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## Varieties of secularisation in English and Dutch public and international law

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## CHAPTER SIX

### HOBBS'S USE OF THE AUTHORISED VERSION, THE GENEVA AND OTHER BIBLES IN *LEVIATHAN*, PART III

#### Summary

Few areas of Hobbes's thought have received as much recent attention as his religion. "The Foole hath sayd in his heart, there is no such thing as Justice" is his famous silent adaptation from Psalm 14.1 that triggered centuries of debate. While the complexity of his thought is widely recognised, there are no elementary and comprehensive studies of Hobbes's biblical exegesis.

The exegetical techniques even within *Leviathan*, his most discussed work, have rarely been subjected to systematic analysis. This chapter hopes to show the importance of such work, and illustrate its potential by adumbrating some of its implications for the political and legal theory supporting seventeenth-century English secularisation and imperialism.

#### VI.1 Introduction

Selden was one of the few thinkers Hobbes admired.<sup>636</sup> A systematic textual study of their reciprocal influence remains a *desideratum*. While some direct textual connections will be noted, my objective here is to examine secularisation in Hobbes by offering case studies that illustrate the conspicuous and consistent idiosyncrasy of Hobbes's biblical interpretations in *Leviathan*, and its integral relevance to Hobbes's political project.<sup>637</sup> Hobbes puts the Bible to strikingly unsuitable uses hundreds and hundreds of times in his works. To avoid making this chapter unnecessarily long and overloading it with exegetical analyses of marginally

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<sup>636</sup> Viz. e.g. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* (London: Andrew Crooke, 1651), 46. Hobbes' 6/16 April 1636 letter to Glen, in ed. Noel Malcolm, Thomas Hobbes, *Correspondence* (Oxford, 1994), I.30. For Hobbes and Selden see Tuck, *Natural Rights*.

<sup>637</sup> While to my knowledge this has never been done, the literature on Hobbes' biblical criticism is too large even to survey here. On the technicality of tracing his biblical sources, see H.W. Jones, "Thomas Hobbes and the Bible: a preliminary enquiry," in ed. J.M. Vaccaro, *Arts du Spectacle et histoire des idées. Recueil offert en hommage à Jean Jacquot* (Tours: CNRS, 1984), 271- 85.

diminishing utility, but without ceding much explanatory force, this chapter is limited to seven examples from Part III of *Leviathan*, “Of a Christian Commonwealth.” After debunking the clergy’s claims to power independent from the Sovereign in the preceding parts of *Leviathan*, this is the section where Hobbes proffers his vision of the constitutional arrangement that ideally accommodates religious sensibilities with political necessity. As *Leviathan* is relevant to Hobbes’s *oeuvre* as a whole, Part III was chosen for its relevance to secularisation and sovereignty. Yet as Part III alone contains hundreds of Hobbes’s biblical exegeses, seven examples were selected according to two further criteria. Firstly, they pertain to well-known and core parts of Hobbes’s theory, including representation and anti-clericalism. Another criterion was their ability to illustrate something interesting about Hobbes’s exegetical method, which applies throughout Part III: namely his preference for the Geneva Bible over the Authorised Version. This in turn raises new questions about whether or not Hobbes regarded himself as a greater authority than the Sovereign in some religious matters; and if his published religious arguments were designed to wholly serve his political and legal agenda.

A sure sign of Thomas Hobbes’s greatness as a thinker is that the adjective from his name remained an insult long after his death. The label “Hobbist” put the accused beyond the pale of civilised, morally acceptable discourse.<sup>638</sup> It was the heterodoxy of his religious views that most upset contemporaries. In spite of this, Books III and IV of *Leviathan* (1651) and their religious context fell into comparative neglect some time during the twentieth century, as Pocock, Champion and others have pointed out.<sup>639</sup>

It is clear to any reader that Hobbes traced most seventeenth-century upheavals, from the Spanish Armada to the Civil War, to the unholy marriage of politics and religion. His fear of anarchy was triggered by religious “enthusiasm” as much as by political *libido dominandi*; and he saw the two as intertwined more often than not. The dilemma of choosing between papal and clerical abuse of the monopoly over right interpretation, and between *sola Scriptura* and the cacophony that is bound to arise from the individual right and duty to read the Bible for

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<sup>638</sup> John Collinges (1679), “the world were drunk with Hobbism & Parkerism.” Zachary Cawdrey (1681), Edward Stillingfleet (1681, associated with “Atheism”), William Sherlock (1687), Richard Baxter (1689, “Peccadillo as Atheism, Sadduceism, Bestiality, Hobbism, Popery, Man-slaughter, Adultery, Drunkenness, Swearing”), Jeremy Collier (1689) and others. Further references in J. Champion, “How to Read Hobbes: Independent, Heretic, Political Scientist, Absolutist? A Review of Some Recent Works on Hobbes.” *Journal of Early Modern History* 11:1-2 (2007), 87-98. Machiavelli’s influence and reputation are similarly linked. References and analysis in I. Evrigenis and M. Somos, “Wrestling with Machiavelli,” in *Pact with the Devil: the Ethics, Politics and Economics of Anti-Machiavellian Machiavellism*, Special Issue of the *History of European Ideas* 37:2 (2011).

<sup>639</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, “Time, History and Eschatology in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes,” in *idem*, *Politics, Language and Time* (Atheneum, 1973).

oneself, appears as a theoretical problem in *Leviathan*, and as an historical explanation of the Civil War in *Behemoth* (wr. 1668, publ. 1681).

A. This controuersy between the Papist and the Reformed Churches could not choose but make euery man to the best of his power examine by the Scriptures which of them was in the Right. And to that end they were translated into vulgar languages; whereas before the translation of them was not allowed, nor any man to read them but such as had expresse lycence so to doe. For the Pope did concerning the Scriptures, the same that Moses did concerning mount Sinai, Moses suffered no man to go vp to it to hear God speake or gaze vpon him, but such as he himselfe tooke with him. And the Pope suffered none to speake with God in the Scriptures, that had not some part of the Popes spirit in him, for which he might be trusted.

B. Certainly Moses did therein very wisely and according to Gods owne commandement.

A. No doubt of it; and the euent it selfe hath made it since appear so. For after the Bible was translated into English, euery man, nay euery boy and wench that could read English, thought they spoke with God Almighty and vnderstood what he said, when by a certain number of chapters a day, they had read the Scriptures once or twice ouer. And so the reuerence and obedience due to the Reformed Church here, and to the Bishops and Pastors therin, was cast off; and euery man became a Judge of Religion, and an Interpreter of the Scriptures to himselfe.

B. Did not the Church of England intend it should be soe? What other end could they haue in recommending the Bible to me, if they did not mean I should make it the Rule of my Actions. Else they might haue kept it, though open to themselues, to me seald vp in Hebrew, Greek, and Latine, and fed me out of it in such measure as had been requisite for the saluation of my soul, and the Churches peace.

A. I confesse this lycence of interpreting the Scripture was the cause of many seuerall Sects, as hauing lyen hidden till the beginning of the late Kings reigne, did then appear to the disturbance of the Commonwealth.<sup>640</sup>

Against pope and civil war, Hobbes praises Henry VIII's solution, namely transforming the Sovereign into the head of a national church. In *Leviathan*, he argues numerous times that biblical interpretation belongs to the Sovereign only.<sup>641</sup> One of the most important reasons why James VI/I had the Authorised Version (AV) prepared was to replace the Bishops', the Geneva, and other translations that contained Calvinistically anti-monarchical annotations, or otherwise undesirable features. The question arises readily: given the Sovereign's all-important right to control the text of the national religion according to Hobbes, what was Hobbes's relationship to the AV?

Elsewhere Hobbes claims the right of interpretation for the individual, and separately for himself at the time of writing: "For the church of England pretendeth not, as doth the church of Rome, to be above the Scripture; nor forbiddeth any man to read the Scripture; nor was I forbidden, when I wrote my *Leviathan*, to publish anything which the Scriptures suggested. For when I wrote it, I may safely say there was no lawful church in England, that could have maintained me in, or prohibited me from writing anything."<sup>642</sup> Elsewhere, he claims the right to interpretation at all times.<sup>643</sup> The individual's right to biblical interpretation, upon which his salvation depends, assumes that God's message can be interpreted well enough for salvation, whether thanks to the text's clarity, man's natural reason, the minimisation of the message essential for salvation, Hobbes's consistent distinction between knowing and believing, an admission of Scripture's incomprehensibility and the replacement of reason with faith as the key to salvation,<sup>644</sup> or the reliability of interpretative authorities, including the Sovereign and the consensus of divines and academics. Statements can be lifted from Hobbes's writings to support several of these contradictory positions. Figuring out the relationship

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<sup>640</sup> T. Hobbes, *Behemoth or the Long Parliament* (ed. P. Seaward, Oxford, 2010), 134-5. Thanks to Ioannis Evrigenis for the reference. Compare Harrington's argument that only professionals have the skills to interpret the Bible; therefore they must be paid by the state to teach, but given no political power. *Oceana* (London, 1656), 220-2. Also see *Behemoth*, 8, cited in J. Champion, "Hobbes and Biblical Criticism: Some Preliminary Remarks." *Bulletin Annuel Institut d'Histoire de la Reformation* 31 (2010), 53-72.

<sup>641</sup> E.g. *Leviathan*, chapter 33, 260; chapter 40, 320-30.

<sup>642</sup> Hobbes, *An answer to a book published by Dr Bramhall, Late Bishop of Derry, Called Catching of the Leviathan* ([1682]; Molesworth IV, 1811), 355.

<sup>643</sup> *Six lessons*, Lesson VI, in *English Works* VII, 350.

<sup>644</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan* ([1651] ed. Richard Tuck, Cambridge, rev. ed., 1996), e.g. 256 ("Therefore... without effect"); 406. All page references are to this edition unless indicated otherwise (e.g. Edwin Curley's Hackett). On Hobbes's deconstruction of Scripture see Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1996), 405.

between these claims would require discussions of Hobbes's rhetoric, development, and diverse contexts. This chapter's scope is limited to selective analyses of Hobbes's use of the Bible in Part III. In light of his attribution of interpretative rights to the Sovereign, this is a useful illustration of the value of a comprehensive close reading of Hobbes's biblical exegesis for future substantive discussions. By adumbrating seven out of 228 idiosyncratic biblical interpretations in Part III, I hope to demonstrate that examining his non-intuitive and idiosyncratic combinations of references can add a dimension of understanding to key concepts in his political theory, including full-spectrum representation (religious, philosophical and political), anticlericalism, deism, atheism or otherwise, the Christian Sovereign, and the Second Coming.

I used the Vulgate, Tyndale's, the 1560, 1587 (with Tomson's revised NT), 1599, 1610 and 1615 (with Beza's commentary) Geneva Bibles and the 1611 AV, versions that featured prominently in seventeenth-century debates, to check Hobbes's citations and his 'strings of references'. By the latter I mean the following. *Leviathan* is carefully broken down into small units of argument, as indicated either by the marginal summary or in the main body of the text. Often Hobbes would use several biblical citations to support a point. When Hobbes denied the clergy a formal power of excommunication, for example, he cited Titus 3.10, 2 Tim. 2.23 and Titus 3.9 to show that the AV translated the same Greek word in two different ways, and the resulting mistranslation of "avoid" as "reject" is to blame for much of the confusion in the debate on excommunication.<sup>645</sup> Where did Hobbes get the cross-references from? Assuming that he did not know all translations (Hebrew, Aramaic, Samaritan, Greek, Latin, English, etc.) and all variants by heart, he must have relied to some extent on the enormous exegetical tradition. An obvious possibility, though far from the only one, is the marginal glosses and cross-references in the Bibles themselves. The AV does not have a cross-reference between Timothy and Titus, so Hobbes must have used other sources. The Vulgate, Geneva and Tyndale do have the reference. The unsurprising inference is that Hobbes probably used one or more of these in addition to the AV. Pursued systematically and comprehensively, strings can yield surprising information about Hobbes's methods and sources.

Checking every biblical reference and all the strings in Parts III and IV against the Vulgate, the AV, Geneva and Tyndale leads to three general conclusions. First, from the number of identifiable borrowings it appears that Hobbes used the Geneva more often than the AV, both for references and the structure of his argument. Second, there is no indication that he used Tyndale's much, other than a few similarities in cases where Hobbes proposed an

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<sup>645</sup> *Leviathan*, ch. 42, 351.

alternative to the AV and the Geneva. Finally, since only a fragment of the references and strings in *Leviathan* come from the four sources I compared them to, there must be another source, or sources, that Hobbes had open on his desk while he was writing *Leviathan*. Except for the long polemical passage against Bellarmine, the identity of this source or sources remains an open question. If it was not a single source, it is unlikely to have been too many, given the difficulty of handling numerous disparate sources while constructing extended and complex theological and political speculations like those in *Leviathan*.

This chapter will give examples of Hobbes's surprising uses of the Bible from *Leviathan*, Part III to show how he led his readers, some of whom were well-versed in the Bible and the topical debates in political theology, to ideas that he did not spell out in the text. To do so, he had three variables to which he could deploy a range of rhetorical devices to get the desired interpretation: 1) the text of biblical passages (in several translations), 2) cross-references to other biblical passages that supported Hobbes's given interpretation, and 3) the historical context of the passages he cited. The first two required no other resource than the Bible itself, albeit in all its variants. For the third ostensibly primary source, namely the historical context of the given passage, Hobbes could draw on extra-biblical texts to obtain the intended interpretation. A range of rhetorical devices, from replacing universal with particular divine precepts (as in the case of the phrase, "peculiar people" discussed below), through inserting misdirecting cross-references, to the deliberate neglect of entrenched exegetical traditions, could be judiciously applied to these three signifiers. Describing at least some of these passages and demonstrating his use of the first two types of signifiers (biblical texts and cross-references) will hopefully lay the methodological foundation for a comprehensive evaluation of the whole of *Leviathan*, which in turn may contribute to the reconstruction of Hobbes's religious views.

Out of at least 228 idiosyncratic biblical interpretations in Part III, the seven cases developed below were selected to illustrate Hobbes's method.<sup>646</sup> The three selection criteria were the illustrative power of a case, the difference of its subject matter from other cases, and its distance from other cases within Part III. The aim was to render this collection of cases representative of Hobbes's exegetical strategy throughout Part III, as well as economical, involving the smallest possible number of *Leviathan* passages on the one hand, and of Hobbes's biblical references, on the other. This allows for more detailed treatment of individual cases in

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<sup>646</sup> The number is uncertain because some biblical references, even citations, are not indicated by the main text, the marginalia, or the typography of *Leviathan*.



a short space, and demonstrates Hobbes's intentionality and ingenuity in reworking the Bible to his purpose.

## VI.2 First example: Deut. 13:1-5

The first example consists of a single biblical reference in chapter 32, "*Of the Principles of CHRISTIAN POLITIQUES*," the first chapter in Part III. After the Hobbesian caveat: "Nevertheless, we are not to renounce our Senses, and Experience; nor (that which is the undoubted Word of God) our naturall Reason," he goes on to consider revelation, the prophetic as opposed to the natural word of God. His evaluation of different kinds of truth claims is fairly straightforward. In post-biblical times sense experience and natural reason must always stand ready to critically assess alleged prophecies, reported miracles and other supernatural occurrences. Even if there were miracles after Christ, could they serve as proofs of claims, do they have any bearing on the epistemic status of statements? Moreover, can these statements serve as the foundation of resistance against the established civil authority? What if two prophets clash? "If one Prophet deceive another, what certainty is there of knowing the will of God, by other than by way of Reason? To which I answer out of the Holy Scripture, that there be two marks, by which together, not asunder, a true Prophet is to be known. One is the doing of miracles; the other is the not teaching any Religion than that which is already established."<sup>647</sup> Hobbes cites Deut. 13. v. 1-5 to settle these questions.

| <i>Leviathan</i>  | Vulgate   | Geneva   | AV   |
|---|---|--|--|
| Deut. 13.1-5  |   |  |  |
| <i>If a Prophet rise amongst you, or a Dreamer of dreams, and shall pretend the doing of a miracle, and the miracle come to passe; if he say, Let us follow strange Gods, which thou hast</i> | 1 si surrexerit in medio tui prophetes aut qui somnium vidisse se dicat et praedixerit signum atque portentum<br>2 et evenerit quod locutus est et dixerit tibi eamus et sequamur deos alienos quos ignoras et serviamus eis<br>3 non audies verba prophetarum illius aut somniatoris | 1 IF there arise among you a Prophet or a dreamer of <sup>a</sup> dreames, (and give thee a signe or wonder,<br>2 And the signe and the wonder, which hee hath told thee, come to passe) saying, <sup>b</sup> Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not knowen, and let us serve them;<br>3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the wordes of the prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreames : for the Lord your God <sup>c</sup> prooveth you, to knowe | 1 IF there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,<br>2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;<br>3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to |

<sup>647</sup> *Leviathan*, 257.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><i>not known, thou shalt not hearken to him, &amp;c. But that Prophet and Dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to you to Revolt from the Lord your God.</i></p> | <p>quia temptat vos Dominus Deus vester ut palam fiat utrum diligatis eum an non in toto corde et in tota anima vestra<br/> 4 Dominum Deum vestrum sequimini et ipsum timete mandata illius custodite et audite vocem eius ipsi servietis et ipsi adherebitis<br/> 5 propheta autem ille aut fictor somniorum interficietur quia locutus est ut vos averteret a Domino Deo vestro qui eduxit vos de terra Aegypti et redemit de domo servitutis ut errare te faceret de via quam tibi praecepit Dominus Deus tuus et auferes malum de medio tui</p> | <p>whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soule.<br/> 4 Ye shall walke after the Lord your God and feare him, and shall keepe his commandements, and hearken unto his voyce, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.<br/> 5 But that Prophet, or that dreamer of dreames, he shall <sup>d</sup> be slaine, because he hath spoken to turne you away from the Lord your God (which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and delivered you out of the house of bondage) to thrust thee out of the way, wherein the Lord thy God commanded thee to walke: so shalt thou take the evill away foorth of the middes of thee.</p> | <p>know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.<br/> 4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.<br/> 5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath <sup>1</sup> spoken to turn <i>you</i> away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way in which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in: so shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.</p> |
|   |   | <p><sup>a</sup> Which sayeth that he hath things revealed unto him in dreames.<br/> <sup>b</sup> He sheweth whereunto the false prophets tend.<br/> <sup>c</sup> God ordaineth all these things that his may be known.<br/> <sup>d</sup> Being convict by testimonies, and condemned by the judge.</p>  | <p><sup>1</sup> spoken revolt against the LORD.</p>   |

There are several things to note here. First, Hobbes is fairly cavalier in his treatment of this passage. He omits phrases and translates others differently, notably “miracle” and “pretend to do a miracle” in verse 1, “follow strange Gods” in verse 2, and “to Revolt from the Lord” in verse 5. Hobbes was not afraid to criticise the AV, or even the Vulgate, or other exegetes like

Beza and Bellarmine. In most cases he would explain the reasons for his disagreement and the grounds for his own translation. Here he fails to note or explain his disagreement. His omissions and retranslations occur in the middle of a carefully constructed flow of argument concerning the epistemic status of Scripture and revelation, leaving one of the crucial load-bearing components of his argument hanging in the air. Hobbes's retranslation of "wonder" as "miracle" allows him to elaborate his position in the fierce seventeenth-century debate about the nature of miracles, and what they do and do not prove. It also enables him to connect false prophets with rebels against established civil authority. As the rest of chapter 32 confirms, Hobbes silently retranslates two phrases in Deut. 13 specifically in order to politicise the biblical language: *deos alienos* as "strange Gods" (in the sense of alien, foreign) instead of the Geneva and AV "other," and *vos avertet* as "to Revolt" instead of the Geneva and AV "to turn you away."

Hobbes's "to Revolt from the Lord" is interesting for another reason. The AV gloss may have been a source, but not for all of, or anything as stark as, Hobbes's interpretation:

Secondly, that how great soever the miracle be, yet if it tend to stir up revolt against the King, or him that governeth by the Kings authority, he that doth such miracle, is not to be considered otherwise than as sent to make triall of their allegiance. For these words, *revolt from the Lord your God*, are in this place equivalent to *revolt from your King*.<sup>648</sup>

Hobbes pins the interpretation on the historicisation of this OT scene, arguing from the start of chapter 35 that it refers to God's direct rule over the Jews, authorised by the covenant made at Mount Sinai. This historicisation is not original, but Hobbes's version is. In his account, Jesus was the next King in the lineage of divine rulers, but only to those who, like Paul, accepted Jesus as the new King of the Jews. As Curley points out, Paul never calls Jesus the King of the Jews, and Jesus consistently evaded the question when it was put to him.<sup>649</sup> Hobbes, however, is clear and insistent on Jesus's succession in chapter 35, and restates the same reading of Deut. 13:1-5 in the Review and Conclusion.<sup>650</sup>

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<sup>648</sup> *Leviathan*, 258.

<sup>649</sup> Curley, 248fn10.

<sup>650</sup> *Leviathan*, 487. Winch Holdsworth in *Defence of the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Same Body* (London, 1727) accused Locke of Socinianism for interpreting 1 Cor. 12:3 the same way, with "the Messiah the Lord" referring to the unitary Redeemer and future earthly King, in *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St Paul* (London, 1705-7).

By insistently interpreting these passages as referring to the Father and Jesus in their role as earthly sovereigns, the historicisation seems either to get away from Hobbes, or serve a specific premeditated function. If Jesus' rule is viewed as an historical event, then the truth of current Christianity requires that Christians have become the new Jews, by a mechanism Hobbes does not specify. Otherwise Paul's preaching, as interpreted by Hobbes, was intended for Jews only, and on his return Jesus will not be a legitimate king to the Christians.<sup>651</sup> Without addressing these issues, standard in the exegetical tradition, Hobbes focuses on laying the foundations for his doctrine of the Christian Sovereign. The analogy between God and kings delegitimises Revolt. To this he adds the parallel between biblical and extra-biblical covenants, the unbreakable pact that creates all sovereigns. Many royalists drew a similar parallel to argue that the absolute and indivisible power of kings was necessitated by the same logic as that which made God's omnipotence logically necessary.

This was not the avenue Hobbes took. He did not make this connection between the two Sovereigns explicitly. It was through an intervening step that Hobbes classified all post-biblical prophecy as sedition, incitement and revolt. The intervening step is simply the timely restatement of one of his main points, namely that miracles have ceased and were replaced by Scripture as the source of revelation; therefore anyone who publicly pretends to revelation is a liar and a manipulator of men, bent on establishing himself as a rival to the civil authority. This was perfectly in line with his stated aim of dispossessing clerics and self-proclaimed prophets from all political influence. It also clearly expressed his position in the debates that dominated his times, when visions and prophecies were often used to justify radical, subversive action.

However, compounding the earlier problem of the God-Jesus and Jews-Christians historical transitions, the objects of Hobbes's analogy shift in chapter 36, where he revisits the same Deut. 13:1-5 passage. He recalls his earlier description of the two marks of true prophecy,<sup>652</sup> namely miracles (including foretelling the future) and adherence to the religion "which is already established."<sup>653</sup> The God-Sovereign parallel of chapter 32 becomes a Moses-Sovereign parallel in chapter 36, when Hobbes names Moses a "Sovereign Prophet" whose prophecies must not be examined by the subjects with natural reason. It is not God, but Moses who institutes the new religion, and subsequent prophets must adhere closely, if they are to meet one of the conditions of possible veracity.<sup>654</sup> As the age of miracles has ceased with the

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<sup>651</sup> The same escalating tension between historicised and prophetic interpretations of Scripture features in many of Scaliger's and Selden's writings.

<sup>652</sup> *Leviathan*, 293-4.

<sup>653</sup> *Leviathan*, 257.

<sup>654</sup> Clarendon, *A Brief View and Survey of... Leviathan* (Oxford, 1676), 196, objects to Hobbes's two marks of true prophecy precisely because they undermine Moses. Hobbes's return to Deut. 13. in chapter 36 solves this problem,

end of the NT, the working of miracles ceases to be a requisite sign of true prophethood, leaving only adherence to “this Doctrine, *That Jesus is the Christ*, that is, the King of the Jews, promised in the Old Testament” – Hobbes’s *unum necessarium*.<sup>655</sup> This raises the intriguing possibility that Hobbes’s account of the Christian Sovereign in Parts III and IV *Leviathan* should be read not as his analysis or recommendation, but a prophecy.<sup>656</sup>

### VI.3 Second example: Exod. 19.5 – Tit. 2.14 – I Pet. 2.9 – I Sam. 8.7

The next case comes from chapter 35, “*Of the Signification in Scripture of KINGDOME OF GOD, of HOLY, SACRED, and SACRAMENT.*” The point at issue, God’s direct rule over the OT Jews and its relevance to later monarchies, is central to the whole of *Leviathan*. Hobbes rejects the metaphorical reading and shows that Scripture is in most cases literal when it discusses the Kingdom of God, “constituted by the Votes of the People of Israel in peculiar manner; wherein they chose God for their King by Covenant made with him, upon Gods promising them the possession of the land of Canaan.”<sup>657</sup> This is the same emphatic historicisation that we saw in the previous example. According to Hobbes, in the few instances when Scripture did use the phrase “Kingdom of God” metaphorically, it refers to God’s dominion over sin, and not to anything that could threaten the Sovereign’s authority.

Hobbes then widens the definition of the divine kingdom to include those whom God commanded directly, in addition to His general dominion over all men. Yet his reading of the biblical passage remains strictly historical. We get the following list of divine kingdoms: Adam, Noah, Abraham, God’s direct rule from Moses to Saul, and the future kingdoms of Christ and the Father. Next, Hobbes constructs his definition of “holy,” meaning God’s own by peculiar right, or commissioned by Him with a specific command. This train of argument in chapter 35 is

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but only by changing Moses’s status from prophet to “Sovereign Prophet,” in effect a shift from God to Moses as the divine commonwealth’s Sovereign. See other chapters in this Thesis for Machiavelli’s, Sigonius’s, Cunaeus’s, Selden’s and Harrington’s views of Moses, not God, as the Founder of Israel.

<sup>655</sup> *Leviathan*, 298-9.

<sup>656</sup> This need not imply hubris on Hobbes’s part; e.g. chapter 36, 291 allows for a definition of prophecy as simply prediction, whether by God’s agents or by impostors. My suggestion, however, is that Hobbes’s insistence on the *unum necessarium*, and his heterodox and idiosyncratic interpretation of Jesus as the future direct, civil ruler and King of the Jews, align to satisfy his post-revelation single criterion for constituting true prophecy in a divine kingdom. In other words, Parts III and IV can be cogently read as a millenarian prophecy.

This possibility is strengthened by the contrast between *unum necessarium* in *Leviathan*, and Hobbes’s philosophical discussion of the knowledge of God that is possible to man. Given man’s epistemic limitations, Hobbes writes in *Thomas White’s De mundo Examined* (wr. 1643), “I incline to the view that no proposition about the nature of God can be true save this one: *God exists*, and that no title correctly describes the nature of God other than the word ‘being.’” Cited in R. Tuck, “The ‘Christian Atheism of Thomas Hobbes,’” in *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, eds. M. Hunter and D. Wooton (Oxford, 1992), 113-30, at 115. If philosophy underscored man’s epistemic limitations, allowing for an apophatic theology at best, then *Leviathan’s unum necessarium* must be beyond philosophy.

<sup>657</sup> *Leviathan*, 280.

supported with a string of biblical references. We will only consider a segment here, Exod.19.5 – Tit. 2.14 – I Pet. 2.9 – I Sam. 8.7.<sup>658</sup>

In Hobbes's citation, in Exod. 19.5 God commanded Moses to tell his people the following: "If you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then yee shall be a peculiar people to me, for all the Earth is mine; And yee shall be unto me a Sacerdotall Kingdome, and an holy Nation." Hobbes criticises the AV and the Geneva translations equally, where instead of "peculiar people" we find "a peculiar treasure unto me above all Nations," and "the most precious Jewel of all Nations," respectively.<sup>659</sup> He then cites the Greek original of Tit. 2. 14 to show that "peculiar" should be understood as distinctive, unique, by special right. In the case of the divine kingdom this meant that God ruled over the Jews through their "Consent, and Covenant, which is in addition to his ordinary title, to all nations."

| <i>Leviathan</i>  | Vulgate   | Geneva  | AV   |
|---|---|---|--|
| Exodus 19.5   |   |   |  |
| <i>If you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then yee shall be a peculiar people to me, for all the Earth is mine; And yee shall be unto me a Sacerdotall Kingdome, and an holy Nation.</i> | <p>5 si ergo audieritis vocem meam et custodieritis pactum meum eritis mihi in peculium de cunctis populis mea est enim omnis terra</p> <p>6 et vos eritis mihi regnum sacerdotale et gens sancta haec sunt verba quae loqueris ad filios Israhel</p> | <p>5 Now therefore * if ye will heare my voyce in deed, and keepe my covenant, then yee shall be my chiefe treasure above all people, * though all the earth be mine.</p> <p>6 Yee shall be unto me also a kingdome of * Priests, and an holy nation. These <i>are</i> the words which thou shalt speake unto the children of Israel.</p> | <p>5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then <sup>c</sup>ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people : for <sup>d</sup>all the earth <i>is</i> mine.</p> <p>6 And ye shall be unto me <sup>e</sup>a kingdom of priests, and an <sup>f</sup>holy nation. These <i>are</i> the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.</p> |
|   | <p>5 Exod. 23.22, 24.7, Deut. 11.27, 28.1, Joshua 24.24, 1 Sam. 15.22, Isa. 1.19, Jerem. 7.23, 11.4-7, Hebrew 11.8, Deut. 5.2, Psalms 25.10, 103.17-8, Isaiah 56.4, Jerem. 31.31-3, Deut. 4.20, 7.6, 14.2, 14.21, 26.18, 32.8-9, 1 Kings</p>          | <p>* <i>Deut.</i> 5,2.<br/> * <i>Deut.</i> 10,14,<br/> <i>Psal.</i> 24,1.<br/> * <i>I Pet.</i> 2, 9.<br/> <i>revel.</i> 1,6.</p>  | <p>c Deut. 32. 8, 1 Ki. 8. 53, Ps. 135. 4, Isa. 43.1, Titus 2.14.<br/> d Deut. 10. 14, Job 41.11, Ps. 50.12, 1 Cor. 10. 26.<br/> e 1 Pet. 2.5, 9, Rev.</p>   |

<sup>658</sup> *Leviathan*, 281-3.

<sup>659</sup> "For a *Peculiar people*, the vulgar Latine hath, *Peculium de cunctis populis*: the English translation made in the beginning of the Reign of King James, hath, a *Peculiar treasure unto me above all Nations*; and the Geneva French, *the most precious Jewel of all Nations*. But the truest Translation is the first, because it is confirmed by St. Paul himself (*Tit.* 2.14.)..." *Leviathan*, 281.

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
|  | 8.53, Psalms 135.4, Song of Sol. 8.12, Isa. 41.8, 43.1, Jerem. 10.16, Malachi 3.17, Titus 2.14, Exod. 9.29, Deut. 10.14, Job 41.11, Psalms 24.1, 50.11, Dan. 4.34-5, 1 Cor. 10.26, 28.<br>6 Deut. 32.2-4, Isa. 61.6, Rom. 12.1, 1 Pet. 2.5, 2.9, Rev. 1.6, 5.10, 20.6, Lev. 11.44-5, 19.2, 20.24, 20.26, 21.7-8, 21.23, Deut. 7.6, 26.19, 28.9, Isa. 62.12, 1 Cor. 3.17, 1 Thess. 5.27, 1 Pet. 1.15, 1.16. |  | 20. 6.<br><i>f</i> Lev. 20. 24, Deut. 7. 6, Isa. 62. 12, 1 Thes. 5. 27. |
|--|--|--|---|

| <i>Leviathan</i>  | Vulgate   | Geneva   | AV  |
|---|---|--|---|
| Titus 2.14  |   |  |   |
| our blessed Saviour <i>gave himself for us, that he might purifie us to himself, a peculiar</i> (that is, an extraordinary) <i>people</i> | qui dedit semet ipsum pro nobis ut nos redimeret ab omni iniquitate et mundaret sibi populum acceptabilem sectatorem bonorum operum   | Who gave himself for us, that hee might redeeme us from all iniquitie, and purge us to be a <sup>f</sup> peculiar people unto himselfe, zealous of good works. | Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, <sup>k</sup> and purify unto himself <sup>l</sup> a peculiar people, zealous of good works. |
|   | Mat. 20.28, John 6.51, 10.15, Gal. 1.4, 2.20, 3.13, Eph. 5.2, 5.23-7, 1 Tim. 1.15, 2.6, Heb. 9.14, 1 Pet. 3.18, Rev. 1.5, 5.9, Gen. 48.16, Psalms 130.8, Eze. 36.25, Mat. 1.21, Rom. 11.26-7, Malachi 3.3, Mat. 3.12, Acts 15.9, Heb. 9.14, Jam. 4.8, 1 Pet. 1.22, 1 John 3.2, Acts 15.14, Rom. 14.7-8, 2 Cor. 5.14-5, Exod. 15.16, 19.5-6, Deut. 7.6, 14.2, 26.18, Psalms 135.4, 1 Pet. 2.9, Titus 2.7, 3.8, Num. 25.13, Acts 9.36, Eph. 2.10, 1 Tim. 2.10, 6.18, Heb. 10.24, 1 Pet. 2.12. | <i>f</i> As it were a thing peculiarly laid up for himselfe.   | <i>k</i> Mal. 3.3, Mat. 3.12, Acts 15.9, Heb. 9.14.<br><i>l</i> Ex. 15.16, Deut. 7.6.   |

Hobbes's recontextualisation of these two passages is particularly revealing. Exodus is about the people's covenant with God, made through the mediation of Moses. Only Moses is allowed to talk to God, and elaborate precautions are taken to ensure that the people would not.

Given the anarchical State of Nature and the power of religion to motivate everyone, Hobbes gives the monopoly of official scriptural interpretation and public ceremony to the Sovereign. It would have been easy to use Exodus for an analogy between, or even for a direct descent from, Moses and the Sovereign, both already shown to be God's representatives. Even if for well-considered epistemological reasons Hobbes continued to maintain that Sovereigns cannot force men to believe, he could have still followed the argument that the State of Nature

resulted from the Fall, therefore Sovereigns are divinely instituted and not only have the monopoly of interpretation but are actually right in religious matters, having been inspired by God; therefore every man who wishes for salvation should force himself to internalise and come to believe the religious views declared by the civil authority.

But neither epistemic humility nor Christian Stoicism drove Hobbes to develop his system along these lines. Instead, he argues that all men are wrong in their speculations about God, including the Sovereign. Hobbes retains freedom of conscience and belief for the individual, and limits the power of the Sovereign to external signs of worship.<sup>660</sup> The verses around the Titus passage give a similar story, only not about Jews and God, but Christ and the faithful who are purified through his sacrifice (Titus 1.15-3.1). There is a long tradition of tracing the connection between these two “peculiar people.” Hobbes does not conclude that Christian Sovereigns are as infallible and omniscient as God was, and Christ will be, when they rule directly over their chosen nations. Nor does he argue on this basis that it is useful to make oneself believe in the Sovereign’s Bible interpretation, even if only in the *adiaphora*.

The next textual corroboration of the meaning that Hobbes assigns to “peculiar” comes from 1 Pet. 2.9. In this short paragraph Hobbes overturns the interpretation of a verse cited by many chosen nation theorists.<sup>661</sup> The Exodus phrase, “kingdom of priests,” used by both the Geneva and the AV, is *regnum sacerdotale* in the Vulgate. Hobbes argues that the AV and Geneva were guilty of serious mistranslation, unless they meant the succession of High Priests who represented God from the time of Moses to Saul.<sup>662</sup> Instead, Hobbes proposes the translation, “a Regal Priesthood,” arguing that the AV and Geneva translation of *sacerdotium regale* in 1 Pet. 2.9 is correct, with which their translation of the same phrase in Exodus 19.6 is inconsistent.

This is the fight for God’s mantle. The objective of a time-honoured and multifarious Christian tradition (both Latin and Greek) was to show that a given form of government was either strongly analogous with or directly descended from the OT kingdom of God, and therefore it commanded greater legitimacy than other forms. Hobbes makes explicit comparisons between the indivisible sovereignty of God the King, and that of Christian monarchs. As we saw, he also claims legal continuity between Moses and the High Priests as representatives of God, but the connection he establishes between them on the one hand, and the Christian kings who ruled by God’s grace and commission, on the other, is more complex and subtle than some of his contemporaries understood, and than what we can examine here.

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<sup>660</sup> *Leviathan*, 479-80.

<sup>661</sup> He spells this out in the Latin edition.

<sup>662</sup> *Leviathan*, 282.



| Vulgate  | Geneva   | AV   |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Peter 2.9  |  |  |
| vos autem genus electum regale sacerdotium gens sancta populus acquisitionis ut virtutes adnuntietis eius qui de tenebris vos vocavit in admirabile lumen suum   | But ye are a chosen generacion, a <sup>d</sup> royal * Priesthode, an holie nacion, a " peculiar people, that ye shulde shew forthe the vertues of him that he called you out of darkness into his marveilous light, | But ye <i>are</i> <sup>l</sup> a chosen generation, a <sup>m</sup> royal priesthood; <sup>n</sup> an holy nation, <sup>3</sup> a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the <sup>4</sup> praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: |
| 1 Pet. 1.2, Deut. 10.15, Psa. 22.30, 33.12, 73.15, Isa. 41.8, 44.1, Ex. 19.5-6, Isa. 61.6, 66.21, Rev. 1.6, 5.10, 20.6, Psa. 106.5, Isa. 26.2, John 17.19, 1 Cor. 3.17, 2 Tim. 1.9, Deut. 4.20, 7.6, 14.2, 26.18-9, Act. 20.28, Eph. 1.14, Tit. 2.14, 1 Pet. 4.11, Isa. 43.21, 60.1-3, Mat. 5.16, Eph. 1.6, 3.21, Phil. 2.15-6, Isa. 9.2, 60.1-2, Mat. 4.16, Luke 1.79, Act. 26.28, Rom. 9.24, Eph. 5.8-11, Phil. 3.14, Col. 1.13, 1 Thess. 5.4-8. | d That is partakers of Christes Priesthode & kingdome.<br>" Or, gotten by purchase.  | / Deut. 10.15. <i>m</i> Ex. 19.5, 6, Rev. 5.10. <i>n</i> John 17.19. 3 Or, a purchased people. 4 Or, virtues.  |

The Geneva gloss interprets the verse as referring to the elect, which means being a member of Christ's priesthood and kingdom. Hobbes often discusses the elect in *Leviathan* as well as in other works, but he is reluctant to use the term in proving that "peculiar" and "holy" mean set aside for God by special command or right. A simple explanation could be that one of his main points here is precisely that there was no particular government that could claim direct descent or strong analogy with the Kingdom of God, as that came to an end with Saul's enthronement, and will only be resurrected at the Second Coming.<sup>663</sup> The elect do not, in this sense, form a divine kingdom within or above established civil sovereignties. His silence on predestination here must have struck his contemporaries, since this passage was a standard point of reference in that debate.

The other, related, issue that becomes conspicuous by its absence is the much-debated transition from Jews to Christians as the chosen nation. Hobbes was clearly familiar with the problem, and had his own views about it. He had a predilection for questioning the importance of Christian rituals and sacraments by showing their Jewish origins. Moreover, the biblical passages he uses in this chapter have a wealth of cross-references to both Christ and the Jews in order to show how God's words in the OT also apply to Christians after they became the

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<sup>663</sup> *Leviathan*, 283-4. This is the same strategy that is described for the Leiden Circle in Somos, *Secularisation*, and for Selden and Harrington in this Thesis.

chosen nation. Hobbes follows some of these cross-references himself when he sets up his string. The *Leviathan* paragraph on 1 Peter 2.9 explicitly mentions the Geneva translation.

A possible clue as to why Hobbes remained silent about the Jewish-Christian transition here could be that his stated aim in chapter 35 was to clarify the meaning of “kingdom of God,” “holy,” “sacred” and “sacrament,” and that the marginal summary for the section we are looking at, “That the Kingdome of God is properly his Civill Sovereignty over a peculiar people by pact,” suggests that if he laid too much emphasis on tracing the continuity from the original to the new chosen nation, then he may have diminished the force of his parallel between the God who ruled directly over Israel and the Christian Sovereign, and between the covenants that instituted them. A republican who wanted to draw a comparison between the relationship of a country’s sovereign assembly and its citizens and between the Jewish commonwealth under God’s direct rule would have found it more convenient to start the comparison with a juxtaposition of the two peoples, while it made sense for Hobbes to begin the same exercise by comparing the two sovereigns, instead of building the comparison on the continuity between the two peoples. This only explains the layout of the argument; it is another question, beyond our present scope, why Hobbes rejected the claims of both church and state for direct descent from the Jewish commonwealth.

The next verse cited to corroborate that the ‘kingdom of God’ should be taken literally is 1 Sam. 8.7. Again, this is a very short paragraph in which all Hobbes seems to argue is that God’s comforting words to Samuel (according to which the Jews who deposed God in favour of Saul rejected God, not Samuel) show that until his deposition God ruled over the Jews directly.<sup>664</sup>

| <i>Leviathan</i>  | Vulgate   | Geneva   | AV   |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1 Samuel 8.7  |   |  |  |
| <i>Hearken unto the voice of the People, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.</i> | dixit autem Dominus ad Samuhel audi vocem populi in omnibus quae loquuntur tibi non enim te abiecerunt sed me ne regnem super eos | And the Lord said unto Samuel, Heare the voyce of the people in all that they shall say unto thee: for they have not cast thee away, but they have cast me away, that I should not reigne over them. | And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for <sup>h</sup> they have not rejected thee, but <sup>i</sup> they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. |
|   | Num. 22.20, Psalms 81.11-2, Isa. 66.4, Hos. 13.10-1, 1 Sam.   |  | <sup>h</sup> Ex. 16.8, Mat. 10.24-5, Luke 10. 16.  |

<sup>664</sup> *Leviathan*, 282-3.

|  |  |  |              |
|--|--|--|--------------|
|  | 10.19, 12.17-9, Exod. 16.8,<br>Mat. 10.24-5, 10.40, Luke<br>10.16, 19.14, 19.27, John<br>13.16, 15.20-1. |  | i ch. 10. 19 |
|--|--|--|--------------|

After citing 8.7 Hobbes adds a reference to 12.12, recalling God’s defence of His people while still their king. 1 Samuel 8, however, is not only about the Jews forsaking God. They are shown to have been idolatrous in Egypt, just as they are rebellious now (8, 9); God Himself makes the parallel between idolatry and *lèse-majesté*. He then asks Samuel to tell the Jews what kings do: they take away their subjects’ relatives and property, to use and allocate as they wish, and the people will cry out as their king enslaves them. The passages before and after 8.7 are stark and striking, and have long been famous *loci*. The Geneva gloss for verse 11, the beginning of a list of monarchy’s horrors, runs: “f Not that kings have this authority by their office, but that such as reigne in Gods wrath should usurpe this over their brethren, contrary to the law, Deut. 17.20.” One reason why James VI/I commissioned the AV was precisely to remove anti-monarchical annotations like this. In this light, it is intriguing that Hobbes chose to add 1 Sam. 8.7 to his string. What was his point? Did he believe that God gave a correct description of human sovereigns? He was clearly not making a simplistic point about dictatorship as the price of survival, or introducing biblical support for his Sovereign, since here we see God Himself deposed by the people – not the sort of behaviour one would expect Hobbes to endorse. It may help to understand Hobbes’s point if we knew where he got his string from. We can trace some, but not all of it. The Vulgate and the AV have the Exodus-Titus link, and together with the Geneva they all have a reference between Exodus and Peter; but none of them could be the source for the odd choice of adding 1 Sam. 8.7. (Unless, improbably, Hobbes is drawing here on the long tradition of this passage justifying republicanism and/or tyrannicide.) Finding his source may help us understand Hobbes’s reason for choosing this passage to support his point about the kingdom of God.

#### VI.4 Third example: Ps. 36:31-Jer.31:33-Deut. 30:11,14

In chapter 36 Hobbes sets out to clarify the meaning of the phrase “the word of God” and the nature and role of true and false prophets. In one section he argues that the word of God can refer simply to statements consonant with natural reason, even when not spoken by a prophet.<sup>665</sup> His first example is 2 Chronicles 35:21-23, Pharaoh Necho’s warning to Josiah. Hobbes adds that in Esdras it was Jeremiah who warned Josiah, not Necho, but “wee are to

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<sup>665</sup> *Leviathan*, 290.

give credit to the Canonick Scripture, whatsoever be written in the Apocrypha.” This may be ironic, since in chapter 42 Hobbes is strongly critical of the separation of the canon and the apocrypha.<sup>666</sup> The next paragraph runs,

The *Word of God*, is then also to be taken for the Dictates of reason, and equity, when the same is said in the Scriptures to bee written in mans heart; as *Psalm* 36.31. *Jerem.*31.33. *Deut.* 30.11,14. and many other like places.<sup>667</sup>

Neither the sequence nor any of the connections come from the AV or the Geneva, and only the Psalms – Jeremiah link could come from the Vulgate. What is more remarkable about this string is that none of the verses cited has the phrase “word of God” at all. Instead, the Psalms and Jeremiah have divine “law,” Deut. 30.11 has “command,” and 14 has *sermo*. These biblical passages are all singularly unsuitable for demonstrating Hobbes’s point.

| Vulgate   | Geneva  | AV   |
|---|---|--|
| Psalms 37 (36).31   |   |  |
| lex Dei eius in corde ipsius et non subplantabuntur gressus eius  | For the Law of his God <i>is</i> in his heart, & his steppes shal not slide.  | The law of his God <i>is</i> in his heart; none of his <sup>9</sup> steps shall slide.   |
| Psa. 1.2, 40.3, 40.8, 119.11, 119.98, Deut. 6.6, 11.18-20, Prov. 4.4, Isa. 51.7, Jer. 31.33, Heb. 8.10, Psa. 37.23, 121.3, 17.5, 40.2, 44.18, 73.2, Job 23.11, Prov. 14.15, Eze. 27.6.            |   | 9 Or, goings.  |
| Jeremiah 31.33  |   |  |
| sed hoc erit pactum quod feriam cum domo Israhel post dies illos dicit Dominus dabo legem meam in visceribus eorum et in corde eorum scribam eam et ero eis in Deum et ipsi erunt mihi in populum | But this shalbe the covenant that I wil make with the house of Israel, After <sup>k</sup> those daies, saith the Lord, I wil put my Law in their inwarde partes, & write it in their hearts, & wil be their God, and thei shalbe my people. | But <sup>n</sup> this <i>shall be</i> the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, <sup>o</sup> I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; <sup>p</sup> and will be their God, and they shall be my people. |
| Jerem. 32.40, Deut. 30.6, Psa. 37.31, 40.8, Isa. 51.7, Eze. 11.19, 36.25-7, Rom. 7.22, 8.2-8, 2 Cor. 3.3, 3.7-8, Gal. 5.22-3, Heb. 8.10, 10.16, Jer.  | k In the time of Christ my Law shal be in stead of tables of stone be written in their heartes by mine  | n Hosea 3.5, Rev. 21.4<br>o Isa. 58.11<br>p Isa. 35.10, Rev. 21.4  |

<sup>666</sup> *Leviathan*, 362-3.

<sup>667</sup> *Leviathan*, 290. Hobbes’s reference to Ps. 36:31 is to the Vulgate. In the Geneva and the AV, Ps. 37:31 is the corresponding verse.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 31.3, 24.7, 30.22, 32.38, Gen. 17.7-8, Eze. 11.20, 37.27, Zech. 13.9, John 20.17, Rev. 21.3, 21.7                                    | holie Spirit, Ebr. 8,8.  |  |
| Deuteronomy 30.11  |  |  |
| mandatum hoc quod ego praecipio tibi hodie non supra te est neque procul positum   | For this commandment which I commande thee this day, is <sup>h</sup> not hid fro thee, nether is it farre of.      | For this commandment which I command thee this day, it <i>is</i> not hidden from thee, neither <i>is</i> it far off. |
| Psa. 147.19-20, Isa. 45.19, Rom. 16.25-6, Col. 1.26-7.   | <sup>h</sup> The Law is so evident that none can pretend ignorance.  |  |
| Deuteronomy 30.14  |  |  |
| sed iuxta te est sermo valde in ore tuo et in corde tuo ut facias illum  | But the <sup>k</sup> worde is verie nere unto thee: even in thy mouth & in thine heart, for to <sup>l</sup> do it. | But the word <i>is</i> very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.                  |
| Eze. 2.5, 33.33, Luke 10.11-2, John 5.46, Act. 13.26, 13.38-41, 28.23-8, Heb. 2.1-3, Jer. 12.2, Eze. 33.31, Mat. 7.21, Rom. 10.8-10. | <sup>k</sup> Even the Lawe & the Gospel.<br><sup>l</sup> By faith in Christ.                                       |  |

Not only the letter, the spirit of these verses also makes them unsuitable for showing that the word of God can mean natural reason. The context of the Psalms verse gives no such clue, while the other three concern entirely different topics. Jeremiah is about God's promise of a new covenant, after which He will put His law into the heart of His people. Not before, and not into the heart of everyone; while Hobbes's argument is about natural reason that all men are supposed to have. The Deuteronomy verses are about the divine laws, the meaning of which God revealed and incorporated into the terms of His covenant with the Jews (Deut. 29.1 ff., esp. 29.29). Again, this is a special case and not something that applies to the whole of mankind. In other words, this is a reversal of the universal-to-particular subversion of the exegetical tradition that we saw in the second example, where Hobbes changed universal promises of redemption to a narrow historical pledge, given to those over whom God and Jesus rule directly.<sup>668</sup>

#### VI.5 Fourth example: Num. 27:21

The next example of an odd use of the Bible is in chapter 40, where Hobbes tries to show that after Moses and Aaron, the role of representing God's sovereignty passed on to Eleazar the

<sup>668</sup> Cases of Grotius's similar inversion of universal and particular divine commands are given in Somos, *Secularisation*, chapter V. See the similar observation on this *Leviathan* passage in Curley, 282fn8.

High Priest. God also appointed Joshua as General, but he remained subordinate to Eleazar. To support this, Hobbes cites Numbers 27:21.<sup>669</sup>

This is a crucial passage. It was a masterstroke on Hobbes's part that while he agreed that "the Supreme Power of making War and Peace, was in the Priest," and that "the Civill and Ecclesiasticall Power were both joined together in one and the same person, the High Priest; and ought to bee so, in whosoever governeth by Divine Right; that is, by Authority immediate from God,"<sup>670</sup> he then turned the tables by saying that after the anointment of Saul it was kings, not priests, who carried on legitimate government. Therefore Popes cannot claim any power that descends from ancient Israel.<sup>671</sup>

Hobbes's use of the verse, however, is not straightforward. Its original context is revealing. After God tells Moses that he is going to die, Moses asks for a successor, so that he would not leave the congregation without a shepherd. Yet it is unclear what Joshua is appointed for. The verse reads as if his were a ritual function, telling the congregation to go in and out (*exire et intrare*). According to the Geneva gloss this denotes civil magistracy, while Hobbes thought it meant being the general of the army.<sup>672</sup> God tells Moses to confer some of his honour on Joshua and to invest him in front of the congregation. The Geneva Bible interpreted this as telling Joshua "how he should governe himselfe in his office."

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<sup>669</sup> *Leviathan*, 327.

<sup>670</sup> This sentence is missing from the Latin *Leviathan*. Curley, 322fn5. But compare Sigonius on Saul: "he judged the tribes, and he had – both in conjunction with the council and by himself – absolute power to grant life or death as he saw fit; he was, in a sense, above the law." *De republica Hebraeorum*, VI.3, 272 in Shalem ed. Cunaeus describes the people and the priests standing in separate areas of the temple court, and the Sanhedrim and the king sitting in their separate areas. The intention was to signal "the king's unmatched dignity." Cunaeus continues, "So this set him above the priests as though he were closer to God, or a more important religious figure than they themselves were. And as for the other nations, Aristotle says that the earliest men more or less considered the same person to be both king and priest. I cannot see anything the least bit wrong with this. Those men were still living innocently according to nature, and the closer they were to their origins and their divine ancestry, the better they understood what was right." *De republica Hebraeorum*, 59. Hobbes's Christian Sovereign therefore approximates Cunaeus's Sovereign when the latter is closest to a blessed State of Nature.

<sup>671</sup> Cunaeus interprets Saul as the same turning-point: "The act of being anointed gave the kings a kind of divine stature and majesty, so that men would treat them as holy and they would have a closer relationship with God; but if the kings of that age did from time to time establish ceremonies and rituals to restore them to practice, it was certainly not because they were prophets. Though some people have this mistaken idea, it is completely groundless; for with the exception of David and possibly Saul, none of the others predicted the future by means of divine inspiration." *De republica Hebraeorum*, I.14, 59 in Shalem ed., 90 in the 1632 Elsevier edition, part of their famous *Respublicae variae* series, later known as *les Petites Républiques*, which Hobbes was fond of reading. V. Conti, *Consociatio Civitatum. Le repubbliche elzeviriane 1625-1649* (Florence, 1997).

<sup>672</sup> Hobbes changes his mind about this in *Behemoth*, 122-3. There he uses Num. 27:18-21 to describe the "gift of the Empire" received by Moses from God, and by Joshua from Eleazar. Here Hobbes (or rather speaker B, with whom A fully agrees) curtails the Pope's power by arguing that the High Priest's and the Pope's power is purely ritual. Dominion comes from the Sovereign. Curley 322n4 details other ways in which Hobbes's interpretation of Num. 27 here is highly idiosyncratic.

To my knowledge, after Flavius, Cunaeus was the first to emphasise the military valour of OT Jews. He thereby gave a new reason for their emulation, while refuting that emulation of, or pretended descent from, the divine commonwealth could bestow divine legitimacy. As shown above, Cunaeus's account of Jewish military organisation and ethos follows Machiavelli's categories and language closely, and was adopted in this form by John Selden. Also see Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* (Amsterdam, 1670), chapter XVII, sections 4-61.

| <i>Leviathan</i> | Vulgate   | Geneva  | AV  |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| Num. 27.15-23    |   |   |   |
|                  | 15 cui respondit Moses  | 15 Then Moses spake unto the Lord, saying,  | 15 And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying,   |
|                  | 16 provideat Dominus Deus spirituum omnis carnis hominem qui sit super multitudinem hanc                                | 16 Let the Lord God of <sup>d</sup> the spirits of all flesh appoint a man over the Congregation,   | 16 Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,  |
|                  |   | d Who as he has created, so he governs the hearts of all men.   |   |
|                  | 17 et possit exire et intrare ante eos et educere illos vel introducere ne sit populus Domini sicut oves absque pastore | 17 Who may <sup>e</sup> go out and in before them, & lead them out and in, that the Congregation of the Lord be not as shepe, which have nto a shepeherd. | 17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd. |
|                  |   | e That is, govern them and do his duty, as in 2 Ch 1:10   |   |
|                  | 18 dixitque Dominus ad eum tolle Iosue filium Nun virum in quo est spiritus et pone manum tuam super eum                | 18 And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Ioshua the sonne of Nun, in whome is the Spirit, and <sup>f</sup> put thine hands upon him.                    | 18 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom <i>is</i> the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;  |
|                  |   | f And so appoint him governour.   |   |
|                  | 19 qui stabit coram Eleazaro sacerdote et omni multitudine  | 19 And set him before Eleazar the Priest, and before all the Congregation, and give him a charge in their sight.  | 19 And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.  |
|                  | 20 et dabis ei praecepta cunctis videntibus et partem gloriae tuae ut audiat eum omnis synagoga filiorum Israhel        | 20 And <sup>g</sup> give him of they glorie, that all the Congregation of the children of Israel may obeie.   | 20 And thou shalt put <i>some</i> of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.  |
|                  |   | g Commend him to the people as suitable for the office and  |   |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
|  |   | appointed by God.  |  |
| <i>He shall stand before Eleazar the Priest, who shall ask counsell for him, before the Lord, at his word shall they goe out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the Children of Israel with him</i> | 21 pro hoc si quid agendum erit Eleazar sacerdos consulat Dominum ad verbum eius egredietur et ingredietur ipse et omnes filii Israhel cum eo et cetera multitudo | 21 And he shal stand before Eleazar the Priest, who shal aske counsel for him by the <sup>h</sup> iudgement of Urim before the Lord: at his worde they shal go out, and at his worde they shal come in, <i>bothe</i> he, and all the children of Israel with him & all the Congregation. | 21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask <i>counsel</i> for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, <i>both</i> he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. |
|  |   | <sup>h</sup> According to his office: signifying that the civil magistrate could execute nothing but that which he knew to be the will of God.   |  |
|  | 22 fecit Moses ut praeceperat Dominus cumque tulisset Iosue statuit eum coram Eleazaro sacerdote et omni frequentia populi  | 22 So Moses did as the Lord had commanded him, & he toke Ioshua, & set him before Eleazar the Priest, and before all the Congregation.   | 22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation:  |
|  | 23 et inpositis capiti eius manibus cuncta replicavit quae mandaverat Dominus   | 23 Then he put his hands upon him, & gave him a <sup>i</sup> charge, as the Lord had spoken by the hand of Moses.  | 23 And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.  |
|  |   | <sup>i</sup> How he should govern himself in his office.   |  |

Hobbes also omits the phrase “after the judgment of Urim.” Urim is used by Harrington, for example, to argue for the republican-democratic character of Israel, in which votes and lot play an important part in political deliberation.<sup>673</sup> In contrast, the Geneva Bible interprets the Urim phrase as “[a]ccording to his office: signifying that the civill magistrate could execute nothing but that which he knew to be the will of God.” This is the sort of Calvinist interpretation that motivated James VI/I to organise the creation of the Authorised Version.

<sup>673</sup> James Harrington, *The Prerogative of Popular Government* (London, 1658), II.3. *Idem*, *The Art of Lawgiving* (London, 1659), II.2, 379 ff.



Tyndale's solution is again different. He gives the power over the congregation to Eleazar: "And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest which shall ask counsel for him after the manner of the light before the Lord: And at the mouth of Eleazar shall both he and all the children of Israel with him and all the congregation, go in and out." Although Hobbes may well have wanted to avoid the complications of introducing this device of divine government in addition to clarifying the hierarchy of God's various representatives, it is also possible that he may have simply retranslated the passage from the Vulgate without spelling out what "asking counsel" actually meant.

Hobbes also avoids discussing the congregation here, although it features prominently in the Numbers chapter he cites. Elsewhere he gives a detailed description and comparison of the Jewish and the early Christian ecclesiastical hierarchy and processes, from the congregations' election of ministers – over which the Apostles only presided, but had no power to interfere – to the order of donations.<sup>674</sup> The absence of even the tiniest comment on the congregation in Num. 27:21, which Hobbes uses to support the argument for the power of the civil authority over religious worship, is striking. Hobbes builds up the structure of at least these parts of his argument with a view to criticising the power claims of the clergy. Thanks to his reinterpretation, both the Sovereign and the community turn out to have more power than the priests and ministers. What Hobbes nonetheless avoids doing here, and in the second example described above, is clarifying the relationship between the Sovereign and the congregation.

To summarise, the oddities in Hobbes's use of this verse are the following: the very choice of the verse to prove his point, namely that whoever had civil authority in ancient Israel also had the right to regulate external worship; agreeing with Catholics that High Priests ruled in God's name, but showing how all that changed with Saul; making Joshua a general; and ignoring the political problems posed by biblical interpretations of the Urim and the congregation in the seventeenth century.

#### VI.6 Fifth example: Acts 1:20-22

As already mentioned, Hobbes gives a systematic treatment of church offices in chapter 42, 363-9. A point he keeps returning to is that in biblical times the congregations elected the various office-holders, and that these offices were limited to teaching and persuasion.<sup>675</sup> It is perhaps not without irony that he cites Acts 1:20 to show that even Judas had a bishopric.<sup>676</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> *Leviathan*, 365-7.

<sup>675</sup> Compare Harrington, *Oceana*, 220-2.

<sup>676</sup> *Leviathan*, 365.

Hobbes's citation follows the AV, but the Geneva glosses strongly resemble Hobbes's general drift in chapter 42.

| <i>Leviathan</i>  | Geneva  | Geneva glosses  |
|---|---|---|
| Acts 1:20-22  |   |   |
|   | 20 For it is written in the booke of Psalmes, * Let his habitation be voyd, and let no man dwell therein: * also, Let another take his <sup>s</sup> charge.     | * <i>Psalm.</i> 69,26.<br>* <i>Psalm.</i> 109,7.<br>s <i>His office and ministrie. David wrote these words against Doeg the Kings heardman: And these wordes, Shepheard, Sheepe, and Flocke, are put over to the Church office and ministrie, so that the Church and the offices thereof are called by these names.</i>   |
| <i>Of these men that have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,</i>   | 21 <sup>8</sup> Wherefore of these men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus was <sup>t</sup> conversant among us.                     | 8 The Apostles deliberate upon nothing, but first they consult and take advisement by Gods word: and againe they doe nothing that concerneth and is behovable for the whole body of the Congregation, without making the Congregation privie unto it.<br>t <i>Word for word, went in and out, which kinde of speach betokeneth as much in the Hebrew tongue, as the exercising of a publique and painfull office, when they speake of such as are in any publique office, Deuter. 31,2. I. Chronic. 27,1.</i> |
| <i>beginning from the Baptisme of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a Witnesse with us of his Resurrection</i> | 22 Beginning from the baptisme of Iohn unto the day that he was taken up <sup>u</sup> from us, must one of them be made a witnesse with us of his resurrection. | u <i>From our company.</i>  |
|   | 23 <sup>9</sup> And they <sup>x</sup> presented two, Ioseph called Barsabas, whose surname was Iustus, and Matthias.  | 9 Apostles must be chosen immediately from God, and therefore after prayers, Matthias is chosen by lotte, which is as it were, G O D S owne voyce.<br>x <i>Openly, and by the voyces of all the whole company.</i>  |

The plausibility of the influence of the Geneva glosses on *Leviathan* is supported by the fact that in his discussion of ecclesiastical hierarchy Hobbes relies heavily on several citations from the Acts, for which the Geneva provides copious glosses like the above. Hobbes also juxtaposes not only the Old Testament congregations with the early Christian church, but also these two with the Catholic and Protestant churches of his own time. His main point concerns the priests' illegitimate and deceitful self-aggrandisement. But it is not Hobbes's only point. In this passage Hobbes also seeks to define the powers of priests and congregations.

When an Apostle was needed, the Jerusalem congregation chose two people – one of them Matthias – then they drew lots. The Geneva version renders this as God's, not the people's, choice. Hobbes reads it as election by the congregation, just as the elevation of Paul and Barnabas to the Apostleship was authorised by the "particular church of Antioch." The early Christian congregations also elected the rest of the church officers. Only the twelve Apostles who saw Christ and were witnesses to Him were unelected. Even so, the Geneva commentators and Hobbes agreed that the Apostles were subordinate to the congregation. Their direct contact with Christ gave them no special authority. They could make no laws for a congregation, only advise them. Additionally to countering papal claims to divinely ordained superiority, and refuting the legates and other clerical officers from claiming power by virtue of apostolic succession, Hobbes also purports to give an accurate description of the original church hierarchy.

In the gloss to verse 21, the Geneva Bible makes Christ an actual officer in the church. By contrast, Hobbes follows the Vulgate or the AV and interprets "went in and out" historically, meaning being manifest in the flesh.

| Vulgate   | AV   |
|---|--|
| oportet ergo ex his viris qui nobiscum congregati sunt in omni tempore quo intravit et exivit inter nos Dominus Iesus | Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, |

Although neither the Geneva nor the AV make the connection between Acts 1:21 and Num., this is the same phrase that Hobbes invoked from Num. 27.17 and 21 concerning Joshua, in the fourth example above. There Hobbes made a general out of Joshua on the strength of these words, while the Geneva made him a governor or civil magistrate. Only the present Vulgate has a cross-reference between the Num. and the Acts verses. In all probability this is an example of Hobbes deliberately manipulating the text of the Bible to suit his purpose, or at least choosing not to explain the meaning of an important phrase, "going in and out in front of the

congregation,” which in chapter 40 he took to mean something quite specific, but nothing particular when cited in chapter 42.<sup>677</sup>

#### VI.7 Sixth example: Eph. 4.11-25

Here I would like to suggest that Hobbes’s commonwealth, described in the first two parts of *Leviathan*, is at least partially modelled on a particular theological position concerning the nature of the Christian Church, and that this position is well exemplified in the Geneva glosses.

On 391 in chapter 42 Hobbes sets out to refute what he said was Bellarmine’s last point, namely that all ecclesiastical jurisdiction belongs to, and can only be received from, the Pope. Hobbes’s refutation depends on smuggling in two assumptions that already contradict Bellarmine’s argument, and then drawing the conclusion. The first is that Eph. 4.11, the verse Bellarmine used, can be applied to the relationship between the Pope and the bishops, but not to the Pope and the King. The second is that “Christian Kings have their Civill Power from God immediately.” Magistrates get their power from the king, Hobbes begins. If we accept Bellarmine’s argument that bishops have no power other than what they receive from the Pope, then it follows that Bellarmine must either accept that not only the bishops but also every constable in the country has his authority *de iure divino mediato*; or he must admit that the bishops have a different source of power. In addition to the unwarranted assumptions, Hobbes’s argument here has several structural weaknesses, some of them due to his attempt to approximate, but not equate, the Sovereign to God, and to simultaneously remain Erastian by denying divine rights to clergy.<sup>678</sup> However, our present concern here is with his reinterpretation and use of Eph. 4.11, and his view of Christian Kings.

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<sup>677</sup> For Grotius’s similar bending of Deut. 20 in several directions, including universal-particular and particular-universal, historical-eternal and eternal-historical, see Somos, *Secularisation*.

<sup>678</sup> “The last point hee would prove, is this, *That our Saviour Christ has committed Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction immediately to none but the Pope*. Wherein he handleth not the Question of Supremacy between the Pope and Christian Kings, but between the Pope and other Bishops. And first, he sayes it is agreed, that the Jurisdiction of Bishops, is at least in the generall *de Iure Divino*, that is, in the Right of God; for which he alledges St. Paul, *Ephes. 4. 11*, where hee sayes, that Christ after his Ascension into heaven, *gave gifts to men, some Apostles, some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and some Teachers*: And thence inferres, they have indeed their Jurisdiction in Gods Right; but will not grant they have it immediately from God, but derived through the Pope. But if a man may be said to have his jurisdiction *de Jure Divino*, and yet not immediately; what lawfull Jurisdiction, though but Civill, is there in a Christian Common-wealth, that is not also *de Jure Divino*? For Christian Kings have their Civill Power from God immediately; and the Magistrates under Him exercise their severall charges in virtue of his Commission; wherein that which they doe, is no lesse *de Jure Divino mediato*, than that which the Bishops doe, in vertue of the Popes Ordination. All lawfull Power is of God, immediately in the Supreme Governour, and mediately in those that have Authority under him: So that either hee must grant every Constable in the State, to hold his Office in the Right of God, or he must not hold that any Bishop holds his so, besides the Pope himselfe.” Either both Pope and Sovereign are supreme governors, and have their power immediately from God, or the parallel and the conclusion does not hold. Most of *Leviathan* is about showing that there can be only one supreme governor, the Sovereign. Even if he could resolve this contradiction, another would arise immediately, since Hobbes did not derive the power of all sovereigns directly from God, only Christian sovereigns’. If the above passage is about Christian sovereigns only, then the statement that the magistrates and constables hold their power *de iure divino mediato*

Verses Eph. 4.13 and 16 offer, I think, a possible clue to Hobbes's concept of representation, "incorporation," embodiment, "carrying the person of," which is central to the instantiation and legitimacy of the Sovereign and of the Commonwealth. The way in which Christ represented all sinners has been the subject of centuries of theological speculation, and Hobbes may well have drawn on this when he constituted his Sovereign. A specifically Calvinist view appears in the Geneva commentaries to Eph. 4:11-25.

| Geneva   | Glosses   |
|--|---|
| Ephesians 4:11-25  |   |
| 11 <sup>6</sup> Hee therefore gave some <i>to be</i> <sup>l</sup> Apostles, and some <sup>m</sup> Prophets, and some <sup>n</sup> Evangelists, and some <sup>o</sup> Pastours, and Teachers.                               | 6 First of all he reckoneth up the Ecclesiasticall functions, which are partly extraordinary and for a season, as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelistes, and partly ordinary and perpetuall, as Pastours and Teachers.<br><i>l The Apostles were those twelve, unto whom Paul was afterward added, whose office was to plant Churches throughout all the world.</i><br><i>m The Prophets office was one of the chiefest, which were men of a marveilous wisdom, and some of them could foretell things to come.</i><br><i>n These the Apostles used as followes in the execution of their office, being not able to answere all places themselves.</i><br><i>o Pastours are they which governe the Church, and Teachers are they which governe the schooles.</i> |
| 12 <sup>7</sup> For the repairing of the Saints, for the worke of the ministrie, and for the edification of the <sup>p</sup> body of Christ.   | 7 He sheweth the ende of Ecclesiasticall functions, to wit, that by the ministrie of men all the Saints may so growe up together, that they may make one mysticall body of Christ.<br><i>p The Church.</i>  |
| 13 <sup>8</sup> Till weall meete together (in the <sup>q</sup> unitie of faith and that acknowledging of the Sonne of God) unto a perfite man, <i>and</i> unto the measure of the <sup>r</sup> age the fulnesse of Christ. | 8 The use of this ministrie is perpetuall so long as we are in this world, that is, untill that time that having put off the flesh, and throughly and perfittly agreeing betwixt our selves, we shall be joined with Christ our head. Which thing is done by that knowledge of the Sonne of God increasing in us, and he himselfe by litle and litle growing up in us untill we come to be a perfit man, which shall be in the world to come, when God shall be all in all.<br><i>q In that most neere conjunction which is knit and fastened together by faith.</i>  |

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means that Christian sovereigns have no power of their own in addition to God's commission. Therefore the whole argument about the providential instantiation of the Sovereign, as the only possible way to leave the state of nature, falls to the ground.

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <i>r Christ is said to growe up to full age, not to himselfe, but in us.</i>  |
| 14 <sup>9</sup> That wee hencefoorth be no more children,<br><sup>10</sup> wavering and carried about with every winde of doctrine, by the <sup>s</sup> deceite of men, and <sup>t</sup> with craftines, wherby they lay in wait to deceive.   | 9 Betwixt our childhood (that is to say, a very weake state, while as we doe yet altogether waver) and our perfit age, which we shall have at length in another world, there is a meane, to wit, our youth, and steadie going forward to perfection.<br>10 He compareth them which rest not themselves upon the word of God, to litle boates which are tossed hither and thither with the doctrines of men, as it were with contrary windes, and therewithall forewarneth them that it commeth to passe not onely by the lightnesse of mans braine, but also by the craftiness of certaine, which make as it were an art of it,<br><i>s With those uncertaine chances which tosse men to an fro.</i><br><i>t By the deceit of those men which are very well practised in deceiving of other</i> |
| 15 <sup>11</sup> But let us follow the trueth in love, and in all things, grow up into him, which is the head, <i>that is</i> , Christ.  | 11 By earnest affection of the trueth & love, we growe up into Christ : for he (being effectually by the ministerie of his word, which as the vitall spirit doth so quicken the whole body, that it nourisheth all the limmes thereof according to the measure and proportion of ech one) quickeneth and cheriseth his Church, which consisteth the proportica of every one. And thereof it followeth that neither this body can live without Christ, neither can any man growe up spiritually, which separateth himselfe from the other members.   |
| 16 By whom all the bodie being coupled and knit together by every joynt, for <sup>ŷ</sup> furniture thereof (according to the <sup>u</sup> effectual power, <sup>v</sup> which is in the measure of every part) receiveth <sup>x</sup> increase of the body, unto the edifying of it selfe in <sup>y</sup> love. | <i>u Of Christ, who in maner of the soule, quickeneth all the members.</i><br><i>x Such increase as is meete the body should have.</i><br><i>y Charitie is the knitting of the lims together.</i>   |

The 1560 Geneva Bible has completely different glosses for this chapter, but those in the 1599 edition are very interesting indeed. The little man that grows up in us connects particularly well with Hobbes's treatment of internalisation.<sup>679</sup> If we are one of the elect, after death we can achieve mystical union with God by internalising Christ, and a similar, though less perfect, mystical union in this life with a little help from the ministers, in a fully harmonious Church.

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<sup>679</sup> Compare Winstanley on the opposite of the ever-present Adam, namely the spiritual man, who judges all things. For a recent treatment of internalisation in Hobbes's moral psychology see C. Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph Over Reason* (Oxford, 2007), chapter 6.

Needless to say, this Church differs from Hobbes's Christian Commonwealth in several ways. The most immediately apparent resemblance between them is Hobbes's use of the body metaphor with Christ as their head. There are other parallels between Hobbes's Church and State. Future citizens of Christ's kingdom must internalise Christ's will in this life, while men in a State of Nature must prepare to suspend and delegate their will to the Sovereign before the Commonwealth can be established at all. The relationship between Christ and the elect, who accept Christ as their King, is similar to the relationship between the group of men who become a commonwealth by accepting the Sovereign. In both cases the king does not merely serve or legislate. He is the linchpin that holds the community together. He puts his own stamp on its character, and continuously nourishes and vitalises the whole body and its limbs. The citizen who abides by the civil laws is like the "perfit man" in whom Christ has fully grown up, and His will has taken over.

#### VI.8 Seventh example: the *unum necessarium*

Chapter 43 of *Leviathan*, "Of what is NECESSARY for a Man's Reception into the Kingdom of Heaven," contains a long discussion of *unum necessarium*.<sup>680</sup> Part of the context for this discussion is the voluminous and intricate early modern debate about essential and non-essential tenets, and the significance of the distinction.<sup>681</sup> As mentioned, Grotius, Herbert, Hobbes and Locke were among those who took the minimalist project to its logical conclusion, deconstructing the claims for the necessity of most Christian doctrines, in Hobbes's case leaving only that Jesus is the Saviour. All who believed this were Christians, with a right to critically examine other doctrines. Grotius, Hobbes and Locke all offered extensive biblical support for the argument that beliefs other than the messianic status of the historical Jesus are non-essential, setting up the claim that institutional ceremonies and the individual liberty to perform external actions pursuant to heterodox beliefs are subject to the magistrate's approval. Conscience could not be forced, but the magistrate could justly regulate public forms of worship. This extreme dogmatic minimalism complements the position on church-state relations normally called Erastian, but it does not lead automatically to modern ideas of tolerance.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>680</sup> *Leviathan*, 324-30. Note that this section is extensively rewritten in the Latin *Leviathan*.

<sup>681</sup> For one treatment of Christian minimalism and adiaphorism see Somos, *Secularisation*, 287-319, and the references there. The relationship between minimalism, ecumenism, adiaphorism, Nicodemism and Christian Stoicism awaits further study.

<sup>682</sup> Hans Blom, "Foreign Gods and Political Order: Locke, Spinoza and the Limits of a Tolerant Society," in eds. Camilla Hermanin and Luisa Simonutti, *La centralità del dubbio* (Florence, 2010), 973-98. Arthur Weststeijn, *Commercial Republicanism*, 307-44.

This is because the single remaining article of faith is a complicated one. Even extreme minimalists could and did portray Catholics, Jews, Socinians, atheists and nonconformists as denying Jesus' redemptive power, and therefore untrustworthy in worldly matters that require adherence to an ethical code – such as keeping promises – that is derived from the fear of eternal death and the promise of salvation. They also could, and did, accuse others of challenging the sufficiency of *unum necessarium*, thereby undermining social order and appropriating the Sovereign's right to regulate external behaviour. Catholics remained subject to the charge that they followed the Pope, whose secular powers were as extensive as a Sovereign's; therefore they were citizens of the Roman Catholic state, not of England.

Notwithstanding such limits of the legal and political effect of doctrinal minimalism, the seventeenth-century minimalist stance was calculated to effectively contain and prevent conflicts that were motivated or excused by religious arguments. Hobbes's formulation of the *unum necessarium* is a major contribution.

#### VI.8.1 First argument: *reductio ad absurdum*

First, Hobbes explains that "Christ" means the promised future king of an actual commonwealth. He then breaks down his argument into numbered parts. The first relies on the Gospels, including descriptions of the life of Jesus. Hobbes argues that the essence of all the Gospels is the *unum necessarium*, nothing more: "the Scope of all the Evangelists (as may appear by reading them) was the same. Therefore the Scope of the whole Gospell, was the establishing of the onely Article."<sup>683</sup> To show this, Hobbes first purports to summarise Matthew's gospel. His summary leaves out the Sermon on the Mount, the parables in chapters 13, 15, 16, 20, 25, etc., all the teachings of Jesus, Judas' betrayal, Pilate and the trial, and Jesus' resurrection. Instead, the list he claims is exhaustive contains only scenes that support his point, and not even all of those. Furthermore, the differences between the canonical gospels have always been a matter of intense debate, including the gaps between the historical accounts of Jesus' life in the synoptic gospels and John. Hobbes addresses none of this, even though he mentions John in this part of his argument: "And St. John expressly makes it his conclusion, *John 20.31. These things are written, that you may know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"<sup>684</sup> This is not, in fact, the conclusion to John: there is another whole chapter. In addition, Hobbes truncates the penultimate verse of the chapter he does cite,

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<sup>683</sup> *Leviathan*, 325.

<sup>684</sup> *Leviathan*, 325.



which ends with the phrase, “and that believing ye might have life through his name.” This first argument from the gospels as historical evidence already contains conspicuous idiosyncrasies.

#### **VI.8.2 Second argument: First string: Luke 9:2 – Mat. 10:7 – Acts 17:6 – Acts 17:2-3**

Hobbes claims that his second argument is based on sermons made by the Apostles, both before and after the Ascension. Instead, he cites passages describing Jesus’ commission to the Apostles, before the Ascension. One plausible reading of this inconsistency is that Hobbes is implicitly questioning the Apostles’ veracity regarding the source of their own authority.<sup>685</sup> This is corroborated by the fact that in chapter 42 he uses Matt. 10:7 and the identical argumentative structure, from *unum necessarium* to the Apostles’ mandate, to refute Bellarmine, papal infallibility and all popes, bishops, monks and clerics who claim to have temporal powers.<sup>686</sup> The string of biblical references in chapter 43 to support the *unum necessarium* follows the same structure and uses many of the same references, but applies them to the apostles:

The Apostles in our Saviours time were sent, *Luke 9.2.* to Preach the Kingdome of God: For neither there, nor *Mat. 10.7.* giveth he any Commission to them, other than this, As *ye go, Preach, saying, the Kingdome of Heaven is at hand;* that is, that Jesus is the *Messiah*, the *Christ*, the *King* which was to come. That their Preaching also after his ascension was the same, is manifest out of *Acts 17.6.*<sup>687</sup>

The first notable thing about this string of biblical references is that, according to Luke 9:2 and Matt. 10:7, Jesus gave several commissions in addition to preaching, namely to heal the sick, cast out devils and, in Matthew, to raise the dead. The Apostles received both the power (Matt. 10:1) and Jesus’ commission (Matt. 10:7), and did indeed perform all these. Although it would have been sufficient support for *unum necessarium* to say that Jesus instructed the Apostles to preach that he was the Messiah, Hobbes instead emphatically makes the point, recognisably erroneous, that this commission was the only one. Even if he wanted to minimise the powers that priests could claim through apostolic succession, he did not need to deny them the added commissions of healing and exorcism, especially after he showed these two to be one and the

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<sup>685</sup> For Grotius doing the same, see chapter IV. Section 5.3 above.

<sup>686</sup> *Leviathan*, 300-320.

<sup>687</sup> *Leviathan*, 325.

same.<sup>688</sup> He could have argued that it was the Church's duty to care for the sick, as long as it did not infringe upon the Sovereign's authority.

Hobbes's use of Acts 17:2-3 and Acts 17:6-7 is also peculiar. In Thessaloniki, Paul preached the divinely ordered necessity of Jesus' suffering, his resurrection, and his divinity. Paul's Jewish opponents distorted his words and accused him of inciting rebellion against Rome in favour of a new king. Hobbes reverses the textual order in *Leviathan*, citing the distorted report (Acts 17:6-7) before the real sermon (Acts 17:2-3), and treats both as equivalent proofs of *unum necessarium*. However, neither passage supports his argument. As Hobbes points out, the divine plan was not to make Jesus king at his first coming, but to obtain satisfaction for man's sins through the crucifixion. The accusation of Paul's opponents was unfounded. Paul himself taught several things in addition to Jesus being the Messiah, including precepts for the internal and external behaviour of congregations. The contradiction between Hobbes's agreement with Paul's critics (according to whom Paul fomented political rebellion) and Hobbes's citation of Acts 17 in support of *unum necessarium*, disappears only if being the new, actually reigning king and being the redeemer are not overlapping but identical conditions. This is possible if Hobbes was a millenarian, or if he agreed with Paul's critics, and/or if he historicised Paul's sermons as referring to an imminent second coming and found Paul to be wrong about it.<sup>689</sup> (As we saw in chapter IV, section 5.3, in *De veritate* Grotius explicitly upholds the latter interpretation, with what contemporaries like Sarrau recognised as devastating implications for the Apostles' reliability as witnesses to Christ's resurrection and the truth of Christianity. Hobbes may well have seen these criticisms.) Another possible and compatible explanation for the contradiction Hobbes creates by subverting Acts 17 is that again he chose not only inappropriate, but obviously unsuitable verses to prove his point.

While this is not the place to delve into Hobbes's probable sources, we can query how he assembled the Luke 9:2 - Mat. 10:7 - Acts 17:6-7, Acts 17:2-3 string. In most Bibles Luke 9:2 refers to Mat. 10:7-8 as well as to Mark 6:12, while Luke 9:1 points to Mat. 10:1 and Mark 3:13. Similarly to the verses in Luke and Matthew, those in Mark clearly state that Jesus gave the Apostles other commissions as well, namely to cast out devils and heal the sick. Elsewhere in *Leviathan* Hobbes argues that casting out devils and healing was often the same thing, since when men did not know the natural cause of an illness, they explained it with devils (e.g. chapter 8.) Even so, Hobbes fails to mention healing or exorcism either there, or here. Furthermore, he ignores the Mark references, even though all the salient Luke, Matthew and

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<sup>688</sup> E.g. *Leviathan*, 36-9: when men did not know the natural cause of an illness, they explained it with devils.

<sup>689</sup> Grotius explicitly argues the latter in *De veritate*, 1629 ed., 55-61.

Mark verses refer to one another, and are very similar. None of them, however, refer to the verses in Acts, and Acts 17 has no references to the others, either.

VI.8.3 Third argument: Second string: Luke 23:39-43 – Mat. 11:30 – Mat. 18:6 – 1 Cor. 1:21.

Hobbes' third argument for *unum necessarium* is

from those places of Scripture, by which all the Faith required to Salvation is declared to be Easie. For if an inward assent of the mind to all the Doctrines concerning Christian Faith now taught, (whereof the greatest part are disputed), were necessary to Salvation, there would be nothing in the world so hard, as to be a Christian.<sup>690</sup>

Minimalism was often complemented by the argument from simplicity, according to which the parts of the Bible that God wanted everyone to understand are so clear that there is no debate about them, and the others are inessential.<sup>691</sup> The general direction of this discourse was the opposite, the reversal of a long medieval process of theological refinement, and often provoked accusations of Arianism, Pelagianism, Socinianism, or even atheism.

Hobbes's string for this, the third argument, is Luke 23:39-43, Matt. 11:30; 18:6 and 1 Cor. 1:21. Although he does not explicitly mention Luke, he argues that the only reason why the thief upon the cross was saved was that he testified to Jesus being king. In support, Hobbes cites a part of Luke 23:42 *verbatim*, but without giving the reference. Hobbes's citation of Luke's report of the thief's words runs, "*Lord remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdome*; by which he testified no beleefe of any other Article, but this, That *Jesus was the King*."<sup>692</sup> The first thing to note is that the thief's statement supports the proposition that Jesus will be king, not that he already is. Secondly, the other source for this story is Matt. 27:44. Contrary to Luke, it describes both thieves reviling Jesus. This was a well-known and oft-cited instance of evangelical inconsistency. Hobbes leaves it unmentioned and unresolved, despite the fact that all Bibles have the cross-reference to the contradictory passages, and despite Hobbes's familiarity with the Gospel of Matthew, which he cites often in *Leviathan*, and twice as often in the third argument as the other books of the Bible combined. Luke 23:42 is another conspicuously inappropriate passage to support the *unum necessarium*.

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<sup>690</sup> *Leviathan*, 325.

<sup>691</sup> See chapter IV, section 2.5 above for Grotius's simplicity argument in *De veritate*, and some relevant background in ancient philosophy and early Christianity. Also see *Meletius*, sections 54 and 91.

<sup>692</sup> *Leviathan*, 326.

Hobbes quotes Matt. 11:30 as “Christ’s yoke is Easy, and his burthen Light,” though the original is direct speech in the first person. Matt. 18:6 is an odd reference: since little children believe in Christ, Hobbes argues, it must be easy to do. Matthew 18 is a long sermon by Jesus about the need to be humble, forgiving, and not hurt or despise children. Although in Matt. 18:6 Jesus does say that children believe in him, the verse itself is a severe threat against those who would offend ‘one of these little ones.’ Moreover, nowhere does Jesus say that belief is in any way easy; in fact, the overall impression is of a continuous struggle aimed at undoing the world in oneself. It certainly does not support Hobbes’s point.

The often-used “foolishness of preaching” in 1 Cor. 1:21 also stands out as an odd passage to choose to prove *unum necessarium*, especially that the ease of believing it is one proof of its validity and truth content. The passage is against worldly philosophy, including its commonsensical and eminently easy-to-believe components. The Geneva Bible, on which Hobbes draws more than the AV, gives elaborate and long glosses to 1 Cor. 1:21, which exemplify the early modern English concern with this passage. Despite Hobbes’s sophisticated engagement with contemporary exegetical debates elsewhere, here he uses without comment this highly debated biblical verse to prove easiness of belief – perhaps ironically.<sup>693</sup> Hobbes’s final point in support of this argument is that Paul, who “never perhaps thought of Transubstantiation, nor Purgatory, nor many other Articles now obtruded,” was still saved. It is worth noting, however, that it was physical signs that convinced Paul: the great light, the voice, and being thrown from his horse. God did not tell him anything about the second coming or Jesus being the king (Acts 9). There is no cross-reference between the passages cited in Hobbes’s third argument in Tyndale, the Geneva or the AV. The Vulgate refers from 1 Cor. 1:21 to Matt. 11:25, and also from Matt. 18:6 to Acts 9:5. If Hobbes’s edition had the same, then it is likely that he also had Paul’s conversion in mind when he wrote that Paul did not believe in transubstantiation. Neither, however, was Paul converted by *unum necessarium*, let alone the easiness of believing it, which is what Hobbes set out to prove.

VI.8.4 Fourth argument. Third string: John 5:39 – John 11:26-7 – John 20:31 – 1 John 4:2 – 1 John 5:1 – 1 John 5:5 – Acts 8:36-37

The fourth argument for *unum necessarium*, the keystone of Hobbes’s theology, builds on biblical passages that allow for “no controversie of Interpretation.”<sup>694</sup> His references are John 5:39; 11:26-7; 20:31; 1 John 4:2; 5:1; 5:5; Acts 8:36-37 as well as “Thy faith hath saved thee,”

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<sup>693</sup> Compare Grotius’s obviously untrue and potentially ironic claim that core doctrines of Christianity command universal consensus: chapter 4, Section 2.2 above.

<sup>694</sup> *Leviathan*, 326.

which only occurs in Luke 7:50 and 18:42, although the phrase, “thy faith hath made thee whole,” also appears several times (Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 8:48; 17:19). The Geneva Bible has no cross-references between any of the verses that Hobbes purports to cite. The AV only has Luke 7:50 to 18:42. The Vulgate has most of them, except for cross-references between any of the first seven verses in this string, and between “Thy faith hath saved thee” in Luke.

This connection between Luke and the first seven biblical references in Hobbes’s argument for *unum necessarium* is another instance of the influence that the Geneva glosses had on *Leviathan*, this time on proving *unum necessarium* with an argument from simplicity. Gloss k to John 20:29 explains the verse as: “Which depend upon the simplicitie of Gods worde, & grounde not the selves upon mans sense and reason,” while gloss b to 1 John 4:2 on Jesus reads: “Who being very God came from his Father and toke upon him our flesh. He that confesseth or preacheth this truely, hathe the Spirit of God, els not.”

Once again we find Hobbes choosing verses that are ambiguous at best, and often strikingly inappropriate, in ways that make the reader question the Bible’s authority and applicability to the constitutional issues raised in *Leviathan*. John 5:39 is a part of Jesus’ speech against those who do not believe in him. It takes the form of a legal argument that must have appealed to Hobbes. A man’s testimony about himself should be disregarded, Jesus begins, but his own messiahship is attested by John, God the Father, and by Scripture. Those who doubt that Jesus is the Son of God also reject these witnesses.<sup>695</sup> This is the context in which Scripture is mentioned, as one of the authorities ignored by all those who did not accept Jesus as the Christ. Hobbes uses this passage to argue that since Jesus was referring to the Old Testament (the New not having been written yet), and Jesus reduced the Old Testament to the “marks” and prophecies of Christ, therefore the only substantive message of the whole Bible is the *unum necessarium*. At the least, this is a radical interpretation of Jesus’ words.

John 11:26-27 comes from the resurrection of Lazarus. Martha’s response to Jesus’ question about her belief concerns eternal life; it says nothing about kingship. Throughout the fourth argument Hobbes repeatedly cites passages like this, which describe Jesus as the saviour, to show that he is king; yet the two are not necessarily synonymous. Likewise, John 20:31 is the closing formula of the doubting Thomas scene. It states that there were more signs that Jesus was the Christ, but these are not described. The signs that remain unwritten are

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<sup>695</sup> The role and importance of witnesses in Grotius’s reasoning about the truth of Christianity is discussed in chapter IV, e.g. in sections 2.2 and 2.3. Also Nan Goodman, “Seeing the World Seeing: The Puritans and the Legal Science of Evidence,” presented at *Sacred and Secular Revolutions: The Political and Spiritual Legacies of the Atlantic Enlightenment in the American Founding*, JMC and The Huntington Library, 7 March, 2014.

meant to make people believe and to have eternal life through their faith. Again, this is an odd passage to bear any weight in Hobbes's argument for *unum necessarium*, partly because Hobbes does not describe here what these signs might be (if they are miracles, for instance, Hobbes argues elsewhere that these have ceased after Christ) and partly because Thomas's demand for tangible evidence is a striking reminder that even Apostles are not always ready to take *unum necessarium* on faith alone.

The next biblical passage supporting the fourth argument is 1 John 4:2, a doctrinal exposition warning against false prophets, addressed to all believers. Acts 8:36-7 is about a eunuch who was reading Isaiah when he met Philip, who explained the Old Testament passage as a prophecy about Christ. The eunuch then wished to be baptised, so Philip summarised the faith. This seems like a straightforward and excellent choice for Hobbes to substantiate *unum necessarium* from the Bible. However, he irreparably obfuscates the matter by dividing the fourth argument for *unum necessarium* into five groups. The first group begins with John 5:39 about the marks of Jesus and the Old Testament; while the eunuch scene from Acts 8:36-7, which is in the last, fifth group is supposed to show that

Therefore this Article beleevd, *Jesus is the Christ*, is sufficient to Baptisme, that is to say, to our Reception into the Kingdome of God, and by consequence, onely Necessary. And generally in all places where our Saviour saith to any man, *Thy faith hath saved thee*, the cause he saith it, is some Confession, which directly, or by consequence, implyeth a beleef, that *Jesus is the Christ*.<sup>696</sup>

This conforms to Hobbes's definition and view of baptism as the sign of a pact with God and a promise to obey Christ when he establishes his kingdom, a view developed at length at the end of *Leviathan*, chapter 35, and in chapters 41 and 42. Although Hobbes discusses prophecy at length elsewhere, he does not bring in his own views here, even though the Acts passage clearly requires it. Not that his view of baptism was straightforward: it could be a sign of the elect, but in chapter 41 Hobbes historicises it, and presents it as a ritual established by Jews at a time of leprosy, or derived from the Greek practice of washing the dead. Still, for Hobbes it was one of the two deeply meaningful sacraments (the other is the Lord's Supper), all other rites being even more incidental and historically contingent.

Regarding the second sentence in the last passage, Jesus invariably uses the "Thy faith hath saved thee" and the "Thy faith hath made thee whole" formulae when dismissing

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<sup>696</sup> *Leviathan*, 326-7.

someone he just healed: never when he says that someone will enter Heaven or gain salvation. In sum, these passages have little of the meaning that Hobbes ascribes to them.

VI.8.5 Fifth argument. Fourth string: Mat. 24:23 – Gal. 1:8 – 1 John 4:1 – Mat. 16:18 – 1 Cor. 3:11-12 – Zech. 13:8-9 – 2 Pet. 3:7, 10 and 12

The fifth and final argument for *unum necessarium* is no less surprising. This argument is “from the places, where this Article is made the Foundation of Faith”: Matt. 24:23; Gal.1:8; 1 John 4:1; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11-12; Zech. 13:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:7, 10, 12. This string may have come from the Vulgate, since almost none of the cross-references are in the AV or the Geneva Bible.

The context of Matt. 24:23 reveals the typical Hobbesian interpretative strategy.

The last argument is from the places, where this Article is made the Foundation of Faith: For he that holdeth the Foundation shall bee saved. Which places are first, *Mat. 24. 23. If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, beleeve it not, for there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signes and wonders, & c.* Here wee see, this Article *Jesus is the Christ*, must bee held, though hee that shall teach the contrary should doe great miracles.<sup>697</sup>

The Matthean context is the end of the world and the destruction of the Temple. The whole chapter is dire and foreboding in tone, unfit to prove and flesh out a positive doctrine. Furthermore, Hobbes refers to the same verse and the same link (Matt. 24:24 and Gal. 1:8) in chapter 32 to show that miracles prove little, since even false prophets can produce them and “deceive the very elect.”<sup>698</sup> He also brings in the more ominous nearby verses (Matt. 24:5, 15) to discuss the Antichrist and the end of the world in chapter 42.<sup>699</sup> What connects Matt. 24:5; 25:11; 25:24 and 1 John 4:1 is the motif of false prophets. This is in the Vulgate, but not in the AV: Matt. 24:5 cross-refers to 24:11 and 24:24, while Matt. 24:11 refers to the other two Matt. 24 verses as well as to 1 John 4:1. Since Hobbes adapted this string either from another book or his own notes on false prophets and the end of the world, it is odd to find him recycle it to support *unum necessarium*.

The reference to Gal. 1:8 is not in Geneva or the AV, but the Vulgate 1 Cor. 3:10 does refer to Gal. 1:7-9. It is another incongruous passage, and its use for *unum necessarium* is conspicuously far-fetched and forced. Galatians 1 is an admonishment; Paul is berating the

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<sup>697</sup> *Leviathan*, 327.

<sup>698</sup> *Leviathan*, 197.

<sup>699</sup> *Leviathan*, 303.

Galatians for falling from the true faith. To put an end to disagreements within the Church, he instructs the Galatians that even if an angel preached something different from what they heard from the apostles, they should still ignore it. He does not say that *unum necessarium* should be the foundation of their faith.

As with other passages he cites, Hobbes again appears to be more concerned with defeating false prophets and those who claim doctrinal authority than with supporting the *unum necessarium*. Earlier we saw the uneasy adaptation of Hobbes' powerful anti-clerical and anti-papal biblical exegeses, developed in previous *Leviathan* chapters, to his definition and severe limitation of the Apostles' mandate in chapter 43, as part of his second *unum necessarium* argument. Just as the redeployment of earlier anti-clerical and anti-papal interpretations led to Hobbes detracting from the Apostles' power (including the reduction of Jesus' commissions), here the exegetical barriers he erects against false prophets severely hamper his ability to construct a positive theological argument to support *unum necessarium*.

Matt. 16:18-19, unlike the other references, is actually directly relevant to what Hobbes set out to demonstrate. This is, as he knew, one of the most debated passages in the Bible; Catholics used "That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church" to support the Pope's legitimacy. Hobbes argues instead that the "rock" refers to the *unum necessarium* professed by Peter in Matt. 16:16. He makes the exact same point in his response to the third argument of Bellarmine's first book, where he invokes five other biblical passages to prove precisely that *unum necessarium* is the only proper and required foundation of faith.<sup>700</sup> Strangely, Hobbes's exposition of these passages is significantly more detailed and convincing when he levels them against Bellarmine's justification of papal authority than here, where his stated aim is to prove *unum necessarium*. Again, the anti-clerical component of *Leviathan* not only far outweighs the constructive theology, but does so in contradiction to Hobbes's stated priorities.

There is a similarly multi-layered and contentious exegetical tradition for 1 Cor. 3:11-12. Hobbes's reading is *prima facie* credible: those who believe in *unum necessarium* will be saved, irrespective of their position on *adiaphora*. However, he next conjectures that the fire, which burns down every man's house and reveals the durability of the materials used to build on the solid foundation, which is the *unum necessarium*, is deeply allegorical. The passage in 1 Cor. refers not to purgatory, but relies on Zech. 13:8-9. This is an ingenious but problematic interpretation. Hobbes cites Zechariah as:

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<sup>700</sup> *Leviathan*, 301-2.



Two parts therein shall be cut off, and die, but the third shall be left therein; And I will bring the third part through the Fire, and will refine them as Silver is refined, and will try them as Gold is tried; they shall call on the name of the Lord, and I will hear them.<sup>701</sup>

But this is not the end of the passage. It continues, in the AV: “they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It *is* my people ; and they shall say, the LORD *is* my God.” Moreover, verses 8 and 9 are at the end of Zech. 13, in the context of verse 7, where God prophecies that he will smite the shepherd who looks after his sheep unfaithfully.

The AV reads Zech. 13:7-9 as a prefiguration and prophecy of the crucifixion and the new covenant through Christ. Geneva offers a different interpretation. Its glosses to verses 4 and 5 say that false prophets will have to work for their living, no longer able to claim church tithes. The trial in verse 8, according to the Geneva gloss, refers to the chosen, who will endure suffering before ascending to heaven. Hobbes’s reading, as in all other cases, is closer to the Geneva Bible than to the AV, and adds a millenarian twist: “The day of Judgment, is the day of the Restauration of the Kingdome of God.” According to Hobbes, this is what 1 Cor. 1:21, Zech. 13:9, and 2 Peter all refer to.

Unusually, this reading is both consistent with the biblical text and relevant to Hobbes’s alleged *demonstrandum*. The questions are where he got the reference from, why he omitted the final phrase of Zechariah, and what he meant by choosing a verse preceded by the image of God smiting and scattering his own shepherds. On balance, it seems highly probable that in this case, as in the cases treated above, Hobbes is trying to use an anti-papal and anti-clerical (and possibly millenarian) treatise’s biblical strings to construct a dubious doctrine of *unum necessarium*. The final references to prove *unum necessarium* are 2 Pet. 3:7, 10, and 12. They too describe the day of judgment rather than *unum necessarium*. In conjunction with Zechariah, they offer a clue to Hobbes’s source for this string. Besides the millenarian and anti-papal genres, another candidate is a work on purgatory, since here Hobbes again rejects the view that either 2 Peter or the foregoing verses prove its existence.

## VI.9 Conclusion

Comprehensive analysis of *Leviathan* reveals that most of its hundreds of biblical interpretations are also conspicuously untenable and were recognised as such by Hobbes’s

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<sup>701</sup> *Leviathan*, 328.

contemporaries.<sup>702</sup> One possible explanation is that Hobbes's reinterpretations are genuine, albeit eclectic. Another is that the consistent instrumentality and idiosyncrasy of Hobbes's biblical exegesis is a *bravura* demonstration that the Bible, like all texts, is open to irreducibly multiple interpretations, and therefore should be inadmissible as evidence in constitutional debates.<sup>703</sup> Explicit parts of *Leviathan* make this same point, including the *unum necessarium* argument, Hobbes's repeated affirmation of the individual's freedom of conscience, and the comprehensive assault on clerical authority.<sup>704</sup> It does complicate matters, however, if the explicit arguments are supported by obviously (but not explicitly) fallacious biblical interpretation.

That, however, is another story. The goal here was to show that Hobbes, like Grotius, Selden and, as shown below, Harrington, systematically subverted the biblical politics which were a cause, and/or the result, but certainly an integral part, of the violence and instability that these thinkers aimed to contain.<sup>705</sup> Moreover, the case of Hobbes' *unum necessarium* – ostensibly in the same genre as irenic and missionary minimalism – shows how hard it is to find conceptual space in *Leviathan* for Christian evangelism, let alone a state and an empire based on positive Christianity. James Harrington was one of Selden's many and Hobbes's very few overt admirers in the 1650s. Proposing sometimes similar, sometimes different constitutional arrangements, but sharing the same ambition to construct an irenicist framework for English, British and colonial politics and law, Harrington's exegetical techniques for the neutralisation of the Bible constitute the next chapter in what increasingly seems like a coherent history of seventeenth-century English secularisation, yet to be written. While texts like *Mare clausum*, *Leviathan* and *Oceana* are rightly placed in the context of particular political controversies, they also address chronic problems of religious politics, and deliberately build on one another to do so.

Perhaps a chief aim of *Leviathan* was really to disabuse men from the deceit of others and make them steady against "every winde of doctrine."<sup>706</sup> From his own explicit comments and from textual evidence it is clear that Hobbes had at least the Vulgate, the Geneva Bible and the AV on his desk while writing *Leviathan*. It is also clear that the furore aroused by his

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<sup>702</sup> Again, it is impracticable to try to survey the recent literature on the contemporary reception of Hobbes' biblical exegesis. Two starting points are Jon Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan: The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England, 1640-1700* (Cambridge, 2007), and Justin Champion, "Hobbes and Biblical Criticism: Some Preliminary Remarks," *Bulletin Annuel Institut d'Histoire de la Reformation* 31 (2010), 53-72.

<sup>703</sup> For the same method in Grotius see Somos, *Secularisation*, chapter V.

<sup>704</sup> E.g. *Leviathan*, 384-6.

<sup>705</sup> Contemporaries famously identified several of Hobbes's biblical subversions. See e.g. Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan*.

<sup>706</sup> Counterarguments to this include reconstructions of Hobbes's own rhetorical agenda in Skinner, *Reason. Evrigenis, Images*.

exeges did not surprise him.<sup>707</sup> Previously less evident, but hopefully demonstrated, is his extensive reliance on the Geneva glosses for several interpretations, derivative points and argumentative structures. It does not follow that Hobbes modelled the whole of his Commonwealth, “fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,” on the image of God’s kingdom to come. He may have, nonetheless, been influenced by it sufficiently for the connection to deserve further examination, together with the rest of the text. His defense of *Leviathan*, namely that it was written in a moment of power vacuum and no Sovereign, is a possible explanation of Hobbes’s dislike for the AV.<sup>708</sup> Another, not incompatible, possibility is his surprising attachment to Calvinist and even millenarian views of sovereignty, which put moral but little redemptive value in the earthly sovereign; unless that earthly Sovereign was Christ.

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<sup>707</sup> “That which perhaps may most offend, are certain Texts of Holy Scripture, alledged by me to other purpose than ordinarily they use to be by others. But I have done it with due submission, and also (in order to my Subject) necessarily; for they are the Outworks of the Enemy, from whence they impugne the Civill Power.” *Leviathan*, Epist. Ded., 3. Contemporary criticisms, specifically of his exeges, include R. Hook, *Leviathan Drawn out with a Hook* (1653), 11, 33, 72-7. T. Tenison, *The Creed of Mr Hobbes Examined* (1670), 64-6, 200-1. Clarendon, *A brief* (1676), 5-6, 198, 202, 316-9, *passim*. J. Whitehall, *The Leviathan Found Out* (1679), 90-1, 113-4, 142, 149. Hobbes’s defence: *Considerations*, 30.

<sup>708</sup> Hobbes, *An Answer to a Book Published by Dr Bramhall, Late Bishop of Derry, Called Catching of the Leviathan* ([1682]; Molesworth IV, 1811), 355.