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TO PLANT THE PLEASANT FRUIT TREE OF FREEDOM:
CONSCIOUSNESS, POLITICS, AND COMMUNITY
IN DIGGER AND EARLY QUAKER THOUGHT

by

ROBERT K. GOERTZ

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
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Abstract

TO PLANT THE PLEASANT FRUIT TREE OF FREEDOM:
CONSCIOUSNESS, POLITICS, AND COMMUNITY
IN DIGGER AND EARLY QUAKER THOUGHT

by

Robert K. Goertz

Adviser: Professor Martin Fleisher

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This dissertation examines certain ideas of political community by investigating the political experience of the inner light during the English Commonwealth. It is my contention that the theory and experience of the Diggers and Quakers help us understand how a republican community might be constructed without degenerating into a stupefying conformity. Digger and Quaker thought is nonliberal and radical, but it does not thereby forfeit some of the theoretical and practical benefits of liberalism.

The basis of Quaker and Digger theory was the direct experience of God's law and command, what they called the "inner light." Through the dialectical process of conversion the light transformed them as individuals, gathered

them into a spirit-led community, and led them to expect that England, which had labored under the Norman yoke and the vestiges of popery, would be transformed into a holy commonwealth.

The result of the conversion process, which began with a sense of judgment and ended with a surrender to divine will, was a new, prophetic consciousness. The Quakers and Diggers were called, first, to declare God's judgment to others and to call them to repentance. Their jeremiads condemned those social institutions which stood in the way of the true community, particularly magistracy and the legal structure, the church and the clergy, and commerce and property. These institutions had to be reformed or even abolished before the New Israel could be created.

Secondly, the Quakers and Diggers wanted to free themselves from the bondage of existing institutions and to demonstrate that the Kingdom of God was being realized through them. The Diggers were led, therefore, to till the commons together, and the Quakers developed an institutional structure in which the light could lead them.

These communities and the theory which grew out of them were political in a republican sense, but since the basis of the community was God's activity the theory was also theocratic. The theocracy of the Quakers and Diggers was popular, however; the community was to be governed by

both an inward and an outward law, and these laws were known and made only in a context of equal participation. It is never certain whom God will call to act for him; each individual's claim to have been called must therefore be considered. Each member of the community can and must participate in its decisions. And since each individual is concerned with discovering truth, the community itself provides the criterion for separating truth from falsehood. All impediments to discovering truth need to be removed for men and the community to be truly self-governing.

My discussion of the Digger and Quaker concept of community raises several questions about the size of the community which can be governed according to the theory of participatory decision making, the ability of a diverse community to maintain the virtue of its citizens, and the persistence of the first prophetic experience into later generations. The historical answers to these questions are in many ways pessimistic, as seen in the "holy experiment" of Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, the theory of the holy commonwealth still suggests that the communitarian experience is a necessary antidote to excessive individualism and that liberalism is not about to solve many of the problems which seem to plague it on its own terms.

PREFACE

The reasons for beginning a dissertation are often both personal and theoretical, and the two combined may well be necessary to see it through. This study of Quaker and Digger thought is no exception. While my interest was originally aroused in two seminars, one in radical thought (led by Marshall Berman), the other in the thought of the English Revolution (led by Martin Fleisher), my effort has been sustained by several personal and theoretical considerations. On the most personal level, the religious argument of Quaker and Digger thought seemed to address my own anabaptist background, even as the argument addressed the anabaptists of the 1640s and 1650s. In addition, the political and social argument found a home in my experience as one of the student generation of the 1960s--an experience which itself had religious overtones stemming from its roots in the civil rights movement. As I then began to explore the writings of Winstanley and the Quakers I found that their experiences had raised questions remarkably similar to those raised by my experiences and those of my contemporaries. The problem of war--civil in one instance, foreign in another, the clear manifestation of social oppression, even

the death of a national leader all seemed to raise the still-perplexing question of whether the outcomes which we all found so abhorrent were in some way the necessary products of the political system as we knew it. Moreover, if the product were in some sense necessary, what could be done to change the system which produced war and racism? What alternatives had we?

Our immediate response to these questions was equivocal. For one thing, existing forms and institutions were inadequate. The rituals of American democracy seemed as empty to us as the rituals of the church had seemed to many in the 1640s and 1650s. Like the people who became Diggers or Quakers, we were seekers, unhappy with existing forms but not certain what ought to be substituted for them. Like them, too, we felt certain that we did not want to substitute a new dogmatism for the old one, and found in the ambiguity and fluidity of our situation both promise and despair. Yet unlike the Seekers of the seventeenth century we were not certain where to turn for our new ordinances. Marx, Mao, Marcuse, and Gene McCarthy, King and Kennedy, and others all seemed to offer answers. The New Left had many gurus but no God.

One thing the New Left did have, however, was its own experience of trying to deal with issues as a community

concerned about them. The characterization of the New Left as issue-oriented rather than theory-oriented is to this extent correct, and what theory has been developed by New Left writers has evolved out of the twin experiences of community and participation. Thus the rallying cry of New Left tracts became "participatory democracy," an admittedly vague term and one whose meaning is not yet completely worked out. One thing is clear, however: participation in the political community of the New Left seemed to have a value which participation in the American political process generally did not. The community was valued by its members, often enough for them to subordinate personal interest to the general interest, and it in turn valued the participation of its members. Though the meanings of participation and community were not always clear, their value was.

It was at this point, then, that I found Quaker and Digger thought theoretically valuable. The Quakers and Diggers, as I read them, helped make sense out of the experiences of participation in a cause and a community. They offered a theory of politics which is not purely instrumental, one in which political activity is valuable as an expression of one's moral personality. Their theory was critical of the ills which we thought we had diagnosed in society: they were radical; they went to the root of those ills. They

experienced too the sense of purpose which transcends both success and failure in achieving specific objectives. In short, the radicals of the seventeenth century can speak to the twentieth century; the problems which they addressed are ours as well.

But our millennium seems no closer than theirs; my generation has lost the transforming power we seemed once to have. Perhaps the experiences of the 1960s were as unique as those of the 1640s and 1650s. Nevertheless, I think that the study of Quaker and Digger theory remains important. It offers more than intellectual and spiritual self-understanding or catharsis; it offers an analysis and suggestion of how the transforming spirit can be kept alive.

One way to rekindle the spirit is to read the tracts which the Quakers and Diggers produced. Most of these bristle with a prophetic urgency; their resonances give additional meaning to the term "jeremiad." The spirit in turn sustained me through better than one thousand tracts ranging in size from a simple broadside to massive volumes. These tracts, all written before about 1664, were read at several different libraries and collections. Most of my reading was done in the Quaker Collection (and subsidiary collections, such as that of William Jencks) of Haverford College, whose Curator, Edwin Bronner, and Bibliographer,

Mrs. Barbara Curtis, were indispensable in many, many ways. An equally extensive collection of early Quaker tracts is held by the Friends' Historical Library, located at Swarthmore College, and the Library's Director, J. William Frost, and Associate Director, Miss Jane A. Rittenhouse, were most helpful. I also used several other collections for reasons of convenience and a change of scenery, and to each of these I owe a debt and an acknowledgment. These collections include the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of the New York Public Library, the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of the Princeton University Library, and the Speer Library of the Princeton Theological Seminary. Within these collections can be found practically all of the Quaker and Digger tracts available on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. Fortunately the majority of Winstanley's writings are available in a collection edited by George Sabine, and a collection of Early Quaker Writings was published in time for me to consult it and the excellent commentary of its editors, Hugh Barbour and Arthur O. Roberts.

My intellectual debts are even more numerous and thus more difficult to assess. My dissertation sponsor, Martin Fleisher, and reader, Marshall Berman, were

exceedingly helpful with matters of both substance and style. Professors Melvin Richter and David Spitz of the Graduate Political Science Department of the City University of New York were also helpful particularly in helping me to define my interests. My teachers at Oberlin College, notably John D. Lewis, Wilson Carey McWilliams, George Lanyi, and Kenneth Sherrill, were each concerned with imparting a concern for politics and theory; to them I owe much more than a mere acknowledgment. I would also like to thank Hugh Barbour and T. Vail Palmer for taking time out from their researches at Haverford to discuss both my work and theirs with me; several of their comments and suggestions became so much a part of this study that they cannot be specifically footnoted. I should like to thank John Curtis for sharing his ideas about George Fox and the meaning of Quakerism with me; these too have influenced my reading and my argument. I trust that each individual will recognize his suggestions and forgive whatever errors I have added to them. The final interpretations are mine, of course, and I bear the responsibility for what has been said.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: my parents, Margret and Leo Goertz, who provided several specific suggestions about Christian radicalism as well as my anabaptist

heritage; my wife, Margaret, who labored over several drafts at the typewriter, made specific and general suggestions about content and style (often much to my initial chagrin, but I have incorporated most of them), and otherwise supported (intellectually, emotionally, and financially) a family while I was in graduate school; and finally, my son Jacob, who reminded me as only an infant and small boy can of the joys of discovering the world. I only hope that some of the ideas contained in this study and the better world towards which they point are his inheritance.

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INTRODUCTION

In many respects the middle two decades of the seventeenth century were, in England, the "dividing of time," as many of those who were alive then both understood and expected. The period saw a transition from medieval to modern society in all phases of life, and though the transition had been going on for some time and was not yet complete in 1660, the 1640s and 1650s were revolutionary decades no matter what name is given to them.¹ The period witnessed the culmination of the Reformation, with its attack on outward authority and emphasis on personal

¹"English Revolution," the term which I will use throughout this study, is only one of several names which have been applied to the period of twenty years beginning in 1640. The choice of the name given this period is often influenced by the emphasis one wishes to place on it; for example, the term "Interregnum" may reflect a view of English history which emphasizes the development of the English political system into a constitutional monarchy, a development which is seen as continuous except for a twenty-year hiatus. Use of the term "Puritan Revolution" may mean that the religious aspects of the struggle are being emphasized.

Referring to the period as a revolution emphasizes certain elements both of the period and of English history, among them the fact that the rebellion against royal authority reflects the rise of certain classes and the emergence of commercial and industrial society. Also, as we shall see, "Revolution" more accurately reflects the assessment of the period made by the Diggers and Quakers themselves, although both "rebellion" and "reformation" could also be used.

experience, decision, and commitment--on spirit rather than nature. The political thrust of the Revolution was also to attack outward authority; theoretically at least we can trace a certain progression through which Parliamentary authority was substituted for the king and that of the people made supreme even to Parliament. The attack on outward authority culminated, despite the wishes of some of the most ardent parliamentarians, in the beheading of the king; not without reason did conservatives worry about the meaning of the phrase "no bishop, no king." And in economics royal control over production and commerce in the form of monopolies was denounced by two groups, those with capital who wished to compete for trade and those who saw in monopolies an artificial scarcity of goods and thus artificially high prices. A new social class was ascending, one with ties to the City and Court or to a new organization of agriculture. Earlier, enclosure had overturned the medieval land tenure relationships, depopulated the countryside, and created a large class of poor and masterless men and harsh laws to deal with them. Even that bulwark of the old order the Church of England was hard hit: the potential revenue from personal and mixed tithes increased but the tithes became extremely difficult to collect, while predial and great tithes--those which supported rectors--allowed their recipients to keep pace with rising prices. Tithes which were

commuted to cash payment remained fixed in the face of a century-long increase in prices. Worst hit by commuted tithes and the difficulty in collecting tithes on commerce and commercial agriculture were the parish ministers and curates. Many parishes had only a parttime minister or none at all, leading to the Puritan concern that all parishes be churched with godly ministers.¹

The dislocation of civil war exacerbated all these trends. The New Model Army was seen by conservatives, Anglican and Presbyterian alike, as a breeding ground of sectarianism and political radicalism. The confiscation of royalist estates by the victorious army could have cemented a change in the social structure, depending in part on how it was used. Enclosure and the shift of land out of agriculture to high-yield pursuits such as sheep raising was coupled with poor harvests in the late 1640s, leading to widespread discontent among the poor, both rural and urban. And vagabondage increased as men were let out of the army with nowhere to go and little in the way of pay for their

¹The problem of tithes in the period preceding the Revolution was exceedingly complex and I only wish to hint at it here. The definitions of the various tithes and an analysis of their economic impacts and complexities can be found in Chapter V of Christopher Hill's Economic Problems of the Church from Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956). More will be said about the Digger and Quaker position regarding tithes in chapter five of this work.

services.¹

Two conclusions ought to be evident even from this brief sketch of the period. First, the medieval order had effectively collapsed and with it the view of the world as an architectonic or hierarchical and all-embracing organic order. Second, though perhaps less obvious, the outlines of the order which would replace the medieval one seemed not at all clear, although they were beginning to emerge. What the period of the Revolution demanded and got was thus an effort to determine both theoretically and practically the course

¹For a general discussion of the economy of the period as well as the trends leading to it see Margaret James, Social Problems and Policy during the Puritan Revolution, 1640-1660 (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1930) and David Mathew, The Social Structure in Caroline England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948). The well-known debate between R. H. Tawney and Hugh Trevor-Roper over the rising and declining classes includes a discussion of many of the economic trends. See Tawney, "The Rise of the Gentry, 1558-1660," Economic History Review 11, No. 1 (1941), pp. 1-38; and Trevor-Roper, The Gentry, 1540-1640 (Economic History Review [2nd series] suppl. no. 1, n.d. [1954]).

The reference by Marxist historians to these two decades as the bourgeois revolution in England is based on their analysis that the triumph of Parliament, which was only reasserted in 1688, reflected a triumph of the bourgeoisie in economics. See, for example, Christopher Hill, "The English Revolution" in C. Hill, ed., The English Revolution 1640: Three Essays (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1940) for a simplified version of this analysis. C. B. Macpherson's The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), interprets Hobbes, Harrington, and the Levellers as well as Locke in this framework. Without committing myself wholly to this interpretation, I would like to emphasize that many of the beginnings of the liberal state and society are to be found in mid-seventeenth century England.

which the new order would take. There were, of course, many who wished only for the restoration of the earlier era,¹ but as Charles II was to discover, that era was gone, never to be recovered. Understandably, then, when we turn to the writers of the Revolution we turn most frequently to those commentators and theorists who suggested directions for the new era--men like the "constitutionalist" or "democratic" Lilburne, the liberal Hobbes, the republican Harrington, and Milton--or to those, like Michael Walzer's Puritans, who developed a discipline to cope with social disruption and change.

Understanding the new age was clearly a problem which these theorists faced, but the problem is ours as well. For one thing, their new age has become our age, and in a critical way their thought has become our presuppositions. What, then, was their new age? Briefly, it was (and is) liberal society, a concept best approached through Sheldon Wolin's discussion in his Politics and Vision.² Historically, liberal thought began by separating political

¹Not all of these men were Royalists, either. Richard Schlatter has argued that the Puritan Richard Baxter argues for the medieval order, though in Puritan rather than Catholic terms. See Schlatter's "Introduction" to his Richard Baxter and Puritan Politics (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1957).

²Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1960), chap. 9.

action from belief. Politics became separated from religion and economics from both of them, leaving politics and political theory as rather limited activities. In a word, the polity was subordinated to the society (particularly the economy) and most meaningful activity was presumed to be social rather than political. To again borrow from Wolin, politics and political theory became sublimated; organization and administration replaced them.¹

It is, however, a mistake to concentrate our efforts primarily on the precursors of the liberal order, on theorists who were, by retrojection, "modern." The new order was not inevitable; alternative social formations might have come into being although greater effort might have been necessary to institute them. The term "institute" is critical here, for men do create social arrangements even if they are also in some sense natural or predetermined by previously chosen arrangements. Thus, if we are to understand our own age and the choices which it involved and which have been made for us, it is worthwhile to examine the alternatives which seemed possible when those choices were being made. In the 1640s and 1650s such alternatives seemed very real, as indeed they probably were.

This study, then, concentrates on the theory of two

¹Ibid., chap. 10.

groups who suggested alternatives both to the order which had died and the order which in fact emerged. These two groups, the Diggers, particularly Gerrard Winstanley, and the Quakers, emerged from the economic, religious and political ferment as radicals both in the nature of their social criticism and in their visions of alternatives to the emerging society. It is for their "radicalness" that they have been chosen.

Their radicalism was self-conscious. They were conscious of attempting to understand the roots of conflict and alienation in both immediate (the civil war and revolution) and broad historical contexts. Moreover, the Quakers and Diggers thought they could demonstrate how conflict and estrangement could be transcended in a particular moral and political community. And on their way to developing a theory of such a community, they made, with a certain prophetic urgency, many detailed social criticisms and suggestions for reform. But reform was not enough; the renewal of society required a transformation of men themselves. They had experienced such a transformation in themselves, and, in the final analysis, expected that all England would experience it.

The theory and expectations of the Diggers and Quakers did not come about easily. For them belief was prior to knowledge or theory, and experience, the particular experience

of conversion, was prior even to belief. One could not truly believe in God or know the mysteries of redemption until he had experienced God's power working within him, a power they generally called the Inner Light. Once one had been converted he saw the world afresh, in categories which had been transformed by the conversion experience. Our understanding of Quaker and Digger theory must begin, then, with these categories, for it was in these categories that they expressed their experience and theory. Chapter Two begins our discussion of the categories, the profound but not exclusive dualism in which they comprehended the world.

The Diggers and Quakers arrived at these categories only after a long and often arduous process they called conversion. Since conversion was the basis for all their theory, our next task will be to understand this process as they understood it; this is the focus of Chapter Three. But conversion was not an individual or isolated event; it was part of an ongoing historical process, the gathering of a holy community or commonwealth. In particular, this process was at work in their day and their country, making manifest religious, political, economic and social oppressions. We need to know, finally, why God chose England, and Chapter Four thus analyzes their eschatology in both its particular and general terms.

Personal and historical experience led the Quakers

and Diggers, as individuals and as communities, to a critique of existing and emerging society. Pride was pervasive, and it always sought a way to express itself, usually in subjecting some men to others. The law, the church, and property all hindered the formation of a true community while oppressing the poor. Each of these institutions had to be reformed before the Reformation could be established, and along the way some of England's worst social ills might be ameliorated. This part of the argument is detailed in Chapter Five, and with it the foundation for the theory of the holy commonwealth will be laid.

As the Quakers and Diggers pushed on to developing their theory of the holy commonwealth they discovered that the question of magistracy posed an intermediate problem. Practically and theoretically corrupt magistrates were clearly part of the problem which the Quakers and Diggers were diagnosing: the leaders of the Good Old Cause had failed to fulfill their covenant to work a reformation in England. Still, I suggest in Chapter Six, by bringing men to "that of God within" godly magistrates could help foster the holy commonwealth even though they could not institute it by themselves.

The holy commonwealth was, finally, the end to which their experience and analysis led the Diggers and Quakers. In the holy commonwealth, and only in the holy commonwealth,

could oppression, conflict, and alienation be overcome. The commonwealth would foster the virtue of its citizens, and their participation in it would be required for its health as well as for the citizen's own moral, spiritual, and physical well-being. The holy commonwealth was developed as a theory of a community which would not eliminate individual differences but which would transcend them through the seeking of a common good. The commonwealth was, as its name implies, a variety of republican political theory, and it is partly in republican terms that it will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Something happened to the theory of the holy commonwealth. The Diggers, we know, were suppressed before they could achieve it--perhaps proving the arguments of Milton and John Stuart Mill (among others) that truth need not always triumph. The Quakers, on the other hand, were presented with Pennsylvania, an opportunity to initiate a holy experiment which did not however, result in a holy commonwealth. The reasons for the failure of Pennsylvania (if failure we wish to call it) are many, but, as contended in Chapter Eight, one of the reasons can be found in a shift in Quaker theory. The obvious historical difference between the Diggers and the Quakers¹--that the latter survived as a

¹The assertion is occasionally made that Quakerism was a way for political radicals to sublimate their

group while the former did not--is thus not a clear-cut test of their theory of community, although the shift in Quaker theory may be one such test.

What brings the Quakers and Diggers together in theory and what distinguishes them from their contemporaries --many of whom also felt they had made a radical analysis of the situation and with whom the Quakers and Diggers often felt an estranged kinship¹--was the particular root which

frustrations after 1650, and while there is some historical support for this contention--some political radicals did become Quakers, as discussed in note 1 to page 25, the Quaker attitudes to politics were not as negative as the argument for sublimation would require. There was a major internal crisis in 1659 over whether to support Sir Harry Vane, and earlier Quakers were upset because they had been stripped of office. On the crisis of 1659 see James F. Maclear, "Quakerism and the End of the Interregnum: A Chapter in the Domestication of Radical Puritanism," Church History 19, No. 4 (December 1950):240-270; Alan Cole, "The Quakers and the English Revolution," Past and Present 10 (November 1956):39-54, reprinted in Trevor Aston, ed., Crisis in Europe, 1560-1660 (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., Anchor Books, 1965; and A. Cole, "The Quakers in Politics, 1652-1660" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 1955). On exclusion from office, one explicit statement may be found in John Crook (and others), A Declaration of the people of God in scorn called Quakers. To All Magistrates and People (London, 1659), p. 5. Crook had been a justice of the peace.

I would argue that one reason for excluding the Quakers from office--and for the general official hostility shown them--was precisely that they, like the Diggers, were viewed as dangerous radicals whose threat, while perhaps not exclusively "political," was nevertheless very real. My other reasons for considering the Quakers and Diggers together will be discussed in the following chapter.

¹This kinship was often more than intellectual or spiritual. In a broad sense, Robert Barclay [the Younger] attempted to trace the anabaptist origins for the radical

they focused on, the way in which it was identified, and the scope of their analysis and theory. The experience of the inner light had laid an axe to the root of the old corrupt

sects, including the Quakers, in his The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth: Considered Principally with Reference to the Influence of Church Organization on the Spread of Christianity (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1876). Hugh Barbour, on the other hand, has emphasized their radical puritan origins and connections in The Quakers in Puritan England (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964). The most general discussion of the social ramifications of Christian teaching and one which tries to put the Quakers and Diggers into this broad context is, of course, Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, trans. Olive Wyon (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan Co., both 1931).

More specifically, several Quakers had been members of the New Model Army; for a list see Margaret Hirst, The Quakers in Peace and War (London: Swarthmore Press; New York: George H. Doran Co., both 1923), pp. 527-531. George Bishop, for example, participated in the Putney Debates; see A. S. P. Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates (1647-9) from the Clarke Manuscripts with Supplementary Documents (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 81, 107. I do not intend to explore these connections further than is needed to illuminate my discussion of their thought, however; this is neither a history of intellectual genesis nor an account of individual development.

Finally, we may note that like many radical groups throughout history, the Quakers in particular reserved some of their most bitter polemics for other radicals rather than for the conservatives who were so clearly wrong. As the Quakers were often wont to say, the Independents, the Baptists, and even the Ranters once had a glimpse of Truth, but had turned from it. The Quakers thought it their duty to call these opponents back to the Truth and to remind their persecutors in New England why they had left England for Massachusetts in the first place. For examples of these polemics, see Francis Howgil, The heart of New England Hardened through Wickedness . . . (London, 1659); F. Howgil, The Popish Inquisition Newly erected in New-England . . . (London, 1659); and George Bishop, New England Judged . . . (London, 1661), although there are many other similar tracts.

tree (as one Quaker tract was entitled);¹ a new heaven and a new earth were expected to follow. Political theory no longer needed to be rooted in the Fall; theory could express the Resurrection.

¹Isaac Penington, the Younger, The Axe laid to the Root of the old Corrupt Tree, and the Spirit of deceit stuck at in its nature . . . (London, 1659).

N.B. In this and in the preceding footnote I have not given the publishers for the seventeenth-century tracts. This procedure will be followed throughout the dissertation. However, publishers will be listed in the bibliography.

CHAPTER I

"Beware of vain philosophy"

The persistent argument of this study is that the Diggers and Quakers provided an historically relevant alternative to what we now call liberal theory and experience-- particularly the theory and experience of the political community. The argument itself rests on certain methodological foundations, among them the model of liberalism and the way in which Quaker and Digger tracts (the basic source for this study) are to be read. Specifically, three questions need to be posed and answered before beginning the actual discussion of Quaker and Digger thought and experience. First, since I am arguing that these movements developed a theory which struck at the very root of liberal theory and therefore provided an alternative to it, what do I mean by "liberal theory"? Second, what if any specific methodological considerations have informed my reading of Quaker and Digger theory? Finally, since the common tendency is to treat the Diggers as social radicals and the Quakers as religious radicals, on what basis can I propose to treat them as jointly describing the political experience of the Inner Light? Answers to these questions, however, tentative,

will be given in the respective sections of this chapter. The answers are, so to speak, the cards that are laid on the table; the remainder of the hand will be played as the argument progresses.

The Model of Liberalism

In trying to characterize "liberal theory" I am aware, of course, that there are many varieties of liberalism and that thinkers who do not agree with each other may still be classified as liberals. My focus will be primarily on the theories of Hobbes and Locke, who, along with Bentham, may be called the "classical liberals." They provide the theory most at odds with Quaker and Digger thought and historically the one most available for criticism.

Classical liberalism begins with the assumption that conflict defines the political relationships among men, whether that conflict is actual or potential. Politics is therefore defined as the accommodation of conflict or where possible its resolution, but not as a search for the common good or the development of a common morality. Whether based on a mechanistic psychology or the expression of personality in property the argument is that politics are concerned with private interests and goods rather than with goods in which all can participate. The polity exists to protect private interests, though more recent liberals have been concerned

with promoting some interests and with equalizing others. But, as Hume asserted, questions of justice, an essential political concept, arise under conditions of scarcity; if goods were unlimited there would be no need to inquire into who ought to have what and on what grounds claims could be made. Similarly, government exists, again according to Hume, to make men calculate their interests on a more long-range basis, and the scientific penology of Bentham further identifies government with the calculation of individual interest by making law into an effort to influence the utilitarian calculus. The influence is essentially coercive, as in Bentham's emphasis on penology, and the state is defined and distinguished from other organizations by its legitimate monopoly of the use of force.

"Interest," "conflict," and "scarcity"--these terms are essential to this particular vocabulary of politics. The model began with Hobbes' idea that individuals are matter in motion and bound therefore to conflict with each other and with his argument that the psyche is restless, seeking power over others to achieve a sense of security. Hobbes' conclusions, that society is unnatural and that only an unlimited power can offer the peace necessary for society and government, are not at all liberal (Locke's assertion that society is natural but inconvenient is more prototypical), but beginning with Hobbes we can see that coercion and its

limits become a primary focus of political theory. The limits are, in turn, set primarily by private interests and their pursuit; so long as these do not conflict the state has no role to play. Needless to say, as society has become more complex the limits on state activity have expanded, but the debates are still circumscribed by the idea that individuals must be free to pursue their own goods.

The Quakers and Diggers defined political problems differently and more broadly than do the classic liberals. The Quakers and Diggers are not unconcerned with the problems of coercion and its limits; indeed, their own experience dictated that the holy commonwealth should concern itself with outward conduct only. Their theory posited a limited state. But they were concerned not simply with the restraint or limits of power; they were concerned also with the creation of power by the people who were being governed and with the development of a moral community. To use the triad of the French Revolution, they were concerned with fraternity as much as with the more traditional liberal concerns of liberty and equality, and this concern helped shape their social and political theory.¹ To take but one

¹This way of phrasing the concerns of the Quakers and Diggers is suggested, although in a different context, by Wilson Carey McWilliams in the "Introduction" to his The Idea of Fraternity in America (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973).

example, private property could never be just for Winstanley; private property was a denial of community and of the Creation-right. Scarcity might aggravate the effects of enclosure, but even in a condition of plenty the problem of justice would remain. Yet Winstanley's is not merely a different way of posing the question of justice; his discussion reflects a desire for a society in which all participate in the government of a moral community. His is a theory not only of the individual but also of the community; finally it is a theory of how the individual requires a certain kind of community in order to be himself. And since the community is national--perhaps even universal--it is also political. Neither Winstanley nor the Quakers saw individual development as separable from public and political action; private association was not the primary good sought after. But these themes will have to be developed in the course of the argument. First, however, there is more methodological ground to be measured.

Language and Method

In the preceding section, I emphasized the language used by liberals to describe politics not merely to clarify an important concept, early liberalism, but also for reasons of methodology. Although this study is not especially a self-conscious exercise in a particular methodology,

there are certain methodological considerations which have influenced it and which ought, therefore, to be mentioned. First, of course, is the unavoidable connection between the language with which politics is discussed and political behavior. This connection exists on the most profound and the most prosaic levels. For example, expectations of political corruption, perhaps buying and selling offices or favors, are inherent in the everyday description of politics as "wheeling and dealing" or protecting certain interests. In the context of this language and these expectations it is no wonder that when one looks at politics one looks first for corruption or that the standards which the public has for political activity and politicians are low. The language itself is in part to blame, and it may be difficult if not impossible to change the behavior of either politicians or the public unless the language and the expectations which it embodies are also changed.

The study of language, then, is the basic method used in the analysis of Quaker and Digger theory, although mine is not a study specifically of the language they used and the alternatives available to them. In their language too are found the grounds for treating the Diggers and Quakers together despite certain historical differences, as I shall argue in a moment. First, however, I would like to indicate why the use of language is an appropriate way to

study a political theory, particularly that of the Quakers and Diggers.

There are several reasons for a methodological concentration on language, not the least of which is the connection between the language we use and our political expectations and behavior. The change of a political language, or alternatively the defense of an existing language, is in one elementary sense the purpose of a political theory. A theory provides us with a way of seeing an existing reality; it provides us with a journey outside a society so that it can be viewed afresh. One way of making the journey is through a new description of the existing reality, while another is through the presentation of an alternative. Either way, the task is in a critical sense that of language, and while a theory must take into account certain "hard" data it may well try to reorder those data to account for observations and experiences which another theory misses.

The relationships between language, theory, and the reality which they describe have recently been developed into a more specific theory of politics as a language activity by Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock. The basic premise of this theory as stated by Pocock is that "the political thinker is assumed to be thinking as a member, and in the context, of the political community itself, and therefore to be speaking a specialized variation of its public

language." Thus, "what has hitherto been rather vaguely termed 'political thought' is redefined as the exploration and sophistication of political language, and the connections between language system and political system begin to seem possible to draw."¹ The study of political thought thus must be in one sense contextual; political speech will refer to a whole set of activities which it is the business of politics to order and coordinate. To the extent that this set is approximately the same across boundaries of both societies and times one can speak of an enduring language of politics. To the extent that this language and activity become autonomous and specialized, the political thinker "will be communicating with his fellow citizens--as Socrates was judged by them--in terms of what he has done with their publicly approved paradigms of value and authority."²

The theorist, however, does not necessarily control the language he uses. To the extent that he uses words and phrases which he shares with others--a language paradigm, as Pocock calls it--he may be communicating both more and less than he intends to communicate. His readers bring their own meanings to his terms, and may well draw implications from

¹J. G. A. Pocock, Politics Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History (New York: Atheneum, 1973), pp. 16, 15.

²Ibid., p. 17.

them which he did not intend or which he may find undesirable. "I am not a Marxist," wrote Marx in a particularly dramatic reminder of this inability to control language.

The problems of controlling language are even more profound when the theorist is attempting to introduce a new language of politics. To communicate with his readers he must move them out of their language paradigm and into his; if he cannot do this he will be at best misunderstood, at worst ignored. He may appeal to a remote past or other external standard for his meaning, and ask his readers to take their cues from this new language--an approach Pocock refers to as the radical politics of language. Or the theorist may try to communicate outside the dominant mode of communication altogether--to revolutionize language, as Pocock calls it. The invention of printing when coupled with fairly widespread literacy became such a revolutionary phenomenon when it supplanted the established medium of communication, the Church. Thus, to anticipate my later discussion, the appeal which the Quakers and Diggers made to the primitive church and their position regarding the Norman Yoke were radical, while their concept of the testimony was revolutionary. But further discussion of these points will wait until the questions are raised by the subject matter itself.

Many problems are presented to the historian discussing emerging paradigms, those with patterns "of implication . . . which became visible only in a historical era later than that of which we are writing."¹ My procedure, is, however, somewhat more problematic than trying to show how an emerging paradigm came into being. I am instead postulating, though with good reason, I think, that the liberal language and assumptions were available for criticism implicit if not explicit. The approach I have taken bears a certain family resemblance to the procedure followed by C. B. Macpherson in The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, in which, as Pocock describes it,

He lays down the hypothesis that seventeenth-century England was a society in which a "market economy" was becoming important to the point where it should have had impact upon abstract political theory; he then enumerates the characteristics of such an economy which he expects to find discussed or implied in its works of theory, and tests a variety of seventeenth-century English theorists to see if the expected allusions, implications or assumptions are really there.²

My approach differs from Macpherson's in focusing upon a "spirit" of politics--and therefore a language--and its criticism, rather than on certain social and economic conditions of which political theory ought to take account. The postulate that liberal theory was emerging is not absolutely

¹Ibid., p. 33; see generally pp. 33-34.

²Ibid., p. 37.

necessary for my thesis, since the Diggers and Quakers might still pose alternatives to it if they are examined in retrospect. But if my postulate is correct, as I think it is, the historical and contemporary interest in the theories of the Diggers and Quakers ought to be greater and the conclusions reached more valuable.

Language, The Diggers and the Quakers

Thus far I have emphasized the study of a political theory by way of language for general reasons, those which have to do with theory and language as activities. There are still more specific reasons for examining the Quakers and Diggers in terms of the language which they use, and to these I now turn. Before doing so, however, I must caution again that my study is not an exercise in a particular methodology, even one as valuable as Pocock's, and warn against expecting to see the discussion of language paradigms emerge as a dominant theme from this study.

As I said earlier, their use of language is one reason for considering the Diggers and Quakers together as providing a theory of the political experience of the inner light. The two groups share certain phrases, images, and resonances which are used by them in a consistent manner and which do not seem to be shared with other groups, including their radical contemporaries who also made use of the

language of religious eschatology. Indeed, the marked similarity of the experiences and arguments of the Digger Winstanley and the Quaker George Fox has led one writer¹ to suggest possible connections between them. To ignore the similarities, the "religious" character of all of Winstanley's writings and the "political" or "social" character of many Quaker tracts is to establish distinctions which cannot be sustained upon closer examination of the language they used. Similarly, those² who argue that Winstanley is a

¹Winthrop S. Hudson, "Gerrard Winstanley and the Early Quakers," Church History 12, No. 3 (September 1943): 177-194. The speculative nature of Hudson's argument should not be allowed to obscure the demonstrated theoretical affinity between Winstanley and Fox.

These connections are given some additional credence by Richard T. Vann's observation that several names which appear in Digger literature are also to be found in Quaker records and that the death of a Gerrard Winstanley is also mentioned in these records. Winstanley's occupation was given as that of corn chandler, which would be quite a departure from prior beliefs about buying and selling the creation if indeed this Winstanley was also the Digger. On the other hand, the "domestication" of Winstanley would lend credibility to the oft-advanced thesis that Quakerism and other radical sects became homes for disillusioned political radicals, including John Lilburne. See Vann, "From Radicalism to Quakerism: Gerrard Winstanley and Friends," Journal of the Friends Historical Society 49 (1959):41-46; "Diggers and Quakers: A Further Note," Journal of the Friends Historical Society 50 (1962):65-68; and "The Later Life of Gerrard Winstanley," Journal of the History of Ideas 26 (1965):133-136. On Lilburne's conversion see his The Resurrection of John Lilburne . . . Declared and manifested in these following Lines penned by himself . . . (London, 1656).

²See for example, David W. Petegorsky, Left-wing Democracy in the English Civil War: A Study of the Social Philosophy of Gerrard Winstanley (London: Gollancz, 1940). Christopher Hill is also guilty of pushing Winstanley in a

rationalist because he announces he will use the word "Reason" instead of "God" ignore his reasons for so doing; they ignore his wish to emphasize the inwardness of the power rather than its separation from, and even hostility to mankind.¹ The Puritan idea of God was for both Winstanley and the Quakers oppressive, but their experience of God's workings was not. Thus, rather than calling to mind the oppressive features of the divine power by using the wrong term they chose to replace it. Of course it is significant that Winstanley chose the term "Reason" and identified it with God's spirit, but his choice may in part reflect the Calvinist background from which he emerged. For the Calvinist, reason partook of the divine; it was a remnant of the creation which man retained after the Fall, although the judgment of reason was usually obscured by the corrupted will. Winstanley retained the divine character of reason, but for him the divine presence was not a part of man's nature even

rationalist or materialist direction, even in his generally sensitive The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution (New York: Viking Press, 1972), specifically pp. 111-114. The problem is one shared generally by Marxist interpreters, beginning with Eduard Bernstein's Cromwell and Communism: Socialism and Democracy in the Great English Revolution, trans. H. J. Stenning (New York: Schocken Books, 1963).

¹Gerrard Winstanley, Truth Lifting up its Head above Scandals . . . (London, 1649), in The Works of Gerrard Winstanley, With an Appendix of Documents relating to the Digger Movement, ed. George H. Sabine (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1941, reprint ed., New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), hereafter cited as Sabine, pp. 103-106.

though it was in every man, indeed, in all the creation. Reason could be known by man only after conversion (and thus not at all by animals), but this is hardly the rationalist conception. In the face of the Calvinist emphasis on predestination and the arbitrary workings of God's spirit it makes sense for Winstanley to have chosen a term which could be applied to all men without exception, and in the Calvinist vocabulary one such term was "reason."

Winstanley and, I would suggest, the Quakers thus differed from the dominant language in three respects at least. First, they spiritualized the concept of reason by identifying it with what would more normally be called the Holy Spirit. Second, they universalized the power of God in man by using the concept of the "spirit, Reason" in a way similar to the Puritan concept of natural reason (though not, of course, with the same results). And finally, the Quakers and Winstanley made God less personal in one sense by making him more of a spirit and present in all facets of creation (less of an "other") while maintaining that God was not to be equated with any one of his creatures and could, therefore, be known in them only as he acted through them. It is perhaps no wonder that a great deal of controversy was occasioned by the language which the Quakers in particular used¹ and, though less obvious, that the critique of existing

¹The nineteenth-century Quaker bibliographer Joseph

society and the desire for reformation became a struggle with the language of those who seemed to support efforts to curb the reformation.

Another reason for concentrating on language stems from an attempt to evolve a methodology suitable for an unsystematic body of writing. The Diggers and Quakers did not begin, as Hobbes did, with a clear statement of postulates and then develop a geometrical argument, and we cannot therefore deal with them on the grounds of logical argument. They did, however, use particular words and images consistently in particular contexts, and thus we can construct a consistent theory out of otherwise unsystematic writings. Moreover, the consistency of usage is not simply a shorthand for believers--though later Quaker journals may have evolved along such lines--but comes from an attempt to explain intense and very real experience to others, particularly in a prophetic call to that experience. I began this study trying to make sense out of Winstanley's language and turned

Smith compiled a substantial list of these tracts written by and against the Quakers, although his list is not limited to the period here under consideration. See his A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books . . ., two vols. (London: Joseph Smith, 1867) and Bibliotheca Anti-Quakeriana; or a Catalogue of Books Adverse to the Society of Friends . . . together with the Answers which have been given to some of them by Friends and others (London: Joseph Smith, 1873). These are the standard catalogues of Quaker writing until the mid-nineteenth century and list publications by an author according to the date published.

to the Quakers, but in turning to them for help in understanding Winstanley's religious imagery I found that he helped make sense out of their often semiarticulated political theory. Though neither group was always successful, each was attempting to communicate its theory to others far beyond their immediate circle.

And communication is, finally, the most theoretical reason for beginning with language in studying political theory. To be effective a theory must be communicated, a point I have made before. But in addition a theory of a political community must also be a theory about how people will communicate, how they will share symbols and make decisions, how they will express and pursue both interests and concerns. The search for a theory of community, Sheldon Wolin has suggested,¹ is the most distinguishing feature of seventeenth and eighteenth century political thought even though it also characterizes Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Politics. The Quakers and Diggers, I will argue, provided a theory about how people can genuinely communicate, share the same symbols, and reach common decisions. On the basis of their theory of communication, which is in the final analysis the result of a religious experience (one difficult to

¹Wolin, Politics and Vision, p. 241. Wolin notes that this search takes place in theology and church organization as well as in political thought, an observation not unimportant for this study.

communicate but one which by its very nature had to be communicated) they developed a theory of community. This theory was at least a partial solution to those historical, theoretical, and methodological problems with which the Introduction and this chapter were concerned.

CHAPTER II

"an Enmity between two Seeds"

The Quakers and Diggers comprehended the world in terms of profound, though not always strict, antinomies. As such, their understanding grew out of the Pauline distinction between the spirit and the flesh, though the antinomies themselves were given various names by the Quakers and Diggers. The existence of these antinomies in turn posed certain problems for the individual, his consciousness, and for history. Yet because the spirit and flesh were not exclusive categories the antinomies could be transformed and overcome by the individual process of conversion and the historical process of redemption, though conversion and redemption themselves depended upon the exclusivity and unending hostility between the power of light and that of darkness, or between Christ and the Devil. In fact, the true character of the dualism under which the world labored was made known to the individual only within the context of the conversion experience; both the description of the experience and the definition of the antinomies could be understood and assessed only by one who had undergone the same process. Darkness, as the Quakers frequently pointed out,

could not comprehend the light.

Yet the experience of the light had to be communicated to those in darkness; ultimately it was a corporate, not a private experience. The Quakers and Diggers were compelled by the logic of their newly experienced knowledge to use the true categories in describing and analyzing their experience, even though those categories were subject to frequent misinterpretation. The categories in which the unregenerate thought were simply inadequate to convey the power and reality of the conversion experience. Thus, while experientially conversion was prior to knowledge and knowledge was validated by experience, descriptively and analytically our discussion must begin with the dualism of the world, even as theirs did.

The dualism was in part a product of the creation, particularly as described in Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The very existence of man, his life principle, partook at one and the same time of the divine spirit and the earth. The dual character of man is not to be confused with a simple dichotomy between mind and matter or between body and soul, however. As described by the Quaker Samuel Fisher, "This divine Spirit in man is the very principle of spiritual Life to his Soul, as the soul is the principle of

natural Life to his Body; whereby as that becomes a living Body through the union of it with the soul; so the Soul respectively becomes a living Soul, through its Union with the said Spirit."¹ The soul permeated the body; it was not a separate part of the body but related spirit to flesh. Or, as Winstanley described it, the soul was "the heaven, in which the battell is fought between the curse and the blessing: Michael and the Dragon" and "the wax fitted to receive, either the impression of the curse, and so prove disobedient to righteousness, or the impression of the blessing, and so prove obedient to righteousness."² While Adam and Eve were in Eden, the soul had not yet been tempted nor yielded to temptation.

God was, of course, the source of all life, not just that of man. In creating the world he imparted to each creature a measure of his spirit. Without this measure nothing would live. This indwelling of God's spirit in his creation was not, however, a pantheistic doctrine, as it has occasionally been taken to be. The Quakers and Diggers did

¹Samuel Fisher (with George Fox and John Perrot), Anokpynta Anokanynta . . . Some Certain Hidden or Vailed Spiritual Verities Revealed . . . (London, 1661) in Fisher's collected works, The Testimony of Truth Exalted, By the Collected Labours of . . . Samuel Fisher (n.p., 1679), hereafter cited as Works, p. 894.

²Gerrard Winstanley, Fire in the Bush . . . (London, 1650), Sabine, p. 476.

find a certain enjoyment in nature because God's spirit had created it and he had pronounced it good, but God was worshipped "in spirit and in truth" rather than in a veneration of nature. The important fact was that nature, including man, was in part divine; therefore, wrote John Crook,

when ye speak of Nature or doing by Nature; the word Nature comes from a word that signifies to be Born; so that whatever a man doth by Nature, he doth by that which was born with him or brought forth with him into the World, as beasts also do in their kind, yea and inanimate creatures in their kind; so moving and rest are general works of Nature, because every Creature moveth or resteth from a Principle which it had from its birth, but here men are apt to commit idolatry in not minding and seeing whence this birth or Nature, and the works thereof proceeds and do subsist, for in the Eternal Power and God-head . . . doth all things, and nature with all its works, subsist and have their being; so they are nothing but what he is in them, yet every thing in its degree, measure and order

Man is distinguished from the creatures because of the greater measure of spirit which was imparted to him, a measure which gives man

an ability in him from his birth to reflect upon himself (as to Godward) when he hath done good or evil (which the beast is not capable of) so as to be accused or tormented, or excused and comforted, this ability (call it what ye will) is from the life of all things, and the Eternal Work of his Power which is the light and life of men. which cannot be separated from man's understanding. . . .¹

Self-understanding, like life itself, is a gift from God, not a natural endowment or instinct. It is the result of

¹J[ohn] C[rook], A Defence of the True Church called Quakers . . . (London, 1659), pp. 21, 21-22.

the separate divine principle in man, not of any effort which man can make on his own. Adam and Eve, however, attempted to make understanding their own and disobeyed the power which created them. The temptations of the flesh, particularly pride and power, were present in Eden, and Adam and Eve yielded to them under the influence of the power of evil disguised as apparent good.

The effect of the Fall was momentous; man and earth were both corrupted, as we shall discuss in a later chapter. Unlike their Puritan contemporaries, however, the Quakers and Diggers did not conclude that this corruption meant that all mankind was permanently depraved; the disobedience of Adam and Eve had not determined man's response to God for all time. Instead, it was argued, the Fall had separated man's psyche into its component principles, the spirit and the flesh. The Fall had meant that man had and would turn outward, to the things of the flesh, but God immediately replanted his spirit, the Seed as it was often called, in man. The individual and historical work of redemption was thus begun as soon as man fell.

The psyche of man after the Fall thus consisted of two universal capacities, either of which could be awakened under appropriate conditions. One of these capacities, the spiritual, was universalistic; the other, the fleshly, was particularistic. Creatureliness was the selfish and sinful

assertion of the right to an "isolated independent existence."¹ By virtue of God's action after the Fall, however, man could again participate in the universal spirit and act according to his true nature; still, man might choose to ignore that spirit and turn instead to his private spirit. The psyche was a kind of battleground over which the powers of good and evil contested, but the victory of either depended on man's response and his being aware of the conflict and the contending powers. Neither man's awareness nor his response can be compelled, however; God must call each individual to obey the spirit just as the devil must tempt the individual into disobeying it. The conflict is at once universal and individualistic, occurring in each individual and at all times in history. Thus for all their other historical significance,² neither the Fall of the first Adam nor the obedience and sacrifice of Christ, the second Adam, are conclusive for this conflict. In their psychological rather than their historical meanings both events are but types of possible human response to the ongoing conflict.

¹Troeltsch, Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, p. 738.

²See my Chapter Four for further discussion of the Fall.

Practically this emphasis on choice and response meant that the Quakers and Diggers denied the doctrine of original sin. The suggestion that children were born in sin, in the devil, who was the "original of sin," was a denial of the work of Christ, who came to destroy the devil.¹ Instead, each child came into the world with the capacity to respond either to the temptations of the outward world or to the prompting of the spirit within. The innocence of the child was thus precisely that he had not yet made the choice; he was in the state of Adam before the Fall. "Therefore," concluded Winstanley,

when a man falls, let him not blame a man that died 6000 years ago, but blame himself, even the powers of his own flesh, which lead him astray; for this is Adam that brings a man to misery, which is the man flesh, or the strong man within that keeps the house, till the man of Righteousness arise and cast him out, who is the second Adam.²

Man was neither saved nor damned by nature; his nature presented him with a choice.

Yet though this choice was free and could not be coerced, it was subject in part to the influence of one's environment. The goods and knowledge of the earth had,

¹George Fox, Something in Answer to the Old Common-Prayerbook . . . (London, 1660), p. 18.

²Gerrard Winstanley, The New Law of Righteousnes . . . (London, 1649), Sabine, p. 177.

after all, tempted Adam, and he had yielded to them. And once Adam yielded to temptation it was more a matter of when than whether his children would also yield. Children were subject to the examples of their parents, who all too often "walk in the broad way your selves, and bring up your children to follow your steps" ¹ And as Winstanley and several of the Quakers were keenly aware, social conditions were both cause and effect of ungodliness in England. Man's psychology was complex; it was neither a tabula rasa on which the environment was recorded nor a set of predispositions which could not be altered. Man's true psyche existed always in potentia, by virtue of the spirit within, but certain conditions and temptations had to be transformed or overcome for the man to realize his true nature.

A related problem which had to be overcome was an epistemological problem. The man of sin, the man of flesh, is so dead in sin that he does not know he is a sinner. He is separated from knowledge of himself as well as cut off from God.

What he henceforth knows of God (as he stands in the degeneration) he knows naturally, like brute beasts (even by the natural exercise of his mind, with the faculties thereof, even as the beasts learn and know by their nature, after their kind); and in what he thus knows, he corrupts himself worse than the beasts. . . .

The fall of man from God is such, that it hath

¹ John Rous, The Sins of a gainsaying and rebellious people laid before them . . . (London, 1659), p. 5.

benumbed all his senses; yea, so bereft him of them, that he cannot feel his own estate. He is dead, spiritually dead; and can no more feel his death, his spiritual death, than a man naturally dead can his natural death. . . . There is nothing at all of the eternal kingdom, of the spiritual image, of the divine life, to be found in fallen man, but a little seed: and that seed not so much as sown in his earth, as he stands in the degeneration; for the sowing of it is the beginning of the work a-new.¹

Man's wisdom has been obscured by his disobedience to the power which created him. Carnal reason is not at all the same as spiritual reason.² Thus in addition to providing man with a choice (and the power) to redefine his character, the spirit had to provide him with knowledge about the true state of that character. Such knowledge could only be granted by the spirit; it was unobtainable for the man of sin using his own powers of reasoning. Man as creature does not possess spiritual knowledge. The self-understanding which distinguishes man from beasts is a gift from God; its central component is the working of the spirit as a principle of knowledge.

As a consequence of the Fall there are, then, two powers or principles of knowledge, the spirit and the flesh,

¹Isaac Penington the Younger, A Warning of Love, from the Bowels of Life . . . (London, 1660), in The Works of the Long-Mournful and Sorely Distressed Isaac Penington . . . , 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, 1761), I:335-336. This will be cited as Works (1761). The first edition (one volume) was published in 1681 and did not contain certain tracts present in later editions. There is also a third edition in four volumes, published in 1784 in London.

²See Winstanley, Truth Lifting up its Head above Scandals, Sabine, pp. 104-106.

which are distinguished in man the knower. There are, however, three objects of knowledge: "There is a natural knowledg, there is a spiritual knowledg, and there is a divine knowledg; as there are natural things and spiritual things and divine things to be known." But divine knowledge is inaccessible to man and cannot concern us, since it refers to "God having a knowledg in himself as well as a life, love, wisdom, power, suitable to himself."¹ We are left then with two objects for human knowledge, spirit and nature. These are not to be distinguished as psychology and biology or physics might be distinguished, however. Both body and mind may be the object of either spiritual or natural knowledge. There is, in other words, a knowledge of man's psyche and his physical condition appropriate to man in the Fall and a knowledge of spiritual man appropriate to redeemed man. "Knowledge is the acquaintance persons have one with another, their comprehending of one another in the same light wherein they are and live . . . : God is said not to know wicked men, because he holds no acquaintance with them"2

The epistemological problem is in the final analysis not really an epistemological problem at all. It is at root

¹Isaac Penington, Divine Essayes (London, 1654), p. 1.

²Isaac Penington, Jr., An Eccho from the Great Deep . . . (London, 1650), p. 63.

an ontological one, since one must be of the same nature as the things which are known. The dualism of the spirit and flesh did not imply two approaches to knowledge about either natural or spiritual matters, such as revelation and reason might be construed. Instead only spiritual man could know spiritual things and, conversely, the man of flesh was limited to knowledge of earthly things. The latter might delude himself and think that he knew about spiritual things, but this knowledge was based at best on the account of the Bible, at worst on imagination. One could spend his life reading scripture and deducing consequences from it (as Puritans were wont to do), but unless the reading was from the spirit all the effort would be in vain. Carnal men could not help but come to their own varying interpretations of scripture; this was the origin of the multiplicity of sects, including the largest sect of all, the Catholic Church. On the other hand, men of the spirit would be able to interpret scripture without disagreement since they had the same spirit which gave them forth. Indeed, if one had come to the spirit he did not even need the scripture; many, including some heathens, had been saved who had never seen or heard of the Bible. This attitude toward scripture, was, needless to say, the cause of much controversy with the Puritans and other Protestants, who held scripture to be the final arbiter.

A good example of natural man as the object of knowledge and as the knower himself can be found in Hobbes' description of the state of nature. Neither the Quakers nor Diggers denied that man in the fall was covetous, willful and arrogant or that he would seek power after power. Property and domination of men by other men were natural to men of the flesh, and man's dominance over woman could thus be described as natural. Uniformity of religion, which Hobbes saw as a prerequisite of civil peace, was not "unto the good Will of the Creator, but unto the evil will of mortal perishing and sinful Creature."¹ Even the psychology described by Hobbes, which depends upon sense impressions, could be accepted by the Quakers and Diggers for natural man. As Hobbes noted, there was not necessarily a great difference between the creatures and man in the state of nature. Wrote Penington, "There is a knowledge of sense (if that may deserve the name of knowledg) in common creatures, [and] a knowledg of reason in the natural man"² Such individuals as these would require a coercive order to govern them; the magistrate was to be a terror to evil doers.

¹Edward Burrough, "The Epistle to the Reader" of William Caton, The Testimony of a Cloud of Witnesses, Who . . . have testified against . . . Forcing of Conscience . . . (n.p., 1662), no pagination.

²Penington, Divine Essayes, p. 1.

The limitation of Hobbes' thought was not in this sense the accuracy of his description of men as he knew them but his denial of any other knowledge as universally valid. The reason of self-interest denied a reason which "restores what is corrupted; and preserves what is pure . . . ," and which leads men "to their right end, which is not to preserve a part, but the whole creation."¹ For this denial Hobbes could have been characterized as a man of sin if the Quakers or Winstanley had chosen to respond to him directly, and by this they would have meant that his knowledge itself was appropriate to his condition. He denied spiritual knowledge because he, like men of sin everywhere, was unaware of the workings of the spirit within him. Hobbes' awareness of sin was not yet at the stage in which he was aware that consciousness of sin was the result of a separate principle of knowledge.

The light, the central principle and metaphor, was thus at once both epistemological and ontological in character. In transforming the psyche and giving man a new nature it enabled him to see all relationships afresh. Without the light and the new nature it bestowed all was darkness. The light alone, wrote Francis Howgil,

will let you see Violence, Treachery, Murder, Envy,
Wrath, Maliciousness, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Lying,

¹Winstanley, Truth Lifting up its Head, Sabine, pp. 104, 105.

Cursed speaking, Stealing, Defrauding, Cheating, Cozening, Riotousness, Pride, Arrogancy, Emulation, Contention, Strife, Hatred, Persecution, Cruelty and Oppression; . . . [it] will let you see there is a ground from whence these, and all other evils, proceed, which ground is in all the Sons of men, in the Transgression, . . . and these things before mentioned, be the fruits that grow from it, and bred forth themselves in all Nations, and in every man, in every Nation ¹

Without the light neither the root nor the fruits of an action can be known.

The use of light as a metaphor for true knowledge is at least as old as Socrates' Parable of the Cave and was also compatible with a heliocentric view of the universe, as has been noted in a discussion of Milton.² But the use of the metaphor has varied; there are profound differences between the Socratic image and the meaning of the Quakers and Diggers. The Socratic parable points to the doctrine of forms, the idea that reality is but a shadow or imperfect manifestation of some preexistent idea, as all triangles are but imperfect portraits of the concept of a triangle. As applied to Christian doctrine, the Socratic idea became the doctrine that the world bears in some sense an imperfect, shadowy resemblance to heaven, and certainly the Quakers and

¹Francis Howgil, The Measuring Rod of the Lord Stretched forth over all Nations . . . (London, 1658) in his works, The Dawnings of the Gospel Day, and its Light and Glory Discovered: by Francis Howgil . . . (London, 1676), hereafter cited as Works, p. 107.

²Harold Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion: The Hebraic Factor in Seventeenth-Century Literature (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 201.

Diggers found manifestations of the divine spirit in nature. But in discussing the dualism which characterized fallen man, the Quakers and Diggers were not talking about shadows; they spoke instead of darkness. It was the absence of light which they emphasized, not its misapprehension, and the defect could not be remedied by philosophy but only by experience. Philosophical knowledge was notional, the product of vain imaginations, and not to be trusted. In contrast to the humbling effect of the experience of the light the clergy's notional knowledge "doth but puff up."

The aversion to philosophy did not mean that the Quakers and Diggers were necessarily opposed to speculation; Penington noted that speculative knowledge had certain advantages over knowledge gained by sense experience.

It is better by virtue of a clear understanding to search into the nature of things, than to seek out an experiment of them from sense, what can the judgment of sense add to the understanding? Or what a poor understanding is that which needeth to be helped by the judgment of sense? He who truly knoweth (who truly comprehendeth in his understanding) needeth not to experiment: He who goeth about to experiment, discovereth the insufficiency of his understanding.

Speculation has a use in our present estate, since we need to know more than we can experience. "Yet," he continues,

Speculative knowledge alone without practice, without trial, without experience is not altogether so safe in this state of man: His eye being weak needeth this further help, or he may easily be deceived. His head

and his heart, must go together, yea and both must be rightly guided, or he will be apt to mistake and miscary in every thing.¹

Speculation is dangerous because the imagination, which "formed and presented the images of desirable or repulsive things to the reason, will, and affection" could also combine sense-images into synthetic phantasms that corresponded to nothing in nature."² In addition, since senses themselves had been corrupted they can sense only the things of the earth. One can search his own experience for confirmation of Hobbes' observations, as he suggested, but this search cannot be conclusive. The sense experiences of fallen man are what Mannheim called ideological; they are space and time-bound. Finally, according to the Quakers and Diggers (but not the Puritans about whom Miller is writing) reason itself had been corrupted by the Fall. It was not the lone but often pitiful remnant of the pre-Fall state which the Puritans in particular and philosophers in general made it out to be. The Diggers and Quakers seemed at one with the emerging liberals in characterizing natural reason

¹Penington, Divine Essayes, pp. 2, 3.

²Perry Miller, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), p. 246. See his chap. IX for a discussion of the Puritan's psychological ideas. If we assume that the ideas Miller described were commonplace (much as Freud's are now), the frequent references in Quaker and Digger literature to their opponents' "vain imaginations" would have both technical and polemical meanings. I do not, however, intend to explore this possibility here.

as a servant of the passions.

In the final analysis, the hostility of the Quakers and Diggers to "vain philosophy" stemmed from the dualism which has been the subject of this chapter. If the light was purely divine there could be no natural light, no light of reason, by which man might be saved or even act civilly to his fellows. No true knowledge could be had by the unredeemed; there was no counterpart to the Thomian jus naturale as truths discoverable by reason. That evil men occasionally perform good acts was no sign that the dualism might be mitigated; instead it was proof positive that the light did occasionally break through the darkness of their evil. All products of the carnal mind were suspect, at least as regarded human behavior and knowledge of things divine.

The clear separation of the realm of the spirit from all things earthly was made, finally, in the idea of conscience. The conscience was not, as it was for Calvin, a pre-Fall remnant in man which could discern good and evil; if conscience was part of man it was subject to all the infirmities of the flesh. Conscientiousness, the result of following a corrupted conscience, could serve the worst as well as the best of causes, and therefore the Quakers and Diggers never appealed to conscience itself. It is all too easy to delude ourselves into thinking that we have done good or that our cause is just. What the Quakers and

Diggers appealed to instead of the conscience was the light or witness of God in the conscience, a witness which could be found even in the most confirmed child of the devil. The appeal was an attempt to quicken the divine impulse, to kindle the divine spark, an appeal finally to the fundamental universal principle in all men.

The distinction between the light within the conscience and the conscience itself did not follow exactly the spirit-flesh distinction. The conscience was something immortal in man which answered God's witness in man; both were spiritual but they were not the same. But because both were spiritual neither could be compelled; one did not act on the conscience, one appealed to it. "Conscience is a persuasive thing, not a compulsive, or that is to be compelled." Man does not direct his own conscience, much less another's. Thus, noted George Bishop, "this is a strange thing amongst Men, and Absurd, to apply a Thing for the instruction of a Creature, which is contrary to the nature of that Creature."¹ One could not, he concluded, teach a horse by books, nor the conscience by force. The best that one could achieve by forcing conscience was hypocrisy, either because the individual did not truly believe what he said or

¹George Bishop, An Illumination to Open the Eyes of the Papists (so called) and of All other Sects . . . (London, 1661), p. 8.

because the "conversion" had not been brought about by the spirit. Hypocrisy was a false fruit, a pretense of the flesh.

The focus of this chapter has been on the antinomies of spirit and flesh and on the problems which the antinomies pose for the psyche and knowledge. The dualism is basic to understanding the Quaker and Digger experience of conversion, their sense of history, social criticism, and finally their political theory. In a word, the dualism has resulted in a profound separation of man from his nature and from God. The potential for this separation lay in the creation of man, but the predicament is the product of choices men have made. By virtue of God's action both in creating man and in restoring the Seed to him after the Fall these choices are free and uncoerced, but they are also necessary. Neither the Fall nor the crucifixion has fixed man's estate; man remains free to respond to his spiritual or his fleshly nature. Always man retains a spiritual potential within himself, one which can be realized after a long, often arduous process of conversion.

But one's spiritual nature is not realized by a simple ascetic denial of the flesh. The spirit working within man must transform the flesh, overcome its limitations, and create a new nature. The process can best be described as dialectical; the soul, relating flesh and

spirit, permits this dialectical relationship between otherwise strict antinomies. If the process is dialectical, though, it must in some sense be immanent, and it cannot be forced. And, as we shall see in the next chapter, this was the understanding of the Quakers and Diggers. God's spirit does not act upon men; it acts within them; it is the Seed planted within which offers the power to transform one's nature. Man therefore cannot compel his own salvation, since the Seed, like the conscience, is not his to control. Salvation involves free choice, it is true, but ultimately an abandonment, not an affirmation, of the will.

The process of conversion is thus a complex one, and one not always or easily comprehended. It is, as has been said, an individual process in that each individual must undergo it if he is to be saved, but it is an historical, social, and political process as well. The Quakers and Diggers firmly believed that not only isolated men but also nations were to be saved in their time; the workings of the spirit were corporate or communal. Although the problems posed by the spirit and flesh and their solution might at first seem individual, they were in the final analysis problems of men in all their social relationships. The capacities of the psyche, for one thing, were universal. Yet since both true knowledge and social transformation begin with a small Seed implanted in the individual, this

analysis continues with the individual's experience of conversion.

CHAPTER III

"While ye have time, prize it"

For the Diggers and Quakers conversion was the critical factor in resolving the problems posed by the antinomy between spirit and flesh. Yet as was stated at the beginning of the preceding chapter, the experience of conversion led them to see the problem in the first place. Without the experience of conversion one was, as Penington observed, unaware of the existence of the spirit within and therefore unaware that there was an alternative capacity within the psyche. Whatever peace or rest one could find was only temporary and depended on the forbearance of others. One was subject to fleshly impulses, pride and greed, and finally to ignorance. Conversion overcame pride and greed, transformed the flesh, and yielded true knowledge about one's own condition and that of others. It was the awakening of the alternative capacity within the psyche and then the exercise of that capacity. Moreover, the spirit which converted the individual was also forming a community, and thus conversion was of paramount importance in social and political theory. Participation in the universal principle of the light meant that one could genuinely communicate with

others as they participated in that capacity; in Jung's terms, one could penetrate the persona and truly experience other individuals. Conversion meant that sense impressions, whether of things or of people, could and would be transcended.

The emphasis on conversion was not unique to the Diggers or Quakers; Protestant thought in general (and particularly anabaptist thought) emphasized the experience. The biblical origins are primarily Pauline; Paul after all was unaware of the power of God until he experienced it on the road to Damascus, and he repeatedly emphasized that his experience had provided him with a new nature and true knowledge. For Paul as for the Diggers and Quakers God was not truly known until he was experienced, and experience was prior even to belief. Moreover, as with Augustine, the personal experience of conversion was the foundation of theology and social theory, though the Quakers and Diggers differed sharply from Augustine in the conclusions which they drew. And, with Protestants in general, the Diggers and Quakers stressed the ongoing work of the holy spirit; direct experience of God was contrasted with mediated experience, particularly that of the mass. In their premises the Diggers and Quakers manifest clear Protestant origins.

The conclusions which they drew often varied markedly from those drawn by the more orthodox Protestants,

however. For one thing, the Diggers and Quakers denied all semblance of mediated experience, including baptism and the Lord's Supper, the two sacraments retained by their radical contemporaries, the anabaptists. The Diggers and Quakers also rejected the Calvinist belief in predestination because it "strikes at the root of the Justice of God, limits his mercy, and makes him a respecter of persons" ¹ The spiritual capacity was universal, and although it was true that the elect had been few this was not the result of any pre-ordained action by God. Rather,

Election and Reprobation is not in respect or relation to persons, but in the two seeds, between which God hath put enmity, there hath God past Election and Reprobation, and all men as they are in the fall in sin and transgression are under the curse and in the state of Reprobation, being joyned unto that seed where the curse and Reprobation is: therefore hath God in his love given his Son to redeem man out of that state ²

God had given his Son for all, but few were willing to undergo the process of conversion. Still, salvation was offered to all, and in the course of history universal salvation will be realized.

When Adam broke the covenant, God did not denounce an utter destruction upon mankind, but only upon the Serpent, or man's work of rebellion against God. The curse

¹Thomas Wight, Unto Those People Who are called Baptists (London, 1659), p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 4.

against Adam was temporary; God will destroy death and quicken mankind again and deliver whole mankind from bondage.¹

The belief that all mankind would eventually be saved meant that the Quakers and Diggers strongly emphasized that redemption was historically an ongoing process. The death of Jesus was but one part, albeit the most crucial one, of this process. For the individual, this meant that his own experience of conversion was not unique but was potentially shared by his fellows. The true community thus consisted in part of individuals in various stages of conversion. The community is dynamic, reconstituting itself, and expanding, not a fellowship of believers withdrawn from the world. The emphasis on the ongoing character of redemption also meant that the work of the spirit was ordinary rather than extraordinary, available to all men at all times rather than limited to specific persons or times. The Quakers and Diggers claimed to have the same spirit which gave power to Moses and the prophets and to Christ and the Apostles.²

¹Gerrard Winstanley, The Myserie of God, concerning the Whole creation, Mankinde . . ., as abstracted by George H. Sabine, Sabine, p. 82. Sabine interprets this tract to refer to the idea that even the damned will ultimately be saved. But as he notes, whether Winstanley continued to believe in universalism in this sense is immaterial. See pp. 25-26 of Sabine's "Introduction."

²There was a corollary to this assertion which was one basis for the attack made by the Quakers and Diggers on

Awareness of the spirit within did not come easily, however. Like the salvation of mankind it was the result of a process which took place over time, and was thereby distinguished from the suddenness of Paul's conversion. Their conversion was more akin to Augustine's; they began with a sense of uneasiness in their established profession, had a vague apprehension of truth, and finally submitted to the will of God. This individual process of conversion consisted broadly of two stages, called by the Quakers "convincement" and "conversion," and each of these stages was characterized by a different level of awareness of the spirit within.

The first stage, convincement, was made necessary by the state of man in the Fall; he was so dead in sin that he was not aware that he was a sinner. Therefore, wrote Edward Burrough, "the first Appearance of Life in the Creature, it convinceth and reproveth the works of Death and the words that proceed from Death, which are unrighteous words, and unrighteous works" ¹ The individual came to realize

"hireling priests." The Quakers and Diggers argued that the spirit which inspired the men who wrote the Bible might be acquired by the men who read it. Thus scripture could be interpreted correctly, but only by those who possessed the spirit which gave them forth. Without the spirit no knowledge was sufficient, not even a knowledge of the original languages Hebrew and Greek.

¹Edward Burrough, A Discovery of Divine Mysteries . . . (London, 1661), in his collected works entitled The Memorable Works of a Son of Thunder and Consolation: Namely, That True Prophet and Faithful Servant of God, and Sufferer

that "all was vanity" and occasionally characterized himself as the "chiefest of sinners."¹ The sensation was one of utter despair and total powerlessness, of being under the powers of Sin and Death. William James characterized this condition appropriately as the "sick soul," one which sees heaven and earth as corrupted and perceives no possibility of change. The person in this condition sees sin and evil as "a wrongness or vice in his essential nature, which no alteration of the environment, or any superficial rearrangement of the inner self, can cure, and which requires a supernatural remedy."²

The first psychological manifestation of conviction was a projection of the powers of sin and death onto something or someone outside of the self. Since the hostile

for the Testimony of Jesus, Edward Burroughs . . . (London, 1662), hereafter referred to as Works, p. 826. Cf. Winstanley, New Law of Righteousness, Sabine, pp. 227-228.

¹These phrases were neither exclusively nor predominantly Quaker or Digger; they were common to a number of writers of different persuasions. Owen Watkins, in The Puritan Experience: Studies in Spiritual Autobiography (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), emphasized that "There seems to have been almost no 'lateral' dimension in this concept [being chiefest of sinners], it was not arrived at by a man comparing himself with others . . . though the identification of particular practices as symptomatic of depravity was, of course, made possible by the existence of particular group values" (p. 232).

²William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature (New York: Macmillan, Collier Books, 1961), p. 119.

powers seemed external, it seemed as if they could be subjected to the will and thereby overcome. If only external conditions might be changed, if only heretics could be eliminated, then, it seemed, all might be set right in the world. Here lay one origin of persecution: it was psychologically easier to persecute than to face the reality of one's own sin. As the Quakers and Diggers understood their own experiences and those of others, the messengers were being punished for bringing what appeared to be bad news. Displacement took on its own dynamic; "the more they persecuted, the more they thirsted after persecution."¹

Penington and Winstanley phrased this dynamic in terms of a conflict of natures. By virtue of the conversion process we are describing they had received a new nature, the nature of Christ. Their persecutors, on the other hand, were still of the spirit and nature of Pilate. "Difference of opinion is seldome very tollerable," observed Penington,

but what is difference in natures? When such a nature and practice appear, as condemn the most religious, the most righteous, the most strict men; not only in that which they will acknowledge to be their vanity and corruption (and which they hope to be delivered from) but in the very root of their life, of their religion, of their purest righteousness and hopes? . . . And how do you think a religious man, or worldly man (for they are

¹George Bishop, The Cry of Blood . . . (London, 1656), p. 106. I am indebted to Hugh Barbour for suggesting the idea of displaced conflict to me.

both the same thing before God) will look upon those who stand between him and heaven, whose principles, whose life, whose motions dash all his hopes, discovering the emptiness and shallowness of the very nature of all his life and righteousness: Surely, if the envy, zeal, indignation, and cruelty of man, here shewed by Religion, can introduce misery, these are sure to feel it, further then they are covered by the art and skil of the Lord from the world, or then the world is blinded from discovering them.¹

Similarly Winstanley opened his preface to The Breaking of the Day of God with the observation that his

Dear friends, and fellow brethren in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ . . . have been, and are the object of the worlds hatred and reproach; not simply as you are men and women; but because the light and beautie of our Father shines forth of you; which they cannot behold; therefore they brand you for wicked ones, and your principles to be error. And under that name of deceivers and troublers (though indeed they themselves are the only deceivers and troublers) they threaten your ruine and death: . . . That the name of Israel might be no more known in the land

And later, in words which anticipated Penington's, he commented,

And if there were not an inward root of bitterness in every mans heart against truth, there would not be such strivings and warres amongst men as there is; the flesh of every man envies the Anointing; and would not have God to reign in him, but by secret grudgins and swellings would cast God out; not under the name of God, but under

¹Isaac Penington, Expositions with Observations Sometimes, on Severall Scriptures . . . (London, 1656), pp. 30-31. This tract was written before Penington actually became a Quaker, but by and large his pre-Quaker writings reflect the same experiences and understanding of them that were expressed by him and others after they became Quakers and by Winstanley. Penington was the son of the Lord Mayor of London of the same name; thus he often signed his works as Isaac Penington the Younger.

the name of an error: For truly our flesh will envie truth, it will not envie error: the flesh will kill it's enemy, not it's friend.¹

Persecution and intolerance were not the only responses to being made aware of one's condition as a sinner, though. Once one realized that the problem stemmed from his own earthly nature, he might try to subdue the flesh, perhaps through extreme asceticism. Any attempt to overcome sin by the powers of one's own will was doomed to failure, however, since the human will was subject to the very power one was trying to subdue. Repeated failure to live a righteous life was likely to lead only to deeper despair (as Bunyan discovered), perhaps even the abject terror of which other writers (but not the Diggers and Quakers) occasionally wrote.

Alternatively, one might come to the awareness mentioned by James, an awareness that change could come only from a supernatural power. This, in fact, was the pattern which most of the Quakers and which Winstanley came to follow. But consciousness of a need for a superior power itself could lead in several directions. One might attempt to achieve some kind of mystic unity with the superior power,

¹Gerrard Winstanley, The Breaking of the Day of God . . . (London, 1648), the first two pages, not numbered; and p. 73. Cf. William Tomlinson, Seven Particulars, Containing as followeth . . . VII, Of persecuting for speaking in the Synagogues (by many called Churches) (London, 1657), particularly pp. 13 [i.e., 31]-32.

to be enveloped by it. One might try to overcome the limits of one's creaturely character by becoming a completely spiritual being. But this effort too was doomed for it denied the very creation of man himself. Mysticism was also too individualistic for the Quakers and Diggers; it seemed to manifest a concern only for one's own soul and ignored the potential of universal salvation. And finally, although the mystic response demonstrated an awareness that the redeeming power was not of man, the mystic was usually unaware that the spirit was within man.

If mysticism was not a proper response to being made aware of one's sins, what was? One other possibility was posed by the sects which were burgeoning forth during the Civil Wars and Commonwealth. These sects--Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and others--seemed to offer rest to the restless soul, but neither Winstanley nor those who became Quakers found the sects satisfactory. Although they fled from sect to sect, they continued to feel the presence of death rather than life. The outward forms of the sect did not offer inner peace, and many became Seekers, waiting, often in silence, for God to reveal new and meaningful ordinances. After his own conversion experience, Winstanley saw the problem clearly. He told his readers

marvel not to see the people turn from one way or worship to another; for the Father is driving this people through all the waies, and forms, and customs, and

reformation, and governments of the Beast, to weary them out in all; that so they may find rest for the soles of their feet no where, in no outward form of worship; til they come to lye down in him (forsaking all forms) to worship the Father in spirit and truth; that is, to walk righteously in the Creation.¹

As characterized by Owen Watkins, the pattern was one of a

growing dissatisfaction with orthodox Puritan teaching, a period of fruitless seeking for true religion among the sects of the time especially the Anabaptists, and finally submission to the inner Light.

All the writers begin with a quest for lasting peace of heart, and all of them assert that neither a pious upbringing, nor fervent prayer, nor powerful preaching heard with reverence and attention did anything but make them more restless and frustrated.²

The pattern of convincement was, then, a complex one in itself. First the individual became aware of the power of sin; only later did he become aware of himself as a sinner. The beginnings of self-consciousness thus developed out of an awareness of sin, but the self was not a very pleasant object to contemplate. In an unconscious effort to avoid the self one might become a persecutor. One might try to overcome sin on one's own, or the sinner might flee madly

¹Winstanley, New Law of Righteousnes, Sabine, p. 230.

²Watkins, The Puritan Experience, p. 162. Watkins refers to this as a pattern of convincement, but in Quaker terminology the individuals were already convinced, though not yet converted. Different writers, he notes, emphasized different aspects of their progress in their writings. See *ibid.*, pp. 166-168. The pattern also applies to Winstanley, as he describes it in Truth Lifting up its head above Scandals and New Law of Righteousnes. See also Sabine's Introduction to his collection of Winstanley's works, pp. 7-8.

from sect to sect, finally waiting and seeking.

The problem with any of these attempts by the individual to change himself was that they were all products of human will. In addition, for each of these responses the power of sin or the power which would overcome sin was something apart from the individual. Each response emphasized outwardness. The individual might become aware that he could not save himself, but he was not conscious that the power which would save him was God's spirit within him. The critical course of conviction was the growth of an awareness that the very power which had reproved one for his sins was the power which could offer release from sin.¹ Only those whose consciousness developed to an awareness of the light within had successfully passed through the state of conviction; the others had been lost along the way. There

¹Those who opposed the Quakers, particularly the Puritans, could not understand that the light which reproved them was the same as that which redeemed them; the former was more normally referred to as "natural" and the latter as "divine." Accordingly consciousness that one was a sinner and redemption were two different processes, not part of the same process, as they were for the Quakers and the Diggers. Furthermore, because the Puritans could not understand that the light was in both cases divine, they could not understand why the Quakers and Diggers believed the light to be sufficient unto itself for salvation. According to the Quakers there was ultimately no need for preaching the Scripture; the light was the Word referred to in the Gospel of John and it was placed in every person to be turned to or disregarded as the individual chose. Preaching and missionary work were important but only reinforced the soft, still voice of the light within.

was, as James Nayler found, "a great difference between sin condemned in the creature, though not yet wholly dead, and sin lived in, and pleaded for" ¹

Convincement made one "willing to fall into the hands of God, seeing that all his own strength cannot help him" and he "begins to wait in the Light to receive power over his corruptions, and so comes to hearken to the voice which reproves him, which is the voice of Christ" One began the process which the Quakers technically called "conversion." This process also was a complex one; after waiting in the Light and hearkening to the voice of Christ there were further steps which the Quaker William Smith distinguished as "redemption" and "regeneration." Redemption is the leading of man out of sin; "the Power helps him where he cannot help himself, and delivers him where he cannot deliver himself" At this stage, according to Smith, one is made "conformable to the death of Christ," and brought "into fellowship with his sufferings, and so he is made one with Christ in his death and sufferings, by which he comes to the virtue of his resurrection" Regeneration, which follows both redemption and the rebuking of

¹James Nayler, How Sin is Strengthened, and How it is Overcome (London, 1657), p. 364 of his collected works entitled A Collection of Sundry Books, Epistles and Papers written by James Nayler . . . (Cincinnati, Ohio: B. C. Stanton, 1829 [original edition: London, 1716]), hereafter cited as Works (1829).

temptation, or what Smith calls "salvation," is, finally, the changing of man's nature by making him dead to the world. As a consequence of regeneration, one "receives a new life in Christ, and hath a new Name given him, which no man can read but he that hath it."¹

Smith's analysis of conversion is unusual for his clear separation of the steps involved but not for his emphasis. Burrough continued his description of the process by saying that Life "destroys all its [Death's] works in the second Creation; and Life again comes to take possession of the Creature, which it made in the beginning"² What Burrough and Smith were emphasizing was that man's will had to be crucified before God's will could take hold. The old nature had to be completely stripped away; the man of sin, in which the Seed of God lay dormant, had to be weakened so that the Seed might grow and become dominant.

Conversion, therefore, could not in any sense be willed by the individual involved. The choices he faced

¹William Smith, The Work of God's Power in Man . . . (London, 1663), pp. 2, 3, 5. The idea of receiving a new name led to the frequent signature or reference to another as "called after the flesh." William Everard, the Digger leader, is thus referred to by Winstanley in Truth Lifting Up Its Head above Scandals, Sabine, p. 103. The reference is not, however, exclusively Digger or Quaker, but was also common to other radical Puritan groups.

²Burrough, A Discovery of Divine Mysteries, Works, p. 826.

were extremely difficult since they were not the sort to which man had become accustomed in his earthly nature. Neither commitment to a new belief nor confession of one's sinful nature constituted true conversion, for "the self, once committed, need no longer ask what its own character really is" and "the inner self that confesses the sin can thus detach itself from the evil" ¹ As William James concluded, self-surrender is indispensable for conversion since "to exercise the personal will is still to live in the region where the imperfect self is the thing most emphasized." "So long as the egoistic worry of the sick soul guards the door, the expansive confidence of the soul of faith gains no presence. But let the former faint away, even but for a moment, and the latter can profit by the opportunity, and, having once acquired possession, may retain it." ² Burrough, Smith, James, and Barbour were all saying in effect that man had to let go of his own earthly nature to be converted. The entire process, both conviction and conversion, readied man for the final substitution of divine will for his own.

¹Barbour, The Quakers in Puritan England, pp. 103-104.

²W. James, Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 175, 177. The alternative to conversion by self-surrender is volitional conversion in which "regenerative change is usually gradual, and consists in building up, piece by piece, a new set of moral and spiritual habits" (p. 172).

When man's will was crucified and replaced by God's will the individual experienced a profound feeling of release and relief. Sin no longer held any power over him, and with Paul he would ask "O Death where is thy sting?"¹ Conversion was the reconciliation of a profound dualism, as James recognized along with the Quakers and Diggers. Religious happiness, he wrote, is distinguished from our commonplace feelings of happiness which

are "reliefs," occasioned by our momentary escapes from evils either experienced or threatened. But in its most characteristic embodiments, religious happiness is no mere feeling of escape. It cares no longer to escape. It consents to evil outwardly as a form of sacrifice--inwardly it knows it to be permanently overcome. If you ask how religion thus falls on the thorns and faces death, and in the very act annuls annihilation, I cannot explain the matter, for it is religion's secret, and to understand it you must yourself have been a religious man of the extremer type.²

Religious happiness is no stoic resignation to accept the station which the fates have allotted. Acceptance of necessity is neither the condition of repose nor, as will be discussed further in a later chapter, the essence of liberty. Christian liberty, the new nature which one received, was freedom from sin.

When they wrote about freedom from sin Winstanley and the Quakers meant the phrase quite literally. In the

¹I Cor. 15:55.

²W. James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 56.

beginning at least they were clearly perfectionists; when one was delivered from sin conversion was complete. One repents not just of sin but from it as well; one turns from sin altogether. "Christ saves his people from their sins," wrote Winstanley, "not only in pardoning evil Actions and removing the evil of sorrow from them, but principally to kill and subdue the powers of the flesh, and to make a man subject to the spirit, and now a man is saved from his sins, and not till now."¹ Burrough, in perhaps the first systematic statement of Quaker principles, similarly declared:

And we believe that the saints upon earth may receive forgiveness of sins, and may be perfectly freed from the body of sin and death, and in Christ may be perfect and without sin, and may have victory over all temptations by faith in Christ Jesus. And we believe every saint that is called of God ought to press after perfection, and to overcome the Devil and all his temptations upon earth; and we believe, they that wait for it shall obtain it, and shall be presented without sin in the Image of the Father. And such walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit, and are in covenant with God, and their sins are blotted out and remembered no more; for they cease to commit sin, being born of the seed of God.²

Put simply, because God was perfect, the submission to his will meant that one's actions would be perfect insofar as

¹Winstanley, New Law of Righteousnes, Sabine, p. 176.

²Edward Burrough, A Declaration to all the World of our Faith: and What we Believe (London, 1657) in Hugh Barbour and Arthur O. Roberts, eds., Early Quaker Writings: 1650-1700 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), p. 301. This collection will be cited as "Early Quaker Writings."

they consisted of carrying out God's will. Given their assumptions about the crucifixion of human will the response could be no less. As Hugh Barbour wrote of the Quakers, "Friends claimed the possibility of perfection came only from facing sin more seriously than anyone else."¹

Perfectionism meant not merely a return to Eden or to the character of Adam before he fell. "They that sit down in that state in which Adam was before he fell, sit down in that which may be fallen from; for he fell from that state, though it was perfect."² Adam's perfection in the garden had been childish innocence: "As a childe, though he love himselfe (the propriety of a Beast so to doe) yet he envies not others; for Envie, Pride, Covetousnesse, Hypocrisie, rash murdering, anger, hath not yet defiled the Earth. The man is plaine, honest hearted, even Innocent Adam."³ His life was that of the five senses; the earth was enjoyed, but it was not possessed. And Adam's perfection had rested on his obedience to God's command, but the commandment was something external to Adam. It was not a part

¹Hugh Barbour, "Ranters, Diggers and Quakers Reborn: A Review Essay," Quaker History 64, No. 1 (Spring 1975):64.

²George Fox, Journal, Vol. I (1901 ed.), pp. 419-420, as quoted by L. Hugh Doncaster, "Early Quaker Thought on 'That State in Which Adam was before he Fell,'" Journal of the Friends Historical Society 41, No. 1 (1949):24.

³Winstanley, Fire in the Bush, Sabine, p. 478.

of his own nature and therefore he could--and did--rebel against it. Adam's will was not God's will; his power of obedience was circumscribed by this very separation.

And this is the mysterie and wisdome of God, to let that innocent nature of man fall, and be defiled by his owne invention; that so, he may declare his power, in redeeming him from that defilement, and in taking him up into unity of the God-head, to remaine in that fountaine of Life and rest, and never to be deceived againe; and this is a redemption indeed; not only to deliver from bondage, but likewise to destroy the tempter; that he shall never appear to draw man into bondage again ¹

Though one might live in Eden, he was redeemed to Christ, to a principle which never fell.

The dialectical character of redemption is here most evident. Adam had to fall from innocence to be truly Innocent; evil needed to be experienced to be destroyed forever. What first separated Adam from the beasts, who also live the life of the senses and have the carnal reason of self-preservation (but are not envious), was that Adam could be tempted and could choose to follow the flesh. And this choice, while separating man from God, was suffered by God so that man might know his weakness and come to understand that strength came only from a separate power within. Only by knowing the temptations of the flesh could man become conscious of the power which could overcome temptation. And finally, it is consciousness of the spirit within that makes

¹Ibid., p. 482.

men self-conscious and gives them Reason, thereby distinguishing them from the beasts.¹ Redemption was the process of imparting God's power to men, making their wills the same as his.

The perfection to which the Quakers and Diggers laid claim was thus the result of a complex and difficult process. Still, there were limits to the concept of perfection. First, perfection did not necessarily mean that temptation ceased altogether, as is evident in Burrough's statement of belief. Though Winstanley seems to indicate that temptation too is destroyed, what is crucial is that temptation no longer has any power over the redeemed individual. Jesus was tempted but had the power to resist; Adam and Eve were tempted but did not have such a power. Second, perfectionism never meant self-perfection. Redemption was signified by works of righteousness done not by human but by divine will. Thus the Quakers and Diggers, like other Protestants and like James, concluded of any religion, "by their fruits so shall ye know them." The test was not simply pragmatic, however; truly good works were always the product

¹In addition to the passages quoted from Fire in the Bush, the dialectics of personal redemption are discussed by Winstanley in Truth Lifting Up It's Head, Sabine, p. 110, and New Law of Righteousnes, Sabine, pp. 212-213 and 227-228. The similarities between Winstanley's doctrine (which I think he shares with the Quakers, though they do not articulate it so clearly) and Milton's discussion in Paradise Lost are striking, but I do not intend to discuss them here.

of divine will. While the products of human will might appear to be good their appearance would be seen to be false.

Yet, interestingly enough, the doctrine of perfect redemption was profoundly uncomfortable for sinners, who preferred a righteousness obtainable only "beyond the stars."¹ Imperfect sanctification and justification meant that one could be a swearer, drunkard or other profane person and still be saved. Ministers who "pleaded for sin" were thus popular but did not preach Truth. Furthermore, pleading for sin was a way to keep people in bondage since it denied that God's power could liberate the poor oppressed people.² The true end of ministry was thereby denied, since ministers were to make men perfect and to free them from their sins. For the world's ministers and the unregenerate masses perfectionism was a trying doctrine, even though for Burrough, Winstanley, and their fellow laborers it had settled all doubts about finding God, Christ, and salvation.

The assurance found in the doctrine did not mean that one was equal with God. As we have seen, this was a

¹Cf. Thomas Speed, Christ's Innocency Pleaded Against the Chief Priests (London, 1656), p. 55.

²See for example, Margaret Fell, False Prophets, Antichrists Deceivers, Which are in the World . . . (London, 1655), p. 5, and Isaac Penington, Jr., The Scattered Sheep Sought After (London, 1659), Works (1761), I:76.

third limit on the concept. One was perfect to the extent he obeyed God or God worked through him. Because of God's infinite character spiritual growth was possible even after one ceased to sin. There were degrees of holiness or stages even of perfection. The Quakers held out not an attainment of perfect holiness that admitted of no increase, "but such a Perfection only as is without unholiness, or committing any sin or Transgression" ¹ Thus the doctrine of perfection was in this sense modified by the idea of various degrees of holiness--what the Quakers called one's "measure."

The three limits on perfectionism were not ad hoc responses to criticism; they were entailed in the description of the process of conversion. As God's will was substituted for man's own, a measure of his power was imparted to the individual. The degree to which God's power was possessed varied from individual to individual; the community was composed therefore of individuals in various stages of perfection. Such stages were in one sense permanent, though spiritual progress was still possible different persons would achieve finally different degrees of holiness. Such a doctrine implied humility; one could not glory in his holiness precisely because it was not his. Epistles written to

¹Samuel Fisher, Rusticus ad Academicos The Rusticks Alarm to the Rabbies: Or the Country Correcting the University and Clergy . . . (London, 1660), Works, p. 39.

Quaker meetings frequently exhorted their readers to remain within their measure of the Power, thus recognizing the temptations to exceed it. In the path of life, noted Isaac Penington,

The great danger is of ascending a step higher than the present estate and condition will bear; for by this means the aspiring mind gets up, and is exalted, and holdeth somewhat received from the life, out of the pure feat which preserves the heart clean, and out of the sensible feeling which keepeth fresh and living to God. And then the simplicity is betrayed, and a wrong spirit lives, and a wrong eye is opened ¹

God's power still placed limits on one's actions; the substance of the Mosaic Law had not been invalidated when Christ fulfilled the Law. The commandments were internalized, not abrogated, when the law was written in the heart, and both Winstanley and the Quakers criticized the Ranters for believing that anything they did had the stamp of holiness.

Yet the concept of measure was expansive as well as limiting, since God gave one the power to perform whatever he required and required nothing for which one had not the power to obey.

The pure and everlasting God layes not hard service upon his children and servants, he imposes no heavy task upon his family, but what is in the pure freedom of the

¹Isaac Penington, the Younger, Some Questions and Answers for the Opening of the Eyes of the Jews Natural . . . (London, 1661), Works (1761), I:523.

Spirit; his requirings are according to the growth of his children and servants ¹

This was the general emphasis of the earliest writers, all of whom had experienced an expansion of their capabilities, even a purification of their senses.

One incident resulted in a shift from this original emphasis and in general placed the Quakers on the theological defensive. This incident, which occurred in 1656, was James Nayler's ride into Bristol in imitation of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Nayler's horse was led by two women and followed by other men and women, all shouting hosanna. For this act Nayler was tried and convicted for blasphemy and punished. In his answers at his trial he gave no impression that he denied the adulation. Known as "Nayler's fall," the sequence of events was interpreted then as it most often is now as a departure from the measure. Nayler was condemned by his fellows for refusing to condemn his followers for exceeding their measure, and he himself seemed to admit that he had departed from his. He had reasoned against God's

tender reproof, and consulted with another, and so let the creature into my affections . . . , and he ceased to reprove, and he gave me up, and his light he withdrew and his judgment took away; and so the body of death and

¹Jacob Chandler, A Tender Salutation: Or, Loving Epistle To such, who have a breathing in the innocent life of my Friends, with whom I walked in the outward observances (London, 1664), p. 4.

sin revived again, and I possessed afresh the iniquities of my youth, and that which had of old been buried, arose and stood against me ¹

Crucially Nayler's fall led to disorder, as any departure from one's measure would. Both the power God gave and the limits which it set were part of his pure order, and after Nayler the emphasis would be put upon the latter

Modern commentators have seen in this incident a sign of an imperfection in the Quaker (and therefore Digger) understanding of human nature. Their argument is that the Quakers ignored the necessity of response and presumed that since the redeemer was perfect the redeemed would be also. But, L. Hugh Doncaster argues, "a perfect redeemer redeems only perfectly if man responds perfectly and our response we know to be imperfect."² On the other hand, the Quakers were

¹James Nayler, "To the Life of God in All" (London, 1659), Works (1829), p. xxxiii.

²Doncaster, "Early Quaker Thought on 'That State in Which Adam was before he Fell,'" p. 20; cf. Barbour, Quakers in Puritan England, p. 149.

Some further background on the Nayler episode may be useful in assessing it in relation to the problem of radical enthusiasm, a problem which will arise from time to time in later chapters. For a long time prior to the incident in Bristol Nayler had been the primary preacher in London and while there had associated with several individuals noted for their emphasis on fasting and emotional enthusiasm. By the time of the Bristol incident Nayler was mentally exhausted, and he was persuaded by some of his followers to undertake the ride despite a written warning from George Fox, then in jail at Launceston, and perhaps even against his own will. The whole episode was originally ignored by the Bristol Quakers but was reported to Parliament by men who wished to check Cromwell's sympathetic alliance with the

aware that perfection obtained only in obedience to God's commands and the doctrine of measure is a recognition of that fact. What led them to be perfectionists was not necessarily an ignorance of human responses; their understanding of the nature of persecution attests to their psychological insight. Indeed, it was their own response to their experience of release from this burden and bondage of sin and from the anxiety about salvation that was in part responsible for their perfectionism.

On their analysis, then, conversion was not and

radicals and force the Protectorate into a more Presbyterian or conservative policy. Once Nayler gained notoriety the episode split the Quakers for a time, with some Quakers defending him, others desiring a reconciliation between Nayler and Fox, and still others (Fox included) remaining relatively unforgiving. The incident points in many directions, to an unarticulated jealousy between the two primary leaders of the Quaker movement (Nayler and Fox), to problems of over-exhaustion and over-enthusiasm, to the limits of the concept of measure (as I am discussing it here), and to the political character of the light and the Quaker testimonies (as it will be discussed later).

For both description and interpretation of the incident and its aftermath see Barbour, Quakers in Puritan England, pp. 62ff. and the citations on p. 63; Mabel Richmond Brailsford, A Quaker from Cromwell's Army: James Nayler (London: The Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1927), particularly p. 93; Emilia Fogelklou, James Nayler, The Rebel Saint. 1618-1660. An Attempt to Reconstruct the Chequered Life History of a Singular Personality from the Age of the Commonwealth, trans. Lajla Yapp (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1931); Ronald Matthews, English Messiahs: Studies of Six English Pretenders, 1656-1927 (London: Methuen & Co., 1936), the chapter on Nayler and the "Conclusions"; and Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "James Nayler; A Fresh Approach" Journal of the Friends Historical Society, supplement no. 26 (1954). Any history of early Quakerism must address itself to Nayler and his "fall."

could not be a mechanical process. Movement from one stage to another was not a foregone conclusion nor could the process be deduced from the laws of physics. The inward motions of the spirit did not impress upon a preexistent moral sense but transformed the senses altogether. The spirit was dialectically related to the flesh through the soul and conscience, and therefore neither spirit nor flesh simply acted upon their opposites. True consciousness emerged from a complex process; it was not some thing lying somewhere waiting to be discovered or acted upon. And since consciousness was not a "thing" but a capacity, it could neither literally nor figuratively be forced. No one, neither oneself nor another, neither God nor Satan, could apply force at one point to move the individual to another one or to stall the process. The response of the individual and not the motions themselves was determinative for the development of his consciousness. Consciousness always exists as potential, and one's true potential is spiritual. But one cannot be forced to develop his spiritual nature nor to act upon it when developed.

The origins of the Quaker and Digger hostility to all attempts to impose a state church or uniform belief are thus firmly rooted in their theory of consciousness. Toleration was not simply a political expedient, as it was for the later Whigs, although the Quakers did point out on occasion

the benefits of national peace and prosperity which toleration would bring. Nor was toleration the product of a strict dualism, although the Quakers and Diggers often said that it was impossible to force the conscience since the conscience was spiritual while force was carnal. Their profound understanding of consciousness emphasized the free and uncoerced choice involved. Any other belief was false or hypocrisy, and their dualism did not permit a Hobbesian distinction between outward profession and inward belief. Thus, unlike Hobbes, the Quakers and Diggers did not see in outward conformity any possibility of lasting peace. Hypocrisy, which is what outward conformity really was, would eventually result in renewed turmoil.

If we take the metaphor of the Seed literally for a moment our attention is drawn to the conditions under which peace might occur. Seeds generally require a certain environment to develop properly; individual trees may thrive under adverse conditions but whole forests do not. The Seed of God had managed to develop in isolated individuals or groups throughout history but the triumph of the spirit in all men would require toleration, which could be achieved by a political decision. Other, often radical changes would be necessary if the spirit were to be free to do its work. According to Winstanley, for example, "so long as we, or any other, doth own the Earth to be the peculiar Interest of

Lords and Landlords, and not common to others as well as them, we own the Curse, and hold the Creation under bondage";¹ the Diggers had to dig to free themselves as well as others. Like Milton and Mill, though for different reasons and with different conclusions, the Diggers and Quakers were concerned with creating the social conditions in which true consciousness might best emerge.

Human action in the conversion process was not limited to broad social change. Individuals also had to be called to answer that of God within them, since social change ultimately rested upon individual choice. There were limits to the appearance of Life in the creature for one thing; man might reject the initial promptings of God's spirit and hearken not to it but to lust and pride. But because they were interested in the salvation of others, the Quakers and Diggers felt a responsibility to point out to their readers that there was only a limited time to repent and that this time ought to be prized. Their own conversion had made them in one sense responsible for their fellows, and they were anxious "to discharge my conscience of thee." It was out of love rather than spite that Winstanley and the Quakers condemned the follies of the world

¹Gerrard Winstanley, The True Levellers Standard Advanced; or, The State of Community opened, and Presented to the sons of men . . . (London, 1649), Sabine, p. 257.

and of individuals, though the line between genuine love and self-righteousness might have seemed blurred to those condemned. Speaking truthfully was part of their new nature; it was also an act of charity because it could bring their listeners to a sense of sin and thus begin the process of redemption.

Truth was not only spoken but also lived. This was the origin of the testimonies and signs, both of which bore witness to the new nature and condemned the old. The dual character of the testimony--both enlightening and condemning --is particularly evident in the digging upon George's Hill in Surrey; Winstanley and his fellow laborers were testifying against covetousness as well as participating in the new creation. The signs reflected that obedience to the spirit of Christ within which lay at the heart of the new nature, but they did not always directly portray that nature itself. The Quakers, for example, were infamous for parading naked through the streets of several cities and were perceived as having been corrupted by their beliefs. But going naked through a town was a sign that its inhabitants had been stripped by God's judgment, not the result of licentiousness. The actions which one performed as a result of having acquired a new nature were bound to conflict with the perceptions of an observer's old nature, and in this conflict of natures Penington and Winstanley found the origins of

persecution.

The Quakers and Diggers thus expected to be persecuted and to suffer just as Jesus and the early church had suffered. When they said this their opponents accused them of believing that they had the truth because they suffered. But the understanding of the Quakers and Diggers was precisely the opposite. So long as the power of Sin and Death ruled in some men true belief would be persecuted because darkness could not abide the light nor the conflicts which the children of light occasioned in the men of darkness. Not all persecution stemmed from a conflict of natures, however; men of darkness were inherently in Hobbesian conflict with each other, and "papists" or others might also undergo hardships at the hand of God because of the error of their ways. But, as Penington and Winstanley recognized, the Quakers and Diggers posed a threat to their opponents, not an external one (as their opponents thought) but a threat to the psyche itself. The threat was both real and necessary; it was a sign of God's work in man and in the world.

As was just intimated, the threat which the Quakers and Diggers posed was quite different from the kind described by Hobbes. At the center of Hobbes' analysis was the expansive ego; threats were posed both by and to such individuals. Individuals as particles in motion were bound

to conflict; the ultimate resolution--and thus the ultimate threat--was death. Men struggled after power to preserve the body, but the psyche remained in the same restless condition. Ultimately Hobbes' psychology depended upon external events and evaluations, motions upon the sense organs. The internal laws of the mind were merely mechanisms according to which initially external motion was channeled. These laws were not threatened by another individual, merely their (again external) expression. The disposition of the psyche was presumed. For the Quakers and Diggers, but not for Hobbes, the personality structure was not a given and, therefore, its presumed integrity could be attacked at the core. Such challenges did not have to be impediments to motion, as they did for Hobbes.

The emphasis on external motion is, however, not limited to Hobbes; if it were criticism of it would be historically limited. Rather, as we have seen, the idea that individuals or groups are bodies in motion lies at the very heart of a liberal idea of politics. So too is the acceptance of human corruption and the argument that the corrupt nature must be channeled rather than overcome. When Madison wrote that a government was being designed not for angels to be either governed or governors he may have been "facing sin" but the Diggers and Quakers would have said that he was not aware of the true nature and ground of it.

He relied on natural faculties for his knowledge and principles, not on the transforming power of the light.

The experience of the light, which first reproved for sin and then offered rest and peace, provided the Quakers and Diggers with a principle at once ontological, epistemological, and practical. With the light they experienced not evil but goodness to be the true essence of things. The reality of sin was not denied; it merely held no power over them. Evil had been transcended. They had become what James called healthy minded. James' description of the state of assurance aptly summarized the personal, epistemological and ontological changes which the Quakers and Diggers underwent. The features of this state are first, "the loss of all worry, the sense that all is ultimately well with one; the peace, the harmony, the willingness to be, even though the outer conditions should remain the same"; second, "the sense of perceiving truths not known before"; and third, "the objective change which the world often appears to undergo."¹ The experience of the light was absolutely authoritative for the individual to whom it came, authoritative particularly in breaking "down the authority of the nonmystical or rationalistic consciousness, based upon the understanding of the senses alone." Mystical experiences, James concluded,

¹W. James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 202.

demonstrate that

our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definitive types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question--for they are so discontinuous with ordinary consciousness. Yet they may determine attitudes though they cannot furnish formulas, and open a region though they fail to give a map. At any rate, they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality.¹

Politically and socially the new consciousness which the Quakers and Diggers experienced led them to a profound critique of prevailing and emerging institutions, those based either on an architectonic system or on the model of physics. The universality of the light led them, in turn, to expect that community rather than conflict would be the basis for a political order. The community was being gathered by the light as it transformed individuals. Soon, they thought, the community would be national in scope. The reasons for their expectations are complex and varied, depending on an interpretation of Biblical and English history. Ultimately, however, the experience of the light was the basis for their feeling that the Kingdom of God was both immanent and imminent.

¹Ibid., pp. 331, 305.

CHAPTER IV

"The Battel is begun betwixt Michael and the Dragon"

As a result of their experience, the Quakers and Diggers knew that God could be known only through prophetic activity rather than through a transcendental or mystical state. One knew God by obeying his will, by being a prophet rather than by reading of them. And, since the significant events of their lives were the result of God's spirit working within them, they came to view history as the continuing work of the Spirit with mankind. History, like conversion, is an ongoing process. As a contemporary historian describes this view,

We discern God's will in the concreteness of situations, that is in history; and only in history, and not in abstracts, principles, laws, values, which we then, as an after-thought, might apply to all kinds of situations. It is in the situations and events themselves that we become aware of the structure of being, often enough without purposeful reflection, but always with an urge to discern God's will in the manifoldness of events. While we are thus directed towards his will, the responsibility for the situation becomes the more fully ours the surer we are of his will for us: to be what we are meant to be. This means that the Spirit will never tell us what to do: it prompts us to have an attitude and to act in a way which expresses the structure of our authentic selfhood, but this implies exactly our full

responsibility. We cannot simply act the will of God, we do it, namely by deciding ourselves.¹

The individual therefore only knows what the spirit has to say by being open to it in its historical specificity.

Universal truth, that which existed before time began, is known only in historically concrete experience. The scriptures are not infallible and complete statements about God's being but casebooks of his activity and new cases are constantly being added.

As a result of their experience, the Quakers and Diggers also saw the purpose of God's activity as being the restoration of man to him. Redemption is, then, an historical process; the work of God's spirit occurs in time. But redemption is also a dialectical process, for it depends upon the overcoming of given historical states, just as the redemption of the individual depended upon his having known and submitted to temptation. History and dialectics are interwoven; for one thing, the individual's self-consciousness had been limited historically by the era into which he had been born, as we shall see. In addition, the conversion of individuals--itself possible only in a certain period of history--was part of the dialectical work of the spirit. History and dialectics would culminate in obedience to the

¹ Richard K. Ullmann, Between God and History: The Human Situation Exemplified in Quaker Thought and Practice (New York: Macmillan Co., 1959), pp. 124-125.

spirit not only by individuals but by peoples as well. Redemption meant the reconstitution of the community in which individuals could be free from sin. And finally, like individual experience prophetic history cannot be coerced. The prophet offers choices on God's behalf; peoples like individuals must choose to respond.

There would have been no problem of history, however, perhaps no history at all, without the Fall. Adam and Eve and their progeny might have continued to work the earth in that idyllic state described by Milton in Paradise Lost. But Adam and Eve chose to disobey, and their disobedience had manifold consequences. For them as individuals these were, of course, their own separation from God and awareness of their nakedness. "In the beginning," wrote Winstanley, "universal love appeared to be the father of all things, (though self-love in our experience rules in man first)"¹ The nakedness of sin and self-love could not be covered by a fig-leaf garment of self-righteousness.

The social consequence of the Fall was the destruction of the primitive community and contention over the goods of the earth. Adam and Eve had labored freely in the earth without wanting to possess it, but the Fall resulted in "one part of Mankind hedging themselves into the earth by force

¹Gerrard Winstanley, A New Years Gift for the Parliament and Armie . . . (London, 1650), Sabine, p. 376.

and sword . . . and thereby shutting out another part of mankind, making them slaves" Man fell from a primitive unity (which corresponded to his childlike enjoyment of the earth) into quarreling diversity, the logical corollary of his individual covetousness, envy, and pride. Private property was thus for Winstanley the result of the Fall and not, as for Augustine, a remedy for it. Furthermore, private property was the very antithesis of any true community and had to be overcome before any community could exist. The quarrel between Cain and Abel over whose industry had made the earth more fruitful and whose sacrifice was acceptable to the Lord "did type-out, or fore-run all the acting between man and man, from that time to this" ¹

In addition to establishing an enmity between man and man, the Fall corrupted man's institutions. Marriage, for example, was corrupted: before the Fall it had been an expression of common love and community, but after the Fall it was only a channel for carnal lust. It was no accident that the purest of man's relationships was defiled, but it

¹Gerrard Winstanley, An Humble Request to the Ministers of Both Universities and to all Lawyers in Every Inns-a-Court . . . (London, 1650), Sabine, pp. 424, 425. Winstanley emphasized the quarrel over the earth, while the Quakers emphasized the quarrel over the acceptability of the sacrifice, noting that the first blood of man shed by man was over religion. See Rabshakeh's Outrage Reproved . . . (London, 1658), p. 45. The consequences of these differing emphases will be theoretically similar.

was still better to marry than to burn. Language too was corrupted by disobedience, as demonstrated by the story of Babel and by the incorrect use of "thee" and "you" by the papists and their progeny. Language set man against man.

The enmity between men and the destruction of community were not the only result of the Fall, however. We might have expected that only man would be corrupted and that he would have descended below the level of the beasts. They, after all, still maintained the divine principle within them. Yet according to Winstanley and several of the Quakers when man fell he dragged creation with him. The Fall "turned all things out of Order, and inverted the right course and order of things[,] in which state things stand" ¹ Winstanley was most emphatic on this point. In The New Law of Righteousnes he wrote

And truly as man might see all creatures lived at rest in him in the beginning, so he may see all creatures in him now, but in a rest-lesse condition, groaning under bondage, waiting for a restauration. The covetousnesse, the subtilty, the cruelty, the pride, the envy, the devouring power that is in the flesh of man are the very distempers that are in such and such beasts and fowls: so that while man is ruled by such powers, and declares no other actions but what is in the beast; he indeed goes in the shape of a man, but properly he is a beast of such and such a ravenous principle. And now this is the curse, Man is gone out of his Maker, to live upon objects; and the creatures are gone out of man, to seek delight in pushing and devouring one another, and the whole Creation of fire, and water, and earth and air;

¹George Bishop, A Tender Visitation of Love . . . (London, 1660), p. 16.

and all bodies made of these are put out of order,
through mans rejecting the Spirit to live upon objects.

"Experience shews us," he continued, "That every beast doth act in oppression and cruelty, toward such creatures, as he can master at advantage. And thus doth the flesh of man, which is the King of beasts" He concluded that "the rising up of creatures to destroy one another is the curse, which unrighteous man, that is, the Lord of the creatures, hath brought upon Creation."¹ In the most real sense, the Fall has meant that the world is no longer natural and therefore that our experiences and knowledge of it are not true or real ones. Fallibility and changeability stem from the Fall; the power of God is infallible and unchangeable.

The corruption of nature is thus significant for several reasons, some of which have already been discussed. Others will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Among the former are the corruption of our senses and knowledge; among the latter are problems of law and magistracy. Corruption, fallibility, and changeability are all frequent and important themes in Quaker and Digger literature. But at this point the fact that nature was corrupted with the Fall means that it may be redeemed with mankind. As George Fox noted, "all the whole Creation groans under the burdens of

¹Winstanley, New Law of Righteousnes, Sabine, pp. 156, 157, 221.

corruption, untill the body be redeemed out of the pollutions"¹ As Christopher Hill notes, Winstanley extended this conclusion to make the common manuring of the land a religious act, a manifestation of the restoration of community and of fertility to the earth.² But he did not necessarily believe that even the most intensive fertilization would restore fertility. He, and the Quakers even more, relied on the promise of God to redeemed men: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."³ The new earth meant far more than individual salvation.

The descriptions of Eden, the Fall, and the possible redemption of mankind and the earth point to a three-part division of the scriptures. This division reflects the dialectics of redemption and not the common distinction

¹George Fox, Newes Coming up out of the North, Sounding towards the South . . . (London, 1655 [first edition 1654]), p. 23.

²Hill, The World Turned Upside Down, pp. 104-105. Winstanley, An Humble Request, Sabine, pp. 423, 428, and The Law of Freedom in a Platform: or, True Magistracy Restored . . . (London, 1652), Sabine, p. 558.

³Isaiah 35:1. Parenthetically, T. Canby Jones has pointed out that the "Bible which Fox practically memorized and quoted most often was the 'new' or 'modern' translation of his day, the King James Version of 1611" ("The Bible: Its Authority and Dynamic in George Fox and Contemporary Quakerism," Quaker Religious Thought 4, No. 1 [Spring 1962], p. 21). It is therefore appropriate as well as standard that quotations be from this version.

between the Old and New Covenants or Testaments. As described by Winstanley,

First, they declare the righteous Law of Creation, wherein God gives to all Mankind, equall freedome, without respect of persons.

Secondly, they declare the fall of Mankind from this righteous Law; and the various unrighteous actings of Mankind, under his falne estate, or power of darkness, by whom he is taken prisoner.

Thirdly, they declare the restoration of mankind to his creation--righteousnesse: By whom he is restored: And the actings and conversation of Mankind upon his resurrection from under that dark, or faln estate.¹

Still, the Testaments are significant. The restoration of mankind took on several of what Isaac Penington called "dispensations," but the restoring spirit was the same throughout history. The spirit of Christ was in Abraham; "it was not the man of flesh that was called Abraham, but the Law of righteousnesse and peace, that did rule and govern in that body, he was the Abraham; . . . the name of the flesh before this righteous power was manifest in it, was Abram."² Christ was in the Law, as being the sum of the Law in the day that Moses dispensed it to Israel, yet Israel knew not Christ in the Law, but feared God therein, and so they were not judged, but justified of him" Likewise with the prophets: "Christ was the Preaching of the Prophets and Life of their Prophecies" although he was not

¹Winstanley, An Humble Request, Sabine, p. 423.

²Winstanley, New Law of Righteousnes, Sabine, p. 151.

"so perfectly seen by the Prophets, as to be born in their flesh; yet walked they in the fear of their God, and were not condemned but justified of their God."¹ The prophets were able to fortell the life of Christ because they had his spirit; the life and death of Christ were known by the light before they were made known in scripture.

The third stage of the dialectic of redemption was thus itself subdivided by the different manifestations of the spirit. These manifestations will, in turn, limit both the self-consciousness of individual men and the kind of community which can be created. As described by Winstanley,

The Almighty hath declared three methods in discovering this mystery in the compasse of six dayes, or 6000 years near hand expired; in every one of which he draws man-kind higher and higher into himself, out of the power of the Serpent or bondage. And when he alone is advanced, he draws all men after him, which is the finishing up of the mystery.

The first Method is this: He was pleased to call forth Moses to be his servant, and in, by and through him, he reveals himself to lie under types, shadows, sacrifices; that man-kind by them might be led to see his Maker; And this was the Covenant of an outward testimony, which Moses, a man that was mixed with flesh and spirit, was Mediatour of. And this

Secondly did point out the Apostolical testimony which was to be manifested in aftertimes; and that was to acknowledge honour, and bear witnesse of the Lamb Jesus Christ, that was the substance of Moses. . . . And this single appearance of the man Christ Jesus (for herein the righteous Law dwelt bodily) was a more spirituall declaration then the former. And this types out

The third Method of Divine discovery, which indeed

¹ John Perrot, To the Upright in Heart, and Faithful People of God . . . (London, 1662), p. 5.

doth finish the mystery; and herein the Lord takes up all into himself, even into that Spirit that governs the Creation; for he is in all, and acts through all. And all power of righteousness that appears in any subject is still but the Lord, in such or such a discovery; for as the man Christ Jesus swallowed up Moses; and so the Spirit dwelt bodily in that Lamb, which was spread abroad in the types; And mankind is to behold the Law of Righteousnesse, in none, but in that his wel-beloved Son. Eph. 4.6 Rom. 8.22,23.

Even so that single body is a type: That the same Spirit that filled every member of that one body, should in these last dayes be sent into whole mankind, and every branch shall be a joint or member of the mysticall body, or severall spreadings forth of the vine, being all filled with the one Spirit, Christ the anointing, who fills all with himself, and so he becomes the alone King of Righteousnesse and peace that rules in man.¹

Penington's description is much the same, though his emphasis somewhat varies from Winstanley's. Beginning with the Fall, he wrote,

Man, by nature, is dead in trespasses and sins; quite dead, and his conscience wholly dark. That which giveth him the sense of his death, and of his darkness, must be another thing than his nature, even the light of the Spirit of Christ, shining in his dark heart and conscience. It is the seed of the woman which not only destroys, but also discovers, all the deeds of the serpent. Now this seed, this light, is one in all, though there have been several dispensations of it. One to the heathen; in whom it springs up after an hidden manner, even as it were naturally; from when it had the name of the Light of nature. . . . Another to the Jews, in whom it was more rigorously stirred by a law given; who by types and shadows, and righteous exercises according to the Law, were to be awakened to the living principle, Mich. vi.8. Another to the Christians, in whom it was livelyly brought forth to light and life, by an especial dispensation of grace;

¹Winstanley, New Law of Righteousnes, Sabine, pp. 160-161. The question of Christ as a type will be discussed shortly.

insomuch as that which was the mystery in the Gentiles, and vailed from the Jews, being opened in them, was found to be Christ the hope, Col. i.27. But under all these dispensations, the generality of men have fallen short of the glory of God, and missed the substance. Therefore the Lord God is now bringing forth the substance itself, but under such a vail as hides it from the eye of man's wisdom, under what dispensation soever he be, and how high soever in that dispensation. To some it seems natural; to others legal; to some it seems from the power of Satan (or at least they pretend so); to others it seems the ministry of John the Baptist. Thus men guess at it in the wisdom of their comprehensions, wanting the true line and plummet to measure it by.¹

The stages of redemption as an historical process are delineated by the different methods of discovering God's spirit and by the different bases for human association. The first stage was the Gentile-state, as Penington called it, which was characterized merely by the presence of the Seed and by an association based on carnal reason or the law of self-preservation. The Seed was God's spirit, but in the gentile state the individual's awareness of God was undifferentiated, while society was Hobbesian or at best Lockean. The gentiles worshipped gods but were unaware of the true God, and their communities were based on accidents of birth or conquest rather than any deeper principle.

The second stage of history was the Jew-state, in which God became manifest as a distinct being and the community was grounded in his choice. In this state, God

¹Penington, The Scattered Sheep Sought After, Works (1751), I, 79-80.

appeared to man as an actor apart, just as the Jews were to be set apart from the other nations of the world. As Penington described it, the Jews were chosen

not for their righteousness, not for their loveliness or pliability to God above other people; but because it pleased the Lord freely to love them, and to pitch upon them for the people of his choice after the flesh, in the free covenant which he made with Abraham.

They had been chosen

to be a vessel for him to form, to try and experiment what his love could bring them to, and bring forth in them in that way of manifestation and operation.¹

Several points need to be emphasized in this description. First, the Jews were God's people after the flesh; the choice and the Covenant were outward, as were their seal and worship. Except for certain of the prophets man was not yet aware of the spirit or seed itself nor that sin was a wrongness of being. Second, the nation existed outwardly also; its existence depended, often in a literal sense, upon obedience to the two Tables of Law--punishment for disobedience often took the form of loss of nationhood through conquest. Third, the Law gave men a sense of what constituted sins, but these were manifest primarily in outward behavior. Finally, the Covenant of Law was an experiment on God's part to see whether men of the flesh could be redeemed in their fleshly nature.

¹Isaac Penington, Some Questions and Answers for the Opening of the Eyes of the Jews Natural . . . (London, 1661), Works (1761), I: 501.

The conclusion to which God came was that man could not be redeemed by the law without, for this covenant had not made men perfect. The Law could show men their sins but it could not release them from sin. Therefore, God promised Jeremiah,

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.¹

As explained by Penington, the law would be written in the heart because the heart is "the seat, the fountain of life and motion; the inward principle of life is there." The law is written to make it more durable than the same law put into the mind, even though the mind "is the inward part of the man, the understanding part wherein the light of the man lies, it is that wherein the principles of light or darkness, of life or death are sown." Because God's law is also in the heart, "the heart may have recourse to it continually . . . the heart cannot chuse but know it, that if

¹Jeremiah 31:31-34.

the light of the understanding should at any time fail, yet the holy inclination of the will should preserve it pure."¹

The difference between the new epoch and the epoch of the Jews was that the Law would be within. The difference between the gospel-state and the gentile-state was that the individual would be aware that it was God's spirit within him. In addition, the Gentiles would have the law which had been given to the Jews; God's law would be made universal. The promise to Jeremiah meant that both previous states would be transcended by a new, higher state.

Still, a promise is only a promise until fulfilled, and thus we come to the role of the historical Christ. Both the Quakers and Diggers saw his coming in the flesh as a sign that the promise had been fulfilled and that henceforth the law was written in every heart. Christ was the new Adam, the beginning of a new creation, a new start for mankind. Like the old Adam he was in every heart. In this respect his historical role was clear. But the Quakers and Winstanley were profoundly ambivalent about other characteristics of his earthly presence. As has been said, his death on the cross did not save all mankind but only opened that possibility to men. Winstanley, as we have read, referred to him as a type of the perfect life, the life

¹Isaac Penington, An Eccho from the Great Deep, pp. 68, 69.

governed by the spirit. Most of the Quakers pulled back from this conclusion, which they were frequently accused of reaching. Christ was an example, Nayler said, but "it is one thing to say Christ is a figure or example, and another thing to say, with all he did and suffered was but a figure, and nothing but an example . . ."¹ Whatever ambivalence there was became subsumed by the next historical age, the rule of the spirit over all mankind.

The direct rule of the spirit and the law which Christ had come to fulfill was not something in a distant future; it had occurred during the Apostolic period. The primitive church was an example of the spirit-gathered and spirit-led community, one in which universal love overcame self-love. The primitive church was an example of the final stage of the historical and the dialectical processes: after having been converted individuals were conscious of God within, and they came together in a community which transcended their individual differences and social statuses. Most significantly for Winstanley, though not for the Quakers, the Apostolic church had held all goods in common, thereby demonstrating that private property, that the antithesis of community, could be overcome by the spirit. (The Quakers pointed instead to the true charity practiced

¹James Nayler, A Discovery of the Man of Sin . . . (London, 1655), p. 19.

in the Apostolic church without sharing either Winstanley's premise or his conclusion that private property and community were antithetical.) Both Winstanley and the Quakers emphasized that the primitive church met in silence, which Winstanley called "the forerunner of pure language"¹ and waited on the spirit rather than worshipping God in outward forms. God was worshipped in spirit and in truth by a community which had been formed by the spirit from converted individuals. The true church was visible, not invisible, as it was for Augustine.

The Apostolic period was significant for another reason. The resurrection of Christ was seen as his second coming, and as one Quaker, William Bayly, pointed out, nowhere in the scripture was a third coming mentioned.² The Fifth Monarchists were thus in error in their expectation that Christ would come as an earthly king. Nayler told them, "your expectations will fail, who look for his appearance in the worldly glory or after your imaginations, who judge him to be like your selves, or such a one as you would have him, who have changed your glory for fading things, and

¹Winstanley, New Law of Righteousnes, Sabine, p. 224.

²William Bayly, Deep Calleth unto Deep . . . (London, 1663), in A Collection of the Several Writings of . . . William Bayly . . . (Philadelphia, Pa.: Marcus T. C. Gould, 1830), p. 186. This is a republication of the original edition of 1676.

so imagine him also."¹

The resurrection also meant that the day had come to separate the precious from the vile. Like the apostolic church the Quakers and Diggers had experienced the Last Judgment, which was an ongoing process rather than a particular point in time. "I do not say it is to come, and is not, but that it is come, and also coming, which manifests the nature of every Root and Branch"² Their personal experience of judgment led them to the conclusion that heaven and hell were not places beyond the stars. The fires of hell were of part the consuming fire with which the Lord judged; if one did not allow it to burn out sin it would burn forever. Wrote Winstanley, "the souls that are lost and ashamed in their work, are not tormented by any terrour without them in any local place, but their hell or place of torment is within themselves, seeing and feeling themselves chained up in bondage . . . until the judgement of the great day." For the spiritual man this hell was as real as any which might be experienced after physical death. But the Quakers and Diggers had experienced a spiritual death; this was their own conversion and resurrection. Thus heaven too

¹James Nayler, A Salutation to the Seed of God: And a call out of Babylon and Egypt . . . (London, 1665 [1655], pp. 29-30.

²William Smith, An Epistle from the Spirit of Love and Peace . . . (n.p., 1663), p. 7.

was not a "local place."

As it is said, That the King of Righteousness takes delight in nothing, but what is within himself, and what proceeds out of himself: So the Heaven of an enlivened heart is not a local place of glory at a distance from him but the seeing and feeling the Father within, dwelling and ruling there; and to behold the glory of that power proceeding forth of himself, to which he is made subject, through which he walks righteously in the Creation, and in which he rests in peace.¹

For the individual these observations were manifest in the perfectionism discussed in the preceding chapter. Socially they were expressed in the government and community of the Apostolic church by the Spirit.

Eventually, however, the church turned away from the true spirit and apostasy set in. Forms were substituted for Truth, and so-called Christians began to feel the need for outward observances to assure themselves of grace. But while an outward worship, a knowledge of sins from the law, and a community based on outward practices (now infant baptism rather than circumcision) had been sufficient for the Jews in their time these practices were not acceptable for those to whom the spirit had come. The church was fornicating, as Penington put it, with the whore of Babylon by

inventing things which the Lord never commanded, or adding to that which the Lord did command. . . . 2. By imitating those things which were commanded to others. . . . 3. By continuing in practices, to which they were once led by the Spirit, without the immediate presence and life of the Spirit.

¹Winstanley, New Law of Righteousness, Sabine, p. 217.

"Idolatry is the worshipping of God without his Spirit (that is the plain naked truth of the thing.)"¹ Moreover, the church had been turned into a political body, with its governors and magistrates: "man having made a Monstrous Body, a Politick Church, he imagines a Head like it, and therefore Blasphemously saith, Christ is the greatest Politician"²

The Quakers and Diggers specified no certain time for the beginnings of the Apostasy, although it was identified with the growth of popery, as Howgil intimates. Still, popery was not the cause of the Apostasy; it was more of a sign of the work of an anti-Christian spirit. Once established, however, popery (which, by the way, was not limited to the Catholic Church) furthered the work of anti-Christ. "Antichrist is not (as some suppose) particular visible Person upon Earth, Distinct and Divided from all other persons . . . ; but Antichrist is rather an Invisible Spirit"³ which dwells in persons. "The same spirit that

¹Isaac Penington, Babylon the Great Described (London, 1659), Works (1761), I: 115-116, 118.

²Francis Howgil, The heart of New-England Hardened through Wickedness . . . , Works, p. 317.

³Edward Burrough, Antichrists Government Justly Detected . . . throughout the Kingdom of this World (London, 1661), Works, p. 869, cf. 869-878 passim. Christopher Hill has an excellent study of the imagery of Antichrist, Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

sometime opposed and persecuted the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, other times was transformed into the Profession of the Prophets, Christs and his Apostles words."¹ "The great masterpiece of the whore was to paint herself like the Lamb's wife, and so to withdraw from the true church, and set up a false church"² More generally, the devil had painted a liberty like the true liberty, only seemingly even greater, since the devil's liberty allowed scope for the flesh. The work of the devil was now inward also; "as the outward Sion, the outward Jerusalem, is passed away in its use and service; so the outward Babylon is out of date too."³ Man did not have to eat a fruit to turn from the spirit which had redeemed him.

Epistemologically and perceptually the Apostasy was similar to the Fall. Both corrupted man's senses and made him incapable of understanding the things of the spirit. The desire for earthly glory led to the corruption of language:

The Pope set up (you) to one in his pride, and it is the pride which cannot bear thou and thee to one but must have, and would have (you) from the Author their

¹Burrough, Antichrists Governments, Works, p. 873.

²Penington, Babylon the Great Described, Works (1761), I: 112, cf. his The Axe Laid to the Root of the Old Corrupt Tree . . ., Works (1761), I: 215-216.

³Penington, Babylon the Great Described, Works (1761), I: 103.

Father in their pride, which must not but have the word thou, which was before their Father the Pope was, which was God's language, and will stand when the Pope is ended. G.F.¹

Socially, the Apostasy meant that the earth was no longer held in common for the common preservation of Mankind, as it had been in Apostolic times. Both church and state overstepped their bounds, each attempting to coerce the conscience. The church attempted to govern men's political affairs; the state established churches. Ministers demanded tithes which became among the greatest oppressions of the nation. The primitive church was at peace; the apostate nations were at war, or at best a pretended peace. True peace and a just settlement of government depended, therefore, on turning away from transgression and out of the Apostasy.

The Apostasy did not mean that the true church had vanished altogether. At various times small groups had come to possess the spirit, but they were usually persecuted to oblivion and consigned to the dust bin of history by being called heretics. Although they might have disagreed with some of the beliefs of these groups the Quakers in

¹George Fox, John Stubs, and Benjamin Furley, A Battle-Door for Teachers & Professors to Learn Singular & Plural; You to Many and Thou to One . . . (London, 1660) in a Facsimile reprint by The Scholar Press Limited (Merston, England, 1968), p. 28 [the last page; pagination is erratic].

particular felt closer to them than to the established churches, who, Howgil noted, controlled history. And since several commentators have sought to put the Quakers into a mystic tradition which includes several of these heretics, Howgil's response to the Puritans of Massachusetts is worth quoting at length.

And as for Praxes, Sabellus, Nestorius, Cerinthius, Eutichus, no with Quintinius, Swenkfeld, Muncer, David George and John of Leyden, what are these to us? and what are their Principles to us? Something they spoke which was real Heresie, if the Histories be true, whereof I much doubt, because many such as thy self were the Authors thereof; and something it may be was Truth, which might be vindicated, not because they held it, but because it is Truth in itself: and as for thy comparing of them to us, and their Principles to ours, doth not at all detract or invalidate Truth, as in it self; for corrupt Minds may speak true Words, and that which is Truth in it self, yet not live in the Life thereof, they are judged, though the Truth in it self stands clear, and so what as they were in their Principles & Practice, in Life or in Doctrine, must they give Account for
¹

The true church had a history, albeit not a continuous one, and the Quakers and Diggers knew from experience the exhilaration and the dangers of being led by the spirit in an apostate world.

¹Howgil, The heart of New-England Hardened . . ., Works, p. 302. Rufus Jones is perhaps the most notable of those who would see the Quakers as the culmination of a mystical tradition, though for the Quakers of our period he is in error. Still, his studies of the mystical tradition, if it may be called that, are invaluable. See his Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959 [c. 1914]) and Studies in Mystical Religion (London: Macmillan and Co., 1909).

The Quakers and Diggers felt more than part of the history of the true church during the Apostasy, however. They saw themselves as the culmination of that history and the beginning of a new history. In gathering the Quakers and Diggers out of the Apostasy the spirit was renewing its efforts to make the true church universal. Though the Quakers and Diggers might be persecuted, they expected to be vindicated by the spirit, if not in their own time certainly in that of their progeny. They felt that they were living in the fulness of time.

There were several reasons which the Quakers and Diggers gave for their expectations, most important of which were their own individual and collective experiences. Conversion had demonstrated the work of the spirit to them and opened their minds to the true meaning of the Bible, particularly the books of Daniel and Revelation. The spirit had shown them the true character of its previous ministration and of all institutions, government, magistracy, and property as well as the churches both Protestant and Catholic. Each ministration pleaded its privilege to rule men, but only the ministration of the spirit was rightful. The character of all other institutions was bondage to the power of the Beast. These demonstrations of the power of the spirit were themselves signs of the fulness of time. Collectively, the fact that they were being gathered (and for

the Quakers their rapid increase) was proof that all men would soon obey the spirit. God was making his hitherto invisible witness visible through the growth of the Saints themselves. In addition, most of the Quakers and Diggers were common people, just as the original disciples and apostles had been.

There were other signs of the impending day of God as well, though these too were only visible experimentally, not notionally. The multiplicity of sects in England were the false Christs of the end of days; their followers went fleeing after them saying "lo, is Christ here" and "lo is he there." The multiplying sects were also signs of the work of conviction, a parallel to the interpretation discussed in the previous chapter. The civil war in England was a similar sign, the earthquake "when God shakes down corruption in Magistracy, which the Beast brought in, and so restores that ordinance of God to purity in Justice"; just as he "shakes down all the corrupt flesh in a Saint, and treads it under his feet" ¹

¹Winstanley, Breaking of the Day of God, pp. 115, 114. This tract is a most elaborate discussion of the signs and meaning of its title; most of the reasons given by both Quakers and Diggers are discussed in it. I do not intend to discuss every one of the reasons given, particularly not the elaborate discussions of Revelation, interesting though they are. I intend only to indicate broadly why the fulness of time was at hand. The four Beasts of Daniel will be discussed in later chapters.

With the introduction of the Civil War in England we suddenly have reached a critical point in their--and our--analysis of history. Until now the emphasis has been predominantly biblical, with a carryover of the spiritual categories to post-Apostolic Christendom. There has been little reference to specific nations since the Apostolic period except by way of example; the Apostasy was, in other words, not a national phenomenon. But once one views the Civil Wars as a sign of the earthquake the role of England ceases to be indifferent and she becomes the chosen nation. The fulness of time would come first within her borders. Whatever secular history the nation possessed is suddenly infused with a sacred character, an infusion no less sudden than the coming of the spirit itself. As Edward Billing prophesied, in England

shall a holy Nation be born in a day, and the memory of the prophane shall rot and perish like their own Dung; and in their rooms shall be fixed (as the Stars of the Firmament) peace and good will upon Earth, Counsellors as at the first, and Judges as at the beginning. Also in that day shall the Truce-breaking Hypocrites, for their mocking of God, their Earthly-mindedness, . . . their persecuting the innocent Lambs of Christ, . . . shall they feel ten times triple the vengeance of the Lord, of which they have already an earnest; . . .¹

The primary reason for Billing's expectation was that the Quakers (and also the Diggers) lived in England and

¹E[dward] B[illing], An Alarm to all Flesh . . . (London, 1660), pp. 3-4.

arose during the tumult of the 1640s and 1650s. If they were the visible manifestations of God's spirit at work, England was obviously the locale which had been chosen. A certain ethnocentrism was involved, one shared with other Englishmen who knew Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the role of destiny it portrayed. In addition, the Quakers and Diggers shared the radical Puritan expectation that God would work in history; the differences between them were over how frequent or infrequent God's intervention would be. With their fellow Puritans the Quakers and Diggers might also have shared the view of England as the last bulwark of Protestantism against a Catholic onslaught, a view conditioned by the 1620s.¹ Finally the Second Coming of Christ was commonly expected throughout the seventeenth century, and various specific dates were predicted for the event.

One of these dates was, intriguingly, 1656--the year of Nayler's ride into Bristol and of the height of Cromwell's despotism. The coincidence of these two events suggests an alternative explanation of Nayler's actions, one which varies markedly from the standard view of the "fall." It is entirely possible, perhaps probable, that Nayler was

¹Cf. H. R. Trevor-Roper, The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation and Social Change (New York and Evanston, Illinois: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 244-249; and more generally, William Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963).

trying to suggest that Christ was already present in England, not in the person of James Nayler but in the spirit which led him. The spirit of Christ was furthermore an alternative to the despotic rule of a Cromwell, or of any other king for that matter. The ride into Bristol might well be the most dramatic of the signs for which the Quakers were infamous; though Nayler saw his punishment as a sign to himself, it was also a sign to his punishers,

and a sign to the nation, and a sign to the world of the dreadful day of the just God, who is come and coming to avenge for that pure life, where it is transgressed, and to plead the cause of that precious seed wherever it is oppressed and suffers under the fleshly lusts of the present world ¹

In any event, the turmoil of the 1640s and 1650s was a sign of God's displeasure with the course of the reformation in England, his chosen nation. The king was turned out by the hand of God, using Cromwell and the Army, because he supported episcopacy. But the triumphant Parliament was content to stop at Presbyterianism, and so it was subjected to Pride's Purge. For Cromwell the Quakers had high hopes, as had Winstanley, but these hopes were dashed when Cromwell supported the Independents. Because they, not the Independents who persecuted them, were the true religion, the

¹James Nayler, "To the Life of God in All" (London, 1659), Works (1829), p. xxxiv. This episode has thus a dual character which was missed by both his contemporaries and modern commentators who view it primarily as a fall.

Quakers (and Diggers had they still been organized) deserved the protection implied in Cromwell's oath to support religion. Then Cromwell died, partly because of God's judgment, and Richard Cromwell in turn was deposed by the army. Thus the army was exhorted again to effect the reformation, but it did not. Even the Restoration, partly because it was preceded by the Declaration of Breda which promised toleration, was the work of God. Significantly, the Quakers reminded Charles II, he had been restored without bloodshed, and if this sign were ignored God would judge him also. The Quakers, unlike some other groups, were not therefore immediately disappointed by any of the changes; they were committed to the Reformation, not to any particular party. The Quakers and Diggers took the Solemn League and Covenant seriously, particularly when it came to the work of the reformation.

Once England became the chosen nation her history took on a different character. It was no longer merely secular, and the categories of religious experience were applied to it. Certain parallels with sacred history could be drawn; these were evident only to the converted. Specifically, the Quakers and Diggers said, the nation had become apostate from its own legal and governmental heritage. Both the civil and religious parts of the nation were under "misery and oppression," and thus the nation had to be

redeemed outwardly as well as inwardly. For Winstanley this meant, of course, that the poor had to be set free to enjoy the commons; in a cogent statement of the relationship between outward and inward bondage he wrote (referring to the clergy),

This is he, that restraines the liberty of the outward man, not suffering him to have a free enjoyment of his portion in the Earth; making such actions to be sinne, which the righteous creating spirit made not a sinne.

And he restraines thereby the liberty of the inward man; not suffering him to act in the liberty of himselfe; for he makes a man a sinner for a word, and so he sweeps the Stars of Heaven downe with his tayle, he darkens Heaven and Earth, and defiles body and mind.

For so long as I must not act, according to the freedome of my owne spirit and power within me; but must be guided by others without me, and punished for such actions, which others in the ruling Chaire doe, in a higher nature then I doe; I am then in bondage, and my eyes are put out.

And this is the Covenant, that the outward teaching power makes with the branches of Mankinde, to put out their owne eyes, to see by others; telling them none can see, but schollars: so that this fourth Beast, is more dreadfull then the other three; for it stamps the other three under foot, and rules over all.¹

Meanwhile, Penington was arguing that the struggle for reformation was tied to the struggle for liberty of conscience and self-government.

Not did onely the sweetness of Liberty and Propriety put men, that were sensible thereof, upon striving to regain and possess them; But the preciousness of Freedom to Conscience, tender Conscience, which had been so long yoked and burthened, did much to instigate Christians to assay the recovery and re-enjoyment of it. And the result hath been much alike to both; both have been

¹Winstanley, Fire in the Bush, Sabine, pp. 468-469.

buried in the dust of Contention and Confusion. The Contention hath grown so hot, that men have almost forgot what they contended for in both, which at first was not a power to oppress and captive others, but to attain Liberty for themselves and others.¹

Winstanley was particularly insistent that the promise to work a reformation in England involved release from the Norman Yoke as well as spiritual reform. The Norman conquest had perverted good Anglo-Saxon institutions in any number of ways, including the establishment of a feudal system, corruption of the law and legal system, the destruction of the communal institutions of the English village, and the establishment of an outward church. William had caused the laws to be put in French, which made lawyers necessary and thus also oppressive to the poor, but more crucially he had changed rather than just confirmed the Anglo Saxon laws. Magna Charta was placed in an ambivalent position: to the extent it confirmed Anglo-Saxon liberties it was affirmed, but the fact that it was necessary at all pointed to the oppressive character of the Norman regime. Observed Winstanley,

England, you know, hath been conquered and enslaved divers times, and the best Laws that England hath, (viz. Magna Charta) were got by our Forefathers importunate petitioning unto the Kings, that stil were their Task-masters; and yet these best laws are yokes and manacles, tying one sort of people to be slaves to

¹Isaac Penington, A Voyce out of the Thick Darkness . . . (London, 1650), p. 1. Others also draw the parallel between religious and political apostasy.

another; Clergy and Gentry have got their freedom, but the common people stil are, and have been left servants to work for them, like the Israelites under the Egyptian Task-masters.¹

Winstanley's last image is particularly instructive. On the one hand, the Norman Yoke was peculiarly English; other nations supposedly did not have the same primitive freedoms that the English had had. On the other hand, the Norman Conquest was but one instance of "the Babylonish yoke laid upon Israel of old . . . to keep Jacob down: And the last enslaving Conquest which the enemy got over Israel, was the Norman over England" ² The power was not exclusively Norman, then, but what Winstanley and the Quakers called "kingly." It was kingly because it tended to be manifest in the rule of the one or few over the many, but

¹Gerrard Winstanley, An Appeal to the House of Commons, Desiring their Answer; Whether the Common-People shall have the quiet enjoyment of the Commons and Waste Lands: Or whether they shall be under the will of Lords of Mannors still (n.p., 1649), Sabine, p. 303. On the Norman Yoke as an image not just during the Revolution but at other times in English history, see Christopher Hill, "The Norman Yoke" in his Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century (New York: Shocken Books, 1958), pp. 50-122. The question of how to interpret the development of the Common Law and whether the Norman Conquest confirmed or changed it is dealt with in detail by J. G. A. Pocock, The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967). Pocock is concerned with the relationship between the historiography and polemics of the period.

²Winstanley, True Levellers Standard Advanced, Sabine, p. 259.

it need not be tied exclusively to the person of a king. Parliaments too were kingly to the extent they were oppressive; moreover the existing Parliament had been composed of the king's servants, not the free people.¹ Freedom meant, then, not only removing the king, however necessary the execution of Charles I, but eliminating all vestiges of kingly power. One had to contend not with persons only, but with "the corrupt state of things,"² and so long as the root was not changed the fruits would remain the same, no matter what name the fruits might assume. England's laws and social relationships could only be reformed by working the spiritual reformation.

England was at the dividing of time, and would be "a forerunner to the rest of the Nations"³ in both spiritual and governmental reformation. The differences of religion and the rule of the few over the land would be overcome by the rule of the spirit. The Quakers and Diggers were to be prophets to the nation, to call the people and "those that have been formerly in Authority, and have broken covenant with God and Man"⁴ back to the Covenants. Their social task

¹See Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 585-586.

²Thomas Zachary, A Word to the Officers of the Army . . . (London, 1657), p. 2.

³Winstanley, Fire in the Bush, Sabine, p. 485.

⁴This is the title of a tract by George Fox (London,

was similar to their individual task; to aid in the work of redemption by reproof for sin and to demonstrate by a life of obedience to the spirit that redemption was possible. England would be redeemed not as a collection of individuals but as a nation, just as God had originally covenanted with Israel. The Quakers and Diggers were the successors of the prophets, particularly Jeremiah, since they were trying to renew the covenant written in the heart.

The prophetic idea of history, including that of England, has several consequences. First, the concept says something about the nature and limits of human action in history. On the one hand, the emphasis on prophecy is a limit to the fatalism which is often the consequence of relying on God's hand in history. The nature of prophecy implies that there are choices to be made, choices which are not compelled even by God. These choices are to be made, moreover, in a particular time frame; the opportunity to make them may be withdrawn. "While ye have time, prize it" --the admonition which was the title of the last chapter-- applies to men and to nations. On the other hand, history is not a purely voluntaristic process. Man will not make or remake history by his own will, but only with the help of God. This is the message of the prophet. Furthermore, the

1660); on the office of prophet see particularly pp. 1-2.

ground rules of history and of consciousness are themselves subject to God's intervention, as they have been at three times already: the Fall, the giving of the Law, and, most recently, the coming of Christ in the flesh. With the Second Coming (which the Quakers and Diggers saw as having occurred with the resurrection) it might appear that the ground rules of history were to remain stable, but there was still no reason to conclude their necessity. Unlikely though it might be, God could always alter the rules again.

Second, the prophetic idea of history meant that the true community would be realized in time, not at some point beyond it. The kingdom of God was in some sense a political kingdom, although obviously not one in the sense which Howgil condemned. Christ's mission had been to establish a political kingdom, as Hobbes noted,¹ but it was not to be governed primarily through an outward law, as Hobbes expected. There had been an early kingdom, the primitive church, but it had fallen into Apostasy, from which it was now being recovered.

Third, in their historical attitude and understanding

¹See Pocock, Politics, Language, and Time, pp. 172-173. On Hobbes' general idea of revelation and the kingdom of God see *ibid.*, chap. 5, "Time, History and Eschatology in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes" (pp. 143-201). Cf. also John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus (Vicit Agnus Noster) (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), chap. 2 and passim.

the Quakers and Diggers were radical, particularly in the sense in which Pocock writes of a politics of history.¹ They argued first that the past could be known outside and apart from the tradition about it. Indeed true knowledge of the past could not be obtained through the tradition because the tradition had perverted knowledge. In addition, when one had the true knowledge of the past, he would find the standards for judging the present located there: in the state of Adam before the fall, in the primitive church, and in Anglo-Saxon society. But precisely because the past could be known independently of the present whether the standards were actually located at some historical time did not really matter. Pocock writes of the Levellers that

they could both assert with Lilburne that institutions embodying that [natural] freedom had once existed in England and assert with Overton that it did not matter if they had not, since the authority of spirit and reason was independent of worldly happenings.²

But the same characterization is even more applicable to the Quakers and Diggers: for the former religious liberty would have been the essence of the Good Old Cause whether or not it had ever been enjoyed in England, and for Winstanley restoration of the creation-right was in a sense independent

¹Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time*, chap. 7, "Time, Institutions and Action: An Essay on Traditions and their Understanding," and chap. 8, "On the Non-Revolutionary Character of Paradigms: A Self-Criticism and Afterpiece."

²*Ibid.*, p. 251.

of the commons system in England.

Like other radicals the Quakers and Diggers were both historical and unhistorical. They were unhistorical since they claimed that their authority was in a crucial sense outside of history. Like the sixteenth-century reformers, they meant to show that the present church was apostate from its original principles and therefore had no authority. Their answer to the question of their authority to discard tradition was contained in their assertion that they had the same spirit as Christ and the apostles. To quote Pocock again,

[s]ince what was in dispute was an action of the sacred upon the world of time, the reformers claimed the authority of the sacred thing acting on and through themselves, their acts being conceived as opposed to tradition; they claimed both to interpret the past and to reform the present by personal authority and charisma ¹

On the other hand, the Diggers and Quakers were historical in that the past was reinterpreted to offer a different kind of authority over the present, yet still not the authority of tradition. They had but to appeal to the idea of the sacred contained in the tradition itself to demonstrate how far society had departed from its origins.

But as I have noted, the Quakers and Diggers were not concerned merely with recapturing the past; their actions were present- and future-oriented. History was conceived

¹Ibid., p. 258.

as prospective, and thus not tradition itself but a particular tradition had gotten in the way. The past, even the primitive church, was rejected as an absolute standard in favor of the present spirit. When Nayler was confronted with the accusation that the Quakers demanded a community of goods as in the primitive church he denied the accusation, but not completely. If it was the will of the spirit to restore this particular characteristic of the primitive church, the Quakers would accept and testify for the community of goods. But they would not force the spirit one way or another.¹

As would be expected, the differences between this particular, and radical, view of history and others will be manifest in theories of Government and society. For Hobbes, for example, the denial of continuing revelation and of the relevance of the past as a standard for the present meant that one had to turn to nonhistorical knowledge to construct a civil society. Those who argued that revelation was given only to a few argued for the rule of the saints, but since the unregenerate could not hope to change this rule was in its essence coercive. The rule might be traditional, as it was for the Puritans, but it was still coercive. The Diggers

¹James Nayler, A True Discoverie of Faith: And a Brief Manifestation of the Ground upon which we stand . . . (London, 1655), pp. 13-14.

and Quakers, however, argued for a government by the community, and since they expected that all men could be saints the coercive nature of government was secondary, though coercion was not completely eliminated. To this theory we shall turn shortly.

First, I would like to emphasize the vital role played by law in the development of the individual and of the community. In the first place, these two processes are essentially teleological ones, following a particular law given by God over time. As in all teleological processes, there is also a particular end toward which development takes place, and that end is God himself. "The Root, Spring or Original of all things is perfect unity," wrote Penington, "and being perfect unity is also perfect variety, comprehending all things in itself in entire oneness, how vastly different or contrary soever they appear, when they come forth out of it."¹ Man's true nature, both social and individual, is the result of overcoming or transcending previous stages; teleology has a dialectical rather than a linear character.

There is another sense in which the development of the individual and community are teleological process, however. Only those who are redeemed will know the true law

¹Penington, Divine Essayes, p. 9.

of development and only they are free to develop their true natures. Those who have not been reclaimed will follow the laws of the fleshly nature. Pride will find a way to manifest itself; "where pride is, it will vent forth itself, either less or more, according to the outward ability of the Creature" ¹ One's physis is not arbitrary but depends upon whether he listens to or rejects the light. Pride and covetousness have their own laws of development, and ultimately they are destructive of the community. For Winstanley property and community are antithetical. The teleology depends upon the experience to which one opens himself.

In the development of consciousness and of community the teleological law combines with the various law states in yet another way. The development of consciousness can, for example, be characterized as the progression through the various law states. Adam's consciousness, the law or righteous necessity under which he lived, was inward, but only in a primitive sense. Adam's inward law was childlike rather than mature, and thus he was not aware in the most real sense of his divine nature. Convincement, to take the first stage of true consciousness, is

¹James Parnel, A Shield of the Truth . . . (London, 1655), in A Collection of the Several Writings given forth from the Spirit of the Lord, through . . . James Parnel . . . (n.p., 1675), p. 59.

characteristically the stage of the outward law, the one which first shows one his sins. Sin is made manifest by the outward law, as the Quakers frequently said, but even the strictest obedience to the outward law will not overcome sin. Sin can only be overcome in the third stage of consciousness, by which time the outward law has become an inward law. Obedience to the inward law, which is no longer something separate but an integral part of the new human nature, is the characteristic of the third stage of consciousness, conversion. The development of consciousness is thus an obedience to successive law states as these are made manifest by the spirit within.

Similarly, the community can be characterized by the law which it obeys. The gentiles obey a natural law, which is the primitive stirring of the Seed within them. This natural law of self-preservation, which men share with the beasts, leads men to form communities to protect their lives and goods. The nation of the Jews was characterized by an obedience to an outward law, the covenants with Abraham and Moses. Both the natural law of the gentiles and the covenants of the Jews are, however, particularistic, applying only to particular nations at particular times, and they presume conflict. Whatever provisions they have in common is the result of the spirit which has informed each of them, but the universality of that spirit is not yet manifest.

The spirit itself becomes known only when the particularistic outward law is transformed and written in the heart. Then men become aware of the necessity of the community for the realization of their freedom and of the commonness of men. The universal community, and with it freedom from temptation, become possible since all men can obey the law within. The dialectics of redemption overcome the differences which men have placed between each other and between themselves and God.

Once the law in the heart has been promulgated all other laws and actions may be judged by it. The error of the Ranters as individuals and as a community was that they failed to obey this law. In addition, while outward laws are not necessarily ruled out by the law within, all such laws must answer that of God in every man. Troeltsch has characterized this ideal of law as the "ancient sect-ideal of the Absolute Natural Law, as it was before the Fall" But it was not as Troeltsch says law before the Fall; for Winstanley and the Quakers this law was possible only after the Crucifixion. Still, the remainder of Troeltsch's observation is accurate; the law is, he continues,

the ideal of freedom, equality, and brotherhood, which only recognized the use of law, force, and dominion in so far as those things are permitted by the full consent of all the individual members of Society, and as they freely serve the common good. All historic law which goes beyond that, all that the Church and the monarchical and aristocratic principle exalt as the relative

Natural Law, which has been instituted by the Fall, is a product of the flesh, of selfishness and externalism; it has only been glossed over with complicated arguments, by the false theology of priests and professors in the interests of a particular class. Christ, the Inner Light, Reason, the absolute Natural Law: it all means the same thing. The victory of Christ, now, in England, means that a new era has begun; and this message ought to be carried over to the Continent as well.¹

¹Troeltsch, Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, p. 711. Troeltsch is writing about Winstanley.

CHAPTER V

"the Sword of Justice turned Backwards"

The prophetic idea of history has political as well as spiritual dimensions. The prophets of old spoke, after all, to a political unit and not merely to individuals, and the Diggers and Quakers thought they saw the emergence of a newly chosen nation with a renewed covenant. Yet if England were to be an ensign to the nations, she must repent as a nation. Conversion of the nation depended, however, on her being made aware of her sins; in this respect national consciousness of the power of the light paralleled the individual's own growth of consciousness. The social theory of the Diggers and Quakers began, therefore, with a thorough indictment of existing evils. Like the prophets of the old Israel they proclaimed the day of the Lord and his judgment upon the New Israel. With Isaiah they were anointed by the Lord "to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God"¹ Or, with the Proverb,

¹Isaiah 61:1-2.

they frequently declared: "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people,"¹ From such indictments the more detailed social theory emerges, for only after the nation becomes aware of the root of bondage and oppression may these be overcome.

Our understanding of Quaker and Digger social theory begins, therefore, with their detailed social criticisms. The critical element of their theory was expressed in two ways, through their frequent jeremiads and through the testimony, the latter being a social action taken to attack a particular evil. The testimony was, in other words, a concrete manifestation of the life of the spirit and an expression of the new self. At first glance, however, the testimonies and the tracts which justified them seemed part of no overall critique, though they can be grouped according to the particular issue to which they spoke. As Hugh Barbour wrote of the Quaker testimonies,

Each specific stand against a social evil was justified independently in their writings, but it is nevertheless useful to group them according to basic issues such as simplicity and equality. In addition, three interacting factors should be noticed as contributing to each of these Testimonies: the role the standard held as part of the total Quaker war against the world; the special concern of one or more sensitive Friends who first laid each issue upon Quaker consciences; and the

¹Proverbs 14:34.

social or regional background which often focused their awareness upon one evil rather than another.¹

Even more basic, the testimonies themselves were part of what John Rawls has called "conscientious refusal,"² which is a refusal to participate in what the individual considers to be evil without appealing to principles which might be shared with one's opponents. Indeed, conscientious refusal indicates that principles are no longer shared; one's opponents live in darkness and do not comprehend the light. To take one Quaker testimony by way of illustration, when the Quakers refused to wish their fellow Englishmen "good day" it was in part because "the morning is good, and the evening is good, for all things that God made were good; But bad people say the morning is bad, & the evening is bad, when it doth not please them"³ The Quakers in their redeemed nature saw even the most dreary morning to be good, and, in a deeper criticism of the social custom, they argued that to wish a sinner "good day" was to wish him well in sinning, something no Quaker could do. Similarly, though on a still different level, Winstanley's digging was in part a

¹Barbour, Quakers in Puritan England, p. 162.

²John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 368-382.

³George Fox, The Serious Peoples Reasoning and Speech . . . (London, 1659), p. 8.

demonstration that the poor could cooperate with each in tilling the earth and that such labor would reclaim the wasteland. Digging was, in short, part of one's obedience to the light, yet it too was a refusal to participate in the evils of buying and selling and working for others. Winstanley was clearly convinced that so long as the poor worked for wages they, along with the rich, "doth hold the Creation under the bondage of the curse."¹ One had to dig to free oneself as well as the nation.

The thrust of these brief examples--and there will be more discussed later including the problems of hat honor and plain language for which the Quakers were famous--was, again, that the Quakers and Diggers decided not to participate in evil institutions unless those institutions were transformed by the light. Still the social testimonies were not simply an attack on specific social evils or even patterns of evil. Theoretically the stands against specific evils were all part of a statement that existing institutions and practices denied the very basis of any real community. To begin with the first of three related arguments which I will discuss in this chapter, the abuse of the law by lawyers and judges makes a community based on outward law impossible, whether the abuse takes the form of perversion of good laws, the enactment of bad ones, or the

¹Winstanley, New Law of Righteousness, Sabine, p. 194.

substitution of personal will for law altogether. Secondly, when the clergy claimed to have a monopoly on the interpretation of the Scripture--and required tithes to support them--they made impossible a community which obeyed the light or inner law. And attacks on poverty were, for Winstanley in particular, part of the statement that private property pit man against man and was antithetical to the formation of a community.

These three theoretical groupings were interconnected; each was a manifestation of pride and covetousness, the acquisitive power which wanted to consume rather than enjoy the earth. The root of social oppression is the old Adam, who "is of the earth, earthly; minds earthly things, lives in the earth, delights in the earth, lusts after the earth, covets, contends and sues for it; for his treasure is in the earth, and his heart is with it" ¹ Government magnified the trouble; "iniquity hath sate upon the Throne, and wilfulness Judged the people, and mercy been wanting, and just Judgement neglected, and the whole Land hath laid desolate because hereof" ² Even the ministers are

¹James Nayler, A Discovery of the [First] Wisdom . . . from Beneath, and the [Second] Wisdom . . . from above . . . (London, 1653), Works (1829), p. 109. Some editions of this work include and others delete the words in brackets.

²Edward Burrough, To the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, who are in place of Authority to do Justice, and in present power to ease the oppressed Nation from its Bonds . . . (London, 1659), pp. 4-5.

oppressive; they are as covetous of the earth as any landlord. In fact, said Fox, the priests plunder the people they allegedly work for and are thus worse than the Cavaliers, "for they did but take their goods away, & you pretend for a worship, and cast into prison besides" ¹

The clergy and the lawyers engaged in a conspiracy. The ministers wanted their tithes, and the lawyers got the fees from the suits which the clergy brought to collect them. And there were still other similarities. Relating the pride which the clergy and lawyers took in their learning as well as their oppression of the people, the Quaker Edward Pyot asked, "How is the Law in the administration thereof adulterated by the Lawyers, As the Scriptures are mangled by the Priests?" ² And Winstanley referred to the clergy, the Kingly power of the sword, the "imaginary Judicature, called the Law of Justice," and "buying and selling of the Earth, with the fruits of the Earth" as "the foure Beasts, which Daniel saw rise up out of Sea. Dan. 7. 3 &c." He continued,

And this Sea is the bulke and body of mankinde, which is that Sea, and waters, upon which the Spirit of God is said sometimes to move; for out of Mankinde arises all that darknesse and Tyranny that oppresses it selfe; And though these Beasts appeare divers, one from another,

¹George Fox, Several Papers Given Forth, The Heads of Which are Contained in the following Table (London, 1660), p. 20.

²Edward Pyot, The West answering to the North, in the fierce and Cruell Persecution of the manifestation of the Son of God . . . (London, 1657), p. 28.

yet they are all one in their power; for Imaginary-selfe ruling in mans heart, is the Father that created and bred them all.¹

Finally, the conquest of the "Imaginary-selfe" required overcoming each of the beasts, for though the power was one each manifestation of it had to be removed. Social criticism would be levelled by both Winstanley and the Quakers at each of the institutions.

The Quakers and Diggers did emphasize somewhat different problems, however. Though at times Winstanley sounded much like the Quakers, arguing that the clergy were the chief problem because they persuaded men that the domination of one man by another was God's will, his chief emphasis was buying and selling and the institution of private property which supported it. In The New Law of Righteousnes Winstanley characterized buying and selling as "the beginner of particular interests" and "the wisdom and power of flesh broke out and sate down in the chair of rule and dominion, in one part of man-kind over another." The stronger have divided the earth, saying, "This is mine," and have enforced their claims "by a law of government of his own making, and thereby restraining other fellow creatures from seeking nourishment from their mother earth." Then, in Fire in the Bush he summarized the dominant theme of his writings by

¹Winstanley, Fire in the Bush, Sabine, pp. 463-464.

arguing

Now this enmity that brought in this division; first of inclosing; then of buying and selling, then of killing one another for the Earth, is the curse within of imaginary covetousnesse, and it was bred by the presentment of outward objects, tempting the five Senses, or the living Soule.

And all the strivings that is in Mankinde, is for the Earth, who shall have it; whether some particular persons shall have it, and the rest have none, or whether the earth shall be a common treasury to all without respect of persons.

And this is the battell, that is fought between the two powers, which is propriety on the one hand, called the Devill, or covetousnesse, or community on the other hand. called Christ, or universall Love. And as Christ doth cast covetousnesse out of the heart, so propriety is cast out from amongst men, and mankinde will not only become single hearted againe, but will walke in the light of pure Reason and Love, and never fall againe into divisions, but shall be so acquainted with the wyles of Satan, that he shall utterly reject, and abhor his imaginary inticement; As Jesus Christ rejected the temptation of objects; And that Satan, or tempter without prevailed not, because the Anoynting was in him, that was stronger then flesh.

Now this same power in man, that causes divisions and war is called by some men the state of nature, which every man brings into the world with him.

But this Law of darknesse in the members is not the state of Nature; for nature, or the living soule is in bondage to it, and groines under it, waiting to be delivered from it, and is glad to heare of a Saviour.¹

Buying and selling was, in short, a denial of the common heritage of mankind, a heritage which began when mankind was created from the dust. The earth in turn had been created to provide for all mankind, not just some of them, and therefore self-preservation denies the creation right

¹Winstanley, New Law of Righteousnes, Sabine, p. 158; Fire in the Bush, Sabine, p. 493.

and righteous law of common preservation. The bourgeois spirit, what C. B. Macpherson calls "possessive individualism," is not the natural state of mankind but one which came with the Fall. It was the acquisitive sense which made the products of the earth seem limited and which made men presume that their security could be obtained only at the expense of another. Though it may be defended as bringing some kind of order to a chaotic system of barter at best and robbery at worst, buying and selling is in reality but a false peace and a pretended order. Men are left in a restless condition protected, as Hobbes so clearly argued, only by carnal power. Leviathan was not the true commonwealth, but "the great enemy of God."¹

Few Quakers were as single-minded in their attack on buying and selling. For them the sins of trade were but one aspect, albeit an important one, of the general disorder among men.

Man was created upright, but he hath sought out many inventions. And through inventions, disorder is come amongst men, and by defrauding, and cozening, and cheating one another, they run into confusion, and distraction, and so are gone from the created uprightness, into subtilty and inventions, and with that subtile part they invent their wicked practices; and studies how to gain their own advantage in their dealing. And from

¹This is the sense in which the term is actually used by several of the Quakers. The phrase itself comes from the second definition (now obsolete) in the Oxford English Dictionary.

this ground arises all deceit amongst men in buying and selling, and trading . . . ¹

Commerce itself was not necessarily evil as it seemed to be for Winstanley; but the commercial practices of the day, "Double dealing, Deceit and Wickedness in the way . . . of Trading," were seen as one reason for a decline in trade itself.² Alternately hiding and trying to discover defects in goods for sale made men into hypocrites, and since the hypocrite was concerned with exploiting outward appearances (whether in religions or commerce) hypocrisy was part of the perversion of true human relationships. In the case of commerce the concern of the hypocrite meant treating others merely as goods and not as children of God. Nevertheless, since the Quakers were not opposed to commerce itself their general conclusion was that the defects could be cured through a fair and fixed price for all goods, a "yea & nay, and of righteousness and true weighing of things, and true consideration of things," which would allow "a child to trade with you as a man," as Fox wrote the merchants of London.³

¹William Smith, Universal Love . . . (n.p., 1664), p. 99.

²Edward Burrough, A Presentation to London . . . (n.p., 1659), Works, p. 608.

³George Fox, A Cry for Repentance unto the Inhabitants of London chiefly . . . (London, 1656), p. 3. The later prosperity of Quaker merchants was seen as a sign of divine favor for practicing plain dealing in commerce.

Winstanley and the Quakers agreed, however, that there was a connection between private property, buying and selling, and poverty. Private property and commerce allowed the rich to hoard goods

which they have no need of, but to lay them by, and keep them for advantage; and this wrongs the poor, and the needy, that when things are at a reasonable price, then the Rich Ingrosses them, and by that means keeps it at a dearer price in plenty, than otherwise it would be, and then in scarcity the poor must either buy it at their dear prices, or be in want, and this grinds the poor every way, and is a disorderly practice, and is filled with Covetousness, which the subtil Inventaer finds out to get wealth and Riches ¹

Wealth allowed the rich to purchase luxuries, and while production of those luxuries kept many people employed, the time and effort could more profitably have gone to producing necessities for the poor. As Winstanley concluded, it was a violation of "Reasons law" for the rich "to have plenty by them, and yet will see their fellow creature men and women starve for want"² The existence of the poor was a judgment upon England and a witness against that fleshly nature in which she lived, while the glory of Israel for both Winstanley and the Quakers was that there had been no beggar in her midst.

Significantly, the Quakers felt that poverty could be ameliorated if not eliminated even though the entire

¹William Smith, Universal Love, p. 102.

²Winstanley, New Law of Righteousness, Sabine, p. 181.

nation had not yet submitted to the light. The light had shown them the problem and then led them to several specific proposals to alleviate the plight of the needy. Fox proposed, for example, that public monies be given to the poor "that there might not be a beggar in England nor Englands dominions" These monies included fines and amercements collected for violations of the law and in addition the "gifts given to great men." Fox also proposed that the fees which landlords collected from their tenants upon alteration of the tenancy (also called "fines") be given to the poor, "for Lords have enough."¹ On the other hand, in an age which relied on excise-type taxes, he warned against "laying great taxes upon the people . . . lest ye oppress the just, and lay heavier burthens upon them then they can bear" because "oppression and heavy burthens, and heavy taxes from some, give to some the great wages, whereby others are oppressed"² And one of the more far-reaching proposals was to establish what amounted to a national labor

¹George Fox, To the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England. Fifty nine Particulars laid down for the Regulating things, and the taking away of Oppressing Laws, and Oppressors, and to ease the Oppressed (London, 1659), pp. 6, 8, 9. This tract is usually and will hereafter be cited as Fifty nine Particulars, but Smith lists it under the full title and thus it is listed here.

On "fine," see Oxford English Dictionary, definition number 7a.

²George Fox, To the Protector and Parliament of England (London, 1658), p. 14.

exchange, a proposal which was coupled with the argument that it was the duty of the parish to provide work for all.¹

Other suggestions were also made, although many of these were not unique to either the Quakers or Diggers. Many individuals and groups suggested that revenues from lands confiscated from the king and his followers be used, as the Quaker Edward Billing phrased it

for the speedy relief of the widows of soldiers, maimed soldiers, fatherless and friendless children of such who have adhered to and served this Commonwealth, or otherwise suffered in the late wars; and that the overplus, if any be, may go towards the payment of the debts of the public, and that all the debts and loans whatsoever for which any person hath the public engagement of the nation or any obligation consonant thereunto be forthwith satisfied.²

Alternatively, the revenues could be used to purchase the estates impropriated and sold by Henry VIII and that land could be turned to the poor.³ Either way, the land speculation which in fact had occurred was a waste of land or money

¹T[homas] L[awson], An Appeal to the Parliament, Concerning the Poor, That there may not be a Beggar in England (London, 1660), p. 2. This tract has also been attributed to a Baptist Thomas Lambe by Donald F. Durnbaugh, Every Need Supplied: Mutual Aid and Christian Community in the Free Churches, 1525-1675 (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1974), p. 176.

²Edward Billing, A Mite of Affection . . . (London, 1659), Early Quaker Writings, p. 419.

³[Anon.], These several Papers Was sent to the Parliament the twentieth day of the fifth Moneth, 1659 . . . (London, 1659), pp. 62-63, 65. This tract is catalogued by Smith under "Parliament."

which could have been used to support the poor and of the lives of those who fought and died "to set the oppressed free."¹ One other, sometimes related proposal was to use church lands for the needy. Fox suggested that Parliament

Let all those Abie-lands, Gleab-lands, that is given to the Priests, be given to the poor of the Nation, and let all the great houses, Abbies, Steeple-houses, and White-Hall be for Alms-houses (or some other use then what they are) for all the blind and lame to be there, and not to go begging up and down the streets.²

And finally, Fox, like Winstanley, proposed the building of public storehouses, although Fox limited the scope of his proposal to relief (to be given from either surpluses or, if the occasion warranted, from a tithe on all production), whereas for Winstanley the public storehouse would have become the basic unit of distribution for all goods and services, commerce having been replaced by free access to publicly produced goods.³

As intimated earlier, the significance of all these proposals for alleviating poverty lies in the fact that each

¹Francis Howgil, One Warning More unto England . . . (London, 1660), particularly pp. 7, 9-10, is most typical of the feeling of betrayal which the Quakers and Winstanley felt.

²Fox, Fifty nine Particulars, p. 8.

³George Fox (and Edward Burrough), Good Counsel and Advice, Rejected; By Disobedient Men . . . (London, 1659), p. 48; Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 526-528, 550-551, and passim. It has been suggested that Winstanley owes his idea to Thomas More's *Utopia*, but it may as likely be biblical in origin, as probably was Fox's idea.

could be achieved prior to the conversion of the nation as a whole. Even Winstanley's initial arguments for the common working of the land did not depend upon a complete transformation of society; what he argued was that the commons belonged to the poor in common and had been recovered from the king and his power with the defeat of Charles, while freemen might have recovered their own estates individually. His initial proposal was that the poor till the commons, leaving the rich to try to till their own holdings by themselves. What is implicit in this argument, though not stated by Winstanley, is that the example of the poor, coupled with the difficulty which the rich will have working their own holdings (there being no laborers for them to hire), will lead the rich to give their lands to the commonwealth and work with the poor. Of course Winstanley expected that the poor would be redeemed and not work for the rich.¹ But again, and this is the main point, in a partially redeemed nation certain actions can be taken and certain institutions modified, thereby allowing the spirit a freer hand in completing its work. Neither the prophetic idea of history nor the dialectics of conversion and history require that man abstain from politics. The redeemed

¹This argument can be found in Winstanley's An Appeal to the House of Commons, A Watch-word to the City of London and the Armie . . . (London, 1649), and A New-Years Gift, Sabine, pp. 305, 326, 370.

individual or group is to work with God to achieve justice in all human relationships. And in this sense the dialectics of conversion have their counterpart in a dialectical relationship between inward and outward bondage. Socially the freeing of the spirit may require that the earthly nature be freed; this I take (in the context of all Winstanley's writings) to be the thrust of his assertion in The Law of Freedom that all inward bondage is the result of a single outward bond, the "restraining of the Earth from brethern by brethern" ¹ After all, and given the dualism of his earlier thought, when Winstanley argues that the task of freeing the earthly nature must be freeing the earth, the argument is implicit in the assumption that things can only be known and acted according to their natures. As noted earlier, the Fall corrupted not only man's spirit but also bound that part of his nature which was derived literally from the earth by and to sin. And

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 520.
The entire passage is as follows:

"A man had better to have had no body, then to have no food for it; therefore this restraining of the Earth from brethern by brethern, is oppression and bondage; but the free enjoyment thereof is true Freedom.

"I speak now in relation between the Oppressor and the oppressed; the inward bondages I meddle not with in this place, though I am assured that if it be rightly searched into, the inward bondages of the minde, as covetousness, pride, hypocrisie, sorrow, fears, desperation, and madness, are all occasioned by the outward bondage, that one sort of people lay upon another.

"And thus far natural experience makes good, That true Freedom lies in the free enjoyment of the Earth."

once the earthly nature has been corrupted it is apt to fly into imaginations; both the goods and evils of the mind become fantasies. Men's very perceptions of the earth, their relationship to it, and their relationships to each other all become perverted by acquisitiveness. As has been said before, the outward bonds positively prohibit the creation of a true community. And since even redeemed men still have an earthly nature and must take nourishment from the earth (a point admitted by those Quakers who believed in fasting because they received spiritual nourishment), Winstanley's prior statement, that "True Freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the Earth,"¹ makes sense. Finally, by his own admission, The Law of Freedom is not an overt program for freeing the spirit, but then neither are Fox's Fifty nine Particulars, Billing's A Mite of Affection or Lawson's An Appeal to the Parliament, not to mention others.

I do not mean to slight the differing conclusions to which Winstanley and the Quakers came when they considered the problems of poverty and the obstacle which it placed in front of the true community. The Quakers as a whole clearly did not conclude that land had to be held or worked in common for them to be spiritually free. Unlike Winstanley, Fox did not specify that lands to be used for the poor were to

¹Ibid., p. 519.

be worked by them, and the usual Quaker emphasis was on the use of revenue from the lands, implying perhaps their sale or at least trade in produce raised on them. Also, the Quakers were generally sympathetic to the small landholder, perhaps because many were husbandmen and yeomen.¹

Still, there is nothing in the proposals of Fox or others which necessarily rules out the common use of former church or royalist lands. More particularly, James Nayler, though denying that the Quakers desired to divide men's estates or to level them, nevertheless concluded: "But if the power of the Gospel fall upon the rich or poor, and move them to distribute their own, thou that thinks the Scripture warrants not this art blinde."² And William Tomlinson, in

¹These terms are not precise but generally designate small, semi-independent and independent farmers. The meanings of the terms and the social origins of Friends are discussed in detail by Alan Cole, "The Social Origins of the Early Friends," Journal of the Friends Historical Society 48, No. 3 (Spring 1957):99-118; Ernest E. Taylor, "The First Publishers of Truth: A Study," Journal of the Friends Historical Society 19, No. 3 (1922):66-81; Richard T. Vann, "Quakerism and the Social Structure in the Interregnum," Past and Present 43 (May 1969):71-90, and subsequent debate with Judith Jones Hurwich ("The Social Origins of the Early Quakers," Past and Present 48 [August 1970]:156-164); and Vann, The Social Development of English Quakerism, 1655-1755 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969). Taylor notes (p. 76) that of the early preachers husbandmen were the most numerous.

²Nayler, A True Discoverie of Faith, p. 14. Significantly, as evident from the necessity of Nayler's response, non-Quakers did fear that the Quakers wanted to level men's estates by force. The equivocation of Nayler's statement reflects an honest openness to the spirit on his part rather than a desire to be "politic."

addressing "the high and lofty in the earth, in whom there is a spirit that seeks to be exalted, or exalts itself by blood or discent," asked them,

But consider you that stand upon discent and blood, Do you know upon what Foundation the greatness of your Family was laid? Are you sure it was not upon Tyranny, Cruelty, Oppression, Covetousnesse, Fraud and Injury, and so have its Foundation in that bestial spirit, which because its stronger, pushes aside all that are weaker? If it had this Original as usually it hath, then see to the Foundation of your glorying.

He then went on, in an echo of Winstanley's declaration that "Jesus Christ . . . is the head Leveller," to query

What do you think are those Mountains and Hills that are to be cast down, and those Valleys that are to be born up, that there may be an even way, & crooked made strait, and rough made plain? . . . Therefore look at your selves, who are exalted in your minds high above your Brethern, and look at those you despise as low, and whose spirits you have dejected in earth by your loftiness, who have not the spirits of men before you the distance is made so great by your exaltednesse, and then you'll see something of the Mountains and Valleys that must be made even by the power of Truth before the glory of the Lord be revealed; for the Lord will have no such distance among them that enter into his Kingdom, Math 20, 25, 26, 27, 28.¹

When we turn from the problems of poverty and private property the similarities between Winstanley and the Quakers again become more striking, as does their common idea that the inward reformation requires an outward one as well. Both Winstanley and the Quakers saw the clergy as

¹William Tomlinson, Seven Particulars, pp. 20, 21, 22. Few other Quakers were as explicit as Tomlinson, however, in their interpretation of Isaiah 40:4. Winstanley's statement can be found in A New-Years Gift, Sabine, p. 390.

concerned more with the goods of the earth than with spiritual things. On the most prosaic level, the "priests," as they were called, did nothing to discourage vanity and fashion, leading Fox to ask, "When did any of the Apostles fruits powder their hair, till they had made their backs white, like a company of Millers carrying Meal-bags?"¹ More importantly, by preaching for hire the clergy in essence bought and sold religion. Francis Howgil likened the bell which called one to services to a "Market-Bell" which announced that the priests had set out their wares, and like all merchants of the time they deluded people about the quality of their wares (and like the monopolists they were the only source of the good). Howgil developed the analogy further; the state of religion in England reflected the following diabolic covenant to force the people to accept a doctrine.

And furthermore let us agree, reverend Brethern, in Unity, and Peace, and strive all with one Consent to be furnished with such Merchandize as will suite with the Countries and Regions where we traffick, as Kings, Princes, Protectors, Parliaments, and Councils, Noblemen, Gentlemen, and also take in the common People (If happily we can please them all) because that by the last mentioned we receive much of our subsistance; yet if any of them do not like our Merchandize, it is the least matter of them; for then we have a King, a Prince, a Protector or Parliament to appeal to; and if we can but satisfy them with Merchandize, upon Petition they will make us a Law, and set a Compass upon every one of our

¹George Fox, The Priests Fruits Made Manifest . . . (London, 1657), p. 1.

Ships to ride in at Sea, and they will command every Parish to buy our Merchandize, and if they will not buy it at the worst compel them to give us our Price, whether they receive our Merchandize or Traffick or not, but if they will not (having a Law to guard us), we can take it from them, whether they will or no ¹

In this remarkable passage are brought together all the themes of the Digger and Quaker anticlericalism save for one, the hostility to the universities as no more than schools for apprentices to a false and dangerous doctrine.

The themes which Howgil illuminates are varied, but they all focus on the way in which the clergy deny or attack the basis of a gospel community. In the first place (though only implicit in the particular quote) the clergy's knowledge was notional; they did not possess the spirit and so made a sham out of the Scriptures. No knowledge of Hebrew or Greek could alter that fact. In the second place, the clergy did not preach freely; they preached for hire. Moreover, their pay was not simply from those who wished to listen to them. The institution of tithes meant that everyone was required to support them, whether they wanted to or not. Though the clergy did no work for the Christian, still the latter was required to pay him. As Winstanley put it, tithes were

taken from us by the Kings, and given to the Clergy, to maintain them by our labours: so that though their

¹Francis Howgil, Mystery Babylon, The Mother of Harlots Discovered . . . (London, 1659), Works, p. 153, also p. 151. Cf. Winstanley, New Law of Righteousnes, Sabine, p. 239.

preaching fill the minds of many with madness, contention, and unsatisfied doubting, because their imaginary and ungrounded Doctrines cannot be understood by them, yet we must pay them large Tythes for so doing; this is Oppression.¹

The monetary cost to the nation of tithes was great, particularly when the nation got nothing from the payment.

Even more oppressive, this cost was not borne equally. Though tithes were supposed to affect all production, it was much easier for a merchant to hide his increase than it was for a husbandman. "The Rich generally pay little, and the poor Husbandman bears the Burden, even he that supplies the Nation with the staff of Bread,"² an observation confirmed by Christopher Hill, who noted that ten percent of the profits was assessed on industry and trade while ten percent of the entire product was assessed on agriculture (and sometimes mining).³ Still, the burden of tithes might have been less onerous if only they were used, as they had been among the Jews, primarily for relief of the poor, the widows and fatherless. The root of tithes was the apostasy; they were, as John Crook called his tract of 1659, "No Property to, nor lawful maintenance for a

¹Ibid., p. 504.

²Anthony Pearson, The Great Case of Tythes Truly Stated . . . (London, 1754 [1st ed. 1657]), p. 64.

³Christopher Hill, Economic Problems of the Church, p. 92 and pp. 78-167 passim.

Powerful Gospel-Preaching Ministry . . . "--nor for anyone for that matter.¹

These criticisms were levelled not simply at the tithes which went to the clergy; they were extended to impropriated tithes as well, and for many of the same reasons. Wrote Pearson,

in the Root all Tithe is alike, whether it be now claimed by a Priest or an Impropiator, and both must fall together. And seeing those that sold them had no good Title, neither can theirs be made good which is derived from them.²

There were, however, differences between impropriated tithes and those which supported the clergy. Though both were oppressive, the support of the clergy more directly bound the spirit since one was required to support a false belief. In addition, state support of religion was one way of ensuring that the clergy would meddle in politics, if only to be secure in their support. A somewhat different contrast between clerical and impropriated tithes was that the state had once benefited by selling the impropriated estates to their lay owners, even if that benefit had not been passed on to the people, had been only temporary and even if the state had a dubious title in the first place. Given this benefit, concluded Pearson, "it is equal and just" to purchase these estates from their owners. But unlike Fox and others who

¹John Crook, Tythes No Property . . . (London, 1659).

²Pearson, The Great Case of Tithes, p. 56.

proposed using royalist lands for this purpose Pearson proposed levying a general tax, to be levied on the impropiators as well as on the rest of the nation. This tax would ease fears of expropriation; furthermore, "when the People are eased of Tithes, they will be better able, and more willing to enlarge the publick Treasury, if it be found wanting."¹

Tithes were among the "chiefest of oppressions" and a major obstacle to making England "a free people and a free Nation," a point made by Winstanley as well as the Quakers. Since social, economic, and religious oppression were inseparable, removing tithes was crucial for obtaining the freedom which was the promise of the Revolution. Removal of tithes, predicted Richard Hubberthorn,

will beget love in the Nation, and all persecution, cruelty and bitterness will cease, and every one may freely and quietly enjoy the fruit of his own labor; then with much freedom and cheerfulness wil every one minister of his substance unto all necessary uses, knowing that the earth and the fulness of it is the Lords: And when this universal love and free Spirit is begotten among people, then wil righteousness establish the Nation, and that will be brought forth which many sincere hearts and tender consciences hath waited for several years, and many have been almost weary and faint in their minds in waiting for that which they once had a lively sight, of, and hopes to enjoy in the Lord's promise of Liberty and Freedom, opened in their understanding ten years since, insomuch that some have been ready to tempt God, and say that he was slack concerning his promise; and some for want of long patience have left off expecting that which they once believed & hoped

¹Ibid., pp. 62, 59, and 60-63 passim.

for; but God is reviving the hopes of the contrite ones,
& in them that had said there was no hope in them, is
he renewing strength to believe that God will give
Judges as at the first, and Counsellors as at the
beginning ¹

The third of Howgil's themes was a bit more complicated. As Winstanley and several of the Quakers argued, the fact that the clergy got their support from the state meant that they were bound to be involved in politics, though not on the side of justice. The clergy were intimately involved in the question of who would rule, and in the civil war they seemed to shift their support from King to Parliament to Protector depending upon who offered them the most support. Tithes could not help but breed a seditious ministry, concluded John Collens, who went on to point out that eliminating tithes would further, not hinder, civil peace.² William Caton, drawing upon The Testimony of a Cloud of Witnesses, explored the theme of a seditious ministry in greater detail, arguing that Erasmus, Calvin, Luther and others had seen

¹Richard Hubberthorn(e), The Real Cause of the Nation's Bondage and Slavery, here Demonstrated . . . (London, 1659) in A Collection of the Several Books and Writings of that Faithful Servant of God Richard Hubberthorn . . . (London, 1663), hereafter cited as Works, p. 220. Hubberthorn was the son of an active opponent of tithes and came from an area in which the early Quakers had obtained support from exploited tenants, according to Bruce Gordon Blackwood, "Agrarian Unrest and the Early Lancashire Quakers," Journal of the Friends Historical Society 51, No. 1 (1965):72-76.

²John Collens, A Word in Season to all in Authority . . . (London, 1660), pp. 7-11.

ungodly ministers as agents of rebellion. The clergy, not the Quakers, were responsible for turmoil. Caton broadened the issue to include not only tithes but also intolerance; persecution led to rather than eliminated civil strife.¹ Here clearly though not always cogently one could find the argument that the clergy were opposed to the community both temporal and spiritual.

The argument that the clergy were responsible for the nation's troubles had as a kind of corollary the argument for tolerance, a theme which can be drawn from Howgil's characterization of the clergy and from Caton's discussion. Some of the arguments for granting toleration were pragmatic; for one thing persecution

must inavoidably tend to destroy and expel Trading, Husbandry, and Merchandize in these Kingdoms, for a great part of Trading and Husbandry depends upon such kinds of persons whose principles are for toleration in Religion ²

In addition, the usefulness of the Quakers to the Commonwealth was hindered because they were forbidden to hold office and persecuted for refusing to use oaths. And, since the Quakers are a good example to others, they serve the

¹William Caton, The Testimony of a Cloud of Witnesses, Who . . . have testified against . . . Forcing of Conscience, and Persecution about Matters of Religion, passim. This tract is significant for its marshalling of nonbiblical authorities, something rarely done by the Quakers.

²Edward Burrough, The Case of Free Liberty of Conscience . . . (London, 1661), Works, p. 818.

proper ends of government and ought to be granted liberty of conscience.¹ Still another argument paralleled Winstanley's argument that the victory over the king meant the recovery of the commons for the poor; several Quakers argued that when they fought with Cromwell it was for liberty of conscience and nothing less. The "Good Old Cause" was betrayed so long as liberty of conscience was denied, and George Bishop emphasized that the Quakers were true to the cause because they continued to testify for both English and godly liberty in the midst of betrayal.² Later, William Smith echoed Milton in arguing that the Quaker's truth would triumph but would require a fair fight to do so.³ And lastly, it was argued that civil peace would be preserved, not destroyed, if liberty of conscience were granted, since men would no longer be able to impose their opinions on others.⁴

¹John Crook, An Apology for the Quakers: Wherein is shewed, How They Answer the Chief Principles of the Law, and Main Ends of Government . . . (London, 1662), pp. 3, 5.

²See George Bishop, Mene Tekel . . . (London, 1659), p. 4 and passim, and The Cry of Blood, particularly pp. 138-141.

³William Smith, Liberty of Conscience Pleaded by several weighty Reasons . . . (London, 1663), p. 6.

⁴It was not always certain whether this tolerance would extend to Catholics, "Prelatists" or Ranters, but the reasons for excluding the first two groups had to do with their royalism, not their religion--an argument similar to Locke's. Bishop would also have required a belief in God by Jesus Christ, a provision made in Pennsylvania. See his The Cry of Blood, pp. 140-141. Winstanley would have disenfranchised the Royalists and their supporters, and also those

None of these arguments, however, was the crucial one. The most fundamental and frequent argument--one made by Winstanley and the Quakers both--was that any attempt to prescribe belief or worship or otherwise to limit the conscience was an attempt to limit the work of the Lord. Neither the relativism of the arguments from civil peace and prosperity nor the rationalism of the argument from the innate power of truth to appeal to the human mind was their starting point. Instead, their plea for toleration was based on the power of God's spirit, which could not be limited, and the nature of intolerance, which was at best presumptuous.¹ Tolerance was part of what it meant to have a free commonwealth, as evident in Bishop's conclusion that

the right of freedom of Conscience, is a civil Right, and a civil Right it is to have the freedome of Conscience; and where this Liberty is abridged by a State, that State is not free. For (according to the received Axiome) a free mind, and a free speech, and a Free State, go together, and weere the two former are wanting, the later is not, nor doth it call such a people happy. But on the contrary, . . . where there is a free Nation (or State) a free mind (or Conscience) a free speech (or profession) and where all professions are exluded, but one, and Profession made onely for that one Profession,

who speculated in the Common-wealth's land: The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 542. Fox would have extended tolerance to the Jews, Turks, Papists and Protestants, however; see his "Four Letters to the King" in The Copies of Several Letters which were delivered to the King (London, 1660), p. 6.

¹See W. Smith, Liberty of Conscience Pleaded, pp. 3-5, among others, and cf. Barbour, Quakers in Puritan England, pp. 211-212.

how can there be said to be a Weale Common, or a Common-Wealth?¹

It was, in sum, an epistemological, an ontological, and a political mistake not to grant tolerance; that was clear from their arguments about the nature of the spirit, the conscience, and the community.

Finally, along with Howgil, Winstanley in particular emphasized that the clergy were the chief support for the existing social system. They preached that justice, perfection, and salvation could only be obtained "beyond the stars" thereby blunting any protest. Their seeming disinterest in earthly concerns served to better mask their role as the ideologues of the kingly power. Tithes had established the clergy as the king's apologists, "and their work was to persuade the multitude of people to let William the Conqueror alone with a quiet possession and government of the earth, and to call it his and not theirs, and so not to rebell against him."² The light was the power which enabled men to break out of Mannheim's paradox and to see that religion in the hands of the clergy was but ideology.

In several respects the criticism of the law paralleled that of the clergy. The connection between the two is explicit in the alleged conspiracy between the

¹Bishop, Mene Tekel, pp. 30-31.

²Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 522.

clergy and the lawyers to support each other by making religious worship a civil matter. More fundamentally, obedience to the law written in the heart is part of what it meant to worship God in spirit and in truth, and the clergy kept men from proper obedience to law by keeping them from true religion. But the critique of law and of the role it plays in society takes on an importance all its own when we recall that outward law was the basis for one historically proper community, that of the Jews. Though the gospel order would be established on the law written in the heart the laws of Moses partook of the spirit which had written the law within. Particularly in a chosen nation such as England outward laws ought to reflect the inward law; there was little room for the variations of time or situation, as there was for Thomas Aquinas.

If outward law could reflect the inward law it could, on the contrary, also establish an order in which the sword of justice was turned backwards. Law might create distinctions where God had intended none, and it could make some men free while enslaving others. Winstanley saw this clearly. The victory over Charles I had destroyed the king but not kingly oppression, while Parliament obeyed neither its covenant with the people nor its own law requiring that a reformation be completed in England. Thus Winstanley was moved to ask Lord Fairfax:

Whether it be not a great breach of the National Covenant, to give two sorts of people their freedom, that is, Gentry and Clergy, and deny it to the rest? I affirm it is a high breach, for mans Laws makes these two sorts of people, the Antichristian task-masters over the common people. The one forcing the people to give them rent for the earth, and to work for hire for them. The other which is the Clergy, that force a maintenance of tithes from the people

The failures of the victors was a sign that they were "the false Christs, and false Prophets, that are risen up in these latter daies."¹ The law was a political instrument and was not neutral between good and evil. While the godly might "set up Equity by a Law," the ungodly "made up a Law to set up Iniquity."²

Criticism of the law focused on precisely this point; the primary concern of both Winstanley and the Quakers was whether iniquity was supported or attacked by the existing laws and legal practices. For example, the Quakers and Diggers opposed lawyers not simply because they charged exorbitant fees and sold their services to the highest bidders--making the quality of justice dependent upon wealth --but because the forms and pleadings which the lawyers used were hypocritical. Using a lawyer forced one to participate in iniquity whether or not one's cause was just, and winning was certainly not related to the justness of the cause. The

¹Winstanley, A Letter to the Lord Fairfax, Sabine, p. 291.

²Howgil, The Measuring Rod of the Lord, Works, p. 106.

use of an attorney was, in short, an abuse of the law.¹ There were other, more specific defects which were attacked, such as being required to plead through an attorney after having been commanded in a writ to appear in person in London, and these led to demands (shared with other groups such as the Levellers) that the administration of justice be decentralized. The Quakers and Diggers also supported certain practices, particularly the jury system, but these practices were precisely those which supposedly antedated the legal apostasy of the Norman Conquest and also were true to the root of all law, the law of God.² Nothing was a more certain sign that equity was no longer contained in the law than the existence of a separate court of equity. If the law were truly just and equitable there would be no need of a special court, and for this reason as much as for its abuses they proposed the abolition of the Chancery. Equity

¹See James Nayler and Richard Hubberthorn, An Account from the Children of Light . . . (London, 1660), p. 21; George Fox and Paul Moon, An Instruction to Judges and Lawyers . . . (London, [1658?]), p. 16; and John Crook, The Case of Swearing (at all) discussed (London, 1660), pp. 7-8.

²See Anthony Pearson, A Few Words to all Judges, Justices, and Ministers of the Law in England . . . (London, 1654), p. 7, William Smith, Some Clear Truths particularly Demonstrated . . . (London, 1664), p. 8, and Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 589. Cf. J. C. Davis, "The Levellers and Christianity" in Politics, Religion and the English Civil War, ed. by Brian Manning (London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., 1973), pp. 227-230, on the meaning of "equity" in the Levellers' arguments.

was more than just the spirit of the existing laws, it was what was fair and right. It was the original of law given forth by God. Proper law is in this sense natural law, and natural law referred to what was common to all. Yet what was common to all was "that of God in every man," "the light which enlightens every man withal." What was common to all men was, in short, divine;¹ the law of nature was the law written in the heart. Even the law of self-preservation had a divine referent since the "self" owed its existence to God.

In addition to pre-Norman practices the Mosaic law provided an important model of a legal system true to the root of law. The laws of Moses, for example, provided the Quakers with a powerful argument against capital punishment for theft, an argument which was also tied to an acute awareness of the relationship between poverty and crime. Capital punishment gave no opportunity for the thief to repent; in addition, no sympathy was shown to the victim, whose goods could not be restored by a dead man. Moreover, if the man wronged was merciful, he was put in a dilemma: he was bound by law "to prosecute the Thief to death" and thus

put upon this strait, either he must stand in danger of making himself confederate with the Thief, & so be made a Felon for mercifulnesse, & for pardoning the wrong

¹Bishop, A Tender Visitation of Love, pp. 12, 14, and New England Judged, p. 30.

done him, (which action favors most of God) and for this be in danger of that cruel wicked Law himself, or else he must against his conscience slay and murther that Mercifulness and Equity that God hat begot in his own heart.¹

Thieves and others could better be put to work than hanged; both they and the commonwealth would benefit. Strenuous labor would "kill their Pride and Unreasonableness, that they may become useful men in the Commonwealth."² Winstanley too looked to the laws of Moses, though he did prescribe capital punishment for the treasonable activity of buying and selling (except to other nations).³ "The laws of Israels Commonwealth were few, short and pithy; and the government thereof was established in peace, so long as the officers and people were obedient thereunto."⁴ Each of these specific criticisms, whether based on the pre-Norman or the Mosaic models, pointed to the fact that the existing legal structure oppressed the poor, denied them access to justice, forced them to participate in evil even when they could afford it or when they won, and tended to make the law a

¹Tomlinson, Seven Particulars, pp. 11-12. See also Fox, To the Protector and Parliament of England, p. 12, and Fox and Moon, An Instruction to Judges and Lawyers, p. 4.

²Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 597.

³Ibid., pp. 595-597. Cf. my discussion of this point in chap. 6.

⁴Ibid., p. 590.

specialized practice rather than something in which the entire community could participate.

The iniquity of the law and thus its attack on the existence of a true community was manifest in one of three ways, as was stated at the beginning of this chapter. First, England was in apostasy from its own good laws, while, secondly, bad ones had been enacted. Thirdly, the will of the judge or magistrate was frequently substituted for law altogether. Moreover, while good laws could be perverted by bad execution, not even the best of magistrates could save a bad law. Three things were required of a just legal order: good laws, fit magistrates, and

a faithful Execution of those Laws; and herein lies the very life of Government: For a right order in Government lies not in the Will of Officers without Laws, nor in Laws without Officers, nor in neither of them without Execution: But when these three go hand in hand, the Government is healthful; but if any one of these be wanting, the Government is diseased.¹

If we begin to analyze the disease of government in more detail, we find that one of the more frequent themes in Quaker and Digger writing was that magistrates made their will into law. This situation obtained on a prosaic level in the frequent jailings which the Quakers experienced for refusing to take off their hats in court. Refusing to doff one's hat to an alleged social superior or equal was part of

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 529; cf. William Smith, Universal Love, p. 83.

the general war on pride, but when the pride was a magistrate's the Quakers found that the substance of their case was lost in the peripheral issue of a so-called respect for law. When hats were forceably removed, there was an actual conflict between law and will, for the removal of the hat "also destroyes propriety, which a great Part of the Law is made to preserve, with Magna Charta, and the Petition of Right" ¹ What the Quakers saw was that the magistrate had identified himself and his pride with his office and could not separate respect for himself from respect for law. As Richard Hubberthorn noted in a different context not oaths (or any other outward show of respect) but godliness was useful to society. ² The argument is one frequently

¹John Pennyman, Thomas Coveney, and Humphrey Woolrich, Some Grounds and Reasons from the Law of God, and this Nation . . . (London, 1660), p. 7. The entire tract is concerned with hat honor and questions of its legality and contains, on p. 6, the following comment on the teleology of hats:

"Besides, to Command any Person to put off his Hat (especially for a Magistrate to do it himselfe) is absurd; for that is to use it contrary to the end, for which it was made; which is to cover the Head, & to keep it from Cold and Rain, whereby sickness may be prevented; and not to keep it in the hand" Similar problems resulted from the Quakers' use of plain speech ("thee" to one and "you" to many); it offended the magistrate's sense of position.

²Richard Hubberthorn(e), Antichristianism Reproved . . . (London, 1660), Works, pp. 249-250. See also Samuel Fisher, Eniekonoe Anoekonoe, The Bishop Busied (n.p., 1662), Works, pp. 63, 72-73, 77 ff., 89-91 (the second so numbered, i.e., pp. 919, 928, 933 ff., and 945-947).

made by radicals: respect for the ideas of law and order does not entail respect for the individual magistrate, who may be seen as acting contrary to those ideas.

Perhaps hat honor, plain speech, and oaths would be trivial in the single instance. Taken together and in the frequent exposure which the Quakers had to the legal system, these experiences suggested strongly that will was being substituted for law. One way to eliminate this problem would be for the magistrate to rely on law and precedent, and certain Quakers did on occasion ask their judges to show them a precedent for removing their hats. Precedent could be cited when it was favorable to the Quakers' or Diggers' cause, and in fact the few references which Winstanley and the Quakers make to authorities other than the spirit or the Bible can be found in their discussions of law and precedent.¹ The Quakers made frequent reference to Coke's studies of the common law and to Christopher St. German's dialogues on the laws of England, usually cited as Doctor and Student, and one of the few references Winstanley makes to a work other than the Bible is to "Sir Edward Cook, 2. part of Institutes . . ."² These references should not,

¹There are a few exceptions to this rule, for example, Caton's The Testimony of a Cloud of Witnesses (already mentioned), the various works of Samuel Fisher (who had been trained as a minister), and one reference to Rome as a model of a commonwealth (to be discussed in another chapter).

²Winstanley, A Watch-word to the City of London, and the armie, Sabine, p. 322.

however, be surprising. Several of the Quakers had been trained in the law, and others, like Fox, became quite proficient in it, perhaps because of their frequent exposure to legal proceedings.¹ Coke was practically required in an argument on the law. But more importantly, Coke and others were to the idea of the legal apostasy what the Bible was to the spiritual, a description of the conditions of Truth.

The Quakers and Winstanley were interested, then, in far more than arguments from precedent. In fact, though they often used historical authorities they did not necessarily agree with them. They did not see as did Coke the common law as having a continuous development; instead its true development had been interrupted and perverted by the Norman Yoke. The authorities pointed to the primitive goodness of Anglo-Saxon institutions rather than to the presence of that goodness in contemporary, that is, Norman institutions. Of course in defending themselves, the Diggers and Quakers did refer to what they thought the precedents were, or ought to be;² they were not immune to appealing to the

¹Fox and others occasionally noted with what seems like pride that they confounded their persecutors with their knowledge of law. In a different vein, James Nayler converted Anthony Pearson during a trial in which Pearson was one of Nayler's judges. The conversion resulted from Nayler's strength of character rather than from his legal acumen, however.

²The Quakers were among those (a group which included Lilburne) who asserted a right to receive a copy of their

rule of law and pointing out the converse when they experienced it. Winstanley observed that when Christ was put to death it was from "an illegal law, for the judge confessed he found no fault in Christ . . . ,"¹ a situation which paralleled the persecution of the people of God in England. Burrough went even further; the persecution of the Quakers was worse than that of Christ and the apostles, worse also than that of the Protestants under Queen Mary, because then at least there had been a known law according to which the persecution proceeded. Now persecution was occurring without the benefit of even a corrupt law.²

Winstanley and Burrough were not simply interested in pleading for a Rechtsstaat, just as they and others were not interested merely in precedents. Saving themselves, which might have been easier had there been a Rechtsstaat or had precedents been followed, was not their primary concern with the law. Outward law was not sufficient for a

indictments before pleading to a charge; see John Crook, The Cry of the Innocent for Justice . . . (n.p., 1662), pp. 16-17. This right was not universally recognized then, however; see Leonard W. Levy, Origins of the Fifth Amendment (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968). Also, in the face of severe vagabondage laws one Quaker asserted the right of an Englishman to travel, a "birth-right, as essential to him as his being . . ." (Pyot, The West answering to the North, p. 12).

¹Winstanley, The Breaking of Day of God, p. 80.

²Edward Burrough, The Woful Cry of Unjust Persecution . . . (London, 1657), Works, p. 273. Parenthetically, the title of this chapter is taken from this work.

true community in any case. What interested them most was the argument (which they found in the historical authorities) that unjust laws, those contrary to reason, are not properly laws at all. Reason is the life of the law, and laws contrary to reason are not in force. This was not simply a maxim, but, as they understood Coke and St. German, a precept of the English law itself. Reason was part of the constitution. Reason and equity as the source of all law were exactly what the Quakers and Diggers sought to recover from the complicated precedents and forms which had obscured the true law. Simplifying the law, gathering it up into a small book so that it could be read and understood without needing lawyers,¹ was therefore a crucial step in recovering English law from its apostasy.

It was not, then, the principle of law, equity and reason, which was under attack but the "selfishness, willfulness, earthliness, and unreasonableness" of the lawyers which had blinded the eye of equity.² This last image,

¹See Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 591-593, and Fox, Several Papers Given Forth the Heads of Which . . . , p. 32.

²George Fox, The Law of God, The Rule for Law-Makers . . . (London, 1658), p. 5 and passim. Fox's characterization of the lawyers (p. 4) is justly famous. He wrote: "I beheld the Lawyers black, their black robes as a puddle, and like unto a black pit, almost covered over with blackness, yet there was a righteousness in the middle, which their unreasonableness runs from"

blinding the eye of equity, is an important one. Justice is not completely blind, although it must be "no respecter of persons." Appearances are however deceiving, and the true magistrate must be able to discern the true spirit of an act as well as its apparent motivation and consequences. The ethic which underlies the concept of law is clearly intentional rather than consequential, albeit in a particular sense. The function of the law is to direct one to the inner light; condemnation by the law is, as has been noted, part of the opening to judgment which precedes conversion. Thus the law must be able to see the state of the person being tried, whether he is being redeemed. If a church service is interrupted by a vain person it is one thing, but if a Quaker called a congregation to repent it is another. In this sense the law is not applied "equally."

But the state of redemption, which is to be considered by the law, should not be confused with any earthly estate. When outward matters are considered the law and courts must treat all men equally; it must make no difference whether rich or poor are at bar. God is no respecter of persons with regard either to redemption or judgment, and thus Fox admonished young lawyers to beware of oppressing the poor and to "doe justice freely without rewards and without gifts" ¹ The crucial category for applying

¹Ibid., pp. 16, 17.

the law is not wealth but redemption. The redeemed had fulfilled the law and were not subject to it. But for those subject to the law neither wealth nor any other social distinction could matter. In England the reverse was true, however, and the sword of justice had been turned backward.

One must not interpret this argument as establishing a double standard, with one law for the Quakers or Diggers and another for the rest of England. For them the law of God was the root which established the crucial categories but which was also the basis for outward law. Though others might stumble onto proper criticism of the law (John Lilburne in particular having been an instrument for recovering English law from its apostasy, as made evident by the fact that he lived to become a Quaker),¹ only conversion would consistently teach one the true end of law and discover its defects while freeing one from its compulsion. In this sense at least the attitudes of the Quakers and Diggers to the law were radical and consistent.

The true end of law was to preserve mercy, justice, and equity, what Winstanley called mutual preservation. Critically, law and individual experience met in the idea that convincement was a law-state. The law was given to

¹Richard Hubberthorn(e), The Horn of the He-goat Broken . . . (London, 1656), Works, pp. 82-83. The relationship between Lilburne and Winstanley was less cordial: Lilburne never became a Digger and indeed disowned them.

show men that some of their actions were sins; without the law there could be little basis for a sense of one's own sinfulness.¹ But ultimately the purpose of law was not so negative; the end of law and the experience of conversion met at a higher stage of development in the restoration of a gospel order. Conversion was an acceptance of the law written in the heart, and that law was the basis for all good order. As expressed by William Smith,

Now as the Lord God of Heaven and Earth created all things in good Order, and every individual stood in its place and service without Offence in that day, but through the Fall is gone into Disorder, which remaineth unto this day; so the highest degree wherein men are concerned in the Institution of any Act, is but to reduce into that comely outward Order again, that so no man may be grieved or offended by the wrong that another may do unto him, but that he may walk safely in his Person, Liberty and Estate; . . . and he that is wronged comes to be righted; and so good Order is kept amongst men, by the Power and Force of the Law; and that is a reasonable thing, unto which the Law only serveth; and so the Law is merciful, just and equitable in every point, forasmuch as the Institution of it tendeth to the preservation and well-being of Men ²

¹See Fox, The Law of God, p. 14.

²William Smith, Some Clear Truths particularly Demonstrated, pp. 8-9. There is a similar passage from Winstanley which bears quoting here. In A New-Years Gift (Sabine, p. 386) he argues

"for if ever the Creation be Restored, this is the way which lies in this Two fold power:

"First Community of Mankind, which is comprised in the unity of spirit of love, which is called Crist in you, or the Law written in the heart, leading mankind into all truth, and to be of one heart and one mind.

"The Second is Community of the Earth, for the quiet livelihood in food and raiment without using force, or restraining one another: These two Communities, or rather

Finally, as obedience to the law of God freed the individual from his bondage to sin, so the obedience of the nation to good laws might free it as well. True law and true freedom were not antithetical but were part of the same experience; only the earthly spirit saw its freedom in opposition to law or in the ability to dominate other men.

This idea of freedom, which Isaiah Berlin calls positive since it rests on a teleological doctrine of the nature of man, has throughout history frequently resulted in an authoritarian state, a point made in Norman Cohn's study of theocratic eschatology, The Pursuit of the Millennium.¹ Because one is free oneself he can, the argument goes, force others to obey the laws which freed him, and any deviance from historical or theological necessity is severely punished. This is the lesson which the critics of any state based on dogma (in our case theocracies) have drawn from the likes of Muenster under John of Leyden or even the Massachusetts Bay experiment of the Puritans. However, Winstanley and the Quakers were quite aware of this danger, which they referred to as "forcing the hand of God." The holy commonwealth which

one in two branches, is that true Levelling which Christ will work at his more glorious appearance; for Jesus Christ the Saviour of all men, is the greatest, first, and truest Leveller that ever was spoke of in the world."

¹Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages (rev. ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 1970, 1961). Cohn has a good appendix on the Ranters.

they proposed would of course require laws; neither Winstanley nor the Quakers imagined an antinomian paradise as did the Ranters. Laws would be necessary particularly to restrict those who might try to reintroduce oppression; this was the meaning of the admittedly severe penalty, death, which Winstanley attached to any buying and selling. But both the nature of law and the nature of conscience precluded any attempt to proscribe certain beliefs or to punish spiritual deviance. "It is true," Howgil wrote to those who had persecuted the Quakers in New England,

Liberty of Conscience, and Liberty of Error and Heresie are two things, but these lye both without the Power and the Line of any Civil Power, as Civil Power to reach unto, the one he should encourage, that is to say, them who exercise a pure Conscience towards God and towards man; and as for the other, Error in Judgment, it's beyond the Power of the Civil Magistrate to rectifie, but as it puts forth it self in outward Acts of Wickedness, as to kill, steal, murder, adultery, defrauding, cozening and cheating in outward things, then the Sword reacheth to the Act outward, but can reach no further
¹

Conduct may be proscribed but belief may not. The assertion sounds remarkably liberal, and in many respects the Quakers did anticipate the limited state. In responding to their opponents they asserted that if in power they would not persecute others of a different profession; in Pennsylvania they made good their promise. But the conclusion that

¹Howgil, The heart of New-England Hardened, Works, p. 320.

civil power must be limited can be reached from several different premises,¹ and it is in these that Winstanley and the Quakers differed from later liberal writers. When the Quakers and Diggers argued that civil power needed to be limited it was because outward power could interfere with the work of the spirit, the drawing together of a true community. They had to be concerned with the spiritual health of their fellows; like Rousseau they did not believe that a true community with the damned was possible. They could not accept the argument that society should be indifferent to the beliefs of individuals, although those beliefs might be important to the individuals themselves.² They could not accept the conclusion that representative government was a way of helping the individual define his own

¹The historical shifts which have occurred in the arguments for tolerance are perceptively analyzed by Robert Paul Wolff in his "Beyond Tolerance" in Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr., and Herbert Marcuse, A Critique of Pure Tolerance (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965). By as early as 1694 this shift had occurred in England; the government had tolerated a millenarianism that thirty-five years earlier would have been revolutionary. The significant shift is in the attitudes of both the government and the population at large. See Christopher Hill, Puritanism and Revolution, pp. 323-336 ("John Mason and the End of the World"), particularly pp. 334-335.

²This argument is implicit in John Rawls' premise that one's life plan is not a significant datum for a social theory so long as the plan is compatible with the outward order; see A Theory of Justice, *passim*. Benjamin Barber's remarks on Rawls' attitude toward religion point to the differences between the liberal attitude and the religious. See Barber, "Justifying Justice: Problems of Psychology, Measurement, and Politics in Rawls," American Political Science Review 69, No. 2 (June 1975):672.

personality and morality by requiring him to make and defend certain choices.¹ Individual development alone was not ultimately at the heart of their theories, although the danger of a quietistic withdrawal from struggle with the world (the opposite of the danger of forcing the hand of God, a danger to which those with a heightened social conscience, men like Winstanley and Nayler, occasionally succumbed) was present even in early Quaker writings, particularly those of an introspective thinker like Penington. Civil power was to be limited not because government was inherently in conflict with individual freedom but because there was a measure even to the rule of the saints.

The next task clearly is to see how the saints would rule, either as godly magistrates or in the context of a holy commonwealth. Many of the answers to the question are implicit in what has been said in this chapter about the law, the clergy, and property. However, before turning to social theory it is appropriate to make a few final observations about the critical experience of the light as just discussed.

The first point is that social theory developed much as did individual experience; both were at first critical and only later could one see a positive alternative to the

¹This is a major thrust, though certainly not the only one, of the arguments of John Stuart Mill in Considerations on Representative Government and On Liberty.

existing situation. The old society, like the old Adam, had to be overcome, crucified if you will, before the new society could replace it. The transformation did not have to be violent, and neither Winstanley nor the Quakers expected that it would be. What violence would occur would come from those who resisted the light, not from the children of God. But transformation and reformation were necessary if the new society were to replace the old.

Secondly, while the holy commonwealth was essentially prospective, relying for guidance on the light rather than on tradition, there were models for it in pre-Norman England, in the Mosaic law, and in the apostolic community. These models were not definitive in the sense that God could always alter them, but they did indicate what could be expected given the consistency of the spirit. Putting aside the question of whether the life of Jesus was simply an example of a life lived in obedience to the spirit, we can again find parallels between individual and social experience in the existence of these models. After conversion the individual was expected to be Christ-like, just as after national redemption the community would be like the one he initially established. And there is yet another parallel in the twin temptations of activism and quietism; Jesus was tempted on the one hand to found a kingdom through carnal means and on the other hand to limit his kingdom to the

spirit. That he was tempted was itself significant for the Quakers and Diggers, but his proclamation of a different kind of kingdom was even more so.

Finally, this different kingdom, the power and rule of the light, acted and was expected to act as a continuing critique on any existing society whether or not the society reflected the gospel order. So long as one flies neither into quietism nor into an activism of the will the light remains as a radical principle, showing whether kingly power has been rooted out. As Penington wrote,

God in every age so bringeth forth and ordereth his innocent lambs and people, as that they are still offensive to the present age. The Lord fitteth them, and calleth them forth to be witnesses against the evils of the present age: how can they but offend it?¹

Even if the holy commonwealth is lost, even if all magistrates are corrupted, the political experience of the light ought to remain critical. If the dynamic tension between the inner life and outward conditions is lost, however, the experience of the light may be either too critical or not critical enough. It is the responsibility of the spirit-centered community ultimately to check both of these tendencies and their inherent dangers.

¹Isaac Penington, The Consideration of a Position concerning the Book of Common-Prayer . . . (London, 1660), Works (1761), I: 423.

CHAPTER VI

"a terror to evildoers and a praise
to them that do well"

When Winstanley and the Diggers began "To dig up George-Hill and the waste Ground thereabouts" it was first to free themselves from the curse by refusing to participate in it. In addition, they expected "to lay the Foundation of making the Earth a Common Treasury for All, both Rich and Poor," thereby eliminating poverty in "Spiritual Israel." They were encouraged in their efforts because they had felt the leadings of the spirit to dig at that particular place and "the streaming out of Love in our hearts towards all; to enemies as well as friends." Most important, they expected that their work would prosper because England had reached "the fulness of Time," as made evident by the worship of "Sacrifice and Types" while "the very name of the Spirit" was persecuted. Winstanley, and the Quakers as well, expected the imminent restoration of Israel and found themselves in the front lines of the Lamb's war.¹

¹Winstanley, The True Levellers Standard Advanced, Sabine, p. 257, 262, 263, and 245-266 passim. See also A Letter to the Lord Fairfax, Sabine, p. 281.

The initial result of these expectations was a systematic protest against the social evils found within the chosen society. But their thought and activity was not limited to a protest against existing conditions; others, both conservative and radical, shared a distaste for the prevailing social system. What grew out of their analysis and expectations, their protests and the leadings of the spirit, was a theory of government and society which, though not always clearly articulated, provided an alternative to the theories and actions of their contemporaries. It was not without reason that the Quakers and Diggers were seen as threats to civil peace and the established order, even though they often protested that by submitting to punishment for their testimonies they were in fact upholding the right of government. Nevertheless, what the Quakers came to call "gospel order" and the civil order of the wicked were antithetical, a point not lost on their opponents and admitted by those who asserted that the peace of the wicked had to be broken if England were to be redeemed.

The development of the holy commonwealth would take place on many fronts. Many of these are suggested by the criticisms which the Diggers and Quakers raised, but as an intermediate step one important necessity was securing godly magistrates. As we just saw, magistrates were part of the problem which the Quakers and Diggers were diagnosing, but

"judges as at the first and counsellors as at the beginning" were to be an integral part of the solution. The Quakers and Diggers wanted magistrates who would rule for God rather than men, a desire reflected in the subtitle of Winstanley's The Law of Freedom, True Magistracy Restored. There is, of course, a long tradition of Christian commentaries on the role of Christian magistrates in both heathen and Christian states, but I do not intend to go into the tradition here. What was important for the Diggers and Quakers was not what others had said about magistracy but the way in which the magistrate fit into a society ultimately governed by the light itself. Since even the holy commonwealth would have outward laws there would have to be magistrates to enforce them; the office could not be dispensed with altogether.

The question of magistracy will center on the two phrases which combine in the title of this chapter, "a terror to evil doers" and "a praise to them that do well." Fulfilling these qualifications implied certain duties for the magistrate, and if his office were successfully discharged he would help to institute the holy commonwealth. The problem of magistracy was in this sense an intermediate one: though one did not live in the holy commonwealth one could live under godly magistrates, and thus magistracy can be considered apart from and prior to the theory of the commonwealth itself. The magistrate could, as many Christian

writers emphasized, mitigate the effects of bad laws and hold to the spirit of good ones, thereby serving God in his office.

Not all Christians have concluded, however, that magistracy is a legitimate calling for a Christian, and in their conclusion that the office was both necessary and legitimate the Quakers and Diggers must be distinguished from groups who, like the anabaptists (particularly after Muenster), argued that personal redemption and fulfillment of the law meant that one ought to withdraw from the world. The Quakers and Diggers came to no such conclusion. Instead, they concluded that the redeemed could participate in government, even an unredeemed government, and in fact the Quakers were often incensed at being forced from the positions they had held prior to becoming Quakers, including, significantly, positions in the army. It was one thing to leave the army or navy if one felt he could no longer serve, a conclusion evident in Thomas Lurting's frequently republished "The Fighting Sailor Turn'd Peaceable Christian,"¹ but another thing to be cashiered. Government was not simply a necessary evil or even a secondary good, a gift to

¹According to Joseph Smith this was first published in 1680 in George Fox's To the Great Turk and his King at Algiers, but as the subtitle of the expanded reprint of 1710 indicates, the letter was "First Written for Private Satisfaction, and Now published for general service."

protect fallen men from each other; government could serve the growing community of the faithful in certain positive ways.

One thing government could do was to ensure that justice obtained between men, and to do that godly magistrates were required. Actions differ according to their intent, but only the redeemed can truly comprehend that intent, which is a thing of the spirit. Since justice required trying an action according to the spirit from which it was taken, it was practically imperative, according to the Diggers and Quakers, that the redeemed serve as magistrates when the opportunity was presented. A magistrate who has not been redeemed can at best judge according to outward law and appearances; being unaware of that of God within himself he cannot rightly discern what God requires as justice and equity between men. Outward law is not a proper guide to what God requires for outward law is a branch of the old corrupt tree. Nor will it suffice for the unredeemed magistrate to look even to the laws given by God, the laws of Israel, since his knowledge of them is from the letter which is outward rather than from the spirit. The laws of Moses may be models, but despite the efforts of Puritan pastors to develop detailed "cases of conscience" not every situation was covered by Mosaic law or deductions from it. Knowledge of equity, as both the foundation of

particular laws and the proper relations between men, could be had only by the redeemed. Moreover, since unredeemed magistrates are of the fleshly nature, they are more likely to judge for the things of the flesh--things such as money, wealth, power or status--than for the requirements of law. God is not a respecter of persons but unredeemed magistrates were likely to be so, and by virtue of their own corruption and their corruption of the law they could corrupt the entire nation.

What was needed immediately, then (godly magistrates aside for a moment), were definite limits to what a magistrate was allowed to do and a sense of responsibility on the part of superior magistrates for the actions of their inferiors. The ruler, be it a king, protector, or parliament, was responsible both legally and to God for what even the lowest magistrate was doing to the people of God, and the Quakers and Diggers often showed a naive faith that if Cromwell were aware of the actions of corrupt justices of the peace he would rectify matters. His failure to do so, despite repeated visits by various Quakers to inform him of what was happening, was a major reason for the disenchantment with his rule which the Quakers in particular came to feel.

Paralleling their concern for a sense of responsibility was a concern with what we might now call constitutional and legal limits to the actions of magistrates.

Despite their recognition that execution was the life of the law and that even the best laws could be perverted by corrupt magistrates, the Quakers and Diggers shared the Leveller and later liberal assumption that in some sense limits could be placed on government by specifying those limits in the form of laws. For example, Isaac Penington specifically warned of the dangers of the involvement by Parliament in administration or of "the Administrative Power to intrench upon the bounds of the Legislative"--a warning which reflected one interpretation of the conflict between Charles and his Parliaments.¹ To set limits upon the magistrates powers were to be separated, although the American corollary, checks and balances, was not yet clearly articulated. And for neither the Levellers nor the Quakers and Diggers was constitutionalism an end in itself; all three groups were concerned instead primarily with consequences rather than with forms, a concern itself a consequence of their spiritual experience.² Still, it was argued by Winstanley and the

¹Penington, The Fundamental Right, Safety and Liberty of the People . . . (London, 1651), pp. 18-19.

²See J. C. Davis, "The Levellers and Christianity," pp. 236-237, 239-242. These are numerous similarities between Leveller proposals and those made by the Quakers; one may note tracts by Billing (A Mite of Affection) and Penington (A Word for the Common weale and The Fundamental Right, Safety and Liberty of the People). Barbour has compared the proposals made by several Friends in 1659 to the Leveller programme and found many similarities as well as certain differences of emphasis, though he argues that the Quakers

Quakers (Burrough in particular), that magistrates are and ought to be subject to law, an argument which was extended to include the chief magistrate himself. The king, Burrough noted, could rebel against his subjects.¹ Accordingly, justice had been done to Charles I "for his shedding and causing to be shed so much innocent blood in these Nations," but, as Winstanley had noted ten years before this line was written, the just execution of Charles had not led to the just society as it properly should have.²

The failure to initiate the just society was in an important sense the failure to have replaced ungodly magistrates with godly ones. The failure was particularly blamed on Cromwell, who had been given the opportunity by God to choose magistrates who were truly called by God; instead, those who had been called "by way of traditional choice, as hath been the custom in our forefathers dayes (that knew no better, being in the dayes of Apostacy & great ignorance Themselves)" continued to enforce the spiritual and legal

were generally theocratic while the Levellers were not. See his "From the Lamb's War to the Quaker Magistrate: Theocracy and Democracy in Early New Jersey," Quaker History 55, No. 1 (Spring 1966):3-23, particularly pp. 15-17.

¹Burrough, "The Epistle to the Reader" of Caton's A Testimony of a Cloud of Witnesses, not numbered. Cf. Burrough, A Declaration to the World of our Faith, Early Quaker Writings, p. 302.

²Richard Crane, A Fevv Plain VVords to the Officers of the Army . . . (London, 1659), p. 4. For Winstanley see the citations under the heading "Charles I" in the "General Index" to Sabine.

apostasy.¹ Godly magistrates were not available "to establish the Gospel" (though not by an outward law),² nor to mitigate the harsh effects of the existing law by interposing their godliness and awareness of the nature of law. The legal and constitutional arguments for separating the spiritual and the temporal had as its counterpart the knowledge by the godly magistrate of things according to their nature.

But, though the just society ultimately could not be brought about by outward means (the conscience by its nature could not be coerced, and only the spirit could make men spiritual), outward means are not completely ineffectual either for furthering or for frustrating the reformation. The inward and outward were related by a complex dialectic, a position made abundantly clear by the Diggers and Quakers in their social protests and analysis of oppression. The force of this dialectic is made clear too in their discussion of the duty of the magistrate, a duty which gives the godly magistrate a critical role in the process of regeneration. It is time to examine in greater detail the oft-repeated (and Pauline) phrase "a terror to evildoers and a praise to them that do well."

¹Burrough, To the Parliament of the Common-wealth of England, p. 2, and passim.

²See John Camm's portion of This was the Word of the Lord which John Camm, and Francis Howgil was moved to declare and write to Oliver Cromwell . . . (London, 1654), not paginated.

At first glance being a terror to evildoers seems to refer primarily to keeping order among sinners. Those who did not violate the law, particularly those whose nature fulfilled the law, had no need of magistrates. But as understood by the Quakers and Winstanley "a terror to evildoers" was not limited to maintaining order. And what about being "a praise to them that do well"? As suggested by Francis Howgil,

they that Rule in the Power of God answer God's witness in every man, and reach to that by his Act of Justice in the Transgressor, and he restraineth the Evil doer within, and limiteth that, and preserves the Creature as much as in him lies from harm, and his Estate from destruction, and also saveth the Innocent, Meek and Harmless from the violence, and from beating and fighting, and from them that would Destroy their Persons and Estates ¹

Thus, the first duty of the magistrate is not just to maintain order but to answer that of God in every man, a task fulfilled in part by judging according to the law within rather than the law without.

More critically, the godly magistrate could by judging for God bring sinners to the process of conversion, particularly to that stage the Quakers called convincement. The way one became aware of the light within was through a sense of sin, and one of the ways in which one could be made aware of his sins was by the pronouncements of God's

¹Howgil, The heart of New-England Hardened, Works, p. 206.

righteous law. Not the judgment of any law would do; only God's law could begin to point to the spirit within. And, of course, only the redeemed magistrate could distinguish between God's righteous law and the laws of men which might appear to be godly. Like the true prophet and the true minister the godly magistrate called men to face their sins and their God. By judging for God, the magistrate would "bring men into, and encourage and preserve them in the fear of God, which is the spring of all goodness, righteousness and equity" and the end of government as well.¹ The duty to help foster conversion was, finally, a major reason that magistracy was accepted as a legitimate, not just a necessary, calling.

Out of this definition of the role of the magistrate came an interesting corollary, the well-known Quaker proposals for penal reform. One problem with the jails themselves was that jailers were corrupt men who did nothing to bring their charges to the spirit within, a problem to which the Quakers could speak based on countless experiences. Fox exhorted Richard Cromwell, "Protector (so-called)" to

take heed of letting any Goaler bear Office thats a drunkard, prophane swearers, as many of them is, or letting people lye long in goales, twenty or thirty together, for such they learn badness together one of

¹Isaac Penington, Some Few Queries and Considerations Proposed to the Cavaliers . . . (n.p., n.d.), p. 4.

another, and Goalers be bad examples to them, that they are worse when they come out, then when they went in.¹

The jails themselves needed cleaning up also; one of Fox's Fifty nine Particulars was:

Let all Goals be in wholesom places, that the Prisoners may not lye in their own dung, and Piss, and straw like Chaffe, having never a House-of-office in the Prison; Therefore let there be an House-of office in all Goals, and let these things be mended.²

These evils were compounded by the fee system, which required prisoners to pay their jailers for such necessities as food and straw (bedding). Some jailers would not even allow a prisoner's friends to bring food or straw, requiring instead that everything be purchased from the jailer, usually at exorbitant prices which the poor prisoners could ill-afford. And since jailers were usually not godly men, the economic exploitation was but part of the corrupt example presented to the prisoner. For these reasons among others (including the fact that they felt they were illegally or unjustly imprisoned) the Quakers usually refused to pay the fees.

The problem with the penal system was not limited to the qualities of the jails or the jailers, however. There were problems with the penal law itself; prisons were overcrowded because people were cast into prison for debt.

¹Fox (and Edward Burrough), Good Counsel and Advice, p. 47. Similar advice was given by Fox To the Protector and Parliament of England in 1658 (p. 13).

²Fox, Fifty nine Particulars, p. 13.

Another problem was that prisoners were kept "in a lazy and idle life" while in jail, increasing their opportunities to "learn more wickednesse of one another."¹ Winstanley and the Quakers alike questioned

whether it would not more restrain Thieves if they should be put to work, & kept in Bridewells & Work-Houses then to be dealt with as they are; for there they would be inured to work, and some might come to delight in it, and give themselves to it when they came to be free; and others however whether they would give themselves to it or no, yet after tryal might be kept to it, and so restrained from thieving, whereas now they are either put to death, or else let loose again to their Trade of stealing, and so are set at liberty to incite and nourish up others in their wicked principles, so that out of their Nursery arises stil an increase of Thieves, whereas if they were drained out of the Countrey (as they were taken) into Work-Houses, their Nurseries would be scattered, and their wicked principle whereby they animate one another, would be taken away ²

The discipline of the calling could be inculcated into most prisoners; meanwhile work useful to the commonwealth could be performed by them. Restitution could be made to the victim of the crime, and since the thief was not executed his wife and children, if he had any, would not become permanent burdens on the government. They could perhaps even be provided for out of the labors of the convicted thief, a point often only vaguely realized by modern penologists. Hard work also might prove a deterrent to

¹Fox, To the Protector and Parliament of England, p. 13.

²Tomlinson, Seven Particulars, p. 18.

theft, even for those on whom its rehabilitative effects would be lost. The wicked principle to which Tomlinson referred was "A short life, and a sweet."

Whereas if their life should be prolonged, and they kept at labour, then there would be another thing for them to look upon, not a short life and a sweet, but for a little sweet, a long servitude and slavery; hard Work and Labour for short pleasure, which would more awe many that are desperate of their lives, then half an hours hanging, as they account it.¹

There is in this passage more than a hint of the later calculus suggested by Bentham, but the Quakers and Winstanley recognized in ways that Bentham did not that deterrence was but one object of a "science" of penal legislation. Particularly they recognized different persons might commit crimes for different reasons, and that only some would be deterred by a comparison of expected pleasures and pains. Others needed discipline of some sort or even the opportunity to acquire a calling; these could be rehabilitated. Thus his ability to discern which persons acted from which spirit was another reason that the redeemed magistrate was required; effective penology could be obtained only when different psychological types could be separated. The greater perceptiveness exhibited by the Quakers and Diggers, as contrasted to the narrowness of their contemporaries and Bentham, was a consequence of their

¹Ibid. Cf. Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 553-554.

understanding of psychological processes and the dialectics of the personal and social experience.

We should not conclude, however, that their greater perception always led to more liberal proposals. With their contemporaries and with Mosaic law the Quakers and Diggers prescribed capital punishment for murder and treason. Winstanley included as treasonable any buying and selling; in a seemingly harsh provision he wrote:

If any do buy and sell the Earth or fruits thereof, unless it be to, or with strangers of another nation, according to the Law of Navigation, they shall be both put to death as traytors to the peace of the Commonwealth; because it brings in Kingly bondage again; and is the occasion of all quarrels and oppressions.¹

The idea of buying and selling was to him more abhorrent than blasphemy, or rather it was blasphemous, and his provision echoes Puritan laws against blasphemy. Even calling the earth one's own "and not his brothers" called for a sentence under the taskmaster, as would giving hire for one's work. In a somewhat different vein, he recognized that rape was

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 594-595. I will discuss this provision as an example of radical enthusiasm or excess later on. For now, however, three things ought to be noted: first, Puritan laws were often harsh and the general tendency of the Quakers and Diggers was to mitigate their severity, and second, Winstanley's proposal presumes that the commonwealth is being brought about and that men's attitudes have been changed, though death does seem to be a high price for holding onto old attitudes, however erroneous. Finally, there is a certain biblical precedent for the maintenance of apostolic communism through "terror"; see Acts 5:1-11.

not a sex crime but an assault, and his punishment was correspondingly severe.

If a man lie with a woman forcibly, and she cry out, and give no consent; if this be proved by two Witnesses, or the mans confession, he shall be put to death, and the woman let go free; it is robbery of a womans bodily Freedom.¹

And even in the most liberal proposals, setting thieves to work, Winstanley noted that those who would not submit to the law and who were "desperate, wanton, or idle," "the Task-master is to feed them with short dyet, and to whip them, for a rod is prepared for the fools back, till such time as their proud hearts do bend to the Law."² God's requirements as they understood them were strict and to our sensibilities often harsh (though probably not so to the Puritan mind), but they were also fair, requiring a godly magistrate who could properly judge and apply punishment, thereby (they hoped) bringing the evildoer to God. As Penington concluded after examining the reasons given by the court of Boston, Massachusetts, for banishing the Quakers,

The magistrate keeping in his place, cannot but be a nursing father to the church; for let him draw out his sword against that wickedness which proper for him to cut down, it will exceedingly help to nurse up the

¹Ibid., p. 599. Winstanley is, of course, requiring corroboration and resistance, two elements of laws against rape rightly under attack today.

²Ibid., p. 553.

church; but where hath the magistrate commission to meddle with any of the spiritual shepherd's work?¹

The theory of magistracy and the theory of punishment were woven together in the idea of "a terror to evildoers."

It is still necessary, however, to determine what is entailed in being "a praise to them that do well." This phrase is much more ambiguous than the other; for reasons that include their understanding of the process of conversion neither Winstanley nor the Quakers developed it in as great detail. At minimum, though, saving "the Innocent, Meek and Harmless from violence" constitutes a praise to them that do well. The Quakers frequently pointed out that magistrates ought to be protecting the children of God instead of standing idly by while they were being beaten on their way to meeting or even encouraging and participating in the beatings. William Smith argued that God cared to preserve his Lambs outwardly as well as inwardly;

the sword stands between the wilde beasts, the ravenous creatures, and the Lambs, where it is rightly placed in the hands of Gods Minister, whose care is to preserve his tender ones his Lambs inwardly, so outwardly from the destroyers power, whose Kingdom is not of this world, yet hath set such in this world to preserve their outward man whom he hath gathered out of the world; and

¹Isaac Penington, An Examination of the Grounds or Causes . . . (London, 1660), Works (1761), I: 284-285.

those that will not have the Lord to rule over them, his light which in the conscience convinceth of sin and evil, shall have man to rule over them.¹

Thus, although the magistrate was not to meddle with religion by establishing a particular worship, the godly were to be encouraged to worship by being protected from the interference of the ungodly.

Smith's comments, and those of Penington, indicate that the offices of the minister and the magistrate were to be kept clearly separate even though in the sense that each was to help bring men to God their duties were the same. Both were to recognize the inherent limits of conscience, limits which have already been discussed, and these limits would help define their proper roles. There were yet other similarities between their callings; these similarities emphasized their parallel tasks. The first similarity was that both magistrates and ministers were to do their business freely without regard for the things of the flesh. True magistracy like true ministry consisted of being in the power of Christ, of being humble and not acting for money. The second, and a related similarity, is to be found in the emphasis that godly magistrates were more likely to be found among the poor. The rich "are too stately houses for Christ

¹William Smith, A Right Dividing, Or a true Discerning, Shewing the use of the Sword . . . (London, 1659), p. 4.

to dwell in." Wrote Winstanley,

For Magistracie hath two excellent principles in his nature, which the darke selfish government is an enemy to.

First Magistracie signifies a great Light, as much as to say, greater Light of Love, greater Light of Humility, greater Light of Reason, greater Light of Truth, keeping promise and covenant; greater Light of Peace, and tendernesse of Heart, greater Light of boldnesse, in a cause that is universally righteous.

And where this power, Authority and government rules, this is pure Magistracie, and it is the Life and power of Christ.

Secondly, Magistracie signifies the greatest Band, that ties the Creation together in peace, and this band is universal Love; for this streames out to preserve all, and despises none; This is the unitie of the Spirit, and the band of peace; this is pure Majestie indeed, that ties people together in Love; And this is the power, Authoritie, and government of Christ; the love of Christ in us, constraines all men to doe his will.

This principle was not to be found in the magistrates of the earth, who "favour the rich for reward, and despise and sleight the poore," but "among the poore despised ones of the Earth; for there Christ dwells, and there you shall see Light and Love shine in Majestie indeed" ¹ Christ would select the poor to be his magistrates, just as he selected poor fishermen and others to be his disciples. Finally, Winstanley and Fox suggested that "states clarks" be used to make laws and proclamations known to the people. Ministers were "to read the law of the Common-wealth: not onely to strengthen the memory of the Ancients, but that the

¹Winstanley, Fire in the Bush, Sabine, pp. 474, 473.

young people also, who are not grown up to ripeness of experience, may be instructed, to know when they do well and when they do ill"¹ "The great Charters are to be read four times a Year in the Counties, and twice a Year in the Cathedrals, that the people may know they are confirmed, and are to be kept in all points";² the argument draws on both certain statutes of the law of England and the idea of law itself.

There were, however, two differences which remained between the office of a minister and that of a magistrate. First, despite the parallels between the magistrate and the minister the Quakers still asserted that the magistrate is not an officer of Christ; "Christ hath not a Political and a Spiritual Kingdom, for the Kingdom of Christ the Heir of God, is but one, which stands in righteousness"³ Most directly this assertion challenged the claim that government is divinely ordained and ought therefore to be obeyed. It was one thing to argue that magistrates ought to be godly men; it was another thing altogether to claim that

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 562.
Cf. Fox, Several Papers Given Forth: The Heads of Which, p. 33.

²[Richard Farnworth?], The Liberty of the Subject by Magna Charta . . . (n.p., 1664), p. 13.

³Richard Hubberthorn(e), Truth and Innocency Clearing itself and its Children . . . (London, 1657), Works, p. 28.

all governments and magistrates were ordained by God in the same way that ministers are. This latter position is that Hubberthorn is denying, not the first. In addition, Hubberthorn's statement reflects the argument, which we will examine in the next chapter, that all citizens are magistrates. The kingdom of Christ is one, not divided between those who have a divine obligation to command and those whose duty is to obey.

There is another difference between ministers and magistrates, one reflecting the prevailing social and political system. Clearly this system had not provided godly magistrates, though neither had the church organization given true ministers. But it was not always clear that any one political system would yield godly magistrates; these had to be called by God rather than by men. Forms were not the issue; constitutionalism was not the goal; any pleading for forms was regarded as forcing the hand of God. As Francis Howgil asked,

Was not Israel governed sometime by Judges, sometimes by the Elders, and sometimes by Kings? and while they stood in the counsel of the Lord, and the people hearkened to them, was not the Lord among them, and were they then not blessed?¹

Was it only a Form of Government, or such and such a Government in Name that ye pursued after? or was it not the Thing it self, Freedom it self, Liberty it self,

¹Francis Howgil, An Information, and also Advice
... (London, 1659), p. 3.

Righteousness it self, that the heavie Yoak might be done away, which as to any of the last I do not say but they might have done it, if they had stood in Gods fear, and in his Counsel, for it is not this or that Title, or Form of Government, which is only Essential to the well-being of a People or a Nation ¹

England's error was twofold: men were for one party or another because they lusted after their own self-interest, or they were particularly for Parliament, thinking it essential since God had used it to overthrow the king. Howgil's concern may be natural for anyone who is concerned primarily with the consequences of a magistrate's role, with policies rather than with procedures. In one light such a position may appear to be inconsistent; what is the test of policy if not correct procedure? But for the Quakers this light was in reality darkness; the true light would show whether policies were righteous. The true light would enable magistrates to judge rightly no matter what the form of government.

This position seems to conflict with the idea that a theory of the just society can be developed. But one of the virtues of the holy commonwealth was precisely that it was open to God's call. Those called to be magistrates would be recognized in a context which required the assent of all involved. The Quakers and Diggers developed both a theory of magistracy and a theory of the just society; Winstanley's

¹Howgil, One Warning more unto England, p. 8.

Law of Freedom was in large part the gospel ordering of magistrates and a specification of their duties. Still, while the broader theory of politics required a theory of magistracy, the latter could also be separated from the former. We can accept the accuracy of Barbour's observation that the Quakers "accepted the Puritan belief that the saints were to rule, yet Friends were the only Commonwealth group who did not claim to know how they would do it."¹ We need not accept a conclusion which can be drawn from the observation, that the Quakers were unconcerned with social theory. Political theory, while not always systematic, was not denigrated or neglected either.

¹Hugh S. Barbour, "The God of Peace: The Root of Radical Pacifism," Quaker Religious Thought 13, nos. 3 and 4 (Spring 1972 [double issue]):32. Barbour is in one sense more accurate than he seems to admit, yet in another sense he is inaccurate, as shall be argued in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

"an ensign to the nations"

As we turn from the theory of magistracy to the theory of political society two preliminary points can be noted. First, the rule of the saints had certain implications for the form of government, though these are not always apparent. For one thing, the Quakers and certainly Winstanley were generally hostile to an earthly monarchy, a position shared with their radical contemporaries. In words which sound much like Winstanley's, Fox wrote to "Friends, to all you that desire an Earthly King in England and Scotland . . . , who profess your selves to be Christians, whether Presbyterians, which signifies Eldership, or others" and compared them to the Jews who wished to replace God with an earthly king. Earthly kingship was a sign of disobedience to God, he noted (and also warned Cromwell), we read of kings not among the Apostles but among the apostate Christians. The fruits of the kings of the earth are subjection and spoilage; therefore those who now plead for a king "shall cry out because of the King whom you have chosen, & the Lord wil not hear you at that day" ¹

¹Fox, Several Papers Given Forth, the Heads of which,

Winstanley's characterization of all perverted government as "kingly" is similarly significant, and he brought many of the same arguments to bear. Yet he recognized, as did Fox and others, that "kingly power" was not limited to the person of the king; as we have seen, the person may be killed while the power lives on. Still it is safe to presume that neither Winstanley nor the Quakers will develop a theory based on any kingship other than that of Christ. The kingship of Christ was incompatible with earthly kingship in any form.

Secondly, despite several changes in her government Israel was seen as a holy commonwealth. This characterization is not accidental nor is it arbitrary. What needs to be emphasized now is that on the one hand the idea of a commonwealth was projected onto Israel; her institutions and magistrates were seen in republican terms. On the other hand, Mosaic models were imported to England, as we have seen in the case of particular laws and economic institutions. The glory of Israel lay both in her magistrates and, more vitally, in her people and their virtue. The magistrates had helped to foster that virtue, as they would again in England, but magistracy and virtue rested on the covenant with God. The safety and liberty of the people depended

pp. 8, 11, and 8-11 passim. Fox is referring to the account of I Samuel, beginning with chap. 8.

upon godly magistrates, while true peace and freedom rested upon the just settlement of government.

The republicanism of the Quakers and Diggers began with a political understanding of the nature of spiritual man. In a theocratic sense man was a political animal; the order of creation had been a political and social one, consisting not simply of Adam and Eve. For Winstanley and some of the Quakers the political character of the prelapsarian golden age was taken quite literally; Winstanley argued that the righteous law of the creation was common preservation and that Adam's rule was the preservation of his household and his children, meaning that at least in principle God meant to create a political order. Martin Mason's statement was perhaps more explicit; referring to the golden age, he wrote: "The children of Men . . . needed not then an outward law to restrain them from Vice or Vanity" but "were (by the inward Law of God written in their hearts, and by their Love and Obedience thereunto) a Law unto themselves." And thus "while this inward Voice or Law of God was regarded by them, all Lording Tyranny was a stranger to them."¹ But whether or not they agreed that the golden age was in fact political --and it is ultimately unimportant whether it was or not²--

¹Martin Mason, Innocency cleared . . . (n.p., n.d.), p. 1.

²The reasons for generally dismissing the prelapsarian state have been discussed in chap. IV. As noted there and

all the Quakers and Winstanley argued that Israel and later the apostolic church were dispensations of God's government and political order.

Moreover, unregenerate spiritual men also required a government, though not for the same reasons as the regenerate. The unregenerate were governed not by the law within but by lust, and thus, continued Mason,

God raised up himself an outward Instrument, and gave him Wisdom and Power to govern his People, and to make Laws and Statues for them, which they were not to transgress, but be subject to: and this Government was intended and set up for a Restraint to the wilde Nature to make it tame, and bring it under the Yoak, subject to just Authority, to deal justly, and uprightly one with another, and to live peaceably in their generation, and inoffensively to all men, and so be a Bridle to that licentious, brutish, profane spirit, which would rise up against, persecute and worry Gods innocent people: And so this Authority proved an incouragement unto, and a protection (under God) of Gods harmless Flock.¹

Historically this was the Covenant of Law, yet in their iniquity men turned even from this government and prophets had to be called to testify against oppression. God then promised Jeremiah a new political order based on a new covenant and the law written in the heart. With the coming of Christ the promise was fulfilled and the basis for a new and more genuine order laid. The light of Christ was public, not private: "It is the Common Light and Publick Spirit of God, which is one and the same in all, though not in the

in chap. V the apostolic church was most critical for social theory, and it is followed in importance by Israel.

¹Mason, Innocency Cleared . . . , p. 2.

same measure" ¹ Whether in flesh or in spirit Jesus Christ had come to set the oppressed free, as Isaiah had prophesied.

The Quakers and Diggers argued, then, that all government had divine origins. In this argument they were not alone, of course: Augustine had emphasized that government was a gift to protect men from each other and the writings of Thomas Aquinas presupposed Aristotle's argument about man's sociability. But the Quakers and Diggers were emphatic in their insistence that the purpose of true government was to set men free, not simply to protect them from each other. As with the mission of Jesus himself, it was the task of a true Parliament

to break the Tyrants bands, to abolish all their oppressing Laws, and to give Orders, Encouragements and Directions unto the poor oppressed people of the Land, that they forthwith plant and manure this their own Land, for the free and comfortable lively-hood of themselves and posterities.

And to declare to them, it is their Creation rights, faithfully and courageously recovered by their diligence, purses and blood from under the Kingly Tyrants and oppressors power. ²

More broadly, salus populi was the supreme law;

The great God of Heaven and Earth so loved the world, that he sent his Son a Light into the world, not to

¹Fisher, Rusticus ad Academicos, Works, p. 546. Cf. Crook, Truth's Principles . . . (London, 1663), pp. 42-44.

²Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 558.

destroy mens lives, but to save them; yet to punish the evil-doer according to the nature of his Crime, but not with Imprisonment, Death or Banishment for every small offence, much less for that wch is no offence at all.¹

And John Crook identified the chief ends of government as "these four":

First, To prevent Oppressions, To limit and restrain the exessive Power and Violence of Great-men, To open the passages of Justice, with indifferency towards all.

2ndly, To preserve men in their Estates, and secure them in their lives and liberties: for if it were not for just Government, no man would have more certainly in his own, than power will allow.

3rdly, That vertue should be cherished, and vice suppressed.

4thly, That all accidents and events, all counsels and designs should be improved to the publick good.²

Winstanley and the Quakers were concerned to manure the ground and plant in it a good government, the benefits of which would be reaped afterwards in the virtue and liberty of both the people and their governors.³

Virtue, including the worship of God, the common weale, including common rather than self-preservation, and the making of good men through obedience to good laws, these

¹Martin Mason, A Faithful Warning, With Good Advice from Israel's God, To Englands King . . . (London, 1660[?]), p. 4. On salus populi, cf. Winstanley, An Humble Request, Sabine, p. 430.

²Crook, An Apology for the Quakers, pp. 4-5.

³The idea of planting a good government is Penington's as well as Winstanley's. See Penington, The Fundamental Right, p. 36; Winstanley, Watch-word to the City of London, Sabine, p. 335. It is from Winstanley that the overall title of this study is taken.

are the proper ends of government. As specified by Winstanley,

Government is a wise and free ordering of the Earth, and the Manners of Mankind by observation of particular Laws or Rules, so that all the Inhabitants may live peaceably in plenty and freedom in the Land where they are born and bred.¹

With these ends and images the Diggers and Quakers have introduced what in the traditions of political theory are predominantly republican terms and ideas, and it is within the republican context that their theories will be construed. The republican tradition in turn helps to make sense out of some seeming anomalies in their thought (a point to be developed towards the end of this chapter), while Quaker republicanism explains their attraction to the republican program of Sir Harry Vane (the younger).² That their temptation to support Vane was finally turned aside after an extensive debate does not negate the republican thrust of Quaker ideas, however. Though the decision can be interpreted as beginning a Quaker withdrawal from the world or as confirming the essential "spiritual" character of Quakerism, and though the lack of Quaker support may have

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 528.

²On the Quaker attitudes to Vane and republican politics see the articles by James Maclear and Alan Cole cited in the Introduction. I would also note here William Penn's support of Algernon Sidney in the Parliamentary election of 1679. Penn and Pennsylvania will be discussed further in the next chapter, however.

contributed to the downfall of Vane's republic, the decision may have reflected simply an astute analysis of political possibilities.

The Diggers and Quakers were not the only republicans, of course; much of the opposition to the monarchy took place within a republican milieu. Vane and James Harrington are to be noted among politicians and theorists, and the entire Calvinist legacy beginning with Geneva is republican. Calvinism, including its radical progeny, was a melding of church and sect (to use Troeltsch's terms), a blend made possible by its Old Testament emphasis on the national covenant and the obligation of the elect to act as God's instruments in all social institutions. Calvinist republicanism meant an alliance of Church and State to promote virtue, civic sermons, and an aristocracy of the elect confirmed by the congregation.¹ Calvinism and Puritanism were of course not democratic; their thrust was rule by the saints. But Calvinism could be radical, as Michael Walzer has argued; the rule of the saints could transform society instead of accepting it. In this context, then, we might expect--and the rapid growth of the Quakers would seem to

¹On the republican emphasis of Calvinism and its melding of Church and Sect see Troeltsch, Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, pp. 576-682 and Walzer, The Revolution of the Saints. One might also point to Richard Baxter's political ideas (as edited by Richard Schlatter in Richard Baxter and Puritan Politics) and to John Milton's political writings.

confirm--that the language and images of the Quakers and Diggers could have a broad appeal, particularly to those who felt that Puritanism had not gone far enough in transforming men or society. The jeremiads--we must take this term quite literally--of the Quakers and Diggers would contrast with Calvin's own emphasis on David and his ordering of the holy community, while Puritanism fell somewhere in between these two Old Testament emphases. The point here is that the holy commonwealth made sense to the Quakers, the Diggers, and their audience in ways it no longer does, and that it still makes sense to discuss their thought in republican terms. The virtue was Christian virtue (of a Calvinist rather than Lutheran strain)¹ and the commonwealth was holy. From their understanding of the implications of these terms the rest of the Quaker and Digger theory emerges.

One immediate implication of the idea of the holy commonwealth was that both rulers and people needed to turn to God to avoid oppressing other men. Their understanding of conscience told the Quakers and Diggers that in the most real sense neither oneself nor another could be coerced. In addition, the kingship of God was incompatible with any

¹This contrast is essentially between acting in the world and withdrawing from it, between trying to bring society into a Christian context rather than accepting existing social relationships because they are finally unimportant. On this contrast see Troeltsch, Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, pp. 602-606 and 576-682 passim.

earthly tyranny. Obedience to God, the end of both conversion and the new covenant, was not at all the same as the obedience owed by Hobbesian man to his sovereign, even though that sovereign also owed his position to a covenant.

The Kingdom of God is a real Kingdom, a monarchy, with all the exactions and demands which that could imply; but it is also a free republic in which ideally no human king could rise to assert himself and tyrannize over his fellow-men. It is only when the Covenant is secularized and the Kingdom of God, so to say, abrogated, that difficulties and inconsistencies arise. Then political societies split into Right and Left, authority and freedom are divided from one another, and the Great Powers (as at the present day) confront one another across a seemingly unbridgeable gulf.¹

The tie between authority and freedom was made evident to Israel in the very idea of her existence. The Covenant had formed the nation; it was not as if a pre-existent tribe had decided to obey God. Thus the continued existence of Israel depended upon her obedience to the Covenant. For the prophets this dependence meant that Israel's disobedience had called into question her right to exist, and indeed they saw in her captivity a just punishment. Occasionally the Quakers applied this idea to England itself. Samuel Fisher was led to ask the Parliament

Whether it be possibly to be expected (unless God himself be so changed as to take pleasure in Iniquity) that God should take pleasure in this Nation, or that Parliament, and People thereof should ever prosper truly into a Common-Wealth, and not rather perish at last by some Common Wo, Ruine and Calamity, if it be found

¹Harold Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion, p. 237.

before him in the cases aforesaid, under the Guilt of those gross Sins of covenant breaking and perjury?¹

Like Winstanley, Fisher took the Solemn League and Covenant seriously and tied it to the development of a true nation. True self-government for England, as for Israel, consisted of choosing God to be the nation's sovereign, a viable choice since the light enlightened everyone.

Political freedom meant more than the separate and continued existence of the nation, however. There was an extensive catalogue of negative freedoms which the Quakers and Diggers thought necessary, including freedom from economic, legal, and spiritual oppression. More specifically, they argued for tolerance and the rule of law or due process in all legal proceedings, and they were decidedly opposed to monopolies and to most privileges associated with class or caste. Each of these negative freedoms was in turn part of the positive expression of the common good. Property for Winstanley and suppression of conscience for the Quakers stood in the way of the commonwealth. What the Quakers and Diggers desired above all was self-government, but according to them it was only the converted individual who found his self to be at all governable. By turning to the law within reason was no longer subject to the passions.

¹Samuel Fisher, To the Parliament of England, and the several Members thereof (n.p., 1659), Works, p. 26.

One might say that the Quakers or Diggers had a passion for truth, but theirs was a transformed passion.¹

Politically this change in attitude was expressed in two ways. First, self-government was an important goal of true government, but the idea of self-government took on a new coloring. Politically conversion led one "into a capacity of desiring the Common good, and of being faithful in the prosecution of it," a capacity not found in those of a "back-sliding spirit."² To borrow again from Rousseau, there is a capacity for knowing (as he put it, willing, which is not the same thing) the general good, a capacity developed only in the process of conversion and nourished in the community. One's apparent and real goods may or may not conflict, then, for the Quakers and Winstanley, depending upon the nature in which one lives.

Secondly, the capacity to desire the common good was developed and needed to be exercised corporately; for the Quakers and Diggers most fundamentally it was the community, not the individual, which was the agent of social change. Thus self-government meant, as a matter of practical necessity, political participation. Self-government meant,

¹The dialectic and transformation of the psyche are discussed in chap. III.

²Isaac Penington, To the Parliament, the Army, and all the Wel-Affected in the Nation . . . (London, 1659), p. 3.

in an Aristotelian sense, ruling and being ruled in turn; it meant, as it did for Harrington and for the Levellers, (usually) annual parliaments and the rotation of offices. Repeated tenure in office was apt to breed temptation, if only the temptation to identify the self with the office, thereby ignoring questions of the common good not necessarily for personal gain but for the aggrandizement of the position.¹

The problem of participation is not a simple one now; it was even more complicated for those who could separate the world into the precious and the vile. Almost immediately the problem of the franchise presented itself to them, since both Winstanley and the Quakers recognized that the ungodly were most likely to elect their own kind, men who would cater to their lusts and pride. Majority rule was not a test of truth but demonstrated instead that answers were in doubt. There constantly lurks the temptation to which both Puritan radicals, like the Fifth Monarchists, and Puritan conservatives, like Richard Baxter, succumbed, the temptation to allow only the saints (however they choose to define them) to participate in the affairs of government. And, to a certain extent, both Winstanley and the Quakers

¹Winstanley was emphatic about rotation of offices both to avoid corruption and to increase participation. See The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 540, 541.

also succumbed to this temptation. The Quaker Dennis Hollister defended the "little Parliament" or Parliament of Saints (of which he was a member) as being "truly servicable there to our generation, according to the will of God," and for "not seeking our selves, but the ease and profit or the people."¹ And George Fox the Younger told those who wished that God's "Mercy and Justice might be established by righteous Laws . . . That you are not like to see your desires fulfilled, by a Parliament that's chosen by the Voice of the People."² Yet for all his fifth monarchist tendencies he also noted that part of the problem was that the poor were deluded into thinking that they were being represented and that the franchise as it existed was corrupted, standing

in respect of persons, and not in equality; for the rich, covetous, oppressing men, who oppress the Poor, they have the only power to chuse Law-makers, and they will chuse, to be sure, such as will uphold them in their Oppression; and the poor man that is oppressed, though he have no power allowed him to chuse, yet he must be subject to the Laws which they make who are his oppressors, or else he is counted a Rebel ³

One could not expect to make England a free nation with such

¹Dennis Hollister, The Harlots Vail Removed . . . (London, 1658), p. 74.

²George Fox the Younger, A few plain Words to be considered . . . (London, 1659), in A Collection of the several Books and Writings, Given forth by . . . George Fox, the Younger (2nd ed., London, 1665), hereafter cited as Works (1665), p. 84.

³Ibid., p. 88; see generally pp. 84-89.

a franchise. Even Winstanley had his fifth monarchist tendencies, for

All uncivil livers, as drunkards, quarrelers, fearful ignorant men, who dare not speak truth, lest they anger other men; likewise all who are wholly given to pleasure and sports, or men who are full of talk; and these are empty of substance, and cannot be experiences men, therefore not fit to be chosen Officers in a Common-wealth, yet they may have a voyce in the choosing.¹

On balance, however, Winstanley and the Quakers were interested in including rather than in excluding men from the franchise. Their proposals did not include women²--few if any thought to extend suffrage so far--but their proposals were at least as inclusive as those of the Levellers, for example. But since Winstanley had proposed to abolish wages and all tenant-landlord relations, he was not exercised by the problem, which so bothered the Levellers, of whether

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 542.

²Women did of course figure prominently in the Quaker organization, serving as preachers and missionaries and organizing several petitions. There was even a debate over whether having separate Men's and Women's Meetings demeaned women, but the debate occurred after the time period we are discussing. See William C. Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism (2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961 [now distributed by William Sessions Ltd., York, England]), chaps. X and XI, passim.

The role of women was radically expanded in most all of the radical sects, but suffrage was not usually considered as part of their increased influence. See Keith Thomas, "Women and the Civil War Sects" in Crisis in Europe 1560-1660, ed. Aston, pp. 332-357. Radicalism should not be equated with a particular stand on questions of suffrage in every case, however.

granting servants and wage-laborers the franchise would merely multiply the voices of their employers rather than counteract them. Both the franchise and office-holding were to be open to all citizens, and a citizen was by and large anyone who adhered to the idea of a Commonwealth. Thus Winstanley proposed to exclude only those "interested in the Monarchical Power and Government," "such as have either lent money to maintain the Kings Army, or in that Army have been Souldiers to fight against the recovering of common Freedom" and "All those who have been so hasty to buy and sell the Commonwealths Land" for they are either "for Kingly Interest, or else are ignorant of Commonwealths Freedom, or both" ¹ Similarly, while proposing what amounted to universal suffrage, Edward Billing excluded those who "have forfeited their liberty by delinquency," those who had "a hand in any of the late plots or rebellions against the Commonwealth," and, as a separate provision, those "who have persecuted any for their conscience, or committed any to prison for their conscience" Yet even persecutors could be enfranchised and made capable of holding office upon "a further manifestation . . . of his or their good affection towards the people of God and equal and just liberty of every individual person, though of different

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, p. 542.

persuasions, within the dominions of this Commonwealth."¹ These restrictions are in essence political; they speak to the understanding of the nature of a commonwealth, either holy or secular. The impetus toward a rule of the saints was in their arguments countered by their awareness that anyone could become a Saint, and therefore that the only proscriptions on the franchise which would make sense were political ones. And the restrictions were coupled with a willingness to forgive past trespass.

The point of these discussions of the franchise is not to demonstrate a particular modernity or farsightedness in the proposals for universal suffrage. The concern is rather to call to mind and to put into a more specifically political context the theories about human nature and history. These theories form the basis of a theory of the demos which will govern in a democracy and also a theory of how the people will govern. What classical liberalism did was to posit a theory of the nature of the individual and then aggregate these beings. Decisions by any group had to be taken by majority vote, since a body also moves according to the greatest force put upon it, not on its own accord. Classical liberalism was thus not so much a theory of the people as of various persons, and questions of obligation to

¹Billings, A Mite of Affection, Early Quaker Writings, pp. 412-413.

the group were of fundamental importance because otherwise there was, as Thoreau cogently argued, no reason to obey laws to which you had not personally consented. Moreover, liberal political theory is primarily a theory of interests, which can be represented in ways personality cannot, and given such a theory decision making can be delegated to a representative body such as Parliament without any qualms. In short, interests can be represented while personality cannot, an idea which the Quakers and Diggers might have found acceptable as far as it went. But ultimately the delegation of authority was unacceptable for them. The light was an integrating factor among men and they had to develop a theory of collective decision making which accounted for the light.

First it must be emphasized, if it is not intuitively obvious, that questions about participation and decision-making are not limited to the problem of the franchise nor to Parliament. The Quakers and Diggers shared with the Levellers, and more generally with the Country party¹ (of which Cromwell was a member), a desire to return

¹The term "Country party" is used by Trevor-Roper by way of contrast with the Court party. Its ideology is discussed by him in Chap. 5 of The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century ("Three Foreigners: Philosophies of the Puritan Revolution"), passim. See also his argument in The Gentry, 1540-1640 (cited in the Introduction), particularly pp. 29ff.

as great an amount of decision-making as possible to the local level. For the gentry this reform would have meant a return to what they perceived as their prerogatives, lost to Charles, but for the other groups it meant additional opportunities for individuals to participate in the Commonwealth.

For the Quakers and Diggers the return of political power to the local level meant, in the first place, an emphasis upon the local government. For example, disputes were to be settled at a local level if at all possible, either through the meeting structure which the Quakers developed or by Winstanley's peacemakers. Appeals would be possible but one would no longer be required to go to London to air or resolve a grievance. Secondly, the emphasis upon the local community meant an increased politicization of certain traditional roles, particularly that of the father. Both Winstanley and the Quakers saw the father as the basic official of the community. Winstanley's argument was twofold: the father's position stemmed from the same root as all other magistrates, the need for common peace and preservation, and his position derived its authority from consent, including that of his minor children.¹ Quaker

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 544-545, 556, 538. I will discuss the root of magistracy in greater detail later in this chapter but would like to note the radical potential of the view of parental authority as stemming from consent. The implication of this view could be that consent might be withheld, thereby striking at the root

exhortations to "Masters and Heads of Families" were frequent and the terms used were frequently the same as those used for magistrates. Fathers were to stand, for example, "as a Terror over all evil, and as Encourager of all good"; they were to "bind not the conscience of any under your power, curb sin only, and reprove not Righteousness"; and to "let not Excess, neither let Want be in your Families, but that which is honest and right" Most important, like all magistrates they were to "rule in Authority in the Fear of God, but not in Tyranny" ¹

Needless to say, these exhortations and Winstanley's proposals applied primarily to fathers who had already been converted by the light, to the holy community or commonwealth rather than to the unregenerate. The Quakers were occasionally faced with the problem of divided families. The suggested resolution of this problem was for the redeemed member to remain in the family and to strive for the conversion of whoever had not been converted. Otherwise the regenerate were to remain subject to the traditional patterns of authority so long as these did not impinge upon true worship and obedience to the light. Freedom did not

of patriarchal authority. Winstanley did not push his argument in this direction, however.

¹Edward Burrough, The Testimony of the Lord Concerning London . . . (London, 1657), Works, p. 221.

necessarily mean throwing off all shackles; it could on occasion be compatible even with slavery. The light would transform the relationships even though their outward form might persist. It was sometimes better "to bear, then avoyd the yoke,"¹ seeking at all times the opportunity to testify

¹This phrase is from the Preface to Isaac Penington's A Voyce out of the Thick Darkness. Penington is emphasizing the freedom which one has to choose the attitude he will take to events, a concept also developed in existentialism.

Penington was specifically admonishing those who "were wonderous eager after making the Nation happy"; and the entire passage is worth quoting here.

"Be content to passe through your pilgrimage without the full enjoyment of that Freedom ye have desired and pressed so hard after. There is a power above, whose Will may crosse yours in this, which may as well find fault with your untowardnesse to be governed, as with the Self-Seeking of such as have been Governors.

I might perhaps have said, if I had not suspected it would have relished too harshly, Be content to be Slaves. It is a brave thing sometimes to oppose the yoke, but a braver from Judgment to submit unto it. It is in many cases better for particular persons, yea for Societies, to bear, then avoyd the yoke. It cost the Israelites dear that they would by no means be brought to put their necks under Nebuchadnezzars girdle. Canst thou say that a present Oppression is not determined concerning thee by him who hath power to dispose of all things? If thou canst not, take heed of over-violent resisting.

2. Groan, pant after, and in a just way pursue the attainment of perfect Freedom. Lie not down as a Slave, with a base abject Spirit, counting slavery best, but with a sweet Spirit submit to it for necessities sake, and withall let a Sense appear of your prizing and desiring Liberty: And what way of attaining it is made out to you plainly and evidently justifiable, forbear not to fall in with; yet not in such a violent and irrational manner, as to make your more noble parts far worse slaves to brutish passions within, to avoyd a more inferior slavery of the outward and more ignoble part."

The ambivalence toward political action which Penington is expressing in this quote is primarily Pauline and

to a more perfect liberty. One would practice what a contemporary theologian, John Howard Yoder, calls "revolutionary subordination."¹

The holy commonwealth should not have to face the problem of revolutionary subordination, however. The theory presumes that a redeemed community has been established, and it is in this context that we must further examine the image of the father as magistrate. The first thing we must note is that the father is not to be so much a ruler as a leader; he is to teach his children by his example. As Winstanley prescribed:

A Father is to cherish his children till they grow wise and strong, and then as a Master he is to instruct them in reading, in learning languages, Arts and Sciences, or to bring them up to labour, or employ them in some Trade or other, or cause them to be instructed therein, according as is shewed hereafter in the Education of Mankind.

A Father is to have a care that all his children do assist to plant the Earth, or by other Trades provide necessaries; so he shall see that every one have a comfortable livelihood, not respecting one before another.

He is to command them their work, and see they do

is present even behind his Calvinist impetus towards social transformation. As I have noted before and will note again, Penington is one of the first Quakers to advocate a withdrawal from the world and struggle; his writings frequently point towards the sect-type of organization. But even he did not withdraw from struggle altogether, as the numerous quotes from his writings in this and previous chapters should show.

¹Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, chaps. 9-12 passim. The problem of divided families is of course as old as Christianity itself.

it, and not suffer them to live idle; he is either to reprove by words, or whip those who offend, for the Rod is prepared to bring the unreasonable ones to experience and moderation:

That so children may not quarrel like beasts, but live in Peace, like rational men, experienced in yielding obedience to the Laws and Officers of the Commonwealth, every one doing to another as he would have another to do to him.¹

Secondly, the role of the father as leader points to a critical element in the theories of the community and its decision-making. We have already noted that the political community is to be ruled by God, just as the family is. It is thus the spirit or light which leads and authority is most essentially charismatic. As expressed in the community the leadership of the light means that those who have most fully experienced its workings are counselors for those who are undergoing the process of conversion. In addition, the leadership of the light expresses itself in the idea of the "elder" or "weighty Friend," as the Quakers called them. This role was defined originally by the wisdom which one had demonstrated and not by age (or later girth). For example, Richard Hubberthorn suggested "that those who are moved by the Spirit of God to watch over the Flock, and ordained with gifts thereunto, may take the oversight of the Flock wittingly, and of a ready mind, and not by constraint, nor for filthy lucre sake"² By the eighteenth century the

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 545.

²Richard Hubberthorn, The Rebukes of a Reviler fallen

role of the elder became associated with age and social position; it took on a conservative cast not part of the original concept. Initially, however, leadership was not permanent. The light might speak to anyone about anything. A weighty Friend was one who had been led before on a particular question, but his position was no guarantee that the light would speak to him on other questions or even on the same one again. The Quakers were concerned with inspiration in a most literal sense, the specific breath of God into an individual, and only secondarily with the development of expertise and proficiency, which may however follow from continued inspiration.

Winstanley's elders would seem to come from a root other than inspiration. The Law of Freedom specifically mandated that age was a criterion for serving as an official of the Commonwealth. All elected officials had to be at least forty years of age, and all men over sixty were to be general overseers ("called Elders"). Age was a criterion which emphasized experience: those over forty "are likely to be experienced men; and all these are likely to be men of courage, dealing truly, and hating Covetousness," while those over sixty are "men of the highest experience in the laws, for the keeping of Peace in the Commonwealth" and so

upon his own head . . . (London, 1657), Works, p. 128.

are due humble respect.¹ Here again Winstanley seems much more certain than the Quakers about what to expect from a holy commonwealth. But the differences are not as simple as first appears. For the Quakers inspiration had a dual role. On the one hand it was the criterion according to which a leader was chosen, but on the other hand it was also the basis upon which the community would follow. Quaker theory expected that the light which led one to become an elder would also lead others to accept his leadership. Winstanley's emphasis on consent in the choice of leaders and his arguments against a permanent aristocracy are necessary though not always obvious parallels to the Quaker theory. Leadership is not exercised in a vacuum; it requires acknowledgment by the community over which it is exercised no matter what specific criteria are specified.

The study of leadership is, therefore, the study of the community from which the leader will arise and to which he will return. Leadership is, as Plato saw, a problem in education, and both Winstanley and the Quakers emphasized that formal education was to be "experimental" rather than "notional" or philosophical. Public officers have to learn first to govern themselves, and these lessons are taught not abstractly but by participating in the community. In

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 543, 551-552.

the Quaker context it has been argued that George Fox's most significant contribution to the development of Quakerism was not his own, continuing leadership (particularly after most of the other early leaders had died), but his insistence that decisions be made by the monthly meeting structure which had developed. Fox seemed to insist that these meetings provide not only relief for sufferers, but also "at the same time an instrument for steadying the precarious balance between inspiration and authority which had plagued the Quaker movement for many years."¹ Fox's most political act was, therefore, precisely the rejection of leadership and the subsequent emphasis on the community. And in so acting, he insisted that participation was essential to the exercise of authority.

The emphasis on participation, particularly when coupled with the thrust of the prophetic spirit, the testimonies, and the view that all aspects of life are integrated around obedience to God, clearly points to a definition of "political" which has more in common with the Greek polis than with the liberal idea that matters political are limited to the formal, coercive power of the state. Liberal theory has abstracted from the classical conception of politics one

¹Emilia Fogelklou Norlind, The Atonement of George Fox, ed. Eleanore Price Mather (Wallingford, Pa.: Pendle Hill Publications, 1969), p. 24. Cf. pp. 25-26, 28, 29.

element, power, and made it over into the essence of politics. Liberal theory almost has to argue, therefore, that the "political society" be limited in scope; otherwise all relationships would be power relationships and there would be little room for human relationships. The thrust of New Testament thought, however, is away from the liberal concept and toward the polis; as André Trocmé has noted, Jesus' concept of political space was essentially that of the small community rather than the Roman Empire, and, of course, his ethics presumed one standard according to which all actions were to be judged.¹ For the Quakers and Diggers the idea of the polis is most evident in the moral and fraternal purposes of the Quaker meeting and in Winstanley's emphasis on small communities as the agents of social change. All institutions partook of a political character, but power or coercion did not define the political for them, even though they were aware of both the possibilities and the dangers of power.

To illustrate the broader concept of political which the Quakers and Diggers had it is useful to consider further the Quaker meeting as the prototype of the political community. The meeting emphasizes the Quaker and Digger view

¹André Trocmé, Jesus Christ and the Nonviolent Revolution, trans. Michael H. Shank and Marlin E. Miller (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1973), p. 55.

that the light is the integrating factor among men. It is the spirit which gathers men into a true community and dictates the removal of obstacles in its path, creating unity while not denying diversity. In this spiritual center, wrote Penington, "the divers and different motions of several members in the body (thus coming from the life and Spirit of the body) are known to, and owned by the same life, where it is fresh and sensible." Moreover, and in direct contrast to Hobbes,

It is not keeping up an outward knowledge (or belief concerning things) that unites, nor keeping up an outward conformity in actions, &c.; for these may be held down and done by another part in man, and in another nature; but it is by keeping and acting in that which did at first unite. In this there is neither matter nor room for division; and he that is within these limits, cannot but be found in the oneness.¹

The light is one and the same; there is no distinction between "natural light" and a spiritual one; and though its appearances may be different, its commands and biddings are consistent.

The sense of the consistency and unity of the light is increased by the meeting itself, since it is in the meeting most clearly that diverse individuals gather to collectively experience it. Thus there were frequent

¹Isaac Penington, "Some Deep Consideration Concerning the State of Israel, Past, Present, and To Come . . ." (n.p., n.d.), Works (1761), I:638-639. The original title differs somewhat.

exhortations that meetings continue in the face of persecution and even in the face of a certain reticence on the part of some Quakers themselves to meet regularly.¹ The failure to meet regularly constituted the sin of presumption² and was "the beginning of the Apostacies, which entred into the reasoning part. . . . And such as forsakes the assemblies of the righteous, some for fear of the earth and sufferings, becomes quarreling spirits, and so goes out of the part of the flocks footsteps" ³ Without the meeting there would be little opportunity to encourage virtue and exercise that mutual watchfulness which had to characterize the holy commonwealth.

The unity of the meeting and Fox's observation on the beginning of the Apostacies raise, in turn, two other considerations which are in their implications at least republican. (Also raised is the theory of decision making, but discussion of this theory will be postponed for a moment.)

¹Pragmatically this reticence may reflect the persecution under Charles II, but it was also a reflection of the idea, accepted by all Quakers, that the light would lead people to meet together whenever and wherever it wanted.

²Richard Farnworth, The Saints Duty, and Safety, In a Trying Time . . . (London, 1664), pp. 3, 8.

³George Fox, Three General Epistles to be read in all the Congregations of the Righteous . . . (n.p., 1664), p. 5. The date of this tract, and of Farnworth's, point to both the persecution and the controversy mentioned in footnote 1 above.

First of these is the concept of affection, which is, as republicans as diverse as Machiavelli, Rousseau, and the authors of The Federalist understood, a prime requisite for the continued existence of a viable republic. What is important is simply that the affections of the citizen be tied to the political community so that the citizen would willingly serve it, even die for it if necessary. Machiavelli and Rousseau each tried to ensure this tie of affection with a civic religion, a worship of civic gods that, of course, the Quakers and Diggers would find unacceptable. The Federalists relied not on a civic religion but on interests--they were in a strict sense of both terms "liberal republicans"--and tried to organize political society so that affections would follow interests.

Needless to say, the Quakers and Diggers handled the problem of affections differently. First of all, affection was in one sense the basis for the holy commonwealth since its very existence depended upon God's love. He had called the new Israel into existence and given his son a light to the world that the commonwealth might be governed. Secondly, the holy commonwealth was sustained by the mutual love of his subjects for each other and for him, a love which was to be fostered by the meeting itself; the frequent exhortations to meet together usually included meeting together "in love."

Love was also to be the basis for discipline and the settling of disputes. Even the unity of the light does not always ensure that men will not come into conflict, and some way of dealing with conflict had to be evolved. Like prophetic condemnation of the unregenerate, discipline within the meeting was to come from the "bowels of love." Discipline was to be handled first and foremost within the local community, "seeking all occasions to restore and forgive one another, and to blot the remembrances of offences out of your hearts" ¹ Likewise, in cases of disputes, the work of Winstanley's peacemaker was "to hear the matter, and . . . endeavor to reconcile the parties, and make peace, and so put a stop to the rigor of the Law, and go no further." ² Only as a last resort was the full force of the law, or exclusion from the meeting, to be applied, and even in these cases the magistrate (or meeting) was to act out of love. In no case were decisions to be made hastily, since to be hasty or rash was contrary to the workings of the spirit. It was expected, in other words, that proper discipline would maintain and increase the bonds of love which held the community together since proper discipline, like the love

¹James Nayler, "Epistle X. For Friends to be Tender and Compassionate One to Another" (n.d.), Works (1829), p. 695.

²Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 545.

from which it stemmed, sought not individual ends but common preservation. Love, as both a power and a principle, established both the means and ends of freedom, as Winstanley noted repeatedly.

Love and common preservation also meant fostering virtue, the second of the republican concepts to which Fox alluded. As with affection, some concept of virtue is essential to republican thought; the task of civic religion and of political organization is to foster it. For the Quakers and Diggers virtue was most simply obedience to the commands of the light, and obedience meant staying within one's measure. Vigilance was required, however, since the temptations to exceed one's measure were frequent, and it is in this framework that Friends "had need to watch over one another in tender love for good, that if you see evil appearing in one another, you may be times minde one another of it"¹ Eternal vigilance over oneself and others is the price of that freedom from sin that is Christian liberty. Later that vigilance would mean that proposed publications would require the approval of a committee of Friends; the republican censor is seemingly the all too obvious parallel. Yet the vigilance was not totalitarian except when it was in darkness, for obedience to the light recognized both

¹William Caton, William Catons Salutation and Advice (London, 1660), broadside.

diversity and inspiration. The censor, like the meeting, would recognize both his own limitations and the essential godliness of the other, including even his own self, in the exercise of his vigil.

There was another way of promoting virtue, a way which has also been recognized by other republicans. This way is the limitation or direction of wealth. For reasons which vary according to the theorist, wealth has been seen as contrary to republican virtue, commonly because it makes one self-interested rather than interested in the common wealth. The desire for wealth therefore increases the probability that justice will be bought or sold. Public office may come to serve private ends; the demeanor or "port" which once seemed to go along with official position was maintained only by exploiting the office. Magistracy and splendour became identified with each other, not magistracy and public service. This confusion about the purpose of official position led to the charge that the Quakers debased magistracy "because they omit the splendour of it," a charge to which an anonymous Quaker replied

The Common-wealth of Rome will attest the contrary, which was best governed when her Magistrates had not that pompe and splendour, which is now cryed up. A good life, gravity, and stayednesse, are more prevalent for the keeping of the most barbarous in subjection (as is evident among the Tartars also) then a Scarlet Cloak.¹

¹A Light Shining out of Darkness . . . (London,

The problem of wealth was essentially a problem of pride and self-interest. Wealth made one inclined to ignore his fellow creatures and exacerbated feelings of self-importance. Nayler commented that "though God be free in himself, and good and plentiful by Nature, yet he cannot so shew himself to such in whom the strong man keeps the house, who makes the creature thereby but more wanton to kick against his Creator, and puffs him up to forget his Maker and Feeder."¹ Poverty was no guarantee of virtue, however. The poor could be as covetous as the rich, the only difference being an opportunity to fulfill their desires. The problem for the republic was, therefore, not simply to equalize wealth or to mitigate the effects of poverty. The problem was to ensure that all men were interested in the common good rather than in their own individual goods.

Winstanley solved this problem most dramatically by arguing that the individual's physical well-being--and thus probably also his affections--was to be dependent most literally upon the common wealth. His solution was simply that the land and its fruits be held in common and distributed from the storehouses according to need, either for

1659), p. 90. This is perhaps the only reference to Rome as a model of a commonwealth to be found among Quaker writings of the period, although other Puritans did take Rome for a model.

¹James Nayler, A Door Opened to the Imprisoned Seed . . . (2nd ed., corrected, London, 1667 [1st edition 1659]), p. 17.

direct consumption or for further production. He did not feel the need to argue that production proceed in common; his ideas of production were still tied to the image of the artisan rather than to the dictates of the factory. Consumption also did not have to be common; families could draw from the storehouses as they required. But we cannot deny the republican thrust of his argument: a common wealth must be what its name implies.

Winstanley's argument was grounded in the natural or ontological right of all men to the fruits of their labors, a right also recognized by most Quakers.¹ The Quakers, however, tried to solve the problems of wealth and self-interest on a somewhat different basis than did Winstanley. The Quakers were definitely less certain that the spirit would lead to the common ownership of goods, but for some that solution was not ruled out. Generally the Quakers defended individual property, though most frequently the defense was made against claims for tithes. The defense was more negative than Locke's argument that private property was an essential expression of the personality; the Quaker idea of the calling emphasized conservation, not acquisition.

¹Winstanley's defense of this right has been discussed, but we may also note here a defense, made against the claims for tithes, by William Smith, The Ravenous Beast, Discovered . . . (n.p., n.d.) in Balm from Gilead: A Collection of the Living Testimonies, Written by . . . William Smith (n.p., 1675), hereafter cited as Works, p. 134.

Property could be obtained by descent, or gift, or purchase, but not (as tithes were) by unreasonable custom. Concluded John Crook,

neither doth the law of England create or make any man a title or property, that had none before, but only conserves and maintains every mans just property and equal right; for the just laws of a Nation are their walls to their Cities, and bars to their gates; and by them the land of every man is inclosed from other, though it lie in open field ¹

The common weal would be ensured primarily by the love or charity (in reality and by definition the same thing) which knit the community together. Crook and other Quakers were thus closer to the Jeffersonian idea of the yeoman farmer than to Winstanley's citizen,² yet the concerns of the Quakers and the Diggers--and of Jefferson--were much the

¹Crook, Tythes No Property, p. 1. Cf. H. P., Tumulus Decimarum: Or, The History of Tythes . . . (London, 1659), particularly p. 9. The differences between Crook's view of the commons and Winstanley's view ought to be evident and will be discussed in a moment.

²I would derive additional support for this view from Burrough's dictum about having neither excess nor want in families. I would also point out that Burrough's dictum anticipates in some respects Rousseau's republic with its provision that no man be so wealthy that he can buy another nor so poor that he must sell himself.

A minor but intriguing point is a comparison of Burrough's dictum with Winstanley's prohibition against spoilage, a prohibition which bears, in turn, some analogy to the natural limitations on accumulation which Locke found in his state of nature. See Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 599. Winstanley, however, did not see in the accumulation of precious metals a way of circumventing the natural law. Instead he proposed that they be used for chamberpots, as did Thomas More in Utopia. See *ibid.*, p. 595.

same--the corruption of self-interest and how to counteract it. Winstanley and those few Quakers who seemed to agree with him may have been more correct than the defenders of individual property in their assessment of what was needed to ensure public affections. The necessity for a radical transformation of social institutions as well as of men may be the lesson of a later Quaker legalism¹ and of the class struggles in Pennsylvania, but for the holy commonwealth we are considering this lesson was yet to be taught, much less learned.

Historically and theoretically the concern with charity in its broadest sense did lead the Quakers to develop both an organizational structure and a theory of decision making which reflected a concern for the common good. The structure and theory were fully articulated only after the period of the Revolution, but proposals had been made as early as 1654,² and the first national meeting was held in 1660. Moreover, the structure itself has certain parallels with Winstanley's structuring of his commonwealth, and since

¹Cf. Vann, Social Development of English Quakers, pp. 143-157. Both responsibility and eligibility for relief depended upon the meeting to which one belonged, leading to frequent disputes over membership.

²The proposal was made by Anthony Pearson and is discussed by Amy E. Wallis in her "Anthony Pearson (1626-1666): An Early Friend in Bishoprick," Journal of the Friends Historical Society 51, No. 2 (1966):90-91. The proposal itself is to be found in the Swarthmore MSS, II. 17.

he did not develop a theory of how common decisions could be taken it is both historically and theoretically appropriate to consider something of the Quaker decision structure at this time. Indeed, it is imperative that we consider it, since on the surface it would seem that the affection and virtue which have just been considered, and the concept of leadership which was developed earlier, would thrive only in small, local groups.

To a certain extent such a conclusion is warranted: sufferings were at first a local concern, and it was local meetings which supported the traveling ministers. But it was soon evident that persecution and poverty were not distributed evenly, and that support for ministers needed to have a wider base. General collections were then taken for relief and support, and out of these developed eventually the structure of monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, with delegates selected by the local meetings. The individuals selected were to act for "the Body of their Representation"¹ as they were led by the light; they were delegated perhaps with concerns but not necessarily with voting instructions. Too strict adherence to the delegate model of

¹William Smith, A Short Manifestation of the Main End of Outward Government (n.p., 1664), Works, p. 132. Smith is actually lamenting the fact "that such as represent the Nation should act against the Body of their Representation."

representation would limit the light and hinder the development of a new consensus. Ultimately the light would lead to a decision in the best interests of the body being represented.

Reliance on the light for leadership means, fundamentally, that a business meeting is also a worship meeting, and thus the requirements of the latter are also requirements of the former. Most broadly, since leadership is essentially inspiration (and since the covenant is a social concept), it follows that worship is the quintessential political act, and this for at least two reasons. First, as has been argued all along, the Quakers and Diggers, like their forebearers the prophets, did not draw any distinction between their religious obligation and the political and ethical demands which were placed on them. Life was of one whole, not neatly divided into compartments, and though there were limits placed on temporal power, these limits were dictated by fundamental ontological and religious considerations. Thus one would expect to find political and social concerns raised in the contexts of religious meetings, and indeed an error of Wilkinson and Story in the later seventeenth century was to attempt to split meetings for business from meetings for worship.¹ Second, since

¹On the Wilkinson-Story controversy, see Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism, chap. XI, and Emilia Fogelklou

inspiration is not normally the property of any one individual, political concerns are raised and decisions made about them in a context which most allows for inspiration, and that context is a meeting for worship. Political leaders, like ministers, may be called at any time; they are not to be permanent; and they are responsible to the community of the spirit as well as to God.

To be more specific, both business and worship meetings begin with silence, the forerunner of true language and the basis of genuine communication. Silence may also be required in the context of debate itself, "for a multitude of words in one particular meeting, to one and the same people, will burden the Seed, and bring deadnesse";¹ excess talking excluded one from officeholding in Winstanley's commonwealth. God's will and law are promulgated in silence, not in cacophony. Reliance on the light also means that decisions are expected to be unanimous, since the light brings men into unity. "Friends expect to find the right way and will postpone a decision in order to get it. If controversy becomes too keen, . . . a period of silence may

Norlind, "Quakerism and Democracy: Some Points concerning Revelation and Organisation," Journal of the Friends Historical Society 42, No. 1 (1950):37.

¹Alexander Parker, in W. H. [Thomas Salthouse] and Parker, A Manifestation of Divine Love . . . Consisting of two General Epistles . . . (London, 1660), p. 17.

ensue for waiting upon God and regaining unity and then a new solution may emerge."¹ Though problems may be pressing and solutions seem to be required immediately, to be hasty is to tempt the Lord.

In addition, reliance on the light gives an individual responsibility for the collective decision, a responsibility which cannot be coerced even by the requirement of unanimity. In the first place, meetings are not open strictly to delegates; they are open instead to concerns, which may be expressed by anyone whether a delegate or not. Lawson's Appeal . . . concerning the Poor included the provision "That all Persons whatsoever, may have free Access and Acceptance without mollestation, to give in true Information concerning any neglect of the Poor to any in Authority, Justice of the Peace, or any in Power, as there may be cause";² this provision could be easily expanded. Secondly, the light dictates that all expressions of concern be considered, and thus the individual is responsible for the formulation of questions as well as for the solutions. Thirdly, the light requires a respect both for fellow

¹Francis E. Pollard, Beatrice E. Pollard and Robert S. W. Pollard, Democracy and the Quaker Method (New York: Philosophical Library [1950]), p. 49. See also R. W. Tucker, "Structural Incongruities in Quaker Service," Quaker Religious Thought 13, No. 1 (Autumn 1971), particularly pp. 16-17.

²T[homas] L[awson], An Appeal to the Parliament, p. 3.

delegates and for the individuals being represented, a respect not always indicated by the representation of either interests or sheer numbers. Fourthly, reliance on the light means that decisions are not limited to situations as they seem; the light penetrates appearances both in formulating and in solving problems. Finally, the unity of the light implies that a value will be placed on unanimity once it is obtained, a value which Rousseau saw as being attached to the general will as a genuine product of individual decisions.

As a technique, then, the "sense of the meeting" requires a certain attitude on the part of the participants, a sense of moderation, of openness, and of the value of a unanimous decision. It requires a certain psychological security so that strife may be creative rather than divisive, "creative tension" as Martin Luther King, Jr., called it. And the technique requires leaders who are themselves creative participants, not merely umpires, but who are nonetheless concerned with the decisions rather than with their leadership roles. If these requirements are met the technique has, as a matter of fact, been able to deal both with specific questions and with matters of principle, though it has not always been successful, as the various schisms in Quakerism attest. As summarized by the authors of Democracy and the Quaker Method,

In stressing the value of united decisions, Friends are not . . . anxious to ignore or to gloss over the differences between individuals or groups, but rather to encourage them to clarify and communicate their different ideas and policies, with a view not merely to mutual toleration but to the mutual comprehension (so far as it is possible) of their several viewpoints in a united decision which does justice to them all. Compromise in such an atmosphere will mean not the barter of concessions between one party and another, but the creation of a common result which brings together in a new whole the greatest number of contributions.¹

The proof of the method is that it has worked; the criterion is "experimental," the same criterion for individual proof of God himself.

The application of the meeting structure, if not also the specific method, to the government of the holy commonwealth will now become more evident. As suggested by Winstanley, one begins with a local body (the town, city, or parish) and progresses to one encompassing "a whole Land." The work of the local government is fundamentally the supervision and education of its citizens, but its tasks also include dispute settlement and reporting "what accidents or passages fall out, which is either to the honor or dishonor, hurt or profit of the Commonwealth," though the reports are made by a national officer, the postmaster. The intermediate body "is called the Judgs Court, or County Senate": it consisted of "A Judg. The Peace-makers of every Town within

¹Pollard, Pollard, and Pollard, Democracy and the Quaker Method, p. 89.

that Circuit. The Overseers, and A Band of Souldiers attending thereupon." It would sit quarterly in different sections of the county, would supervise all inferior officers within its boundaries, and "If any grievance lie upon any man wherein inferior Officers cannot ease him, this Court shall quietly hear his Complaint, and ease him; for where a Law is wanting, they may prepare a way for the ease of the Offender till the Parliament sit" Finally, the national officers are the "Parliament. A Commonwealths ministry. A Post-master. An Army."¹

National government thus builds upon local participation. All officers of a true commonwealth, including the father, are chosen "by them who are in necessity, and who judg him fit for that work." All officers have the same general roots, freedom and consent. As stated by Winstanley in his Law of Freedom,

All these officers are like links of a Chain, they arise from the same root, which is necessity of Common Peace, and all their works tend to preserve Common Peace, therefore they are to assist each other, and all others are to assist them, as need requires, upon pain of punishment by the breach of the Laws: And the Rule of right Government being thus observed, may make a whole Land, nay the whole Fabrick of the Earth, to become one

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 544, 571, 555, 556. See generally pp. 544-576 for his discussion of the duties of each of these officers. Perhaps the proposals of both Winstanley and the Quakers are attempts to build upon the structure of the English county courts and their "Quarter-Sessions," hence the remarkable similarities.

family of Mankind, and one well governed Commonwealth; as Israel was called one house of Israel, though it consisted of many Tribes, Nations, and Family.

Later, the theme was picked up and expanded:

A Parliament hath his rise from the lowest Office in a Commonwealth, viz. from the father in a family: For as a fathers tender care is to remove all grievances from the oppressed children, not respecting one before another; so a Parliament are to remove all burdens from the people of the Land, and are not to respect persons who are great before them who are weak; but their eye and care must be principally to relieve the oppressed ones, who groan under the Tyrants Laws and Power: The strong or such as have the Tyrant Power to uphold them, need no help.¹

Finally the people retained a residual control at all times over those to whom government had been entrusted--an extraordinary power, Penington called it (anticipating Locke in some ways), at once "constitutive, corrective, and alterative." Though it did not extend to administration, this power of the people was a natural one. Penington concluded:

such a Power is sown in man, in the nature of man. Man hath a power over himself, to dispose of himself, according to that wisdom and righteousness which is seated in him, grows up with him (if it be not blasted or kept under) which he further attains to, or is in a further degree bestowed upon him. Of this common kinde is this, with all other earthly Powers."²

Winstanley and the Quakers put Parliament at the apex of their organization, and both specified that its task was "to branch forth the proposals now proposed and to make

¹Ibid., pp. 538, 544-545, 556-557.

²Penington, Fundamental Right, pp. 15-17. Cf. Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 538.

other good laws and statutes, as need from time to time shall require" Lawmaking was to be national to be uniform and to represent the entire nation, and Winstanley would have concurred more or less with Billing's proposal

that there be an equal uniting of the places commonly called parishes, towns and villages, and that ten parishes so equally united, consisting of a hundred families or upwards, make a Hundred, and that the people within each such Hundred may every year elect and freely choose one or two persons to be their representative or representatives in Parliament ¹

Winstanley's discussion contained certain additional elements: "A Parliament is the highest Court of Equity in a Land," he wrote, expressing a common view of Parliament's legal position, and "This Court is to oversee all other Courts, Officers, Persons and Actions, and to have a full Power, being Representative of the whole Land, to remove all grievances, and to ease the people that are oppressed." But Parliament's task was still essentially legislative; its function as a court of equity was to ratify decisions made by the Judges Court where a law was wanting, or to "Frame another Law to that effect; for it is possible that many things may fall out hereafter, which the Law-makers for the present may not foresee."²

In addition, the procedures which Winstanley mandated

¹Billing, A Mite of Affection, Early Quaker Writings, pp. 417, 416.

²Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 556.

for a commonwealth's parliament required the individual responsibility which has been discussed, if not specifically the unanimity of the Quaker method. Most interesting in this context are the requirements for abolishing "all old Laws and Customs, which have been the strength of the Oppressor," and of preparing, and then enacting "new Laws for the ease and Freedom of the people, but yet not without the peoples knowledg."

First, When old Laws and Customs of the Kings do burden the people, and the people desire the remove of them, and the establishment of more easie Laws,

It is now the work of a Parliament to search into Reason and Equity, how relief may be found out for people in such a case, and to preserve a common Peace; and when they have found out a way by debate of Council among themselves, whereby the people may be relieved, they are not presently to establish their Conclusions for a Law.

But in the next place, they are to make a publike Declaration thereof to the people of the Land who choose them for their approbation; and if no Objection come in from the people within one month, they may then take the peoples silence as a consent thereto.

And then in the third place, they are to enact it for a Law, to be a binding Rule to the whole Land: For as the remove of the old Laws and Customs are by the peoples consent, which is proved by their frequent petitioning and Requests of such a thing; so the enacting of new Laws must be by the Peoples consent and knowledg likewise.

And here they are to require the consent, not of men interested in the old oppressing Laws and Customs, as Kings used to do, but of them who have been oppressed. And the Reason is this:

Because the people must be all subject to the Law, under the pain of punishment; therefore it is all reason they should know it before it be enacted, that if there

be any thing of the Council of Oppression in it, it may be discovered and amended.¹

There is in all this discussion a certain sense also of the pragmatic argument that the best judge of whether a law impinges adversely on the individual is that individual himself. But the true test is, finally, common good, not individual interest.

The political society, as governed and as constituted, is, as has been suggested all along, a republic, albeit one of a particular kind. Nowhere is this characterization clearer than in the concern shown by the classical republicans on the one hand and Winstanley and the Quakers on the other for the twin virtues of durability and dynamism. That these virtues do not necessarily entail each other is made evident by the contrast Machiavelli made between Sparta and Rome and upon which he built extensively. In opting for Rome over Sparta he concluded that the true virtue of a republic was dynamic and that this virtue would be made manifest in political expansion. Conquest was the glory of the Roman republic but in conquest were sown the seeds of its decline. For Harrington the lesson of Rome was somewhat different; a republic was to propagate civil liberty and liberty of conscience, to create new and additional commonwealths by liberating oppressed nations. This dynamic of

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, pp. 558, 559.

Oceana would lead to its receiving gratitude and tribute. But Harrington took his lessons from history at large as well as from the history of commonwealths, and in his famous agrarian law saw a way of ensuring durability as well as dynamism.

In Harrington's synthesis and in his twin images of propagation and liberation are the closest parallels to Quaker and Digger thought. They too thought that durability and dynamism would be combined, though durability would result from being in the nature of the second Adam, "that which never fell," as well as from specific institutional arrangements. Righteousness was the strength of the holy commonwealth, and it was also the source of its peculiar expansive character. England would be the "ensign for the nations" of which Isaiah spoke (11:12); as Winstanley put it, "While Israel was under this Commonwealth Government, they were a terror to all oppressing Kings in all Nations of the World; and so will England be, if this righteous Law become our Governor" ¹ The specific task of a covenanted England was to export the principles of reformation, either by example or by force of arms. The gratitude of other nations for their freedom would follow; "they shall come bowing and bending, and shall desire to be at a League

¹Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 516.

and Covenant with all those who are, and abide in Covenant with God, because they shall know that God is with us."¹

The Puritan idea about the role of England in the Reformation and Harrington's specific prediction of its consequence, England at the head of a league of commonwealths, both find their expression in Quaker and Digger thought, though not necessarily in orthodox terms.

The task of propagating the Reformation had been entrusted by God to various actors. The task had been given first to the army, new-modeled from citizen-soldiers, but it had become more interested in the honor of the world than in its mission. In 1659 Burrough saw a chance for the army to recover its lost role, but only if it would

return to the old spirit of Righteousness, which will reach after the liberty of the people, and the freedom of the Nations, and that all Oppression may be broken down to the dust before you, and be subdued by you as your Prey: and that there be no more a looking back by you for rest and ease in the Flesh, in great Houses of residence, till you have visited Rome, and inquired after, and sought out the Innocent Blood that is buried therein, and avenge the Blood of the Guiltless through all the Dominions of the Pope; the Blood of the Just it cries through Italy and Spain and the time is come, that the Lord will search it, and seek it out, and repay it; and it would be your honour to be made use of by the Lord, in any degree in order to this matter, whether the Lord will revenge the grievous blood-guiltiness that lies upon them, by himself without an Instrument, or whether by you or others as an Instrument; whether this way or another that God will do it, this I determine not;

¹Josiah Coale, A Salutation to the Suffering-Seed of God . . . (London, 1663), pp. 4-5. Cf. Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 534.

but this I do know, The time is not long, that he will one way or another avenge, and revenge, the Blood of the Just upon the murderous Head: and this I also believe, that the Lord will do it, or make way hereunto even by you, the men of our English Nation, if you be faithful to him, and do what he requires of you ¹

The soldiers were not to "set up your Standard until you come to Rome."²

Alternatively, the mission could be seen as having been given to Cromwell himself, as Harrington, Winstanley, and the Quakers all saw. Why else had he and not another been elevated? But Cromwell too betrayed his trust; lamented Fox,

Oh! Oliver,
Hadst thou been faithful, and thundered down the deceit, the Hollander had been thy subject, and tributers; and Germany had given up to have done thy will; and the Spaniard had quivered like a dry leaf, wanting the vertue of God; the King of France should have obeyed bowed under thee his neck; the Pope should have withered as in winter; the Turk in all his fatness should have smoaked; thou shouldst not a stood trifling about small things, but minded the work of the Lord, as he began with thee at first; sober men and true hearts took part with thee.³

Moreover, "thou shouldest have invited all the Christians upon earth in all Nations that are against popery to thee,

¹Edward Burrough (with Samuel Fisher), A Visitation and VWarning Proclaimed, And an Alarum Sounded in the Pope's Borders In the Name and Authority of the Lord Almighty, and the Lamb . . . (London, 1659), Burrough's Works, p. 537.

²F. G. [George Fox], To the Council of Officers of the Armie . . . (n.p., n.d.), p. 8.

³Fox (and Edward Burrough), Good Counsel and Advice, pp. 26-27.

to come in and joyn with thee against popery, for thou hast had authority" ¹ Not meekness but the Old Testament image of the warrior-king was demanded by the existence of the Inquisition, which figured in many of Fox's writings. And the Old Testament warrior was essentially a citizen-soldier; he and the warrior-king of the classic "Joshua" type were figures out of a commonwealth, not a monarchy. They receded into the people as quickly as they arose; it was a sign of virtue that they could be called. ²

There was, however, an antidote to the powerful warlike imperative of the republican images, the emerging "peace testimony." Both Winstanley and the early Quakers were developing what we might now call a pacifist doctrine. They asserted that they lived in the power which put an end to strife and, more pragmatically, that they should not be expected to fight for liberties which were not guaranteed to them. ³ To the objection that if all men refused to fight the Nation would be defenseless, Penington replied that the

¹Ibid., p. 36. Cf. To the Councill of Officers of the Armie, pp. 2-4.

²The parallels to Machiavelli and to the classical republicans ought to be evident and I will do no more than allude to them.

³See The Third Part of the Cry of the Innocent for Justice . . . (London, 1662), pp. 48-55. There is a certain, limited parallel with the Leveller emphasis on a free army as opposed to a mercenary one, though this is not the Quaker emphasis.

strength of the Nation lay in righteousness rather than in arms. Then he answered,

when ever such a thing shall be brought forth in the world, it must have a beginning before it can grow and be perfected. And where should it begin but in some particulars in a Nation, and so spread by degrees, until it hath overspread the Nation? and then from Nation to Nation, until the whole earth be leavened.

Reliance on military strength was a sign that the nation had insufficient trust in God's ability to teach them what was necessary for preservation.¹

Yet as originally articulated there were two caveats to the peace testimony, or perhaps more specifically, to radical pacificism. As would seem to be implied in the mission of the army or Cromwell, the Quakers and Diggers seemed to allow for participation in a holy war, one called by God. This would be the first caveat. But in the 1650s, and even more during the 1660s the likelihood of God's calling such a war seemed remote. England under Cromwell had been as guilty as any other nation of using deceit as a policy, and "the robbing of a Nation, and that by consent, is as great an evil, if not greater before the lord, as he that robbeth by the high-way-side, it may be for his need" ² The second caveat is that neither Penington nor

¹Isaac Penington, Somewhat Spoken to a Weighty Question . . . (London, 1661), pp. 4, 7, 8 (quote is from p. 7).

²James Strutt, A Declaration to the Whole World . . . (London, 1659), p. 10.

Winstanley ruled out defensive wars; Penington spoke

not this against any Magistrates or Peoples as defending themselves against forraign invasions, or making use of the Sword to suppresse the violent and evil doers within their borders (for this the present estate of things may and doth require, and a great blessing will attend the Sword where it is born uprightly to that end, and its use will be honourable; and while there is need of a Sword, the Lord will not suffer that Government, or those Governours to want fitting instruments under them for the managing thereof, who wait on him in his fear to have the edge of it rightly directed:) but yet there is a better state, which the Lord hath already brought some into, and which Nations are to expect and travel towards.¹

Winstanley specified that the army of his commonwealth was to "withstand the Invasion" of an enemy who wished to reimpose kingly authority over the commonwealth, or to recover from within lost liberties, as had been the original thrust of the civil war with Charles.²

There is, in short, during the Commonwealth period a profound ambivalence in the attitudes of both Winstanley and the Quakers toward the use of arms to effect the Reformation. The ambivalence is part of a broader problem, one manifest in Winstanley's extremely severe penalties for buying and selling and perhaps even in Nayler's ride into Bristol. Historically the specific problem of martial

¹Penington, Somewhat Spoken to a Weighty Question, p. 8. He concludes: "Yea it is far to know the Lord to be the Defender, and to wait on him daily, and see the need of his strength, wisdom, and preservation, then to be never so strong and skilful in weapons of war" (ibid.).

²Winstanley, The Law of Freedom, Sabine, p. 573.

activity has been resolved by a refusal to serve in military forces, though not necessarily as magistrates. This resolution seems to be the logical conclusion, given their description of themselves as being out of strife and given their analysis of the conscience as something which cannot be coerced. But the specific historical resolution is not necessarily a theoretical one; questions of whether to serve in the army of a holy commonwealth or to execute those who engage in commerce may have been only postponed, perhaps for eternity. The problem is one of militance and the attitudes one takes towards those who are clearly wrong. Does one try to redeem them, as Winstanley and the Quakers usually argued, or is some activity so threatening that it must be prohibited under threat of death? What does one do about those who remain perverse? The answers are of course not simple. The holy commonwealth is an attempt to resolve the tension between one's spiritual and earthly existences, but the resolution itself requires maintaining the dialectic between one's inward and outward lives. Two questions thus suggest themselves: first, to what extent can the tensions implicit in the holy commonwealth--indeed in the entire theory--ever be resolved; and second, what does our answer to the first question have to say about the theory or about the failures of the Quakers and Diggers to realize it. Are these failures problems of "fact" or problems of "theory"?

Before answering these questions, however, I would like to summarize the major points of this and the two preceding chapters and to raise the question of their radical character. The basic argument of the last chapters has been developed along two interwoven strands, the prophetic thrust of social criticism and the theory of a holy commonwealth. The interweaving of these two ideas is most evident in the frequent use of Old Testament models and images, particularly in the idea of the covenant--an idea which they shared with their Puritan contemporaries. Many of the positive proposals are implicit in the context of their criticisms of existing society, and thus the proposals were discussed along with the criticisms rather than with the theory of political society. This organization of the discussion makes sense, too, since many of the criticisms and ameliorative proposals are specific and could be effected even in an unredeemed society. Even Winstanley's initial arguments for implementing common ownership are limited and do not presuppose the radical transformation of society.

The theory of political society itself, I have argued, is best understood broadly within the republican tradition as informed by the doctrine of the inner light and the experience of conversion. It is a theory of what might also be called a "popular theocracy," one in which the rule of the saints consists of ruling and being ruled in turn.

Individual experience is vitally bound with the creation of a community, and that community is concerned with the development of affection, virtue, and leadership. These concerns implied for the Quakers and Diggers a certain political structure, one which had to remain loose to avoid limiting the light. Thus the balance between the aristocracy, whether of wealth or position, and the people becomes instead a balance between an "aristocracy" called by the light regarding a particular concern, and a "people" who differ in no significant respect. The best will rule, but the theory indicates that neither "best" nor "rule" are permanent categories. Here the Quakers and Diggers differed substantially from the Puritan contemporaries in both the Old and New England; the Puritans limited both the franchise and the right to be chosen to their elect, establishing in both theory and practice a permanent aristocracy. Finally, it was felt that the holy commonwealth so structured and governed would be both durable and dynamic, restoring to its proper place the covenant promised to Jeremiah and executed with Jesus. Their theory was to complete the reformation which they had first experienced, to communicate it and participate in it. It was a theory, in short, in which traditional republican categories are used and transformed.

It is, in the final analysis, their transformation of these republican categories which constitutes their

radicalism, a theme which has been neglected for a time. They are radicals not simply for their institutional proposals--though many of these are still radical in any sense of the term--but also for the theory from which the institutional proposals are derived. The theory is, after all, not one primarily of institutions: the theory is one of virtue, and the root of virtue is a radical transformation of men rather than institutions.

The dream of the holy commonwealth has as yet gone unfulfilled, except among small "fellowships of believers." To some extent this result was anticipated by the Quakers and Diggers themselves when they noted that the children of darkness would always be hostile to the children of light. Yet this note of caution was often lost in the rapid growth of the movement, in the conquest of the light. The Quakers were among the last to give up hope; even after the Restoration they retained their exuberance and expectations. Finally, they too realized that the survival, not the conquest, of the children of the light was the issue. What became of their dream, why it has been realized only in small groups, and whether the failure of the theory which they and the Diggers developed argue against the theory itself are the questions which now must be answered.

CHAPTER VIII

"Paradise Lost"

Unfortunately, though not completely unexpectedly, the holy commonwealth was not realized either under Cromwell or by any of those governments which immediately and so rapidly succeeded him. England instead returned to its monarchy, seemingly confirming the observations of men like Milton who saw the populace as a degenerate, idolatrous mass. The fact that Charles II was more subject to Parliamentary control than his predecessors had been did not alter these impressions; in fact, Parliament had more of the persecuting spirit than did Charles II and overruled whatever plans he had for tolerance. The promises of the Declaration of Breda were quashed by the king in Parliament. Whatever expectations the Quakers had for Charles--whose coming to the throne had been without bloodshed--went unfulfilled. Parliamentary control over the monarchy was, in short, more oppressive of the true religion than absolute monarchy might have been.

Moreover, when the position of Parliament was confirmed in the "Revolution" of 1688, the Quakers' chief aim, toleration, was accepted more as an expedient than as a

desired policy. The reformers of 1688 did not argue that intolerance limited the Spirit; they were more concerned with limiting the Tories. Intolerance became impolitic, as even the Quakers had on occasion pointed out. But while the Quakers did see some of their arguments accepted, they were not the arguments which had originally been given the most emphasis. Thus, in a sense, even in toleration the most basic hopes of the Quakers went unfulfilled. They and the Diggers had seemingly failed to achieve all but the most pragmatically argued of their reforms, and in 1688, the hold of even these was tenuous at best.

This failure to realize the holy commonwealth inevitably raises two related questions. The first of these is the most historical; it asks simply "what happened?" And the preliminary answer seems equally simple: the Diggers were suppressed both economically and politically, and the Quakers were hounded by persecution. But the answer to the historical question is not really so simple, since it in turn raises the more involved question of possible judgment on the theory of the holy commonwealth itself. Even granting, with Milton and Mill, that the truth can be suppressed where intolerance reigns, a disjunction between theory and practice can argue against the validity of the theory, and certainly the Quakers and Diggers expected their theories to bear fruit. At first these expectations, particularly those

of the Quakers, seemed to be confirmed by their rapid increase, but something happened which seemed to check the coming of the kingdom. If this something was a theoretical misunderstanding either of the kingdom of God or of the personal experience, then the theory of the holy commonwealth ought to be discarded. But if the check was more simply the repression of the idea the theory may still stand as viable.

Pennsylvania, it would seem, would provide an answer to the question of whether theoretical misunderstanding or political opposition had checked the holy commonwealth. Pennsylvania seemed unencumbered by the persecution and superstition so rampant in England; it seemed to offer the perfect opportunity for a republican legislator (in this case William Penn) to establish an enduring political order.¹

¹The republican legislator is of course one who gives the basic law to a republic, the primary example being Lycurgus in Sparta. Rousseau's definition of the qualities needed by a legislator is particularly appropriate in considering a holy commonwealth. In Book II, Chapter VII of The Social Contract he writes:

"In order to discover what social regulations are best suited to nations, there is needed a superior intelligence which can survey all the passions of mankind, though itself exposed to none: an intelligence having no contact with our nature, yet knowing it to the full: an intelligence, the well-being of which is independent of our own, yet willing to be concerned with it: which, finally, viewing the long perspectives of time, and preparing for itself a day of glory as yet far distant, will labour in one century to reap its rewards in another. In short, only Gods can give laws to men." I will discuss both Rousseau and certain implications of the idea of the legislator further in the next chapter.

The land too seemed ripe for a "holy experiment": The Quakers could attempt to establish a model of the New Jerusalem, and it would be an empirical test of the theory of the holy commonwealth. Penn may well have seen himself as a legislator, and if so the test takes on even more importance. It is therefore both legitimate and necessary, on their terms as well as ours, to examine the case of Pennsylvania as a test prima facie of the validity of Quaker (and by implication Digger) theory.

It is not to the point to recount all the events which led to Penn's colony nor all of those which followed the first settlement. The test consists not of chronology but of its interpretation, and therefore the bulk of my discussion in this chapter relies on secondary sources.¹

¹The studies on which I have relied most are the following: Braithwaite, Second Period of Quakerism; Edwin B. Bronner, William Penn's "Holy Experiment": The Founding of Pennsylvania 1681-1701 (New York and London: Temple University Publications, 1962); Mary Maples Dunn, William Penn: Politics and Conscience (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1967); Melvin B. Endy, Jr., William Penn and Early Quakerism (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1973); Joseph E. Illich, "The Flight to Pennsylvania: Affirmation or Denial of Quakerism?" Quaker History 59, No. 2 (Autumn 1970):98-105; Sydney V. James, A People Among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963); Gary B. Nash, Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania 1681-1726 (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1968); and Frederick B. Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Philadelphia 1682-1763 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1948). Where particular interpretations of events are at issue, the individual author will, of course, be cited.

These seem generally to agree on the significant events, which is to be expected, and even in their interpretation of Penn's thought, which is perhaps less expected. I think it therefore reasonable to rely on these interpretative sources rather than applying the stricter canons of research and interpretation to which I have held myself to now. Were this a study of Penn or later Quakerism I would, of course, reapply these canons, which were discussed in the first chapter.

What is at issue most immediately is, then, what we may call the mixed success of Pennsylvania--mixed because while implementing toleration and several other more minor reforms the colonists did not achieve a Quaker utopia. Part of this failure was most certainly the result of Pennsylvania's origins; it was a royal grant to William Penn (in settlement of a debt) and was therefore somewhat subject to English foreign policy. No republic is created in a vacuum, of course; all must contend with geography and the existence of other polities. But Pennsylvania was perhaps less independent of circumstances than many other fledgling republics: it became "a principal theater of growing Anglo-French imperial rivalries,"¹ and when the Quakers finally bowed out of politics in 1755 it was over the question of providing

¹Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 11.

forts and other military preparations for the colony. It was difficult, if not impossible, to practice noncoercive foreign relations when the foreign policy was in part determined for you. Yet as we have seen, the earliest Quakers were somewhat equivocal in their peace testimony, and thus James Logan and the other "politic Quakers" who argued that defensive preparations were legitimate were not inconsistent with the earliest experience, although they were at odds with the peace testimony as it had been developed in the late seventeenth century. The point of ultimate royal control need not be belabored, but it was brought home to Penn when control of the colony was taken from him for a time by William and Mary, partly because he was under suspicion as a Jacobite. (Penn had been, after all, a close friend to James II.)

Royal authority also posed a potential limit to the kind of government which could be granted to Pennsylvania; the king's veto could have limited the legislator's choices. But Penn seems not to have tested the limits. Though his political sympathies were generally with the Whigs, his Whig leanings were more liberal and aristocratic than radical if by radical we mean the theory of the holy commonwealth itself.¹ The Frame of Government Penn gave to

¹On Penn's relationship to Whig political ideas see Dunn, William Penn: Politics and Conscience, chaps. 7 and 8. As mentioned in a footnote in a previous chapter Penn had

Pennsylvania was a dramatic act of self-limitation since Penn was by virtue of his proprietorship the absolute ruler of Pennsylvania. But the limits he placed on his own power established an aristocratic rule rather than a popular one.¹

Penn's Frame of Government was a particular amalgam of liberal and republican principles. Its liberalism lay particularly in the establishment of toleration and the abolition of the oath. Its republicanism was more complicated, and care needs to be taken to separate Penn's strand from the picture of the holy commonwealth which has been woven earlier. Penn's republicanism, unlike that of Burrough, Nayler or Winstanley, relied on a permanent council "to be made up of men 'of most note for their virtue wisdom, and ability,' the word ability connoting, as it often did in the seventeenth century, wealth or pecuniary power."² Penn was concerned to prevent the growth of large landed estates "by stipulating that no purchaser was to have more than a

supported Algernon Sidney for Parliament. Sidney in turn examined and criticized Penn's drafts for the First Frame of Government for Pennsylvania.

¹Endy notes (William Penn and Early Quakerism, p. 359) that the contrast between popular and aristocratic rule is made particularly evident when the original drafts for the First Frame of Government are compared with the final product. The early drafts were more democratic than the final product, which was criticized by Sidney.

²Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 117. Tolles is quoting Penn's phrase, which can be found in his Charter of Liberties and first Frame of Government, both produced in 1682, as well as in later documents.

thousand acres in one place unless within three years be settled a family on each thousand acres."¹ The provision, which bears some resemblance to Harrington's Commonwealth of Oceana, nevertheless encouraged those individuals with developing wealth to turn to commerce, as Tolles went on to point out. And a draft prohibition on primogeniture, which has both Harringtonian and Jeffersonian overtones, was left out of the final Frame of Government.² Penn was, therefore, concerned with limiting certain kinds of property, but he was less concerned with limiting absolute wealth than were Burrough, Tomlinson, and most certainly Winstanley. The Quaker defense of property against the claims of tithes and, later, the spoilage of the Second Conventicle Act had become a defense of wealth as a divine trust, not at all the same thing.

Whatever problems might have grown out of this shift in attitudes towards property were compounded by the further provisions Penn made for the Council. In essence the Council, with all its overtones of wealth, was to be the deliberating body for the colony. The role of the assembly was limited to accepting or rejecting the decisions of the Council,³ and while Penn took pains to ensure that the

¹Ibid., p. 114. ²Ibid.

³Dunn notes (William Penn: Politics and Conscience, p. 85) that Penn's separation of debate and resolution resembles the program of James Harrington.

representatives were accountable to their constituents (they were to bring with them letters of delegation and were to consult with constituents on all money bills), the deliberations of a more or less permanent, aristocratic body are hostile to the ideas of popular participation and rotation of office which were found in the theory of the holy commonwealth. It required some time before the Assembly was granted the right of initiating as well as of reacting to legislation.¹ Yet even then the Assembly met infrequently, often only one or two weeks a year. In one sense Penn's government was too limited; it was practically invisible.

Another problem with Penn's Frame stems from the origins of the colony itself. Penn got Pennsylvania in repayment of a debt and he expected monetary rewards from the venture. (He in turn had a bad debt to repay.) The fact that Pennsylvania was a financial venture thus limited Penn's role as a legislator; his goals were split between making Pennsylvania a self-governing republic and making it profitable. His monetary interest may have helped him decide in favor of rule by an aristocracy; most certainly his financial interest made him especially insistent that all debts to him be settled promptly, although the colonists argued--sometimes with and sometimes without justification--

¹Cf. Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 14.

that Pennsylvania was not sufficiently productive to permit repayment of debt at the expense of reinvestment in their labors. Penn's interest led him to a profound anachronism: "The man who had made his niche in English legal history by defending the right of a jury to freedom from control by the bench instructed his officers of government in 1687 to punish juries that decided against him in cases involving quit-rents owed to him."¹

Yet Penn was no tyrant; if anything he exercised insufficient leadership at times when his presence and authority might have countered the divisive tendencies which had been set in motion, partly by Penn himself, partly by the frontier environment, and partly by the development of Quakerism in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The holy commonwealth seemed to require ongoing leadership even though the continuing presence of the legislator is not part of republican theory. In trying to avoid meddling in daily affairs of his colony Penn may have been less of a Quaker (the light having taught the necessity for continuing leadership) and more of a republican than he knew.

Not all the problems were the result of Penn's doings, however. There is in Quakerism a certain anarchic

¹Endy, William Penn and Early Quakerism, p. 365.

strain which is hostile to government and exists despite all protests that the Children of God are subject to the powers of Caesar for conscience sake. From the beginning the Quakers' experience with government had been negative; government was a persecuting enemy. Quakers came to develop alternative theories and to a large extent alternative institutions in the face of this opposition as well as because of their conversion experiences. But, as Endy notes, "it was impossible for the colonists to separate Penn's government from England's and to view their allegiance to Penn as separable from their allegiance to the crown."¹ The hostility to the latter carried over to the former and was not minimized by Penn's defense of his reservation of powers to himself on the grounds of his responsibility to the Crown.² Penn also ran afoul of a strong residual tendency in Quakerism, a tendency towards popular participation, and his personal absence could but exacerbate the hostility certain parts of the populace felt towards him or towards aristocratic rule in general.

Yet another problem not of Penn's making were the emigrants themselves. Individual Quakers were not encouraged to emigrate to Pennsylvania solely to avoid persecution; to do so would be to flee the great work which needed

¹Ibid., pp. 373-374. ²Ibid., p. 374.

to be done in England. There was, moreover, a debate within the movement on the questions of passive resistance and political action; Penn clearly reflected the latter ideology. It was a debate with certain parallels in Massachusetts of the 1640s, only there the debate had been over whether to return to England or to stay in Massachusetts to try to develop the Puritan experiment there. The Quaker debates were even further complicated by the particular twist which had been given to persecution in England: the Second Conventicle Act had made the economic ruin of dissenters, not just their imprisonment, a goal and an incentive to informers. The Quakers felt, therefore, that they were being denied an opportunity to pursue their callings.

The Children of Light felt that they were called to suffer for the vindication of the Truth, but they knew that an equally binding injunction was laid upon them to labor diligently in their callings for the honor of God and the welfare of their fellow men. The protracted persecutions of the Restoration period thus placed them in a dilemma from which emigration provided a means of escape.¹

In any event, Quaker meetings tried to ensure that the emigrants they certified were not leaving for baser motives, at least not to flee from engagements, commercial or marital, which had been made. But even if flight from persecution or pecuniary gain were not dominant motives, the security or

¹Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 37. Cf. Illick, "The Flight to Pennsylvania," passim.

person and property which Pennsylvania offered cannot be minimized as a factor in the monolithically Quaker migration to the new outward plantation. Once in Pennsylvania the scramble for wealth and security furthered a spirit of contention between the farmers and merchants in the Assembly and the farmers and merchants in the Council, a contention which "caused the harassed Proprietor to cry out: 'For the love of God, me, and the poor country, be not so governmentish!'"¹ The governmentish spirit, the contention over rights and privileges, the defense of property against the legal claims of the Proprietor, all showed that the Quaker emigrants had learned the lessons of Whiggery perhaps too well, meanwhile having forgotten the lessons of the sense of the meeting.

But there is a profound sense in which the problems of the emigrants were of Penn's making; Penn was the chief exponent of the use of political resources to achieve toleration. Moreover, if he did not initiate certain other profound changes in Quakerism, he most certainly confirmed them with his constitution for Pennsylvania, thereby furthering certain divisive tendencies. One of the most profound of these changes was in the leadership principle itself, for the

¹Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, p. 12. The quote from Penn is taken from Samuel M. Janney, The Life of William Penn (Philadelphia: Hogan, Perkins & Co., 1852), p. 277.

Quakers as a body were turning to the idea of eldership as a more or less permanent position. Leaders and ministers no longer reflected specific leadings by the light but age and social position. It would not do, for example, for rude, young, mechanic preachers to try to influence the court, and even Fox found himself occasionally in uncertain positions. A certain social division was taking place among Friends, and this division was ratified by Penn's permanent, deliberative council.

In addition, by the time Pennsylvania was founded, Quakerism had largely lost its critical and transforming spirit, the spirit which permeated the writings on the holy commonwealth. In its stead, the Quakers substituted a separation of politics and religion which minimized the carryover of the religious spirit into political questions. Though Quakers, Penn included, continued to manifest social and political concerns, the movement as a whole had lost its prophetic thrust. It was content to cultivate its inward plantations. I do not mean to imply that the Quakers had yet become completely quietistic or had completely shown all the characteristics of a sect. Indeed, there were some who wished the Quakers in Pennsylvania to become a church, embracing saints and sinners alike, despite the attending compromises with the world. But whether they became a sect or a church the division was a sign that the original spirit

of the movement had been lost.

Barbour and others have seen this shift as occurring in two important ideas. First, he noted a shift in the idea of conscience, which had been "the agent of the Light, the beachhead for attack and transformation within each 'child of the devil.'" Beginning before 1670, however, the conscience became something which could be reached even though the individual remained unconverted. The appeal to conscience was no longer directly an appeal to the light; the separation between conscience and the light within the conscience which the early Quakers made took on meanings they would have been unfamiliar with.

Such an approach implied that conscientiousness was good in itself, whether or not it led men to the Quaker Light. . . . Conscience was regarded no longer as a passive channel for God's voice but as a divine and active guide. A breach was thus quietly made between the conscience and the infallible Spirit, one which deepened the rift already opening in practice between experiences shared with Friends alone and those which many non-Friends could share. The old, unchanging testimonies and standards of Quakerism were based on the infallible authority of the Spirit within the Quaker fellowship and tradition, but on the other hand, conscientious appeals to which any sensitive man would respond might bring about new political and social reforms in the unconverted nation. This double standard for Quakers and the outside world was the beginning of the end of the Lamb's War.¹

The breach was, as Barbour goes on to note, not total, but it did imply, among other things, that even within the

¹Barbour, Quakers in Puritan England, pp. 240, 240-241.

fellowship of believers Quakers might not wait on the light to resolve their differences but merely agree to differ. The conscience was no longer public, though it might still be the product of divine illumination. The groundwork had been laid for the argument that the individual's conscience was a strictly private concern.

And with the shift from conscience to conscientiousness came the second of the two shifts noted by Barbour. It was a shift from radical obedience to the spirit to an emphasis on morality.¹ One manifestation of this shift was the growing Quaker concern with preserving their good name with respect to the outside world and with preserving purity of tradition within the society. Tradition has obvious conservative tendencies, not only in dress and speech but also in politics, and these tendencies became most evident when the Quakers relied on the spirit of tradition rather than on the tradition of the Spirit for guidance. Conformity became an end in itself, not the expression of consistent experiences. The concern for social justice was transmuted to philanthropy, since benevolence allowed the Quakers to aid the world without becoming polluted by it.²

Again, however, the blame for all these changes

¹Ibid., pp. 246-247.

²Cf. S. James, A People among Peoples, pp. 286, 327-328.

cannot be laid at Penn's feet; in fact, the spirit of benevolence was a reaction to the temptation of politics into which the more worldly Quakers (I am tempted to say the followers of Penn) were led. Nor do I mean to imply that Penn or other Quakers were unconcerned with the lot of the poor or prison conditions or legal reforms. Penn wrote many of these reforms into the Frames of Government, and, reminiscent of Winstanley, an office of peace-maker was established to try to settle disputes out of court. But Penn and Pennsylvania expressed all the tendencies I have discussed, the different character of leadership, the emphasis on conscientiousness, the concern for morality rather than the spirit, and the separation of politics from religion. Harbingers of these tendencies admittedly can be found in Quaker writings before 1660,¹ but they are countered by the prophetic thrust of the light. Such was not generally the case in Pennsylvania.

¹Penington is notable for his emphasis on toleration as necessary to allow individuals to follow their consciences rather than a condition to allow the light to work freely. Cf. his An Answer to that Common Objection against the Quakers, That they condemn all but themselves . . . (London, 1660) in Works (1761), I:425-432. The tendency to separate politics from religion is perhaps implicit in all the discussions of the limits to the power of the magistrates, but is overcome by the prophetic thrust and the arguments for thorough-going social reform. William Britten's Concerning the Kingdom of God and Men (n.p., n.d. [ca. 1660?]) has a somewhat different tone, the tone of the later attitude, however.

The picture painted of Pennsylvania has thus far been a bleak one, not at all one of a successful holy experiment. I have, in fact, ignored the notable successes of the experiment: the Indian policy (which may have owed part of its success to a balance of power among the Indian tribes as well as to Quaker benevolence), the growth of opposition to slavery, and numerous contributions to medicine, science, education, and monetary policy. But from the standpoint of the holy commonwealth even these successes can be disillusioning, growing as they did from the same spirit which produced a government divided along class lines and a split between those Quakers who yielded to the temptations of politics and those who wanted nothing to do with the worldly business. To develop an observation made earlier, the separation of politics from religion, or of religion from politics, meant that certain tensions in both thought and practice were eased, but the separation also meant that a certain dynamic was lost. The dynamic of Quaker--and also Digger--thought is produced in part, I have argued, by the dialectical and transforming relationship between the inner and the outer life. The dynamic is also the consequence of a vital relationship between the individual and the group, between inspiration and corporate decision-making. This relationship was lost in Pennsylvania and also in England.

The loss of the original experience, which had

reordered the lives of individuals and formed communities, was, then, a fundamental problem for later Quakerism and, theoretically, for the Diggers as well. It was not, of course, a problem faced by them alone: "the problem of rekindling a living love to God in each generation is as old as the great Phylactery passage in Deuteronomy,"¹ and concern for maintaining the vitality of belief was one of the reasons J. S. Mill argued for freedom in On Liberty, just as the Quakers and Diggers earlier had argued for freedom of conscience to avoid limiting the spirit and the power of truth. Still, the problem of maintaining a vital belief was particularly important for the Quakers and Diggers, since the original emphasis of these movements had been "experimental" rather than doctrinal.

Exactly why these movements failed to maintain their original experience is uncertain; Braithwaite suggests that in part it was because the early Quakers failed "to relate the experience of the Inward Light to the Historic Life of Christ, in a way which gave each its true value."² Retrenchment under persecution may also have contributed to the loss of vitality, but concern for outward morality and the good name of the sect were not necessary reactions to persecution.

¹Braithwaite, Second Period of Quakerism, p. 633. The passage referred to is Deut. 6:4-9.

²Ibid., p. 635.

Most certainly later generations of Quakers did not breathe the heady atmosphere of the Commonwealth period; they could be with seemingly good reasons more cynical about the possibilities of experiencing the true, political kingdom of God. Yet the problem of experience "was not adequately solved by the guarded methods of Quaker discipline, which threw the emphasis on outward conduct and failed to nourish a first-hand experience."¹ Later Quakerism came to inherit and to contribute to an unfortunate shift in the argument for tolerance, a shift from a concern for belief which is coupled with a recognition that conscience cannot be forced to a feeling that all beliefs are equal and therefore do not matter. As Barbour cogently described the changes and the problem,

Inwardly and outwardly, they no longer expected warfare and conquest but rather constant pruning and improvement. The first generation of Quakers had needed to fight the inner Adam and the world as well. The second generation faced daily outward danger, and inherited self-sacrifice with little choice. The third generation inherited the Quaker life without a struggle.²

Both Barbour and Braithwaite direct us, finally, to two social problems which later Quakerism faced and which from the standpoint of the holy commonwealth it failed to solve. These social problems are critical because Quakerism

¹Ibid., p. 633.

²Barbour, Quakers in Puritan England, p. 250.

was not predominantly an individualistic, mystical movement but a social, prophetic one. The first of these problems was the failure to develop a new, inspired leadership, a problem which in turn stemmed from the failure to maintain and develop the dynamic, prophetic community. Though Quakerism was not destroyed by persecution, the movement changed and with it the idea of leadership. This change is particularly evident in Penn's theory of government, particularly his distrust of rotation of offices and his approval of a more or less permanent and aristocratic deliberating body. While he was perhaps correct in rejecting a mechanical rotation of offices--after all, the light could not be limited to a fixed term of office--he and the later Quakers in general were wrong to presume that the only alternative, political or religious, was an aristocracy. Such an aristocracy, whether of age, experience, or wealth, limited the light by specifying whom it would enlighten.

The other problem which later Quakerism failed to solve was that of wealth and the attendant dangers of the privatization of the spirit, dangers which already have been discussed in depth. For a time, however, the dangers seemed minimal; the Second Conventicle Act effectively removed wealth from the practical list of Quaker concerns. Yet even with the perverse aid of the Act Quaker leaders had to remind believers not to covet the things of the earth, and

once persecution had ended the practical problem became evident.¹ Quakers began to feel safe in amassing wealth; they acquired the goods of the world so long as they were "of the best sort but plain."² Philanthropy and even corporate benevolence did not solve the problem of wealth in a holy commonwealth; they were, in fact, reflections of the withdrawal from political life. Corporate benevolence grew out of sectarian concerns; it was not directed at conversion but instead reflected concern for the soul of the group. Philanthropy likewise often grew out of an individual's concern with the effect of wealth on his own soul rather than with its effect on the souls of others, a clear change in emphasis from the concerns of the early Quakers. And for good or ill, philanthropic activity did and does not need to rely on communal concerns. I do not wish to minimize the important contributions which Quaker philanthropy and benevolence have made to society, but it is necessary to point out that even philanthropy and benevolence, while reflecting the view of

¹ Parenthetically, the problem itself arose in part from the twin religious concerns of diligence in a calling and speaking truth in matters of price and quality. Although the best businessmen were probably not the best Quakers, the Quaker merchant aristocracy of Pennsylvania, which came originally from other colonies, and of England itself, bears witness to the broad connection between a kind of Calvinism and a kind of capitalism.

² Cf. Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House, pp. 123-132.

wealth as a divine trust, are signs of a movement toward private concerns and away from the radical critique of society so manifest in the writings of the Quakers and Diggers during the Commonwealth. Privatization is not necessarily caused by wealth alone, but the attitude certainly feeds upon it, as the Quaker critics John Bellers, Anthony Benezet, and John Woolman pointed out to their fellows.

On concluding that later Quakerism failed to solve certain social problems I do not mean to imply that the social problems by themselves led to the significant changes in Quakerism. Experience is not completely dependent upon social conditions; instead it is dialectically related to them, as the Quakers and Diggers argued. On several occasions I have pointed out that a change in the theory of the political leadings of the light contributed to the social problems which later Quakerism faced and which on that changed theory could not solve. The most significant of those changes was the sundering of the religious and political aspects of social life and the reliance on the light only in matters which seemed to pertain to the former.

Now perhaps it is time to assert that many of these problems were amenable to solution on the original theory, if only the first political experience of the inner light had been heeded. The creative tension between the inner and the

outer lives was far different from the comfortable traditionalism into which the Quakers slipped. The leadings of the light were consistent but not rigid, they had originally argued, and to make certain experiences matters of dogma was to enter into a renewed apostasy. The original attitude was critical of any self-complacency; it required more effort to sustain itself but would have resulted in more attention to the problems of community and the common weal.

At this point we may briefly but profitably turn to examine certain aspects of the thought of John Milton, from whom the title of this chapter is of course taken. Like the Quakers and Diggers Milton felt that England had been chosen as the instrument of the new covenant, and like them too he was concerned with the problems of leadership and the limitation of government. Finally, Milton expressed many of the same ambivalences, aspirations, and even disillusionments that characterized the thought of the Diggers and Quakers. In these themes, by way both of similarity and contrast, lies the profit in examining Milton.

Milton's fundamental concern was perhaps most clearly with godly leadership. The concern for it was the basis of his defenses of Parliament and of Cromwell and later for his proposals in 1660 for a commonwealth. Leadership and

its attendant characteristics is also a fundamental theme of the major poems. Milton at first felt that the glory of the English people was to have consented to be ruled by a godly Parliament, but the godliness of the leaders rather than consent was his major emphasis. Later he became disenchanted with the people of England, finding in their desire for a king the pure spirit of idolatry. He then decided that the alternative was a permanent senate composed of virtuous men, one which would provide stability and counteract the idolatry of the masses. But Milton's concept of virtue was not identical to that of the Diggers and first Quakers; it is instead much closer to Penn's concept, as was the idea of a permanent senate. Both men relied broadly on morality rather than conversion, on the education of reason to control the passions rather than on the transformation of the passions themselves. Godliness was primarily an outward phenomenon, though both Penn and Milton clearly asserted that the belief of the inner man was what mattered for salvation and grounded arguments for toleration in this assertion.

Yet the distinction which Milton drew was primarily between things necessary and things indifferent as regarded salvation, not between the inner and the outer man. Marriage and divorce, for example, fell into the category of things indifferent and so were civil proceedings, not

subject to religious scruples. But government could enforce morality even though it had no power over belief. Morality in turn meant subjecting the passions to the control of reason, and government could try to make men reasonable. Reason, however, was essential to salvation, and by enforcing reasonable behavior government could exercise some influence on belief. This ambivalence about the role of government is expressed clearly in Milton's argument in Areopagitica, which is more an argument against licensing (or what we now call "prior restraint") than an argument for removing all fetters from publishing. The power of truth to win in a free debate did not necessarily imply that error once discovered could not be rooted out. Once truth was discovered erroneous publications could be regulated, although matters of private belief were still not to be touched. Any argument for absolute freedom of ideas thus comes not from the premises of Milton's thought but from his disillusionment with the ability of successive generations of leaders to judge the essentials of truth and salvation correctly.

Though Milton was equivocal about the limits on government his concern with leadership and its definition remained constant. Leadership and its coincidence with both virtue and power were persistent themes, and in Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes they are among

the more predominant ones. In Paradise Lost the kingdom of heaven is one in which virtue and power are bound together in God; his rule is sustained by this combination, by his perfection of character, not by custom, consent, or popular opinion. The rebellion, first of Satan and then of Eve and Adam, against this combination of virtue and power separates the two and constitutes the Fall. Satan becomes a power figure, devoid of virtue, but as a power figure seemingly the central figure of Paradise Lost. But he cannot be the central figure, since he has chosen to forfeit rectitude in rebelling against God. Likewise Adam and Eve, though they gain knowledge, violated the conditions under which they would combine the two virtues, and the violation came despite clear warnings of what Satan was doing. And Adam, Eve, and Satan all fell because they exceeded the stations God had assigned to them, desiring equality with their superiors rather than obedience to the wisdom ultimately of God.¹

Interestingly enough, however, it is the figure of Samson rather than the figure of Christ who most clearly combines power and virtue. Christ in Paradise Regained is fundamentally a character of virtue, virtue which is tempted by power and various ways of exercising it. Christ is, of

¹This interpretation relies in part on Don M. Wolfe, Milton in the Puritan Revolution (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), pp. 346-348.

course, expressing a transformed power, the power of obedience to God, but it is not the power of the warrior-king which the Son of God expressed in leading the angels against the battalions of Satan. The power of Christ in Paradise Regained is the power to withstand temptation, but it is not in any common sense "political" power. Indeed, as the Quakers came to conclude, maintaining virtue requires the rejection altogether of political power, not overcoming its temptations while participating in it. The Christ of Paradise Regained is, in the anabaptist sense, in but not of the world.

Thus it is that Samson is the most attractive figure of all, for Samson managed to combine religious and political activity in an act of singular obedience to the call of God. Indeed, Samson is perhaps the only identifiable hero out of all the figures of Milton's epics. Obedience allowed him to recognize and overcome his own faults and limitations, to be the deliverer of his people. Samson embodies the renewed combination of power and virtue, even if only for a moment; he expresses the prophetic ideal of a leader called by God to rectify a specific concern.

The point of this discussion of Milton is, again, threefold. First, his concern with leadership, particularly with the combination of power and virtue, has obvious parallels in Quaker and Digger thought. While Milton's idea of virtue is not always the same as that held by the

Quakers and Diggers, the similarities point to two later developments in Quaker thought, the substitution of a concern with morality for the conversion process and the temptations of rule by an aristocracy. The disjunction of power and virtue which we find expressed in Milton finds its echo in the debate among the later Quakers over whether to be in Troeltsch's terms a church or a sect. Second, like the early Quakers, Milton was concerned with exceeding one's limits; Paradise Lost is in this sense a cosmic version of Nayler's fall. Yet, like Nayler's fall, the fall of Adam and Eve had dialectical results (as the Quakers and Winstanley also saw): the immediate consequences were tragic enough, but new possibilities and assurances were opened to them--including being in a power which never fell. Unlike the Quakers and Diggers, however, Milton saw disorder as the cause as well as the consequence of the fall, and unlike them he laid the blame on a man who lived six thousand years ago. Finally, Milton tended to rely on the pre-fall remnant of reason to reorder the world; no radical conversion experience, no attack on the previous order and its replacement by Gospel Order was required. Milton was at one and the same time more Arminian and more Puritan than the Quakers and Diggers. He was also much more certain that one's limits coincided with his social station; his doctrine of measure had a pronounced conservative thrust not found in the doctrine

of the Quakers and Diggers.

Finally, Milton found the model for his commonwealth in the Old Testament, as did the Quakers and Diggers. But though they all felt that England had been chosen to fulfill the new covenant, Milton did not follow the prophetic implications of the covenant idea. The Old Testament model pointed to a permanent council of the godly rather than to profound and scathing social criticism. Here too, as in his emphasis on natural reason, Milton was far less radical than Winstanley or the Quakers. For all the similarities, we must avoid a too-close identification of Milton's ideas with those of Winstanley or the Quakers. Yet, and this is the thrust of the third reason for discussing Milton, he expressed many of the same aspirations and ambivalences that they did. His expectations for the Commonwealth were no less than theirs; his disappointments were more immediately keener. From Milton's disappointment, Harold Fisch has pointed out the danger of "that over-exact identification of Israel and England--of Albion and Jerusalem if you like--of which Milton was guilty." Unlike Israel, England had no covenant which could serve as a reference point for Milton, the Quakers, the Diggers, or for the Nation. Though the inward covenant was very real for the Quakers and Diggers, national history was all too clearly not on their side, except insofar as they could equate Israel and pre-Norman England, at

least as regarded social institutions. Thus finally Milton and the Quakers (the Diggers having vanished or become Quakers) came to conclude

that only in the complete separation of Church and State --with complete religious freedom as its corollary--would room be found for the development of that distinctive religious culture of which he dreamed. In one sense, this is a positive drive in so far as it aims at some new, unhampered, humanistic formulation of protestantism; but in another sense, it is a negative and fundamentally despairing movement of the spirit, for it involves giving up the State to its own unredeemed devices, it involves rendering to Caesar that which is Caesar's, and is thus the denial of Milton's instinctive holism.¹

For Milton in particular the desire for a holy commonwealth, with its origins in the Hebraic union of King, Priest, and Prophet, became transformed into a criticism of that very union. And though the Quakers and Diggers never proposed such an identification of powers and offices, for them the prophetic thrust was transformed into quietism, a withdrawal from rather than an attack upon the world.

The prophetic spirit was not completely lost, however, as the cases of Bellers, Benezet, and Woolman demonstrate. The light could break through the darkness of tradition and conformity and enlighten some men. But they found it difficult to convince even their fellow Quakers of their concerns; Bellers' proposals were all but lost and Woolman's attacks on slavery had to be couched in the language of

¹Harold Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion, pp. 166, 167.

concern for the owner's soul. Nevertheless, they and others since remain as proof of Penington's observation that the inward can be a continuing critique of the outward.

CHAPTER IX

"The inheritance of Jacob"

The holy experiment was the end of the holy commonwealth. Pennsylvania came to embody liberal values and stands as a proof of the affinity between a particular kind of Calvinism and capitalism. To some extent this tendency was inherent in the theories of the Quakers and Diggers themselves, just as Calvinism contained the seeds of its own transformation. Once the two tables of the Decalogue are separated, as the Quakers and Diggers (though not Calvin or the Puritans) argued they should be, two standards are set up, one for the regenerate and another for the unregenerate. The Calvinist acceptance of the world's institutions loses the Calvinist idea that they may be transformed by the holy spirit; religion either becomes "worldly"--the Reformation criticism of Catholicism--or rejects the world entirely, as in much Anabaptist practice. Either way, religion loses its prophetic thrust and accepts, even to the point of defending, existing society rather than challenging it. Worship, essentially an act of the community, is replaced by an essentially private activity, commerce or industry. Religious obligations are not necessarily translated into social

or political duties except within the limited confines of the sect. In time, moreover, the universality of the light can be transmuted into a theory that all men possess natural reason. But natural reason is essentially limited to the second table of the Decalogue; its emphasis shifts to the coercive character of the law. Reason no longer teaches the necessity of fraternity; one's duties are to oneself, not to others. As Marx so perceptively wrote in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, "when the bourgeois transformation of English society had been accomplished, Locke supplanted Habakkuk."¹

The purpose of this brief characterization, which draws upon Ernst Troeltsch's discussion of the development of Calvinism,² is to indicate that liberal theory derives some of its arguments and assumptions from a theory which is

¹Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte in Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works in One Volume (New York: International Publishers, 1968), p. 98. I would, of course, argue with the assumption that "Cromwell and the English people had borrowed speech, passions and illusions from the Old Testament for their bourgeois revolution" (ibid.). While there was some borrowing of Old Testament themes to rationalize bourgeois activity, for many--the Diggers and Quakers included--the Old Testament had a different meaning. (This is probably why the sects are so attractive to Marxist historians.) Even for Cromwell and the Independents too much emphasis on "borrowing" would be misplaced. However, Marx's characterization of the result is for my intent and purpose correct.

²Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, pp. 576-691.

implicitly critical of itself. It is not my intent, however, to develop these connections and affinities any further than they have already been sketched out. Rather, by way of conclusion, I wish to discuss the republican elements of Quaker and Digger thought and to indicate why they are valuable. Two themes, virtue and the community, are particularly important in the republican context, and we shall begin the remaining discussion with a discussion of virtue. We will leave it, finally, through community.

Virtue for the Quakers and Diggers was, of course, Christian virtue, perhaps best summarized as obedience to the Will of God, known to them directly by hearkening to the light within. The light has been generally consistent, but its leadings are not necessarily known by where it has led in the past. Christian virtue thus requires an openness to alternatives; it cannot be overly programmatic without involving itself in a contradiction. And Christian virtue need not withdraw from politics and the world though it may ultimately withdraw from coercion; significantly, the civitas dei is spoken of in political--though not for Augustine terrestrial--terms. Yet, unlike Augustine most descendants of Calvin thought that the civitas dei could be realized in an actual polity. For the Quakers and Diggers this feeling was based on their experience of the direct kingship of Christ, one unmediated by earthly authority.

The removal of the kingdom of God from heaven to earth is less of a departure from the republican tradition than might at first seem apparent. For one thing, as J. G. A. Pocock has noted in his study of the development of republican thought, the founding of a republic is in many ways an eschatological event and even for Machiavelli may be equated with a prophetic undertaking, albeit with an armed prophet.¹ Republics are irruptions in the process of history, and who better to irrupt than God himself? Eschatology and virtue also intersect in the restoration of virtue to a corrupt people. Here the idea of conversion is appropriate, for if only metaphorically a new nature must be bestowed upon a corrupted people if they are to be capable of a virtuous life. Beginning perhaps with Savonarola in Florence, conversion takes on political significance; republican man becomes assimilated to the second Adam; and when conversion sweeps the political unit the holy commonwealth is possible.

Conversion is critical for yet another reason.

Republican theory has located the problem of virtue primarily

¹J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1975). Interestingly, Machiavelli is also a significant exception to Pocock's oft-repeated observation; Machiavelli was concerned with the way in which virtue developed out of contingent events in Rome rather than with a constitution perfect at its inception, as in Sparta. See Pocock, chap. VII, specifically p. 190. I am relying broadly on Pocock's discussion of republicanism.

in the people rather than in institutions. Thus, while good institutions may help foster virtue, once corruption has set in and virtue been lost good institutions alone are insufficient to restore virtue. "We have met the enemy," as Pogo said, "and they are us." On the other hand, a virtuous people may evolve new institutions when the existing ones seem incapable of dealing with new contingencies, as Machiavelli argued had been the case in Rome. One clear example of the emphasis on virtue rather than on institutions is the problem of the franchise. The question here is not so much who exercises it but the spirit in which it is exercised. So long as our understanding and expectation of politics are corrupted the common good will not be sought after. Arguments for universal suffrage treat only symptoms, not the disease itself. This is the fundamental meaning of the observation, made by George Fox the Younger, that the ungodly will never elect the godly. To translate into modern pluralistic terms, no matter how many interests are articulated, interest articulation does not yield a public interest except by accident. To make this statement is not to argue against the increased articulation of interests and grievances; as the Diggers and Quakers saw, insufficient attention to human interests is a major problem in itself. But it is not a problem which will be solved by interest politics, with its presumption that all interests are equal,

varying only in intensity. What is needed is a standard according to which interests can be assessed. Now I want to point out that in being true to their republican and Christian heritage the Quakers and Diggers help us understand why the problem is one of virtue and, more importantly, why that problem is located in the people. Though sin is not itself a republican term its corollary, corruption, is, and any attempt to come to terms with republican thought and images must understand how sin and corruption may be overcome.

Corruption and sin are frequently thought to require different experiences if they are to be overcome, however. According to the vocabularies of republicanism and Christianity, virtu (the republican concept) seems to be incompatible with the virtue described by Christian thought. Virtu is, we say (following Machiavelli), something nonmoral, perhaps even antimoral in its implications, while even the republican idea of virtue puts the good of the polity above all personal goods including salvation. And, in a critical sense, these attitudes are correct: virtu is for Machiavelli directly though not exclusively related to the founding of a republic, to the imposition of a moral order where none existed before. Virtu is precisely a premoral characteristic. It may surface when the republic is threatened by contingencies either internal or external, but it is a virtue of republics that, though men of virtu arise when needed,

they also return to the people from which they arose. In more normal times, however, virtu yields to the moral virtue which the republican legislator established. This virtue is commonly thought to be antithetical to Christian virtue--Machiavelli again dominates our understanding--but we need only recall the appeals made by Winstanley and the Quakers to Cromwell and the problems of Penn and Pennsylvania to realize that the problem of imposing a moral order is not as remote from the holy commonwealth as we might have thought.

In a prophetic undertaking such as the holy commonwealth, then, Machiavellian observations about virtue and virtu may be translated roughly as follows. The imposition of the moral order is clearly the work of God, perhaps using human instruments such as Harrington's Lord Archon, or perhaps more directly, as through the experience of the inner light. As the author of the moral order, God necessarily stands outside it--one reason he ought to be "feared," although the Puritans and their progeny (here including the Diggers and Quakers) felt that he had chosen to act within the order he had created. Virtu is thus God's, and his alone, and through the inner light he may and does continue to act upon the contingent events of history. Moreover, as one waits upon the light, he may be called to exercise something akin to virtu on behalf of the Lord, and it is the virtue of the holy commonwealth that it maintains the

conditions under which such prophetic virtu may be brought forth. In this sense as in others, worship is a necessary political act, for worship involves waiting upon the Lord.

The distinction between virtu and virtue which I have been drawing is illuminating in another respect and therefore is not misplaced. It points to the continuing tension postulated by republican theory as necessary for the continued existence of a dynamic republic, defined as one unlikely to slip into stasis and corruption. For Machiavelli and Harrington this dynamic was expressed as a tension between the wisdom and ambition of an aristocracy checked and channeled by the collective judgment (and perhaps conservatism) of the people at large. For the holy commonwealth, the tension which must be maintained is between inward and outward experience; too great an emphasis on the former may lead to anarchic mysticism, while an overemphasis on the latter can degenerate into a stupefying conformity. Continued corporate experience is necessary, in other words, both to maintain the health of the community and to check tendencies to slip into either privatism or tyranny.

But what is often most feared in republican theory is precisely its emphasis on corporate experience or on the supremacy of the polity and political action. Various aspects of life which we have come to think of as autonomous--

economic activity, other social arrangements, even sex and marriage--can be subordinated to political concerns. Religion in particular becomes civic, a way to integrate the polity rather than an expression of values other than (and perhaps in conflict with) political values. Rousseau's statements in The Social Contract--that the legislator must destroy all the individual's natural powers and replace them with civil ones and that we must all be equally bound to be free¹--are outrageous, but they seem to be, and in some ways are, the logical extension of the principles of theocratic republicanism. Conversion does give one a new self, for example, and Christian liberty means binding oneself to the will of God. From the liberal perspective Rousseau seems to suggest that whatever benefits might obtain from a republican theory are contradicted by the costs of establishing and maintaining civic virtue--costs measured in terms of vigilance and the subordination of all individuality to the general good. It is therefore incumbent upon any republican theory to indicate how it can secure the blessings of liberty to its posterity without sacrificing liberty in the

¹Rousseau, The Social Contract, Bk. II, chap. VII and Bk. I, particularly chap. VI. Because it is particularly relevant to the idea of a holy commonwealth I would also note his statement in Bk. IV, chap. VII "that Christian law is, fundamentally, more harmful than useful to the firm establishment of the community." There are similar observations throughout this chapter, which is entitled "Of Civil Religion."

process. The advantage of the theory of the holy commonwealth is that it does offer suggestions about the way in which a liberal republicanism could be developed.

Without looking at liberal republicanism in greater detail (I have sufficiently emphasized that the holy commonwealth requires tolerance and due process of law, for example), it must be admitted that the idea of virtue requires some standard against which actions and attitudes may be measured and that republican theory locates this standard in the public realm rather than in a private one. One develops a moral personality, therefore, by acting publicly; the republic requires participation. Moreover, by asserting that virtue is holistic, the holy commonwealth requires a community which is integrated rather than a collection of individuals. Indeed, the only community in which virtue can develop must be one which touches all aspects of life. This doctrine, I have said, is what makes Winstanley's argument that wealth be held in common more telling. Without such a community one is left with the image of the devout capitalist exploiting his workers for six days and hearing them told that justice is other-worldly on the seventh.

In addition, republican theory, including that of the holy commonwealth, presumes that there is a common good that can be discovered and that may well be incompatible with individual goods. This presumption does not necessarily

rule out pursuit of those goods, but it does require that there are values to which individual goods must be subordinated--a point admitted by liberal theory prosaically through taxation and military service and theoretically by Hume's argument that government exists to require that the individual calculate his interests on a long-term basis or by J. S. Mill's emphasis on man as a progressive being. What republican theory offers, however, is some idea of what is meant by the common good, a criterion according to which we may judge "progress" or William James' "cash value of an idea." Classical liberal theory as I have described it does not offer such a criterion, except to assert that it is the pursuit of individual goods. To criticize those goods we must go to a standard outside them.

But establishing the need for an outside criterion is not the same thing as establishing the details of that criterion. It is one thing to presume that the Truth may be known; it is altogether a different thing to presume that the Truth is now known in all its totality. Here Quaker and Digger theory is most illuminating, for they argue that truth is something which is discovered and experienced in a particular context, the community. No person nor group may presume to speak truth without the assent of other members of the community, and no one can presume to have any special insight into the workings of Providence. God is no respecter

of persons, and the very existence of the holy commonwealth is itself a check on whatever totalitarian tendencies we may discover in republican theory. A politics which is dependent on God puts radical limitations on human power, including that of the magistrate whose duty it is to help foster the capacity to consider the common good. These limits are established partly because human power itself is transformed and partly because the magistrate is able to act according to the root of the matter, including the root of magistracy itself. Thus, though they indicated that all social institutions partake of a political character, the Quakers and Diggers did not thereby make them uniform or subject to some central control.¹ We must also bear in mind that participation cannot be conceived as ratifying the will of a leader, the specter raised by Nazism and Stalinism. The community must be open to both assent and dissent. Participation is to be understood only in the context of rotation of offices, the participation in small communities which radicals and liberals alike see as the antidote to totalitarianism.

¹ Similarly, specifying that certain institutions are not political, as liberals often have, does not make them thereby any less coercive. Regulatory government is thus a recognition of the coercive power of non-governmental institutions, but regulatory government only increases the total stock of coercion in society, a fact recognized by conservatives and radicals alike and evident in their attacks on "big government."

The holy commonwealth requires participation in order to develop a common moral life. That life is conceived as political in a broad sense; political experience is not limited as it is in much liberal theory to protection against intrusions by the government.¹ The individual is not set against the political order in the holy commonwealth, nor can the community be defined or limited as can the state. The problem with liberal theory is that it defines the state essentially as coercive and then reads this emphasis into all that is presumed to be political. Republican theory, however, does not limit the essence of politics to coercion. Politics should be expressive and purposive. Freedom is to be expressed in civic action, hence the liberal limits on the polity need to be removed for this freedom to grow. Politics are more important to men and therefore they are also more dangerous. Virtue must therefore be stronger if danger is to be avoided. The holy commonwealth is not simply a community of interests or their guardians; it is a community in which virtue can develop. A community of interest is all too often defined by the enemy it keeps, as is evident in the case of war, so often seen as the archetype of

¹For an excellent though brief discussion of the various arguments for participation see Donald W. Keim, "Participation in Contemporary Democratic Theories," in Participation in Politics: Nomos XVI, eds. J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman (New York: Lieber-Atherton, 1975), pp. 1-38.

communal or fraternal relations.¹ The moral community, like virtue itself, must transcend particular interests and the necessity of an opposition.

The emphasis on transcending is perhaps why our ideas of community are so often religious and why worship is frequently the archetype of a communal activity.² Neither simple proximity nor complex interdependence define a community. Instead, it is defined by a complex set of shared experiences including hope and joy, grief and sorrow. These experiences are, in turn, those to which religion often speaks most directly. The arguments for such a community are not liberal and some, such as losing one's life to find it, may even be anathema to the liberal spirit. But the arguments for community stem from an experience as valid as

¹I would acknowledge a general debt here to Wilson C. McWilliams' argument about the meaning of fraternity in his The Idea of Fraternity in America.

²The Quakers and Diggers would say that our ideas of community are both literally and figuratively the inheritance of Jacob, hence the title of this chapter (and of Francis Howgil's spiritual autobiography). Of all the Old Testament patriarchs Jacob signified most clearly the eventual triumph of the second Adam over the man of flesh, personified by his brother Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. The struggle between Jacob and Esau in Rebekah's womb typified all struggles from that day to this: as the Lord said to her (Genesis 25:23), "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." The stronger was equated with Esau and the weaker with Jacob, at least until power was transformed by the spirit.

Bunyan's experience of religious isolation or the liberal's experience of individualism. And if nothing else communal experience may be a necessary antidote to excessive reliance on the self.

We in America are profoundly ambivalent about religious ideas of community. Too much of our heritage is Puritan in both the best and worst senses of that experience: we have seen the stupefying effects of a rigid legalism and conformity but we have also experienced the liberating effect of what Michael Walzer and others call the revolution of the saints. Indeed, the existence of the nation depends as much on the obstinate character and Puritan discipline of a John Adams, himself a product of the idea that a godly republic--literally the "New England" of covenant theology--can be realized in the wilderness, as it does on the Enlightenment spirit of a Jefferson or a Franklin, a spirit which in turn has certain Calvinist origins. In the context of the American experience, then, the value of the Quakers and Diggers is that they managed to maintain the liberating tenor of the holy commonwealth while mitigating most of its worst effects, despite certain excesses in theory and practice. They taught that politics are to be discussed in terms of duty, obligation, sacrifice and the common good, and they gave to these terms a more egalitarian character than did either their more orthodox, Calvinist contemporaries or the emerging liberals. The Republic is limited, but not in a liberal

sense.

In the preceding analysis and discussion I have concentrated primarily upon the teachings themselves, and I do not intend to be any more specific than I have been about the lessons to be learned. In part my reticence is a product of the teaching themselves, with their emphasis on openness and their denigration of specific programmes. There are problems with their teachings, to be sure, particularly when we come to scale. Historically, both the holy commonwealth and the whole republican tradition have had trouble coming to grips first with the facts of commerce (Winstanley's problem) and later with the increased size of the nation. Thus it is no accident that recent republican theory has focused on neighborhoods or the workplace. The Quakers and Diggers were aware of these problems, however, and they did suggest some solutions; these have been discussed in the body of the work. What we must retain in working out further solutions are their basic ideas of the spirit and language in which we discuss politics and according to which we engage in the search for solutions.

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