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HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE MARIA (AND MARY, AND MARY, AND ELIZABETH)? | SEAN MORRIS

For many, the name “John Knox” probably evokes some association with authoritarianism, misogyny, or at least an overbearing, severe personality.

Indeed, when I was in Edinburgh this past summer standing outside of St. Giles’ Cathedral near the site where Knox’s grave had been (quite unceremoniously) paved over to make way for a parking lot, I overheard a nearby leader of a walking-tour describe the Scottish minister as a “fanatic given to sentiments of treason and anarchy, known for his bigoted, antiquated, and chauvinistic views, his antagonism and disdain toward Mary Queen of Scots, and his strict religious control over the city of Edinburgh.”

Now to be fair, when one considers that the Father of Presbyterianism’s best-known work is titled *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women...* well, his detractors might be forgiven for having an unsavory impression of the man.

Knox was certainly “a man of his times,” but that cliché hardly does justice to the content of his theology, the contours of his politics, or his concern for justice and religious liberty in a land where Protestants were being persecuted and slaughtered by the thousands—never mind the fact that this man was an outspoken advocate for education and care for the poor.¹ As students of history well know,

the truth of an historical matter is usually far more complicated, muddled, disorienting, confusing, and fascinating than a first glance would suggest.

So when Pastor Knox refers to Mary, Queen of Scots (or *Maria Regina Scotorum*, if you like) as “...that idolatress Jezebel, mischievous Mary, of the Spaniard’s blood, cruel persecutrix of the church,”² we cannot be satisfied with a run-of-the-mill charge that he is a religious bigot and hater of women as the tour-guide charged. A provocative line like that from Knox must drive us to dig further.



MARY TUDOR, MASTER JOHN, 1544

WOMEN WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE THRONE

In *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, Knox called for rebellion against England’s Mary Tudor (“Bloody Mary”) and protested against all female civic rulers. He argued that women must never govern because God had created women as helpers and subordinates to men—it was God’s created order that men should own the burden and responsibility of ruling and governing. Rule by women was a “monstrous regiment,” an unnatural, deformed government. For Knox, having men pass the

responsibility of civil government and rule on to women was to abdicate their God-given responsibility, tantamount to cowardice or laziness.

1 McDonald, Suzanne. *John Knox for Armchair Theologians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press), 107-120.

2 Bond, Douglas. *The Thunder: A Novel on John Knox* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing), 246.

ness. On the other hand, Knox had tender and congenial friendships with many women in his life. He had the highest regard for numerous women whom he regarded as prayer warriors, friends, builders of the kingdom of God, and he counted their faithful efforts as indispensable to the cause of the gospel in Scotland.³ Consider this text of tender gratitude to his own mother-in-law:

Since the first day that it pleased the providence of God to bring you and me into familiarity, I have always delighted in your company; and when labor would permit, you know that I have not spared hours to talk and commune with you, the fruit thereof I did not then fully understand nor perceive. But now absent, and so absent that by corporal presence neither of us can receive comfort of other, I call to mind how that oftentimes when, with dolorous hearts, we have begun our talking, God hath sent great comfort unto both, which for my own part I commonly want.

AT ODDS WITH CALVIN

Interestingly, Knox's position on the appropriate role of women in government was not shared by John Calvin (by whom he had been mentored during his years of exile in Geneva, at various points from 1554-1559) nor by Heinrich Bullinger, another influential reformer. These men noted the biblical accounts of Deborah and Huldah as examples of God's willingness to suspend the natural order and place women in positions of civil authority; this could be done in needful circumstances, by God's discretion (especially in situations where the men of the realm had shirked their duty). Calvin believed it to be both unlawful and unwise to interfere with long-standing practices of monarchical inheritance, themselves established by God. Knox, however, disagreed. While acknowledging such cases as the biblical examples of Deborah and Huldah, he believed those to be legitimate only in the context of Old Testament theocratic Israel.⁴ He believed that God had so ordered creation that in the contemporary political realm, it was never appropriate for a woman to permanently rule—even in cases when there was no male heir to the throne.

3 Ibid., namely, Anne Locke.

4 Robert Healey. "Knox's Curious Attitude Toward Women." *Christianity Today*. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-46/knoxs-curious-attitude-toward-women.html> (accessed October 1, 2016).

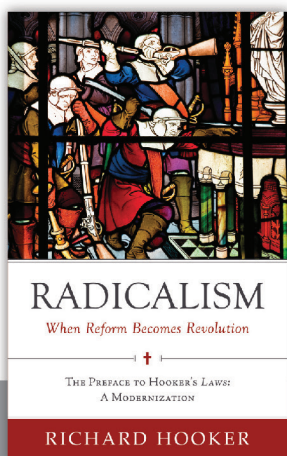
A PASTORAL TENOR

While acknowledging Knox' rather sour and tempestuous relationships with Mary Guise (the Queen Regent in time of Mary Stuart's childhood), Mary Tudor, and Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, we would be remiss if we did not note other important women in Knox's life: his first wife, Marjorie, his second wife, Margaret, his mother-in-law Elizabeth Bowes, and his friend Anne Lock.⁵ His interaction with these women paints a rather different portrait of the Scottish reformer.

The letters written to these latter women are windows into the heart of kindness and tenderness that Knox had for them. The evidence of these letters demands our attention as we see tremendous warmth and pastoral sensitivity in these relationships. Here we see a man who loved his wife dearly, who greatly appreciated the able help of his mother-in-law and carried on an appreciative and affectionate discourse with her (as noted above), and who deeply valued the godliness, insight, and friendship of Anne Lock. A man of his times? Certainly. A man whose position on women in government was more hard-line than that of his fellow reformers? We have seen so. But a surly woman-hater, dismissive of the value of women to the Kingdom of God? This conclusion cannot be sustained.

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5 Knox, John. "Letters Chiefly Relating to the Progress of the Reformation in Scotland, 1559-1562." *The Works of John Knox, Volume 6* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2015).



RADICALISM

When Reform Becomes Revolution

The first installment in a project to translate Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Politie* into modern English.

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JEROME ZANCHI (1516-1590): A LIFE IN EXILE

PART TWO: THE SCHOLAR IN EXILE

PATRICK O'BANION

Late 1551 began a protracted period of exile for Zanchi. His immediate destination was the city of Chiavenna near the Swiss border. He visited only briefly, but was there long enough to make an impression on the members of the Protestant congregation. It was the first in a long line of temporary homes. He traveled to many of the great centers of the Reformation on the European continent, looking for work and meeting leading Protestant figures: Wolfgang Musculus in Basel, Pierre Viret in Lausanne, and Theodore Beza in Geneva, where he remained for some months visiting with his old friend, Celso. Zanchi attended some of Calvin's lectures and later kept up a correspondence with him.

Steady work was hard to find, and Zanchi seems to have been making his way to England hoping for a reunion with Peter Martyr. Perhaps an influential patron could help a deserving disciple find a good living. Instead he was offered an unexpected opportunity on the Continent by the chief magistrate of Protestant Strasbourg. Zanchi became professor of Old Testament at the College of St. Thomas. He hung up his hat and walking stick—but only for a time.

Zanchi found Strasbourg a mixed blessing. There was much that was good: He was employed at an excellent institution of higher education in a robustly Protestant city. And he wasn't alone. When the death of King Edward VI of England brought the aggressively Roman Catholic Mary Tudor to the throne, Peter Martyr Vermigli fled (again). In October 1553, he joined Zanchi in Strasbourg and soon received an appointment at St. Thomas. Finally, as if to make Zanchi's joy complete, he married. His bride, Violante, was a native Italian and the eldest daughter of Celio Secundo Curione, his friend from Lucca. Zanchi later claimed that he could have married a wealthy German heiress from a noble family with an ample dowry, but such was his love for his own people that, instead, he chose "a poor Italian" as his wife.

But sadness followed hard upon the heels of joy. Soon after arriving in Strasbourg, Zanchi became embroiled in disagreements with Johann Marbach, the city's leading Lutheran preacher. As head of the Collegiate Chapter of St. Thomas, Marbach required all professors to subscribe to the Lutheran Augsburg Confession. This presented a difficulty for those who took a Reformed view of the Lord's Supper. In 1540 Philip Melancthon had amended the original 1530 Augsburg Confession to reflect his own less rigorous stance on the Lord's Supper. Reformed Christians usually found that they could sign this

newer "variata" version. But Zanchi and Vermigli were asked to affirm the original "invariata" version.

Initially, Zanchi refused, but when Vermigli arrived they both agreed, somewhat reluctantly, to sign the document. Zanchi noted in his subscription that he only affirmed the Confession if its words were "understood in an orthodox manner." Marbach—who like many northern Protestants had a strong anti-Italian prejudice—concluded that they had signed with their fingers crossed and pressed forward with efforts to reshape Strasbourg into a Lutheran stronghold. In so doing he alienated Zanchi and his mentor. Peter Martyr soon found teaching there impossible, and in 1556 he accepted an offer to teach Hebrew in the Swiss city of Zurich.

ZANCHI CLEVERLY APPEALED TO THE JUDGMENT OF PROTESTANT THEOLOGIANS FROM ACROSS EUROPE AND, WITH THEIR SUPPORT, WAS EVENTUALLY EXONERATED. BUT THIS CONTROVERSY SEEMED ONLY TO SPAWN OTHERS. INDEED, IT WAS THIS STORM AS MUCH AS ANY OTHER THAT SOLIDIFIED THE LINES BETWEEN LUTHERAN AND REFORMED PROTESTANTISM.

Zanchi's family life also deteriorated. In March 1555, Violante suffered her second miscarriage, which caused a paralysis from which she never recovered. In November of 1556, just months after Vermigli's departure, and in the midst of ongoing conflict with Marbach, she died. The marriage had lasted barely three years and left no living children. Caring for his wife had taken an emotional toll on Zanchi and left him in embarrassing financial straits. The execution of her will opened a rift with his father-in-law. If all of this wasn't enough, 1557 saw Celso's death as well. Finally, in 1561, the troubles in Strasbourg came to a head: Marbach officially challenged Zanchi's orthodoxy on a variety of issues, among them the Lord's Supper and his doctrine of election.

Zanchi cleverly appealed to the judgment of Protestant theologians from across Europe and, with their support, was eventually exonerated. But this controversy seemed only to spawn others. Indeed, it was this storm as much as any other that solidified the lines between Lutheran and Reformed Protestantism. By the summer of 1563 the situation at Strasbourg had become so contentious that, full of regrets but eager to avoid more trouble, he packed up and left.

Zanchi was on the road again and alone, but his job prospects, at least, seemed better than they had when he had departed Lucca more than a decade previously. This time he had an offer to pastor the Reformed congregation at Chiavenna in northern Italy near the Swiss border. The small city proved to be another disappointing hotbed of contention and a source of further hardship. He found himself overtaxed, battling incidents of the plague, an anti-Trinitarian movement, and a spirit of bitter factionalism within his congregation that he never overcame.

No doubt, these challenges led him to reconsider the advantages of academia. When offered the chair of theology at Heidelberg by Duke Frederick III, Zanchi accepted. He assumed his duties in the winter of 1568. Anti-Trinitarianism was rearing its head in the Germanic lands (as it had in northern Italy) and, probably at Frederick's request, Zanchi began work on a massive defense of the doctrine of the Trinity. More than seven hundred pages long, *On the Threefold Elohim: Eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* was published in 1572 (as well as several times thereafter) and it established Zanchi's theological reputation.¹ The sequel, *On the Nature of God, or the Divine Attributes*, was equally impressive and perhaps even more influential. He completed a third volume on the doctrine of creation entitled *On the Works of God in the Space of Six Days* and began a fourth, which was to have covered the fall, sin, and the Law. He did not complete it, but the unfinished manuscript was published posthumously in 1597.

These major works from the Heidelberg years took the shape of a massive multi-volume theological system that tackled the full range of doctrinal and exegetical topics—a Reformed *summa* of theology, something no Protestant had ever attempted. The portion he completed proved truly influential in the formation of Reformed theology. One can hardly imagine what the finished project would have done. In any case, it was a great period of intellectual fruitfulness for Zanchi, who was also busy writing shorter treatises and lecturing on the New Testament. Centuries after their first appearance, his works still impress. Their freshness, warmth, and rich insights command the attention of modern readers.

But doing theology wasn't the only order of the day. At some point following his departure from Strasbourg, Zanchi gave domestic life another try. His second wife, also Italian and named Livia, provided a bustling household of children. In 1576 he wrote to his English friend Edmund Grindal (recently elevated to the archbishopric of Canterbury) that his wife was expecting their sixth child. Near the end of his life, in 1585, the paterfamilias claimed nine *bambinos*. Most survived into adulthood, not an easy feat in the sixteenth century. At least one son became a minister of the Gospel and, touchingly, a daughter was named Violantes, presumably in memory of Zanchi's first wife.

Then, at sixty-one years of age, Duke Frederick died in October of 1576 and Zanchi's life was interrupted once again. Frederick's eldest son, the Lutheran-leaning Ludwig VI, succeeded him and removed the Reformed professors from Heidelberg. Zanchi left home—this time with wife and children in tow. Count Johann Casimir (Frederick III's younger son) organized a school known as the Casimirianum

¹ The Davenant Trust is currently sponsoring work to translate this work. You can follow the progress and read what has been completed at www.nsa.edu/academics/wenden-house-project/zanchis-de-tribus-elohim/

at Neustadt-an-der-Hardt on the other side of the Rhine River, a refuge for the professors exiled from Heidelberg. For reasons that are not altogether clear, Zanchi now abandoned his *summa* and never resumed it. Instead he devoted his energies to New Testament exegesis, revising his earlier work, and writing more focused books of theology.

The venerable Italian was fifty-nine when he joined the Casimirianum. He lectured on the Pauline epistles, and many of those lectures became biblical commentaries, among them a massive study of the letter to the Ephesians. In 1591, the year after Zanchi's death, a section of his Ephesians commentary was spun off and printed independently as *On the spiritual marriage of Christ and the Church*. This rich and sometimes daring analysis of 6:21-33 drew as well upon Zanchi's deep familiarity with the marriage motif in the Old Testament and became one of his most popular works.

In 1583, when Ludwig died, Count Johann Casimir became the ducal regent for Frederick IV, who was only nine years old. At that point, Casimir initiated a re-introduction of Reformed theology to Heidelberg, a program that Frederick IV continued when he came of age. By this point in his life, Zanchi was "a withered old man, but still by God's favor in good health." When invited to return to his duties at Heidelberg, he declined. He'd done enough travelling for one lifetime. He remained in Neustadt and was granted an annual pension for faithful service.

The last years of Zanchi's life were marked by failing eyesight, which slowed his writing and editing. In 1585, at the age of sixty-nine, he oversaw the publication of one last treatise: *On the Christian Religion*, which he had composed some years earlier in an unsuccessful bid to provide the Reformed churches with a unifying statement of belief. Now he recast it as a gift to his children, a personal confession of faith to guide them after he was gone. Five years later, on November 19, 1590, blind and in declining health, Jerome Zanchi made one last visit to Heidelberg. After a lifetime of exile, he died peacefully and, his travels at an end, was interred in the University Church.

Part One of this biographical and critical profile appeared in our October issue.

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MAP OF EUROPE, ABRAHAM ORTELIUS

RICHARD HOOKER ON THE ETERNAL LAW

TRANSLATED BY BRIAN MARR, BRADLEY BELSCHNER, AND

W. BRADFORD LITTLEJOHN

Richard Hooker (1553/4-1600), the Elizabethan divine most responsible for laying the theological foundations for the Church of England, was one of the leading theorists of law in the Christian theological tradition. He begins his great *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in Book I with an outline of *law* as a basic category for Christian faith, and indeed human reasoning in general. This outline stands as a magnificent specimen of a Reformed Thomism, showing the broad harmony between these two theological traditions on foundational questions.

Like Thomas Aquinas, Hooker treats law first and foremost as a *directive rule*, not a *coercive imposition* (even if human law has a necessarily coercive dimension), and like Aquinas, Hooker begins his treatise with the notion of “the eternal law,” which is to say the law that binds God’s own action. Not, of course, that God is bound by something outside himself; the eternal law is “that order which God before all ages hath set down with himself, for himself to do all things by.” However, it is important, thinks Hooker (and indeed do most of those in the Reformed tradition, contrary to common caricatures) to insist that God’s actions do reflect a law, an order, a reason; they are not arbitrary projections of the divine will. As such, our own reason can grasp something of the order and rationality of divine action, though only a glimpse; it remains the case that because God’s thoughts are so far above ours, his purposes remain most often shrouded in mystery, as Hooker eloquently attests in this passage.

Note that the following text, extracted from Book I, ch. 2 of the Laws, is a modernization of the early English original, by Mr. Brian Marr, Mr. Bradley Belschner, and Dr. Bradford Littlejohn. The full modernization of Book I will appear in Spring 2017 under the title A Christian Theory of Law.

(2.) All things that exist work in a way that is neither unnatural nor random. Nor do they ever work without a preconceived end or goal. And the end which it works for is not achieved unless the work is also fit to achieve it by. For different ends require different modes of working.

Therefore, we define a *Law* as that which determines what kind of work each thing should do, how its power should be restrained, and what form its work should take. No end could ever be reached unless the means by which it was reached were regular, that is to say, unless the means were suitable, fitting, and appropriate to their ends accord-

ing to a principle, rule, or law. This is first true even of the workings of God Himself.

All things work, in their own way, according to a law. Nearly everything works according to a law subject to some superior, who has authored it; only the works and operations of God have Him as both their worker and as their law. The very being of God is a sort of Law to His working, for the perfection that God is, gives perfection to what God does. The natural, necessary, and internal operations of God—the begetting of the Son and the proceeding of the Spirit—are far beyond the scope of this book. For our purposes, we need only attend to those operations that begin and continue by the voluntary choice of God who has eternally decreed when and how they should be, and that this eternal decree is what we call an *eternal law*.

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to those operations that begin and continue by the voluntary choice of God who has eternally decreed when and how they should be, and that this eternal decree is what we call an *eternal law*.

It is dangerous for the feeble brain of man to wade too far into the doings of the Most High. Although it is life to know Him and joy to mention His name, our surest knowledge is that we do not know Him as He truly is, nor can we; our safest eloquence is to be silent by confessing without confession that His glory is inexplicable and His greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above, and we are on earth; therefore let our words be wary and few. . . .

(3.) Even wise and learned pagans acknowledged that there must be some First Cause, upon which the existence of everything else depends. Nor do they call this cause anything other than an Agent, that is, something that knows what it does and why it does it, and does so according to a certain order or law. Homer, for instance, says, “Zeus’s counsel was carried out” and the thrice-great Hermes admits the same when he says, “The creator made the whole world, not by hands, but by reason.” The same is confessed by Anaxagoras and Plato who call the Maker of the whole world a rational worker, and the Stoics, although they thought that the First Cause was fire, also affirmed that the fire having art did “proceed about a set way in making the whole world.” All these admit that this First Cause took *counsel*, or followed *reason*, or observed a *way*. In other words, constant order and law is kept, which order must be its own author. If this were not the case, then it would have to be directed by some worthier or higher cause, and would by definition not be a First Cause. Since it is the first, it alone can be the author of that law according to which it freely acts.



RICHARD HOOKER

God therefore is a law both to Himself and to everything else. To Himself He is a law in all those things which our Savior speaks of, saying, “My Father worketh even until now, and I work.” (Jn. 5:17). God works nothing without cause. He does everything with some end in mind, and the end for which they are done is the reason He does so. He would never have created woman unless he saw that it would not be good unless she were created. “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). God only does those things which to leave undone would not be good.

One might ask why, even though God has infinite power, the effects of that power are limited as we see they are. This is because he works toward a certain end and by a certain law which constrains the effects of His power so that it does not work infinitely but only as much as necessary to reach that end: “all things well” (Wisd. 8:1), all in a decent and comely manner, all “by measure and number and weight” (Wisd. 11:20).

(4.) The general end for which God works all things in time is the exercise of His most glorious and abundant excellence. This abundant excellence shows itself in variety, which is why Scripture so often speaks of God’s “riches” (cf. Eph. 1:7; Phil. 4:19; Col. 2:3); “The Lord has made everything for Himself” (Prov. 16:4), not because they can add anything to Him, but so that in all things he might show His beneficence and grace.

We might not be able to tell the exact reason for every one of God’s actions, and therefore we cannot always give a full account of His

works. Nonetheless, every finite work of God’s has some reason or purpose behind it, since some law has been imposed on it; if there were no law, the work would have to be infinite, just as the worker Himself is.

(5.) Therefore those who think that God acts without any other cause than His bare will are badly mistaken. Again, we will not always know the reason, but it is most unreasonable to imagine there is no reason, since He works all things, not only according to His own will, but “after the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11). Whatever is done with counsel or wise forethought must have some reason behind it, even if the reason is in some cases so secret that it makes a man stand amazed, as the Apostle Paul did: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!” (Rom. 11:33). That eternal law which God Himself is to Himself and by which He works all things which have their origin in Him; that law on which the countenance of wisdom shines and says, “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old” (Prov. 8:22); that law which is the pattern for the making of the world and the compass by which to guide it; that law which is of God and with Him everlastingly; again I say, that law whose author and sustainer is the God who is blessed for ever, how should either man or angel be ever able to perfectly behold? The book of this law we are neither able nor worthy to open and look into. The little which we barely glimpse, we admire; the rest in devout ignorance we humbly and meekly adore.

WAS THERE A CALVINIST RESISTANCE THEORY? THE WATERSHED OF MODERN POLITICS: LAW VIRTUE, KINGSHIP AND CONSENT (1300-1650) BY FRANCIS OAKLEY

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2015

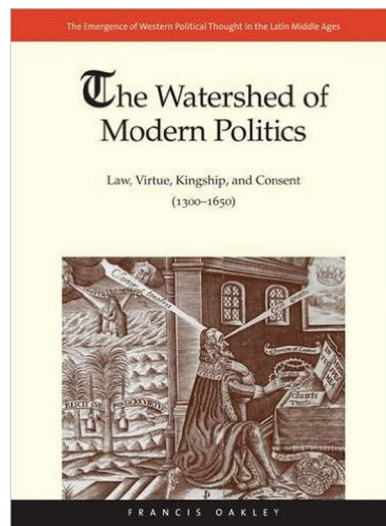
REVIEW BY SIMON KENNEDY

It is a common trope in histories of political thought to maintain that the European reformations saw the development of a new understanding about the nature of political obligation and political legitimacy. Specifically, scholars are fond of claiming that there was a special school of thought which developed out of the Swiss Reformation. Apparently, Reformed Protestants were the primary propagators of a new theory which legitimized resistance against tyrannical rule; hence the common title “Calvinist Resistance Theory”. Of course, there are always two sides to any story. Francis Oakley, renowned medievalist and historian of political thought, recently weighed in on this debate about the category of “Calvinist Resistance Theory”. He argues that there was no such thing.

Oakley makes his case in the closing title in his trilogy on Western political thought, *The Watershed of Modern Politics: Law, Virtue, Kingship and Consent (1300-1650)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015). His claim revolves around a larger historical argument: that the conciliarist theorists of the late medieval period were the precursors of many significant aspects of modern political thought. Oakley suggests that the idea that the people having a right to resist tyranny, whether on their own behalf or through the agency of the lesser magistrates, was formed much earlier than the emergence of Swiss Protestant theology, and was seeded by conciliar theologians. According to Oakley, the passivity of German Lutherans after the peace of Augsburg, along with the rather strict intimations against civil resistance of Calvin himself, are aberrations. Oakley describes the nonresistance which is evident in the Protestant theological writings of the period as “short-lived”, a “swerve in the history of political thought away from the characteristically medieval constitutionalist aspirations” of conciliarist thinkers (252). In essence, Oakley is not claiming that Reformed Protestants didn’t have theories of resistance, but is instead suggesting that any developments they did make were not especially Calvinist.

His historical evidence for this claim is judicious. John Ponet (1514-1556), sometime bishop of Worcester and Marian exile, wrote *A Short*

Treatise of Politicke Power, published in Strassburg in 1556. In this text, Ponet calls upon various precedents for the legitimacy of rebellion against tyrannical rulers, including incidents from the Bible, from English history and, most surprisingly, from papal history. Intriguingly for Oakley’s argument, Ponet raises a pertinent example from 1415, when there “were three popes popped out of their places.” (257, Ponet’s own words) Here, Ponet is calling upon conciliar theory to bolster his claims for the legitimacy of civil resistance to tyrants. Oakley helpfully points out that Ponet frames the resistance against the popes as an act of the church itself, as opposed to a council representing the church (258). This is a useful distinction, as it shows that Ponet was radical in his understanding of legitimate rebellion. The agency of a rightly constituted representative body was of no real consequence for his theory, and therefore Ponet bypasses the lesser magistrate doctrine and goes straight to the more radical popular resistance theory (258). Oakley is right to point out the radical nature of this position, but his point must be taken that it has theoretical precedent.



Passing over Oakley’s exegesis of George Buchanan’s resistance theory, along with his discussion of Theodore Beza, readers will no doubt be interested in what he has to say about the Huguenot tract *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579). The *Vindiciae* is most likely the work of Philippe du Plessis Mornay, and is framed by Oakley as a work which aims for broad appeal. Indeed, Oakley points out that the *Vindiciae* uses sources ranging from ancient Israel to Roman Catholic France, through to Protestant England. In doing so, Oakley says that Mornay is making his case “in a markedly secular fashion”, designed to reach out across confessional boundaries to gain allies from within the Romanist camp in France (266). Oakley also notes how Mornay deploys natural law arguments instead of scriptural arguments, and draws on the customary historical precedents, in support of the Huguenots’ right to resist their monarch (266-7). The clincher comes when he shows that Mornay, like Ponet, concludes his argument by pointing to conciliarist precedent. (268)

Vindiciae contra tyrannos represents, for Oakley, “a sort of catchment basin wherein were collected so many of the arguments—Romanist,

Lutheran, and Calvinist—pointing in the direction” of the people’s right to resist a tyrant (265). Oakley insists that this tract is not so much revolutionary as it is a repository for arguments made in the past. The other works of resistance theory by Reformed authors that he examines are framed in a similar way. And this way of viewing this particular aspect of the history of political thought is, I think, very helpful for us today. It seems to me that some scholars and writers are far too keen to derive extraordinary significance from the resistance theories of the early Reformed writers, in

a similar way that some might claim that the Reformation was the seedbed of popular sovereignty, capitalism, or individualism. But, as Oakley illustrates in this specific excursus, the history of ideas is rarely that neat. His narrative of resistance theory is made more plausible than many others by his framing of the historical ques-

tion: where did the idea originate? Indeed, he concludes that the resistance theories of early Reformed thinkers were, as it turns out, not especially “Calvinist”. Even if one disagrees with the specifics of

his claim about the importance of conciliarism, it is surely a better method to look to antecedent ideas, as Oakley does here, for guidance in understanding the history of Reformed thought, rather than finding significance in speculations about descendant ideas. Reformed political thought matters. But perhaps not in the way that is often assumed.



THE ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY MASSACRE, FRANCOIS DUBOIS

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