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The Development of Thomas Hobbes' Religious-Politico Thought

by

Greg D. Weber

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Examining Committee

Amy M. Schmitter, Philosophy

Bruce Hunter, Philosophy

Jennifer Welchman, Philosophy

Don Carmichael, Political Science

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wife, who has inspired me, supported me, encouraged me, and believed in me like no other.

Abstract

There are two trends in recent Hobbesian scholarship: one which identifies the development of Hobbes' political philosophy in order to derive a greater appreciation for his overall goals in his masterwork, *Leviathan*, and another which seeks to bring the religious Parts III and IV of *Leviathan* into the context of the main goals of the overall work. I bring these two trends together, arguing that Hobbes' religious thought grows from the position in *The Elements of Law* that good Christian obedience only involves obedience to the laws of nature to the idea first presented in *Leviathan* that Christian sovereigns are uniquely obliged to God to prepare citizens for entry into the kingdom of God to come according to the specific teachings of Christian doctrine.

Preface

In each edition of Hobbes' political philosophy, he discusses how lawful Christian conduct operates under a civil sovereign. Some of the most important changes that he makes to his strategy between *The Elements of Law* and *Leviathan* concern the relationship between the kingdom of God, the church, and the commonwealth. In *The Elements*, which I will explore in chapter two, Hobbes suggests that all one must do to be a Christian is to obey the laws of the kingdom of God, which, it turns out, are identical with the laws of nature. In a commonwealth, obedience to the laws of nature entails obedience to the commonwealth's civil laws. In order to clarify the nature of Christian obedience, Hobbes claims that every citizen is obliged to behave according to the sovereign's laws because, categorically speaking, the sovereign's authority is absolute for determining external behaviour. God, however, is concerned with individuals' beliefs and inner motivation for obeying laws. Christian obedience, then, requires the proper inner orientation of the heart that precedes external action. Church leaders are in place to facilitate that obedience through teaching, preaching and other priestly duties. Their authority, however, only extends insofar as what is required to ensure that members of the kingdom of God obey the laws of the kingdom of God from within. Accordingly, Christ did not give church leaders an authority that competes with the civil sovereign's authority even though civil kingdoms and the kingdom of God exist side by side. A major task of Hobbes'

argument in *The Elements* is to show that neither kingdom threatens the authority of the other.

In chapter three, Hobbes' discussion of the role of Christianity in the political philosophy of *De Cive* is examined with an eye to the changes and adjustments that he makes to the structure of his overall strategy. A major turning point is that in *De Cive,* and even more so in *Leviathan*, Hobbes ceases to understand the church and the kingdom of God to be of equal extent. Even though the church is still understood as consisting of those who have committed to taking Christ as king in the kingdom of God, Hobbes thinks that the kingdom of God ceased to exist when Christ came; the kingdom of God will only once again exist when Christ comes to restore and rule it. The church, then, is an intermediary institution between the old and new kingdoms of God consisting of those who have vowed to take Christ as king once he returns to establish his kingdom. As we will see, this change is ushered in *De Cive* by a refined understanding of the kingdom of God where the kingdom of God could either mean the natural kingdom of God, the prophetic kingdom of God by the old agreement (the Biblical kingdom of Israel), or the prophetic kingdom of God by the new agreement (which will be established when Christ returns). Hobbes' main task in the religious Part III of *De Cive* is to show that the prophetic kingdom of God does not compete categorically with the commonwealth because it does not exist and how Christian obedience to God can still occur peacefully in commonwealths. An important implication of these changes in *De Cive* is that all sovereigns (Christian and non-Christian) come to play a more significant role in the religious lives of citizens.

In my final chapter concerning *Leviathan*, Hobbes reinforces his new understanding of the various kingdoms of God and expands this understanding's utility to determine, to a much greater extent than he previously could, where Christian and non-Christian commonwealths fit into the structure of his religious arguments. To assist with this task, Hobbes introduces the infamous kingdom of darkness in contradistinction to the various kingdoms of God and the Christian church. This new category of the kingdom of darkness allows him to set Christian commonwealths apart from non-Christian commonwealths and derive their differences according to their relation and orientation to the kingdom of God: Christian commonwealths prepare Christians for entry into the kingdom of God to come by encouraging Christian obedience and canonizing Christ's teachings in the civil law. In contrast, non-Christian commonwealths have no allegiance to God, are enemies of the kingdom of God (and, by implication, they are also enemies of Christian commonwealths), and are intent on deceiving citizens in order to "disprepare them [citizens] for the kingdom of God to come" (*L* 411, iv.44.1). In contrast to non-Christian sovereigns of the kingdom of darkness, Hobbes provides a somewhat perfectionist account of sovereignty in *Leviathan* for Christian sovereigns in that they are obliged to God to prepare citizens for life in the kingdom of God to come.

Despite the differences in Hobbes' treatment of Christianity in the various versions of his political philosophy, all of his works are united by the aim to show that there is no problem for a Christian to obey the sovereign's commands. Nevertheless, changes in each edition provide an opportunity to reflect on how

Hobbes' overall strategy develops. The very fact that Hobbes adjusts his position calls for his readers to grapple with why he felt it was necessary to make adjustments and introduce new aspects of his religious-politico theory. A comparative study of Hobbes' texts highlights changes that provide insight into Hobbes' intentions. Quite often, especially in *The Elements of Law*, readers most familiar with *Leviathan* will find traces of Hobbes' later view inchoate in the text. When doing the exegesis required for a comparative study of Hobbes' works, we must resist the urge to use the more familiar later works to interpret obscure or unclear passages in his early writing. Only when we grasp the obscurity and deficiencies in each stage of his writing can we trace the development of his thought, and, as a result, receive valuable clues to important, but largely unnoticed, goals of his most important work, *Leviathan*.

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Chapter 1: Locating the Literature

There are two trends in Hobbesian scholarship that, for the most part, have developed in isolation from each other. The first trend focuses on the essential role that the religious Parts III and IV play in *Leviathan*. There have been influential interpreters who have neglected Parts III and IV and claimed that Hobbes' religious project is secondary and adds nothing substantive to his overall political theory.[1] In response, scholars working in the first trend, such as A. P. Martinich, Edmund Curley, S. A. Lloyd, and Eric Brandon, have argued that the second half of *Leviathan* plays an indispensible role in the work. However, as we will see, it would be a mistake to assume that there is broad agreement on how these parts make their contributions. Nevertheless, the first approach does agree on the fact that "some of the most revolutionary and important passages" of

[1] David Gauthier is typically regarded as a leader in this approach (see David Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan: The Moral and Political Theory of Thomas Hobbes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 178-206). Others considered to be in this tradition include Jean Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition* (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1986); Gregory Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); and M. M. Goldsmith, *Hobbes's Science of Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966). For a direct and thorough discussion of why this "standard" or "secularist" approach is unsatisfying, see S. A. Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes's Leviathan* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1992), 6-47, Eric Brandon, *The Coherence of Hobbes's* Leviathan*: Civil and Religious Authority Combined* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 6-8 and A. P. Martinich, *The Two Gods of* Leviathan*: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 14-15. It should be acknowledged, however, that the goals of the "secularists" generally are not in line with those who pay attention to all of *Leviathan*, including Parts III and IV. For instance, Kavka makes it clear that his purpose is to learn from Hobbes in order to contribute to contemporary political philosophy (Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory*, 3-4). Likewise, Hampton's concerns "go beyond mere analysis of the Hobbesian political position" and aim to "shed light on the general structure of all social contract arguments by analyzing and explaining Hobbes's contractarian argument" (Hampton, *Hobbes and the Social Contract Tradition*, 1) and Gauthier's interest is "not primarily in what [Hobbes] said, but in what we can accept and use of what he said" (Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan*, v). It is perhaps not surprising, then, that these influential accounts of *Leviathan* do not take into account the entire work.

Leviathan are found in Parts III and IV.[2] Accordingly, they claim that the second half is "necessary in order to achieve the overall goal of the work."[3]

The notion that Parts III and IV make an important contribution to Hobbes' political philosophy in *Leviathan* is not without textual support. For instance, in the heart of Part IV, Hobbes claims to "pretend to nothing but what is necessary to the doctrine of government and obedience" (*L* 460, iv.46.18).[4] As strange as this claim might sound in the midst of his religious discussion, it is a methodological claim that pushes Hobbes' readers to understand his religious project as an important part of his political philosophy. However, it is not immediately obvious how many of his points in the second half have the relevance for Hobbes' political theory that he claims they do. For instance, Hobbes devotes (occasionally significant) time to religious issues such as the Trinity (*L* 334-35, iii.42.3-4), miracles (*L* 293-300, iii.37.1-13), purgatory (*L* 420, iv.44.16), baptism (*L* 417, iv.44.12), prophecy (*L* 282-293, iii.36.7ff) and the kingdom of God (*L* 271-278, iii.35.1-19; 317-326, iii.40.1-14); all of which are not obviously connected with his political philosophy. The task for interpreters is to account for Hobbes' extended discussions on religious issues that seemingly do not have an immediate connection with his political aims; there is good reason to think that this task is both doable and fruitful for understanding Hobbes' broader political philosophy.

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[2] Edmund Curley, "Introduction to Hobbes' *Leviathan*," in *Leviathan*, ed. Edmund Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994), xl.
[3] Brandon, *The Coherence of Hobbes's* Leviathan, 2.
[4] Citations from the Hobbes corpus will be cited parenthetically, first by page number and then by part, chapter, and paragraph number. Hobbes' works will be abbreviated as follows: *EL—Elements of Law* (ed. G. C. Gaskin); *C—De Cive* (ed. Richard Tuck); *L—Leviathan* (ed. Edmund Curley).

Whereas those following the first trend have reacted against the tendency to neglect Parts III and IV of *Leviathan*, those in the second trend react against the tendency to overlook changes that Hobbes made to his political philosophy over the course of his career. For example, Quentin Skinner, as an influential member of the "Cambridge School," is best known for his emphasis on the need to understand Hobbes' historical context as preliminary to understanding the texts themselves.[5] This project has led Skinner to emphasize the evolution of Hobbes' thought. For instance, in his famous *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Skinner argues that Hobbes' humanist education initially lead Hobbes to embrace rhetoric as a requisite tool for presenting the findings of reason. According to Skinner, Hobbes' disposition toward the use of rhetoric changed dramatically throughout his career:

> *The Elements of Law* and *De Cive* had been founded on the conviction that any genuine science of politics must aim to transcend and repudiate the purely persuasive techniques associated with the art of rhetoric. By contrast, *Leviathan* reverts to the distinctively humanist assumption that, if the truths of reason are to be widely believed, the methods of science will need to be supplemented and empowered by the *vis* or moving force of eloquence.[6]

Elsewhere, in *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, Skinner takes pains to highlight the evolution of Hobbes' understanding of liberty. In *The Elements* (1640) and *De Cive* (1642), Hobbes claims that "once we establish sovereign authorities over ourselves, we are 'as absolutely subject to them, as is a child to the father, or a

[5] Skinner argues that "if we allow ourselves to approach the past with a less importunate sense of 'relevance', we may find our studies taking on a relevance of a different and more authentic kind. We may find, in particular, that the acquisition of an historical perspective helps us to stand back from some of our current assumptions and habits of thought, and perhaps even to reconsider them." Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 15.

[6] Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes,* 334.

slave to the master in the state of nature' [*EL* 116, ii.20.16]."[7] In contrast, in *Leviathan* (1651), "[t]o be free is simply to be unhindered from moving in accordance with one's natural powers, so that human agents lack freedom of action if and only if some external impediment makes it impossible for them to perform an action that would otherwise be within their powers."[8] Such differences between Hobbes' early and mature political thought illustrate the need to be wary of interpretations, like Jeffrey Collins', that aim to "understand Thomas Hobbes as a political theorist whose fundamental beliefs were relatively static."[9] In contrast, Skinner is part of a countermovement:

> most of the existing literature embodies one cardinal assumption that seems to me untenable. Hobbes produced four different versions of his political philosophy: *The Elements* in 1640, *De Cive* in 1642, the English *Leviathan* in 1651 and the revised Latin *Leviathan* in 1668. There is widespread agreement, however, that his basic beliefs, including his beliefs about liberty, remained 'relatively static' and 'largely unchanged' throughout these works, and that any differences between them 'can almost always be understood as an attempt by Hobbes to give greater clarity to his original ideas'. To speak of any marked change of direction between *The Elements* and *Leviathan*, we are assured, 'is fundamentally mistaken'.[10]

Accordingly, much of Skinner's work is concerned with demonstrating that many changes in Hobbes' philosophy reflect "a substantial change."[11] Although Skinner is a leader in this approach, he is neither alone nor the first to emphasize the

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[7] Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 55.
[8] Ibid., 211.
[9] Jeffrey Collins, *The Allegiance of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9.
[10] Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, xv. Here, Skinner cites the work of Jeffrey Collins (ibid); Johann Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Historical Context* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 3, 162; Richard Tuck, "Introduction to Thomas Hobbes" in *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xxxviii; Jon Parkin, *Taming the* Leviathan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 90; and Lodi Nauta, "Hobbes on Religion and the Church between *The Elements of Law* and *Leviathan*: A Dramatic Change of Direction?" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63 (4, 2002), 578.
[11] Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, xvi.

evolution of Hobbes' thought. Scholars such as F. S. McNeilly, Charles Hinnant, and Maria Lukac De Stier have all made contributions that both support and anticipate Skinner's contention and demonstrate the potential that his approach has for interpretation.[12]

For whatever reason, these two trends have largely developed in isolation from each other. A central aim of my project is to bring them together. Scholars like Martinich, Lloyd, Curley, and Brandon do not seem to be concerned with understanding the differences between Hobbes' early and mature thinking on religion. On the other hand, Skinner (among others) has done very little to examine the evolution of Hobbes' religious thought.[13] This is surprising since, arguably, Hobbes' views on religion offer the most obvious point of entry for discussing significant differences between *The Elements of Law* and *Leviathan*. In *The Elements*, Hobbes limits his discussion of religion to two chapters in Part II (25 and 26). His primary aim, roughly, is to show that "the difficulty . . . of obeying both God and man, in a Christian commonwealth is none" (*EL* 154, ii.25.14), which he argues by showing the demands of the laws of the kingdom of God to be unproblematic for Christians. Hobbes' attention to religion increases to

[12] F. S McNeilly, *The Anatomy of* Leviathan (London: Macmillan, 1968); Charles Hinnant, *Thomas Hobbes* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977); Maria Lukac De Stier, "Hobbes on Authority *De Cive* and *Leviathan*: A Comparison." *Hobbes Studies* 10 (1997): 51-67.

[13] On the other hand, Richard Tuck has offered a brief account of what is different between Hobbes' political works. For Tuck, *Leviathan* introduces an eschatology that liberates people from the fear of an afterlife that would have otherwise contributed to them disobeying the sovereign. Although I believe that Tuck is correct in pointing to Hobbes' eschatology in *Leviathan* as a significant new starting point, he undersells the role that the eschatology plays for Hobbes' political philosophy. Moreover, Nauta has done much to deflate many of Tuck's claims regarding the evolution of Hobbes' religious thinking (although there is reason to think that she is mistaken in her overall thesis). See Richard Tuck, "The Civil Religion of Thomas Hobbes," in *Political Discourses in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner, 120-138 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 132 and Nauta, "Hobbes on Religion and the Church between *The Elements of Law* and *Leviathan*," 577-598.

devote Part III to similar themes in *De Cive*, but he drastically overhauls and sharpens his understanding of the kingdom of God, which, in turn, impacts his discussion. In *Leviathan*, the trend unexpectedly balloons to encompass over half of his major work when he examines in detail, for the first time, the nature of Christian commonwealths and the ominous "kingdom of darkness." Hobbes is concerned in *Leviathan* with showing that sovereigns of Christian commonwealths (qua churches) are bound by baptism to do the work of Christ on earth that prepares people "for their entrance into his kingdom [to come]" (*L* 382, iii.42.100). The aim to show that Christian sovereigns receive a moral agenda for their governance from their baptism is distinctly unique to *Leviathan.* Accordingly, I will demonstrate how, over the course of his career, Hobbes comes to incorporate perfectionist elements into his mature political philosophy. That is, in *Leviathan*, Hobbes thinks that Christian sovereigns are specially obligated to God to use their political office to morally shape citizens according to aims of the Christian church.

Since the results of my comparative analysis have the greatest significance for how the second half of *Leviathan* is understood, I will situate my project in the literature of the first trend. As mentioned, there are at least four interpretations of *Leviathan* that make a serious attempt to account for Parts III and IV. These are A. P. Martinich's *The Two Gods of* Leviathan*: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics* (1992), S. A. Lloyd's *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes's* Leviathan*: The Power of Mind Over Matter* (1992), and more recently, Eric Brandon's *The Coherence of Hobbes's* Leviathan*: Civil and Religious Authority* (2007). In

addition, Edmund Curley has written on the importance of Parts III and IV in several works (although he does not attempt a comprehensive an interpretation of *Leviathan* in one work).[14] In this chapter, I will examine these theorist's arguments for the significance of Hobbes' religious project in *Leviathan*.

In *The Two Gods of* Leviathan, Martinich argues that Hobbes was a "sincere, and relatively orthodox Christian," more specifically, a Jacobian Calvinist.[15] According to Martinich, understanding Hobbes' religious sincerity provides the best perspective for interpreting *Leviathan.*[16] In this view, Hobbes' main intents are "(1) to show that the distinctively religious content of the Bible could be reconciled with the new science and (2) to prove that religion could not legitimately be used to destabilize a government."[17] By the "new science," Martinich is explicit that he has "the modern science of Copernicus, Galileo, and

[14] Curley's most relevant works include "'I Durst Not Write so Boldly' or, 'How to Read Hobbes Theological Political Treatise'," in *Hobbes e Spinoza, Scienza e Politica*, ed. Daniela Bostrenghi, 497-593 (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1992) and "Introduction to *Leviathan*," in *Leviathan*, ed. Edmund Curley, viii-xlvii (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1994). For some of Curley's other writing on the second half, see "Covenant with God in Hobbes's *Leviathan*," in Leviathan *after 350 Years*, eds. Tom Sorrell and Luc Foisneau, 199-216 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) and "Hobbes and the Causes of Religious Toleration," in *The Cambridge Companian to Hobbes's* Leviathan, ed. Patricia Springborg, 309-334 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[15] Martinich, *The Two Gods of* Leviathan, 1.

[16] This understanding of Hobbes' religious sincerity has placed Martinich in an extensive debate with Edmund Curley. The relevant texts in this debate are Curley, "'I Durst Not Write so Boldly' or, 'How to Read Hobbes Theological Political Treatise'," in *Hobbes e Spinoza, Scienza e Politica*, ed. Daniela Bostrenghi, 497-593 (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1992), "Calvin and Hobbes, or, Hobbes as an Orthodox Christian," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (2): 257-271, "A Reply to Professor Martinich," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (2): 285-287; and Martinich, "Appendix A: Curley on Hobbes," in *The Two Gods of Leviathan*, 339-353 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and "On the Proper Interpretation of Hobbes's Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (2): 273-283. For a summary of this debate and an example of work that has spun out of it, see George Wright, "Curley and Martinich in Dubious Battle," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40 (4): 461-476. For more recent defences of both sides of the debate, see Martinich, "Interpreting the Religion of Thomas Hobbes: An Exchange," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70 (1):143-163 and Douglas Jesseph, "Hobbes's Atheism," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 26: 140-166.

[17] Martinich, *The Two Gods of* Leviathan, 5.

Harvey" in mind.[18] For Martinich, the first goal is part of the reason why Hobbes takes significant space in *Leviathan* to discuss the theological doctrines of scripture (chapter 33), angels and inspiration (chapter 34), the kingdom of God and the sacraments (chapter 35), prophets (chapter 36), miracles (chapter 37), heaven, hell, and salvation (chapter 38), the church (chapter 38), the nature of Christ's office (chapter 40), etc.

Martinich offers an important and refreshing interpretation of Hobbes' philosophy in comparison to mainstream accounts that portray Hobbes as a proto-game theorist and psychological egoist. However, although the project of reconciling science with religion might explain why Hobbes needs so much space for religious issues in *Leviathan*, it does not explain why Hobbes devotes so much time to such a project in a *political* treatise. Even Martinich admits that, for some issues, "[t]here is no explanation for his attempt to understand these terms other than a deep intellectual commitment to theology."[19] For Martinich, then, the volume of Hobbes' religious writing is not driven solely by his political philosophy, but also by Hobbes' (somewhat arbitrary) interest in religion. However, it is difficult to reconcile the idea that Hobbes only addressed some religious issues out of a personal commitment to theology when we consider his statement that everything in *Leviathan* "is necessary to the doctrine of government and obedience" (*L* 460, iv.46.18). In addition, Martinich's interpretation makes the fact that there is significantly less attention to religious issues in his early political thought problematic. If, as Skinner argues, Hobbes is

[18] Ibid., 7.
[19] Ibid., 142.

more concerned with scientific method in his early work, readers should expect Hobbes to pay *greater* attention to the project of reconciling modern science with religion in *The Elements* and *De Cive* than he does in *Leviathan*. However, the exact opposite is true.

Like Martinich, Edmund Curley offers a reading of Hobbes that, in some important respects, rests on the question of Hobbes' religious sincerity. In this regard, Curley is often cast as Martinich's main opponent. Curley identifies himself as a Straussian in his interpretation of Hobbes because, like Leo Strauss, Curley believes that Hobbes was either a deist or an atheist, but was "forced by the repression of his times to conceal his atheism in a cloak of insincere professions of (relative) religious orthodoxy."[20] For Curley, the question of Hobbes' religious sincerity is fundamental because if Hobbes is a sincere Christian, then "he cannot be the founder of modern moral philosophy because he is not modern enough."[21] In spite of his doubts concerning Hobbes' religious sincerity, Curley maintains that the second half of *Leviathan* contains "some of the most revolutionary and important passages in the work."[22] For Curley, an interpretation that appropriately reflects this fact will centre on Acts 5:29: "we must obey God rather than man."[23] Since the majority of people in Hobbes' day would take such Biblical precepts seriously, they pose a serious threat to the stability of the commonwealth even if Hobbes would not personally take them seriously.

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[20] Curley, "I Durst Not Write So Boldly," 1; [document download available online]: http://sitemaker.umich.edu/emcurley/hobbes.
[21] Ibid., 4.
[22] Curley, "Introduction to Hobbes' *Leviathan*," xl.
[23] Ibid., xli.

Curley's interpretation places a large emphasis on irony and scepticism because, he believes, the academic climate of seventeenth century England prohibited Hobbes from being explicit about his intents. Accordingly, Hobbes' strategy is to first grant the concession that we should obey God rather than man (which makes him appear orthodox), but then to build the case for religious scepticism. Hobbes makes heavy use of irony to show that religious sources of civil disobedience are unfounded while, at the same time, appearing like a sincere Christian.[24, 25] Parts III and IV are dedicated to showing that even if Hobbes grants Acts 5:29, ironically, there are no grounds by which we could determine if God is instructing something contrary to the civil law; people who obey the sovereign rather than the perceived commands of God do not have to fear torment in hell.[26, 27] On the contrary, strict adherence to civil laws is an essential component of salvation (*L* 398-99, iii.43.3-5). If Hobbes can systematically induce scepticism regarding the legitimacy of religious authority, revelation, miracles, prophecy, etc., then all religious grounds for civil dissent are undermined because Acts 5:29 would become moot.

In comparison to Martinich, Curley provides one of the strongest interpretations that questions Hobbes' religious sincerity. Unlike Martinich, Curley cannot be accused of being "oblivious to Hobbes's use of irony to lend his

[24] "I Durst Not Write So Boldly" is Curley's main text for assessing how Hobbes managed to maintain the balance of undermining theistic justifications for disobedience while appearing orthodox.
[25] According to Curley, Martinich has fallen prey to Hobbes' rhetoric and completely misses the point of Hobbes' project since it is fundamentally sceptical toward religion.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Curley, "Introduction to Hobbes' *Leviathan*," xliii-xliv. Richard Tuck also focuses on the role that Hobbes' eschatology plays in persuading people that they have nothing to fear by complete submission to the civil sovereign. See Richard Tuck, "The Civil Religion of Thomas Hobbes," 132.

apparent [religious] concessions a mocking undertone."[28] On the contrary, Curley's conviction regarding Hobbes' atheism encourages Curley to "probe beneath the surface"[29] to uncover trends that indicate the true nature of Hobbes' project, namely, to undermine Christianity.[30] On the other hand, a main deficiency in Curley's interpretation is that it remains profoundly mysterious why Hobbes pays disproportionate attention to religion in *Leviathan* in comparison to his early work. It would be strange for Hobbes to suddenly devote half of his major work to religious issues if his main goals have not changed or developed in any significant way. There is good reason to think that there is something more going on in the text of *Leviathan* that would be made clearer upon a comparative analysis of Hobbes' political texts.

Of the four readings of *Leviathan* to be examined, perhaps the most novel belongs to S. A. Lloyd. Lloyd's main thesis is that Hobbes' absolutist commonwealth can only have stability if "transcendent interests" are aligned with the interests of the commonwealth. Transcendent interests are principles for which people are willing to sacrifice themselves (martyrdom is a supreme example of people dying for transcendent interests). Transcendent interests override the drive for self-preservation that is typically seen as central to Hobbes'

[28] Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in Hobbes' Philosophy*, 405. Footnote 111.
[29] Curley, "The Covenant with God," 216.
[30] Curley, "I Durst Not Write So Boldly," 67. The idea that Hobbes wanted to undermine Christian belief is pervasive in the literature. This is a main thesis of Paul Cooke's *Hobbes and Christianity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996). Others who have argued to this effect include Tracy Strong in "How to Write Scripture: Words, Authority, and Politics in Thomas Hobbes," *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Fall 1993): 128-159; John Seaman, "Hobbes and the Liberalization of Christianity," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 32 (June 1999): 227-246; Bernard Baumrin, "Hobbes' Christian Commonwealth," *Hobbes Studies* 13 (2000): 3-11); Jesseph Douglas, "Hobbes' Atheism," 140-166; and Richard Tuck, "The Civil Religion of Thomas Hobbes," 120-138.

philosophy. According to Lloyd, "[t]he sorts of transcendent interests that particularly worried Hobbes were religious interests. This is why he devotes more than half of *Leviathan* to a discussion of religion, which is crucial to his task of providing a permanent remedy to the internal social disorder caused by transcendent religious interests."[31] Furthermore, this concern informs the entirety of Hobbes project in *Leviathan*:

> Hobbes's strategy was *not* to derive the necessity of an absolutist form of government from the individual's overriding desire for self-preservation. I shall argue instead that Hobbes was attempting to provide virtually all of his readers with a *sufficient reason*, given *all* of the interests they actually took themselves to have, for affirming and acting on a *principle of obligation* that, if generally and widely adhered to, could ensure the perpetual maintenance of effective social order.[32]

Lloyd's thesis is a significant departure from more familiar interpretations of Hobbes.[33] In addition, Lloyd's thesis pushes her to embrace the notion that Parts II and III together form the united heart of *Leviathan* (it would be inappropriate to think of *Leviathan* as divided into two halves)[34] with Parts I and IV in the periphery.[35] For Lloyd, Part II provides a principle of obligation and Part III provides sufficient reasons for adhering to that principle.[36] With Lloyd's new direction, there is increased emphasis on the role of education:

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[31] Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes's* Leviathan, 2.
[32] Ibid., 50.
[33] Usually Hobbes' project is taken to be about the generation and justification of the commonwealth through covenant against the backdrop of the state of nature. Lloyd denies that this theme is in *Leviathan* in any way. For Lloyd, Hobbes' argument begins with the assumption of the existence of the commonwealth rather than accounting for its generation. Ibid., 237, 261 and 297.
[34] Ibid., 239.
[35] Ibid., 56, 234-241.
[36] Ibid., 98. According to Lloyd, Hobbes' principle is as follows: "One is to obey the extant effective political authority of the commonwealth of which one is a member in all of its commands except those that would require one to violate one's duty to God." Ibid., 69. She then argues that the exemption clause is null upon the successful project of rationally redescribing Christianity in Part III. Ibid., 269.

> What is called for is a process of reeducation, preferably one that begins from the true beliefs a man holds, and uses these to show the falsity of his disruptive beliefs. . . . And if we can get him to hold true beliefs as passionately as he held his false and disruptive beliefs, we will have passion working for, rather than against, the maintenance of peace.[37]

Parts III and IV are fundamentally educational in nature. The nature and content of the education will depend on what beliefs are held among the group that is in need of reeducation. In Hobbes' day, this group is constituted by Christians, which explains why Parts III and IV pertain to Christianity.

For Lloyd, the fact that Christianity is the subject of Parts III and IV is entirely contingent. If Hobbes' audience had been Muslim, then Hobbes would have undertaken the exact same project using the beliefs and scriptures of Islam.[38] There is reason to believe, however, that Hobbes thinks that the laws of nature can only be taken as morally obligatory if the Christian God is acknowledged. Moreover, there is evidence that suggests that Christian sovereigns have a special duty to teach the Christian religion. If these two tenets are correct, Christianity cannot be easily divorced from Hobbes' argumentative strategy. The necessary role of Christianity in Hobbes' thought, however, only comes into plain view in *Leviathan* where he is first able to sharply distinguish between Christian and non-Christian commonwealths (which are a part of the kingdom of darkness). I will examine the necessity of Christianity for Hobbes' project in my fourth chapter. In general, Lloyd has much to say about education's role in creating a stable and long-lasting commonwealth, but she fails to recognize that Christianity necessarily forms the basis for education in Hobbes' political philosophy.

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[37] Ibid., 43.

[38] She claims that Hobbes gives us a methodology that is both timeless and sensitive to particular contexts. Ibid., 314.

Brandon offers one of the most recent accounts of *Leviathan* that takes Hobbes' religious project seriously. His main thesis is as follows:

> the two halves of *Leviathan* have the same overall purpose, namely the presentation of arguments for absolutism and criteria for identifying the absolute sovereign. . . . I contend that Parts 1 and 2 do not completely satisfy these conditions and that Parts 3 and 4 complete the satisfaction of these conditions. Thus, I claim that the second half of *Leviathan* is necessary in order to achieve the overall goal of the work.[39]

Brandon believes that Hobbes devotes half of his main work to religious considerations because they are necessary for showing that all power and authority reside in the sovereign (absolutism) and that the immediate government is the legitimate sovereign rather than the leader of a revolt or the pope (identifying the sovereign). Identifying the sovereign is problematic if "sovereignty is claimed by both civil and ecclesiastical authorities."[40] Brandon demonstrates that religious authorities were making such claims to sovereignty in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe.[41] These claims rested on a spiritual/physical distinction and the belief that the corporeal is subordinate to the spiritual. For Brandon, Hobbes' project in Parts III and IV is characterized by the deployment of materialism to debunk ecclesiastical claims to sovereignty.[42] Moreover, Hobbes' materialism unites the main goals of absolutism and identification of the sovereign of both halves into a "deep and complex coherence."[43]

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[39] Brandon, *The Coherence of Hobbes's* Leviathan, 2.
[40] Ibid., 58.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 118.

Brandon is insightful in his treatment of many issues including the kingdom of God and the sovereign's role as pastor; two very important issues that have not received enough attention in the literature. Also, his emphasis on the role of materialism proves to be a good reminder to keep Hobbes' metaphysics in mind.[44] Yet, a main difficulty with Brandon's interpretation is his tendency to divorce the Christian nature of Hobbes' thought from the essence of his argumentative strategy. Like Lloyd, Brandon thinks that the religious nature of the second half is contingent upon Hobbes' historically Christian setting, but is necessary given the reality of that setting and his political goals.[45] Perhaps Brandon's most novel claim is his insistence that a main goal of *Leviathan* is to put forward criteria that will determine the identity of the sovereign—a task only completed in the second half. However, when the Christian content of *Leviathan* is viewed as contingent, Parts III and IV read more like a mere case study of how to apply the first half in a particular historical context rather than forming part of the core of Hobbes' overall argument. Brandon must show how the Christian content of the second half can be contingent while, at the same time, maintaining that the first half is philosophically incomplete without Parts III and IV.

[44] Brandon focuses on materialism because he feels that previous interpreters, especially Martinich and Lloyd, do not take Hobbes' metaphysics seriously enough. In Lloyd's case, Brandon takes issue with her statement that transcendent interests are cases of "exerting mind over matter" (Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes's* Leviathan, 1). Since this strikes at the heart of Lloyd's project, Brandon maintains that Lloyd's failure to respect Hobbes' materialism more or less undercuts her project. However, this criticism seems too hasty. Surely Hobbes has a conception of the 'mind' as a specific locale of matter in motion. Lloyd could easily respond that this is what she means by "mind" in "mind over matter." With this clarification, it is not obvious why Hobbes' materialism would cause a problem for Lloyd's interpretation. Rather, Lloyd's understanding likely assumes Hobbes' materialism as most do (since there is broad agreement on this issue in Hobbes).

[45] Ibid., 81.

Although Martinich, Curley, Lloyd and Brandon have made significant and important contributions to Hobbesian scholarship, their approaches are in need of supplementation. In this thesis, I will supplement their best findings with a comparative analysis in the spirit of some of Skinner's work.[46] By comparing each edition of Hobbes' philosophy, we will see, to a much greater extent, how the best of what these scholars offer[47] came to be an integral part of Hobbes' thought in *Leviathan*. In addition, however, a comparative study will reveal what is lacking in their accounts. That is, in *Leviathan*, Hobbes comes to sharply distinguish between Christian and non-Christian commonwealths and argues that Christian sovereigns have a moral agenda given to them by God. For this reason, at least, it is implausible to divorce the Christian nature of Parts III and IV from the essence of Hobbes' argumentative strategy. To conclude this chapter, I will provide a brief sketch of my thesis.

Building from the work of scholars like Lloyd, Mark Button has recently argued that "the most complete rendering of [Hobbes'] moral and political theory is one that accords a central place to the idea that contract makes citizens, never simply the other way around."[48] That is, Button thinks that, for Hobbes, commonwealths can only be sustained if citizens are given a moral education that brings them to obey the sovereign's laws for the right reasons.[49] A main tenet of

[46] Primarily, I am thinking of the methodology employed in Skinner's *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*.
[47] Such as Martinich's argument that the Hobbesian laws of nature should be taken as the divine laws of God and form the basis of an account of moral obligation, Lloyd's insight into the role of education, Curley's emphasis on the importance of Acts 5:29, and much of Brandon's insights about the sovereign qua pastor and the kingdom of God.
[48] Mark E. Button, *Contract, Culture, and Citizenship: Transformative Liberalism from Hobbes to Rawls* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 86.
[49] Ibid., 71.

his argument is that Hobbes establishes a dichotomy between the internal court and the external court. According to Button, since "the actions of men proceed from their opinions" (*L* 113, ii.18.9), Hobbes is deeply concerned, throughout his career, to shape "hearts and minds, seeking always to unite the internal and external court, conscience and commonwealth."[50] Uniting these two courts only occurs by instituting public reason in citizens. Accordingly, "Hobbesian public reason is best viewed as a transformative project that seeks to embed free and equal individuals in a social and political framework with significant ethical content."[51] More than any other position examined in this chapter, Button's interpretation of Hobbes is the closest to capturing the spirit of Hobbes' overall project when Parts III and IV are considered.

However, like Lloyd and Brandon before him, Button overlooks the specific Christian content of Hobbes' political philosophy. Instead, Button chooses to focus on the ethical content of the laws of nature as promulgated by public reason. My thesis will seek to remedy Button's oversight. Accordingly, I will trace Hobbes' religious thought in order to show that Hobbes comes to envision the governing and teaching of the sovereign as promoting uniquely Christian content—content that includes and transcends what can be found in the laws of nature.

In *The Elements*, Hobbes identifies good Christian obedience as mere obedience to the laws of nature as the laws of the kingdom of God. Since Christians are members of the kingdom of God, they are obliged to obey the laws

[50] Ibid., 55.
[51] Ibid., 48.

of Christ (the king of the kingdom of God), which, it turns out, are identical to the laws of nature. Since the laws of nature command absolute obedience to sovereigns, Hobbes believes that Christianity never provides grounds for civil disobedience. However, what distinguishes Christian from non-Christian subjects is that Christians are obliged, as members of the kingdom of God, to strive to obey the laws of nature *internally*—the arena free from the scrutiny of the sovereign.

In *De Cive*, Hobbes repudiates his position that Christians are immediate subjects of Christ as members of the kingdom of God by refining his understanding of the kingdom of God. That is, Hobbes comes to understand the kingdom of God such that it could be the natural kingdom of God, the prophetic kingdom of God by the old agreement, or the prophetic kingdom of God by the new agreement (which is only established when Christ returns in the second coming). As we will see, the development of Hobbes' understanding of the kingdom of God allows him to include Christ's specific teachings as part of the canon of Christian doctrine that Christians are to strive to obey internally.

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes introduces the kingdom of darkness in Part IV, which allows him to sharply distinguish between the nature of Christian and non-Christian commonwealths. Accordingly, the main goal of Part III is to show "the nature and rights of a CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH" (*L* 245, iii.32.1). For the first time in *Leviathan*, Hobbes examines, in detail, the nature of Christian sovereignty in contradistinction from non-Christian sovereigns. I will show that, for Hobbes, a distinguishing feature of Christian sovereignty is that Christian

sovereigns incur a unique obligation to God in their baptism that drives them to use their civil office for the aims of the Christian church: to prepare people "for their entrance into his kingdom [to come]" (*L* 382, iii.42.100).[52] Since the preparatory work of the church, which is the work of the Christian sovereign, seeks to morally shape people in order to make them fitted for life under Christ's rule, Hobbes' political philosophy in *Leviathan* can appropriately be thought to have perfectionist elements that stem from the essential role that Christian teaching plays in Hobbes' overall strategy.

[52] To my knowledge, Patricia Springboard is the only one who has noticed this unique feature of Christian sovereignty. Remembering that, for Hobbes in *Leviathan*, the Christian commonwealth is identical with the church (*L* 316, iii.39.5), she claims that Hobbes "saw the Second Coming as an event in a continuum to which the preparatory work of the Church belonged as an earnest of the Kingdom of God, a 'Kingdom of Grace' constituted by the Godly who have already been naturalized into the heavenly kingdom by Baptism." Springboard correctly identifies that the purpose of the church (the Christian commonwealth whose head is the Christian sovereign) is to prepare Christians for life in the kingdom of God to come. However, since Springboard is primarily concerned with Bellarmine's interaction with Hobbes, she is unable to pursue the significance of this connection for Hobbes' political theory. Accordingly, a main task for my project will be to show what Springboard could not: that the Christian content of Part III is essential for a complete account of Hobbes' theory of sovereign activity. See Patricia Springboard, "Thomas Hobbes and Cardinal Bellarmine: *Leviathan* and the 'Ghost of the Roman Empire'," *History of Political Thought* 16 (4): 517.

Chapter 2: *The Elements of Law and Christian Obedience*

In 1640, Hobbes provided the first expression of his political philosophy in *The Elements of Law*. In this work, Hobbes addressed a threat to his political theory that appeared to arise from religious authority. To diffuse such threats, Hobbes argues that all that is required for good Christian service is to have faith in Christ and to obey him. For Hobbes, neither of these two requirements threatens the commonwealth because the nature of Christian obedience required of members of the kingdom of God does not absolve them of their obligation to external obedience to their civil sovereigns. Although many themes first presented in *The Elements* persist into *Leviathan*, the way that he argues his religious claims changes, especially in reference to his conception of the kingdom of God. The aim of this chapter, then, is to provide an exegesis of the first expression of Hobbes' religious thought so that we can compare it to his subsequent presentations in *De Cive* and *Leviathan* in chapters three and four.

As a part of his political project in *The Elements*, Hobbes devotes two of his chapters to diffusing the threat posed by religion:

> there occurreth now a difficulty, which, if it be not removed, maketh it unlawful for any man to procure his own peace and preservation, because it maketh it unlawful for a man to put himself under the command of such absolute sovereignty as is required thereto. And the difficulty is this: we have amongst us the Word of God for the rule of our actions; now if we shall subject ourselves to men also, obliging ourselves to do such actions as shall be by them commanded; when the commands of God and man shall differ, we are to obey God, rather than man: and consequently the covenant of general obedience is unlawful (*EL* 141, ii.25.1.).[53]

[53] Hobbes' stated intention in this passage corresponds to Curley's claim about Acts 5:29.

Hobbes' political system is compromised if individuals can find anything that absolves them from wholly submitting to the sovereign. Accordingly, religion poses a fundamental threat if it presents God as an alternative authority to the sovereign. To diffuse the potential threat, Hobbes examines what is necessary for salvation to show that faith and obedience, the two requirements of salvation, do not threaten the sovereign's authority. If Hobbes is correct, then Christianity cannot provide legitimate grounds for civil dissent.

According to Hobbes, religion may seem to encourage individuals to act according to authorities other than the sovereign. In Christianity's case, these authorities are private conscience and ecclesiastical leaders. Both of these pretend to derive their authority from God via scripture rather than the sovereign:

> This difficulty therefore remaineth amongst, and troubleth those Christians only, to whom it is allowed to take for the sense of the Scripture that which they make thereof, either by their own private interpretation, continually demanding liberty of conscience; and those that follow the interpretation of others not ordained thereunto by the sovereign of the commonwealth, requiring a power in matters of religion either above the power civil, or at least not depending on it (*EL* 142, ii.25.2).

Hobbes' proposed solution is to show "that no human law is intended to oblige the conscience of a man, but the actions only" (*EL* 142, ii.25.3). The claim that human law is only intended to oblige external behaviour must be compared with Christian obedience. Hobbes must determine if Christian obedience requires action beyond people's inner consciences, and, if it does, he must determine if the actions that result from Christian obedience threaten the sovereign's absolute authority.

In order to clarify the nature of Christian obedience and how it plays out in the commonwealth, Hobbes depends on a dichotomy first mentioned in chapter 17:

> [The laws of nature] requireth no more but the desire and constant intention to endeavour and be ready to observe them, unless there be cause to the contrary in other men's refusal to observe them towards us. The force therefore of the law of nature is not *in foro externo*, till there be security for men to obey it; but it is always *in foro interno* wherein the action of obedience being unsafe, the will and readiness to perform is taken for the performance (*EL* 97, i.17.10).

In its context, the *in foro externo*/*in foro interno* (in the inner/outer court) distinction is meant to allow for reasonable action in the state of nature where strict adherence to the laws of nature would endanger self-preservation.[54] If the consequence of obeying the laws of nature is death, the spirit of these laws would be undermined by strict adherence because the laws of nature are designed to preserve life when followed. To avoid this result, Hobbes appeals to two arenas that could potentially be subject to laws: the arena of conscience and the arena of external actions. When the inner/outer distinction is applied to his religious discussion, he aims to show that the religious orientations of individuals' consciences are categorically outside of the sovereign's reach. On the other hand, the arena of human behaviour belongs solely to the sovereign. For Hobbes, then,

[54] Even though Hobbes retains the *in foro interno/in foro externo* distinction throughout his works (see *L* 99, i.15.36), in *Leviathan*, Hobbes qualifies some laws of nature to make them apply more generally. Hobbes' qualifying has the effect of reducing the potential for instances where, as in the state of nature, following a law of nature might lead to self-destruction. For example compare Hobbes' formulation of the second law of nature: "*that every man divest himself of the right he hath to all things by nature*" (*EL* 82, i.15.2); "*that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth as for peace and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things, and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself*" (*L* 80, i.14.5). The formulation in *The Elements* would not bind *in foro externo* in the state of nature whereas, in *Leviathan*, the law would always bind *in foro externo* because it has allowances for situations like the state of nature.

all external activity in the commonwealth is ultimately grounded in the authority of the sovereign. As long as rogue determinations of conscience do not translate into external action, people are always free to believe whatever they will in the inner court.

In light of Brandon's reminder to respect Hobbes' metaphysics, it is prudent to examine the basis for a firm distinction between the inner and outer courts. Since, for Hobbes, everything can be reduced to matter in motion, there is no *metaphysical* basis, but, rather, there is an *epistemological* basis. For Hobbes, everything is matter in motion; concepts, ideas, and passions result from matter moving in different locales within a body (*EL* 43, i.7.1). We experience concepts and ideas when matter moves in the brain and we experience the passions when matter moves in the heart. Metaphysically, there is nothing different between the experience of ideas, passions and ordinary causal sequences (like when one billiard ball strikes another): everything is matter in motion. What is different, however, is that we can observe the matter in motion in the case of the billiard ball, but we cannot observe the matter in motion that produces ideas and passions. Therefore, even though there is no metaphysical basis, there is an epistemological basis for the inner/outer distinction because the moving matter in ideas and passions in individuals is not subject to observation by other people in the way that moving matter in overt behaviour is.[55] The fact that inner states cannot be known creates freedom in respect to the inner arena. Sovereigns could not

[55] Hobbes confirms this interpretation: "For seeing no man (but God alone) knoweth the heart or conscience of a man, unless it break out into action, . . . the law made thereupon would be of none effect, because no man is able to discern, but by word or other action whether such law be kept or broken" (*EL* 142, ii.25.3).

possibly enforce laws that demand obedience at the level of conscience because it would be impossible to determine whether or not subjects are obedient at the level of conscience.

Even though he has established a notion of religious freedom with the dichotomy between inner conscience and external action, Hobbes still needs to show how the religious freedom created by the inner/outer distinction helps to vindicate Christian obedience in a commonwealth. Accordingly, Hobbes appeals to the precepts of Christianity and shows that they do not contribute to rogue consciences in those that obey them. These precepts are the laws of the kingdom of God which, Hobbes claims, are identical with the laws of nature (which, obviously, do not pose a threat to commonwealths). Since the laws which Christians are to obey do not threaten commonwealths, they do not present a conflict between private conscience and submissive law abiding activity. Thus, Hobbes devotes the majority of chapters twenty-five and twenty-six of *The Elements* to substantiating his claim that the requirements of salvation, faith and obedience (and, consequently, the God-given role of the church), always support the sovereign's authority. In order to clarify Hobbes' strategy, we will first examine his teaching regarding Christian salvation.

The basic problem posed by religion ("when the commands of God and man shall differ, we are to obey God, rather than man" (*EL* 142, ii.25.2)) acquires its thrust from a fear of consequences. That is, Christians are motivated to obey God rather than the sovereign when their commands conflict because the threat of eternal death is worse than anything the sovereign can impose: "why should a

man incur the danger of a temporal death, by displeasing of his superior, if it were not for fear of eternal death hereafter?" (*EL* 144, ii.25.5). It is urgent, then, to clearly identify the boundaries that determine what is required to avoid eternal death, that is, which elements are necessary for salvation. If it be the case that these elements undermine the sovereign's authority, then there would be legitimate grounds to disobey the civil sovereign.

For Hobbes, there are two necessary requirements for salvation: faith that Jesus is the Messiah and obedience to him as king of the kingdom of God. Regarding faith, Hobbes claims that the profession of faith amounts to the belief and acknowledgement that Jesus is king of the kingdom of God in virtue of being the Messiah: "without controversy, there is not any more necessary point to be believed for man's salvation than this, that Jesus is the Messiah, that is, the Christ" (*EL* 144, ii.25.6). Moreover, this profession of faith constitutes "the only essential . . . calling of a Christian" (*EL* 145, ii.25.7). All other dogmas are superfluous for salvation and adherence to them neither enhances nor endangers the chances of escaping eternal death. Therefore, faith that Jesus is the Christ is the only Christian dogma that could potentially justify disobedience to the sovereign. Since faith is a matter of conscience and inner resolve, it could only interfere with civil laws when it translates into contentious external action.

In addition to the article of faith, Hobbes argues that obedience is the second necessary element for salvation:

> For, as it is not enough in temporal kingdoms (to avoid the punishment which kings may inflict) to acknowledge the right and title of the king, without obedience also to his laws; so also it is not enough to acknowledge our Saviour Christ to be the king of heaven, in which

> consisteth Christian faith, unless also we endeavour to obey his laws, which are the laws of the kingdom of heaven, in which consisteth Christian obedience (*EL* 151, ii.25.10).

Faith that Jesus is the Messiah is an acknowledgement that Jesus is king of the kingdom of Heaven. If it is true that Jesus is a king, Christ's subjects (those who have faith in him) are obligated to obey his commands, that is, his laws. For Hobbes, Christ's laws are none other than the laws of nature:

> And forasmuch as the laws of the kingdom of heaven, are the laws of nature, as hath been shewed in Part I. chap. XVIII, not only faith, but also the observation of the law of nature, which is that for which a man is called just or righteous (in that sense in which justice is taken not for the absence of all guilt, but for the endeavour, and constant will to do that which is just), not only faith, but this justice, which also from the effect thereof, is called repentance, and sometimes works, is necessary to salvation (*EL* 151, ii.25.10).

When Hobbes identifies the laws of nature as Christ's laws, he is concerned to highlight what Christian obedience entails. According to my earlier discussion, the laws of nature always oblige in the inner arena (and in the outer arena only when it is fitting) because there can be situations in the state of nature such that following the laws of nature would lead to death. The idea that the laws of nature have special relevance to the inner arena is significant in the context of salvation: when God looks for obedience in his subjects, he looks at inner conscience where he sees the effort and will to obey the laws of nature qua divine laws. In the state of nature, inner obedience does not always translate into external action in the way that it does in commonwealths where the laws of nature are part of the civil law. Moreover, Hobbes indicates in this passage that justice as a virtue consists of this internal obedience to the laws of the kingdom of Heaven. The person who

satisfies the obedience component of salvation is the just person; justice as a virtue and Christian obedience are perfectly commensurate.

Christian obedience is ultimately rooted in the internal sphere. For this reason, Hobbes identified this obedience with repentance in the above passage. For Hobbes, "REPENTANCE is the passion that proceedeth from opinion or knowledge that the action they have done is out of the way to the end they would attain. The effect whereof is to pursue that way no longer; but, by consideration of the end, to direct themselves into a better" (*EL* 52, i.9.7). According to Hobbes, repentance is a passion. As mentioned earlier, passions are experienced when there is motion in the heart. Therefore, Christian obedience contrasts with mere external obedience in that Christian obedience will always be rooted in the proper motion of matter in hearts. Furthermore, repentance is defined by the resolve of the repenter. Since circumstances do not always allow for overt action that stems from a repentant heart, repentance is marked by the interior opinion that a wrong has been committed and the desire and effort to act otherwise in the future. When Hobbes claimed that the laws of nature always oblige *in foro interno*, he noted that this obligation does not always entail external action and that, therefore, the laws of nature "requireth no more but the desire and constant intention to endeavour and be ready to observe them" (*EL* 97, i.17.10). When considering how Christian obedience is obedience to Christ's laws in the kingdom of Heaven, Hobbes' association of Christian obedience with the internal passion of repentance follows naturally. Christian obedience cannot, therefore, be appraised by external action, but only by the inner repentance that only God can view.

The idea that Christian obedience to the laws of nature (and, thus, the laws of the kingdom of Heaven) is to be understood as internal repentance makes sense of Hobbes' claim that "the laws of nature concern the conscience" (*EL* 97, i.17.13). When discussing divine laws, Hobbes further argues that

> these laws concern only the tribunal of our conscience; and that the actions contrary to them, shall be no farther punished by God Almighty, than as they proceed from negligence and contempt. . . . which proceeded from this, that Christ required no more than our best endeavour. . . . And in innumerable places both in the Old and New Testament, God Almighty declareth, that he taketh the will for the deed, both in good and evil actions. By all which it plainly appears, that the divine law is dictated to the conscience (*EL* 102-3, i.18.10).

In this passage, Hobbes ties the inner arena to religion and God's judgment. God is primarily looking for repentance when considering obedience to the laws of nature: the internal resolve to give our best effort. When this best effort does not translate into external actions, God can still view the inner arena and judge accordingly. Conversely, proper external action does not always indicate that citizens are acting according to the right disposition of the inner court. In the commonwealth, sovereigns inevitably make the laws of nature a part of the civil law so that they always oblige external actions.[56] In this context, people could externally obey the laws of nature for a variety of reasons that are not grounded in the true Christian disposition. Hobbes discusses this possibility in the context of Hebrews 6:

> And St. Paul, Heb. 6, 1, calleth works without faith, dead works, where he saith, *Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works*. And by these dead works, is understood not the obedience and justice of the inward man, but the *opus operatum*, or external action, proceeding

[56] This is why, in *The Elements*, there is *never* a conflict between conscience and external action for Christians, regardless of whether the commonwealth is Christian or not. More attention to this issue is provided below.

> from fear of punishment, or from vain glory, and desire to be honoured of men; and these may be separated from faith, and conduce no way to a man's justification" (*EL* 151, ii.25.10).[57]

For Hobbes, it is possible to follow the laws of nature externally and not be a just person. This occurs when there is external obedience without the internal repentance that God requires. The fact that God is expecting "justice of the inward man" from those who receive salvation indicates that there is religious freedom in the inner court in reference to life in the commonwealth, but in reference to God, each individual will be judged according to their inner states.

I have alluded to the fact that Christian obedience (inner repentance) is obedience to Christ's laws that he has issued for his subjects in the kingdom of God. Now we must examine what the kingdom of God is in *The Elements*. In *De Cive* (and even more so in *Leviathan*), Hobbes spends a significant amount of space devoted to the kingdom of God. In these later works, he is adamant that Christians are *not* members of the kingdom of God but only covenant to obey Christ as king once they enter his kingdom. Unlike his later writings, in *The Elements*, Hobbes neither spends much time on the issue nor puts forward a position that is consistent with his subsequent stance. Due to Christ's kingship in the kingdom of Heaven, Hobbes thinks it is necessary for Christians to obey the laws of the kingdom of Heaven (this is the obedience required for salvation)

[57] Interestingly enough, Hobbes, who is famous for doubting the traditional authorship of some Biblical books (such as Moses and the Pentateuch) attributes the authorship of Hebrews to Paul. Not only does contemporary scholarship hold that Pauline authorship of Hebrews is highly unlikely, there were those preceding Hobbes, such as Martin Luther (who opted for Apollos), who denied Paul as the author. In light of Hobbes' tendency toward unorthodoxy in issues surrounding Biblical authorship, it is peculiar that Hobbes does not follow his pattern with Hebrews when prestigious theologians like Luther were already setting the precedent (Hobbes likely would not have been scorned as a rogue trailblazer if he followed Luther). See Leon Morris, "Hebrews" in *The Expositor`s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*., ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 6-7.

because in their conversion, they take Christ as their king and submit to his laws as subjects of his kingdom. In *The Elements*, then, the kingdom of Heaven is the same as the church: the collection of believers who have submitted to the kingship of Christ. Hobbes does not spend significant time on this issue, but he does confirm this understanding in passing: "our Saviour in his kingdom of Heaven, the church, out of the whole number of those that believe in him, ordained seventy persons, which peculiarly were called the seventy disciples, to whom he gave power to preach the Gospel and baptize" (*EL* 157, ii.26.5). For our purposes, note that Hobbes treats 'the kingdom of Heaven' and 'the church' synonymously. Since Christians are immediately subject to Christ's kingship in the kingdom of Heaven, it follows that the collection of Christians, the church, is the kingdom of Heaven. Moreover, since upon conversion Christians immediately enter the kingdom of God, they also attain salvation immediately and pledge to meet their obligation to God's laws *in foro interno* in their current situation. Hobbes' identification of the kingdom of Heaven with the church in *The Elements* is a crucial point that he rejects in his subsequent writing (most clearly in *Leviathan*). This is worth noting because it is an indicator of Hobbes' change of strategy in the way he addresses the threats posed to his political philosophy by religion as we will see in chapters three and four of this thesis.

In *The Elements*, the church is the kingdom of God and its members are to obey the laws of that kingdom to the degree that those laws can be enforced; God can view the inner court and that is why he is able to enforce inner obedience to laws that human sovereigns cannot. However, from the sovereign's perspective, it

matters little why people obey civil commands—so long as they do. In Hobbes' political philosophy, the fact that the sovereign does not have a godlike power to see the hearts of his citizens is not a deficiency in his authority. Even if the sovereign does care about the orientation of citizens' hearts, there is no avenue by which he can know and enforce the content of consciences; only God can know and judge such things. Accordingly, obedience to Christ is categorically different from obedience to civil laws in that obedience to Christ must involve the internal repentance of conscience, whereas obedience to civil sovereigns need not.

At this point it should be clear that the potential for civil laws to threaten Christian obedience is severely limited. Now Hobbes needs to show the converse: religion does not legitimately threaten the commonwealth. This project concerns the church's leaders and the authority that they have been given to aid Christians in their resolve to obey Christ as members of his kingdom. In general, civil dissent can arise if people mistakenly think that anyone has civil authority other than the sovereign. Since Christians are required to recognize Christ as king, there is great potential for Christians to believe that he, as the king of the kingdom of Heaven, gave authority to Christian clergy to legislate human behaviour:

> this is the cause why many Christians have denied obedience to their princes; pretending that our Saviour Christ hath not given this magistracy to them [sovereigns], but to others. As for example: some say, to the pope universally; some, to a synod aristocratical; some, to a synod democratical in every several commonwealth; and the magistrates of Christ being they by whom he speaketh: the question is, whether he speak unto us by the pope, or by convocations of bishops and ministers, or by them that have the sovereign power in every commonwealth (*EL* 155, ii.26.1).

In order to curb this potential, Hobbes must demonstrate that the sovereign has absolute authority in the arena of external activity and that the clergy's God-given

ecclesiastical authority does not include a right to command external actions. Since the sovereign's authority is absolute in this way, all attempts to regulate behaviour independent of him are not only misguided, but fundamentally dangerous (as the example of the "two mutinies" against Moses in the desert illustrates (*EL* 155-56, ii.26.2)). Hobbes' argument attempts to show, then, that there is no independent religious authority that can compete with the sovereign's authority to command and enforce external behaviour.

In order to ascertain the true nature of religious authority, Hobbes traces the history of religious authority from Moses to the present situation. Jewish history as recorded in the Bible is especially relevant for Hobbes' project because the issue of religious authority is ultimately a matter of how God confers authority to people (*EL* 155, ii.26.1), and Christians believe that God has historically done this with the people of Israel. For Hobbes, "in the government . . . of Moses, there was no power neither civil nor spiritual, that was not derived from him . . . the power spiritual and temporal, was always in the same hand" (*EL* 156, ii.26.3). Consistent with this precedent, Hobbes argues that throughout Jewish history until the time of the exile, civil and religious authority were united in one person and both were passed on to successors by the current holder of religious and civil authority. Moses delegated his authority to twelve chiefs (one per tribe) to assist his ruling and then seventy more who were subordinate to the twelve. Hobbes identifies the same patterns with Jesus that seem to indicate that Jesus was reviving the same authoritative order: Jesus, "the rightful king of the Jews in particular, as well as king of the kingdom of Heaven, in the ordaining of

magistrates, revived that form of policy which was used by Moses" when choosing twelve disciples (or apostles) (*EL* 156, ii.26.4) and he also "ordained seventy persons . . . to whom he gave power to preach the Gospel and to baptize" (*EL* 157, ii.26.5). For Hobbes, the fact that Christ organized his followers after the example of Moses indicates that the ecclesiastical "government of bishops hath a divine pattern" (*EL* 159, ii.26.8).

The hierarchical way that Moses and Jesus distributed their authority is similar in structure. There is a major difference between them, however, in that as "Christ-King" (*EL* 157, ii.26.7), Jesus only "annexed the *priesthood* to those whom he had appointed to govern the church" (*EL* 158, ii.26.7. Emphasis mine.) and not the authority to govern as per his title as 'king'. Accordingly, the office of church leaders "was to preach, to administer the sacraments, to offer up prayers and thanksgiving in the name of the people" (*EL* 159, ii.26.8). It would be a mistake to assume that the divine pattern of the church's hierarchy authorizes the use of civil force in its commission as it did with Moses. Instead, the unique nature of Christ's commission to the church defines the nature of religious authority: "the authority which our Saviour gave to his apostles was no more but this: to preach unto them that Jesus was the Christ, to explicate the same in all points that concern the kingdom of heaven, and to persuade men to embrace our Saviour's doctrine, but by no means to compel any man to be subject to them" (*EL* 159, ii.26.9). Therefore, ecclesiastical leaders have a unique *authority* tied to the commission of the church that was given to them from Christ directly.[58] In

[58] In subsequent works, Hobbes clarifies that this authority is passed on from Christ to the apostles and then to all church leaders by the laying on of hands.

addition to his claim that Christ himself authorized the church with priestly duties (rather than legislative duties), Hobbes strengthens his argument that the church, as an independent institution, does not have the right to compel submission by, once again, appealing to the inner arena to which the laws of the kingdom of Heaven are always primarily addressed:

> For seeing the laws of the kingdom of heaven, as hath been showed, Part I. chap. XVIII, sect 10, are dictated to the conscience only, which is not subject to compulsion and constraint; it was not congruent to the style of the King of Heaven to constrain men to submit their actions to him, but to advise them only; nor for him that professeth the sum of his law to be love, to extort any duty from us with fear of temporal punishment (*EL* 159, ii.26.9).

According to Hobbes, the reason why Christ did not ordain church hierarchy with the authority to compel people into submission is because the laws of his kingdom are directed at the domain of conscience and conscience is not subject to compulsion. It is impossible to effectively reinforce religious teaching with commands that compel external action only because, as mentioned, right external action does not necessarily translate into proper inner motives (which is what concerns religious teaching); the "style" of God's rule is determined by what is most effective for changing the inner realm. Christ did not grant the authority to compel external obedience to the church hierarchy because it would be superfluous in light of the church's commission to perform priestly duties and to teach people's consciences. In contrast, the very essence of civil authority consists in the ability to make laws that compel external obedience. Therefore, for Hobbes, the church has authority to neither contravene the sovereign's laws nor demand external obedience: "in no case can the sovereign power of a commonwealth be

subject to any authority ecclesiastical, besides that of Christ himself" (*EL* 161, ii.26.10).[59, 60] Nevertheless, for Hobbes, the church does have a unique and genuine authority to teach and perform priestly duties according to the commission of the church that is given to them directly from God qua Christ.

There is a problem I have not yet addressed that can arise when non-salvific religious issues arise in the commonwealth that go against conscience. Hobbes notes that the fact that the Christian's external actions are bound to the sovereign's laws may cause problems for some Christians, even though Christian obedience consists in the inner disposition of heart because "it be true, whatsoever a man doth contrary to his conscience, is sin" (*EL* 153, ii.25.11). To address this issue, Hobbes attempts to show that the only scenarios where inner conscience would conflict with civil laws are in issues that do not factor in salvation. Since Hobbes has already demonstrated that citizens are obliged to obey the sovereign in all that civil laws can effectively touch, these instances of conflict speak to the inappropriate orientations of some Christian's consciences. That is, if a Christian has a conviction about a matter that brings them into conflict with the sovereign,

[59] This point is central to Hobbes' religious and political project in *The Elements*. More than this, however, Hobbes can be understood as entering a long standing debate in medieval political philosophy over the "fullness of power of the pope." The essence of this controversy was whether or not political authority is derived from the pope's religious authority. Some, such as Aquinas and Giles of Rome argued that the temporal realm is inferior to the spiritual and, consequently, the pope, as the sole representative of God, has ultimate authority in the political sphere. Hobbes can be understood as taking a sharp stance in opposition to the doctrine of papal fullness of power. See John Kilcullen, "Medieval Political Philosophy," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (July 2006).

[60] This passage comes in the context of the excommunication of Christian princes. For this reason it is best to understand Hobbes' proviso that the sovereign who is subject to the ecclesiastical authority of Christ is a *Christian* sovereign. It is not clear if a non-Christian sovereign would be subject to Christ because that sovereign would not have taken Christ as king (he would not have salvific faith and would not be a subject in the kingdom of God). What it might look like for Christian sovereigns to be subject to Christ only comes fully into focus for Hobbes in *Leviathan* when he can contrast them and their commonwealths with the kingdom of darkness (as we will see in chapter four).

the requirements of salvation (obeying the laws of nature) command submission to the sovereign: "And for other points, seeing they are not necessary to salvation, if we conform our actions to the [civil] laws, we do not only what we are allowed, but also what we are commanded, by the law of nature, which is the moral law taught by our Saviour himself. And it is part of that obedience which must concur to our salvation" (*EL* 153, ii.25.11). Accordingly, in every imaginable religious issue, one must follow the sovereign as a part of the requirements of salvation because the content of the laws of nature direct us into absolute submission to the sovereign's laws. Even if the matter of controversy pertains directly to the components of salvation (faith and repentance), Christians must submit to the sovereign's laws when acting externally, even if that means that one verbally renounces their faith in Christ. The fact that they have not renounced their faith in the inner arena is what matters in God's eyes (God will take the will for the deed in these situations (*EL* 102-3, i.18.10)). Insofar as adhering to the laws of the kingdom of Heaven is necessary for salvation, obeying the civil sovereign in one's external actions in all matters, including religious issues (whether the sovereign is Christian or not), is necessary for salvation because the laws of nature are a part of the civil law in commonwealths.

In *The Elements*, Hobbes set out to show that "the difficulty of obeying both God and man, in a Christian commonwealth, is none" (*EL* 154, ii.25.14). Along the way, Hobbes argues for much more: that faith and internal obedience are all that is essential for salvation, that Christians are primarily dedicated to obeying the laws of the kingdom of Heaven in conscience (that is, they are

dedicated to being just), that the church does not have authority to compel external action, and that, ultimately, all authority regarding external activity belongs solely to the civil sovereign because Christ did not give any such authority to his successors.[61] Although there are elements of his argument that persist throughout Hobbes' political writing, the way in which he arrives at his conclusions changes as he refines and develops his religious thought, at times, dramatically. In order to see how Hobbes' treatment of religion changes between *The Elements* and *De Cive* in chapter three, I will analyze and point out some important features of his argument in *The Elements*.

One of the implications of Hobbes' argument is that the sovereign is never obliged to obey the church or follow its teachings as if he was subordinate to the church's authority. Hobbes indicates that "though he [the Christian sovereign] be informed concerning the kingdom of heaven, and subject himself thereto at the persuasions of persons ecclesiastical, yet is not he thereby subject to their government and rule" (*EL* 161-62, ii.26.10). A Christian sovereign might be wise to heed the advice and counsel of the church for his governance and personal spiritual life, but the sovereign is never obligated to obey because the church's authority does not include a warrant to compel submission. In *The Elements*, the

[61] It may be helpful to view Hobbes' procedure in *The Elements* in argument form:

1. The kingdom of Heaven is the church (ii.26.5).
2. The church's task is to explicate the kingdom of Heaven's laws (ii.26.9).
3. The laws of the kingdom of Heaven are the laws of nature (ii.25.10)
4. These "laws" always oblige the conscience (ii.26.9; i.18.10; i.17.12-13).
5. The church's task pertains only to conscience (from 2, 3, and 4).
6. Conscience is not subject to compulsion (from 4) (ii.26.9).
7. The church cannot compel external obedience (from 5 and 6).
8. The essence of sovereign authority consists in its ability to make obligatory laws that compel external obedience (ii.25.3).
9. The church could not possibly interfere with the tasks of the civil sovereign (from 7 and 8) (ii.26.10).

Christian sovereign is never obliged to anything more than his own faith and obedience to Christ. Accordingly, the Christian sovereign's task is never necessarily associated with the commission of the church. This point is significant because, as we will see, especially in the fourth chapter, Hobbes will claim that the Christian sovereign incurs an obligation to God in his conversion (as symbolized by his baptism) to use his sovereign office for the aims of the church, which, unlike in *The Elements*, is explicitly united with the state (and is *not* the kingdom of God).

In addition, it is important to note the ambiguity in *The Elements* regarding whether or not the sovereigns Hobbes discusses are Christian or not. There is very little textual guidance to help readers determine when he has only Christian sovereigns in mind, when only non-Christian sovereigns, and when it could be either. Perhaps this is due to the fact that, in *The Elements*, Christianity can never oblige the sovereign to govern a certain way; non-Christian and Christian sovereigns are identical in this respect. This is crucial to keep in mind when reading the second half of *Leviathan* because, there, Hobbes is very clear about whether he is discussing Christian or non-Christian sovereigns and he discusses how the sovereign's religious commitments influence how they govern their commonwealths. The difference between the rule of non-Christian and Christian sovereigns will be a main focus of chapter four.

Another related feature of Hobbes' religious discussion in *The Elements* is the way that he characterizes religious authority. As we have seen, Hobbes' argument that the church does not have the authority to compel behaviour is

derived from two features: the contingent fact that Christ only annexed priestly duties to church leaders, and the "style of the King of Heaven" (*EL* 159, ii.26.9), which is derived from the fact that consciences (the concern of Christianity) are not subject to compulsion. Therefore, the "style" of Christ depends on teaching and persuasion rather than law-making.[62] According to Hobbes in *The Elements*, the authority that religious leaders have is derived *directly* from Christ. It just so happens that the nature of this God-given authority is such that it cannot compel external action and, consequently, interfere with life in the commonwealth.

There are several implications of Hobbes' conception of religious authority in *The Elements* that are worthy of note. As discussed, Hobbes understands the kingdom of Heaven as the church with its own (non-legislative) authority derived from Christ and the church is the collection of believers who have taken Christ as their king (*EL* 157, ii.26.5). In *The Elements*, Hobbes does not equate the church with the Christian commonwealth as he does in *De Cive* (*C* 221, iii.17.21) and *Leviathan* (*L* 316, iii.39.5). This is important because it marks a shift in how Hobbes understands the relationship between the church and the commonwealth. In *The Elements*, the church is an institution within a commonwealth, whereas in subsequent work, the church is identical with a Christian commonwealth. More importantly, Hobbes' position that the church is the kingdom of God in *The Elements* entails that the kingdom of God is an active group on earth that coexists with civil commonwealths; this is something he explicitly repudiates in *Leviathan* (*L* 274-77, iii.35.7-13). Accordingly, the fact

[62] If the mission of the church would have been enhanced by the civil authority to make laws, then, presumably, Christ would have annexed such authority to ecclesiastical leaders. If this were the case, the "style" of church teaching would not be in the spirit of persuasion, but of lawmaking.

that the church's authority to teach and perform priestly duties is derived directly from Christ *and* performed in the capacity of the kingdom of God on earth (with Christ as its king) renders the church an independent institution within a commonwealth with its own type of authority; it just so happens that this authority categorically does not pose a threat to the commonwealth.[63]

As mentioned, the claim that the kingdom of Heaven is the church is unique to *The Elements.* In *Leviathan*, Hobbes repudiates this position by claiming that the fall of Israel's theocracy (by the election of King Saul) puts an end to the kingdom of God's presence on earth until Christ returns to re-establish his rule. Thus, whereas in *Leviathan* the kingdom of God poses no threat because it is not presently on earth, in *The Elements*, the kingdom of God poses no threat only because the Christ-King (contingently) chose to authorize the church only with priestly authority (this is what Hobbes means by his interpretation of John 28:36: "*his kingdom is not of this world*" (*EL* 160, ii.26.9)). Hobbes' argument is not as secure as it is in *Leviathan*; if it were actually the case that Christ imparted more authority to the church than Hobbes grants, Hobbes would be committed to respecting that authority in *The Elements* because the kingdom of God is, in fact, currently present on earth. Brandon is right to point out that, in *Leviathan*,

> Hobbes obviously wants to avoid any situation where a subject is under the dominion of two masters, and removing the kingdom of God from the contemporary world by relegating it to the past and the future furthers this

[63] In places like Hobbes' England where there was a unity of church and state, the church possesses all the civil authority of the state because the head of the church is the head of the state. Hobbes simply does not discuss this scenario in detail in *The Elements*. Nevertheless, the right to teach the Christian message for the church seems to always be derived from Christ even though the church's efforts are united with the sovereign's. It is clear in *Leviathan*, though, that all sovereigns always have the authority to teach religion and the Christian sovereign only ever teaches and performs priestly duties according to the authority he always possessed—he does not inherit religious authority from the church hierarchy.

> aim. . . . As for the political impact of this doctrine, it strikes a blow against the Pope, or any other ecclesiastic, who claims to be a lieutenant in the kingdom of God.[64]

However, insofar as *The Elements* is concerned, Hobbes has not removed the possibility of this situation. His position is more vulnerable than what we will see in later editions of his political philosophy.

Finally, perhaps the most obviously distinct feature of *The Elements* subject to change is that Hobbes does not distinguish between the different forms of the kingdom of God. In both *De Cive* and *Leviathan*, Hobbes distinguishes between the natural kingdom of God and the prophetic kingdom of God. This nuance allows him to differentiate various forms of religious laws that may or may not oblige people depending on the nature and context of those laws. That is, the laws of the natural kingdom of God are the divine laws (the laws of nature), whereas the laws of the prophetic kingdom of God are positive divine laws that are civil laws for citizens of that particular kingdom. Without identifying the various forms of the kingdom of God in *The Elements*, Hobbes is unable to distinguish between different kinds of divine laws. As a result, the idea that the kingdom of Heaven's laws are the divine laws and that teaching them so that people will live lives of inner repentance is an overly simplistic presentation of the teachings of Christianity. In the Bible, for instance, there is a variety of precepts that are part of Christianity's teaching that do not reduce to the laws of nature.[65] For instance, there are the ceremonial laws of Israel expounded in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, there is instruction on wisdom and daily

[64] Brandon, *The Coherence of Hobbes'* Leviathan, 63.
[65] Hobbes readily admits this in *De Cive* and *Leviathan.*

living as found in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, there are the basic historical books of the Bible, and there are the epistles that contain specific instructions for specific audiences. All of these are part of Christian teaching and are not easily reduced to teaching about the laws of nature. Hobbes' religious discussion in *The Elements* regarding the teachings of Christianity assumes a range of content that is implausibly narrow. The fact that Hobbes ignores the broad range of content in Christian doctrine marks a significant deficiency in his religious discussion that he will attempt to remedy by refining his understanding of the kingdom of God and its various laws. In addition, in *De Cive* and *Leviathan*, he will sharply distinguish between commands/laws and teaching/advice and allow for a broad range of Christian teaching contained in scripture that does not qualify as commands.

With this background, it becomes clear that one of the effects of Hobbes' revolutionized approach to religion in his subsequent political writings is that he provides a much more accurate picture of Christianity so that Christians can more readily buy into his arguments. The implications of his refined understanding of the kingdom of God for Hobbes' religious discussion are far reaching. In *The Elements*, Hobbes only discusses the kingdom of God insofar as it pertains to his claim that Christians are to obey the laws of the kingdom of Heaven (and it is implied that this, along with faith, exhausts the important teachings of Christianity). In contrast, in *De Cive*, the distinction between the natural and prophetic kingdoms of God provides the very framework within which the entirety of Hobbes' religious discussion takes place (his religious chapters are

entitled “On the kingdom of God by nature,” “On the kingdom of God by the old Agreement,” “On the kingdom of God by the new Agreement,” and “On what is necessary for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven”).

The restructuring of Hobbes’ thought along the theme of the various kingdoms of God will have implications for some of the claims he makes in *The Elements*. For instance, when Hobbes divides the kingdom of Heaven into the natural and prophetic, it allows him to appropriately address two different kinds of revelation (or words of God) that correspond to the two different kingdoms of God: the word of God as reason in the natural kingdom of God (the laws of nature) and the word of God as prophecy in the prophetic kingdom of God (specific precepts given to specific people). Hobbes could not distinguish between different words of God in *The Elements*. The difference in Hobbes’ treatment of the kingdom of God is more than a mere change in direction; it transforms the way in which he is able to address the relation that religion bears to politics and it equips him with the tools needed to more adequately diffuse the threats posed by religion. Furthermore, these changes in Hobbes’ thought serve as indicators that reveal more closely what Hobbes was trying to accomplish with his religious discussions since, presumably, Hobbes would only make changes to his philosophy that would be improvements. In the next chapter, I will examine Hobbes’ religious discussion in *De Cive* by highlighting how the changes that Hobbes makes better serve his larger political philosophy and how they serve as intermediary steps to his mature claims in *Leviathan*.

Chapter 3: *De Cive* and the Kingdoms of God

Perhaps the greatest change in Hobbes' religious thought occurs between *The Elements* and *De Cive*. In *The Elements*, Hobbes' argument rested on the church's mission and how it is concerned with internal obedience to the laws of nature. When Christians obey Christ as King of the kingdom of Heaven, they are members of his kingdom and are obliged to obey his laws, which are the same as the laws of nature. For Hobbes, however, religious obedience is primarily associated with the internal obedience of repentance and, consequently, the laws of nature always apply in conscience. The task of the church reflects the nature of Christian obedience in that the church is focused on promoting the best endeavour through right teaching (but not through compulsion) so that when God examines the heart, he will find a just person whose external actions are motivated by the right internal reasons. Since inner Christian obedience can be distinguished from external obedience, inner obedience to rogue civil laws is not enforceable unless it translates into external action. So, as discussed in the previous chapter, Hobbes' religious argument in *The Elements* depends on a few fundamental premises and assumptions: Christian obedience consists in obeying the laws of nature (divine laws) in internal conscience, the church is the collection of people who have accepted Christ as king and, as a result, are subjects in the kingdom of God (the church is the kingdom of God), and civil laws are only effective in regulating external actions. All three of these points are either expanded or altered in some significant way in *De Cive*.

In 1642, Hobbes rewrote his political philosophy in the form of the Latin *De Cive*. Although some themes established in *The Elements* persist in *De Cive*, the way that Hobbes treats these themes is, at times, dramatically different. Perhaps the most significant change is that he revolutionizes the structure of his argument by organizing it into four chapters, all of which are based on the different forms of the kingdom of God. By changing his argument to fit under the framework of the various kingdoms of God, Hobbes is free to alter many of his views that were essential to his earlier strategies. For example, in *De Cive*, Hobbes denies that the church is the kingdom of God so that it could not possibly be construed as competing against civil sovereigns. In addition, he increases the importance of interpretation in regards to civil laws and Christ's teaching. Furthermore, the way that the laws of nature and the divine laws oblige citizens will be determined by the sovereign's interpretation of them in the civil law to a much greater extent than Hobbes expressed in *The Elements*. In this chapter, I will examine Hobbes' religious discussion by revealing its structure, how it changes from *The Elements*, and how these changes set the stage for his goals in *Leviathan*.

In chapters 25 and 26 of *The Elements*, the simplicity of Hobbes' argument depended on a presumed simplicity in Christianity. There Hobbes implied that all that is important for good Christian practice is mere obedience to the laws of nature. In *De Cive*, his religious discussions are meticulously planned and organized under four chapters pertaining to the kingdom of God: "On the kingdom of God by nature," "On the kingdom of God by the old Agreement,"

"On the kingdom of God by the new Agreement," and "On what is necessary for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven." The strategy of organizing his thought around the kingdoms of God allows Hobbes to refine his views to better capture the complexity of Christianity while, at the same time, firming up weak spots in his religious arguments. Hobbes takes strides towards reorganizing his religious discussion by refocusing his main task on the laws of the kingdom of God:

> Only one thing more is needed to complete our knowledge of our civil duty: we must know what the laws or commands of God are. Otherwise we cannot know whether what we are ordered to do by the authority of the civil power is against God's laws or not. . . . we need to know the Divine laws; but as knowledge of a Kingdom's laws depends on a knowledge of the Kingdom, we must speak in what follows of *the Kingdom of God* (*C* 171-72, iii.15.1).

In *De Cive,* the fundamental problem of religion is understood as a problem of knowing God's law. Since knowledge of law is part of what makes law obligatory, it is very natural for Hobbes to set up Part III by raising questions that pertain to the promulgation of God's laws and the knowledge of the kingdom in which he is sovereign. Since knowledge of laws depends on their promulgation, the extent to which we can be obliged by God's law will be determined by what has been communicated as the word of God. For Hobbes, there are three ways that God's laws are promulgated:

> First, *by the silent dictates of right reason*. Secondly, *by direct revelation*, which is thought to be carried by a *supernatural voice*, or by a *vision* or *dream* or *inspiration* (the breath of God). Third, *by the voice of a man* whose credibility God has verified to other men by working true miracles through him [a prophet]. . . . These three ways can be called the triple *Word of God*: namely, the *rational Word*, the *perceptible Word* and the *Prophetic Word*" (*C* 172, iii.15.3).

The word of God in the second and third sense falls under the general category of "prophetic" whereas the first is understood as "natural." Consequently, there are two kingdoms that relate directly to the two different ways that God speaks:

> There is the *Natural* Kingdom in which he rules through the dictates of right Reason. It is a universal kingdom over all who acknowledge the divine power because of the rational nature which is common to all. And there is the *Prophetic* Kingdom, where too he rules, but by his *Prophetic Word*. It is a particular kingdom, because he has not given positive laws to all men, but only to a particular people and to certain specific men whom he himself chose (*C* 173, iii.15.4).

Everything that Hobbes says about right conduct in the context of religion in Part III falls under either the natural or prophetic kingdom of God. Since right conduct in any kingdom is determined by law, it is necessary first to understand what a law is in *De Cive*, how it obligates, and how it is distinguished from advice. Once a clear understanding of law is established, it can be situated in the context of the various kingdoms of God to ascertain the nature of each kingdom's laws and whether or not they are problematic for Christians in civil commonwealths.

In *De Cive*, Hobbes develops a general theory of law: "LAW is *a command of that person (whether man or council) whose instruction is the reason for obedience*" (*C* 154, ii.14.1). Law is to be distinguished from advice: "ADVICE is an *instruction or precept* in which the reason for following it is drawn *from the matter itself*" (*C* 153, ii.14.1). Laws are obligatory in virtue of the authority of the one who issues the command. In contrast, advice is never obligatory because it appeals to the consequences of actions in particular situations rather than to anyone's authority. From these definitions, several things follow:

> *Law* comes from one who has power over those whom he instructs, *advice* from one who does not have power. To do what one is instructed by law is a matter of *duty*; to take *advice* is *discretionary*. *Advice* is directed to the purpose of *the person instructed*, *law* to the purpose of *the instructor*. *Advice* is addressed only to *those who want it*, *law* also to *those who do not want it*. Finally the right *to give advice* is cancelled at the discretion of *its recipient*; the right of the *lawgiver* is not cancelled at the discretion of the person on whom *law* is imposed (*C* 154, ii.14.1).

De Cive does not seem to have an account of authorization (there is no author/actor distinction).[66] Accordingly, this passage contains the elements of Hobbes' account of obligation which holds that people are obligated to those who have superior power because they have the ability to force their will on inferiors. There is no person to person obligation in the state of nature because everyone is naturally equal (*C* 26, i.1.3). There can be no interpersonal obligation until covenant results in the sovereign's superior power. In order for law to oblige in the way that it must, there is a further criterion:

> it is necessary to the essence of a law that two things be known to the citizens: first, what man or council has sovereign power, i.e. the right of making laws; second, what the law itself says. For he who has never come to know to whom he is obligated or what his obligations are cannot obey, and is exactly as if he were not obligated (*C* 159, ii.14.11).

In this crucial passage, Hobbes argues that laws can only effectively obligate when people have knowledge of what the laws are and that the one issuing the law has sovereign power. Thus, when Hobbes asks, 'what are the laws of God?' he is committed to determining whether or not God has issued commands and what these commands entail: these are questions concerning the promulgation of

[66] As Skinner and Lukac De Stier have noted, Hobbes will add an account of authorization to his political theory (see *L* 101-105, i.14). This makes sense because, as his account in *De Cive* stands, political obligation reduces to a state of servitude or slavery to the one whom is owed obedience. For a detailed treatment of Hobbes' theory of authorization in these works, see Lukac De Stier, "Hobbes on Authority *De Cive* and *Leviathan*: A Comparison," 51-61. Also see Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, 54-55, 82-123, 162-173 for an excellent study of how the changes to Hobbes' account of obligation and authorization impacts his doctrine of civil liberty.

law. If there is an epistemological problem that inhibits *knowledge* of God's laws, then that lack of knowledge would hinder individuals' obligation to God: it would be "exactly as if he were not obligated." The criterion of promulgation applies to the civil sovereign as well as to God. Accordingly, we will first examine if there is sufficient knowledge that the laws of nature are commanded by a supremely powerful God before turning to examine whether or not there is sufficient knowledge of the content of these laws in order for people to know what to do.

In *The Elements,* Hobbes equated the divine laws with the laws of nature. There, Hobbes was careful to show that "the force . . . of the law of nature . . . is always *in foro interno*" (*EL* 97, i.17.12.). When Hobbes described the "style" of the kingdom of God and ecclesiastical authority, he appealed to the internal force of the laws of nature. In *De Cive,* too, Hobbes pays close attention to the laws of nature as divine laws of the kingdom of God—but here it is discussed in the context of the laws of the *natural* kingdom of God (*C* 175, iii.15.8). With the understanding of what a law is for Hobbes, we can return to our discussion of what the laws are in the kingdom of God; first the kingdom of God by nature, and then the prophetic kingdom of God.

Although space constrictions kept us from examining Hobbes' account of the laws of nature in *The Elements* in the detail that we will here, much of what we find in *De Cive* was inchoate in his earlier work and is more or less continuous with his discussion on the laws of the natural kingdom of God. In *De Cive,* there are two ways (or "forms") to teach and understand the laws of nature, which are to be understood as the laws of the natural kingdom of God:

> [Justice, civil obedience, and the observation of all natural laws] can be taught in two forms. One is as Theorems, through natural reason, deducing natural right and natural laws from human principles and human contracts; doctrine so taught is subject to the scrutiny of the civil powers. The other is in the form of laws, by divine authority, revealing that such-and-such is the will of God; this form of teaching is only appropriate to one to whom God's will is supernaturally known, i.e. to CHRIST (*C* 216, iii.17.13; NP[67]).

Essentially, the main difference between these forms of teaching is whether or not the laws of nature will be recognized only as they proceed from nature, or if they will also be taken as divine laws. The immediate task is to determine which of the two forms (call these the "revelation form" and the "natural form") most fully reflects the true status of the laws of nature. Along the way we will see how Hobbes understands the natural kingdom of God, which is important for our primary task: determining what the laws of God are.

In Part I of *De Cive*, Hobbes describes the laws of nature according to the natural form:

> Now what we call the *laws of nature* are nothing other than certain conclusions, understood by reason, on what is to be done and not to be done; and a law, properly and precisely speaking, is an utterance by one who by right commands others to do or not to do. Hence, properly speaking, the natural laws are not laws, in so far as they proceed from nature (*C* 56, i.3.33; cf. *EL* 97, i.17.12).

This passage resonates with another definition of natural law: "Thus law is a certain *right reason*, which (since no less part of human nature than any other faculty or passion of the mind) is also said to be natural. The *Natural Law* therefore (to define it) is the Dictate of right reason about what should be done or

[67] In the context of my discussion of the two different ways to take the laws of nature, when I cite from *De Cive*, I will also provide the references to close parallels in *The Elements*. When there is, as far as I can tell, no parallel, I will indicate this with 'NP'. Significant passages with no parallel often signal a development or clarification in Hobbes' thought.

not done for the longest possible preservation of life and limb" (*C* 33, i.2.1; NP). When we consider this description of the laws of nature as theorems, it is clear that they are influential in moving people to exit the state of nature because they resonate with our drive for securing self-preservation. Even though the laws of nature are not laws in virtue of the fact that they are natural and rational, the fact that they promote "the longest possible preservation of life" (*C* 33, i.2.1; NP) makes the natural form useful for teaching proper behaviour;[68] even if the laws of nature were not recognized as laws, they would still be efficacious in bringing an end to the state of nature because, it appears, reason promulgates their content sufficiently. Therefore, the laws of nature can be taught as laws within the civil law of the commonwealth according to the natural form.

In *De Cive*, Hobbes also frequently expounds the laws of nature in the revelation form. For instance, Hobbes indicates that "in so far as the same laws have been legislated by God in the holy scriptures . . . they are very properly called by the name of laws; for *holy scripture* is the utterance of God, who issues commands in all things with the highest right" (*C* 56-57, i.3.33; cf. *EL* 97, i.17.12[69]). Elsewhere, Hobbes teaches that "God's precepts with respect to men" are laws (*C* 154, ii.154.1; NP) and he defines natural law as "the law which God

[68] As will become obvious, teaching the laws of nature in the natural form is most appropriate for non-Christian commonwealths because their sovereigns will likely not acknowledge the natural law as divine law—that is to say, the non-Christian sovereign is not a member of the natural kingdom of God and has no reason to think that the laws of nature are issued by a divine sovereign.

[69] This parallel passage is significantly altered to emphasize, in *De Cive*, that the laws of nature are, in fact, true laws because they are commanded by God: "[these dictates are commands] in respect of the author of nature" (*EL*) vs. "in so far as the same laws have been legislated by God in the holy scriptures . . . they are very properly called by the name of laws; for *holy scripture* is the utterance of God, who issues commands in all things with the highest right" (*C*). This change of emphasis indicates that it was important to Hobbes that he not be understood as denying outright that the laws of nature are *merely* dictates of reason and not genuine laws.

has revealed to all men through his *eternal word* which is innate in them, namely by *natural reason.* And this is the law which I have been attempting to expound throughout this little book" (*C* 156, ii.14.4; cf. *EL* 99, i.18.1-2). The natural form of teaching the laws of nature is useful by considering them only insofar as they are natural. On the other hand, the revelation form is useful because it recognizes the laws of nature as laws commanded by God; that is, as precepts issued by one with sovereign power. As such, the revelation form is the only teaching form appropriate for members of the natural kingdom of God.[70]

When considering the natural kingdom of God, "all questions are examined by reason alone, i.e. from principles of natural knowledge" (*C* 180, iii.15.15) rather than from principles derived from special revelation (special revelation is what we consider in the prophetic kingdom of God). To what extent can the natural form for teaching the laws of nature result in their sufficient promulgation? Clearly, Hobbes believes that there is sufficient knowledge of their content in order to direct people into covenant (we will examine the content at a later point). However, it is another question if reason promulgates the laws of nature to the extent where they can be known to be issued by one with sovereign power.

Hobbes seems to believe that some headway can be made in determining the origin of the laws of nature by considering the divine laws of natural worship. For the first time in his political writing, Hobbes provides a developed account of this approach in *De Cive.* It is also significant that this account is worked out in his chapter on "The Kingdom of God by Nature" because it places the natural

[70] This concludes the section of this chapter where I indicate parallel passages.

form of teaching the laws of nature in the immediate context of determining whether God's laws are promulgated by reason sufficiently. For Hobbes, the natural laws of divine worship are guidelines dictated by reason that instruct human-divine relations in the natural kingdom of God (rather than human to human relations) and are based on honour. Honour (which is the same as worship (*C* 176, iii.15.9)) "is nothing other than the opinion one has of the union of *power* and *goodness* in another person" (*C* 175, iii.15.9). Since God is considered sovereign in the natural kingdom of God because of his irresistible power (*C* 173, iii.15.5), the idea of an omnipotent God comes hand in hand with honour because we cannot acknowledge power without honouring. In addition to identifying God's power, attributing the governance of the world to God honours him: "It is obviously a poor opinion of God to take away from him the government of the world and of the human race" (*C* 178, iii.15.14). Thus, for Hobbes, we are directed by reason to honour God by taking him to be the ruler of the world.

The idea that God rules the world implies that he does so by issuing laws, since, for Hobbes, rulers can only govern through law:

> A ruler is said to reign if he rules through *speech* rather than action, i.e. if he rules by *precepts* and *threats*. . . . A ruler can only be said to rule by *precepts* if he publicly declares his precepts to those who are to be ruled; for a ruler's *precepts* are laws for the ruled. But they are not *laws* unless they are promulgated clearly, so that there is no excuse for ignorance. . . . God's *laws* however are declared in three ways. First, *by the silent dicates of right reason*. Secondly, *by direct revelation* . . . Third, *by the voice of a man* . . . [who] is called a PROPHET" (*C* 172, iii.15.2-3).

In this passage, Hobbes ties the acts of ruling and law-making together: a sovereign can only rule through law. When someone assents to the idea that God is the ruler of the natural kingdom, God is taken as a law maker—the one who has

the sovereign power to issue laws. The only way that we can bring ourselves, *by natural reason*, to assent to the idea that the laws of nature are the divine laws by which God governs the world is by following the natural laws of divine worship and honouring God accordingly.

Even though recognition of God as the author of the laws of nature follows from the natural laws of divine worship, it is important to note that it all begins with first *assenting* to the idea that there is a supremely powerful God. If the natural form is to successfully demonstrate that the laws of nature are sufficiently promulgated in the knowledge of who it is that issues the laws, then this assent must also follow from the natural form. At this point, however, the natural form begins to break down because it fails to take individuals in reasoning "from the principles of natural knowledge" (C 180, iii.15.15) (remember that "*in the natural kingdom of God all questions are examined by reason alone*" (C 180, iii.15.15)) to the conclusion that the silent dictates of reason are issued by a supremely powerful God that governs the world.

The laws of nature considered in the natural form (as silent dictates of right reason) can only lead to taking the laws of nature as divine laws if *assent* is first given to the notion that a supremely powerful God exists. However, by definition, those who do assent to such a notion are already members of the natural kingdom of God in virtue of their assent to the idea there is a supremely powerful God (*C* 173, iii.15.4). The fact that only those who assent to these ideas will be successful in their reasoning according to the natural form serves to highlight the potential obscurity of this assent. In *De Cive*, Hobbes seems to take

it for granted that people will naturally have an idea of God's existence; it is merely a question of whether or not people will regard him as powerful.[71] Such regard, however, can only be given by faith. The natural form alone is unable to reason from the principles of natural knowledge to the conclusion that the laws of nature are issued by one with sovereign power. Consequently, if the laws of nature are going to have an obligatory force as divine laws, their promulgation must be completed by the prophetic word of God so that it can be known that the one who issues the dictates of right reason has sovereign power.

For Hobbes, the revelation form is one of two ways to teach the laws of nature. In the revelation form, the laws of nature are taken as divine laws issued by God. In light of the limits of the natural form, it should not be a surprise that Hobbes thinks that the revelation form "is only appropriate to one to whom God's will is supernaturally known, i.e. to CHRIST" (*C* 216, iii.17.13). Since sufficient promulgation requires knowledge that the one who gives the precepts has the right to make laws (*C* 159, ii.14.11), the laws of nature can only be recognized as *divine* laws when there is knowledge that God has sovereign power. The incarnate Christ possesses this knowledge: he has *knowledge* that the laws of nature are the divine laws. If members of the natural kingdom of God (those who acknowledge God's power) are to take the laws of nature as the divine laws, it will depend on Christ's knowledge. Whenever someone depends on another's knowledge, Hobbes takes the dependant person to be acting on faith:

[71] It is important to note that Hobbes remedies this in part in *Leviathan* by detailing a cosmological argument and describing how the seeds of religion are formed and provide the ground for assenting naturally to the idea that there is a powerful God (*L* 63-74, i.12).

> when the reasons for which we assent to a proposition are drawn not from *the actual proposition* but from the *person of its proponent*, because we judge him to be expert enough not to be deceived and we see no reason why he would want to deceive us, our assent is called *Faith*, because it arises on someone else's knowledge not our own (*C* 238, iii.18.4).

The fact that the person trusted is a privileged expert and that there is no evidence or reason to suspect that he might deceive us constitutes good reasons for having faith in them when direct knowledge is not possible. Be that as it may, since Hobbes' task is to determine what commands of God are *known*, it is important to determine the extent to which well-grounded faith can function as knowledge in order for the sovereign position of the author of the laws of nature to be known.

Hobbes fully acknowledges the failure of the natural form in its ability to bring people to assent to the idea that the laws of nature are the divine laws (and, thereby, its inability to bring people into the natural kingdom of God) without depending on faith: "*in the natural kingdom of God all questions are examined by reason alone*, i.e. from the principles of natural knowledge. But we are so far from understanding the nature of God by this means that we cannot achieve a satisfactory knowledge of the properties of any created thing, not even of our own bodies" (*C* 180, iii.15.15). Even though a certain degree of knowledge can be gained of the laws of nature by natural reason, ultimately, faith will have to ground assent to the proposition that God governs the world. Although this is difficult for the rational mind to accept, for Hobbes, it need not be altogether disconcerting:

> Finally, the difference between *faith* and *knowledge*: the latter proceeds by cutting a proposition into small pieces, then chews it over and digests it slowly; the former swallows it whole. It contributes to knowledge to explain the words in which the subject of inquiry is put forward; in fact,

> this is the one and only way to knowledge, *the way of definitions*. But it is harmful to *faith*. For things put forward for belief which are beyond human understanding never become clearer by explanation, but to the contrary, become more obscure and more difficult to believe. A man who goes about to demonstrate the *mysteries of Faith* by natural reason, is like a sick man who tries to chew some health-giving but bitter pills before swallowing them; the result is that he throws them up straight away, whereas, if he had swallowed them whole, they would have made him better (*C* 238-39, iii.18.4).

Arguably, a cause of atheism could occur when a person tries to see that the laws of nature are divine laws by proceeding by the way of definitions, the way of the principles of natural knowledge without first being rooted in faith. Natural reason's attempt to promulgate the laws of nature as true laws commanded by God depends on faith; natural reason alone does not provide sufficient knowledge required for the promulgation of God's laws in his natural kingdom because it cannot identify that the one who issues the laws of nature has a sovereign right to do so. The fact that natural reason cannot provide sufficient knowledge is why Hobbes claims that "the natural laws are not laws, *in so far as they proceed from nature*" (*C* 56, i.3.33. Emphasis mine). On the other hand, giving full assent to certain propositions of faith can be wholly therapeutic (as in *The Elements*, Hobbes will identify faith as necessary for salvation) while enabling us to take the laws of nature as God's laws in the natural kingdom of God—laws to which its members are fully obligated to obey.

As we have discussed, an important feature of *De Cive*'s account of law is that promulgation is required in order for laws to oblige:

> it is necessary to the essence of a law that two things be known to the citizens: first, what man or council has sovereign power, i.e. the right of making laws; second, what the law itself says. For he who has never come

> to know to whom he is obligated or what his obligations are cannot obey, and is exactly as if he were not obligated" (*C* 159, ii.14.11).

As we intended, we have examined the question of the promulgation of the laws of nature by considering whether we can have sufficient knowledge of who it is that issues commands and that they have sovereign power. Now we must turn our attention to determine if there is sufficient knowledge of "what the law itself says." As we will see, in many cases, there can only be sufficient knowledge of what the law says when the sovereign of particular commonwealths interpret the laws of nature.

Enough knowledge of the laws of nature can be acquired by reason to be certain of at least one obligation for members of the natural kingdom of God: to keep agreements that are conducive to self-preservation. The second law of nature is to "[*s*]*tand by your agreements*, or keep faith" (*C* 43, i.3.1), which is derived directly from the first ("*to seek peace when it can be had*" (*C* 34, i.2.2)). In this way, the laws of nature provide the foundation for all actions that follow from agreements. When an agreement or covenant is made to form a commonwealth, it is the natural law that grounds all civil law: "contained in the actual formation of the commonwealth, natural law commands that all civil laws be observed in virtue of the natural law which forbids the violation of agreements" (*C* 159, ii.14.10). The laws of nature, therefore, are not limited to obliging conscience; they provide the basis for all obedience to civil law. That is, members of the natural kingdom of God make an agreement (or covenant) to give their natural right as a free gift to the sovereign out of obedience to God's divine laws; this is why "[*a*] *man is obligated by an agreement, i.e. he ought to perform because of his promise*" (*C*

155, ii.14.2). The laws of nature qua divine laws provide the obligation that drives people into covenant. In this case, the laws of nature can be said to direct external action.

It is easy to see how the law of nature to keep agreements instructs external action. However, there are many other laws of nature, when they are not taken in the context of a prior agreement, that are not clear enough to sufficiently instruct action:

> *Theft*, *Murder*, *Adultery* and all *wrongs* are forbidden by the laws of nature, but what is to count as a *theft* on the part of a citizen or as *murder* or *adultery* or a *wrongful act* is to be determined by the *civil*, not the *natural law*. Not every taking of an object which is in the possession of another is a *theft*, but only the taking of something *that belongs to another*; what counts as *ours*, what as *another's* is a question for the *civil law* (*C* 86, ii.6.16).

The reason why obedience to natural law depends on civil law is because some natural laws are vague. Any action that proceeds from "do not steal" will depend on an understanding of what will count as stealing. In the state of nature, it is up to each individual to decide for himself what will qualify. Having each person interpret the laws of nature for themselves will never lead to peace because there is a fundamental lack of consent about what will count as theft. The only way to rightly[72] obey many laws of nature externally is in the context of a commonwealth: "Natural laws give the same precepts [as civil law], but implicitly; for natural law (as explained at iii.2) commands that *agreements* be

[72] By 'rightly', I am alluding to Hobbes' qualification that natural law "gives rise to obligation only when it can be kept with safety" (*C* 54; i.3.27). The only context where they can always be obeyed safely is where there is common consent about what the laws of nature mean. In the state of nature, all may agree that theft, for example, is against the law of nature, but they will only agree on what theft entails when each person covenants with each other and acts under the sovereign's civil laws prohibiting theft.

kept, and hence also commands men to show obedience when they have agreed to obey, and to keep their hands off what is another's when what is another's has been defined by civil law" (*C* 158, ii.14.9). The reason why most natural laws can only be obeyed in the context of the commonwealth is because civil law provides sufficient knowledge of the content of natural law needed for external obedience: "*Law is an utterance, determined by the common consent of the commonwealth, which declares how things are to be done*. This is not a definition of *law* simply, but of *civil law*" (*C* 154, ii.14.2). Civil law, by definition, remedies any deficiency in the promulgation of the content of the laws of nature.

The vagueness of some laws of nature shapes how God governs the world: in the natural kingdom of God, God rules and governs his kingdom through the mediation of civil sovereigns. Hobbes elaborates this key point:

> We may therefore conclude that the *interpretation* of *natural laws*, both *sacred* and *secular*, where God reigns through nature alone, depends on the authority of the commonwealth, i.e. of the man or council which has been granted sovereign power in the commonwealth; and whatever God commands, he commands through his voice. And conversely, whatever commonwealths command both about the manner of worshipping God and about secular matters, is commanded by God (*C* 183, iii.15.17).

Hobbes is explicit about the fact that God governs the world through each commonwealth's sovereign. Only in the commonwealth's civil laws are vague natural laws clarified enough for them to be known sufficiently. The implication is far reaching: *only in the context of the commonwealth can all the laws of nature be promulgated properly for members of the natural kingdom of God*. Prior to the formation of the commonwealth, members of the natural kingdom of God were always obliged *in foro interno*, but could not always act externally properly

because there was insufficient knowledge available for how to obey them. In the commonwealth, the sovereign's interpretation removes problems associated with the promulgation of the content of many natural laws and they come to oblige *in foro externo* in virtue of being a part of the civil law. Therefore, knowledge of 'what the laws are' is only finally determined for many of the laws of nature by the civil sovereign. God leaves the sovereign to interpret vague laws of nature for members of the natural kingdom of God. Insofar as natural law obliges external action in the commonwealth, God governs the natural kingdom of God by requiring his subjects to submit to the civil sovereign.

Hobbes' main task for his religious discussion is to determine if we can "know what the laws or commands of God are" (*C* 171, iii.15.1). In order to determine that, we had to establish that it could be known that God, the maker of the laws of nature, has the right to make laws and what the laws command. In the natural kingdom of God, it can be known that God has sovereign power when the faith necessary for the assent needed to take God as a ruler functions like knowledge. Furthermore, when the promulgation through the natural word of God (the silent dictates of reason) is insufficient in providing enough knowledge of the content of divine law, the civil sovereign interprets it to complete the promulgation of the natural word. The fact that God's laws in the natural kingdom of God are part of the civil law via the civil sovereign's interpretation means that members of the natural kingdom of God do not need to worry about "whether what we are ordered to do by the authority of the civil power is against God's laws or not" (*C* 171, iii.15.1). In *The Elements*, we were to take the laws of nature

as the laws of the kingdom of Heaven and the nature of the church's authority was non-legislative in virtue of the fact that these laws were primarily directed at internal obedience/repentance. In *De Cive*, the internal obedience necessary for salvation is determined by the sovereign's interpretation of the laws of nature in the civil law. It is true that Hobbes gave the sovereign responsibilities of interpretation in religious issues in *The Elements*, but there it was restricted to non-salvific controversies. In contrast, in *De Cive*, what one must do for salvation (albeit, internally) depends on the sovereign because the question of what God's laws are, is, in most cases, only finally settled by the sovereign in civil law. For example, when members of the natural kingdom of God encounter the natural law "do not steal," the internal resolve corresponding to that law will be directed by the sovereign's interpretation of what counts as stealing in a way that is not emphasized in *The Elements*; this is how God governs the natural kingdom of God. The important lesson Hobbes wants his reader to learn is that their very membership in the natural kingdom of God depends on the sovereign's will, regardless of whether or not the sovereign himself is a member of the natural kingdom.

Now that the extent to which the divine laws can be known in the natural kingdom of God has been examined, it remains to be seen if there are any of God's laws promulgated by direct revelation (the prophetic word of God) in the prophetic kingdom of God that could cause a problem for Christian submission to civil sovereigns (this task occupies chapters sixteen and seventeen in *De Cive*). For Hobbes, there are two prophetic kingdoms of God. The prophetic kingdom of

God by the old agreement was the commonwealth of Israel as recorded in scripture. The prophetic kingdom of God by the new agreement, however, does not come into existence as a commonwealth until Christ returns. When people become Christians and vow to enter that kingdom once it is established, they merely promise to take Christ as the king of that future commonwealth and to obey him in it. First, we will examine the prophetic kingdom of God by the old agreement.

The prophetic kingdom of God, "is a particular kingdom, because he has not given positive laws to all men, but only to a particular people and to certain specific men whom he himself chose" (*C* 173, iii.15.4). For Hobbes (and, indeed, the Judaic-Christian tradition) the particular kingdom in question is the nation of Israel whose history and dealings with God are believed to be recorded in the Bible. In this kingdom, obedience is due to God, who is the sovereign of the commonwealth (though represented on earth by people like Abraham and Moses). In the natural kingdom of God, God was thought to rule according to his irresistible power. In contrast, in the prophetic kingdom of God, he acquires his sovereign power over a particular people by covenant: "it pleased him [God] to reveal himself to him [Abraham] supernaturally; and to enter into that famous agreement with him and his descendants which is called *the Old Agreement*, *the Old Covenant* and *the Old Testament*" (*C* 188, iii.16.1). According to Hobbes, a covenant is marked by "an appropriate sign or signs that he no longer wants it to be licit for him to do some specific thing which previously he might *rightly do*" (*C* 34, i.2.4). In the covenant that initiates the prophetic kingdom of God by the

old agreement, the sign that is used to commemorate the contract was circumcision (*C* 188-89, iii.16.3). The prophetic kingdom of God, whether it is by the old or new agreement, depends on an act of covenant. The specific laws that results from this agreement are the divine positive laws: "*Positive law* is that law which God has revealed to us through the *prophetic word* by which he spoke to men as a man; such are the laws which he gave to the *Jews* about their constitution and divine worship; and they can be called *divine civil laws*, because they were particular to the commonwealth of Israel, his own particular people" (*C* 156, ii.14.4). It is through these divine civil laws that God ruled the prophetic kingdom of God by the old agreement.

At Mount Sinai, God gave the divine civil law to a particular people and this is why Hobbes indicates that the prophetic kingdom of God is first established with Moses (*C* 191-92, iii.16.9). Of the laws that were given to Israel at Sinai, some "had validity even before *Abraham*" (*C* 192, iii.16.10). Clearly, these independently valid laws are the laws of nature. Their appearance in divine positive law, however, is not as the bare laws of nature as promulgated by the dictates of reason (the natural word of God), but as articles in the divine civil law given at Sinai. As such, the laws of nature qua divine law as they appear in the divine civil law carry with them an interpretation that is unique to a particular commonwealth. This interpretation is applied by God's lieutenant as he judges individual cases according to the understanding of the law that he has been given as God's representative.[73] On the other hand, God also gave laws that "derive

[73] Hobbes indicates that "*giving judgement* is simply the application of *laws* to individual cases by *interpretation*. We recognize those who have been entrusted with this responsibility in the same

their obligation solely from the *agreement* which was made later with the people itself, because they were given by God *specifically as King of the Israelites* (*C* 192, iii.16.10).[74]

In *De Cive*, the prophetic kingdom of God by the old agreement persisted until it was replaced by the new agreement that was established by Christ. In order to see if the divine civil laws of this kingdom oblige Christians, Hobbes spends some time determining who, by right, had the authority to represent God as sovereign of the particular kingdom of God. It is not necessary to reproduce Hobbes' meticulous tracing of sovereign authority in the history of Israel. Yet, it is important to note that his tracing is useful for determining what laws of God are known and if the authority by which they were issued applies for Christians. In the end, Hobbes concludes that God's positive law does not apply to Christians because the prophetic kingdom of God by the old agreement ceased to exist when Christ established the kingdom of God by the new agreement and a kingdom's laws only last as long as the kingdom itself.

According to Hobbes, the old agreement was a covenant made with the people of Israel and it ended with the establishment of Christ's new agreement. The kingdom of God by the old agreement was established, like any other commonwealth, with each person "transferring" their natural right to everything as a free gift to the sovereign, which, in this case, is God.[75] Like the old kingdom,

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way in which we recognize who has been entrusted with the authority to promulgate laws" (*C* 161; ii.14.13).

[74] Laws of this sort include the "*political*, *judicial* and *ceremonial* laws, which affected only the Jews" (*C* 193; iii.16.10).

[75] For Hobbes, individuals are said to transfer their right when, by laying it down, they intend another (the sovereign) to benefit.

the kingdom of God by the new agreement also rests on its members covenanting, which is signified by baptism (instead of circumcision). However, the new kingdom of God is quite different from the old in that it does not establish a current commonwealth.

Hobbes notes that when the people of Israel pictured the Messiah, they anticipated a political king who would restore power to the old kingdom of God and rule the world (*C* 205, iii.17.1). Although Christ was a king in virtue of being born in the line of David, when he came to earth, he came qua representative of God rather than qua God (*C* 208, iii.17.6). In this capacity, Christ could only properly act according to his task: "CHRIST was sent by God the Father to make a *covenant* between himself and the people" (*C* 207, iii.17.4). This covenant restores the prophetic kingdom of God, but "it does not begin until his second coming, in fact from the day of judgment, when he is to come in majesty in the company of Angels" (*C* 206-7, iii.17.5). The fact that the Kingdom of God was not founded immediately by Christ has implications for the nature of Christ's authority and, ultimately, the responsibilities incurred on covenanters (Christians) while they wait for the establishment of this kingdom: "CHRIST is not yet seated in the seat of his Majesty. And the time when CHRIST was on earth is not called a Kingdom but a *regeneration*, i.e. a renovation, or restoration of the Kingdom of God, and a calling out of those who are to be received into the kingdom to come" (*C* 207, iii.17.5). Hobbes is explicit regarding the relation between Christ's authority and mission: "he was not sent to make new laws, and therefore did not have the office and mission of a *legislator*" (*C* 209, iii.17.6). The nature of

ecclesiastical authority and Christians' responsibilities is immediately tied to the fact that Christ is not reigning in a commonwealth and, therefore, could not govern people by law. As a result (and in stark contrast to *The Elements*), Christians are not currently citizens in the kingdom of God (because it does not yet exist) and are, therefore, only *called* to reside in the kingdom once it is truly established.

Hobbes' teaching on the new kingdom of God is much different than what we find in *The Elements*. There, Christians were immediately called to obey divine law as members of the kingdom of God, which he had equated with the church. In *De Cive*, there are no new divine laws, in addition to the laws of nature, for Christians to obey because their covenant does not immediately put them in a kingdom under the rule of another sovereign. In *The Elements* the fact that the church did not have legislative authority was contingent upon the fact that Christ simply did not dispense civil authority to them. In *De Cive*, however it is *necessary* that the church does not have legislative authority because Christ himself did not establish a kingdom because of the nature of his mission and the limits incurred on him when he came to perform that mission. There are no positive laws that God commands to Christians according to the new agreement.

The primary aim of Hobbes' religious discussion was to determine what the laws of God are (and, thus, to what we are ultimately obliged). At this point, Hobbes has completed this task. Once the laws of God in all the forms of the kingdom of God have been shown not to interfere with submission to a civil sovereign, it would have been natural to conclude his religious discussion and end

De Cive; obviously, Hobbes did not agree. In *The Elements*, Hobbes detailed the responsibilities, teachings, and authority of the church solely in terms of natural law. In *De Cive*, Hobbes changes his presentation of Christianity so that obedience to the laws of nature no longer entirely captures good Christian living. By allowing for the content of Christian teaching to transcend the laws of nature, Hobbes increases the likelihood that devout Christians will take his political philosophy seriously. Since there are similarities between Hobbes' religious discussion in *The Elements* and *De Cive*, it may be tempting to assume that Hobbes persists to the end with the same intentions in mind. This assumption is untenable for two reasons. First, it ignores the different strategy that Hobbes employs in *De Cive*. In *The Elements*, the answer to 'what are God's laws for Christians?' was 'the laws of the kingdom of Heaven'. In *De Cive*, the answer is that God did not give new specific laws to Christians.[76] This is a fundamentally different strategy that Hobbes employs by restructuring his religious arguments around the various forms of the kingdom of God. Second, assuming that Hobbes is largely employing the same strategy in *De Cive* cannot explain the shift that occurs in the role that the interpretation of the sovereign plays in salvation. In *The Elements*, the obedience clause of salvation was explicated in terms of internal obedience to the laws of nature. The sovereign was responsible to interpret and judge all other religious controversies that were not essential to salvation. As we will see in *De Cive*, obedience is explicated in terms of repentance and a desire to

[76] It is true that Hobbes conceives of the divine laws as obliging Christians, but this is best understood in the context of my earlier discussion of how obedience to the laws of nature often depends on them being interpreted by the sovereign in the context of civil law. Therefore, to obey the divine laws is the same thing as obeying the civil sovereign in *De Cive* whereas obeying the divine laws in *The Elements* was only about obeying them in conscience as the church taught.

follow Christ's *teaching*. Since the interpretation of what Christ taught belongs to the sovereign, in *De Cive*, the conduct of a Christian necessary for salvation depends on the sovereign in a way that was impossible in *The Elements*.

I have argued that a primary reason why Hobbes continues his religious discussion after establishing that there are no divine positive laws for Christians is to give a more accurate picture of how Christian teaching is broader than mere teaching about the laws of nature. Hobbes is only able to give a more accurate picture because of this different strategy that is organized according to the different kingdoms of God. Hobbes has to explain how Christian conduct is affected by entering the new agreement established by Christ and how it interacts with citizenship in an earthly commonwealth. In *De Cive*, these are explicated in terms of Christ's teaching rather than his law, which will require us to recall the law/advice distinction that we discussed earlier in this chapter.

One item that is the same as in *The Elements* is that the church derives its authority to teach from Christ, whose authority is also limited according to his mission on earth:

> The Régime under which CHRIST rules his faithful in this life is not properly *a Kingdom, or government*, but a *Pastoral office* or *right to teach*, i.e. God the Father has not given him authority to *give judgements* about *mine* and *thine* as he has to the Kings of the Earth, nor to *compel* by *penalties* or *make laws*, but he has given him authority to reveal to the world and to *teach the away* and *the knowledge of salvation*, i.e. the authority to *preach* and to *explain* to men what they should do to enter into the *kingdom of Heaven* (*C* 208, iii.17.6).

If Christ did not establish laws, the instruction that he did give should be considered teaching or advice. In contrast to *The Elements*, then, the Christian faith is explicated in terms of teaching rather than law: "*Faith* is a part of

Christian teaching, and that is not encompassed in the term *law*" (*C* 65, i.4.24). The core of Christian teaching is a call to enter the new agreement by faith and obedience. When people enter the covenant, they agree "to serve God in the way CHRIST taught, [which] has two elements: *obedience to God* (that is what serving God is); and *Faith* in JESUS, i.e. to believe that JESUS IS THE CHRIST promised by God" (*C* 210, iii.17.7). In *The Elements*, religious authority was limited to teaching God's laws. In *De Cive*, religious authority concerns teaching about Christ's teaching rather than mere teaching about law.

The pastoral task of the church resembles Christ's: "to teach, strengthen and govern the minds of those who already believed" (*C* 223, iii.17.23). The authority to perform this task was first dispensed to the church when "CHRIST himself *chose* and *ordained* the first twelve *Apostles*" (*C* 223, iii.17.24). Ecclesiastical authority to teach will contain Christ's teaching on how to enter the kingdom of God to come, which is what Christians vow to pursue when they enter the new agreement. However, Christian teaching can never occur in a political vacuum because an essential part of Christ's teaching is repentance of sin, and sin is only defined by commonwealths: "a SIN is what anyone does, fails to do, says or wills contrary to *the reason of the commonwealth*, i.e. against the laws" (*C* 163, ii.14.18). Hobbes concludes: "acts have to be measured against laws before repentance. But it is useless to measure actions against law without an interpreter; for it is not the words of the law but the meaning of the legislator which is the rule of actions" (*C* 226, iii.17.25). The sovereign's interpretation forms one of two parts in the process of attaining salvation: "The first of these, i.e. the judgement

whether it is a sin, is for the *interpreter of law*, i.e. the *supreme judge* to decide; the second, remission or retention of sin, belongs to the Pastor" (*C* 226, iii.17.25).These two parts directly depend on two sources of authority: the sovereign authority of interpretation and the priestly ecclesiastical authority derived from Christ (*C* 208, iii.17.6). These two authorities only ever unite in a Christian commonwealth: "in *Christian* commonwealths judgement of *spiritual* and *temporal* matters belongs to the civil authority. And the man or assembly which holds sovereign power is the head of both the *commonwealth* and the Church; for a *Christian Church* and a *Christian commonwealth* are one and the same thing" (*C* 233, iii.17.28).

In *De Cive*, Hobbes dramatically changes his strategy for his religious discussion which motivates a repudiation of some of his central premises in his religious arguments in *The Elements*, including the contention that the church is the kingdom of God and that good Christian obedience is summed up by inner obedience to the laws of nature. In contrast, in *De Cive*, Hobbes denies that the church is the kingdom of God, opting instead to equate the church with Christian commonwealths. He also claims that the laws of the natural kingdom of God depend on the sovereign for sufficient promulgation and, moreover, that salvation itself depends on the will of the sovereign's interpretation. In short, all of these changes serve to strengthen and solidify the reach and strength of the sovereign's power and authority within the commonwealth. Although many of Hobbes' new teachings and strategies in *De Cive* will reappear in *Leviathan*, the expansion of the sovereign's authority will continue. The most significant changes that we will

see between *De Cive* and *Leviathan* stem from his ability to distinguish between (and describe) Christian and non-Christian commonwealths by introducing the kingdom of darkness.

Chapter 4: *Leviathan* and the Nature of Christian Sovereignty

In *De Cive*, Hobbes focussed on how civil and religious authority work together for salvation. The sovereign played an integral role in salvation by interpreting scripture, Christ's teaching, and the laws of nature, so that there would be sufficient knowledge for Christian obedience. According to the ecclesiastical authority to teach and perform priestly duties dispensed by Christ, church leaders were to teach the gospel in a way that conforms to civil law and offer forgiveness of sins to those who obey the civil laws and the teaching of the church. In *The Elements*, as discussed in chapter two, the fact that inner motions cannot be known by others provides the basis for a distinction between the sovereign's authority to make laws and the church's authority to teach Christ's message: in the external arena, behaviour is governed by positive laws enforced by the sovereign, whereas, in the inner arena, determinations of conscience are only subject to the influences of teaching and advice. A person's thoughts and desires are not observable phenomena because they occur in the inner realm. Since these kinds of actions are not observable, people who do not operate internally the way they should are not subject to punishment. In Hobbes' early thought, the ecclesiastical right to teach pertained to the inner sphere and the sovereign's authority to make laws only extended to the external sphere.

In *De Cive*, Hobbes implies that the church and state are one in a Christian commonwealth: "judgement of *spiritual* and *temporal* matters belongs to the civil authority" (*C* 233, iii.17.28). Although Hobbes did not expand on the how civil and ecclesiastical authority operate in a Christian commonwealth, in *Leviathan*,

their unity becomes a keystone of Hobbes' religious-politico thought as he focuses on the nature of Christian commonwealths in clear distinction from non-Christian commonwealths. In *Leviathan*, the authority corresponding to the distinction between the inner and outer realms unites, thereby extending and solidifying the reach of the Christian sovereign's power and authority. In this chapter, I will explore how Hobbes' religious discussion in *Leviathan* continues to affect his doctrine of sovereign power. In comparison to *De Cive*, Hobbes consolidates the Christian sovereign's power by unilaterally placing him at the head of all authority (inner and outer). In *Leviathan*, salvation depends solely on the authority of Christian sovereigns (rather than also depending on the church as an independent institution) and the Christian sovereign becomes obliged to God to use his political office for the aims of the church.[77]

In Chapter three I argued that Hobbes reforms his religious discussion in *De Cive* by structuring it around the various expressions of the kingdom of God. Although Hobbes retains the distinctions between the different forms of the kingdom of God, in *Leviathan*, the main structure of his religious thought is organized into two parts: "Of the Christian Commonwealth" and "Of the Kingdom of Darkness."[78] For Hobbes, the introduction of the kingdom of

[77] Hobbes refines the concept of authority in *Leviathan* by introducing the author/actor distinction. Accordingly, it will be important to identify how civil and religious authority operates under Hobbes' new account of authority.

[78] Hobbes defines the kingdom of darkness as "*a confederacy of deceivers that, to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavour by dark and erroneous doctrines to extinguish in them the light, both of nature and of the gospel, and so to disprepare them for the kingdom of God to come*" (*L* 411, iv.44.1). It is important to note that non-Christian commonwealths are not the same thing as the kingdom of darkness. Rather, non-Christian commonwealths are members of the kingdom of darkness in the same way that Christian commonwealths are members of the kingdom of God without being identical with the kingdom of God.

darkness allows him to sharply distinguish between Christian and non-Christian commonwealths. The nature of these commonwealths is determined by their orientation to the kingdom of God. In *Leviathan*, Christian commonwealths are the same as churches when they have a Christian population and are headed by a Christian sovereign. Consequently, the Christian commonwealth relates positively to the kingdom of God in that its mission is to prepare citizens for entry into the kingdom of God to come (*L* 276, iii.35.13); the church is an intermediary institution in place until Christ returns to establish and rule his kingdom after the resurrection. In sharp distinction, Hobbes defines the kingdom of darkness as "*a confederacy of deceivers that, to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavour by dark and erroneous doctrines to extinguish in them the light, both of nature and of the gospel, and so to disprepare them for the kingdom of God to come*" (*L* 411, iv.44.1). We will return to discuss the kingdom of darkness in further detail, but for now it is important to be clear about the status of the kingdom of darkness in relation to the forms of the kingdom of God and Christian commonwealths.

For Hobbes, members of prophetic kingdoms of God are also members of the kingdom of God by nature in virtue of their acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God:[79]

[79] As discussed in chapter three, the kingdoms of God are characterized by the different words of God (pp 45-47). For Hobbes, all kingdoms are governed by law, which in the kingdom of God, is the word of God. The various kingdoms of God, then, are distinguished by the various ways that God has spoken. The kingdom of God by nature, or, the "natural" kingdom of God, is a kingdom governed by God's laws insofar as they are promulgated by the dictates of natural reason. The kingdom of God by nature is not a commonwealth, but the collection of people who acknowledge the dictates of reason as the divine laws through which God governs the world. On the other hand, prophetic kingdoms of God are governed by the "prophetic word of God." As a result of this special revelation, the prophetic kingdom of God is a particular commonwealth with God as

> Subjects, therefore, in the kingdom of God are not bodies inanimate, nor creatures irrational (because they understand no precepts as his), nor atheists, nor they that believe not that God has any care of the actions of mankind (because they acknowledge no word for his, nor have hope of his rewards, or fear of his threatening). They, therefore, that believe there is a God that governeth the world, and hath given precepts, and propounded rewards and punishments to mankind, are God's subjects; all the rest are to be understood as enemies (*L* 234, ii.31.2).

The kingdom of God by nature is a generic kingdom that consists of all who believe that God governs the world, gives precepts, and offers rewards and punishments. Therefore, all Christians and members of the prophetic kingdoms of God are also members of the natural kingdom of God. For that matter, an individual in the state of nature preceding the establishment of civil commonwealths could also be part of the natural kingdom of God. It is possible, however, to be a member of the natural kingdom of God, but neither a member of a prophetic kingdom of God nor a Christian if an individual acknowledges God's power and governance of the world but denies the deity of Christ and does not covenant to take him as king in the kingdom of God to come.

In contrast, Hobbes thinks that all who are not members of the natural kingdom of God are enemies. The kingdom of God by nature and the generic kingdom of darkness are exact opposites. One could be a member of the kingdom of darkness as an individual in the state of nature, or even within a Christian commonwealth, if they deny the articles Hobbes' requires for membership in the natural kingdom of God. More importantly, non-Christian commonwealths headed by non-Christian sovereigns are part of the kingdom of darkness. They "believe not that God has any care of the actions of mankind (because they

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sovereign by covenant. All members of the prophetic kingdom of God are, by default, members of the natural kingdom of God, but not necessarily vice versa.

acknowledge no word for his, nor have hope of his rewards, or fear of his threatening)" (*L* 234, ii.31.2). According to Hobbes, members of the kingdom of darkness are antagonistic to the kingdom of God, even to the point where they actively try to interfere with Christian commonwealth's attempts to prepare Christians for entry into the prophetic kingdom of God to come: they "*endeavour by dark and erroneous doctrines to extinguish in them the light, both of nature and of the gospel, and so to disprepare them for the kingdom of God to come*" (*L* 411, iv.44.1). It is important to note that the kingdom of darkness primarily embraces the use of erroneous teaching to "disprepare" people for the kingdom of God to come, likely because teaching is aimed at the internal arena: the arena in which God always demands obedience. The introduction of the kingdom of darkness will allow Hobbes to sharply distinguish between the nature and operation of Christian and non-Christian commonwealths and their sovereigns. As I examine Hobbes' understanding of how Christianity operates within Christian and non-Christian commonwealths, I will pay special attention to the role of teaching and who possesses the religious authority to teach and make religious laws.

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes distinguishes Parts I and II from Parts III and IV according to two different sources of knowledge—reason and revelation:

> I have derived the rights of sovereign power, and the duty of subjects, hitherto from the principles of nature only. . . . But in that I am next to handle, which is the nature and rights of a CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH, whereof there dependeth much upon supernatural revelations of the will of God, the ground of my discourse must be, not only the natural word of God, but also the prophetical (*L* 245, iii.32.1).[80]

[80] In the Latin edition of *Leviathan*, Hobbes clarifies that the "much" that "dependeth" on supernatural revelations is *knowledge*: "But for the things to be said concerning the nature and

Accordingly, Hobbes' philosophy in the first half of *Leviathan*, as Brandon notes, "exhausts the politically relevant rules derivable from reason alone."[81] The division of Hobbes' philosophy by the two different sources of knowledge explains why chapter thirty-one ("Of the Kingdom of God by Nature") is placed outside of Part III even though its goals seem to relate more to the project of Part III.[82] The discussion of the natural kingdom of God depends on reason alone rather than revelation: "it is supposed that in this natural kingdom of God, there is no other way to know anything but by natural reason, that is, from the principles of natural science, which are so far from teaching us anything of God's nature as they cannot teach us our own nature, nor the nature of the smallest creature living" (*L* 241, iii.31.33). In this passage, Hobbes anticipates the introduction of a new source of information in Part III. If the aim is to determine the nature and rights of a Christian commonwealth and natural reason is limited in such an aim, "the grounds of [his] discourse must be, not only the natural word of God, but also the prophetical [revelation]" (*L* 245, iii.32.1).

Even though chapter 31 is in line with the methodology of Part II, it establishes themes that set the tone for Hobbes' religious discussion in Part III. As in *De Cive*, Hobbes is concerned about the commands of God and their implication for civil obedience:

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rights *of a Christian commonwealth*, the knowledge of which depends in great part on supernatural revelations of divine will, other principles are to be used, viz. the prophetic word" (*OL* 245, iii.32.1).

[81] Brandon, *The Coherence of Hobbes's* Leviathan, 38.

[82] The division along epistemological lines also explains why Hobbes does not include a chapter in Part I or Part II of *Leviathan* that proves from scripture that the laws of nature are the divine laws as he did in *The Elements* (chapter 18) and in *De Cive* (chapter 4).

> There wants only for the entire knowledge of civil duty, to know what are those laws of God. For without that a man knows not, when he is commanded anything by the civil power, whether it be contrary to the law of God or not, and so, either by too much civil obedience offends the divine Majesty, or through fear of offending God transgresses the commandments of the commonwealth. To avoid both these rocks, it is necessary to know what are the laws divine (*L* 234, ii.31.1).

According to the marginal note, the task of completing the entire knowledge of civil duty by examining the laws of God sets "[t]he scope of the following chapters" (*L* 233, ii.31.1).[83] Accordingly, Hobbes' quest to determine the nature and rights of Christian commonwealths in the second half is part of the broader project established in the last chapter of the first half. As we saw with *De Cive*, an answer to the question of "what are the laws divine?" will colour Hobbes' picture of the duties of Christian subjects and the nature of Christian commonwealths. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes expands much of his religious-politico thought in this context and presents a sovereign who actively pursues the moral formation of citizens in order to prepare them for entry into the kingdom of God to come.

For Hobbes, every Christian is a member of the natural kingdom of God and is obliged to obey the laws of nature as divine laws. In the particular kingdom of God, however, only members of that commonwealth are obliged to obey the positive divine laws of that kingdom. Although Hobbes had previously thought in *The Elements* that the church was the kingdom of God, in *De Cive* and *Leviathan*, he denies that the particular kingdom of God is extant until Christ returns after the

[83] The marginal notes appear published in the original 1651 edition (as well as the Latin 1678 edition); it is very likely that they were written by Hobbes himself. Even if he did not write them, it seems very likely that Hobbes either authorized them or, at the very least, was aware of them (authorization by tacit consent?). In light of the unusually high level of involvement that Hobbes had in the printing of *Leviathan* (his extensive involvement with the frontispiece is well documented), it would be very odd if the marginal notes did not represent Hobbes' mind.

resurrection. In virtue of this fact alone (although Hobbes provides additional considerations), there can be no divine positive laws for Christians to observe. Hobbes develops this theme in *Leviathan*.

In *De Cive*, it seemed as though the kingdom of God by the old agreement persisted through the exile and was intact (at least nominally) until Christ established the new agreement. In *Leviathan*, however, the reign of God as the sovereign of a particular kingdom ended with the election of Saul as king and that election was tantamount to a rebellion against God. In the kingdom of God, "God was king, and the high priest was to be (after the death of Moses) his sole viceroy or lieutenant" (*L* 274, iii.35.7). With the election of Saul as king, Hobbes claims that Israel rejected God as sovereign (*L* 275, iii.35.8-10). Hobbes' argument that the kingdom of God ceases when Israel chose Saul for a king rather than God sets the stage for much of what follows in *Leviathan*:

> In short, the kingdom of God is a civil kingdom, which consisted first in the obligation of the people of Israel to those laws which Moses should bring unto them from Mount Sinai . . . and which kingdom having been cast off in the election of Saul, the prophets foretold should be restored by Christ, and the restoration whereof we daily pray for when we say in the Lord's Prayer *Thy kingdom come* . . . and the proclaiming whereof was the preaching of the apostles, and to which men are prepared by the teachers of the Gospel—to embrace which Gospel (that is to say, to promise obedience to God's government) is to be in the *Kingdom of Grace*, because God hath *gratis* given to such the power to be the subjects (that is, children) of God hereafter, when Christ shall come in majesty to judge the world, and actually to govern his own people, which is called *the Kingdom of Glory* (*L* 276-277, iii.35.13).

This passage is likely one of the most concise sketches of Hobbes' overall framework for his religious thought in *Leviathan*. The removal of the kingdom of God from the historical picture is a double-edged sword because, in addition to

eliminating the possibility of divine positive laws for Christians, the fact that the prophetic kingdom of God will eventually be re-established provides the context for the goals and aims of the church. That is, teachers of the gospel are to prepare people for life in the kingdom of God to come. When sovereigns are Christians and the church is the Christian commonwealth, the goals of the church become a fundamental part of the nature of the commonwealth. Hobbes effectively establishes the framework for his goal of determining the nature and rights of Christian commonwealth by providing the aims and responsibilities of the church in contradistinction from the aims of commonwealths in the kingdom of darkness.

In contrast to my interpretation that Hobbes' teaching on the kingdom of God has the twofold purpose of eliminating divine positive laws and defining the mission of the church, Brandon claims that

> *the entire goal* here is to make it impossible for the various national kingdoms of the world, and of Europe in particular, to exist contemporaneously with the kingdom of God. Hobbes obviously wants to avoid any situation where a subject is under the dominion of two masters, and removing the kingdom of God from the contemporary world by relegating it to the past and the future furthers this aim.[84]

Brandon is correct to identify one function of Hobbes' teaching on the kingdom of God, but he fails to notice that Hobbes' doctrine involves an eschatology that has immediate implications for the Christian church. Even though there are no positive divine laws competing with the civil laws of particular commonwealths, Christian conduct and teaching is still guided by the prospects of life in the future kingdom of God. It is my contention that the preparatory work that is assigned to ecclesiastical leaders by Hobbes (as a result of his eschatology) provides an

[84] Italics mine. Brandon, *The Coherence of Hobbes's* Leviathan, 63.

agenda for the Christian sovereign's role in the moral formation of citizens. For Hobbes, all sovereigns are obliged to God to govern in certain ways according to the laws of nature. However, only Christian sovereigns are obliged by their baptism to a particular God-given agenda of moral formation. Insofar as Christian sovereigns are concerned, then, Hobbes' political theory has perfectionist elements.

One element that is consistent throughout Hobbes' political writing is that faith and obedience (repentance) are all that is necessary for salvation. In *The Elements*, salvation was understood in terms of eternal life in heaven and was an immediate consequence of faith and obedience to the laws of the kingdom of Heaven. In *Leviathan*, however, Hobbes explicitly defines salvation merely as safety and security against temporal evils: "to be saved is to be secured, either respectively, against special evils, or absolutely, against all evil (comprehending want, sickness, and death itself). . . . to be saved from sin is to be saved from all the evil and calamities that sin hath brought upon us" (*L* 310, iii.38.15). Partial freedom from evil (salvation) can be achieved when people exit the state of nature for the safety offered by the sovereign in a commonwealth.[85] Although, in the end, no sovereign can offer full salvation because they cannot eliminate the prospect of inevitable death, sickness, and want (after all, he is merely a *mortal* god himself). Salvation in the most complete sense, then, can only be offered in Christ's future kingdom, which will not be in heaven, but on earth: "it is evident that salvation shall be on earth, then, when God shall reign (at the coming again

[85] As Martinich notes, this "saving" is one of the features of Hobbes' doctrine of sovereignty that renders the sovereign a mortal god. See Martinich, *The Two Gods of* Leviathan, 47.

of Christ) in Jerusalem; and from Jerusalem shall proceed the salvation of the Gentiles that shall be received into God's kingdom" (*L* 311, iii.38.23). Hobbes' understanding of salvation as mere protection from evil would likely have been unusual for Hobbes' readers.[86] Nevertheless, the way in which Hobbes' salvation hinges on eschatology provides him with the context for how faith and obedience entail preparation for entry into the kingdom of God to come.

According to Hobbes, the preparatory work of ecclesiastical leaders becomes the work of the sovereign once sovereigns become Christians. In *Leviathan*, whether or not the sovereign is a Christian dramatically changes the way religious authority is exercised. For this reason, Hobbes divides Christian history according to whether or not sovereigns were Christians: from Christ to Constantine and from Constantine to Hobbes' day.[87] The primary feature that distinguishes these time periods is that, in the second, ecclesiastical authority

[86] Consider John Calvin's understanding of salvation which has more to do with restoring human nature rather than temporal safety from evil: "Man, created originally upright, being afterwards ruined, not partially, but totally, finds salvation out of himself, wholly in Christ; to whom being united by the Holy Spirit, freely bestowed, without any regard of future works, he enjoys in him a twofold benefit, the perfect imputation of righteousness, which attends him to the grave, and the commencement of sanctification, which he daily increases, till at length he completes it at the day of regeneration or resurrection of the body, so that in eternal life and the heavenly inheritance his praises are celebrated for such stupendous mercy." Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* , vol. 1, trans. John Allen (New Haven: Hezekiah Howe, 1816), 37. Two key components of Calvin's understanding of salvation are the immediate imputation of righteousness and the commencement of sanctification (becoming holy). For Calvin, salvation constitutes personal transformation both now (in that Christians can stand upright before God in Christ's righteousness), and later as the personal journey of sanctification is completed. Both aspects depend absolutely on what happens to Christians because of Christ's death and resurrection. In contrast, Hobbes has neither a notion of personal transformation, nor a clear dependence on Christ's death and resurrection in his understanding of salvation. For Hobbes, all salvation amounts to is complete protection from temporal evils that come against Christians—they are protected from death, sickness, and want. Since Hobbes' understanding of salvation has no element of personal transformation owed directly to Christ's work on the cross and speaks only of protection from temporal evils, in comparison to Calvin, Hobbes' salvation is deflationary.

[87] Although Hobbes briefly notes the difference that a Christian sovereign makes for the operation of Christianity in *De Cive*, he did not derive a theory of history accordingly or detail how their rule differs from non-Christian sovereigns as he does in *Leviathan*.

ceases to be independent from the sovereign in *any* way. (Arguably the most important chapter of Part III, chapter 42 ("Of Power Ecclesiastical"), is split according to whether or not sovereigns are Christians (at *L* 366, iii.42.66)). A unique feature of Hobbes' treatment of salvation in *Leviathan* is that he divides his discussion of it into two chapters (chapter 38: "Of the Signification in Scripture of Eternal Life, Hell, Salvation, The World to Come, and Redemption"; and chapter 43: "Of what is Necessary for a Man's Reception into the Kingdom of Heaven"). In chapter 38, he provides the definition and details of what constitutes salvation and in chapter 43, he outlines what is necessary for salvation by depending, heavily at times, on the role that Christian sovereigns play in salvation. Following Hobbes, I will first examine the way that ecclesiastical authority and Christian obedience operates under non-Christian and Christian sovereigns, and how the conversion of Christian sovereigns has the effect of rendering independent ecclesiastical authority unnecessary. Next, I will turn to how Christian sovereigns incur a special obligation to God in their baptism to actively pursue the aims of the church of preparing citizens for entry into the kingdom of God and how the sovereign becomes intimately connected with the requirements of salvation in chapter 43. Finally, I will compare how Hobbes thinks the nature of Christian commonwealths and sovereigns differs from non-Christian sovereigns and commonwealths.

Before we proceed, it is prudent to first examine Hobbes' account of authority in *Leviathan* in order to make sense of how ecclesiastical leaders could have an authority that does not depend on the sovereign's will. Hobbes, likely for

the first time in his political writing,[88] provides an explicit definition of authority in chapter 16 of *Leviathan*: "And as the right of possession is called dominion, so the right of doing any action is called AUTHORITY. So that by authority is always understood a right of doing any act; and *done by authority*, done by commission or licence from him whose right it is" (*L* 101-102, i.16.4). For Hobbes, the right to perform an action is derived from a distinction between authors and actors: "Of persons artificial, some have their words and actions *owned* by those whom they represent. And then the person is the *actor*, and he that owneth his words and actions is the AUTHOR, in which case the actor acteth by authority" (*L* 101, i.16.4). When an actor represents an author, the actor is said to act by authority and is an "*artificial person*" (*L* 101, i.16.2). According to Hobbes' definition of authority, such representation results in authority because the author possesses a proper right to the words and actions that the actor represents.

Hobbes famously applies the concept of authorization to the civil covenant when individuals transfer their right of self-governance to the sovereign: "*I authorize and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men*" (*L* 109, ii.17.13). In this case, the sovereign becomes the actor and the covenanter the author. Sovereign *authority*, in distinction from sovereign *power*, is always derived from those who originally possess rights.

As mentioned in chapter three, in *De Cive*, the concept of authorization, in contrast to power, is an important addition to Hobbes' political philosophy.[89] Not

[88] See Lukac de Stier, "Hobbes on Authority *De Cive* and *Leviathan*," 51-52.
[89] See page 48, particularly footnote 66.

only does it stand behind the origin of sovereign authority, the concept of authorization stands behind the origin of ecclesiastical authority. For instance, Moses (the actor) possessed a unique authority in virtue of him representing God (the author). Hobbes thinks that God was the direct beneficiary of the covenant that instituted the prophetic kingdom of God. Therefore, God held all authority as the beneficiary of the covenant—not Moses. Moses only had authority because he represented God. Likewise, ecclesiastical authority occurs when God (qua author) authorizes ecclesiastical leaders (qua actors) to represent him. It is incorrect to understand ecclesiastical leaders as proper authorities in and of themselves. Rather, they only have ecclesiastical authority only if they represent God. Therefore, any potential conflict between civil sovereigns and ecclesiastical "authorities" would actually be a confrontation between civil sovereigns and God himself.

With a working understanding of ecclesiastical authority, we can proceed to examine how ecclesiastical authority operates under Christian and non-Christian commonwealths. Regardless of whether or not Christians are under Christian or non-Christian sovereigns, everyone who converts to Christianity enters a new covenant with God that is symbolized by baptism. As a result of this contract, even though Christ "was not then king in present," Christians are "obliged to obey him for a king" once he establishes his kingdom (*L* 328, iii.41.3). For Hobbes, the future nature of Christ's office as king necessitated Christ's first coming. That is, according to Hobbes, Christ needed to come to create a populace that will one day occupy his kingdom as citizens:

> there are two parts of our Saviour's office during his abode upon the earth: one to proclaim himself the Christ; and another, by teaching and by working of miracles, to persuade and prepare men to live so as to be worthy of the immortality believers were to enjoy, at such time as he should come in majesty to take possession of his Father's kingdom (*L* 329, iii.41.4).

The proclamation that Jesus was the Messiah was necessary for people to have faith and recognize him as the king of this future kingdom. Accordingly, as the apostles instituted the early church, the proclamation that Jesus was the Christ was an important part of their task which they passed to subsequent ecclesiastical leaders. The teaching, however, concerns the obedience component of salvation because teaching aims to ensure that Christians will be prepared to enter Christ's kingdom. In *Leviathan,* Christians are to obey the divine laws (the laws of nature) as members of the natural kingdom of God, but they are also to endeavour to follow Christ's specific teachings as taught by the apostles and revealed in the New Testament, which, as advice, do not obligate external actions: "we do not in baptism constitute over us another authority by which our external actions are to be governed in this life, but promise to take the doctrine of the apostles for our direction in the way to life eternal" (*L* 342, iii.42.18). To this end, ecclesiastical leaders are authorized by God to teach the doctrines of Christianity and Christians pledge to follow their teaching as much as possible.[90] Hobbes helpfully summarizes the twofold task of the Christian church: "[t]he work of Christ's ministers is evangelization, that is, a proclamation of Christ and a preparation for his second coming" (*L* 337, iii.42.8).

[90] As in *De Cive*, Christians are obliged to obey both the laws of nature qua divine law (which entails obedience to civil law) and the teaching of ecclesiastical authorities (provided that ecclesiastical authorities do not teach outside of their non-legislative commission).

For Hobbes, in non-Christian commonwealths, Christians operate in a hostile environment that "*disprepare*[*s*] *them for the kingdom of God to come*" (*L* 411, iv.44.1). As a result, the church and non-Christian sovereigns are at odds. According to Hobbes, however, members of the laity never have to worry about coming to a place where Christian obedience interferes with civil obedience. As we have seen in both *The Elements* and *De Cive*, Hobbes understands Christian obedience primarily in terms of repentance in the inner arena and the effort and desire to follow Christian doctrine; such obedience is not immediately subject to observation. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes again depends on the internal nature of Christian obedience to show that the requirements of salvation do not bring Christians into conflict with non-Christian sovereigns. In this context, Hobbes fully retains the dichotomy between civil authority and the ecclesiastical authority to teach.

Hobbes introduces the case study of Naaman to illustrate how Christians might submit to non-Christian sovereigns without compromising their integrity before God. In II Kings 5 we are told of the story of a pagan general, Naaman, who came to the prophet Elisha to be healed of his leprosy. As a result of Naaman's experience, he "was converted *in his heart* to the God of Israel" (*L* 338, iii.42.11. Emphasis added). However, following his conversion, Naaman returned to Syria and bowed before foreign idols at the command of his sovereign, apparently with Elisha's blessing: "*Go in peace*" (*L* 339, iii.42.11). Hobbes concludes:

> whatsoever a subject, as Naaman was, is compelled to [do] in obedience to his sovereign, *and doth it not in order of his own mind*, but in order to the

> laws of his country, that action is not his, but his sovereign's; nor is it he that in this case denieth Christ before men, but his governor, and the law of his country (*L* 339, iii.42.11. Emphasis added).[91]

In this passage, Hobbes is recalling his account of authorization discussed earlier: "the person is the *actor*, and he that owneth his words and actions is the AUTHOR, in which case the actor acteth by authority" (*L* 101, i.16.4). When this is applied to Naaman, the civil sovereign would be the author and Naaman the actor. According to Hobbes, since Naaman is not the author of his idolatrous actions, he does not jeopardize his salvation. However, in Naaman's case, the author/actor distinction is facilitated by the inner/outer distinction since it enables him to act as an artificial person on behalf of his sovereign without Naaman committing the sovereign's actions in his heart. Hobbes explicitly defends Naaman's actions on the basis of the inner/outer distinction:

> what if we be commanded by our lawful prince to say with our tongue, we believe not; must we obey such command? Profession with the tongue is but an *external* thing, and no more than any other gesture whereby we signify our obedience, and wherein a Christian, *holding firmly in his heart the faith of Christ*, hath the same liberty which the prophet Elisha allowed to Naaman the Syrian. Naaman was converted *in his heart* to the God of Israel (*L* 338, iii.42.11. Emphasis added).

For Hobbes, the fact that Naaman did not waiver in his internal obedience to God is what allows him to retain his salvation while performing illicit external actions. Naaman was free to act externally according to civil laws that were contrary to God's revealed will because, according to Hobbes, God unilaterally commands external obedience to civil laws (in virtue of keeping the civil covenant first made because of the laws of nature qua divine laws).

[91] For other discussions of Hobbes' use of Naaman, see Martinich, *The Two Gods of* Leviathan, 298 and Brandon, *The Coherence of Hobbes's* Leviathan, 89.

For Hobbes, before sovereigns were Christians (even though Christians are free to act internally according to the precepts taught by Christianity) members of the laity were always limited by civil laws in how they act externally. Christian scriptures can always be taught as counsel or advice for external actions when the sovereign is silent on relevant issues, but the scriptures can never be law without the sovereign's blessing:

> When, therefore, any other man shall offer unto us any other rules, which the sovereign ruler hath not prescribed, they are but counsel and advice, which, whether good or bad, he that is counselled may without injustice refuse to observe; and when contrary to the laws already established, without injustice cannot observe, how good soever he conceiveth it to be. I say: he cannot in this case observe the same in his actions, nor in his discourse with other men, though he may without blame believe his private teachers, and wish he had the liberty to practise their advice, and that it were publicly received for law. For internal faith is in its own nature invisible, and consequently exempted from all human jurisdiction, whereas words and actions that proceed from it, as breaches of our civil obedience, are injustice both before God and man (*L* 354, iii.42.43).

It is clear that Hobbes retains the distinction between the inner and outer arenas and that the teaching of Christian scriptures always applies in the inner. Christianity is not, however, a matter of merely obeying the laws of nature from within as was the case in *The Elements*. Rather, Hobbes applies the distinction to allow for the teaching of *all* of scripture's precepts. Since ecclesiastical leaders have no authority to make laws, they cannot make the precepts of scripture oblige external actions. Nevertheless, in a way not previously expressed in *The Elements* or *De Cive*, Hobbes considers the possibility that the entire canon of the precepts of Christianity (even those extraneous to the divine laws)[92] could be made a part

[92] As mentioned in chapter two (pp. 41-42) there are many examples of teachings in scripture that are not easily reduced to the laws of nature. Additional New Testament examples might include

of the civil law. The Christian frame of mind in non-Christian commonwealths is one of anticipation for the day when sovereigns convert and make all Christian precepts law thereby liberating Christians to act externally from within in all cases pertaining to religious belief.

It is clear that ecclesiastical leaders are not authorized to make laws, but only to teach and give advice concerning Christian doctrine. However, since the act of teaching is always an external act, it would seem that ecclesiastical leaders could come into conflict with the civil sovereign when their teaching conflicts with the non-Christian sovereign's teaching and laws. In order to understand how the ecclesiastical authority operates in non-Christian commonwealths, we must first examine the extent and origin of the sovereign's natural authority to teach before considering what Hobbes has to say about ecclesiastical teaching in non-Christian commonwealths (in his discussion of martyrdom).

It may have appeared in previous editions of Hobbes' political philosophy that religious authority to teach and perform priestly duties belonged to church leaders alone. In *Leviathan*, such is not the case. In chapter 12, Hobbes discusses the origin of religion and the disposition that humans have for religious belief (the "seeds of religion"). He argues that

> [t]hese seeds have received culture from two sorts of men. One sort have been they that have nourished and ordered them according to their own invention. The other have done it by God's commandment and direction. But both sorts have done it with a purpose to make those men that relied on them the more apt to obedience, laws, peace, charity, and civil society (*L* 67, i.12.12).

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instructions for women to wear head coverings (1 Cor 11:6), instructions not to eat meat with blood in it (Acts 15:29), and instructions regarding fasting (Matt 6:16-17).

In this passage, Hobbes indicates that all religion established by sovereigns (regardless of whether it is true or not) is designed to make people fit for life in the commonwealth. All sovereigns can use religion for training in civil obedience.

The aim of religion is consistent with a broader responsibility that Hobbes gives to sovereigns: "it is his duty to cause them so to be instructed; and not only his duty, but his benefit also, and security against the danger that may arrive to himself in his natural person from rebellion" (*L* 222, ii.30.6). In fact, almost half of the sovereign's duties described in chapter 30 involve teaching: he is to provide "public instruction" (*L* 219, ii.30.2), to ensure that citizens' rights are "diligently and truly taught" (*L* 220, ii.30.4), and citizens are "to be taught, first, that they ought not to be in love with any form of government they see in their neighbour nations, more than with their own, nor . . . to desire change" (*L* 222, ii.30.7). They are to be taught by the sovereign not to speak evil of the sovereign (*L* 223, ii.30.9), to honour their parents (*L* 223, ii.30.11), to know what justice is (*L* 224, ii.30.12), and, perhaps most importantly for our purposes, "they are to be taught that, not only the unjust facts, but the designs and intentions to do them . . . are injustice, which consisteth in the pravity of the will as well as in the irregularity of the act" (*L* 224, ii.30.13). It is clear that the sovereign has the right, authority, and responsibility by nature to teach people how to act externally *and* internally. The right of sovereigns to teach the inner realm naturally fits the design of religion "to make those men that relied on them the more apt to obedience, laws, peace, charity, and civil society" (*L* 67, i.12.12). It would seem, then, that for Hobbes, all sovereigns, Christian and non-Christian alike, have always possessed the right to

teach and instruct people's conscience. As we will see, this interpretation is confirmed in Part III where Hobbes claims that the Christian sovereign's pastoral office to teach existed before the conversion of sovereigns.

The fact that all sovereigns have the authority to teach religion underscores the precarious position that Christianity is in when sovereigns are not Christians. If we recall Hobbes' discussion of Naaman and the question of Christian submission to non-Christian sovereigns, Hobbes allowed for external obedience to civil laws that are antagonistic to Christian doctrine. The allowance, however, is ultimately based on the fact that civil sovereigns cannot observe and enforce the inner activity of citizens. Naaman was not obedient in his heart to his civil sovereign when he performed the actions the civil sovereign authored, even though Naaman was externally obedient to the civil law. For Hobbes, the teaching of Christianity, even when it surpasses the laws of nature, can never justifiably result in civil disobedience. However, the act of teaching Christianity is always external and can only persist in commonwealths where such teaching is prohibited if church leaders are authorized to do so independent from their sovereign.

The only reason why the ecclesiastical authority to teach and perform priestly duties can persist in the face of the sovereign's right to teach religion is because it is "done by commission or licence from him whose right it is" (*L* 102, i.16.4), who, in this case, is God. In non-Christian commonwealths, ecclesiastical authority was passed to men chosen by local churches by the laying on of hands, who themselves were authorized by Christ and his apostles (*L* 333, 360-63; iii.42.2, 56-57, 60). In his discussion of martyrdom, Hobbes explores how such

authority might persist in spite of the non-Christian sovereign's natural authority to teach religion.[93] Only in instances where non-Christian sovereigns try to inhibit the God-given calling of ecclesiastical leaders are they absolved of their duty to obey their civil sovereign and can be considered martyrs when they ultimately die for not relenting in their ecclesiastical calling.

For Hobbes, there are two sorts of Christians: "some have received a calling to preach and profess the kingdom of Christ openly; others have had no such calling, nor more has been required of them than their own faith" (*L* 340, iii.42.12). Only those who have a calling from God to preach and teach Christian doctrine in non-Christian commonwealths are justified in persisting in their external activity to the point of death:

> he that is not sent to preach this fundamental article [that Jesus is the Christ] . . . [is] not obliged to suffer death for that cause; because, being not called thereto, it is not required at his hands. . . . None, therefore, can be a martyr . . . that have not a warrant to preach Christ come in the flesh; that is to say, none but such as are sent to the conversion of infidels. For no man is a witness to him that already believeth, and therefore needs no witness, but to them that deny, or doubt, or have not heard it. Christ sent his apostles, and his seventy disciples, with authority to preach; he sent not all who believed (*L* 340-41, iii.42.14).

Hobbes' doctrine on Christian martyrdom is designed to rule out the possibility of civil disobedience for religious reasons within Christian commonwealths. It is significant, however, that Hobbes reserves a group of Christian leaders who have a unique calling from God to act externally so that the aims of the church can persist in non-Christian commonwealths. Hobbes confirms this point later on:

[93] It is important to remember, though, that the content of ecclesiastical teaching is never rightly antagonistic to the commonwealth nor non-Christian sovereign's authority (as Naaman illustrates). The only reason Hobbes mentions why non-Christian sovereigns would have a problem with Christian teaching is because, as members of the kingdom of darkness, they "disprepare" Christians for entry into the kingdom of God to come.

> Besides these magisterial employments in the Church—namely, apostles, bishops, elders, pastors, and doctors, whose calling was to proclaim Christ to the Jews and infidels, and to direct and teach those that believed—we read in the New Testament of no other. . . . [Nothing makes] an officer in the Church, save only the due calling and election to the charge of teaching (*L* 360, iii.42.55).

According to Hobbes, the calling of Christian leaders is derived from God in order to preserve the integrity of the church's aims in non-Christian commonwealths. Under non-Christian sovereigns, God *authorizes* those whom he calls to act externally insofar as what is necessary to ensure that the Christian message is spread to those who have not heard and to foster and disciple those who have heard and believed so as to prepare them for life in the kingdom of God to come. Moreover, to say that God authorizes ecclesiastical leaders is to say that they represent God's words and actions and are themselves, as a result, *artificial persons* insofar as they act in that capacity. Therefore, when non-Christian sovereigns conflict with ecclesiastical leaders, it is actually God that these sovereigns confront rather than the natural individuals who represent him.

We are now in a position to understand what happens to ecclesiastical authority under Christian sovereigns. As mentioned, Hobbes divides chapter 42, "*Of Power Ecclesiastical*," by whether or not sovereigns are Christians. At paragraph 66 he sums up what he had shown about ecclesiastical authority when sovereigns are not Christian. In paragraph 67, Hobbes proceeds to set the agenda for his discussion of the period of Christian sovereigns—a period that Hobbes found himself in: "We are to consider now: [g] what office in the Church those persons have who, being civil sovereigns, have embraced also the Christian faith."

It is crucial to note the very first thing that Hobbes brings to our attention in regards to this goal is the sovereign's natural right to teach religion:

> And first, we are to remember that the right of judging what doctrines are fit for peace, and to be taught the subjects, is in all commonwealths inseparably annexed . . . to the sovereign power civil. . . . And therefore, in all commonwealths of the heathen the sovereigns have had the name of pastors of the people, because there was no subject that could lawfully teach the people but by their permission and authority" (*L* 366-67, iii.42.66-67).

For Hobbes, one of the most important things that happen when sovereigns become Christians is that they become the teachers and pastors of Christianity in virtue of their sovereign power.

Before Christian sovereigns, ecclesiastical leaders were authorized by God through the laying on of hands (*L* 333, 360-63; iii.42.2, 56-57, 60). For the Christian sovereign to be the supreme Christian teacher and pastor, no such formalities are required because the sovereign becomes the head of the church in virtue of holding the position of 'sovereign' rather than because any right to teach is inherited from Christ via intermediary church leaders. Hobbes is very emphatic on this point:

> This right of the heathen kings [to teach and be pastors] cannot be thought taken from them by their conversion to the faith of Christ, who never ordained that kings for believing in him, should be deposed (that is, subjected to any but himself) or . . . be deprived of the power necessary for the conservation of peace amongst their subjects and for their defence against foreign enemies. And therefore, Christian kings are still the supreme pastors of their people, and have power to ordain what pastors they please, to teach the Church (that is, to teach the people committed to their charge) (*L* 367, iii.42.68).

Even though the church possessed a God-given authority to teach in non-Christian commonwealths, their independence collapses when sovereigns are Christians.

All authority, civil and religious, is derived from the Christian sovereign rather than directly from the church's commission from Christ; the sovereign is now the supreme pastor: "But if every Christian sovereign be the supreme pastor of his own subjects, it seemeth that he hath also the authority, not only to preach (which perhaps no man will deny), but also to baptize and to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and to consecrate both temples and pastors to God's service" (*L* 368-69, iii.42.72). Like the right to teach, the sovereign administration of sacraments is appropriate in virtue of the sovereign's pre-existing pastoral office.[94] Although the dichotomy between the inner and outer realms remains (sovereigns do not acquire any magical ability to determine the hearts of citizens by converting), the dichotomy between the church's authority to teach and civil authority to make laws disappears because, in *Leviathan*, sovereigns *always* had the power to teach and hold the office of pastor and, now that they are teaching Christianity, any independent Christian authority is redundant.

The collapse of independent ecclesiastical authority only happens in Christian commonwealths. In non-Christian commonwealths, Christian leaders retain their authority to teach to ensure that true religion has a voice. Ecclesiastical teaching, then, occurs simultaneously with the sovereign's religious teaching in non-Christian commonwealths. In contrast, sovereigns of Christian commonwealths have no pedagogical competition because they, by default, come to represent God to their citizens; Christian sovereigns become the voice of God: "he which heareth his sovereign ([his sovereign] *being a Christian*) heareth

[94] The right of the sovereign to administer sacraments is not something that was obviously (or explicitly) permitted in *De Cive*.

Christ; and he that despiseth the doctrine which his king (*being a Christia*n) authorizeth, despiseth the doctrine of Christ" (*L* 385, iii.42.106. Emphasis added). The privilege that sovereigns have to speak on God's behalf belongs only to Christian sovereigns because non-Christian sovereigns are not members of kingdom of God by nature, but, rather, are part of the ominous kingdom of darkness that Hobbes discusses in Part IV. Accordingly, sovereigns of such kingdoms can lead and teach their own religions, but they cannot speak for God because, even though they are legitimate sovereigns, they are not God's subjects.

Now that we have compared how religious authority operates in Christian and non-Christian commonwealths, we are closer to identifying the "nature and rights of Christian commonwealths" (*L* 245, iii.32.1) in contradistinction from non-Christian commonwealths. The final chapter of Part III immediately follows his discussion of Christian sovereigns and ecclesiastical power and completes his thought on salvation first presented in chapter 38.[95] In this earlier chapter, Hobbes primarily focusses on what salvation is and where salvation will occur (it is an earthly and temporal safety and protection from evil). In chapter 42, with his established foundation of Christian sovereigns and the collapse of independent religious teaching in Christian commonwealths, Hobbes expounds the requirements for salvation: faith and obedience (repentance). As mentioned, these two components are hardly unique to *Leviathan*. What is unique, however, is the extent to which Christian sovereigns are obliged to God, as a result of their covenant with God (according to the new agreement symbolized by baptism), to

[95] The first part of Hobbes' account of salvation was discussed on pages 82-83.

use their civil authority for their pastoral office in order to work towards the salvation of citizens and prepare them for life in the kingdom of God to come.

As discussed, when people covenant they require an outward sign to mark the beginning of any obligations incurred by that covenant. When Christians covenant to keep the new agreement established by Christ, the outward sign is baptism. Baptism serves as a public declaration of a person's intention to have faith and obedience for salvation. The average citizen need not worry about anything else other than persisting in their faith and obeying the civil laws, but Christian sovereigns incur a special obligation to God because they hold the office of civil sovereign: "For, as I have proved before, sovereigns are supreme teachers (in general) by their office, and therefore oblige themselves (by their baptism) to teach the doctrine of Christ" (*L* 380, iii.42.92). When the preparatory mission of the church falls into the hands of the Christian sovereign, the sovereign becomes obliged to use his sovereign office to do Christ's work on the earth. All other Christians fulfill their obligation by following the sovereign's laws, regardless of whether that sovereign is a Christian or not. The Christian sovereign, however, fulfills his obligation to God by duly performing his task as the supreme pastor of the church (his Christian commonwealth) and preparing people for life in the kingdom of God to come. Therefore, the civil sovereign "ought indeed to direct his civil commands to the salvation of souls, but is not therefore subject to any but God himself" (*L* 393, iii.42.125). In practice, Christian sovereigns are obliged to God to include all the precepts of scripture in the civil law because they must use their office for the church's aims: "And this law of God that commandeth

obedience to the law civil, commandeth by consequence obedience to all the precepts of the Bible, which . . . is there only law where the civil sovereign hath made it so, and in other places but counsel" (*L* 399-400, iii.43.5). When Christian sovereigns make the precepts of scripture part of the civil law, Christians no longer have to "wish" that they could openly practice their religion, but they are obliged to take the teachings of scripture as law as interpreted by their sovereign. Salvation, then, immediately depends on obeying the teachings of scripture as law rather than advice. The fact that Christ's teachings become law means that the civil law of the Christian sovereign directly prepares citizens for life in the kingdom of God to come. In contrast, the civil law in non-Christian commonwealths will likely "disprepare" citizens for a life of perfect peace and security. Therefore, the preparatory nature of the civil laws of Christian commonwealths is one of the primary features that distinguishes the nature of Christian commonwealths from non-Christian commonwealths.

Christian sovereigns must operate at the point where their duty and authority as sovereign intersects with their duty and pledged obedience to God according to the new agreement. When this happens, Christian commonwealths provide the setting that is most conducive to eternal felicity because it actively tries to secure its citizens in the kingdom of God to come (which, like all commonwealths, is a temporal and earthly kingdom). The kingdom of God to come will be a place of unending felicity (*L* 271, iii.35.1). Since the essence of salvation is "to be secured, either respectively, against special evils, or absolutely, against all evil (comprehending want, sickness, and death itself" (*L* 310, iii.38.15)

and felicity is "continual prospering" (*L* 34, i.6.58), salvation and felicity are closely linked concepts that are perfectly commensurate and only ultimately achieved in Christ's kingdom. These considerations underscore Hobbes' claim in Part I that eternal felicity depends entirely on the commonwealth: "As for the instance of gaining the secure and perpetual felicity of heaven by any way, it is frivolous, there being but one way imaginable, and that is not breaking, but keeping of covenant" (*L* 92, i.15.6). Remembering that, for Hobbes, salvation is only a perfect temporal safety from evil, it is clear that Christian commonwealths best serve its citizens because its sovereigns do everything within their reach to procure felicity and protection from evil (salvation) for their citizens. That is, they do everything they can to place people into the kingdom of God to come, the only locale of perfect temporal safety and protection. In contrast, insofar as they are part of the kingdom of darkness, non-Christian commonwealths are antithetical to the perfect felicity and salvation of its citizens.

Conclusion

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes elaborates the spiritual and temporal unity that occurs in Christian commonwealths that he first alluded to in *De Cive*. His religious project in *Leviathan* plays an important role in identifying the characteristics of commonwealths that operate according to truth, that is, it identifies the nature of Christian commonwealths; all other commonwealths are members of the kingdom of darkness described in Part IV. In comparison with the sovereigns of these commonwealths, as well as with the sovereigns presented in Hobbes' early work, the sovereign of *Leviathan* is to play an active role in the moral formation of citizens. When the Christian sovereign takes control of the mission of the church, he is given an objective agenda presented in the Christian scriptures that Hobbes thinks should be pursued at a political level.

According to Steven Wall, political perfectionism has two main components: "a commitment to an objective understanding of "the good" and "the rejection of state neutrality."[96] Hobbes' religious-politico thought in *Leviathan* has both of these elements. That is, he is committed to the idea that the teaching of Christianity delivers what is good for people and that Christian civil sovereigns ought to govern accordingly without heed to competing conceptions of the good. To be sure, Hobbes thinks that there is no formal "*Summum Bonum*" (*L* 57, i.11.1), but rather that "whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire that is it which he for his part calleth *good*" (*L* 28, i.6.7). Since felicity is "*continual success* in obtaining those things which a man from time to time

[96] Steven Wall, "Perfectionism in Politics: A Defense," in *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy*, eds., Christiano and John Christman (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 102.

desireth" (*L* 34, i.6.58), Hobbes thinks that "the object of man's desire is not to enjoy once only, and for one instant of time, but to assure forever the way of his future desire" (*L* 57, i.11.1). Therefore, the state of affairs where everyone can achieve the continual success of felicity operates as a broad notion of what is good in Hobbes' political philosophy. For Hobbes, this state of affairs is ultimately achieved in the kingdom of God to come as taught by Christianity. In this way, Hobbes' political philosophy merges with his religious thought in *Leviathan* so that Christian sovereigns actively try to institute what is good (the teachings of Christianity) in their citizens. As a result, Hobbes' mature political philosophy has important perfectionist elements that are largely absent in *The Elements* and *De Cive*.

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