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RESSENYES

REVIEWS

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The Covenant with Moses and the Kingdom of God: Thomas Hobbes and the Theology of the Old Covenant in Early Modern England
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One of the hallmarks of Thomas Hobbes's genius is his ability to synthesize the terms of debate on a remarkably wide range of topics, reconceptualize them (some might say he warps them), and deploy them for his own purposes. This ability has been recognized and studied in many ways and from many angles, concerning seventeenth-century debates over metaphysics, algebra and geometry, the philosophy of science, legal theory, logic, the philosophy of language, the philosophy of history, economics, pedagogy, rhetoric, and performance studies, to say nothing of his contributions to political theory and philosophy. Until relatively recently, however, Hobbes's involvement in Biblical hermeneutics and the intense arguments in his time over covenant theology has remained less studied. Such a gap is of course odd, considering how central these debates were to the politics of seventeenth-century England and considering how seriously Hobbes himself took interpretations of the Bible.

Andrew J. Martin's book is, in that way, a welcome historical contribution to Hobbes studies. It examines the texts—sermons and pamphlets as well as books—from many major figures in this debate to show the development over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the conceptual importance of covenants in English discourse and to lay out the links between and differences among them, and then takes up the development in Hobbes's own thoughts on the topic, from *The Elements of Law* to *De Cive* to *Leviathan*, as in conversation with those figures. Thus, although not divided in this way, *The Covenant with Moses and the Kingdom of God* can be taken as in split into two parts, along with an introduction that both explains the importance of the religious question of covenants, especially of how many there are in the Christian Bible, and, quite helpfully, an overview of the recent literature in English on this history generally and in terms of Hobbes more specifically. Chapters 2 through 4 then more precisely establish the historical context that chapters 5 and 6 use to take account of Hobbes's understanding of covenant theology and the conclusion brings both parts together in order to argue more directly for the importance of that theology in Hobbes's overall system.

Of that first part, chapter 2 focuses on the Anglican bishop, Robert Sanderson; chapter 3 devotes separate sections to Samuel Bolton (a clergyman and member of the Westminster Assembly, the council of divines and members of Parliament that met from 1643 to 1653 after the Bishop's Wars in 1639 and 1640 as an attempt to reorganize the Church of England and standardize several aspects of catechism), John Ball (a schoolmaster and divine), Anthony Burgess (a Nonconformist clergyman), and Edmund Calamy (an English Presbyterian divine); and chapter 4 does the same with regard to Thomas Blake (an English clergyman with Presbyterian sympathies), Samuel Rutherford (a Scottish Presbyterian pastor, theologian, and Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly), and Francis Roberts (a puritan Birmingham minister who conformed to the Church of England after the Restoration). One problem that can emerge for a novice to the debates outlined in these chapters is a periodic assumption on Martin's part that the reader is familiar with some of the technical vocabulary of Protestant theology, though that is to be expected given the series in which it appears, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions. At any rate, the problem is usually easily resolved with a little research and the footnotes are a rich resource for deeper study. For brevity's sake, I will here focus on the positions each of these thinkers take on the number and kinds of covenant there are.

In chapter 2, Martin argues that Sanderson, in the context of controversies during the 1620s and 1630s between strict Calvinist beliefs in predestination and Arminian positions moderating them, «relied upon a series of complex theological positions to minimize the distance between civil and ecclesiastical authority» (p. 22). This minimization leads to the claim that there are two covenants, «a covenant of grace» and «a covenant of works or a legal covenant» (p. 29). In Calvinism, the former is marked by the sacraments of baptism and the Last Supper. However, by the covenant of works Sanderson means both the universal forgiveness of sins offered on the condition of faith, «based *a priori* on obedience to the Law», and the actual forgiveness of sins by actually accepting Christianity, «based *a posteriori* upon belief in the Gospel» (p. 32). In this way, «personal transgression and not the sin of Adam was the source of guilt under the covenant of works», which is why it is also a covenant of law «made with each individual person» and so continues to stand at the same time that «the righteousness of Jesus was the source of…the new covenant of grace» (pp. 56 and 57). All these covenants being conditional for salvation, including obedience to the law, allowed Sanderson «not only to connect the conditions of temporal and eternal membership in the kingdom of God but also to legitimate temporal jurisdiction over spiritual matters» (p. 59).

Sanderson's work forms the backdrop, along with the Westminster Assembly, for understanding the debates in the 1640s and 1650s taken up in chapters 3 and 4, respectively. Developing from the Scottish theologian John Cameron's system, Bolton argues for two absolute covenants, one with Noah and the other «to give faith and perseverance to the elect» (i.e., the saved), and three conditional covenants: of nature, of grace, and «the subservient (old) covenant» (pp. 65 and 67). The old covenant is the one with Moses and, as subservient, is neither Sanderson's covenant of works nor a mixture of his covenants of works and grace. Its subservience also allows Bolton to differentiate «the religious authority of Moses and that of contemporary civil magistrates» (p. 69). Ball also distinguishes between absolute and conditional covenants but sees the covenant with Moses as continued in a covenant of grace «to justify the close relationship between church and commonwealth advocated by the supporters of a Presbyterian national church» (p. 75). More radically than Ball, Burgess claims that «the two covenants were in fact one covenant and the differences were merely of administration», even if the covenant with Moses was subservient insofar as it was one of works (p. 82). Calamy, however, identifies a

covenant of works originating in Eden, and so both universal and «entered into by nature», and a covenant of grace, conditional on faith, as «eternal… between God the Father and Christ for the benefit of Adam's postlapsarian posterity» (p. 84). Meanwhile, he takes the Mosaic covenant as «a 'rule of righteousness' for those already in covenant», allowing him to claim that «there was no one-to-one relationship between a particular understanding of the covenant with Moses and a corresponding understanding of the relationship between church and state» (pp. 86 and 87).

In the 1650s, Blake both «stressed continuity between the old and new covenants more than any of his Presbyterian predecessors had», with Jesus mediating both of them and the old being not subservient, and he «placed more emphasis on the temporal and political benefits of new covenant membership» because doing so made it possible «for whole nations to have the capacity to enter into it» insofar as «visible covenant membership did not necessarily require inward real change» (pp. 93 and 94). For Rutherford, the covenant of grace could not be separated from practical and political concerns. Instead, the covenant with Abraham involved «a promise of blessing in the earthly land of Canaan» and the new covenant made a similar earthly promise to believers—individuals, families, societies, and nations alike—in their own lands (p. 98). Roberts, who refers to the covenant of grace as a covenant of faith, «identified the covenant of works with the covenant with Adam before the fall and the covenant of grace/faith with all subsequent covenants», allowing him to argue for strong continuity from the covenant with Noah through all others (p. 100). On this view, the importance of the Mosaic covenant is that it required «either perfect and personal obedience or perfect believing», opening up «a distinction between temporal and eternal matters» and so between «temporal calling… and spiritual calling or election to salvation» (pp. 107-108). These distinctions allowed him to argue both for continuity between the Mosaic and new covenants as administrations of the covenant of faith and for «discontinuity in the application of the judicial aspects of the old covenant to contemporary civil governments under the new covenant» (p. 110).

With even a cursory awareness of Hobbes's covenantal claims, one can see how he is informed by and contributes to these debates. Martin reads *The Elements of Law* as part of the conversation in the 1640s exemplified in Bolton, Ball, Burgess, and Calamy, and associates *De Cive* and *Leviathan* with that in the 1650s as found in Blake, Rutherford, and Roberts. To that end, he sees Hobbes's claims in *The Elements*, which «articulate a purely

horizontal covenant theology», as allowing him to do three things (p. 134). First, the impossibility of immediately covenanting with God, beyond a divine declaration of who will accept it, set up later developments in his theory of representation. Second, the non-transferability of covenants allowed him to «undermine those who sought to defend the regicide of Charles I on the basis of the Solemn League and Covenant» between Scottish Presbyterians and English Parliamentarians in 1643 (p. 120). Third, the necessity of the performability of covenantal promises allowed Hobbes to both «argue that conditions must be obeyed, and…reject the idea of an ongoing covenant of works grounded in the natural order» (p. 120). Because in *The Elements* there is no covenant between a sovereign and an individual, and instead individuals confer sovereignty on someone, there is no covenantal continuity. Rather, «each subsequent covenant superseded the terms of the former», hence rejecting covenant theology insofar as dependent on covenantal continuity (p. 122). Remembering the non-immediacy of covenants with God, «there was no covenant between the people and the sovereign by which the people could claim the violation of a condition, whether with God and mediated by the king or with the king directly», even while the king can require obedience from the people on the ground that covenants are between individuals to confer sovereignty (p. 129). This conferral involves a transference of rights in the pre-covenantal state of nature such that anyone can fulfill «the terms of the original covenant after the fall» insofar as «obedience to the human laws imposed by the sovereign was itself obedience to the law of nature, which was the same as the moral law taught by Jesus» (pp. 131 and 132). Hence, the only question of faith is whether one accepts Jesus as the Messiah and, «So long as the sovereign did not require subjects to renounce Jesus…, subjects were bound by the moral law and the law of nature to obey all dictates of human law» (p. 132). In this way, for Martin, Hobbes's rejection of covenant theology serves the purpose of increasing temporal sovereign authority.

With *De Cive*, Hobbes does not simply reject this theology, but rather uses it, a shift that necessitates further development in *Leviathan*. This utilization reveals itself in the number of and relationships between different covenants. In *De Cive*, there are four covenants. The original was in Eden, but was concurrent with «God's natural rule over Adam and Eve by power» (p. 137). This covenant is voided by the «'old covenant'» with Abraham and «renewed» in the Ten Commandments, which does not thereby supersede the divine natural rule by power but does establish «God's kingdom on

earth» (p. 137). Voiding the original covenant by the old means a distinction between «the natural law known by right reason and the arbitrary commands given to Adam and Eve, including the command not to eat from the fruit of the tree» (p. 145). Since God only gave one arbitrary rule to Abraham (circumcision), the latter's authority via the old covenant «to interpret the natural laws and the form of the covenant was absolute», so there was no sin in obeying him absolutely and ecclesiastical and temporal authority were unified in him (p. 145). Renewing the old covenant with Moses added the revelation that Israel was to be a kingdom of priests, truly establishing the kingdom of God «through the explicit consent of each person», hence all the changeable «judicial and ceremonial laws» in Exodus 21-23 (p. 146). The Mosaic covenant's renewal of the Abrahamic is itself renewed in the «'new covenant'» with Jesus, who acts as a mediator like Moses (p. 137). This renewal still does not involve a heavenly kingdom, which awaits the Second Coming, when Jesus will «rule in power» (p. 148). The renewal is instead that of the temporal kingdom insofar as «Christ did not come to give laws, but rather to point his people to repentance and faith, the conditions of the kingdom of heaven» (p. 149). For this reason, baptism replaces circumcision only as a sign of this new covenant renewing a kingdom of faith, thereby subordinating spiritual matters to temporal power insofar as physically gathering members of the church must involve temporal issues «and therefore belonged to 'civill Right'» (pp. 151-152). Thus, until Jesus returns, salvation requires both faith in him as the Messiah and obedience to temporal authority.

Leviathan eliminates Eden from the list of covenants and «grounded the rule of God solely on the basis of his command» (p. 156). The original covenant thus becomes the one with Noah, but now it establishes the kingdom of God that was formally instituted with «Abraham provisionally and Moses properly», thus establishing continuity in a series of old covenants that can be identified as discontinuous in their practices and, thereby, in the «inference of 'certain Rules'» (pp. 156 and 157). Such discontinuities in inference being an indication that «even the practices of God's people in biblical history should not function as authoritative models», for Martin they indicate that «the proper foundation of sovereign authority» in *Leviathan* is the inferences, allowing Hobbes to argue against the patriarchal right to rule by inheritance from Adam and Eve, à la Sir Robert Filmer (pp. 157 and 158). The simultaneous continuity and discontinuity in the series of old covenants then make it possible for Hobbes to claim that the properly

founded old covenant remains in force because «the new covenant would not be experienced in the present temporal age», but only with the Second Coming (p. 160). Because the proper institution of that old covenant was grounded on the consent of the people, it establishes a pattern in which «the sovereign was formed by the willing consent of the people to transfer their individual right of judgment to the will of the sovereign» (p. 165).

Martin concludes that the explosion of covenantal theories in the 1640s and 1650s «left the door wide open for Thomas Hobbes to assume the… mantle of Robert Sanderson» and suggests several points for further study into the relations between covenant theology and seventeenth-century political as well as religious polemics, social contract theory, and contemporary theological debates about ecclesiastical vs. temporal authority (p. 171). Presumably because of his historical focus, Martin does not make significant claims about that explosion of theories as concerns Hobbes's system beyond the mantle-claiming and drawing attention to the explosion's clear influence on that system as it developed. This lack is a shame because there are several moments that warrant closer attention, both in terms of opening up possible new interpretations of Hobbes's work and in terms of problematic claims Martin makes about it.

First, let me address a concern with the Mosaic covenant. There are three moments in Exodus when the people accept God's rule: when Moses tells the elders that God has they will be the chosen people, when he tells the people as a whole the Ten Commandments as well as the judicial and ceremonial laws, and when he reads the covenant to the people after having written it early the next morning (Exodus 19:8, 24:3, and 24:7). In all three cases, the people or elders seem to speak collectively (*yah-daub*, *kohl*, and *ve-yah-meh-roo*, respectively). Such collective speech stands in contrast to claims in *The Elements*, *De Cive*, and *Leviathan* that covenants are made individually. Indeed, it stands in contrast to Hobbes's claims in chapter 20 of *The Elements*, chapter 14 of *De Cive*, and chapter 16 of *Leviathan* that a multitude cannot speak as one and, in chapter 16 of *Leviathan*, that the covenanting moment makes them one. How can the elders and the people speak in this way to Moses as God's intermediary, then? Hobbes does not say, nor does Martin. The closest the former comes to taking up this question is in chapter 16 of *De Cive* and chapter 40 of *Leviathan*, but in neither does he note even his own use of the first-person plural. Perhaps, if we follow the numeration of covenants in *De Cive*, the fact that Moses is renewing the Abrahamic covenant means that the people are already no

longer a multitude. Or, if we follow that in *Leviathan*, perhaps the provisional institution of the kingdom of God via Abraham achieved the same.

Another issue with the reading of Hobbes is more problematic. Put simply, Martin is insufficiently sensitive to the difference between representation in *The Elements* and *De Cive* as opposed to authorization in *Leviathan*. For him, *De Cive* opens up «the possibility of human covenants with God made through a representative», representation thus making possible something outright denied in *The Elements* despite its appeal to the conferral of sovereignty (p. 139). Yet, even conferral indicates the difference between representation and authorization. In *The Elements* and in *De Cive*, the person on whom sovereignty is conferred in order to represent the multitude as a people exists at the moment of conferral, but in *Leviathan* the dynamics of authorization mean that this person, even though they obviously exist at that moment, does not exist qua sovereign. Chapters 16 and 17 of *Leviathan* are clear on this point, most especially in articulating the terms of the covenant, which are said among the covenanters and not between the people and the pre-existing person who will be authorized as sovereign. In *Leviathan*, then, the sovereign qua sovereign is authored into existence, is generated by the authorization that transfers people's natural rights. Martin seems to acknowledge this distinction in saying that «the sovereign was formed by the willing consent of the people», but he does not track out its possible consequences for *Leviathan*. For instance, this authorization is the imitation of the divine *fiat* as discussed in The Introduction, the generation of the artificial life of the commonwealth. Insofar as that is the case, and insofar as the new covenant will not come into force until the Second Coming, as Martin rightly points out, to what extent can we take the generation of sovereignty as forming a new Adam, one subject only to God's rule by natural power, and so, in that way, another appearance of the Messianic? Further, precisely insofar as we must wait until the official Second Coming for a heavenly kingdom on this earth, could we thus understand the sovereign as a false Christ, perhaps even an Antichrist? If the answer to either of these questions is affirmative, could that impact our understanding of the reactions to *Leviathan* by covenant theologians at the time?

Perhaps these issues are unfair, in that Martin's focus is on establishing the historical importance of covenant-theological debates in seventeenth-century England for Hobbes's intellectual development. For that historical work, Martin is to be commended, as *The Covenant with Moses and the Kingdom of God* is an excellent resource for considering that con-

text. Nonetheless, the historical focus seems to have resulted in a sometimes overly standard reading of Hobbes rather than in a rethinking of his covenantal arguments. It would have been interesting if Martin took up issues such as those mentioned above in the context of the covenant theologies at hand as well as within Hobbes's developing systems.

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Voltaire
Contes filosòfics
Pròleg, introducció i traducció de Joan-Lluís Lluís
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Atenent la preceptiva literària, es pot dir que tots aquests *contes filosòfics* són realment contes? Novel·les curtes i epistolars, contes llargs i curts, discursos, cartes, diàlegs... Hi trobem, en aquest volum, vint-i-sis narracions, algunes de les quals pensades per a ser llegides en veu alta. Per a Joan-Lluís Lluís, presentar-los tenint present l'ordre cronològic de redacció «deixa entreveure amb més nitidesa l'evolució no només estilística, sinó, sobretot ideològica i moral, de Voltaire». Aquesta edició s'ha basat en la de 1966, a cura de René Pommeau, i en la de 1979, revisada el 2001, a cura de Frédéric Deloffre, Jacqueline Hellegouare'h i Jacques van den Heuvel. És una traducció íntegra que inclou les notes a peu de pàgina redactades per Voltaire.

Els protagonistes d'alguns dels contes són viatgers. A *Micromegas*, Voltaire relata el viatge interplanetari de dos extraterrestres: Micromegas (Petitgran), de Sírius, i l'homenet de Saturn, que, en alguns moments, recorden el Quixot i Sancho Panza. Sosté Lluís que el saturnià, «ple de bona voluntat però una mica maldestre i sempre prou reflexiu, és el comparsa necessari per fer fluir el protagonista principal del conte, però, justament perquè és més fal·lible, potser és més interessant»; i el compara amb el capità Haddock o amb Obèlix, imperfectes, però més entranyables que el