

FILMER'S AND LOCKE'S USE OF GENESIS

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FILMER'S AND LOCKE'S
USE OF GENESIS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Arts

McMaster University

July, 1982

MASTER OF ARTS (1982)
(Religious Studies)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: A Critical Analysis of Filmer's and Locke's use
of Genesis in the Development of their Political
Philosophies

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NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 91

ABSTRACT

The political philosophy of John Locke is well known to those who are familiar with the foundations of modern liberal democracy. What is perhaps less familiar is the biblical base to Locke's political teaching and his scriptural argument with Sir Robert Filmer. Indeed, Locke's use of the Bible in the development of his political philosophy has been strangely ignored by both biblical and political scholars.

Thus, this thesis is an attempt to articulate the political philosophy of Filmer and Locke from their explicit use of Scripture. It in turn focuses on the question of whether two disparate political teachings (i.e., the divine right of kings and liberal democracy), which are overtly based on the same three biblical verses, can be substantiated on the basis of what the text actually says at a particular point. The net result of this investigation will be to demonstrate a relationship between political teachings and religious texts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Eugene Combs for his help in this thesis. It was he who taught me how to read Genesis and it was he who generated my interest in exploring the theologico-political question. His unseen hand guided me throughout many of the sensitive administrative and academic challenges encountered in this work. I should also like to thank Dr. Alan Cooper for his constructive and all too necessary help with my Hebrew grammar; Dr. Tom Lewis for his valuable assistance on the political section of this thesis; and Dr. Ken Post for his inspiration and encouragement throughout.

Finally, I would like to give a special thanks to my parents, brothers, colleagues and friends who have not only made this work possible, but enjoyable as well.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to investigate the relationship between political thought and religious texts; in particular, this inquiry will focus upon the way in which Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653) and John Locke (1632-1702) use the Bible in the development of their political philosophies. This procedure will in turn necessitate a further investigation of those biblical texts upon which their arguments are based to determine whether or not Filmer or Locke is concerned with serious exegesis. If it is found that either Filmer's or Locke's exegesis is hermeneutically valid,¹ then it will have been shown how a particular political philosophy is in line with or not inconsistent with an interpretation of the Bible.

Locke has been chosen for this exercise primarily

1. By "hermeneutically valid" I mean the most probable reading that can be substantiated on the basis of the evidence from the text. To establish the norms of a given reading (for without norms there is no way to distinguish between two disparate interpretations) I am relying on those provided by E.D. Hirsch in Validity in Interpretation (New Haven, 1967), pp. 236-37. A reading must satisfy the criterion of legitimacy (permissible within the public norms of langue), of correspondence (account for each linguistic component of the text), of generic appropriateness (understanding the genre in which the text was written), and of coherency (how well the parts of an interpretation fit in with the total context).

because of his great importance as a political philosopher. It is crucial to understand, however, that his Two Treatises on Government (1690), in which the principles of freedom and equality are used to support his theory of liberal democracy, is a direct reply to Sir Robert Filmer's Patriarcha (1680), in which the principles of slavery and inequality are used to support his theory of the divine right of kings. Furthermore, the fact that Filmer had based his theory of divine right on the Bible (especially Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7) required that Locke's reply would also take the form of an argument from Scripture. Indeed, because of the overt biblical references in the political writings of Filmer and Locke, the relationship between political thought and religious texts can be demonstrated. Because of the historical importance of the ideological dispute between Filmer and Locke, the connection between political thought and religious texts should not be ignored.

Nevertheless, even though biblical references pervade Locke's Two Treatises, the relationship of his political philosophy to the Bible has yet to be documented in any great detail. In fact, many Locke scholars seem to feel that Locke was deliberately twisting the Bible if not distorting it altogether in order to make the Bible conform to his political philosophy. This hypothesis finds its fullest development in Leo Strauss's Natural Right and History (1953). Strauss argues that Locke falsifies biblical texts

in order to prove the sufficiency of Reason over Revelation. According to Strauss, "Locke was forced to make his political teaching, i.e., his natural law concerning the rights and duties of rulers and of subjects, as independent of Scripture as it could possibly be".² Yet even though Strauss's theory has many adherents, other scholars remain to be convinced; unfortunately, those who do take issue with Strauss's hypothesis do not go so far as to articulate Locke's political philosophy from the standpoint of the biblical material with which Locke deals.

Indeed, the failure of political scholars to see a relationship between political philosophy and the Bible is compounded by their failure to see the Bible as containing a teaching on the foundations of human order. This comment by James Daly in his Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought is not untypical:

Since the first book of Scripture is, if viewed as a source of political theory, such a congeries of imprecision, contradiction, story-telling, and incomprehensible genealogy, and since it is so frequently silent on detail which would be absolutely essential to the elaboration of a systematic political philosophy, the critics [of Filmer] were bound to have the advantage.³

2. Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History (Chicago, 1953), p. 207.

3. James Daly, Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought (Toronto, 1979), p. 80.

Nevertheless, the crucial question that must be addressed is whether Filmer or Locke saw that the Bible contained a particular theologico-political teaching. It is surely no coincidence that Filmer's and Locke's political philosophies concern themselves with the first three verses in Genesis that concern man's ruling. We see how, in Genesis 1:28, God tells the male and the female to have dominion (rādā) over certain things; how in 3:16 God says that the woman is to be ruled (māsal) by the man; how in 4:7 God tells Cain that he should rule (māsal) over a certain thing.

Thus, although there is a probable relationship between political foundations and religious texts that may have been perceived by the political philosophers in the seventeenth century, there is a need in the twentieth century to recover that relationship if we are to understand more precisely the origins of the political order under which we live. It is therefore in the attempt to recover just such a relationship that this thesis is being undertaken.

My four part structure will be as follows. In the first chapter I will describe the importance of the historical context in which both Filmer and Locke are writing in order to define more clearly the issues that are at stake. The second chapter will survey the recent scholarship on Locke's use of the Bible in his political philosophy in order to assess the allegation that Locke is "proof-texting". Is this merely an assumption or does it have any basis in fact?

distorting the text. If, however, it is found that either Filmer's or Locke's exegesis is hermeneutically valid, then a positive connection between political foundations and religious texts will have been demonstrated.

CHAPTER ONE

Before examining the political philosophy of Filmer and Locke from the point of view of their biblical exegesis, it is first necessary to sketch in some historical background. The decade of 1680-1690, which opened with the publication of Sir Robert Filmer's Patriarcha and closed with publication of Locke's Two Treatises on Government, is particularly significant in the history of western political thought. It was a decade of political controversy, ushered in by the Exclusionist Crisis (1679-1681) and drawing to a close with the "Glorious Revolution of 1688". Most emphatically, it was a decade which saw the absolute power of the king severely limited by Parliament.

From 1679 to 1681 a bitter political dispute arose between Charles II and the Earl of Shaftesbury over Parliament's right to exclude the king's brother, James, Duke of York, from the throne. Shaftesbury's party (the Whigs) feared that James would increase the power of the monarchy, limit the power of Parliament, and possibly return the country to Roman Catholicism. Yet, the timely publication of Filmer's Patriarcha in 1680 (even though it was written no later than 1642) gave the Royalist "Tory" Party a weapon to combat Shaftesbury and the Whig exclusionists: here was a political tract whose biblical base justified hereditary

succession as well as the divine right and absolute power of kings.¹ What was needed by the Whigs, therefore, was an answer to Filmer and an answer directly rooted in Scripture. Thus it was John Locke, a patron of Shaftesbury, who was summoned to champion the Whig cause.

Locke began writing the Two Treatises as early as 1681

1. The extent to which Filmer was representative of a faction of English political thought in the seventeenth century is by no means clear. J.N. Figgis, in The Divine Right of Kings (New York, 1965), p. 148; M. Ashley, in The Glorious Revolution of 1688 (London, 1966), pp. 99-100; J. Dunn, in The Political Thought of John Locke (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 45-51; and also in his article, "The Politics of John Locke in England and America in the Eighteenth Century", in John Locke: Problems and Perspectives (Cambridge, 1969), p. 49; all argue that Filmer had had a profound influence on English political thought at the time of the publication of Patriarcha. J. Dunn, in his article, writes, "the most elaborate, and perhaps at the relevant social level the most influential, exposition of [the Tory] political ideology was to be found in the writings of an obscure Kentish squire called Robert Filmer" (p. 49). Similarly, G.J. Schochet, in Patriarchalism and Political Thought (Oxford, 1975), writes that "the Filmerian position very nearly became the official ideology" (p. 193). P. Laslett, the editor of Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer (Oxford, 1949), and of Locke's Two Treatises on Government (New York, 1965), argues, in the former work, how influential Filmer's writings were at the time of their publication (pp. 36-38) and, in the latter work, argues that Filmer's writings "had become the official exposition of the Royal and Tory view of the basis of governmental power" (p. 49). Daly, however, in his Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought, argues persuasively that Filmer did not belong to the conventional royalist political thought at the time his works were published (see especially pp. 124-26). Nevertheless, the fact remains that Filmer's works were sufficiently popular to be reprinted in 1684, 1685 and 1698, and that the likes of John Locke (Two Treatises, 1690), James Tyrrell (Patriarcha non Monarcha, 1681) and Algernon Sidney (Discourses Concerning Government 1698), all found it necessary to refute him.

1679 and had finished most of it by 1683² but, owing to the heated political climate in England at that time, he decided not to publish it until 1690.³ Thus, the early date of the Two Treatises indicates that Locke was writing more in response to the events of 1679-1681 than to those of 1688.

Locke's work would then foreshadow rather than defend the "Glorious Revolution" even though the Preface suggests otherwise:

2. In the third chapter of his introduction to Locke's Two Treatises, Laslett argues that Locke had completed his work at least seven years before it was published. Almost all scholars now concur with this finding.

3. There were several practical reasons for the delay in publishing. In 1681 Charles II had dismissed Parliament which had thus allowed for the unopposed accession of James II's absolutist regime in 1685. Charges of sedition and treason were on the upswing during this period and, in fact, the manuscript of Sidney's refutation of Filmer (Discourses Concerning Government) was a crucial part of the prosecution's contention that Sidney was a collaborator with the Rye House plotters (an alleged conspiracy to murder Charles and James). Sidney was executed for his efforts but, unto his death, he maintained the veracity of his claims against Filmer's absolutism (see especially Laslett's introduction to Patriarcha pp. 36-37). So turbulent was the political climate at this time that Locke himself left for Holland in 1683 and did not return until 1689, that is, until James's regime was overthrown by William and Mary in the bloodless revolution of 1688. Even then, however, the political atmosphere had not quieted down enough for Locke to sign his name to his work. (In fact, Locke's only acknowledgment of his authorship of the Two Treatises was in his will.) To appreciate the turmoil of the decade of 1680-1690, see Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke, pp. 45-51, and, for an interesting literary rendering of the "divine right" versus "Parliamentary privilege" debate see John Dryden's satiric poem, "Absalom and Achitophel" (1681) wherein the biblical account of David and his rebellious son, Absalom (II Samuel 13-18), is given a contemporary setting.

These [papers], which remain, I hope are sufficient to establish the Throne of our Great Restorer, Our present King William, to make good his Title, in the Consent of the People, which being the only one of all lawful Governments, has more fully and clearly than any Prince in Christendom: And to justifie to the World, the People of England, whose love of their Just and Natural Rights, with their Resolution to Preserve them, saved the Nation when it was on the very brink of Slavery and Ruine.

What is fundamental to remember, however, is that Locke is responding directly to Filmer and, in particular, to Filmer's biblically based theory of divine right. In other words, the decline of the absolute power of the monarchy and the rise of the power of the people through Parliament can be viewed against the backdrop of a theologico-political dispute between Filmer and Locke which is based upon their interpretations of the Bible.

Although today the Bible's influence in political affairs is perhaps negligible at best, it had a considerably greater influence on the political thinkers of the seventeenth century. In a long line which stretches back at least to Augustine's City of God, the Bible influenced political thinkers such as Abravanel, Calvin, Grotius, Hooker and many more.⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, to find such a

4. In fact, throughout its history, the Bible (especially the early chapters in Genesis) has had a particular appeal for political thinkers. Philo Judaeus (d. A.D. 54) argued that God had already created a "perfect commonwealth" before Adam, who was the world's first citizen, lived within the boundaries of its divine laws (see On the Creation,

strong biblical bias in the writings of Filmer and Locke immersed, as they were, in such a tradition. Although most scholars agree that the Bible had had a profound influence on Filmer⁵

142ff.). Augustine (354-430), who was in part influenced by the Philonic method of interpretation, also saw the opening chapters of Genesis as containing a political teaching. For him, the story of Cain and Abel was an example of the founding of two types of cities: Cain, whose love is directed towards himself, established the city of man; Abel, whose love is towards God, established the city of God. Cain's fratricide, moreover, was politically motivated inasmuch as he desired and achieved sole sovereignty and power over his brother by removing him from the political scene (see City of God, Book XV, especially chapters 1-7, 17, 20-21). The medieval Jewish political philosopher Isaac Abravanel (1437-1508) also saw the Cain and Abel story as one that had fecund political implications. Cain, who pursued the superfluous life, used his intellect to make himself "political"; that is, "to domineer over others and subjugate some to others, though nature has made man free and equal at their birth." Abel, on the other hand, pursued the rustic life and, as such, lived according to God's original purposes for man (see his "Commentary on the Bible" in Lerner's and Mahdi's Medieval Political Philosophy [Glencoe, 1963], pp. 254-270). In a more general way, the founders of modern political theory, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1677), who was Filmer's contemporary, and Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), who was Locke's contemporary, constantly used the Bible to articulate aspects of their political theory. Nevertheless, the explicit relation of their use of Scripture to their political philosophies has yet to be documented in detail. In any event, the tradition which viewed the Bible as having a political teaching had, in all probability, been well developed and rooted in the culture at the time of Filmer's and Locke's writings. For a general description of the importance of the Bible to seventeenth century political thought see Figgis, The Divine Right of Kings, and Schochet, Patriarchalism and Political Thought.

5. See especially Daly, Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought, pp. 13, 61; Laslett, Patriarcha and the Political Writings of Sir Robert Filmer, p. 11; Schochet, Patriarchalism and Political Thought, p. 137; Figgis, The Divine Right of Kings, p. 157. Filmer himself wrote that "we must not neglect the scriptures, and search in philosophers for the grounds of dominion and property, which are the main principles of government and justice" (p. 187).

and Locke,⁶ their use of the Bible in their respective polit-

6. Although I will deal with Locke's specific relationship to the Bible in chapter three, it is important to point out that there are many political scholars who argue that the Bible was one of Locke's chief concerns. For a general description of this position, see J.W. Gough's introduction to his John Locke's Political Philosophy (Oxford, 1973), p. 11; G.H. Sabine's discussion on Locke in his A History of Political Theory (New York, 1963), p. 52; M. Seliger's The Liberal Politics of John Locke (New York, 1969), p. 60 and his article, "Locke, Liberalism and Nationalism" in John Locke: Problems and Perspectives (Cambridge, 1969), p. 21; R.I. Aaron in his John Locke (Oxford, 1971), p. 364; and S.S. Wolin in his Politics and Vision (Boston, 1960), p. 337. More specifically, however, Laslett, in his introduction to Locke's Two Treatises, writes: "the holy scriptures, rationally interpreted, were to be used almost as sources of empirically verified facts for moral and political purposes" (p. 110). H. Aarsleff, in his article, "The State of Nature and the Nature of Man in Locke", in John Locke: Problems and Perspectives, writes: "this belief in the two kinds of revelation, special and manifest (i.e., Scripture and reason), and in their complete harmony, is fundamental to Locke's thought; he expresses it again and again throughout his works from the first to the last, and hence no reading of Locke, no attempt to understand him, can ignore it" (p. 105). Similarly, R.H. Cox, in his Locke on War and Peace (Oxford, 1960), writes: "[the Bible] is unquestionably Locke's most venerable and frequently quoted 'authority'" (p. 39).

Locke himself, in a letter to Edward Stillingfleet, bishop of Worcester, writes: "the Holy Scripture is to me, and always will be, the constant guide of my assent; and I will always hearken to it, as containing the infallible truth relating to things of highest concernment. And I wish I could say there are no mysteries in it; I acknowledge there are to me, and I fear always will be. But where I want evidence of things, there is yet ground enough for me to believe, because God has said it; and I will presently condemn and quit any opinion of mine, as soon as I am shown that it is contrary to any revelation in the Holy Scripture" (Works, IV, p. 96; quoted in George W. Ewing's introduction to Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity, xi).

Some scholars have even gone so far as to argue that Locke's rationalistic interpretation of Scripture inaugurated what has come to be known as modern biblical criticism. See Aaron, John Locke, who writes: "in the historical and critical approach to the Scriptures, Locke is a worthy

ical philosophies has yet to be articulated in any great detail. But before I discuss the scriptural or exegetical relationship between Filmer and Locke, I will describe two other ways in which the Bible was used to establish political order in the seventeenth century. This will help to illustrate more clearly the biblical background to Filmer and Locke. First, there was an attempt to legitimize the king's position as rightful heir to the throne by a genealogical reading of Genesis. These pedigrees attempted to show that the king was Adam's or Noah's direct descendant. Understandably, because access to one's past was limited in this pre-archeological age, the genealogies had a particular appeal - at least in the popular mind. Obviously, if it could be shown that the king was the sole direct descendant of Adam or Noah, then his position as "divine appointee" was made all the more legitimate. These genealogies certainly did exist and no less than Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and James I all had their lineage traced back as far as Adam.⁷

forerunner of Schleiermacher; he is a pioneer of modern biblical criticism, as is shown both by the Reasonableness of Christianity and even more by his commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul" (p. 295). See also H. McLaughlin, The Religious Opinions of Milton, Locke and Newton (Manchester, 1941), p. 92; Hans Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative (New Haven, 1974), p. 95; W. Neil in his article, "The Criticism and Theological Use of the Bible, 1700-1950", in the Cambridge History of the Bible, III (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 240-41.

7. See W.H. Greenleaf's article, "Filmer's Patriar-

More relevant perhaps was the "genetic" theory of political origins which looked to the earliest recorded example of political society in order to explain the current political situation. Genesis, whose record stretched back to the beginning of human history, was used as the political model for genetic justification.⁸ Indeed, if political society were created by God, then an inquiry into government in its most pristine state (i.e., before the "Fall") would help to point out how political society operated before human corruption had altered it. Thus, the genetic theory tried to recapture that "Golden Age" and apply its political principles to the current political situation in an attempt to stem the tide of human corruption. Looked at in this manner, the genetic theory may be seen as an attempt to explain the present in terms of its relation to the past.

Although the genetic and genealogical theories of political duty pervade the writings of Filmer and Locke, I will conduct the examination of Filmer's and Locke's political philosophy solely on the basis of their arguments on specific biblical verses. Indeed, it was the Bible, or more specific-

chal History", Historical Journal, IX (1966), pp. 36-71, for an in depth treatment of the genealogical argument.

8. For an elaboration of the genetic argument, see Daly, Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought, pp. 57-59; Schochet, Patriarchalism and Political Thought, pp. 8-9, 58-63; and Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke, pp. 64-65, 101.

ally, it was Filmer's interpretation of the Bible that necessitated a response from Locke. As Peter Laslett points out in his introduction to Locke's Two Treatises:

It was because Sir Robert Filmer claimed that there was to be found in Revelation a proof that God had set men above other men, fathers above sons and men above women, the older above the younger and kings above all others that his doctrine was so dangerous and had to be refuted. It became necessary to show in minute detail, analysing text after text of the Scriptures, that this interpretation was quite wrong.

This is the logical function of the First Treatise in Locke's work on government, but he says nothing there which is not laid down in the Second Treatise. The polemic against Filmer had to be in the form of a Scriptural argument, but it is necessarily an argument from observation and reason as well, for the Scripture does not interpret itself.⁹

Nevertheless, even though there is an historical and literary relation between Filmer and Locke, there are many scholars who argue that Locke is responding more to Thomas Hobbes.¹⁰ Yet the fact remains that Locke never quotes any

9. See the introduction to Two Treatises, pp. 106-07. Above all, it is crucial to see the exegetical dimensions to the relationship between Locke and Filmer if one is to understand their argument in greater clarity. See Seliger, The Liberal Politics of John Locke, who writes: "since Filmer derives absolute power from Scripture, Locke had to meet him on his own ground" (pp. 210-11). Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke, writes: "the intellectual tedium of this exercise was matched only by its ideological necessity; if a specific political doctrine could be extrapolated from Scripture, as Filmer's claimed to be, it clearly pre-empted any further form of political reflection" (p. 68). Schochet, Patriarchalism and Political Thought, also writes: "even Locke did not dispute the literal truths of Scriptural history in his attack on political patriarchalism. What was at issue, though, was the interpretation to be extracted from certain passages where the meaning was not clear" (p. 122).

10. Most chiefly, Leo Strauss in Natural Right and

of Hobbes's works in the Two Treatises and Hobbes's Leviathan is only mentioned on two occasions. Filmer and Patriarcha, on the other hand, are mentioned throughout the First Treatise and the language and style of argumentation of the Second Treatise similarly betray Filmer's influence.¹¹

History (Chicago, 1953). Strauss argues that Locke and Hobbes are advocating a doctrine of hedonistic self-preservation (see chapter two of this thesis). See also C.B. Macpherson, in The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Oxford, 1962), who argues that both Locke and Hobbes are putting forth a doctrine of unlimited appropriation of property and giving rationale to the capitalist system. Similarly, see Cox, Locke on War and Peace, pp. 35-63; W. Bluhm, Theories of the Political System (Englewood-Cliffs, 1965), pp. 301-11; J. Anglim, "On Locke's State of Nature", in Political Studies, 26 (1978), pp. 78-90; R.A. Goldwin, "Locke's State of Nature in Political Society", in Western Political Quarterly, 29 (1976), pp. 126-35; R.W.K. Hinton, "Patriarchalism in Hobbes and Locke", in Political Studies, 16 (1968), pp. 55-67; E. Sandoz, "The Civil Theology of Liberal Democracy: Locke and his Predecessors", in Journal of Politics, 34 (1972), pp. 2-36, who all argue that Locke is actually basing his political theory on Hobbesian premises.

11. Of the scholars who feel that Filmer (rather than Locke) influenced the development of Locke's political philosophy, see Laslett, introduction to Patriarcha, pp. 33-43 and his introduction to Two Treatises, pp. 80-105; Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke, pp. 77-83; E.S. de Beer, "Locke and English Liberalism", in John Locke: Problems and Perspectives, pp. 34-44; J.H. Franklin in John Locke and the Theory of Sovereignty (Cambridge, 1978), p. 123; and M. Cranston, in his biography, John Locke (London, 1957), p. 207, who writes: "two wrong ideas about Locke's Government have gained currency in text-books; the first is that the book was written after 1688 to justify the Glorious Revolution; the second, that it was written as a reply to the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. Neither view stands up well to scrutiny. The first of the Two Treatises is a detailed refutation of Filmer; and the second sets out an alternate political philosophy to Filmer's. This definite connection helps to date Locke's book as one written, like Patriarcha Non Monarcha, when the writings of Filmer were at the height

The net effect of shifting the emphasis from Filmer to Hobbes is important and bears mentioning. To ignore Filmer and his presence is largely to ignore the scriptural argument between Filmer and Locke, in particular, the explicit scriptural argument as found in the First Treatise.¹² In fact, those who argue that Locke is responding to Hobbes rather than to Filmer tend to ignore the First Treatise altogether precisely because the First Treatise is so heavily influenced

of their fashion after the first publication, in 1680, of Patriarcha."

12. Although the First Treatise was quite popular at the time of its publication (even more so than the Second Treatise; see M.P. Thompson's article "The Reception of Locke's Two Treatises in 1690-1705", in Political Studies, 24 [1976], pp. 184-191), it has, during the past three centuries, suffered from a rather bad press. C.D. Tarlton, in "A Rope of Sand: Interpreting Locke's First Treatise on Government," in Historical Journal, 21 (1978), pp. 45-73, is the only one, to my knowledge, to consider seriously the first half of Locke's work on government. A few quotes, which Tarlton culled (pp. 46-47), will suffice to show how little attention has been paid to the First Treatise. H.J. Laski, in Political Thought in England (New York, 1920), p. 38, writes: "the first [treatise] is a detailed and tiresome refutation to the historic imagination of Robert Filmer"; D. Geronimo, in Modern Western Political Thought (Chicago, 1972), p. 118, writes: "the First Treatise, which virtually no one reads anymore, is a line by line refutation of Filmer's tome. Tedious would be too flattering an adjective for it"; and Bluhm, Theories of the Political System, p. 310, writes: "the first of the Two Treatises is a rather dull affair, and to a modern reader it seems to have only antiquarian interest." In fact, the First Treatise was not published in Germany until 1905, in Italy until 1948, in America until 1949, and in France until 1953. Similarly, even though the Second Treatise has been translated and published in Spain, Sweden, Norway, the Soviet Union, India and Israel, the First Treatise is yet to appear in those countries (see Laslett, introduction to Two Treatises, appendix A).

by Filmer. Thus, to ignore Filmer's influence is tantamount to ignoring the biblical argument between Filmer and Locke, that is, the way Locke uses the Bible against Filmer's position. Indeed, there is a direct correspondence between those scholars who stress Hobbes's influence on Locke and those who argue that Locke misuses or "proof-texts" from the Bible. Similarly, those scholars who stress Filmer's influence at least take into consideration the role that the Bible has played in the political philosophy of Locke.¹³ Perhaps the most important if not influential scholar who argues that Locke is teaching a Hobbesian doctrine and that he is deliberately misusing the Bible is Leo Strauss. The second chapter is devoted to Strauss's position in an attempt to assess the charge that Locke is "proof-texting" or misusing the Bible.

13. Of the scholars who stress the Hobbes - Locke relationship (i.e., Strauss, Goldwin, Bluhm, Macpherson, Sandoz, Anglim, Cox), only Cox stresses the importance of the First Treatise. Yet every one of those scholars either argues that Locke misuses the Bible or fails to mention the Bible in connection with Locke's political philosophy. Conversely, those scholars who stress the Filmer - Locke relationship (i.e., Laslett, Dunn, Schochet, Seliger, Aaron), take into consideration both the First Treatise and Locke's sincere use of the Bible in his political philosophy.

CHAPTER TWO

Although Leo Strauss is not the only scholar to have written on Locke's misusing the Bible to support his political philosophy, Strauss is perhaps the most influential. Other scholars who have discussed the role of the Bible in Locke's politics (either pro or con) all find it necessary to take Strauss's arguments into consideration. Yet, in all that Strauss has published, only two articles, one in his book Natural Right and History and the other in his What is Political Philosophy?, deal specifically with Locke. It is in Natural Right, however, that Strauss argues that Locke is teaching Hobbes's doctrine of hedonistic self-preservation and is, therefore, misusing or "proof-texting" the Bible.

Strauss argues that Locke wanted to make his political philosophy demonstrably certain and since revelation did not supply one with any "certain and clear knowledge"¹ it did not, accordingly, provide a solid base upon which to build a political account of the whole. Had Locke relied totally on revelation, he would have written a "Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture Sainte". It was, however, Locke the rationalist who wrote the Two Treatises on Government. If Locke anticipated that his political

1. Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, edited by A.C. Fraser (New York, 1959), IV, 18, 4.

teaching would have a universal appeal as being unquestionably true, he could not base his teaching on Scripture for that would limit the scope of his audience to Christians. In other words, he had to teach truths which would be discernable by reason or, more precisely, prove the sufficiency of reason over revelation.

But to teach that revelation was superfluous in an age that had witnessed the murder of countless heretics would be foolish, if not suicidal. Locke, however, was a very able and cautious man, shrewd enough to realize what the implications of his doctrine would be; thus, in order to break with the Christian tradition, he would necessarily have to show his allegiance to it.² To do this, Locke had to write with two audiences in mind or conduct his teaching on two levels: on the one hand, he would have to show how much he agreed with the tradition and, on the other hand, demolish that agreement and teach a radically new doctrine.³

2. See Sandoz, "The Civil Theology of Liberal Democracy", p. 16, who writes: "his true profundity is perhaps obscured by an ambivalence that was probably calculated and which followed from his systematic intention to break with the classical and Christian tradition in philosophy and religion while appearing to be the true advocate of that tradition. ... Locke manages to reject the core of classical and Christian anthropology and along with it the tradition that was embodied in Western and English history."

3. See Strauss, Natural Right, pp. 165, 207-09, 246. For a further development of the theme of writing under persecution, see his Persecution and the Art of Writing (Glencoe, 1952). See also Cox, Locke on War and Peace, pp. 34-35, who argues that one should read Locke the way Locke says he had

Locke could thereby both appease the censors and yet be assured that anyone who took the time to read carefully between the lines would find out what he really had to say.

What Locke really had to say, according to Strauss, is that the state of nature should not be biblically based, that natural law should be independent of revelation, and that property should be based on a non-biblical concept of natural law. Therefore, although Locke appears to rely on Scripture in his doctrines of the state of nature, natural law, and property, he is silently altering the biblical teaching.

According to Strauss, although Locke's political philosophy is "based on the assumption of the state of nature", that state of nature cannot in any way be said to be based on the Bible.⁴ In the first place, the Jewish state

to read Filmer, that is, finding a concealed meaning behind the apparent contradictions. Similarly, see Bluhm, Theories of the Political System, pp. 109-10, who follows Strauss.

4. See Cox, Locke on War and Peace, pp. 52-53, who makes a similar point on the basis of the lack of explicit biblical references in Locke's concept of the state of nature: "in the first place, as the 'state of nature', which is mentioned explicitly only in the First Treatise, comes explicitly to occupy the foreground in Locke's argument - i.e., beginning in the second chapter of the Second Treatise - his reliance upon biblical citations and references diminishes drastically. This inverse relationship, while not in itself conclusive, suggests both the possibility of a slow and cautious development in the argument from beginning to end, and the existence of a tension between the biblical teaching and the origins of government."

described in the Bible is the only state which is not a natural one as God himself intervened in its affairs. Furthermore, although Locke would seem to equate the state of nature with the biblical state of innocence, the state of nature participates in the corrupt and degenerate state of man.⁵ If the state of nature is the only state where man is granted all the rights and priveleges that are essential to his survival, then that state would not come into effect until God granted Noah the right to eat meat in Genesis 9:6.⁶ And since God' grant to Noah takes place well after the Fall, the state of nature cannot be equated with the state of innocence. In other words, Locke has ignored the Christian concept of the Fall. Strauss says:

Just like the Fall itself, the punishment for the Fall ceased to be of any significance for Locke's political doctrine. He holds that even God's curse on Eve does not impose a duty on the female sex "not to endeavor to avoid" that curse: women may avoid the pangs of childbirth "if there could be found a remedy for it."⁷

Locke ran into more difficulties when he tried to separate his natural law teaching from Scripture in order to

5. See Anglim, "On Locke's State of Nature", p. 81, who agrees with Strauss's view that the state of nature in Locke's political philosophy is un-biblical: "the state of nature cannot be said to be the condition in which God placed temporarily as described in Scriptures."

6. Strauss, Natural Right, p. 216. See also Cox, Locke on War and Peace, p. 51, and Bluhm, Theories of the Political System, p. 310, who tacitly follow Strauss.

7. Strauss, Natural Right, pp. 216-18.

make his political teaching demonstrably certain. When the law of nature is divorced from Scripture it ceases to become a law, for a law must come with those sanctions which would make it a law (i.e., eternal rewards or punishments in the after life); and since those sanctions are properly said to be articles of faith and not reason, the law of nature is not a law in the proper sense of the word. Strauss concludes:

Therefore if there is to be a law knowable by the light of nature, that is, "without the help of positive revelation" that law must consist of a set of rules whose validity does not presuppose life after death or a belief in life after death.⁸

There are, however, moral rules which stand independent of Scripture and which are directed towards man's "political happiness" and concern the "good of mankind in this world". Yet in order to prove how this "partial law of nature" can stand independent of Scripture and Divine Law, Locke again had to alter the biblical teaching. Strauss cites at least three examples of this taking place. First, the conjugal ties which require that the man and the woman will live together "until death do them part" are not based upon revelation (Matthew 19:6 for example) but upon a mere convenience. When things are no longer convenient, the man

8. Ibid., p. 212. See also his discussion in 203-204, and Anglim, "On Locke's State of Nature", p. 79, n. 1: "certainly the text of the Two Treatises belies Locke's assertion that scriptural and natural law congrue."

and the woman are free to make other associations.⁹ Similarly, the honour owed to the father and the mother by the children, far from being absolute (cf. Exodus 20:12 or Deuteronomy 5:16), is proportional to "the amount of the father's care, cost and kindness". If the father contributes nothing, he deserves nothing in return.¹⁰ And finally, although the sanctions of rewards and punishments must be operative in the state of nature to make the law of nature a law in the strict sense, those sanctions are not of divine but of human origin. Locke quietly alters the biblical text of Genesis 9:6 in his justification of the right everyone has to kill a murderer in the state of nature (i.e., "whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"). But here Locke surreptitiously omits the biblical reason ("for in the image of God made He man"). Locke, therefore, shifts the emphasis for the right to execute the law of nature in the state of nature from God to man by distorting the Bible.¹¹

The law of nature would then appear to be a mere convenience, a convenience which is antithetical to biblical teaching and is directed towards man's political happiness. Indeed, in the state of nature (a state of continued dis-

9. Strauss, Natural Right, pp. 216-218.

10. Ibid., p. 219.

11. Ibid., pp. 221-23, especially n. 84, p. 223
See also Cox, Locke on War and Peace, pp. 54-55.

order), natural law will only be effective when it is directed towards man's self-preservation.¹² The law of nature, accordingly, will be superseded by the law of self-preservation or, more to the point, "the law of nature is nothing other than the sum of the dictates of reason in regard to man's 'mutual security' or to the 'peace and safety' of mankind."¹³ Thus, to avoid the inconveniences of the state of nature, men must contract among themselves to assure everyone's self-preservation as much as possible. And since self-preservation is ultimately dependent upon property, the best form of government is the government which tries to protect property, thereby ensuring self-preservation.¹⁴

It became a simple matter to see how Locke could derive an absolute right to property from an absolute right to self-preservation. The enjoyment of the right to self-preservation is dependent upon the amount of property one has or, the more property one has the more he is assured of a comfortable self-preservation. Locke attempts to justify

12. Ibid., pp. 227-34. See also Goldwin, "Locke's State of Nature in Political Society", p. 131, who argues that, "in the state of nature everything a man does to preserve himself is likely to be justified by him, the sole judge and executioner, as an action to punish an aggressor or offender against the law of nature. Preserving oneself and preserving all mankind thus becomes practically indistinguishable."

13. Ibid., p. 228.

14. Ibid., pp. 233-34.

this radical teaching from specific scriptural passages, in this case, from I Timothy 6:17 "where the apostle says that God has given us all things richly to enjoy". Yet, upon further investigation, the passage is actually a condemnation of those people who would place their trust in riches in this life:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they not be highminded, nor trust in certain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; having up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may hold an eternal life.¹⁵

By so twisting the Bible to his own purposes in his discussion of the state of nature, natural law, and the accumulation of property, Locke had tacitly shifted the burden of man's responsibility to God to a responsibility to himself. Natural obligations became natural rights. Locke's doctrine, which embodied the "spirit of capitalism", made man the centre of the universe. The world became ego-centric and hedonistic; life became a "joyless quest for joy".¹⁶

15. This is actually Cox's point in Locke on War and Peace, pp. 40-41, who is making explicit what Strauss implies on p. 247. Strauss's discussion on the right of unlimited appropriation reads very much like Macpherson's argument in The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, which Strauss acknowledges, p. 234, n. 106.

16. Strauss, Natural Right, pp. 249-51.

Strauss's understanding of Locke's use of the Bible, if in fact accurate, would demonstrate that Locke is "proof-texting" or using the Bible for his own political ends. Upon further examination of both Locke and the Bible, however, Strauss's interpretation is problematic. Although Strauss tried to show that Locke distorts the Bible in order to secularize the state of nature, natural law, and the acquisition of property, Strauss's assessment merits reconsideration.

Strauss contends that throughout the Two Treatises, Locke is intent on proving the sufficiency of reason over revelation to make his political philosophy demonstrably certain and to appeal to a universal audience. Yet in arguing his position, Strauss must ignore those places where Locke asserts that revelation is a superior guide to reason in the understanding of the "things of highest concernment".¹⁷ Strauss is also ambiguous as to whom Locke is addressing in the establishment of his "universal teaching". He makes no attempt to justify his claim that Locke wrote the Two Treatises "chiefly for the deists", although he does correctly point out that the Reasonableness of Christianity was written to persuade the deists (through a rational argument)

17. See Locke's Essay, IV, 18, 7-9, and his letter to Bishop Worcester (quoted in ch. 1, n. 6). For very different purposes, Strauss admits that for Locke, reason is not the only goal in life (p. 204, n. 49).

to convert to Christianity. But Strauss also admits that Locke was writing for Englishmen, Englishmen who were already well versed in traditional scriptural teaching. Therefore, because Strauss offers no proof that Locke was writing for the deists, one must assume that Locke was writing for Englishmen, English Christians in fact: a universal appeal, therefore, would have to be Christian oriented. One is left wondering why Locke would wish to make his teaching so radically un-Christian and anti-traditional if in fact his audience was already traditional and Christian.

Strauss would apparently overcome these difficulties by establishing that Locke had two teachings in mind when he wrote the Treatises: an exoteric teaching to avoid persecution and an esoteric teaching which revealed his real intentions. But to support this premise, Strauss once again goes outside the Treatises. Since Locke states, in the Reasonableness, that Jesus did not disclose the fact that he was the Messiah in order to teach his doctrine without fear of persecution, Strauss claims that Locke also has to hide his teaching because "unqualified frankness" would get him into trouble. But even in the Reasonableness Locke makes it quite clear that Jesus' silence is due to his divine mission and that he could not reveal his identity until his mission was fulfilled.¹⁸ On a deeper level, however,

18. Locke, Reasonableness, p. 70.

Strauss's theory is problematic. It assumes that the implementation of Locke's esoteric secular political philosophy has come about only through the work of a handful of intellectuals who knew what Locke really had to say.¹⁹ Thus, it is Strauss's method (ingenious though it may be) that allows him to appropriate those things in Locke's political philosophy which support his assumptions while dismissing those passages which contradict his theory as part of a giant smoke screen. A critical reading of Strauss's theory of Locke's biblical distortions, however, will expose how unsound his method turns out to be.

Although Strauss argues that Locke's state of nature is un-biblical because it is degenerate and corrupt, he is assuming that Locke equates the state of nature with the prelapsarian state. Locke himself, however, makes no such equation and while technically a state where there is "no

19. See Aaron, John Locke, p. 361; Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke, p. 99; and especially Aarsleff, in "The State of Nature and the Nature of Man", p. 265, who writes: "this procedure would require enough concealment not to be found out by everyone, yet not so much as not to be understood by all, at least by a few and presumably first of all by those who might be swayed to accept the argument, that is, by those among others, who were potentially the very enemies whose wrath Locke should have wished to escape. For it is surely not enough to believe that Locke wrote for a small coterie who already had the message. Thus the method seems to offer little hope of success without having the supposedly dangerous heterodoxy and even heresy come out in the open. One might as well argue that the Bible was not only read but indeed written by the devil for his own purpose."

independent judge",²⁰ Locke's state of nature does take into consideration both the peaceful and warlike aspects of human nature in the founding of his political order.²¹ Far from being un-biblical, Locke seems to be following the Bible for it is only after the Bible shows the potentialities of man in Genesis 1:28 and the baseness of man in the fratricide of 4:8 that the text, in Genesis 4:17, actually records the beginning of civil society. Both Locke and the Bible, therefore, take into consideration the heights to which man is capable of rising and the depths to which he actually sinks before either begins an account of civil society. Both would seem to be arguing that man has the ability to form civil society as well as showing the necessity of forming such a society.²²

Strauss had similarly argued that Locke had minimized the doctrine of the Fall because the state of nature, where one has been granted all the rights and privileges of the law of nature, does not come into effect until well after the Fall (i.e., when God grants Noah the right to eat meat).²³

20. See Locke, Two Treatises, II, 19.87-91, 171, 216.

21. That is, man's irrationality and rationality (Ibid., II, 8, 10, 16, etc.).

22. See Seliger, The Liberal Politics of John Locke, pp. 99-101.

23. Strauss, Natural Right, p. 216; and Cox, Locke on War and Peace, pp. 56-57.

Although Strauss again makes the same false assumption (i.e., equating the state of innocence with Locke's state of nature), he has missed an important point in the context of God's grant to Noah in 9:4: it is not unconditional. God stipulates that man should not eat flesh that is living. One place, however, where it could be inferred that man has "all the rights and privileges of the law of nature" is in Genesis 1:29 where man is given all types of vegetation to eat. And although man is not specifically told to eat meat in 1:29, he is not prohibited from doing so either; he is, however, prohibited from eating certain types of flesh in 9:4. Thus, Locke's argument that Adam, in the state of nature, had all the rights and privileges of the law of nature, is probable insofar as the restrictions concerning the eating of certain types of meat are more relevant to Noah's time than to Adam's.

Strauss also uses the Bible to show that Locke had not only ignored the Fall but also the punishment for the Fall. Yet once the relevant evidence is examined, Locke's interpretation is just as (if not more) probable than Strauss's. Strauss had argued that Locke softened the intensity of God's curse on the woman by allowing the woman to avoid the pain of childbirth. In fact, Locke does argue that the curse and punishment are merely "laid upon" the woman and that there is no law subjecting the woman to her

husband or to her curse.²⁴ But Strauss would also have us think that God had commanded or legislated a duty on the woman by His curse. Genesis 3:16, however, does not record God's statement as being a curse, punishment or law. God only tells the woman what the new situation entails. In softening the intensity of God's statement to the woman, Locke's interpretation is more internally coherent and consistent with the text than is Strauss's.²⁵

Strauss had similarly argued that Locke's teaching on natural law was un-biblical. But to argue that Locke separates his natural law teaching from revelation, Strauss had to ignore all those places where Locke explicitly states that natural law cannot be known without the help of revelation.²⁶ Perhaps these statements are all part of Locke's double-talk but, when the details of Locke's interpretation of natural law are examined, Strauss may be employing exactly the same method which he accuses Locke of using.

The core of Strauss's argument on natural law proposes that Locke turns natural law into a convenience rather

24. Locke, Two Treatises, II, 44,47.

25. Locke may tacitly be following Henry Ainsworth here. Locke refers to his Annotations Upon the Five Books of Moses (London, 1626) throughout the Treatises and follows his exegesis in a number of places.

26. See J.W. Yolton, "Locke on the Law of Nature", Philosophical Review 67 (1958), p. 486. See also Locke, Two Treatises, II, 6,11; Essay, II, 27, 4; Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity, in Works, v. 7, pp. 241-43.

than a biblically based obligation. Strauss understands Locke to mean "the end of conjugal society merely requires that [here the Locke quote begins] 'the male and the female in mankind are tied to a longer conjunction than other creatures'." Strauss then stops quoting Locke in full at this point and attempts to prove the convenient nature of the contract between the male and the female by stringing together brief phrases and words from other sections of the Two Treatises. Had Strauss continued to quote Locke, however, he would have discovered that the "reason why" the male and the female remain together longer than the animals is attributable to:

the Wisdom of the great Creator, who having given man foresight and an ability to lay up for for the future, as well as to supply the present necessity, both made it necessary that Society of Man and Wife should be more lasting than the male and female amongst other Creatures Locke's emphasis .27

Locke's argument, therefore, is based on his interpretation of the wisdom of the great Creator. Implicitly his argument in this section recalls the divine ordinance in Genesis 1:28 "to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth" and explicitly it recalls Genesis 2:18 (where God says that "it is not good for the man to be alone") to establish the beginning of conjugal society.²⁸

27. See Strauss, Natural Right, p. 217, in comparison with what Locke actually says in II, 80.

28. Locke, Two Treatises, II, 77. Strauss also notes

Strauss also contends that Locke's convenient law of nature is a distortion of the fifth commandment; i.e., "honour thy father and thy mother if they have deserved it of you." Nevertheless, Locke makes it quite clear that the duty owed by the children to their parents and the parents to their children is based upon divine laws. Locke says that God "hath made it [the parent's] business to imploy this care on their offspring" and that the "Law of God and Nature teaches that children should honour their parents."²⁹ It is not even, as Strauss also argues, that "the natural law basis of perpetual duty is in the fact that parents have begotten their children" because Locke explicitly states that "'tis hard to understand how the Law of Nature, which is the Law of Reason, can give paternal power to the father over his children, for the only Reason of Begetting" [Locke's emphasis].³⁰ Thus, even though children are duty bound to honour their parents, the parents have no absolute right

that Locke evokes Genesis 2:18 (see Natural Right, p. 217, n. 74) but does not explain how there is a striking "contrast between the biblical doctrine and Locke's own doctrine." Cox, in Locke on War and Peace, p. 53, also sees that Locke uses 2:18 but argues that Locke is altering the biblical teaching because he "refuses to cite biblical authority" (which presumably means for Locke to have written "Genesis 2:18" in a footnote).

29. See Strauss, Natural Right, p. 219 in contrast to Locke, Two Treatises, II, 63,66.

30. See Strauss, Natural Right, p. 219 in contrast Locke, Two Treatises, I, 101; II, 68-74.

over them, "only an obligation to nourish, preserve and bring up their offspring" until such time as they have attained sufficient reason to fend for themselves.

Strauss's complex interpretation of Locke's use of natural law to prove that man has an absolute right to self-preservation (i.e., the law must have sanctions to be effective; those sanctions are man-made; man-made sanctions are only to promote self-preservation) is also problematic. Although it is true that Locke says natural law must have sanctions in order for it to be a law, those sanctions are directed towards the "peace and preservation of mankind." Locke is careful to show that the execution of the law of nature in the state of nature should occur only when the offender has renounced his reason; accordingly, if one acts like an animal through the renunciation of his reason, he may be treated like an animal and possibly be killed. And since, for Locke, mankind is in the image of God because he is reasonable, he has the right to enforce the law of nature in the state of nature against those who have renounced their reason, that is, their "God-likeness."³¹ Having thus constructed his argument, Locke need not make it explicit that man's enforcement of the law of nature is dependent upon his being in the image of God as the reader would have

31. See Locke, Two Treatises, I, 30,86; II, 7,8,11, 16,89,172,181.

already made that assumption.³²

Strauss's conclusion that man, being executor of the law of nature, has an absolute right to self-preservation is not entirely convincing. Although self-preservation is important for Locke, Locke's argument on a person's right to self-preservation is a necessary argument in favour of the natural freedom and equality of man.³³ It is because everyone has a right to use that which nature had provided for his self-preservation that everyone was considered to be equal to one another.³⁴ Locke had similarly argued that the natural freedom and equality of man can be argued from the natural duties everyone has towards each other. In other words, man has a natural duty not to infringe upon another's right of self-preservation.³⁵ Thus, to stress natural rights and omit natural duties would necessarily obscure what Locke had to say on the natural freedom and equality of mankind.

Strauss concludes his discussion of Locke by arguing

32. See Seliger, The Liberal Politics of John Locke, p. 57, who also argues that Locke's omission of "the image of God proves nothing." See also Aarsleff, "The State of Nature and the Nature of Man in Locke", pp. 129-30, who sees Locke as relying on Romans 2:14-15 in his discussion of Locke's conception of natural law.

33. Locke, Two Treatises; I, 86; II, 6-8, 16, 17, 128-30; and Seliger, The Liberal Politics of John Locke, pp. 62-66.

34. See Lewis, "An Environmental Case Against Equality of Right" in Canadian Journal of Political Science, pp. 259-60.

35. Locke, Two Treatises, II, 8-12; and Seliger, The Liberal Politics of John Locke, p. 50.

that Locke's doctrine of self-preservation allowed for the right to unlimited appropriation. Everyone has every right to acquire as much property to preserve himself as well as he possibly could. Here Strauss, and more particularly his follower Cox, see Locke distorting I Timothy 6:17 to advocate a doctrine of unlimited appropriation. But neither Strauss nor Cox take Locke at face value. Locke explicitly uses the Timothy passage in the First Treatise to argue against Filmer's notion of private dominion (i.e., God gives us all things richly to enjoy) and, in his Second Treatise, Locke explicitly uses the passage against those who would waste or spoil their property.³⁶

36. See Locke, Two Treatises, I, 40 and II, 31. Strauss goes on to argue that Locke's political philosophy would overcome wastage (both in the limited sense of allowing something to spoil, II, 31, and in the larger sense of allowing land to lie in waste, II, 36) by the introduction of money. Money itself will not spoil, it will allow for the exchange of perishables and, in a system of exchange, will allow for the appropriation of nature. See R.A. Goldwin's article, "John Locke" in History of Political Philosophy (Chicago, 1963), pp. 449-51; and Lewis's article, "An Environmental Case Against Equality of Right", pp. 263-64. Thus, by allowing for the unlimited accumulation of wealth to overcome wastage, Strauss sees Locke as unleashing the reins of capitalism. For a contrasting view, see C.H. Monson, "Locke and his Interpreters", Political Studies, 6 (1958), p. 125, who argues that Locke sets specific limits on appropriation. Similarly, Aaron, in John Locke, p. 362, argues that appropriation which makes someone another's servant is not permissible in Locke's system where every citizen's right to life, liberty and estate is to be preserved. In any event, in spite of the many implications of Locke's political teaching on property, Locke explicitly uses the Timothy passage to argue against private dominion and spoilage. To say that Locke uses the passage to advocate unlimited appropriation is certainly controversial, if not tendentious.

In conclusion then it would appear that Strauss's interpretation of Locke and of Locke's reading of the Bible is not entirely convincing. Strauss's theory of Locke's "secret teaching" is dubious for it allows Strauss the convenience of taking isolated fragments out of context to prove what Locke really had to say. Thus, it appears that it is not so much a case of Locke's proof-texting the Bible as Strauss's proof-texting Locke's interpretation of the Bible. A careful analysis showed, however, that Locke is, in many instances, far closer to the teaching of the Bible than is Strauss.

The virtue of Strauss's work, nevertheless, lies in the fact that he sees Locke's political philosophy as having a biblical base (however distorted that base may be).³⁷ Unfortunately, many Locke scholars entirely neglect what Locke has to say on the Bible and even those scholars who are sympathetic to Locke's use of the Bible do not go so far as to articulate his political philosophy from the stand-

37. See Cox's emphasis here in Locke on War and Peace, p. 39: "a straightforward reading of the First Treatise gives the impression that Locke is very insistent upon the rigid application of biblical authority to support crucial points. A similar reading of the Second Treatise indicates that although Locke uses fewer biblical quotations, he nonetheless continues to do so on important points, such as the source of the sanctions for murder, the beginnings of political society, the origins and limits of property, the nature of parental power, and the right of rebellion against an unjust conqueror."

point of his biblical exegesis.³⁸ Thus, having at least shown in the first chapter the importance of the Bible to the political philosophers of the seventeenth century and, in the second chapter, having shown that the accusation that Locke deliberately misread or proof-texted the Bible was based on a misunderstanding of Locke's use of the Bible, the third chapter will show how Locke's political philosophy is constructed along the lines of his biblical exegesis.

38. See Dunn, The Political Thought of John Locke, p. 195, n. 1: "there has yet to be a serious synthetic study which re-examines Locke's intellectual life from the perspective of his religious concerns. It is an astonishing lacuna."

CHAPTER THREE

To understand more clearly the relationship between Locke's political philosophy and the Bible it will first be necessary to reconstruct his scriptural argument with Sir Robert Filmer. Since Filmer had based his divine right argument on specific biblical passages (i.e., Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7) it was necessary that Locke's reply would also be in the form of an exegetical argument. If Locke could show the errors and inconsistencies behind Filmer's exegesis, then Filmer's political framework would collapse. Although it is certainly true that Filmer uses other scriptural verses to support his divine right theory, it will be possible to reconstruct his argument (as well as Locke's reply and the nucleus of his political teaching) solely on the basis of his interpretation of three verses in Genesis. And although the selection of the verses may at first appear to be arbitrary, they are the first three verses in the Bible that concern man's ruling: in Genesis 1:28 man is told to have "dominion" (rādā) over certain things; in 3:16 the woman is told to be "ruled" (māsāl) by the man; in 4:7 Cain is told to "rule" (māsāl) over a certain thing. Thus, the organizing principle of Filmer's political philosophy, Locke's reply to Filmer and Locke's political philosophy will be that of an exegesis of Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7.

Filmer's Argument¹

According to Filmer, Genesis 1:28 proved that the first form of government was monarchical and that Adam, who was the first monarch, had absolute dominion over the lives and liberties of his subjects. The text of 1:28 reads thus:

And God blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: And have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.²

The origin of political society, for Filmer, was not an artificial happening created by man but a natural occurrence as revealed by God. Original monarchy, therefore, had the divine blessing and superseded all other governmental forms:

For by the appointment of God, as soon as Adam was created, he was monarch of the world, though he had no subjects; for though there could not be actual government until there were subjects, yet by the right of nature it was due to Adam to be governor of his posterity though not in act, yet at least in habit.³

Indeed, for Filmer, there was not need to look elsewhere to find the original form of government; government started with God's original grant to Adam:

1. In reconstructing Filmer's arguments from the perspective of his biblical exegesis, I have taken the entirety of his works into consideration rather than relying solely on his Patriarcha. All page references to Filmer's works are to Laslett's 1949 edition.

2. Throughout this thesis, the Authorized King James Version will be the translation given as both Filmer and Locke were familiar with and used this translation themselves.

3. The Anarchy of a Limited or Mixed Monarchy, p. 289. See also Patriarcha, pp. 90-93.

we must not neglect the Scriptures and search in philosophers for the grounds for dominion and property, which are the main principles of government and justice. The first government in the world was monarchical, in the father of all flesh. Adam being commanded to multiply, and people the earth, and to subdue it, and having dominion given him over all ⁴ creatures, was thereby monarch of the whole world.

Thus, not only was Adam the first monarch because of the grant that God had given him, but his monarchy was absolute. Kings ruled with absolute power because God had so decreed it from the beginning; "for as kingly power is by the law of God, so it hath no inferior limit to it."⁵ The fountain of political society rose from one man and all property, creatures and men were naturally subservient to him.

Filmer's justification of the natural superiority of the male over the female and of the father over his children was supplied by Genesis 3:16 where the text reads:

Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Although Filmer also argues that "Eve was subject to Adam before he sinned" and that, in the beginning, God had given

4. Observations upon Aristotle's Politics Touching Forms of Government, pp. 187-88. See also Patriarcha, p. 71: "we maintain the natural and private dominion of Adam to be the fountain of all government and property."

5. Patriarcha, p. 96. See also Directions for Obedience to Government in Dangerous or Doubtful Times, p. 233: "in grants and gifts that have their original from God or nature, as the power of the Father hath, no inferior power of man can limit, nor take any law of perscription against them." See also Anarchy, p. 284.

the man a natural superiority and sovereignty,⁶ it was God's grant in Genesis 3:16 which placed the superiority of the male over the female in a political context: "here [Genesis 3:16] we have the original grant of government, and the fountain of all power placed in the father of mankind."⁷ According to Filmer, therefore, Eve is not only naturally inferior to Adam because she was made from a part of him, but God had also decreed that her desire will be to her husband and he will rule over her.⁸

If Eve then is subject to Adam, her children are also to be subject to Adam. Indeed, the subjection of Eve and her children was further evidence of the absolute dominion.

6. Anarchy, p. 289. See also Observations Concerning the Original of Government, p. 245: "but we know that God at the Creation gave the sovereignty to the man over the woman, as being the nobler and principle agent in generation." See also Milton, a contemporary of Filmer, who writes of the inferiority of woman's creation in Paradise Lost, Book VIII, ll. 537-46:

at least on her bestow'd
Too much of Ornament, in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understood in the prime end
Of nature her th'inferior, in the mind
And inward Faculties, which most excel,
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both, and less expressing
The character of that Dominion giv'n
O'er other Creatures.

7. Anarchy, p. 283. See also Schochet's (Patriarchalism and Political Thought, p. 113, n. 1) citation of John Knox who also understands this verse to mean that women were created inferior.

8. Original, p. 241.

of Adam. In effect, Adam's children are born in slavery and subject to him because God had given Adam ultimate political power. Filmer writes:

I do not see how the children of Adam, or of any man else can be free from the subjection of their parents. And this subordination of the children is the fountain of all regal authority by the ordinance of God himself.⁹

Thus, the paternal power of Adam "has no inferior limit to it" and, as for the natural power of the people, "they find neither Scripture, reason, nor practice to justify it."¹⁰

Having established the absolute dominion and unlimited power of Adam over all creation, Filmer tackled the problem of succession which he solved by his exegesis of Genesis 4:7. The verse records God telling Cain to rule that which desires him:

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and, if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

Filmer's interpretation of this verse was a justification of primogeniture as, according to his exegesis, this verse granted Cain, the eldest son, a right to rule Abel, the younger son. Filmer had perhaps reasoned that the pronoun "his" in 4:7b must refer to Abel for Abel is the only other

9. Patriarcha, p. 57. See also Anarchy, p. 283: "neither Eve nor her children could limit Adam's power, or join others with him in government; and what was given unto Adam, was given in his person to his posterity."

10. Patriarcha, p. 96, and Anarchy, p. 277.

male person alive over whom Cain could rule. Since God gives Cain the power to rule over his brother, the right of succession should be through the eldest son. Therefore, sovereign power should be handed down to the eldest son in the event of the death of the father.¹¹ By establishing the law of primogeniture from Genesis 4:7, Filmer asserted a connection between the paternal authority of Adam and the paternal authority of the king or monarch. Even though kings are not the direct fathers of their people, Filmer reasons that they have inherited the right to be king because "they all are, or are reputed to be, as the next heirs of those progenitors who were at first the natural parents of the whole people and in their right succeed to the exercise of supreme jurisdiction."¹² And although Filmer does not go so far as to say that the present monarch is the direct descendant of Adam, he may have wished his audience to make just such a connection.¹³

The implications of Filmer's exegesis of the preceding verses are: (a) women are subject to men; (b) younger bro-

11. Patriarcha, p. 11. Archbishop Ussher, who is famous for his pronouncement that the world began on October 23, 4004 B.C., had also discerned primogeniture from Genesis 4:7. (See Schochet, Patriarchalism and Political Thought, p. 113, n. 1)

12. Patriarcha, pp. 61-62

13. Ibid., p. 61. See also Daly, Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought, p. 77, and Schochet, Patriarchalism and Political Thought, p. 156.

thers are subject to the eldest brother; (c) the eldest brother is subject to the father; (d) the father is subject to the king. In other words, no man is born in freedom:

Every man that is born, is so far from being free-born that by his very birth he becomes subject to him that begets him; under which subjection he is always to live, unless by immediate appointment from God, or by the grant or death of his father, he becomes possessed of that power to which he was subject.¹⁴

All people are born in subjection to some authority and "where the subjection of the children is natural, there can be no natural freedom";¹⁵ indeed, a "natural freedom of mankind cannot be supposed without the denial of the creation of Adam."¹⁶ Thus, if people are free only insofar as their subjection to another is concerned, people are not equal. Equality only occurs when "there can be no superior power" and since society is arranged hierarchically, people cannot be equal. If all the people were equal, the child "hath a like interest with the wisest man in the world."¹⁷ Thus, a political organization that assumed that all men are free and equal makes no sense politically and has no justification in the political teachings of Genesis. Since everyone is born in varying degrees in subjection to some authority, everyone is born in varying degrees unequal.

14. Directions, p. 232.

15. Anarchy, p. 287

16. Aristotle, p. 188. See also Patriarcha, p. 78.

17. Anarchy, p. 287.

Locke's Reply

To discredit Filmer's theory of natural inequality and slavery or, more particularly, Adam's original monarchy and absolute power as well as the right of inheritance, Locke necessarily had to attack the base upon which Filmer's theory was erected, namely, Filmer's exegesis of Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7. In order for this tactic to be convincing, however, Locke would have to show (by way of a rational argument) the superiority of his own exegesis.

In arguing against Filmer's hypothesis of the original monarchy and absolute power of Adam, Locke consulted the Hebrew text of Genesis 1:28. In the first place, Adam could not have been the first monarch merely because he was the first man created; the text nowhere specifies an inherent connection between "creation" and "monarchy."¹⁸ Furthermore, Filmer's vacillation on this point, i.e., that Adam was a monarch "in habit though not in act", only evaded the question: the issue was not the exercise of Adam's authority but, rather, whether or not Adam had a proper title to that authority (I,18). Secondly, reasoning that the only way Filmer could have supported Adam's absolute dominion over other men from Scripture was to equate "living things that move"

18. Locke, Two Treatises, I, 19. To simplify the notation, subsequent references to the Treatises will appear in brackets in the body of the thesis. The Roman numeral will designate the treatise number and the Arabic numeral will designate the section number (i.e., I,19).

with "mankind", Locke concentrated his exegesis on the explication of the Hebrew phrase "living things that move" (hāyyâ hārōmeset). After an analysis of the passage, Locke came to the conclusion that "the living things that move" apply only to the "Wild beasts" and "reptiles" (I,25). In other words, what Adam had dominion over are only the irrational animals; he is not given any political power, then or subsequently, over other men (I,27). And lastly, Locke argues that God's grant in 1:28 was not just to one person but a grant in common with the rest of mankind. The text uses the third person plural, "them", and not the third person singular, "him", to signify the recipient of the grant. Thus, even if "them" refers only to the male and the female in 1:28, there must be a joint sovereignty. According to Locke, however, "them" more than likely refers to the whole species of mankind who, being made in the image of God, are granted superiority over other creatures (I,29-31).

Filmer's exegesis of 3:16, which sought to prove that the man could rule over his wife and progeny, was another misinterpretation of the text according to Locke. In the first place, Adam had only recently disobeyed God, having eaten of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and it is unlikely that God would reward Adam by giving him absolute power. Indeed, in verse nineteen of the same chapter, God makes Adam a monarch who has to work hard for a living; "in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread

until thou return to the ground" (I,45). Therefore, it is evident that the superiority that Adam had over Eve was an "accidental superiority" (I,44), for it is inconceivable that God would give the man absolute power and sole sovereignty the same day he was expelled from paradise and told to till the ground until he dies. Furthermore, when God tells Eve that her desire will be for her husband and that he will rule over her, God has only stated what the new situation entails; God neither speaks to Adam nor grants him anything (I,47). If there is any power that Adam has over Eve, it is "conjugal and not Political Power" (I,48), that is, a power over Eve in matters of common interest, not a power of life and death.

Contrary to what Filmer also interprets 3:16 to mean, Locke maintains that Adam has no political power over his children. The fact that Adam is the begetter of his children does not give him political authority over them for their creation is ultimately an act of God, not of man (I,52). If procreation grants Adam political authority it must be a shared political authority with his wife for she had at least an equal share in the birth of the children (I,55). Locke notes that even Filmer admits this saying, "no man's children can be free from the subjection of their parents"; thus, Adam must either share his authority or, to avoid contradiction, "parents" must refer solely to the father (I,63). Furthermore, if Adam's act of procreation gives the father

political authority over his children, then there would be as many sovereigns as fathers (I,65). Indeed, if paternal authority gives Adam absolute power over his children, his children have the same power over their children. Therefore Adam's children would be slaves and absolute rulers at the same time (I,69). It should be mentioned, however, that the contradictions that Locke finds in Filmer's exegesis of 3:16 (political power of Adam over his wife and children) are mitigated by Filmer's exegesis of 4:7 (the law of primogeniture). Undoubtedly Locke noticed this point too inasmuch as a large portion of the First Treatise attacks Filmer's scriptural justification of primogeniture.

To Locke, primogeniture is both self-contradictory and has no scriptural base. In the first place if, as Filmer claims, Adam received a private grant from God to have dominion over all creation, this grant, being private, gives Adam no right to transfer it to anyone else; it must therefore return to God upon the death of Adam (I,85). Nevertheless, the Scriptures do not specify which son is the sole inheritor and, in any event, Adam appears to give both Cain and Abel certain possessions: Cain has a field for his corn and Abel has a pasture for his sheep. Therefore, either Cain is not the sole inheritor or inheritance has nothing to do with property (I,76). And even if one accepts that the title of authority passes on from father to the eldest son, the knowledge of who the eldest son is in direct line of succession

from Adam is irrevocably lost (I,125). Having no idea of who is the heir to the dominion of Adam, man is under no obligation to obey the monarch who pretends to be the direct descendant of Adam.

It is also evident to Locke that Filmer does injustice to the meaning of 4:7 which, it will be recalled, reads thus:

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?
and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the
door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and
thou shalt rule over him.

In the first place, the words to Cain are conditional; "if thou doest well" does not imply a necessary relationship but a relationship contingent upon the way Cain acts (I,112). Furthermore, the name "Abel" does not appear in this passage and the antecedent to the pronoun "his" is probably "sin" rather than Abel (I,118). Locke writes:

It is too much to build a doctrine of so mighty consequence upon so doubtful and obscure a place of Scripture, which may be well, nay better, understood in quite a different sense, and so can be but an ill proof, being as doubtful as the thing proved by it, especially when there is nothing else in Scripture or Reason to be found that favours or supports it (I,112).

Even though Locke and Filmer deal with the same three verses in Genesis, both arrive at different conceptions about the nature of man which necessarily affect their political philosophies. Filmer argues that men are neither free nor equal but Locke, in refuting Filmer, argues men have a natural liberty and equality. Contrary to what Filmer

says, Locke believes that Adam had no natural right to rule other men, no private grant from God, no authority over his children, nor any dominion over the world. Even if he had, he had no heirs to his power and even if he had heirs, the Scriptures do not specify which heir is to rule. Even if the eldest son does inherit the title, the identity of the eldest heir in Adam's progeny is unknown and no single person has the right of inheritance (II,1). Thus, if man is under no compulsion to obey anyone, man is in a natural state of freedom. Similarly, if man is not naturally subject to anyone, he is naturally equal to everyone else and is under no authority except that of God (II,4). Locke writes:

Man has a natural freedom ... since all that share in the same Common Nature, Faculties and Powers, are in Nature equal, and ought to partake in the same common Rights and Priviledges, till the manifest appointment of God, who is Lord over all, Blessed forever, can be produced to shew any particular Persons Supremacy, or a Man's own consent subject him to a superior (I,67).

Locke's Political Philosophy

Having thus shown in his scriptural argument with Filmer that man is not born into a state of slavery and inequality, Locke could construct his political philosophy based on the principles of freedom and equality. Just as Genesis provided Filmer with the basis to his political philosophy, so Genesis would provide Locke with the basis to his political philosophy; unlike Filmer, however, Locke would have to avoid making unqualified assertions if his exegesis

was to be convincing. Locke had to walk the line between advocating a secular political philosophy, on the one hand, and saying that the Bible supports a particular political regime on the other. That line, however, will lead Locke to conclude that there is a foundational teaching on human order in the Bible and his political philosophy will be based upon that foundational teaching.

It is easy to see why Genesis 1:26-29 held such a fascination for the political philosophers of the seventeenth century. The verses record the creation of man in 1:27 and God's first speech to the man and the woman in 1:28-29 and, as such, they would offer at least a hint of what man's original nature might be. Understandably, to try to answer the important political question of "how should man best be ruled?", political philosophers would necessarily have to consider human nature: if man is essentially irascible or incorrigible he may best be ruled by force, but if man is predominately reasonable and charitable, he might best be given more political responsibility. Thus, if it is correct to assume that Genesis 1:26-29 was a key text for Locke's understanding of man's original nature, then a proper understanding of how Locke interprets these verses would be crucial to the understanding of his political philosophy.

What Genesis revealed as being fundamental to man's original nature was the fact that man was created in the

image of God. The political implications of being in the image of God was, for Locke, to be rational: "God makes man in His own image, after His own likeness, makes him an intellectual Creature and so capable of Dominion" (I,30). Man's rationality, furthermore, allowed him to know the will of God, that is, the law of nature (II,35).¹⁹ It was because of man's rationality that he became aware of the law of nature and the knowledge of the law of nature is what made a person free:²⁰ "where there is no law there is no freedom" (II,57). If, therefore, man was created with a capacity for reason he is born with a capacity for freedom. His freedom is, in other words, dependent upon his being rational (II,63) for "we are born free as we are born rational" (I,61). Looked at in this manner, to be in the image of God (i.e., endowed with reason) is to be born into a state of freedom.

19. The more reasonable one was, the better equipped he was to know the will of God or the law of nature (II,8,10, 11,57,135,172,181). See also Yolton, "Locke on the Law of Nature", pp. 482-83; and Aarsleff, "The State of Nature and the Nature of Man in Locke", p. 130. In fact, Locke calls reason "that voice of God in man" (I,86). Whether Immanuel Kant in his peculiar exegesis of Genesis 2-6 called "Conjectural Beginnings of Human History" (in Kant, On History [New York, 1963]) meant to respond to Locke by saying that "instinct [was] that voice of God in man" (p. 55) is beyond the competence of the present writer to judge. It is interesting to note, however, that both are dealing with similar issues in Genesis, albeit for different purposes.

20. Locke, unfortunately, does not tell us how. See Laslett's introduction to the Two Treatises, p. 108, n. 2, and Aaron, John Locke, p. 375, n. 2, who make the same point.

Being in the image of God is also what distinguished man from the animals. As man is reasonable, so he is different than the animals (I,86; II,16,89); as he is unreasonable, so the distinction between man and animal is blurred (II,13). In Locke's state of nature, therefore, anyone who committed an unreasonable act which threatened the lives and liberties of the rest of mankind could be punished as one would punish an irrational animal (II,10,11,16,172). Although Locke admits that this is a "very strange doctrine", it does coincide with his biblical politics. If being in the image of God was to be rational and thereby different than the animals, renouncing one's reason would be tantamount to renouncing the fact that man is in the image of God, thereby reducing oneself to the level of the beasts. Now since man is expressly given "dominion" over the animals because he is in the image of God, (I,30,40), he who renounced his reason could be treated like an animal and ruled accordingly. In other words, he no longer possesses that distinguishing feature which had differentiated him from the animals.

God's command to "be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth" also had important political implications in Locke's political philosophy. In the first place, conjugal society, which was a necessary result of God's command (II,77), facilitated the accumulation of provisions that would be necessary to the survival of the families. Thus God:

hath made it necessary, that the Society of Man and Wife should be more lasting, than of Male and Female amongst other Creatures; that so their Industry might be encouraged, and their Interest better united, to make Provsion, and lay up Goods for their common Issue, which uncertain mixture, or easie and frequent Solutions of Conjugal Society would mightily disturb (II,80).

In the second place, although the accumulation of goods and provisions would help to promote the "arts and conveniences" of life, those arts and conveniences are also a direct result of being fruitful, multiplying and filling the earth. By following God's command, man could more easily make use of those things which God had amply provided. In fact, Locke argues, those countries which have a very small population also have very few conveniences of life (I,31). Indeed, the governments of those countries which have little population and few conveniences are absolute monarchies and tyrannies. Thus, by implication, Locke seems to be arguing that the command to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth is an effective measure for combatting tyranny or authoritarian rule (I,43; II,184).²¹

Yet what was perhaps to have the most profound political implications for Locke's political philosophy was God's grant to the man and the woman to have "dominion" over the animals and to "subdue" the earth. This grant

21. Although he does not say so, Locke may be thinking of Exodus 1:12-20, where the fecundity of the Israelites is viewed as a threat to the totalitarian regime in Egypt.

meant that everyone had an equal right to the land and animals which nature had provided as, in the beginning, there was an original community of all things (I,39,40; II,25). However, the fact that man was under an obligation to "subdue" the earth, that is, to appropriate it for his own ends (II,35), gave rise to the origin of property (I,87; II,32).²² Thus, through and because of God's grant in Genesis 1:28, man had a right to preserve himself by using those things which nature had provided (I,80). Indeed, God had planted a desire in man to preserve himself inasmuch as his reason could tell him how best to appropriate those things which were necessary to his survival, or necessary to the "Support and Comfort of his being" (II,26).²³ Thus, since the world was given to mankind in common, man could appropriate as much as would allow him a commodious living and

22. See K. Olivecrona's article, "Locke on the Origin of Property", Journal of the History of Ideas, 35 (1974), pp. 211-30, for the biblical base to Locke's doctrine of property (especially p. 420).

23. See also Tyrrell who makes the same point: "supposing the Earth and the fruits thereof to have been at the first bestowed in Common on all its inhabitants; yet since God's first command to man was, encrease and multiply, if he hath a right to perform this end, he hath certainly a right to the means of his preservation, and the propagation of the species, so that though the fruits of the earth, or beasts, or food, were all in common, yet once any man had by his labour acquired such a portion of either as would serve the necessities of himself and Family, they became so much his own as that no man could without manifest injustice rob him of those necessities." (Quoted in Laslett's introduction to the Two Treatises, II,27, n.)

since, in this original state of nature, there was enough goods for everyone to enjoy, no one could have an exclusive dominion or acquire as much property to the detriment of his neighbour (II,36).

Locke managed to take his doctrine of property a step further when he combined it with a political theory of labour. What is so important to note here, however, is that Locke supplies a biblical base for his labour theory. Furthermore, that biblical base is taken from the next section in Genesis that had explicit references to ruling, namely Genesis 3:16-19. Although, strictly speaking, only 3:16 records a "ruling" of a man over a woman, it is the larger context of God's speech to the man and the woman that interested Locke. Locke had understood a divine command to labour from verse nineteen and admitted that the "penury of [Adam's] condition" (II,32) necessitated that man was to work "by the sweat of his face" (I,45). What the net effect of the command to work for a living entailed was the origin of a doctrine of private property. When man applied his labour to that which had previously been held in common, he transformed goods from communal to private ownership: "man's labour hath taken it out of the hands of Nature, where it was common, and belong'd equally to all her Children, and hath thereby appropriated it to himself" (II,29; cf. II,27,28,32). It was labour, therefore, labour which had been expressly commanded by God, which had given rise to private possessions.

Locke had seen far more in this passage than man's condemnation to ceaseless toil and drudgery: the command to labour had positive connotations. Since Locke evokes the language of Genesis 3:19 to describe the amount of work that goes into making bread, i.e., through the ploughman's pains, the reaper's and the thresher's toil, and the baker's sweat (II,93), he would see a highly complex and integrated system of labour that results from the command to work. Furthermore, the application of man's labour to the ground made the ground far more productive than had it been left uncultivated. It would produce ten times the amount of crops (II,37) and could feed ten times, if not a thousand times, the number of people (II,40). Labour also furnished one with the comforts and conveniences of life as perhaps as many as ninety-nine out of one hundred products in use are the result of labour (II,40). Thus, the political implications of the command to labour in Genesis 3:19 were enormous: it allowed for a system which would try to make life as comfortable as possible through labour. Locke had developed a view of a beneficent God who did not eternally punish or condemn mankind so much as show him a way to overcome natural deficiencies.

The story of Cain and Abel, which is the next place in the Bible where man's rule is specifically mentioned, provides the biblical background for Locke's argument in favour of the necessity of forming civil society. Locke understands the story of the two brothers to be a story of

political economics. Cain is the first tiller of the soil and as such has a certain amount of enclosed land; Abel, on the other hand, is a shepherd and he therefore has a certain amount of open land. Since each brother had his own respective duties which concerned the type of work he was employed in, there came into existence a division of labour and of ownership (I,76,112). Yet although this situation would remain relatively stable for a while, after a period of time Cain's possessions and Abel's flocks would increase so much that there may not have been enough land to maintain both the farmer and the shepherd (II,38); thus, conflict became inevitable. One way, however, to overcome the problem would be by mutual consent. Both parties would thus come to a common understanding and settle their territories within the bounds of an agreed upon convention. But by his choice of the Cain and Abel example, Locke does not wish his readers to think that that was the only solution; the dispute between Cain and Abel was settled by murder. Cain's crime is not one of passion but of possession. Locke is also careful to point out that the perpetration of this crime is an act against the law of nature (II,11). Cain has reduced himself to the level of beasts by committing this unreasonable act and can, therefore, be treated like a "Lyon or Tyger."

Thus, although it is conceivable that men could reach an amicable agreement in the state of nature (as, for instance, Abraham and Lot, II,38), the settling of territories

would more likely result in violence. To transcend these "inconveniences" of the state of nature, Locke found it necessary for there to be a civil society whereby an independent judge would settle all disputes which arose between man, as man, because of his own passions, could not be trusted to settle matters equitably or objectively (II,13). Thus, civil society is "where any number of men are so united into one society, as to quit everyone his Executive Power of the Law of Nature, and resign it to the Publick" (II,89). And since, in the state of nature, the crimes against the law of nature concern property,²⁴ there is a necessity in a civil society to construct laws which would concentrate on protecting a person's property. In fact, the sole purpose of government would be the preservation of property (I,92; II,87,94,124), and the best form of government, therefore, would be a government that had the most effective means of preserving it. Simply, it is a society in which everyone is born into a state of freedom and equality whereby a citizen would be safeguarded against the inconveniences of the state of nature. As Laslett writes:

It is through the theory of property that men can proceed from the abstract world of liberty and equality based on their relationship with God and natural law, to the concrete world of

24. Locke uses the word "property" ambiguously throughout the Two Treatises. It can either mean "estate" or here, in the general sense of "life, liberty and possessions."

political liberty guaranteed by political arrangements.²⁵

Thus, construed in the above manner, the fundamental tenets of Locke's political philosophy can be seen to emanate from his reading of Genesis 1:26-29, 3:16-19, and 4:2-8. It will be recalled that being in the image of God, being fruitful, multiplying and filling the earth and subduing it, and having dominion over the animals were important political issues which resulted from his reading of Genesis 1:26-29. Similarly, the command to labour in Genesis 3:16-19 was important insofar as it introduced a doctrine of private property into his political philosophy. And finally, the Cain and Abel story was important as it represented the division of labour and of ownership, man in the state of nature, and the necessity of transcending the state of nature. If, therefore, serious exegetical discussion both informs and amplifies certain aspects of Locke's political philosophy and his debate with Filmer, it is legitimate to ask whether Locke's political teaching can be upheld on the basis of the text of Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7. Thus, it will be the purpose of the fourth chapter to compare Filmer's and Locke's exegeses with a close and careful reading of the text to see if their political philosophies can be substantiated.

25. See Laslett, introduction to the Two Treatises, p. 117.

CHAPTER FOUR

Having reconstructed Filmer's and Locke's political philosophy on the basis of their respective exegeses of Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7, we may next determine whether it is feasible to support two diametrically opposing political philosophies from the same three verses in Genesis. We have already seen that the uncovering of the biblical base to Filmer's and Locke's political teaching revealed how serious both were in their use of Genesis. However, the fact that two such divergent political theories result from a reading of the same three verses indicates that either Filmer or Locke (or maybe both Filmer and Locke) were using the Bible to support a priori notions of political theory. To put the matter more concretely: in deference to the fact that each political philosopher thought it necessary to base his political teaching on the Bible, it is a legitimate inquiry to see if a political order based on the divine right of kings or one based on liberal democracy is in line with or inconsistent with what the text actually says at particular points.

Of course, it may well be that the text itself is sufficiently ambiguous as to support both Filmer's and Locke's.

political philosophy;¹ similarly, it may well be that the text cannot be shown to support either Filmer's or Locke's political philosophy.² Yet, showing that the text supports either Filmer's or Locke's political philosophy will contribute to understanding both the nature and the development of two types of political orders. The problem, however, in judging between two disparate interpretations involves showing that one reading is more probable than the other.³ And, to

1. See C. Maxey's Political Philosophies (New York, 1938), p. 18, who writes: "no distinct literature of political thought, in fact no single treatise of exclusively political nature was ever produced by the ancient Hebrews; but the Bible is a well-stored magazine of political ideas. So abundant and varied are the political ideas which make appearance in its pages, so typical are the factors in its political subject matter, and so weighty is the authority accorded to it by Christian peoples that political controversialists have found in it a never failing source of substantiation for every kind of doctrine." See also James Barr's article, "The Bible as a Political Document", in The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 62 (1980), pp. 288-89; and Daly, Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought, p. 80 (quoted in the introduction, p. 3).

2. This would be the contention of Leo Strauss and his followers. See chapter two of this thesis.

3. In a sense, both Filmer and Locke are trapped in what Hirsch calls the "hermeneutic circle." The meaning of their contexts (i.e., divine right and liberal democracy) is derived from the meaning of the component parts (i.e., their exegeses of Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7) and the meaning of the component parts render their contexts coherent and consistent. In other words, because Filmer (for example) sees Genesis as teaching a political theory of the divine right of kings, he confirms his theory by a reading of the relevant passages in Genesis. And because of his reading of those relevant passages, he confirms his original theory of divine right. Nevertheless, it is still possible to determine the most probable reading on the basis of whose context is more internally coherent and consistent with the component parts.

set forth objective grounds to determine the more probable interpretation, hermeneutical issues which are intrinsic to the debate between Filmer and Locke must be found. These issues, primarily, are an examination of the grammar, syntax and context of the relevant passages to determine the political teaching of Genesis.⁴ Furthermore, since Locke knew Hebrew,⁵ a decision on the hermeneutical validity of Filmer's and Locke's exegeses may more easily be obtained by examining both the Hebrew original and the King James translation.

Genesis 1:28

Because both Filmer and Locke maintain that the original foundation for man's rule lay in Genesis 1:28, this exegesis will first proceed by an examination of that particular verse. The text of 1:28, in which the Hebrew has been transliterated below its English counterpart, reads thus:

(See Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation, pp. 169-70, 182, 192, 204, 236.) For the criteria to judge the hermeneutical validity of an argument, see introduction, p. 1, n. 1.

4. Modern biblical grammarians and lexicographers have also been consulted in this chapter to focus more sharply upon the grammatical, philological and syntactical problems of the relevant passages.

5. For his M.A., Locke was required to learn both Hebrew and Arabic in addition to the Greek and Latin that he had to learn as an undergraduate. See H.R.F. Bourne's biography, The Life of John Locke (Darmstadt, 1969), pp. 54-58; and H. McLaughlin, The Religious Opinions of Milton, Locke and Newton, p. 206, who cites Locke as having a particular fondness for his Hebrew professor. Locke also uses the Hebrew letters in his arguments in I, 25, 26, 28.

And God blessed them and God said unto them
way^e bārek 'ōtām 'ēlōhîm wayyō'mer lāhem 'ēlōhîm

Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth
 and subdue it

p^erû ûr^e bû ûmil'û 'et-hā'āres w^e kibśūhā

And have dominion over the fish of the sea
ûr^e dū bidgat hayyām

and over the fowl of the air

ûb^{ec} op haśśamayim

and over every living thing that moves upon the earth
ûb^e kol-hayyā hārōmešet cal-hā'āres

In Filmer's and Locke's exegesis of 1:28, it will be recalled that the questions of who is to rule and what is to be ruled are the ones upon which their argument revolves. To answer the first question, therefore, the "them" (lāhem) to whom God speaks must be clarified. To answer the second question, that which the "them" are given dominion over must be explained. And, as we may well expect after having examined the argument between Filmer and Locke, the text does not lend itself easily to interpretation. Nevertheless, by referring to events which take place prior to Genesis 1:28, questions concerning the original foundations for man's rule will be clarified.

By thus comparing Genesis 1:27 with 1:28, we notice that the "to them" (lāhem) of 1:28 refers to "man" (hā'ādām) of 1:27. The text of Genesis 1:27 reads:

So God created man in His image
wayyibrā' 'ēlōhîm 'et hā'ādām b^e salmō

In the image of God created He him

b^eselem 'elohim bara' 'oto

male and female created He them

zakār un^eqēbā bārā' 'otām

God thus creates "man" in 1:27 and speaks to man for the first time in 1:28. It would appear then that the definition of "man" (hā'ādām) is the question over which the controversy between Filmer and Locke had arisen. In Hebrew, the word "'ādām" can refer to a single proper noun "Adam" or a collective noun "mankind".⁶ Nevertheless, the fact that the definite article "hā" is attached to the "'ādām" of 1:27 would indicate that the "hā'ādām" is used in the generic rather than the singular sense.⁷ Furthermore, since the text records the creation of both "male" (zākār) and "female" (n^eqēbā), it implies that "hā'ādām" of 1:27 refers to the genus mankind which is composed of both males and females. Thus, it is "mankind", composed of both males and females, who is created and told to have dominion over certain parts of creation. Finally, the fact that a third person pronoun, "them" (i.e., "hem" with the inseparable lamedh prefix), is used in 1:28 indicates that there is to be a shared dominion.

6. See F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, in a Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford, 1907), p. 9. Also important to note is the ambiguity in the use of the third m.s. pronoun "him" ('oto) in 1:27b and the third m.p. pronoun "them" ('otām) in 1:27c.

7. See R.J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax: An Outline (Toronto, 1976), p. 19; and W. Gesenius, E. Kautzch, and A. Cowley Hebrew Grammar (Oxford, 1910), p. 406, #3.

What mankind rules is made explicit in the text: males and females are to subdue the earth and have dominion over fish, birds and "all living things that move upon the earth" (ūb^ekol-hāyyā^ā hārōmeset^ʿ al hā'āres). What the "living things" (hāyyā^ā) are is the question over which Filmer and Locke seem to be in disagreement. Some progress, however, can be made towards solving this dispute by examining those places prior to Genesis 1:28 where "living things" have already been mentioned. Thus, since the context will help us to determine a more precise meaning of "living things", it is important to remember that the "living things" in 1:28 are those things which move upon the earth. In verse twenty-one, God creates "every thing that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly" (hahāyyā^ā hārōmeset^ʿ 'āser šar^esū^ā hammayim l^eminēhem), but the living things described in 1:28 are specifically said to be the ones that move upon the earth. It is, then, more appropriate to examine those places where the moving, living things are described in their relationship to the earth. Indeed, Genesis 1:24 and 1:25 do in fact describe such an occurrence: the "beasts of the earth" (hayyat hā'āres) and "every living thing that creepeth upon the earth" (kol remes^ʿ hā'adāmā^ā) are those things that God makes immediately before He says that He will make man:

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every living

thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind:
and God saw that it was good.

Since, therefore, all that which man has dominion over in 1:28 has been previously created (i.e., fish, fowl and living things), it is logical to assume that man's dominion would not extend over that which was yet to be created. In other words, man's dominion would extend only over those things which are explicitly mentioned in 1:28.

Having had the opportunity to examine Genesis 1:28 in some detail, we are in a better position to decide whose exegesis more closely adheres to what the text actually says in 1:28. From a close reading of the text (in particular, an examination of 1:28 with 1:27 to decide who is to rule, and, 1:28 with 1:24 and 1:25 to decide what is to be ruled), it was determined that the male and the female of the species "mankind" were to rule over the earth and over the forms of animal life that had been previously created. It will be recalled that Filmer had argued that only one man was to have dominion and that Adam's rule had extended not only over the animals but that God's "private grant" had given Adam the right to rule over his progeny as well. Filmer's first conclusion, therefore, fails to take into consideration the creation of both males and females as well as the fact that "them" (i.e., a plural pronoun) are the recipients of God's grant. His argument probably stems from a confusion surrounding the uses of both the singular and plural pronouns

in 1:27 as well as the fact 'ādām can also be taken in the singular or plural sense. Nevertheless, his exegesis fails to take into consideration the full scope of the passages. Furthermore, his inference that Adam had the right to rule over other men cannot be supported on textual grounds as dominion is only given over those animals which had been created earlier.

Locke's argument that God's grant in 1:28 was to at least two people (but more than likely concerned the entirety of mankind) is, on the other hand, more in accordance with what the text says in 1:27 and 1:28. His argument that dominion was only over "irrational creatures" and was not over other men is also consistent with the evidence from the text. Furthermore, the political implications that Locke draws from 1:28 (i.e., the imperative to subdue the earth and have dominion over the animals was a command to make use of nature and, by being fruitful, multiplying and filling the earth, man could make better use of that which nature had provided), take into consideration the importance of both the male and the female (in being fruitful) as they correctly identify that which man is to have dominion over (not other men but animals and the earth).

Genesis 3:16

Genesis 3:16 is also a verse that had many important political implications for both Filmer and Locke. It is also the next verse in the Bible where rule is specifically

mentioned. Filmer had argued that 3:16 showed the natural inequality of women and children as well as the subjection of women to their husbands and children to their fathers. Locke had argued that if there was any superiority of husbands to wives, it was only "accidental superiority" and related to things of "conjugal concern". Thus, in order to decide whose interpretation more closely adheres to the text of 3:16, it will again be necessary to examine the verse in detail. The Authorized Version and the Hebrew transliterations read as follows:

Unto the woman He said,

'el-hā'iššā 'āmar

I will greatly multiply thy labour and thy conception

hārbā 'arbeh ciss^ebōnēk w^ehērōnēk

in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children

b^{ec}eseb tēl^edī bānīm

and thy desire shall be to thy husband

w^e,el-'išk t^esūqātēk

and he shall rule over thee

w^ehū' yimšol-bāk

Because the argument between Filmer and Locke concerned not so much who was to rule as the implications of this ruling, this exegesis will also attempt to discern the nature of the rule and the context in which it is mentioned in the text.

Thus, to understand the context of 3:16, it is necessary first to give a brief account of the events that led up to God's speech to the woman in 3:16. Chapter three of Genesis initially records the conversation between the woman

and the serpent which, in turn, led to the man's and woman's eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (3:1-6). The text then records the man's and the woman's reactions after they had eaten the fruit (3:7-8). God then questions the man and the woman (3:9-13). He then tells the serpent (3:14-15), the woman (3:16) and the man (3:17-19) of the consequences of their actions. Genesis 3:16, therefore, contains God's explanation to the woman of the consequence of her eating the forbidden fruit.

What results from the disobedience is again explicit in the text: God will cause her "sorrow and conception" in childbirth to be "greatly multiplied",⁸ that her desire will be to her husband and that he will rule over her. It is crucial to note here that the text specifies that God is the agent who causes the woman's increased labour in childbirth,⁹ but the text does not specify who causes the woman's desire for her husband nor does it specify who causes the man to rule over the woman. Indeed, the fact that God is not said to be the agent causing the woman's desire for her husband nor the man's rule over the woman means that these latter

8. The grammatical form here is the "cognate accusative." When the infinitive absolute precedes the finite verb, the usual effect is to make the meaning more emphatic; in this case, "I will really multiply and multiply" (harbā 'arbeh). See Gesenius, Kautzch, Cowley, Hebrew Grammar, p. 342, n; and J. Weingreen, A Classical Approach to Hebrew Grammar (Oxford, 1959), p. 79.

9. The verb is in the Hiphil, first person singular.

statements to the woman are prophetic rather than causative of the new situation (i.e., God is describing what will take place rather than directly causing it to take place). The rule of the man over the woman cannot clearly said to be caused by God but is, rather, predicted or prophesied by God.

From this examination of the context and content of 3:16, a decision can be made on the hermeneutical validity of Filmer's and Locke's exegeses. The crux of Filmer's argument on 3:16 was that God had given Adam a grant to rule Eve which had thereby rendered her subject and unequal to Adam. And, if Eve was inferior to Adam by this grant, her children would also be subject to him. But although 3:16 contains the words "he shall rule over thee", a close examination of the text revealed that God did not speak to or grant the man anything at this stage. God did not tell the man to rule but, rather, explains to the woman that she is "to be ruled." This difference, however slight it may appear, undermines Filmer's argument to the extent that he cannot prove that God had granted Adam political power over Eve because the words are not spoken to Adam. To appreciate this difference more fully, saying "one day he shall die" is not the same as giving someone the right to take someone else's life. Filmer's justification for the slavery and inequality of children is another a priori assumption that he reads into the text and an assumption which he makes no attempt to justify on the basis of the text. Filmer's failure to

establish an intrinsic relation between the inferiority of women and that of her children from 3:16 is understandable once it is realized that the inherent connection between woman and children in this verse only concerns the increased labour in childbirth that the woman will experience. There is a tremendous leap that one would have to make in order to establish a connection between the increased difficulty in childbirth and the slavery and inferiority of children.

Locke's analysis, however, is more consistent with what the text actually states in 3:16. He is aware that the words are only spoken to the woman and that God had, therefore, not given Adam any particular rights or privileges over the woman. By thus restricting Adam's rights to "conjugal and not political power", Locke had minimized the extent to which the man's power could extend. And although Locke had regarded 3:16 as a "curse" and a "punishment" which, from a close reading of the text, is not strictly true,¹⁰ he quietly limits God's speech to a statement of facts and does not name the agent of the curse. God only "foretels what should be the woman's lot, how by his Providence he would order it so" (I,47). By correctly diminishing God's complicity in the "curse" upon the woman (that is, understanding "rule" as

10. Neither the word "curse" or "punishment" is used in 3:16. The word "curse" ('ārūr) is, however, used in 3:15 and 3:17 but both forms are the Qal passive participles which describe a state of "cursedness" rather than designating someone as having done the cursing.

predictive rather than causative), it becomes easier to understand how God's emphasizing the necessity of man's labour takes on such positive connotations for Locke's political philosophy. God's speech to the man is viewed not so much as a condemnation but a blessing. Far from being a bad thing, labour, according to Locke, would perhaps feed one thousand times the number of people than had the land been left waste. Locke's political teaching on 3:16ff., therefore, is an interpretation based on an internally coherent and consistent reading of the text. By understanding the significance of the fact that rule is spoken of only in the context of God's speech to the woman and, further, by taking most of the sting out of God's speech to the man and the woman, Locke had shown his insight and awareness of what is actually stated in Genesis 3:16.

Genesis 4:7

The next verse upon which Filmer's and Locke's political philosophies were reconstructed (and the last verse with which this exegesis deals) is Genesis 4:7. Furthermore, Genesis 4:7 is the third place in the Bible where man's rule over something is explicitly at issue. Filmer had argued that this verse was a justification of primogeniture whereby God had given the eldest son the absolute right to rule over his younger brother. Locke, on the other hand, had admitted that this was a "difficult and obscure" verse but had regarded "rule" in 4:7 to be something other than a rule by one

brother over another. The text of 4:7, with the Hebrew transliterations, reads thus:

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?
hālo', 'im tēytib s^e,ēt
and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.
w^e,im lō' tēytib lappetah hattā't rōbēs
And unto thee shall be his desire
w^e,ēleykā t^esu^vgātō
and thou shalt rule over him
w^e,attā timsol-bō

Of the verses studied thus far, 4:7 is perhaps the most difficult from a purely linguistic or grammatical point of view. But, by a close reading of what has taken place prior to 4:7 and what immediately follows in 4:8, some sense can be made out of the passage.

From a cursory reading of 4:7, the verse suggests that God is giving Cain the option of doing well (which would result in an acceptance) or not doing well (which would result in sin lying at the door). Cain is then told to rule over that which desires him. What prompts God to address Cain in such a fashion is crucial to the understanding of this verse. The event which immediately precedes God's directive to Cain and the event which necessitates a response from God is the "offering". Cain had offered God "from the fruit of the ground" and then his brother Abel offered God "the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (4:3-4). God then has "respect for" (sā^vcā) Abel and his offering

but does not have "respect for" (sa^v-caⁿ) Cain and his offering.¹¹ As a result of this apparent rejection, "Cain grew very wroth and his countenance fell" (4:5).

One is led to believe, therefore, that Cain's anger is the result of his not having been accepted by God but, it may be reasonable to assume that God would be more favourably disposed towards Cain than Abel. In Genesis 3:23, God had sent the man forth from Eden to "till the ground" (la^vc^vabod 'et ha'adama) and it is Cain, not Abel, who is called a "tiller of the ground" (co^vbēd 'adama) in 4:2; Abel is only called a "keeper of sheep" (ro'eh so'n). Cain, therefore, seems to fulfill the role that God gave to his father more so than his brother Abel.¹² Cain, however, either forgets that he has already been accepted or is angry in spite of having been accepted.

11. See Brown, Driver, Briggs, who, in their Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 1043, define sa^v-caⁿ as "gaze steadily" or "gaze with interest". The interpretations of the Revised Standard Version, "had regard for", and the New English Bible, "received with favour", imply a judgement on God's part that may go beyond what the text actually states at this point. Robert Sacks, in his commentary on Genesis called, "The Lion and the Ass: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis", in Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy, 8 (1980), pp. 68-70, points out that God may merely be waiting to gaze at Cain and his offering because Cain's lifestyle is more complicated than Abel's. Cain must contend with other men who may want his land. To accept unhesitatingly Cain's offering would be to accept his way of living.

12. See Sacks, "The Lion and the Ass", p. 69.

In light of the context of 4:7, we are now in a position to examine that verse in greater detail. Although the text records Cain's countenance as having fallen in 4:6, God tells Cain how he can be "accepted" (literally, "uplifted", from the Hebrew word nāsā'). If Cain does well, he will be accepted but if he does not do well, "sin lieth at the door." Cain is then told that he should rule over he who desires him. It is reasonable to assume that the uses of the third masculine singular pronouns "his" and "him" (bô) would refer to the last proper noun mentioned which, in this case, is "sin" (hāttā't). Nevertheless, hāttā't is a feminine noun and "bô" is a masculine pronoun. "Bô", however, could refer to "lieth" (rōbēs) if the participle is translated nominally instead of verbally. (That is, rōbēs would refer to the thing which lies down rather than to the act of lying down.)¹³ To make grammatical sense out of the passage, Cain's rule would only extend over the "lying thing" which desires him. The verse implies, therefore, that if Cain does well, he will be accepted. If he

13. See Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 308, who translate rōbēs nominally instead of verbally and thus render the phrase; lappetah hattā't rōbēs as "at the door, sin is a crouching beast." See also E.A. Speiser, Genesis (New York, 1964), p. 33; and B. Vawter, On Genesis: A New Reading (New York, 1977), p. 95, who translate rōbēs as "demon" based on the linguistic similarity between the Akkadian word for demon, rābisum, and the Hebrew word rōbēs. Thus, the phrase is translated, "at the door, sin is a demon."

does not do well, sin is a crouching beast at the door, and its desire is for him. Cain, however, must rule it.¹⁴

Having examined the verse in detail, we may next determine how and in what way Filmer's and Locke's political philosophies have dealt with the grammar, syntax and context of 4:7. Filmer's interpretation, which was a justification of primogeniture, focused on a very difficult textual problem. Filmer had regarded Cain's rule to be one over his brother Abel, arguing that the "him" (bô) over whom Cain is to rule, refers to Abel. As we have seen, the antecedent of the pronoun "him" (bô) is difficult to determine but the fact that Filmer offers no further textual evidence to support his interpretation means that his exegesis is at least suspect. Indeed, the use of bô in the verse would seem to indicate that the pronoun refers to something in its immediate context such as rôbēs. Filmer's failure to show an inherent connection between bô and Abel which is based on relevant textual evidence seriously weakens his exegesis.

14. Rather than ruling the "crouching beast", however, Cain seems to have asserted his rule over something very different: The next verse records his murder of his brother Abel. Whether Abel's death is because of or in spite of God's speech to Cain about "ruling" is difficult to determine. There are, however, a number of commentators who argue that Cain's crime is politically motivated, or at least view the conflict between Cain and Abel as one having fecund political implications. See Augustine, City of God, Book XV, chapters 1-9; Abravanel, "Commentary on the Pentateuch" in Medieval Political Philosophy, pp. 256-58; J. Ellul, The Meaning of the City (Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 1-9; R. Sacks, "the Lion and the Ass", p. 71.

Locke's reading of 4:7, however, takes into account more of the detail of the text than does Filmer's. He has importantly understood the subjunctive sense of the passage whereby Cain's ability to rule is contingent upon his actions and not upon his birthright. Locke also argues on contextual grounds that since the word "Abel" does not appear in this passage, the pronoun refers to something else other than Cain's brother. Locke admits that this is a "doubtful and obscure" passage but he relies on "most Learned Interpreters'" opinion in this case and states that the pronoun, in all probability, refers to "sin" rather than to "Abel".¹⁵ Furthermore, Locke's derivation of a political teaching from the Cain and Abel story (i.e., disputes arising over the division of property might be solved through the formation of civil society) is an interpretation that is not inconsistent with the authority of biblical commentators nor with the text itself.

15. Although Locke does not cite his sources here, it is of interest to note that Henry Ainsworth (the only commentator explicitly mentioned by Locke in the Two Treatises) interprets the pronoun bo in two ways: it either refers to "Abel" or "sin". Yet, in realizing the difficulty of this verse both Locke and Ainsworth have shown their sensitivity to the text. It is not surprising, therefore, that three hundred years later, Genesis 4:7 continues to plague modern biblical scholars. See G.R. Castellino's article, "Genesis 4:7", in Vetus Testamentum X (1960), pp. 442-45, for the problems modern biblical scholars have with this verse. How ironic then is Tarlton's article, "A Rope of Sand", pp. 47-48, where it is argued that if Locke admits that this verse is "difficult and obscure" then the Bible itself is difficult and obscure and cannot be used to support a rational system of political order.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to establish a relationship between a political teaching and an exegesis of Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7. In the first chapter, an attempt was made to examine the historical and intellectual milieu at the time of the publication of Filmer's Patriarcha (1680) and Locke's Two Treatises on Government (1690) so that issues with which both concerned themselves could be seen in greater clarity. The net effect of this investigation was to reveal how central a role the Bible played in the development of the political philosophy of the seventeenth century. Indeed, because of the importance of the Bible and of theologico-political thought at the time of their writings, it became necessary to ask why there was such an absence of secondary literature on their use of the Bible.

One argument which accounted for this lacuna was that scholars were more interested in Locke's relation to Hobbes than to Filmer (and, by implication, less interested in Locke's scriptural debate with Filmer). The other argument, which presupposed the first, was that since Locke advocated a Hobbesian doctrine of hedonistic self-preservation, he could not be a serious student of the Bible or, if he was serious, he consciously altered biblical teaching to suit his own political motivations. It was this last allegation

that the second chapter sought to investigate through the writings of its greatest exponent, Leo Strauss. Yet a careful analysis of Strauss's Natural Right and History (1953) showed that his theory of Locke's "esoteric teaching" was problematic and, on specific textual matters, Strauss seemed to have misread Locke's actual intentions. Nevertheless, there was still no guarantee that Locke was not proof-texting, only that there was no systematic method of exposing how he was using the Bible in the development of his political philosophy.

What was now needed was a detailed examination of Locke's scriptural argument with Filmer which would indicate how and in what way they had appropriated the biblical material. This was the function of the third chapter. By so organizing both Filmer's and Locke's political philosophy upon the basis of Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7, the biblical architectonic structure could be made plainly visible. And, while not suggesting that those were the only three verses in the Bible with which Filmer and Locke deal, or that the entirety of their political philosophy could be deduced from their exegesis of 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7, the third chapter attempted to expose the biblical base to their political philosophy. Accordingly, it also implied that the driving force behind their political thought may have resulted from a reading (however accurate or inaccurate) of the relevant biblical verses.

Nevertheless, the question which then surfaced was, if two such divergent political theories could be shown to originate from the same three verses in Genesis, it may well have been the case that Filmer or Locke was using the Bible to support a previously held political theory. Thus, the purpose of the fourth chapter was to consult the Hebrew text of those verses upon which Filmer's and Locke's political teaching was constructed to see if either political thinker was concerned with serious exegesis. After a comparative weighing of the relevant evidence, it was found that in all three cases, Locke's exegesis was more probable than Filmer's. Filmer's errors and inconsistencies in the text, on the other hand, meant that his political teaching, although based on Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 4:7, could not be substantiated on the basis of what the text actually taught at particular points.

The net result of the total investigation has been to show that Locke's political philosophy is consistent with his interpretation of the Bible and that his interpretation closely adheres to the grammar, syntax and structure of the original Hebrew text. It follows, therefore, that a positive connection between political foundations and religious texts has been documented insofar as the nucleus of Locke's political philosophy can be seen to derive from his close and careful reading of Genesis.

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