.

[81] Ibid., sig. C 10.

[82] In one sense, St. German applied his definition of the concept of equity to law in its positive sense and suggested that any law which ignored it was "manyfestly unreasonable." Ibid., sig. K 1. However, it did not have the same force as the laws of nature and God. This concept of equity, although simple by standards of definition, was complex by virtue of its application. See Holdsworth, History of English Law, IV, 279 ff.

types of law were also applicable here. The laws of England were to be based upon both the laws of reason and the law of God. For St. German this implied not only the idea that the laws of England should not contradict the contents of these two aspects of law, but also that the laws of England should punish the transgressions of God's law. In the years when St. German wrote his dialoges on the nature of law, this meant the punishment of heresy. Secondly, to these considerations he added a belief in the validity of law based upon Parliamentary statute and diverse customs. Finally, St. German clearly preferred laws which were grounded upon the force of tradition and custom. These laws, he said, were properly called common law. Now during his career and during the sixteenth century in general, there was much dissatisfaction with certain aspects of common law, and St. German shared that dissatisfaction. Yet he firmly maintained that "a lawe grounded vpon a custome is the most sueryst lawe."[83] This particular point of view is interesting for several reasons. First, it contradicts what St. German was later to affirm against More--that the existence of a custom for a lengthy period of time was no measure of its validity.[84] St. German's preference for law based upon custom is also indicative of his mentality, and it reinforces the notion apparent everywhere in his treatment of law. His views on the nature and sources of law were thoroughly medieval. As Professor

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[83]St. German, Fyrste dyaloge, sig. F 1.

[84]St. German, Salem and Bizance, sigs. L 2 - L 3.

Chrimes so aptly states, St. German is the best representative of fifteenth century legal thought in sixteenth century England.[85]

This brief analysis, while ignoring the complexity with which St. German discussed the law, does offer enough information to make the necessary comparison with Tyndale's own thoughts on law in its political sense. The comparison is basically between two men of different orientations and interests. Tyndale had very little interest in and knowledge of the laws of England. This was St. German's primary concern. In spite of this all-important difference, there are some similarities and parallels between the two men's treatment of the law.

One aspect of this similarity is partially summarized by Tyndale's statement in the Obedience, "one king and one law is god's ordinaunce in euery realme."[86] Among other things, Tyndale was calling for the end to ecclesiastical law in England. This was one of St. German's primary concerns in his later years. Earlier, however, his intention was not as clearly pronounced, and in his Fyrste and secunde dyaloges, he was more interested in dealing with the laws of the church as one of the primary sources of confusion in English law. In short, he was more concerned with the problem of overlapping jurisdiction. His methodical solutions to this problem provided English lawyers with a useful tool, a guide to the complexity of the law in the decade before the Reformation. In one sense, the year 1531 marked a turning point in St. German's interests,

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[85]Chrimes, English Constitutional Thought in the Fifteenth Century, 205.

[86]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. K. 6^{v}.

and in his addycons to the Secunde dyaloge, he began his lengthy arguments against the actual validity of papal law in England. Here, drawing from the arguments of Jean Gerson, he suggested that the decretals of the popes did not have the force of divine law.[87] Although this particular point of view had existed for centuries in England, its use by St. German in the decade of the Reformation was very significant.[88]

There was also a remarkable degree of similarity between Tyndale's and St. German's considerations of heresy proceedings. Unlike Tyndale, St. German methodically explored the strong anti-clerical sentiment which existed on the eve of the Reformation, and heresy trials were an important part of this anti-clericalism. St. German's treatment focused on the procedure ex officio.[89] His arguments against it were an important aspect of his controversy with Thomas More. Tyndale's imprecise consideration of this problem merged with St. German's usual precise treatment and with old Lollard opinions to provide More with some formidable opposition. In one sense, this confluence of anti-clerical sentiment meant that More was fighting a losing battle against the forces of the Reformation.

Although St. German's consideration of the theory of law had all the markings of the product of someone well versed in legal theory, his

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[87] As noted, St. German, when discussing the meaning of "temporal things," repeated Gerson's distinction in earlier editions of the dyaloge. Nevertheless, he did not employ it separately until he wrote his addycons to the Secunde dyaloge in 1531.

[88] See above, Chapter IV, 122-3. This was a Lollard opinion given in response to the incorporation of the Clementine Constitutis into canon law.

[89] See R. J. Schoeck, "The Meaning of ex officio in the sixteenth Century, Notes and Queries, CCV (October, 1960), 365-6.

theory of law shared some interesting similarities with Tyndale's own thoughts on the nature of law. It would be foolish to propose any influence of St. German on Tyndale. St. German's works on the law were well known by those men who moved in legal circles, but Tyndale did not move in these circles. There is no evidence to suggest that Tyndale even knew of St. German, although the latter's own controversy with More would have interested him. All things considered, the similarities in their respective ideas on the nature of law were probably the result of the continuing medievalism of the sixteenth century.

Nowhere is this continuing medievalism more evident than in the two men's discussions of natural law.[90] The previous thorough consideration of Tyndale's use of this concept has revealed that, like St. German, Tyndale employed two definitions of natural law.[91] In the Obedience, while referring to the infidel, Tyndale remarked that he was "vnder the testamente of the lawe naturall which is the lawes of every londe made for the comon wealth there and for peace and vnite that one maye lyve by another."[92] This definition of natural law was the same as St. German's first sense of natural law, and it was a definition which was first used by Ulpian. Tyndale, like St. German, never made much out of this sense of natural law. Both men preferred what St. German called the specific sense of natural law. St. German had defined it as meaning,

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[90]An old but useful treatment of this topic is by J. N. McNeil, "Natural Law and the Teaching of the Reformers," Journal of Religion, XXVI (1946), 168-82.

[91]See above, Chapter II, 57-62.

[92]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. G. 5.

"good is to be loued, evil fled," and "do to another y^{t} thou woldest another shuld do to the."[93] This was Tyndale's preferred definition of natural law, and it was one which he employed throughout his career as a reformer. It came from Luther. Finally, both men thought that natural law acted as a guide for the validity of the laws of man. Once again, this was a thoroughly medieval idea which the reformers of the sixteenth century put to good use.

A comparison of Tyndale's and St. German's theories of positive law is also revealing. Tyndale, unlike St. German, did not consider its origins in a detailed, methodical way. He appeared to believe that it came from the temporal regiment, a belief which is made clear by his constant reference to positive law as "temporal law." He also believed that Parliament, with the help of God's spirit, could make temporal law,[94] and like St. German, he believed that one measure of its validity lay in the fact that it had to be made by the legitimate temporal authority. The previous examination of Tyndale's thoughts on "temporal law" also showed that he closely equated this sense of law with sin, and this equation forms an interesting parallel with St. German's thought. St. German did not believe, as Tyndale apparently did, that law in this sense proclaimed sin. However, both men believed that positive law was necessary because of sin. St. German stated in his Fyrste dyaloge that the "law of a prynce" was necessary "for the good ordre of the people to

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[93] St. German, Fyrste dyaloge, sig. B 1.

[94] Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. F 5.

haue many thyng added to the lawe of reason as well by the churche: as by secular prynces!![95] In other words, because of man's original sin, his reason could not always lead him to good and away from evil. Tyndale stated the same belief but in opposite terms. If all men had the law of nature engraved on their hearts, then there would be no need for temporal law. But this was not the case, and thus temporal laws were necessary for the commonwealth.[96] This was a Lutheran sentiment which Tyndale stated on two occasions, but one which he did not repeat after 1531. In spite of this interesting parallel, however, St. German's orientation and Tyndale's theological development led the two men in different directions with regard to the function of positive law. St. German thought that since positive law made up for the deficiencies in man's reason, it could and did lead man to virtue. This was an Aristotelian belief which St. German may have picked up through his readings of Gerson's works.[97] Earlier in his career, Tyndale thought of temporal law in terms of a coercive force which led men away from sin. However, the development of his sense of legalism and his prejudice against Aristotle prevented him from accepting the positive aspect of this idea, i.e., that law could teach men virtue. For Tyndale, the only source of virtue and goodness became God's law, and man achieved that goodness by a rigid adherence to its dictates.

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[95] St. German, Fyrste dyaloge, sig. B 1.

[96] Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. E. 2^{v} - E. 3.

[97] See Vinogradoff's essay in his Collected Works, "Reason and Conscience in Sixteenth Century Jurisprudence," where he makes a good case for St. German's dependence on Gerson for his knowledge of Aristotle.

It cannot be claimed that the preceding analysis of St. German's thought is comprehensive, nor can it be claimed that the comparisons of his thought with Tyndale's political thought are exhaustive. However, within the declared limits of this chapter the relationship of Tyndale's political thought to St. German's is now fairly clear. With regard to the topics discussed: the problem of authority; the problem of the king and the church; and the theory of law in its political sense, the distance which separated the thoughts of these two men was great. The examination of their senses of authority clearly demonstrates that St. German's preferred sense of authority was antithetical to Tyndale's. While St. German did employ the concept of authority in its Pauline sense, the entire structure of his political thought was not based upon it, as was Tyndale's. St. German employed authority in its hierocratic sense to justify the king's control over the church. But even here, this sense of authority was not as important to St. German's arguments as was the concept of authority in its representative sense. To a large degree St. German's arguments in favor of royal control over the church rested on a representative sense of authority. Using this sense of authority in conjunction with Marsilius of Padua's definition of the word "church" St. German was able to justify this type of control.

Quite probably, Tyndale stood farthest away from St. German's thought in regard to the important question of royal control over the church. And as this matter was the essence of the thought of the Henrician apologists in general, the convenient label of "Henrician apologist" for Tyndale is questionable. During one period of his career Tyndale did advocate an undefined degree of royal, administrative control

over the church. However, it did not approach the degree of control which St. German gave to both the king and Parliament over the church. Perhaps more important than a quantitative judgment about this control is the actual type of control which St. German and other Henrician apologists advocated. The major Henrician apologists, St. German, Edward Fox, and Stephen Gardiner, all relied heavily on the thought of Marsilius of Padua. It is one thing to advocate administrative control over the church, but it is quite another thing to make the church a part of the state. And this was the direction of St. German's arguments during the years 1534-5. The term "Erastian" has acquired a multiplicity of meanings in the historiography of the Reformation, and quite probably there is a serious danger that it will soon lose its precise meaning. However, St. German was an Erastian in the sense that the church became for him part of the state, with the king and Parliament enjoying the right to interpret scripture. In one sense they became the final authority within the church, since St. German clearly affirmed that the subjects were obligated by the law of God to follow their interpretations. For Tyndale, this was tantamount to arguing that the truths of God were dependent upon the wisdom of men. He stood firmly against this procedure.

The differences between Tyndale's thoughts on the question of the king and the church and St. German's treatment of this question were made even greater by the development of his ecclesiology sometime during the years 1530-1. Now it is almost impossible to envision the king's relationship to the church of Tyndale's own design. This church had to exist within the framework of the Christian commonwealth. There, the king, as always, was responsible for punishing sin. In his later years

Tyndale also looked to him as a figure of religious inspiration. It is also known that in his later years Tyndale was willing to allow Henry his choice of a vernacular translation of scripture. This concession gave Henry a measure of control over the dogma of the church. Different translations imparted different theologies. Tyndale knew this. However, the king and Parliament were not an authority within the church in the same sense that they were for St. German. By any measure employed, the king's control over "Tyndale's church" fell far short of the type and extent of the control which St. German gave to the king in the years 1534-5.

The final topic considered in this chapter was Tyndale's and St. German's treatments of law in its political sense. Here, surprisingly enough, there are some interesting similarities and parallels. For the most part, these were probably a result of the continuing medievalism of the sixteenth century. And although these similarities and parallels are important, it would be foolish to overemphasize them. The focus of Tyndale's legal thought was primarily theocentric, as was his entire political thought. This theocentrism was completely lacking in St. German's discussion of the law. First and foremost, he was concerned with the laws of man. In spite of the similarities in their respective theories of positive and natural law, Tyndale's legalism and his theological bearing placed his consideration of law on a different level from St. German's. For Tyndale, the laws of God were always of greater importance and interest than were the laws of man.

The work of St. German forms almost a direct line with the work of Richard Hooker. Writing almost two decades after St. German's death,

Hooker was attempting to prove many of the things which St. German had attempted to prove, and which Tyndale would certainly have denied, "to define of our church's regiment, the parliament of England hath competent authority."[98] In certain ways Tyndale's thought led to the thought of those people whom Hooker argued against, the Puritans. In the following chapter Tyndale's ecclesiology and his idea of authority within the church again become important. Robert Crowley was, among other things, a Puritan. However, the focal point of the following chapter is not Crowley's Puritanism, although it is important, but rather his thoughts on the Christian commonwealth. The Puritan minister was also a member of the Commonwealth Party, and the line between the thought of Tyndale and the thought of the commonwealth men was probably as direct as that line between the thought of St. German and the thought of Hooker. It is to this relationship between Tyndale and the commonwealth men, and to other important aspects of Crowley's thought that we now turn our attention.

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[98] Richard Hooker, The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, cited in Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century, 197.

CHAPTER VII

A COMMONWEALTH MAN IN RETROSPECT: WILLIAM TYNDALE AND ROBERT CROWLEY

Like William Tyndale, Robert Crowley was one of the truly important spokesmen for his age, and like Tyndale, he is understudied by the historians of our own time. There is no thorough analysis of his ideas, nor is there a modern edition of his works.[1] Yet he is singled out both by those historians who attempt to understand the structure of English political thought, and also by those historians who are concerned with the social and agrarian problems in England during the sixteenth century.[2] Indeed, it is in this latter connection that he is usually studied, a procedure to which Crowley himself would have objected. Crowley's association with the Commonwealth Party and the so-called commonwealth men formed only a small part of a varied career, which also included both preaching and printing, and writing in defense of the Reformation.

Very little is known about the actual events of his life. He was born in Gloucestershire in 1518, and attended Oxford some sixteen years later. During his early years he was a member of the Church of England

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[1] The most recent edition of his works was done by J. M. Cooper, The Select Works of Robert Crowley, Early English Text Society, extra series, XV (London, 1872).

[2] Both Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century, and G. R. Elton, England Under the Tudors (London, 1955) treat Crowley primarily as a member of the Commonwealth Party.

and a minister in that church. However, it was a religious affiliation which proved to have been only short-lived. Sometime after 1533, Crowley became a Puritan. Like many of his fellow countrymen, he fled England with the coming of Mary and resided in Frankfort for six years. In 1559, he returned to England. At the same time that he virogously opposed pluralism, he became something of a pluralist himself. Still, his talents for preaching as well as writing were considerable, and he became a powerful and respected figure among the Puritan clergy. His active involvement in the vestiarian controversy led to his dismissal from the active clergy, and of course, only increased his prestige among the Puritans. He died in 1588, at the age of seventy.[3]

By the time of his death in 1588, Crowley had written numerous tracts which reflected his varied career. His most famous work, The Way to Wealth, wherein is plainly taught a most present Remedy for Sedicion, established the author's connection with the commonwealth men. Crowley's thoughts in this tract have little relationship to Tyndale's, although Tyndale himself had attacked the evils of enclosure. However, the method which Crowley employed in writing this work and numerous others is significant, for Crowley systematically applied Christian principles to the totality of Christian society. When it is remembered that Tyndale had followed a similar procedure in his Obedience of a Christian Man, this similarity establishes one important link between Tyndale and Crowley. Here Tyndale was the pioneer and Crowley, the vocal Puritan, was following

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[3]Dictionary of National Biography, V, 241-3; and Cooper, op. cit., ix-xix.

in the footsteps of the man who gave English Puritanism its first theological expression. To quote one authority on Tyndale's career:

> Before many years had passed an active group of social reformers to whom the title "commonwealth men" has been attached, were seriously considering . . . similar questions. . . . whatever the answer may be to the question of Tyndale's influence, a strong case can be made for his right to respect as a pioneer whose ideal for Tudor society was a social order based on Christian principles, which followed logically from his faith in Scriptures as the sole guide to pure religion and right human conduct.[4]

This particular method of applying Christian principles to the totality of Christian society was not restricted just to those works in which Crowley discussed the agrarian problems of the sixteenth century. He followed the same procedure when he discussed the election of officials to the commonwealth. Of particular importance was his Sermon made in the chappel at the Gylde halle, a heavily didactic work which Crowley wrote in 1574. Both by virtue of the method followed and by virtue by the subject matter of this work, it deserves a careful investigation. Crowley's thoughts established some interesting parallels with Tyndale's political thought. In one way Crowley's sense of authority was identical to Tyndale's.

There are other important links between the thought of Tyndale and the thought of Crowley. Pace Professor Williams, Crowley was also interested in theology, and his duties as a Puritan minister led him to a consideration of important aspects of the Reformation. In particular, his involvement in the vestiarian controversy led him to a consideration of the all-important question of the king's authority over the church, and over the Christian conscience. His thoughts in one work in particular,

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[4]Williams, William Tyndale, 145.

A briefe discourse against the outwarde apparel and Ministring garmentes of the popishes church, written in 1566, form another interesting and important link with Tyndale's thought.

Crowley was not only interested in purifying the church and removing all vestiges of "popery"; he was also interested in destroying the power of the Catholic Church in general. He wrote two polemical treatises against the church, both in 1581: A breefe discourse, concerning those foure vsuall notes, wherby Christes Catholique church is knowne, and An Aunswer to Sixe Reasons, That Thomas Pownde, gentlemen and Prisoner in the Marshalsey . . . required to be Aunswered. Both polemical works are important, for they show a striking similarity with Tyndale's own polemical works against the church. They also show that the issues hotly debated by Tyndale and More in 1530 were still largely unsettled in the year 1581.

The final link between Tyndale and Crowley was established not by Crowley's career as a polemicist, but rather by his activities as a printer. Crowley reprinted several works of considerable interest, but only two of them were related to Tyndale's thought. In 1550, he reprinted a True Copye of a Prolog Wrytten about two C.yeres past by John Wycliffe.[5] This work formed a link between Crowley, Tyndale, and the general revival of Lollardy in the sixteenth century. While this link is probably not as significant as others between the two men, it

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[5]Crowley's contribution to the revival of Lollardy is discussed by Margaret Aston, "Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival," 149-170.

is interesting to note that at specific times during their respective careers, both Tyndale and Crowley looked back to the figure of Wyclif, and to the Lollard tradition. Crowley also reprinted Tyndale's Supper of the Lorde in the same year. Here, a direct link between the two men is impossible to establish. Crowley appeared to have been more concerned with this problem that Tyndale had been. But in his prologue to this work he did not mention Tyndale by name, and it is impossible to determine if he regarded Tyndale as the author of this work, of if like many modern scholars, he attributed it to the pen of George Joy.

Given the limitations of space, it is impossible to investigate all these aspects of the link between the thought of Tyndale and the thought of Crowley. For this reason, the following discussion will focus on the three most important aspects of that link: the problem of authority in its political sense; Tyndale's and Crowley's social thought; and finally, their treatment of the problem of the king's authority over the church, and the problem of authority within the church in general. The logical place to begin this discussion is with their ideas on the problem of authority.

Tyndale, Crowley, and the Problems of Authority

Crowley's ideas on the nature of authority are strikingly similar to Tyndale's. He wrote his political theory under the same concept of political theory which guided Tyndale through his two political tracts. Throughout many of his works Crowley offered his readers a theocentric ideal of authority based on Tyndale's favorite text taken from Paul's Epistle to the Romans:

> all living creatures are bound to submit themselves to the higher powers, not only for the sake of fear, but for conscience sake also.[6]

Crowley only stated the text in its abbreviated form, but he drew the same conclusions from it as Tyndale had eighteen years previously. He thought it anachronistic to talk about political authority in the sense that it existed separately from the authority of God, or in the sense that the authority which existed in society was a result of a voluntary association of men coming together to form something called the state. Like Tyndale, Crowley never used that word, but always spoke of the commonwealth. And for both men this term implied a political and social organization which had been ordained by God, with authority flowing from the top of the commonwealth, the prince, to the lowest levels of humanity. In those works in which he discussed the nature of the commonwealth, its society and its implicit sense of authority, Crowley did so systematically, either commencing his discussion with a consideration of the highest level and descending to the lowest levels, or vice versa. Even the organization of Crowley's works was influenced by his sense of authority. In The Opening of the wordes of the Prophet Ioell, a work written in verse, Crowley remarked:

> God gave great power,
> and like honour,
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> To some bicause they should
> Defend the rest,

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[6]Robert Crowley, The Confutation of xiii articles (London, 1546), sig. B 1.

Which are opprest
with thurst, hunger and cold.[7]

These words reflected a sense of authority which was narrow, static, theocentric, and hierarchical. The sentiments were typical of both Crowley and Tyndale. God had granted authority to certain orders in the commonwealth for purposes revealed by him to all. To ignore the duties and responsibilities which accompanied one's office, or to act in ways not originally intended by God's original design, was to act against God. The logic of this belief led Tyndale and Crowley to set out rigid requirements for those chosen to rule. Crowley's admonitions to the commons are indicative of this point of view. In 1548, he told them:

> That you are Lordes and gouernours therfore, cometh not by nature but by the ordinaunce & appoyntment of God. . . . Ther shall you learne that it is God that geveth impiere to whome it pleaseth hym and that all power is from above.[8]

Crowley's consideration of the duties of the various officers within the commonwealth was remarkable because of its negativism. His belief that the unchristian actions of those in the positions of authority were responsible for the woes of the society led him to offer his readers frequent catalogues of abuses, followed by the appropriate remedies. These will be considered shortly. But with regard to the actual duty of a prince, Crowley's views were much like Tyndale's. In 1575, in his Sermon delivered on the occasion of the election of the mayor of London he said:

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[7]Robert Crowley, The Opening of the wordes of the Prophet Ioell, in his second and third chapters (London, 1567), sig. E 7^{v}.

[8]Robert Crowley, an informacion and Peticion agaynst the oppressours of the pore Commons of This Realme (London, 1548), sigs. A 8 - A 8^{v}.

> For in the Scriptures Princes are called Gods, because they be Gods leuetenants vpon earth and as Saynt Paul doth terme them: They are Gods revengers, and beare the sword, that they use thereof they may revenge Gods quarell in punishing the transgressors and breakers of Gods lawes.[9]

He said elsewhere:

> The Lord, from whom Rulers haue thyr authoritie, hath ordayned as we reade in Deuteronomie, (17) that Princes and all rulers, shall not onely haue the booke of Gods lawe by them: but that they shall also reade in it, all the daies of their life, that they may learne to feare the Lord thery God, and keep his woodes and Ceremonies that are commaunded in his lawe.[10]

Tyndale could have easily written these words, for the strong Pauline emphasis on the punishment of sin was characteristic of his earlier political thought. The similarity of his and Crowley's dependence upon the Book of Deuteronomy is also very interesting.

Of the various works in which Crowley considered political authority and the obligations which went with election, his Sermon of 1575 is the most important, for it clearly demonstrates both the similarities and differences between his and Tyndale's treatment of this important topic. Crowley was not a political theorist, and he was guilty of the same sort of imprecision which is characteristic of much of Tyndale's political thought as well. With regard to the process of election, he was most imprecise when he discussed the exact nature of elected authority. He appears to have assumed, like Tyndale had done earlier, that the process of election did not carry with it any special authority,

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[9]Robert Crowley, a Sermon Made in the chappel at the Gylde halle (London, 1575), sigs. B 4^{v} - C 1.

[10]Robert Crowley, A breefe discourse, concerning those foure vsnotes whereby Christes Catholique Church is knowne (1581), sig. A 3.

apart from divine sanction.[11] He also appears to have assumed that the validity of any election depended upon divine approval.[12]

Crowley was more precise in his consideration of those qualities which all elected should possess in order to govern well. He followed a method he had employed elsewhere, determining these qualities by an application of certain Old and New Testament texts, and it is hardly surprising that the results were decidedly spiritual. The most important and indeed, the only requirements found in his Sermon were based upon religious suitability. Here, there are some interesting parallels with Tyndale's own thoughts on the matter, although Tyndale did not concern himself with this problem of election to any great extent. Particularly important was Crowley's anti-papal attitude and his suggestion that no Catholic was fit for public office. It would be foolish to suggest that in a time so filled with xenophobia and anti-papalism, Crowley found his own hostility towards the papacy by way of Tyndale's works. However, it is interesting to note that Crowley's criticism of the Catholics, based upon Pauline sentiment, was exactly the same as the criticism given by Tyndale so frequently in his Obedience and his Practyse of Prelates. Crowley felt that the choice of a Catholic for office was a poor one because historically the pope had always attempted to subvert the temporal authorities, and in so doing, had shown himself to be the

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[11]Crowley, Sermon, sig. B 3. Tyndale discussed this problem in his exposicion vppon v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. G 8.

[12]Crowley, Sermon, sig. B 3.

anti-Christ.[13] To him, this fact put all Catholics in the same class as heretics, atheists, sectaries, and schismatics. No member of any of these groups was fit for public office.[14]

However, Crowley was more precise than this when he discussed those qualities of elected officials, and some of them, based upon his reading of the Book of Exodus, were remarkably like those given us by Tyndale in his Obedience. While Tyndale had believed that David provided a good example for kings to follow, Crowley thought that all elected officials should attempt to follow his example. They should ask themselves:

> Do not I hate them (o Lord) that hate thee? and am not I greeued with them that ryse vp against thee? Yea I hate them, and that right fore: euen as though they were myne own enemies.[15]

Crowley's vision of the magistrate was as theocentric as Tyndale's. In his Sermon, Crowley divided the elected officials into two categories, civil and ecclesiastical, and he had special words for each. His words to each type of official resembled Tyndale's admonitions to the clergy and the temporal authorities. Referring to the ecclesiastical officials, Crowley remarked:

> If his calling be Ecclesiasticall, he must reprehend, rebuke and enstruct them. And if that wyll not helpe, he must lay before them the horrible threatrynges of Gods wrath against them. And this he must do . . . without any feare, fauoure, hatred or other fleshly respect. . . .[16]

Crowley was suggesting the same thing which Tyndale had suggested in his exposicion vppon Mathew, namely, that the duty of the clergy was to preach,

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[13] Ibid., sig. B 4^{v}.

[14] Ibid., sig. B 3^{v}.

[15] Ibid., sig. D 3^{v}.

[16] Ibid., sigs. F 4 - F 4^{v}.

and through preaching and religious instruction, to prevent sin.[17]

The affinities between Tyndale's and Crowley's considerations of the civil officer are also important. Crowley remarked that the civil officer should:

> use the swoarde in punyshynge synne according to the lawes of his Countrye remembring alway that he is appointed by God hymselfe to be the revenger of his quarell vpon earth.[18]

Again, Crowley has employed a Pauline conception of authority which made the temporal officer responsible for punishing sin. This basic premise was the beginning of both his and Tyndale's lengthy complaints concerning the standards of justice in their own times. Tyndale's thoughts as expressed in the Obedience are remarkably similar to those expressed by Crowley almost fifty years later.[19] More significant than this emphasis on the punishment of sin and various complaints concerning the standards of justice, however, is the sense of authority embodied in Crowley's statement: the elected officials should always remember that they were appointed by "God hymselfe." Crowley's theocentricism affected his sense of authority in the very same way that Tyndale's theocentricism affected his sense of authority. In spite of the fact that Crowley was discussing an elected official, he still could not bring himself to believe that man's role in government was as important as God's. Tyndale's own words in his exposicion vppon Mathew are worth repeating here:

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[17]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, passim.

[18]Crowley, Sermon, sig. G 2.

[19]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. G. 4 - G. 4^{v}.

> For Dutero.xvi. God commaundeth to chose and set vp offycers: and therfore is God the chefechoser and setter vp of them, and so must he be the put downe agayne.[20]

Tyndale, it will be remembered, suggested that government was a covenant between God and man, and that man's very ability to erect and maintain any political organization was dependent upon God's grace.[21] Crowley could talk about the election of officials in greater detail than could Tyndale, but beneath his discussion of this topic lay the same belief that divine guidance and God's grace were more important than anything that man could do on his own. In 1550, Crowley wrote the following lines:

> When the hertes of the people
> be one to their prince;
>
> Then can no Commotioners
> do hurte in hys prouince.
>
> If this wyll not help,
> than God wyll take cure,
>
> And destroy these Commotioners,
> we may be right sure:
>
> Except the type be come
> that the body muste dye;
>
> For than there canne be founde
> no maner remedy.
>
> God graunte that our synne
> haue not brought vs so lowe,

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[20] Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. G 8.

[21] Ibid., sig. F 5.

That we be past cure:
God onely doeth thys knowe. . . .[22]

Crowley believed that the guidance of the Holy Spirit was the most important factor in any election. And like Tyndale, he also appears to have believed that ultimately the health of the "body," that is the commonwealth, was dependent upon God. Every man could do his part by obeying the temporal authority, and even more important, by regarding his station in life.

It is clear that both Tyndale and Crowley applied their theology to the study of politics. In spite of the similarities in their beliefs concerning authority in the electoral process, the suitability of candidates, and the necessity of God's grace within any political organization, there remained one important difference between their respective points of view. In the Obedience, even before Tyndale had developed his sense of legalism, he advocated the sufficiency of the law of the Old Testament for the punishment of sin.[23] This was not part of Crowley's vision of the workings of justice, and his remark that the civil officer should punish sin according to the "lawes of his country" becomes important. It is difficult to determine to what degree Tyndale thought this idea was practicable within his own society. But when it is remembered that he criticized the legal proceedings of the church against heresy on the grounds that it did not conform with the examples

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[22]Robert Crowley, One and Thyrtie Epigrammes, wherein are bryefly touched so many Abuses that maye and ought to be put away, in Cooper, op. cit., 23.

[23]Tyndale, Obedience, sig. D. 1.

of justice in the Old Testament, it becomes fairly clear that practicality aside, this was the model of justice which Tyndale thought to have been proper for a Christian commonwealth.[24]

For both Crowley and Tyndale, the problems of the responsibilities of kings and magistrates, as well as their proper qualifications, were one aspect of the larger problem of maintaining a truly Christian commonwealth. As both men were concerned with the problems of a Christian commonwealth and sought to give specific remedies for the prevalent abuses of their times, their respective ideas warrant careful consideration.

Tyndale, Crowley, and the Christian Commonwealth

Interest in developing a concept of the commonwealth was an important aspect of the intellectual activity of the sixteenth century in England. Quite probably, it was not as important as the desire to discern the relationship of the church to the civil authority. On the other hand, as a topic of thought, the concept of the commonwealth was not completely divorced from the all-important question of authority. To quote J. W. Allen:

> Under Henry VIII and Edward VI political thought was also taking on another and quite different direction. The conception of an "absolute" national sovereignty was developed mainly in connection with the Reformation: the conception of the church of England

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[24]Here, there was a slight ambivalence on Tyndale's part. Sin was to be punished according to the justice of the Old Testament, but heresy trials should correspond to the trials for treason with regard to procedure. Tyndale was probably thinking of the fact that these trials were conducted openly, and wanted the church to follow this procedure.

> as an aspect of the commonwealth presupposed a conception of the commonwealth.[25]

The concern with the Christian commonwealth was nothing new in the history of political thought. Developing an idea of the Christian commonwealth had been one of the preoccupations of medieval political theorists, and Crowley showed his own debt to the medieval expressions of this idea through his edition of the Vision of the Piers Plowman, a monumental work of social criticism. However, Professor Allen rightly tells us that the sixteenth century expressions of this idea were different from previous medieval ones, because of the lack of concern with the authority of the prince.[26] He also states that as interest in this topic grew during the sixteenth century, it was primarily the humanists, the men like More and Starkey, and the commonwealth men like Crowley, who attempted to evolve an idea of the commonwealth.[27] But Tyndale too occupied a place within this tradition.

No historian would suggest that a development of a concept of a Christian commonwealth was Tyndale's primary interest. However, it would be incorrect to suggest that the topic was unimportant to him. One need only remember the structure of the Obedience of a Christian Man, Tyndale's concern for obedience of various segments of society to the "hier authorities," and his treatment of Christian duty, to see that his own thought forms an important link with the humanists' analysis of the

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[25]Allen, History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century, 134.

[26]Ibid., 134.

[27]Ibid., 134.

ills of society and their discussion by Crowley and the commonwealth men.

For both Tyndale and Crowley, the consideration of the Christian commonwealth depended on the all-important assumption that society was divinely ordered, and that very little change was permissible. The commonwealth in its totality could be improved only when the members of the various levels of the society performed the duties associated with their "station" or "office." The fundamental logic of both Tyndale's and Crowley's treatment of the commonwealth was based upon a justification of the existing social order, a justification as complete as ever came from the pen of a medieval political theorist, or from a theologian like Thomas Aquinas.[28] Both men labored under the influence of a social Augustinianism which made up an important part of their conservatism. Crowley, for example, when discussing the poorer elements of society, freely admitted that they were oppressed by the other members of the commonwealth. But like Tyndale, he suggested that their response to this oppression should be obedience to the person in authority. Perhaps God sanctioned the oppression, or perhaps they were poor because they had misspent their chances which God had given them.[29] In either case, their duty was to bear the oppression willingly, and to obey for God's sake. In his Voyce of the Laste trumpet, he remarked:

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[28]See C. K. and Katherine George, The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation, 1570-1640 (Princeton, 1961).

[29]Crowley, The Voyce of the Laste trumpet, in Cooper, op. cit., 57.

But if thou wylt take in hande
Thyne owne wrong for to remedy,

The lord hym selfe wyll the wythstande,

In like sort, if thy prince wil take
More tribute then thou canst well spare

See thou paye it for Goddes sake
Whose officers al princes are.[30]

This Augustinianism, the static view of society, and the emphasis on obedience established important links between the thought of Tyndale and the thought of Crowley. Once again, it would be impossible to establish some influence of Tyndale upon Crowley, since many of these ideas were widespread during the sixteenth century. This is especially true of the doctrine of obedience which was so important to the political philosophy of both men. Both men were responding to the necessities of their times. Tyndale developed the idea of the duty of obedience partially in response to the association of the reformers' creed with social disorder. Crowley was also responding to the pressures of social disorder since he lived in decades of great agrarian discontent. However, both Tyndale and Crowley did more than offer obedience as the only remedy for the social problems of their times. They both made the attempt to understand the various sources of this discontent, and of course, offered the appropriate remedies.

Robert Crowley was very much concerned with the agrarian problems of the sixteenth century as one source of the social unrest.[31] His most

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[30] Ibid., 66.

[31] The literature on this particular aspect of English history is immense, but a good starting place is G. R. Elton, England Under the Tudors, 224-251.

famous work, the Waye to Wealth, was a product of his desire to understand the problems of the agrarian discontent, and his treatment of this topic established another link with the thought of Tyndale. To understand part of this link one need only look at some of the ideas which he expressed in the Obedience. In 1528, Tyndale expressed his own dissatisfaction with various practices surrounding the rental of lands. This became the rallying cry of the commonwealth men three decades later:

> Let Christen landlordes be contente with their rente and olde customes not reysinge the rente or fyens and bringine vp new customes to oppresse their tenauntes. . . . Let them not take in their communes nether make partes nor pastours of hole parishes. For God gave the erth to men to inhabite/ and not vnto shepe and wilde deare.[32]

The criticism of enclosures during the sixteenth century was probably as frequent as the denunciation of flattery. But in this case, there are some interesting resemblances between Tyndale's criticism in the Obedience and Crowley's discussion of enclosures in his Waye to Wealth. In this particular work Crowley defended the poor in spite of their disobedience and recent violent actions. He was probably referring to Ket's Rebellion which took place in Norfolk, in 1549. Nevertheless, he maintained that the people who were really to blame were the people who oppressed the poor and drove them to commit these violent acts:

> If you charge them wyth disobedience: you were firste disobedient. for without a law to beare you, yea contrarie to the law which forbiddeth al maner of oppression and extortion & that more is contrarie to conscience, the ground of al good lawes, ye enclosed from the pore theire due commones, leavied greater fines then heretofore . . . put them from the liberties . . . that they held by custome & reised theire rentes. . . .[33]

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[32]Tyndale, Obedience, sigs. G. 2^{v} - G. 3.

[33]Crowley, Waye to Wealth, wherin is plainly taught a most present remedy for Sedicion (London, 1550), sigs. B 3^{v} - B 4.

To both Tyndale and Crowley, economics and metaphysics were inseparably joined. And like most men of their century, with the exception of Jean Bodin, who was first to realize that economics had little to do with human nature, both men thought that the evils of the times were the product of the greed of a few. In a commonwealth, when its members strived for individual profit and gain, and fell prey to the forces of greed and ambition, the good of all would suffer. In his Answere to More's dialoge, Tyndale remarked:

> So that all men/ what so euer degre they be of are every man in his rowme/ saruantes to other/ as the hand sarueth ye foote and every membre one a nother.[34]

Crowley, in a phrase remarkably reminiscent of Tyndale's own poetic analogies said, "The boughes cannot budde, if the tree have no sappe."[35] Desire for individual gain and enclosures were two of those forces which drained the tree of sap.

One of the most interesting and important aspects of this concern with the Christian commonwealth pertained to the problems of private property. Once again, there is a great deal of similarity between the discussion of this problem in Tyndale's works, and Crowley's discussion of it a few decades later. Both men fell far short of the famous vision of Thomas More in his Utopia. Yet it is noteworthy that Crowley was attempting to achieve the same goals which had motivated More to write his great work of social criticism. With Tyndale, the case is less

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[34] Tyndale, Answere, sig. E 5.

[35] Crowley, Waye to Wealth, sig. A 2^{v}.

clear, since it was not one of his primary concerns. Still, he gave us enough to allow us to believe that he was genuinely concerned with the problems of social justice and with the ills of society.

Tyndale's attitude towards land, property, and wealth was at once interesting and complex. He considered these problems in a detailed fashion in two works: The parable of the wicked mammon, the Practyse of Prelates; and he gave it passing mention in his exposicion vppon Mathew. Earlier in his career Tyndale made the rather basic association of property and wealth with evil. He blamed the decline of the church partially on its association with wealth and land, for he believed that it had led to avarice and greed within the church.[36] While he was probably willing to see the wealth of the church diminished by the temporal authorities, he was also willing to see the vast wealth of the church be put to a better use. Observing that it was used in the early church to help the poor, before the spirit had grown weak, he suggested that it should again be used for this purpose.[37] Crowley himself made the same suggestion several decades later.[38] Elsewhere, in his Answere to More's dialoge, Tyndale again considered this problem, but his discussion was theological as well as practical. He remarked:

> we haue not ceased to blyde them albayes/ cloysters/ coleges/ chauntrees and cathedrall churches with hie steples/ striuinge & enuienge one a nother/ who should do most. And as for the

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[36]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. B 4^{v}.

[37]Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sigs. E 2 - E 2^{v}.

[38]Crowley, The Opening Wordes of the Prophet Ioell, sig. C 2.

> dedes/ that pertayne vn to oure neyboures an vn to the comon wealth/ we haue not regarded at all/[39]

Tyndale was complaining that the actual connection of the church with physical aspects of worship, cathedrals, cloisters, etc., had led the multitude of Christians astray, and had also caused them to neglect both their Christian duty towards their neighbors and towards the commonwealth. This particular criticism is lacking in the writings of Crowley.

Near the very end of the Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale considered the importance of land in the commonwealth. His discussion of this problem was part of his treatment of the problems of marriage in his own times and its relationship to Old Testament law. For example, he remarked that if a man should die without any heirs, the problems of dividing his land were great. To him it was unfair that the wife should not receive anything, but it was equally unfair that she should take all. There was also the question of his other relatives. Tyndale offered the following explanation:

> Thou wilt say that the londes might returne Vnto ye nexte of his Kynne & the wife have a porcion hir lyfelonge onlye. Then shuld greate possessions come in to the handes of one man & so shuld there manye tyrantes nyse amonge the people. Which to avoyde god ordeyned that the londes shuld be scatered ever among as manye as might be of the same Kynne.[40]

Tyndale insisted that God had intended that private property be maintained among the various members of the family. He also believed this to have been true for the commonwealth at large, in order to prevent tyranny. However, this belief was modified slightly by two other ideas which

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[39]Tyndale, Answere, sig. F 8.

[40]Tyndale, Practyse of Prelates, sig. J. 4.

Tyndale interjected into his discussion. First, he insisted that God had intended that no man should be able to buy lands forever.[41] The exact meaning of this particular suggestion is not clear. Secondly, Tyndale argued against the imbalance of wealth in the commonwealth on theological grounds, as well as on the grounds that it might lead to tyranny. He suggested that a situation in which there was a radical and disproportionate measure of wealth in the hands of a few would cause the poorer people in society to look to the rich rather than to God.[42]

Tyndale's treatment of the problems of property was different from Crowley's. Crowley never advocated any sentiments similar to the ones Tyndale had advocated in his Practyse of Prelates. The practice of one man holding vast lands did not concern him. However, he did suggest that men should change their attitudes towards the actual ownership of property. In his informacion and peticion agaynst the oppressours of the pore commons, he said:

> If the possessioners woulde consyder themselves to be but stuardes, and not lorder over theyr possessions: Thys oppression woulde sone be redressed.[43]

This particular idea of stewardship was part of a larger attitude towards private property in general which was shared by both Tyndale and Crowley. Their sentiments fell far short of More's famous statement in the Utopia:

> When every man aims at absolute ownership of all property he can get, be there never so great abundance of goods, it is all shared by a handful who leave the rest in poverty. . . . I am fully

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Crowley, an informacion and peticion agaynst the oppressours of the pore commons, sig. A 4.

> persuaded that no just and even distribution of goods can be made and that no hapiness can be found in human affairs unless private property is utterly abolished.[44]

More's words have made his work justly famous and have given his own work of social criticism an immortal quality. But the important point to emphasize here is that both Tyndale and Crowley were attempting to arrive at the same vision of justice by taking a different route. Both Tyndale and Crowley believed that the right of private property was guaranteed by the law of God, and this view was consistent with the thought enshrined in the Stoic-Patristic tradition of western philosophy. Professor Hexter's observations of this tradition in relation to More's social thought have a great deal of relevance to Tyndale's and Crowley's thought as well:

> Ultimately then the force of the Stoic-Patristic conception of community of property was to provide a justification for almost any legal system of property right, and at the same time by connecting them with man's fallen and imperfect state to deprive all property systems of sanctity or any high place in the hierarchy of human values.[45]

Tyndale's and Crowley's thoughts on private property have an interesting relationship to the dual direction of the thought of the Stoic-Patristic tradition. Without breaking with this tradition by advocating the end of the right of private property, both men attempted to make that system of property holding as holy as possible by suggesting that no man had the right to do with his own things that which he chose to do, if that wish disregarded the welfare of others. In developing these thoughts, both

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[44]More, Utopia, 105.

[45]Hexter, More's Utopia: The Biography of an Idea, 83.

Tyndale and Crowley used strikingly similar arguments, and these arguments establish another important link between their social philosophies.

Tyndale's consideration of the problems of land and wealth within a Christian society was fairly constant throughout his career. Apart from his Practyse of Prelates, where he was primarily concerned with the problems of land and wealth within the historical institution of the church, his method was the same, whether he was writing in 1527 or in 1533. Essentially, Tyndale applied his understanding of the law of nature to this problem of land and riches. In 1527, he told his readers that the word "Mammon" was a Hebrew word which meant riches, and that they were considered unrighteous because of their use. He also told them:

> . . . for if my neybour nede and I geve hym not/ nether depart lyberally with hym/ of that which I have: than wythhold I from Vnrighteously that which is hys awne. For as moch as I am bownden to help hym by the lawe of nature/ which is/ what so ever thou woldest that a nother dyd to the that do thou also to hym. And christ Mathei.v. Geve to eVery man that desireth the.[46]

Tyndale applied his understanding of the dictates of the law of nature with such thoroughness, that at times it appeared that he was advocating the communism of More and his Utopia. For example, he also said, "Amonge Christen men love maketh all thinges in commune every man ys others detter & every man is bounde to minister to his neyghbours & to supplie his neyghbours lacke/ . . ."[47] However, Tyndale did stop short of More's communism. His concern was more with the use of property and wealth

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[46]Tyndale, parable of the wicked mammon, sig. C. 8^{v}.

[47]Ibid., sig. F. 4^{v}.

within a Christian society than with the issue of ownership.[48] The following statement, also from Tyndale's mammon, makes this clear:

> In Christ we ar all of one degree without respect of persons. Not withstonding though a Christen mans hert to open to all men/ and receaueth all men. Yee because that his abilite of goodes extendeth not so ferre/ this provision is made/ that every man shall care of his own housefold. . . . More over if any be an infidele and a fals Christen and forsake his household/ hys wyfe/ chyldren and soch as can not helpe them selves/ then art thou bound & thou have where with/ even as moch as to thine owne housefold. And they have as good right in thy goodes/ as thou thyselfe.[49]

This became a familiar theme in Tyndale's treatment of this problem--in times of need, the Christian is duty-bound to consider what he has as being the property of those in need.

Tyndale gave us one significant variation of this theme of Christian charity in his exposicion vppon Mathew. Here, he equated his definition of natural law with the law of God, something which he did frequently, and said, "Gods law is oure and syngle: loue they neyboure, whether he be good or bad. And by loue God meaneth, to healpe at nede."[50] Tyndale was also determined to put the problem of property and personal possessions within the context of the two regiments of a Christian society, "the regiment of the gospell," and the "temporall regiment." Any Christian existing in the first state was required to give or lend all that he had to assist his fellow Christian and neighbor. This was in keeping with the requirements of natural law. However, with

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[48] See above, Chapter V, page

[49] Tyndale, parable of the wicked mammon, sig. F. 6^{v}.

[50] Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sig. E 2.

regard to the Christian in the second state, the temporall regiment, Tyndale suggested that the individual Christian was also duty-bound to give all, if called upon to do so. His words were:

> Moreouer concernynge thy goodes.thou must remembre how that thou art a person in the temporall regiment, and the kynge as he is ouer they bodye, euen so is he lorde of thy good and of him thou holdest them, not for thy selfe onlye, but for to maytene thy wife, children, and seruantes, and to maytene the kynge, the realme and the contrey and towne or citie where thou dwellest.[51]

Tyndale appears to be expressing a variation of an idea which he held constantly throughout his career--that personal possessions did not belong to someone to use as he wished. However, he also appears to be suggesting that while the natural law instructed every Christian to help his neighbor at a time of need, the logic of the preservation of the commonwealth suggested that the goods of the individual Christian might be used by the king to this end.

Crowley assumed many of the same things which Tyndale assumed when he addressed himself to this problem. However, in one instance, the resemblance of their arguments is striking. With regard to the dictates of the law of nature, he remarked in his Waye to Wealth:

> consider firste in thou haue loued thy neighboure as thy self . . . how was it possible for the to loue God (whom thou seest not) fyth thou louest not thy Brother whom thou seest?[52]

The likeness between his own statement and Tyndale's is clear. For both men, to help meant to be charitable during times of need. Nevertheless, there was one important difference between Tyndale's and Crowley's

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[51] Ibid., sig. G 8^{v}.

[52] Crowley, Waye to Wealth, sigs. A 5^{v} - A 6.

discussion of this important topic, and it is more a difference in emphasis than anything else. When Crowley considered the problems of possessions and charity within a Christian commonwealth, his words were meant more for the nobility than for every Christian. He viewed this class of people as having been largely responsible for the ills of society during his own time. They were the oppressive element. He said:

> and you y^{t}haue oppressed, lament your so doing and do the office of your callinge, in defendinge the innocente and fedinge the nedye.[53]

Tyndale's treatment of the nobles was remarkable from the point of view that he did so little with this topic. He rarely mentioned them in his works, and when he did, it is apparent that he thought of them not in terms of the welfare of the people, but rather in terms of their ability to govern.[54] However, any condemnation of them with regard to their abdication of their responsibilities of the welfare of the poorer people is completely lacking. Crowley stood much closer to More and to his Utopia than he did to Tyndale and his thought in the Obedience.

No discussion of Tyndale, Crowley, and the problems of the Christian commonwealth would be complete without some mention of the proper role of the church. First, Professor Allen's assertion that the best state of the commonwealth was being explored without any specific reference to the church must be questioned.[55] It is certainly untrue with regard to the works of Tyndale, and untrue with regard to the works of Crowley as well. Both men considered the role of the church to have

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[53] Ibid., sig. B 7. [54] Tyndale, Obedience, sig. K. 6.

[55] Allen, History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century, 134.

been of great importance in the health of the commonwealth. And both Tyndale and Crowley concerned themselves with the role of the visible, institutional church as well. Here, their respective ideas merged to form another important link between the political thought of Tyndale and that of Crowley.

Like Tyndale, Crowley was very much concerned with the presence of the Catholic church in England, and much of his thought on its role in society was similar to Tyndale's complaints against the historic rise of the papacy to a position of preeminence over emperors and kings. Crowley's sense of authority led him to rebel against these developments, and he assumed that in any commonwealth, all orders of society were subject to the authority of the prince. In 1575, he had suggested that no papist could be eligible for public office, because the church had inverted the correct order of society.[56] In 1581, he wrote:

> Saint Paule saythe. Let euery soule be in subiection to the higher powers, &c. Chrisostome expounding these wordes, sayeth thus.Let euerie soule be in subiection to the higher powers, yea although thou be an Apostle, if thou be an Euangelist, if thou be a Prophet: or to conclude, whosoeuer thou art.[57]

With certain important exceptions which shall be considered momentarily, Crowley believed, like Tyndale, that all orders of society were subject to the will of the prince, who represented God on earth. No commonwealth could exist in any other state of order and still be Christian, as Crowley understood the term. It is important to note that these particular

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[56]Crowley, Sermon, sig. B 4.

[57]Robert Crowley, a breefe discourse concerning those foure vsuall notes whereby Christes Catholique Church is knowne (London, 1581), sig. C 1.

remarks were not just the products of xenophobia and extreme anti-papalism, both of which were strong during the latter half of the sixteenth century. In other words, Crowley was not merely looking for a weapon to use against the church. His understanding of a Christian commonwealth was based upon a static, hierarchical conception of authority, and the development of the papal hierocratic sense of authority, in conjunction with the numerous clerical privileges which the clergy had obtained from the kings and emperors, obviously went against the concept of authority upon which the commonwealth was based.

Crowley was also concerned with the activities of the prelates, but his concern was not so much for the prelates of the Catholic church, as for the members of the clergy of the Church of England. Nevertheless, his criticism of them was like Tyndale's criticisms of the clergy of the Catholic Church. In his Waye to Wealth, he said:

> Woe be to the shepherdes of England, that have fed them selves. What ought not those shepherdes to have fed those flockes of England. Ye eate the fatte, and decke your selves with the woule, & the mutton that is fat, ye kil to fede vpon, but these silli shepe ye fede not.[58]

Crowley was himself guilty of many of the same abuses which he condemned. The most frequent criticism he gave us of the clergy was that of pluralism, and the events of his life show that he did not adhere to the suggestions he made for the benefit of others. Nevertheless, pluralism aside, Crowley's attitude in the above passage was similar to Tyndale's, and beneath the above words lay a concern for, and a belief in the importance of good religious instructions. As Crowley accused the lords

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[58]Crowley, Waye to Wealth, sigs. A 8 - A 8^{v}.

of having been the greatest oppressors of the common people, so he accused the prelates of robbing them and the commonwealth by denying them a satisfactory standard of religious instruction. Again, in his Waye to Wealth, he remarked:

> And if ye wil nedes hold stil your pluralities for your lordlike liueing sake doubt ye not ye wyll be charged with that whiche ye wulde seme to be cleare of. For a great number of youre vnworthye currates haue bene the stirrars up of the simple people in the late tumulates that haue bene, whereas if you had not robbed them of that which thei paye yearely to haue a learned and Godly teachar, they had bene better enstructed as appeared by the quietenes that was amonge them that had such shepeherdes.[59]

There is much to be discussed here, both in terms of the relation of Crowley's thought to Tyndale's, and to other expressions of political thought during the sixteenth century. First, the charge that the clergy was responsible for social revolution was widespread during the sixteenth century. In making this accusation, Crowley did not stand alone. Tyndale himself made similar accusations, both in connection with the disturbances which surrounded the Lollards' activities, and in connection with his own times. In his own days Tyndale had not accused them of actually plotting revolution or actually stirring up the masses of the people, but rather of preaching disobedience to the higher authorities in word and deed. Crowley's charge was stronger than was Tyndale's, for in the Waye to Wealth he was actually accusing the curates of stirring up social disorder. In spite of this difference, the last sentence in the above passage is important, for it shows that Crowley believed that with proper religious instruction, and of course the help of God, the commonwealth would flourish. Tyndale believed the same thing.

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[59] Ibid., sigs. B 1 - B 1^{v}.

Crowley's thoughts here are important in one other context. During the sixteenth century, men like More, Erasmus, and the Northern humanists in general, assumed that the poorer segments of society were the most prone to violence and disorder. This was a natural assumption, given their own beliefs in the value of education and the ability of education to quell the passions. Although Crowley was able to discuss church history with the learning of a Christian humanist, he never made all the same assumptions which More and Erasmus had made about the poorer members of society. If he felt any distrust of them, it is not to be found in his works, and throughout his Waye to Wealth, the people whom he blamed for the social unrest were not the poor but rather the nobility, and at times, the clergy. The only way in which Crowley did approach the humanists' attitude was in his belief in the importance of education for the commonwealth. Once again, the phrase in the Waye to Wealth in which he accused the clergy of failing to provide religious instruction becomes significant. Crowley was assuming the same thing that the humanists assumed: that the people who had the benefit of a good, Christian education would have the "quitenes that was among them that had such shepeherdes."[60]

For both Tyndale and Crowley, the belief in the importance of religious instruction for the Christian commonwealth led to a consideration of the question of authority within the church, and also to a consideration of the problem of the king's authority over the church. Once again, there are some interesting parallels between the thought of Tyndale and the thought of Crowley concerning these two important questions.

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[60] Ibid., sigs. B 1 - B 1^{v}.

Tyndale and Crowley: The King and the Church

Tyndale was greatly concerned with the two problems of authority within the church and the king's authority over the church. Earlier in his career, he looked to Henry as the sole person with the authority and the ability to carry out the Reformation in England. However, sometime during the year 1530, or briefly thereafter, Tyndale deemphasized this aspect of the king's authority and turned instead to the idea of authority residing within the individual congregation. This was true at least within the context of the problems of maintaining doctrinal purity within the church and establishing the veracity of a minister. Tyndale also discounted the authority of the organized church hierarchy, and in his Answere to More's dialoge, he ridiculed the idea of the necessity of a bishop's license to verify the authenticity of a priest. In 1530, he substituted the idea of the election of one member of the congregation, thus depriving the church hierarchy of its authority. This elected official was to preach Christ, and his words were to be judged by the members of that congregation who used the open text of scripture as their guide.[61] Ultimately then, Tyndale looked to each congregation to guarantee the level of the clergy within the church and the commonwealth. His ideas on this question form an interesting parallel with Crowley's treatment of the problem of authority within the church.

Crowley had much to say about the topic of authority within the church and about the topic of the king's authority over the church, but

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[61] Tyndale, Answere, passim.

he remained relatively silent on the important matter of the means to maintain satisfactory standards among the clergy. As previously noted, he discussed the election of ecclesiastical officials in his Sermon of 1575, and suggested that the person elected to an ecclesiastical office had the duty of reprehending, rebuking, and instructing the faithful.[62] It is possible to accept this statement of belief in the election of ecclesiastical officials as Crowley's final thoughts on this problem of maintaining the standard of the clergy. The only other instance where he discussed this problem was in his Waye to Wealth, written fifteen years before he delivered his Sermon. There, Crowley implied that the church hierarchy had abdicated its spiritual responsibilities in favor of "lordlike liueing" and had permitted the curates to stir up revolution and to cheat the common people by failing to provide good religious instruction.[63] In making these accusations, he was admitting that the church hierarchy had the authority to regulate the activities of the clergy. Now this idea is certainly contradictory to Crowley's later pronouncement in his Sermon, and it must be taken as only his earlier answer to the problem. Crowley had written his Waye to Wealth before he fled England to avoid the pogroms of Mary, and consequently before he was affected by the various currents of thought in Frankfort which contributed to the making of Puritan ecclesiology. The response which he gave to this problem in his Sermon of 1575 clearly showed the effects

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[62]Crowley, Sermon, sig. F 4^{v}.

[63]Crowley, Waye to Wealth, sigs. B 1 - B 1^{v}.

of his years at Frankfort, and his idea of the elected ecclesiastical official as the means to maintain acceptable standards of the clergy, was the same solution which Tyndale had suggested in the years 1530-1.

It was not until fairly late in his career that Crowley became concerned with the general problem of authority within the church, and the problem of the king's authority over the church. Here, we witness a dramatic shift in Crowley's interests. The man who had been concerned previously with Christian society in its totality and with the agrarian problems of the sixteenth century became almost exclusively preoccupied with the weighty problems of Reformation theology. While it is impossible to pinpoint exactly when this change in Crowley's interests came about, it appears safe to conclude that after the year 1570, his primary concern was with the problems of authority within the church. Once again, Crowley's discussion of these two topics established important links with the past and with the thought of Tyndale.

Like Tyndale, Crowley discussed the general problem of authority within the church. What weight did institutions like the papacy and the general council of the Christian church possess? The answer to these questions was fairly obvious--none at all. But the road which he travelled to reach this conclusion is interesting and important. Of the two important institutions within the Catholic Church, the papacy and the council, Crowley devoted more time to the former. Like Tyndale, he dismissed the institution of the council in a few pages, and like Tyndale, he simply argued that the councils could not be a source of authority for the preservation of doctrinal uniformity, since historically they had

contradicted themselves.[64] Tyndale had employed a similar argument against More in his Answere to More's dialoge.[65]

Crowley also employed arguments against the papacy which were like the ones used by Tyndale five decades earlier. Of particular interest and importance was his use of history against the papacy. In a work entitled a breefe discourse, concerning those foure vsuall notes whereby Christes Catholique Church is knowne, written in 1581, Crowley used the idea of the fall of the church. His observations established important links with the past:

> From the time of Cyprian, which was when Sistus the second was cheefe Minister in Rome: the church of Rome did continually decline from that precisens that Cyprian writeth of: and was so far from refusing to heare of adding to that which their predicessors helde, that it gaue it selfe to nothing more earnestly: then to deuising new and strange things, in and about the Ministration of the Church . . . tyll at the laste, euen in the daies of Gregorie the firste, the straung deuises in Ministration beyng growen to the full perfection: But shorty after, euen in the dayes of Phocas the Emperour: Bonafacius the thryd of that name, obtayned to be called the high Bishop, and was by Phocas established in that dignitie. Now is the Church of Rome become Schismaticall, & is no longer Catholique, because from that day to this, it has followed nor taught Catholique Doctrine, which our Sauior taught . . . that is to saye. Repente, and beleeue the Gospell.[66]

Crowley's treatment of the fall of the church from its original pristine pure state to a point where it could no longer be considered Catholic was remarkably similar to Tyndale's own treatment in his Practyse of

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[64]Crowley, An Aunswer to Sixe Reasons, That Thomas Pownde, gentleman and Prisoner in the Marshalsey...required to be Aunswered (London, 1581), sig. D 2^{v}.

[65]Tyndale, Answere, sig. H 4^{v}.

[66]Crowley, a breefe discourse, concerning those foure vsuall notes, sigs. B 3^{v} - B 4.

Prelates. There was a slight difference in their emphases, and Crowley concentrated on the decline of the church doctrinally while Tyndale had been more concerned with the emasculation of the temporal authorities at the hands of the papacy, and with the perversion of the truth of scripture by the false, subtle glasses of the scholastics. Nevertheless, they both placed the fall of the church within the same historical framework, and it is probable that they both employed the same sources of history, notably Vadianus' A worke entytled of ye olde god & the newe, and perhaps Platina's Lives of the Popes. Crowley offered us what was essentially Vadianus' historical account, placing particular emphasis on the pontificate of Gregory the Great and Boniface III. As stated elsewhere, Tyndale interpreted Vadianus incorrectly and confused Gregory the Pope with Gregory the missionary who brought Christianity across the Rhine. Like St. German, Crowley did not make this error, and this in itself is probably sufficient evidence to rule out Crowley's use of Tyndale's Practyse of Prelates. Nevertheless, the similarity of their narratives would appear to establish an important link between the Swiss reformer, Tyndale, and Crowley.

Evidence for this link between the three men is further supported by their discussions of the problem of the church's authority to interpret scripture. Like Tyndale, Crowley was forced to wrestle with this problem. One of his polemical opponents, Thomas Pownde, had employed a variety of arguments to support the Catholic position, but one of his arguments in particular is important. Employing the famous dictum of Augustine in his letter to Boniface concerning the Manicheans, Pownde was reported by Crowley as having said:

> I should not beleve the Gospell except the authority of y church did move me thereunto. meaning that the tradition of the universall churche, and the testimonie of all the people of God, in whom the holie Ghoste swelleth, must iustly move us to credite that, whiche their authoritie doth commaunde us to give credite vnto.[67]

Several decades earlier Tyndale had been forced to consider the same argument in his polemical debate with Thomas More. He answered More's use of Augustine in the following way:

> I had not beleued ye gospel/ excepte the auctorite of the church had moued me. I answere/ . . . many are wonne with godly liuynge/ which at the first ether will not heare or can not beleue. And this is the auctorite that S. Augustine ment.[68]

Tyndale took his exegesis of Augustine's text from Vadianus who had also used the idea of good living to explain the sense of the word "authority."[69] Crowley answered Pownde's use of Augustine in a similar way. While there is a bit of confusion engendered by his words, the sense of his argument is clear enough. He suggested that the authority of which Augustine had spoken was the truth taught by the church, and:

> all her delight is to lette men see it, in her lyfe, that may be occasioned hereby, to glorifie her spouse christe, and his and her heavenly father.[70]

It is impossible to say whether Crowley went back to Vadianus for his exegesis, or if he went instead to Tyndale's Answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge. He would have found the same answer in both places.

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[67]Crowley, An Aunswer to Sixe Reasons, sig. B 1.

[68]Tyndale, Answere, sig. D 5.

[69]Vadianus, A worke entytled of ye olde god & the newe, sigs. C 7^v^ - C 8.

[70]Crowley, An Aunswere to Sixe Reasons, sigs. C 4^v^ - D 1.

Nevertheless, there is some evidence to support Crowley's direct use of Tyndale. In the same year but in a different work, Crowley again argued against the Catholic Church and he employed the distinction of the feeling faith and the historical faith against the church.[71] Tyndale had used this distinction against More.[72] Crowley's use of this distinction is a testament to the continuing influence of Tyndale, and ultimately to Melanchthon's influence as well, on the development of English religious thought in the latter decades of the sixteenth century. The same is true of Crowley's use of Vadianus, and the line between the Swiss reformer, Tyndale, and Crowley is an interesting insight into the formation of English Puritan thought.

Having discredited the authority of the council and the papacy, as well as the authority of the church to interpret scripture, and the force of tradition within the church, Crowley was left with a sense of authority within the church much like Tyndale's. It was a church which was guided only by the open text of scripture. However, the open scripture was of little comfort to Puritans like Crowley who were convinced that the vestiges of "popery" had to be removed from within the church, and removed against the expressed wishes of the monarch. Earlier, Crowley had advocated the obedience of all segments of society to the higher authorities, but the issues were not the same. Crowley had not foreseen a situation in which the monarch would command something contrary

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[71] Crowley, a breefe discourse, concerning those foure vsuall notes, sig. D 2^{v}.

[72] Tyndale, Answere, sig. D 5^{v}.

to what he himself believed to be the word of God. The Puritans in general, and Crowley, left themselves open to the charge of disobedience against God's appointed minister because of their stand in the vestiarian controversy. Crowley himself related the substance of this charge which was made against him and other Puritans:

> If refusing therefore, to vse them at the commaundement of ye Prince, you not onely resist the ordinaunce of God your selues, but ye doe also fall into that inconvenience, which ye woulde so faine seeme to be most afrayde of. That is, ye be made stumbling stockes to the simple Subiectes, who seeing your disobedience, are encouraged to think, that it is none offense at all to disobey a Prince.[73]

Crowley devoted an entire work to a refutation of this charge and to the problem of vestments within the church. His answers provide one final link between his thought and the thought of Tyndale.

Crowley proceeded to refute this charge by arguing in three directions. First, he attempted to prove that vestments were indeed contrary to God's laws. While interesting in themselves, Crowley's arguments are not really germane to the links between his thought and Tyndale's. Tyndale was just not concerned with this particular problem. However, Crowley also considered the problem of the limits of the monarch's authority over the church, and erected a hierarchy of obedience which allowed for a form of passive resistance. Both aspects of his thought are important for the links which they form with Tyndale's thought.

At the very heart of the controversy over the surplice and other vestments of the church lay the question of whether or not the monarch

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[73]Robert Crowley, a Briefe Discourse against the Outwarde Apparel and Ministring Garmentes of the Popishe Church (London, 1566), sig. B 2.

had the authority to command the Christian conscience. Crowley answered yes--within certain important limits. He was forced to agree partially with the assumptions of his opponents, that the monarch had the right to command in religion that which was not strictly forbidden by God, and to deny that which God had not strictly commanded. This was another aspect of the charge made against the Puritans, and again Crowley gave his readers the substance of the accusation:

> the thinges that you refuse are . . . are such as God hath neither commaunded nor forbidden: . . . And therefore, Princes haue auctoritie ouer them to commaunde them, toyther to be vsed, or not to be vsed.[74]

Now Crowley agreed with this idea in principle, and his agreement established an important link with Tyndale's thought, since Tyndale himself had employed the criterion of "things indifferent" to define the monarch's authority over the church. His words were:

> what so euer edifieth in faith and loue/ is to be kepte/ as long as it so doeth. And what so euer hurteth faith or loue/ is to be broken immediately: though kynge/ Emperoure/ pope or an aungel commaunde it. And al indifferent thinges that nether healpe ner hurte faith and loue/ ar hole in the handes of father/ mother/ master/ lorde and prince.[75]

Tyndale did not employ this idea frequently. It appears in his Exposition of Fyrste Ihon, and briefly in his Answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge.[76] But he never applied it in any of his lengthy discussions concerning the problems of king and church. Quite probably, after 1531, he preferred to think of the king in more positive terms. The reader is left with

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[74] Ibid., sig. B 2.

[75] Tyndale, The Exposition of the Fyrste Epistle of Seynt Ihon with a Prologge before it, sig. E 5.

[76] Tyndale, Answere, sig. E 3.

this problem, his exposicion vppon Mathew. The distinction of "things indifferent" does not appear in that work.

Although Crowley agreed in principle with his opponent's arguments, he was not about to admit that either the surplice or the vestments of the church were indifferent. On the contrary, they destroyed and did not teach or help the faith. He said:

> When the vse of them will destroy, or not edifie, then cease they to be indifferent, that in such case we may use them. For S. Paul hath taught vs, that in the vse of things indifferent, we must always note, whether ye same doe edifie or not.[77]

Tyndale had employed the same criteria for judging the status of things indifferent which would come under the prince's authority, and things essential to the faith which lay beyond his authority. Whether Crowley got his knowledge of the principle of "things indifferent" from Tyndale's works is impossible to say. But the fact that both men used the same criteria for making the decision of what was truly indifferent and what was not establishes another important link between the thought of the two men. Crowley concluded his discussion of the problem of the monarch's authority over the church with words which were also identical to Tyndale's own beliefs:

> Not despising the auctoritie that God hath giuen the Princes and other Potentates: but preferring the commaundement of him that is the giuer of auctoritie, before the commaundement of those that haue none auctoritie of themselues, but haue receuyed theyr auctoritie at hys hande, and shall aunswere to hym for the vse therof . . . First we obey God, in that, both in doing and leauing undone, we seeke the edification of his Church. And then we obey man, in that we doe submit ourselues to suffer at mans hande,

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[77] Crowley, a Briefe Discourse against the Outwarde Apparel...of the Popishe Church, sig. A 4^v^.

> whatsoeuer punishments mans lawes doe appoint for our doing or refusing to doe at mans commaundement.[78]

Tyndale's life as well as Crowley's defiance of royal authority in his later years were both testaments to these beliefs.

Like the three preceding chapters in this dissertation, this chapter has attempted to deal with the origin and continuity of certain currents of thought in the sixteenth century. It would be foolish to suggest that Tyndale's political thought had the same influence on the development of English political thought as did that of someone like Hobbes or Locke. However, in the case of a figure like Crowley, who conceived his own political thought completely within a Biblical frame of reference, as Tyndale had also done earlier, there appears to be a great deal of continuity. Tyndale's passing concern with the concept of the Christian commonwealth, his consistent application of Christian principles to the totality of Christian society, and his narrow concept of political authority which was really divine authority in different dress--all these ideas found their expression decades later in the writings of one of the most interesting of the early Puritans, Robert Crowley. It is rarely possible to prove conclusively that one historical figure influenced another, especially when we are dealing with ideas which could have come from any number of sources. This is especially true of Tyndale's influence upon Crowley. However, on the basis of the ideas explored during the course of this chapter, the possibility of some influence of Tyndale on Crowley seems admissible. Might it then be concluded that the man who

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[78] Ibid., sigs. A 7^{v} - B 2.

gave English Puritanism its first theological expression was also a pioneer in the realm of political thought? Certainly, more work is needed before the final "yes" or "no" can be given. But once again, based upon the ideas studied above, it must be admitted that this particular line of investigation appears to be a fruitful one.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Unless it be objected that this dissertation has been a study of something which does not exist, the first point to be made is simply that William Tyndale did offer his readers a political theory. This fact is important, since in the numerous studies which have appeared dealing with his life and his career as a reformer, no one has taken the time to examine his political thought with any degree of precision or care. This study has been both precise and careful, and within the limitations of the historian's craft, it provides the readers with an accurate idea of the nature of Tyndale's political thought.

However, there are always limitations on the historian's craft and on the writing of history, and there are limitations to this study. The pursuit of precision and order, those two qualities which all historians strive for, does have certain drawbacks. The historian, like the artist, imposes order when sometimes order is difficult to see, or even when it does not exist. Any precise and orderly study of Tyndale's political thought would be, to a degree, misleading. His political thought did not always embody those qualities. This is not surprising. Tyndale was not a political theorist, a fact which has been continually stressed in the preceding pages, and political theory was a topic forced on him by the events of those monumental decades of the English Reformation. While he had the ability to be precise, to use words in a precise way, this capacity for precision did not extend to his political thought. In

that unavoidable passion for order, this study might give its readers the impression that there is more order to Tyndale's political thought than there actually was at the time when he developed it.

Nevertheless, history without order would prove incongruous, and keeping Tyndale's basic imprecision in mind, the further pursuit of order is legitimate. In this conclusion, first, it is necessary to summarize Tyndale's thought, and to place it within the context of his theological development. Given the recent debate over Tyndale's originality, it is also necessary to discuss the sources of his political thought. Finally, it is necessary to place his political thought within the context of English political thought in the sixteenth century, as represented by the other figures examined in this study.

Three criteria have been employed in the analysis of Tyndale's political thought: ideas on the nature and origin of authority; ideas on the nature of law; and the discussion of the problems of church and state. Tyndale's discussion of each one of these topics clearly demonstrates the basic orientation of his political thought, but this orientation is most evident in his discussion of the problems of authority and the nature of law. His political thought was thoroughly theocentric. It was the product of a narrow concept of authority, which based upon Paul's famous text in his Epistle to the Romans, held that there was no authority but the authority of God. Translated into political terms, Tyndale's reliance upon this text meant that he had no concept of political authority per se. He never affirmed the idea that political authority could be created by a voluntary association of men coming together to form something called the "state," nor did he feel that any of the officers

within the "temporal regiment" derived their authority from the process of election. Authority just did not come from man. Tyndale's thoughts on the king's authority were no different. Apart from the one instance late in his career when he made a pronouncement on the validity of one of England's kings, Richard II, he assumed that all kings received their authority directly from God, and that ultimately God was responsible for both the choice of the people's sovereign as well as other elected officials within the commonwealth. As to how this procedure worked, Tyndale was not clear. Nevertheless, this belief meant that his conception of tyranny was bound to be imprecise. Tyndale, like other Protestant political theorists, was intentionally vague on this point.

Although Tyndale's basic concept of authority did not change throughout his career, his political thought did become more refined. In this regard, his exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew is an extremely important work. In fact, it is so important that any analysis which fails to take into account what Tyndale said in this work is necessarily incomplete, and it is an interesting comment on the level of scholarship that no one has given this work the attention which it fully deserves. His exposicion vppon Mathew contains his final vision of the nature of political organization and his most precise statement on authority. Two passages in this work are very significant. The first deals with Tyndale's concept of authority:

> I answer God (and not the comen people) choseth the prynce, though he chose him by them. For Dutero.xvi. God commaundeth to chose and set up officers: and therefore is God the chefe choser and setter vp of them, and so must he be the chefe put downe agayne. Now hath God geuen no commaundement to put them down agayne: but contrary

> wyse, when we haue anoynted a kynge ouer vs at his commaundement, he sayeth: Tuych not myne anoynted. The authority of the kynge is the authority of God.[1]

It would be difficult to overemphasize the significance of Tyndale's words here. His emphasis on God's authority and power, and Tyndale's refusal to admit that the people derived any rights from their participation in the actual process of election, are important aspects of Tyndale's political thought. God, who was responsible for the original grant of authority, was the only person who could change the officers appointed in a commonwealth. Since the members of the "temporal regiment" were acting on God's authority, they were responsible to Him alone. These beliefs led Tyndale to some important conclusions. He refused to grant the people any authority to act in cases of tyranny or lèse-majesté. Disobedience was never justified, and he looked upon a tyrant with the same reverence as a good king. He also concluded that the consensus of the people was not a limiting factor on the king's authority. Frequently, Tyndale told kings and magistrates that the people were not theirs but God's. Thus God's word became the all-important limiting factor on the actions and authority of the members of the "temporal regiment." Finally, this sense of authority which is found in the exposicion vppon Mathew and elsewhere, in conjunction with the Lutheran idea of "office," led Tyndale to view the king as a passive creature, used by God to chastise His people when they had sinned. All of these considerations were primarily products of his narrow, static, hierarchical, and theocentric sense of authority.

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[1] Tyndale, exposicion vppon the v.vi.vii. chapters of Mathew, sigs. G 7^{v} - G 8.

Tyndale's sense of authority was also important for determining his attitude towards representative institutions like church councils and Parliament. When faced with Thomas More's firm belief in the authority of the general council of the Christian church, Tyndale went to great lengths to argue against them. He was pushed hard by More on this issue, and in his Answere to More's dialoge, he employed a few interesting arguments against More's belief, and against this sense of authority within the church. Tyndale ridiculed More's belief in the consensus omnium. How could one speak of the authority of the church councils, he asked More, when there were such differences and disagreements among the various church councils held during their own times, and when each council was claiming infallibility?[2] However, it would be incorrect to assume that Tyndale had argued against church councils simply because More had argued for them. More forced Tyndale to develop certain aspects of his thought, but fundamental to Tyndale's rejection of the authority of the church council was his sense of authority which was antithetical to More's. Tyndale did not believe in God's continuing revelation. This belief was important in his denial of the authority of the councils. But since authority came directly from God and did not originate from the consent of the people, albeit people who might have been gifted with the presence of the Holy Spirit, Tyndale just could not talk about a council in any positive fashion. Tyndale's sense of authority also influenced his consideration of Parliament.

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[2]Tyndale, Answere, sig. E 4^{v}.

Tyndale only mentioned Parliament on two or three occasions, and on each occasion, he displayed an attitude of suspicion and even hostility towards that body. His attitude was partially the product of his belief that the prelates dominated that institution. At times he viewed it as an appendage of the Roman Curia. However, Tyndale's theocentrism and his sense of authority also influenced his view of Parliament. He appeared to view any single institution within the commonwealth, like Parliament, in the exact same manner as he viewed any individual Christian. Just as the individual Christian was thoroughly dependent upon God's grace for his own wisdom, so was Parliament dependent on God's grace as well. Tyndale could take this point of view because he rejected the conciliarist point of view and a belief in the consensus omnium. In other words, Tyndale viewed any representative body like Parliament as a collection of individuals whose consensus represented only a collection of errors without God's guidance. Turning again to Tyndale's exposicion vppon Mathew, his vision of the worth of Parliament as well as his final vision of society becomes clear:

> Euen so if we cast of vs, the yocke of oure temporall lawes which are the lawes of God and drawen out of the ten commaundementes and law naturall and out of loue thy neyboure as they selffe: God shall cast vs of and let vs slyppe, to folowe oure awne witte. And then shall all goo agaynst vs, what so euer we take in hande: in so moche that when we gather a parliament to reforme or amende ought, that we there deterne shall be oure awne snare, confusion and vtter distruction, so that all the ennemyes we haue vnder heauen coulde not wishe vs so greate myscheue as oure awne councell shall do vs. God shall so blynde the wisdome of the wise.[3]

Tyndale's description of government in this passage can be regarded as his final statement on this topic. Government was a covenant not between

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[3] Ibid., sig. F 5.

man and man, but between God and man in which God gave man wisdom in return for obedience to all temporal laws. Without man's fulfillment of this divine/human bargain, God would allow man to slip from a state of order to a state of chaos. And with regard to institutions like Parliament, Tyndale finally came to believe that all institutions had only the worth of the men who comprised them, but no inherent worth of their own. Whatever good that might come out of any institution was dependent upon the grace of God.

There are several important things to be noted concerning Tyndale's final vision of government as a covenant between God and man. While his determinism is not accepted today, his pessimism concerning representative institutions, and his refusal to believe in the value of the consensus omnium, both appear to give a certain modernity to his thought. In this regard, he leaves his arch rival, More, far behind.

It is also important to note that his vision of government as a covenant between God and man developed gradually during his career. Earlier, while still laboring under Luther's influence, Tyndale remarked that keeping the temporal laws would result in worldly prosperity.[4] Thus, as early as 1528, Tyndale was thinking of government in terms of the covenant theme, although in a very limited sense. But it was not until 1533, in one of the last works which he wrote, that he made all government dependent upon this bargain between God and man. Essentially, he had applied his own theology of the covenant to his vision of political

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[4]Tyndale first made this remark in his Obedience and continued to restate it throughout his career. It last appears in his exposicion vppon Mathew.

theory, but it is remarkable that his sense of authority made this vision even stronger. If there was no inherent authority in an institution like Parliament, and if no authority resulted from such things as elections or from the consent of the people governed, then it was easier to affirm that government could only be maintained by an agreement between God and man. And this is exactly what Tyndale affirmed in his later years.

Finally, it is important to note that the development of Tyndale's political covenant in 1533, and his legalism which went hand in hand with that development, made the theocentric element in his political thought even stronger. Tyndale had always been concerned with God's presence, His wishes, and His designs in the commonwealth, even before the covenant theme made its entrance into his political thought in a fully developed way. He viewed the king and other "secular officials" in a thoroughly theocentric light. Kings, he told his readers in 1528, were placed on earth by God to punish sin. This was their primary function, and while he elaborated, expanded, and to an extent modified this theme in his later years, this emphasis remained well pronounced in his political thought. Tyndale had also looked to the Old Testament as a guide even before his sense of legalism became well developed in his thought. The officers of the temporal regiment whom Tyndale addressed in his Obedience were those officers spoken of in the Old Testament, and he looked there as well for the explanation of their Christian duty. Nevertheless, Tyndale's legalism did affect his political theory in two ways, in addition to allowing for the development of his idea of the covenant. First, it made for an important limiting factor on the authority of kings and other

officers within the temporal regiment. Tyndale had always affirmed that it was the king's duty to rule after the word of God, rather than after his own "imaginacion." But his legalism and his belief in the literal interpretation of scripture led Tyndale to regard the Old Testament and particularly the Book of Deuteronomy as a sufficient guide for all kings. Secondly, it is arguable that his legalism also affected his view of the importance of the laws of man. To suggest that when Tyndale wrote that important sentence in the Obedience, "one king and one law is gods ordinaunce in every realme," he was implying that any commonwealth could exist solely on the basis of the laws of God, is probably reading Tyndale backwards.[5] Nevertheless, this impulse is found in his thought, and it would seem that his sense of legalism, which he developed well after he had written the Obedience, would only have served to strengthen this belief.

Tyndale's sense of legalism is one of the most interesting and significant aspects of his consideration of law. Many scholars have dealt with the problem of its origins, and in general with his changing understanding of law, with varying degrees of success. In this study of Tyndale's political thought, the examination of his understanding of law was restricted, quite naturally, to law in its political sense. Since Tyndale's overwhelming concern was with the laws of God and not the laws of man, or law in its political sense, this was an important restriction. Among other things, this restriction meant that controversies such as the one concerning the origins of Tyndale's legalism

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5. Tyndale, Obedience, sig. K. 6^{v}.

were left largely unconsidered in the preceding pages. However, Tyndale's thoughts on the law in its political sense were such that it was not always possible to ignore his theological understanding of law. Tyndale's theological understanding of law had a significant influence on his discussion of the laws of man.

Tyndale never devoted one particular work to an examination of law in its political sense. Rather, his thoughts on this topic must be extracted from his many works. Nevertheless, two of his works, the Obedience, and the exposicion vppon Mathew, are especially significant, for they clearly demonstrate the influence of Tyndale's theological understanding of law on his understanding of law in its political sense.

In 1528, Tyndale's understanding of the law was decidedly Lutheran. In fact, his understanding of law in just about all its senses appears to be indistinguishable from Luther's. The law for both reformers proclaimed man's helplessly sinful nature. It stood above man in such a way that alone, he was powerless to fulfill its dictates. These sentiments influenced Tyndale's treatment of law in its political sense. The connection between law and man's sinful nature was a natural one to make, and in the Obedience, Tyndale made it. He did not suggest that the temporal laws proclaimed man's inadequacies in the same way as God's law did. Nevertheless, man's relationship to God's law and to man's laws was virtually the same. He could not fulfill its dictates by himself, and this belief led to Tyndale's emphasis on the king as the coercive, driving force within a Christian society, compelling men to obedience.

As Tyndale's understanding of law in its theological sense changed, so did his understanding of law in its political sense. This change

began sometime after 1530, but it is most pronounced in his exposicion vppon Mathew. In 1533, Tyndale no longer formed the close association of temporal law and sin simply because God's law no longer proclaimed man's inadequacies and his sinful nature. Man now possessed the potential for fulfilling the law, and his adherence to its dictates in a moral, legalistic fashion became the way in which man lived out his part of the covenant between himself and God. Just as man possessed the potential to fulfill the dictates of the law, so did he possess the potential to keep the temporal law. Thus, in the exposicion vppon Mathew, the king no longer appeared as the angry, coercive force within a Christian society which drove man to obedience. To Tyndale, he now appeared more as a moral force within that society. Here, Tyndale was being extremely logical, for it would have been contradictory for him to have argued that man could keep the law in a moralistic, legalistic way, but that he could not keep the comparatively simple dictates of man's laws.

In spite of this all-important difference in Tyndale's view of temporal law in 1528, and his view of it in 1533, there was a strong, unifying theme in his treatment of law. This theme consisted of his view of law in its general, overall sense. Tyndale, like other men of the sixteenth century, saw a definite hierarchy in the law. Law consisted of three different but related parts: the law of God, the law of nature, and the laws of man. He frequently equated the concept of natural law with the law of God, and he always believed that these two types of law were the normative standard for the laws of man. It would be difficult to find any figure of the sixteenth century who did not accept this point of view.

However, Tyndale's vision of this hierarchy of law was narrow and theocentric, and these qualities are especially evident in the criteria which he employed to judge the validity of man's laws. The only criterion which he used was the relationship of "temporal law" to the laws of God and nature. "Temporal law" could not contradict the dictates of the laws of nature and God and still be law in a valid sense. No law which contradicted the laws of God and nature was binding upon any Christian. The narrowness of his vision becomes evident when it is remembered that during the sixteenth century, it was believed that such things as custom and consent were also valid criteria for judging the laws of man. Quite probably, Tyndale's theocentrism prevented him from adopting this point of view.[6]

Two other aspects of Tyndale's consideration of law are important. The first is his attitude towards, and use of canon law. Tyndale remained largely silent on this important body of law, and from his silence, it can be inferred that he just did not know his canon law very well. Of course, he argued against it, and in his Obedience, he told Henry that there was no room for canon law in a Christian commonwealth. Tyndale regarded it as the antithesis of the law of God, something which the papacy had fabricated to keep the princes in perpetual subjection to its tyranny. However, unlike other major reformers, Tyndale was unable to use the contents of this body of law against the papacy with any degree of skill or precision. In the Obedience, the sum-total of his use of

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[6]Tyndale also appears to have believed that for a temporal law to have been valid, it had to be enacted by a legitimate member of the temporal regiment. However, he never did very much with this idea.

canon law consisted of his application of one sentence from the Decretum to undermine the claims of the popes. This sentence gave Paul the same authority which Peter had possessed. At least, this was the way in which Tyndale interpreted it, and his knowledge of the Decretum was so poor that he was forced to use the same argument twice. In his Practyse of Prelates, Tyndale showed a greater familiarity with canon law. But it must be remembered that whatever knowledge of that body of law he possessed when he wrote that work, he obtained from his reading of Vadianus' anti-papal tract.

Tyndale's use of Roman law is also significant. On one occasion in the Obedience, he employed a concept taken from Roman law and defined natural law in the same way as Ulpian had defined it. There is no way of determining his source of Ulpian's definition, and quite probably, Tyndale was even less familiar with this Roman law than he was with the laws of the church. However, his use of a concept drawn from Roman law is interesting, simply because it clearly demonstrates the eclectic tendencies in his thought. When Tyndale wrote his polemics, he drew freely from whatever was available at that particular time. Both Tyndale's eclecticism, and it must be admitted, his originality, were well pronounced in his consideration of one of the most significant problems of the English Reformation, the problem of church and state.

Tyndale had absolutely no concept of the state and several definitions of the word "church." As a result, his consideration of the problems of church and state was very complex. This basic complexity is not the only source of confusion which surrounds Tyndale's treatment of this question. Like his understanding of law, his understanding of the

proper relationship between the church and the temporal regiment changed during the course of his career. Nevertheless, certain aspects of his consideration of the problem of church and state are clear. First, Tyndale ignored the sweeping legislation of Thomas Cromwell and his frontal assault on the Catholic Church. He probably viewed this as a half-measure, since he always judged the progress of the English Reformation in terms of the availability of a vernacular scripture. His life was dedicated to this goal. Still, it would be incorrect to suggest that the actual relationship of the church to the temporal regiment was unimportant to him. It was, however, a concern which was most important to him during the earlier years of his career.

Tyndale began his treatment of this subject in the Obedience under the influence of his characteristic sense of authority. This sense of authority, which was Lutheran in inspiration and Pauline in content, led him to believe that in certain ways the two orders of society should be separate, and in other ways they should be joined. Generally speaking, he thought that the two were joined insofar as the king's authority, which came directly from God, should prevail over all members of the commonwealth. This included the members of the church, and Tyndale argued that since Christ himself had been subject to the temporal sword, the members of his church could hardly be exempt. But he also thought that the two orders of the Christian society should be separate insofar as the clergy's authority did not pertain to matters of government. The authority which Christ had given them was the authority to preach, and nothing else. Of course, Christ's wishes were still binding, and Tyndale

advocated the immediate end of the prelates' participation in the mundane affairs of government.

Tyndale next considered the problem of church and state in his Practyse of Prelates. Here, he did not apply his sense of authority to the problem, as he had done in the Obedience, although it remained important. Rather, he analyzed the relationship of the church to the temporal regiment in historical terms. Having learned his history from Vadianus, Tyndale proceeded in a mood of complete reaction to retrace the successive steps by which the papacy had wrested control of the church from the kings and emperors of history. This mood of reaction probably led Tyndale to feel that the best way to correct the imbalance which had been characteristic of the relationship of the church to the temporal regiment was to return to the situation as it had existed before the papacy had commenced its unholy business. It is arguable that early in his career Tyndale might have been willing to accept a relationship of the church to the temporal authority in which the privileges which the popes had taken from the emperors would be returned to them. If this was the case, and it is by no means certain that it was, then Tyndale's vision of the solution to the problems of church and state was one in which the Emperor had a large degree of administrative control over the church. This control would have included the right of the emperor to nominate popes, as well as his right to convene a general council of the church.

Tyndale stopped considering the problem of the relationship of the church to the temporal regiment in these terms sometime after the year 1530. Once he had given up on the reform of the institutional church,

and once he had evolved his own understanding of the word "church," his earlier treatment of this problem probably would have had little real meaning to him. As he was forced by More to develop his understanding of the word "church," it is probably correct to regard his Answere to More's dialoge as the turning point in his consideration of this important problem of the Reformation. After he had completed his Answere to More, he interjected two new elements into his treatment of the problems of church and state. First, he again put his eclecticism to good use and enjoyed the concept of Adiaphora as part of the answer to the question of king and church. Whether Tyndale got this concept from the works of Melanchthon or from the works of Erasmus is not clear. Nevertheless, he found it extremely useful in clarifying the extent of the king's authority over the church. His control over the church, Tyndale thought, pertained only to those things which were indifferent and not essential to salvation. After 1530, Tyndale also stopped considering the problem of church and state primarily in terms of institutions. In both his Answere to More's dialoge and his exposicion vppon Mathew, he was far more concerned with the relationship of the individual Christian to the temporal regiment than with the relationship of the institutional church to the temporal regiment. Tyndale was now considering the problem in light of his own understanding of the church, and for him the church was a multitude of believing Christians. As a result of his ecclesiology, he no longer felt compelled to consider this problem in terms of institutions. However, he did not completely dismiss the institutional aspect of this problem. But there were certain ill-defined areas within his ecclesiology, and to the limited extent that he did consider the relationship of the

institutional church to the temporal regiment after 1530, there are so many obscurities present that it is almost impossible to say exactly what Tyndale had in mind. This in itself is a very interesting comment on one particular aspect of his political thought. Tyndale's earlier consideration of this problem had been fairly precise. And at that time, he was working with ideas which he had borrowed from other reformers. Tyndale's ecclesiology was his very own. But as a result of certain vaguely defined areas of thought within his ecclesiology, one portion of his later consideration of the problems of church and state lacked the precision of his earlier treatment of this problem.

Tyndale's eclecticism, which was an important factor in his consideration of the problems of church and state, is even a more important factor in the problem of assessing his originality. Although the question of Tyndale's originality has been hotly debated by numerous scholars, the focal point has never been his political thought, but rather his theology.[7] The reason for this is apparent. There has been very little concern with his political thought in general. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the problem of Tyndale's originality in the realm of political thought is not completely divorced from that problem in the realm of theology. Tyndale did not go to one source for his theology and to another completely different source at the same time for his political thought. He employed the same sources for both. Tyndale's

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[7]The two exceptions to this statement are: Gordon Rupp, The English Protestant Tradition, where the author discusses Tyndale's debt to Luther; and Clebsch, England's Earliest Protestants. Here the author deals with the problem of Tyndale's originality fairly thoroughly.

pilgrimage to originality in the realm of political thought does parallel his pilgrimage in the realm of theology. In this case, the answer to the problem of Tyndale's originality with regard to his political thought does substantiate the consensus of scholars concerning his originality in the realm of theology, with one exception. In the realm of political thought, Tyndale's debt to Luther remained strong.

There can be little doubt of the fact that for Tyndale, Luther remained a figure of great influence and inspiration. Leaving aside the question of his debt to the German reformer on the all important definitions of the law and the Gospel, Luther's influence upon the formation of Tyndale's political thought was great. Quite probably, he got the cornerstone of his political philosophy, his Pauline sense of authority, from Luther. Of course, Tyndale never developed any other sense of authority during his career. He also took two other important ideas from Luther: one, his concept of office; and two, his definition of natural law. There are several important things to be noted about Tyndale's use of each one of these ideas, beginning first with the concept of office.

Tyndale's use of Luther's idea of office first appeared in the Obedience, his earliest political tract. It was this idea which led Tyndale to state that the truly important thing about a king was not his personality, but rather his office. His authority came not from God's grant to him personally, but rather to him through his office. This particular point of view, in combination with a strong Augustinianism which Tyndale probably found on his own, independent of the German reformer, prompted him to view the king in an impersonal fashion. Kings were God's agents on earth to be manipulated by His ever-present and active hand,

for the punishment of sin. Tyrants remained kings, since one could not be sure if God had not made a king that way to punish those who had sinned. The logic of this particular belief led Tyndale to reverse the traditional idea of the mirror of princes genre of political analysis. The spiritual state of of the prince did not reflect onto the commonwealth, but rather the spiritual state of the commonwealth guided the actions of the prince.

Tyndale's use of Luther's concept of office gave his Obedience a decidedly Lutheran flavor.[8] But it is important to note that Tyndale never parted with this idea, even after he had broken with the German reformer on the all-important matters of law and Gospel. His use of this idea in his exposicion vppon Mathew is a testament to Luther's continual influence on the formation of Tyndale's political thought.

The same is true for Tyndale's use of Luther's definition of natural law. The concept of natural law was as important to Tyndale's political thought as was the concept of office. Tyndale defined natural law in a Lutheran fashion in the Obedience in 1528, and again in his exposicion vppon Mathew in 1533. For him, it always was the means by which the individual Christian judged the validity of the temporal laws. Up to 1533, Tyndale also believed that the contents of natural law were the surest guide for the actions of the individual Christian within

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[8]L. J. Trinterud said of the Obedience, "the work . . . neither demonstrates nor refutes the "Lutheranism of Tyndale." "A Reappraisal of William Tyndale's Debt to Martin Luther," Church History XXXI (1962), 33. It is just a matter of time before this point of view will be revised. While his conclusions are sound, this particular argument is certainly questionable.

society. After 1533, he dropped this particular use of natural law. Nevertheless, he always defined natural law in a Lutheran way, and he always offered it to his readers as the guide for judging the validity of man's laws. Tyndale's sense of authority, his concept of office, and his definition of the concept of natural law were Luther's, and his continual use of these ideas clearly demonstrates that while Tyndale was able to break with Luther theologically, the German reformer's influence on his political thought remained strong.

No discussion of Tyndale's originality in the realm of political thought would be complete without some attempt to assess the actual significance of his debt to the Swiss reformer, Vadianus. Previously, it has been noted that Vadianus' work provided Tyndale with his source of history and canon law for his Practyse of Prelates, and that Vadianus' work also influenced the actual form of the Practyse of Prelates as well. From Vadianus, Tyndale also took his rebuttal to Augustine's dictum which appeared to give the church the authority to determine scripture. Finally, Tyndale probably arrived at his figure of eight hundred years when discussing the fall of the church through a misreading of Vadianus' work. All these influences are significant in one sense, but appear to be insignificant in another. When Tyndale wrote his Practyse of Prelates, Vadianus was the most important single source of inspiration. Yet, when compared with Luther's inspiration and influence on Tyndale's political thought, that of the Swiss reformer appears slight. Tyndale never used the historical approach to the problem of church and state after 1530, nor did he employ the periodization of church history which emphasized the figure of eight hundred years after his debate with More. While he

continued to deny that the church had the authority to determine scripture, he never employed Vadianus' particular argument against the church except in his Answere to More's dialoge. In short, Vadianus' influence on Tyndale's political thought was not the same, permanent influence that Luther's was. The influence of the Swiss reformer was important, but only in those years in which Tyndale wrote his Practyse of Prelates and his Answere to More's dialoge.

There remains the elusive figure of Erasmus--elusive because it is difficult to assess the influence of this leading humanist on Tyndale's political thought. At best, it was indirect and uncertain. Quite probably, Erasmus did influence the development of Tyndale's legalism, and this legalism was important in his political thought, since it allowed for the covenant ideal which Tyndale eventually applied to his understanding of the workings of a Christian society. Erasmus' influence was thus indirect. It is also uncertain. The concept of Adiaphora came to occupy an important place in Tyndale's political thought, simply because he applied it to judge the all-important question of the king's authority over the church. However, as previously stated, there is no way of knowing if Tyndale found this idea by way of Erasmus or by way of Melanchthon.

In spite of Tyndale's dependence upon Luther, Vadianus, and to some degree Erasmus for his political thought, something must be said for his originality. Tyndale's final vision of government was his alone. Government appeared to him as an agreement between God and man in which man obeyed the "temporal laws," drawn exclusively from the laws of God and the Ten Commandments, in return for which God maintained order in the society. This view originated not from applying Lutheran sentiments

to his vision of political theory, a procedure which Tyndale had employed earlier, but rather from his application of his own unique covenant theology to his political theory.

These observations concerning Tyndale's originality in the realm of political thought should be placed within the context of his thought in its entirety. Tyndale's quest for originality in the realm of political thought closely parallels his quest for originality in the realm of theology, but with one all-important difference. Luther remained a figure of considerable influence of the formation of his political thought. However, while these influences are important, they are not important enough to resurrect the older view of Tyndale which pictured him as a mindless slave to the German reformer's ideas.[9] Political thought was only one small part of Tyndale's diverse intellectual activities. On the other hand, the continuing influence of Luther, even on one small aspect of his thought, should provide both the student of the Reformation and of Tyndale's career with a warning that the current trend of Tyndale studies, which stresses the reformer's originality, does have its limitations.

The remaining task is to place Tyndale's political thought within the context of certain, specific trends of sixteenth century political thought in England as represented by the other figures whose works have been considered in this study. What conclusions can be made concerning Tyndale's relationship to the continuing current of Lollardy, to humanism

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[9]For a survey of the historiography of Tyndale studies, see Williams, William Tyndale, 157-65.

as represented by Thomas More's Utopia, to the thought of the commonwealth men, and especially that of Robert Crowley, and finally to the thought of the Henrician apologists, and their most important spokesman, Christopher St. German? One chapter has been devoted to a detailed study of Tyndale's relationship to each of these figures and the current of thought which they represented, and it is necessary to summarize his relationship to the Henrician apologists and St. German.

One of the most important problems discussed in regard to Tyndale and St. German pertained to the actual goal of the Reformation. To carry out a program of reform, was it necessary to make the "state,"--so-called, coincide with the dictates of God's laws, or was it preferable to reduce the church to a component part of that state? Both points of view existed during the sixteenth century, and one of the significant differences between the political thought of Tyndale and that of the Henrician apologists was based upon Tyndale's preference for the first alternative. Both Stephen Gardiner, another important Henrician apologist, and St. German employed arguments taken from the thought of Marsilius of Padua, and proceeded to reduce the church to part of the state. They did this by employing the Marsilian definition of the word "church," a definition which Tyndale only alluded to briefly in his Answere to More's dialoge, and by suggesting that the king and Parliament had the right to control the church, since they represented it. For St. German, the control of the church by king and Parliament meant especially the right to interpret scripture. His concluding argument on this issue is significant:

> if the clergy can prove that they be the Catholique churche/ then it belongeth to them to expounde it. But yf the emperours/ kynges & princes/ with their people/ as well of the clergy . . . make the catholique church . . . then may the emperoure/ kynges & princes with their people expounde it.[10]

This statement was based upon concepts which were foreign to Tyndale's thought, the most important being a representative sense of authority. St. German probably found his preference for this sense of authority through his study of the works of Fortescue. He employed Fortescue's concept of mixed dominion which was based upon this sense of authority, and this, in conjunction with Marsilius' definition of the word "church" provided him with the tools to prove that the church hierarchy no longer had a monopoly on the right either to control the church or to interpret scripture.

Tyndale had looked to the king to reform the church, but he never assumed that the king and Parliament had the right to interpret scripture, nor did he feel that the church was part of the "state" in the same sense that St. German did. For Tyndale, the church was one part of the Christian commonwealth, and the king did possess some control over it. Here, Tyndale was unclear, and his ideas on this question did change. Nevertheless, the king and Parliament did not have the authority to determine the scripture for other Christians. Tyndale would have used two arguments against this authority. Earlier in his career he consistently said that to allow the church to determine scripture was to make the truths of God dependent upon the wisdom of men. It is difficult to see exactly how Tyndale could have regarded St. German's arguments in any other way. Later in his career, Tyndale applied the concept of

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[10]St. German, Answere, sig. G 5.

Adiaphora to this problem. The interpretation of scripture did not come under those things which were indifferent to the faith.

Furthermore, Tyndale was more concerned with making society and the commonwealth in its totality conform to God's laws. Without changing the essential structure of the commonwealth, he used the Pauline concept of authority which made the king God's agent on earth, and in Tyndale's political thought, the king became the vehicle for making society conform to his understanding of God's word. It is interesting to note that both Tyndale and Wyclif stood on one side of an intellectual barrier, and the Henrician apologists and St. German stood on the other.

Tyndale's relationship to Wyclif's thought and to the thought of his followers, the Lollards, is very interesting. It is impossible to argue that Wyclif or the Lollards exerted a fundamental influence upon the formation of Tyndale's political thought. The most important aspects of Tyndale's political thought were his concept of authority and his ecclesiology, and neither came from the enigmatic figure of Wyclif. But, at certain times during his career, Tyndale did look back to the Lollards, and he interpreted his own program of reform in light of theirs. Tyndale's editions of several Lollard tracts were an important part of the survival and revival of Lollardy. These tracts also provided Tyndale with a few useful arguments to use against the church, especially against its heresy proceedings. The same is true of Wyclif's strong anti-clericalism and his idea of dominion, which was an important part of that anti-clericalism. Tyndale probably applied Wyclif's concept of dominion against the prelates in his Practyse of Prelates, and it is interesting to note that at the same time Tyndale was laboring under the strong influence of Vadianus,

he was also looking back to the tradition of religious dissent in England. Finally, Tyndale interpreted his own persecution in light of the suffering of the Lollards. His view of history facilitated this approach, for he believed that as long as the prelates possessed the power which they did, the truth of God's word would suffer the pogroms of the hypocrites.

One of the most interesting and difficult problems which the student of Reformation History must consider is the relationship of Renaissance humanism to the thought of the reformers. In Tyndale's case, the problem takes on even greater significance because of the probable influence of Erasmian humanism on the development of his legalism. These two considerations, and Tyndale's debate with Thomas More, led to the inclusion of one chapter in this study dealing with Tyndale's thought and its relationship to the humanism of Thomas More, as expressed in his Utopia.

The differences which separated the political thought of Thomas More and William Tyndale were great. There was a great difference between the two men's methods of writing political theory. Tyndale himself noticed the two distinct methods which More had employed in his Utopia, and his adverse reaction to book two of that work permitted an interesting comparison between More's thought as expressed in book one with Tyndale's thought in general. While More's method in book one was very similar to the method employed by Tyndale when he considered the problems of a Christian society, his thought in that book still differed greatly from Tyndale's. Important here were both differing concepts of authority and differing views on the nature and function of law within a commonwealth. For the most part, humanists adopted monarchy as a form

of government only when they were forced to do so. And this is exactly what More did in his first book of the Utopia. He talked about monarchy only because he was discussing the problems of England as it actually was during the sixteenth century. However, even his actual concept of monarchy was completely different from Tyndale's conception of a king who received his authority directly from God, through his office, but not through the consent of those governed. In book two, More increased the distance which separated the two men on the important matter of government by making Utopia a representative democracy. Tyndale, of course, finally came to view government not as a bargain among men but as a covenant between man and God. In book two, it was not only More's humanism, but also his conciliarism which provided for the differing conceptions of the two men with regard to government.

The distance which separated Tyndale's and More's vision of government was as great with regard to their thoughts on the nature and functioning of law. This particular problem is complex, since Tyndale's thoughts on law in a general sense changed greatly during his career. Nevertheless, More made two assumptions about law which were foreign to Tyndale's thoughts. First, he assumed that law could lead men to virtue. This was an Aristotelian concept, and Tyndale rejected it. Secondly, More assumed that in a Christian society, only a few laws were necessary. Earlier in his career, Tyndale would have denied this simply because of the important assumptions which were connected with this point of view: one, that only a few laws were necessary since man was so virtuous; and secondly, that man could fulfill whatever laws there were in a spontaneous manner. Tyndale's early dependence upon Luther most certainly

would have prevented him from agreeing with both of these assumptions. However, Tyndale's legalism dramatically altered his conception of law and provided an interesting parallel with More's treatment of law in the Utopia. With his legalism came a belief in the importance of the individual Christian's striving to fulfill the dictates of God's law in a moral way, and also an overwhelming concern with the laws of God, probably at the expense of the laws of man. Now Tyndale never believed that man was so virtuous that only a few laws were necessary, and he always saw a contradiction between the laws of God and the laws of man. More affirmed the first point and implied the second in book two of his Utopia. Thus, there was always an important difference in the two men's views of law. Yet, laboring under different conceptions, Tyndale might have been perfectly willing to have a commonwealth which was based upon the bare minimum number of laws of human derivation.

This distance which separated the thought of Tyndale and More was also a product of More's radicalism and Tyndale's conservatism. Here the issue was More's communism and his belief that to have a truly just society, it was necessary to reform all of the institutions of that society. In one important instance reform meant doing away with an institution completely--private property. Tyndale could not accept this, and decided to work within the existing framework of European institutions to arrive at his vision of a Christian society. On this issue Tyndale stood much closer to the conservative approach of the commonwealth men and to that of Robert Crowley. Both men believed, in spite of More's approach in his Utopia, a work which they undoubtedly knew, that a society could be Christian and embody a sense of justice by making its

institutions conform with the role that God had intended them to have. Charity and the application of the laws of God and nature to the problems of society were preferable to More's communism.

The key to Tyndale's life and his career is to be found in his great abilities as a translator. It was in that realm of activity that he left his mark on English history and on the English language. And while it would be foolish to argue that his political thought had as great an influence on the development of English political thought as had his vernacular translation on the development of the Englishman's sense of scripture, his political thought appears to have been influential upon the development of early Puritan political thought. It is interesting to note that the man who gave English Puritanism its first theological expression may also have contributed to the formation of Puritan political thought. The resemblances between Robert Crowley's political thought and Tyndale's appear to be important. The similarity of their sense of authority, Crowley's treatment of the problems of the king and the church, his use of history against the authority of the papacy, and finally, his actual method of approach when he wrote for that group of men who were so concerned with the problems of a Christian society, all these factors call for the reevaluation of the traditional point of view which sees Tyndale's influence solely in the light of his greatest achievement, the vernacular translation of the Bible.

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