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Sanctified Tyrannicide:
Tyranny and Theology in John Ponet's *Shorte Treatise of Politike Power* and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*

by Ryan J. Croft

JOHN Ponet's *Shorte Treatise of Politike Power* (1556) has often been noted for its argument against tyranny.[1] At the same time, scholars have repeatedly commented on Ponet's apparent movement from violent resistance to prayer at the book's conclusion.[2] Barrett Beer, for

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[1] Barbara Peardon states plainly, "Ponet's task was to construct a theory which would determine how and by whom a tyrant could be deposed" ("The Politics of Polemic: John Ponet's *Short Treatise of Politic Power* and Contemporary Circumstance, 1553–1556," *Journal of British Studies* 22 [1982]: 47). David Wollman, alternatively, has stressed the importance of the biblical overthrows of tyrants that Ponet cites as precedents ("The Biblical Justification for Resistance to Authority in Ponet's and Goodman's Polemics," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 13 [1982]: 29–41). Most recently, Barrett L. Beer, after acknowledging how "recent historians have . . . considered the *Shorte Treatise* either in the context of the Puritan movement or as it related to later theories of tyrannicide," has attempted to move away from this popular focus and emphasize instead Ponet's personal anguish and loss of "faith in man and political institutions" ("John Ponet's *Shorte Treatise of Politike Power* Reassessed," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 21 [1990]: 373–84). Also see Quentin Skinner's discussion of Ponet alongside other prominent Marian exiles, in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Volume Two: The Age of Reformation [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978], passim).

[2] For example, Peardon points out that if the "desperate action" of tyrannicide committed by a divinely inspired assassin "were shunned, *the ultimate remedies* which Ponet recommended were both long-term in operation," those being "Penance and Prayer," for "God would eventually heed the cries of his oppressed people and come to their aid" ("Politics of Polemics," 48; my emphasis). Wollman similarly notes that Ponet's "specific advice to the common people is to seek the assistance of God by repentance and prayer" ("Biblical Justification," 35).

example, suggests that Ponet "was not successful in spelling out how the people, those who were the subjects of a tyrant, were to free themselves from oppression," and he adds that the *Treatise* "ends not with a blast of the trumpet calling for the saints to rise against tyranny, but with a prayer exhorting a suffering people to repent of their sins and trust in God to change 'variable England to the constant Jerusalem, from the company of men to the fellowship of angels.'"[3] Wollman has offered what is to date the best solution to this oft-criticized aspect of Ponet's treatise, arguing that Ponet emphasized supplication to God because such emphasis was in line with "the Old Testament model of Israelite behavior" where "repentance removes the reason for God's anger and thus clears the way for terminating the punishment."[4] While Wollman's explanation is enlightening, it only considers Ponet's knowledge of Scripture and overlooks his familiarity with other forms of religious discourse, such as the English liturgy and catechetical texts. An examination of these sources produces a more complete answer to this central problem of the *Treatise*. Moreover, once the liturgical and sacramental dimensions of Ponet's political thought are understood, the *Treatise* illuminates Edmund Spenser's strikingly similar treatment of tyranny and resistance in *The Faerie Queene*.

In this essay I first reveal how Ponet's demand for repentance and prayer in the *Treatise* recalls similar exhortations and prayers that occur prior to baptism in the Edwardian rite. These ritual prayers call for the rejection of Satan and prepare the recipient and the Christian community for the grace of the sacrament. I argue that Ponet similarly casts prayer as preparation for a tyrannicide that, like baptism, will remove a dark spiritual influence from the body politic and bring salvation to the nation. That is, since Ponet presents the devil as inspiring the tyrant, tyrannicide like baptism becomes a rejection of Satan's oppression in both the secular and spiritual realms. Turning to Spenser, I find a similar linking of tyranny, the devil, and baptism in his national epic. Spenser's sacramental understanding of tyranny and tyrannicide not only clarifies my reading of Ponet's political theology but also suggests Spenser's inheritance of a discursive legacy from the preceding genera-

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[3] Beer, "*Politike Power* Reassessed," 381. Compare his equally strong critique on page 382: "Ponet, perhaps troubled by anger and frustration, failed to define the legitimate authority of a limited monarchy, and his proposals for removing a tyrant leave much to be desired. His work stressed the failures of kings and ministers but offered little by way of practical advice to one who had a job to do."

[4] Wollman, "Biblical Justification," 40.

tion of Marian exiles. This essay, then, continues to recuperate Ponet as an important thinker, while also contributing to the ongoing conversation about Spenser's political and religious ideals.

An association between baptism and tyrannicide would have come easily to both Ponet and Spenser for a number of reasons. As the first sacrament, baptism held a foundational place in the life of the Christian, signifying escape from the tyranny of the devil into the freedom of Christ. Such a contrast between bondage and liberty would have been felt keenly by the Marian exiles and those still in England, where the Catholic queen was imprisoning and executing English Protestants while attempting to restore the false Roman religion. Baptism was also at the center of a religious controversy among Protestants themselves throughout the sixteenth century. As we will see, Ponet was engaged in this controversy on the side of the Edwardian church in opposition to the more radical Anabaptists, whom Spenser also targeted. Finally, there is the fact of Ponet's own participation in the Edwardian liturgy and its sacraments as bishop. Having served under Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, the man responsible for the reformed liturgy, Ponet would have longed for a restoration of the reformed vernacular service that Mary had dissolved upon her ascendency. Not only as a writer of a political treatise but also as a cleric, Ponet saw an urgent need for England to return to the purity of a Protestant faith confessed in baptism. In the aftermath of this struggle and in the face of continued threats from both Catholicism and Protestant radicalism, Spenser also upholds England's calling as a Protestant nation. However, he does this primarily by portraying the individual Christian's baptismal calling—the individual Christian in question here being the Red Cross Knight, also known as Saint George, the patron saint of England. As we will see, for Ponet and Spenser the baptismal callings of both the nation and the individual require the opposing of spiritual and temporal tyrants.

Before discussing Ponet's sanctification of tyrannicide through baptism, it is first necessary to recognize how he conceives tyranny—and the tyrant himself—in spiritual terms. For Ponet, as for other writers who approached politics from a theological perspective, a tyrant serves as an agent of the devil and rises to power because of a nation's sins. Consequently, all tyranny for Ponet hearkens back to the primeval Fall, a key point I cover in part one of this discussion. In part two, I examine Ponet's views on the Fall and baptism as expressed in his more religious writings, considering in particular how he posed his Edwardian orthodoxy against the beliefs of the Anabaptists, who held a different

theology of the Fall and original sin and who rejected the baptism of infants. My aim here is to show the theological as well as the political importance of the Fall and baptism for Ponet. Thus, in part three I demonstrate how the Edwardian liturgy associated baptism with the expulsion of a secular and a spiritual tyrant, specifically Pharaoh and the devil. In light of this liturgical subtext, I reveal that Ponet does not simply figure prayer as patient trust in providence but rather suggests that prayer is the appeal for the grace necessary to sanctify the violent act of tyrannicide—an act that Ponet casts as a type of baptism in its ability to cleanse England from a dark tyranny that is at once spiritual and political. In part four, my conclusion, I show how this precise understanding of Ponet's sanctification of tyrannicide helps us to understand the similar portrayal of the devil, tyranny, and baptism in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, particularly in the Book of Holiness. For instance, scholars have differed in the way that they read the religious allegory in the penultimate canto of this book, where the Red Cross Knight combats a dragon and liberates Una's kingdom from his tyrannical oppression. Ponet's sanctification of tyrannicide elucidates this and other moments in Spenser's allegory because both Spenser and Ponet constructed their works on the same political and theological foundation.

<div align="center">I</div>

For Ponet, the struggle between the tyrant and the commonwealth involves the ancient conflict between the devil and God. As the king is supposed to rule justly with authority given to him by God, so the tyrant rules unjustly with power given to him by the devil. Near the beginning of his *Treatise*, Ponet professes his belief that God defends people from tyranny in order to make certain that they all have a secure and just government: "And the state of the policies and common wealthes haue been disposed and ordained bi God [so] that the headdes could not (if they wolde) oppresse the other membres."[5] God's protection of the commonwealth from an oppressive ruler is assured as long as the people remain obedient to his will.[6] However, merely falling into disobedience is not

[5] Ponet, *A Shorte Treatise of Politike Power* (Strasbourg, 1556), reprinted in facsimile in Winthrop Still Hudson, *John Ponet: Advocate of Limited Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 11, hereafter referred to as *Treatise*. All subsequent references to Ponet will be to this facsimile edition and will be cited parenthetically by Hudson's page numbers.

[6] Wollman summarizes Ponet's beliefs regarding this dynamic in the following way: "so long as God's word is preached and held to, tyranny was impossible. Unfortunately,

grounds enough to create a tyrant—the tyrant must also have the assistance of the devil.[7] Thus, Ponet presents the tyrant as having traded not only his soul but also the souls of his people in return for power. He asks, "what iudgement shalbe geuen of those that willfully goo about to destroye mennes soules, and to make them a present to the deuil, so that they for a tyme maye be his deputies here in earthe?" (15–16). Here and elsewhere as we will see, Ponet paints a dark picture of tyrants who make a Faustian bargain with the devil in exchange for unjust power.

Later in the *Treatise* Ponet explains how the devil inspires the tyrant to make this fatal political and spiritual bargain. First, he puts forward the example of a demonically inspired ruler in Alexander the Great, who was led by a "worme of ambicion":

> *This worme without faile was the deuil*, who not contented that kinges (the ministers of God) should serue God in their vocation (to haue them the soner fall from God and serue him) putteth them in hope that they shalbe lordes of all the worlde, *if they will take him for their chief lorde and souraigne*. (127; my emphasis)

Ponet then discusses in detail how the devil allures rulers with promises of domination, noting as well the two "waies of the Deuil" by which such tyrants seize power—these being "open force" and Machiavellian "secret subtiltie," also known as "policy."[8] He comments that tyrants most often chose the latter route, so that "they worke a great deale more mischief than by open force and streingth of men, and with lesse peril of them selues." This way of deception is necessary, Ponet states, because God alone assures victory and success in open action: "For whan they goo about it by force, *the deuil their maister* is not hable to warraunt them the successe" (128; my emphasis).

The relative weakness of the tyrant and the devil explains why they can only disrupt the political order that God has set after the people themselves have first abandoned God. As Barbara Peardon argues, it

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this situation has not survived, and as the Israelites of old were disobedient and suffered God's wrath, so now Christians are punished for the like sins" ("Biblical Justification," 33).

[7] Compare Ponet's claim with Skinner's acknowledgement that the people's failure to follow God's signs in choosing their ruler is a symptom of their fallen nature. Note also his neglect of the important role of the devil in taking advantage of this vulnerability—a vulnerability Satan himself enabled in the Garden (*Foundations*, 229–30).

[8] The devil, Ponet states,

Bicause he seeth the inconstauncie of kinges, that they no longer abyde by their othes and promises than they maie thereby haue profit, gayue, and their desire, he dothe not furthewith put them in possession, but to trye their fidelitie, he sheweth them bi what meanes they shall come to it, putting to their good will, helpe, and industrie. He doubteth not, but if he maye bring them ones into the puddle ouer the shoen, they will through thicke and thine whatsoeuer cometh of it, to come to that thei loked for. These waies of the Deuill procede out of his schole of practices. (127–28)

is not that Ponet, like John Knox and Christopher Goodman, sees the tyrant as "the instrument of God, sent to move a nation to repentance for their sins, to punish the wicked, and both to humble and strengthen the pious," since such a belief was "'a great blasphemy' which made God 'the author of evil.'"[9] Rather, making a move of great political and theological significance, Ponet views the tyrant as the natural or necessary consequence of disobedience, for it is in such a moment of backsliding that the commonwealth leaves itself open to possession by the satanic tyrant. Thus, in the first section of his *Treatise* Ponet states, "But wher the people haue forsaken God, and contened utterly his worde, ther hathe *the deuil by his ministers*, occupied the hole country, and subuerted the good order, iustice and equalitie, that was in the common wealthe, and planted his unreasonable lustes for good lawes" (12; emphasis added). He adds suggestively that this process of tyranny is so common that he need not provide a particular example, though he does mention the Turk's domination of Hungary (12–13). However, Ponet clearly expects his Protestant countrymen to think of England here, now under the demonic sway of Mary Tudor and her ministers.

Although Ponet views tyranny as the direct result of a people's turning away from God, he does not visualize this infernal political and spiritual transformation as always being a sudden one. On the contrary, Ponet portrays tyranny in vivid detail as a shadowy menace that gradually asserts control over the commonwealth, until the nation perceives the danger all too late:

And wher the people haue not utterly forsaken God and his worde, but haue begonne to be weary of it: there hathe not God suffred Tyrannes by and by to rush in, and to occupie the hole, and to suppresse the good ordres of the common wealthe, but by litel and litel hathe suffred them to crepe in, first with the head, then with an arme, and so after with a legge, and at leynght (were not the people penitent, and in tyme conuerted to God) to bring in the hole body, and to worke the feates of Tirannes. (12)

Here the tyrant appears like a burglar slowly entering through the window of a house while the owner slumbers in blissful ignorance. Again, tyranny is defined as an ever creeping threat that God alone is able to repel as long as the commonwealth embraces his Word. To ward off the satanic tyrant, then, Ponet counsels spiritual vigilance: "Wherefore it shalbe the parte of all Christen men to take hede, that in forsaking God, they bring not iustly *the deuil and tyrannes* to reigne ouer them"

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[9] Peardon, "Politics of Polemics," 46, citing Ponet. Compare Skinner, *Foundations*, 227.

(13; my emphasis). The implication, once more, is that complacency and faithlessness to God have multiplied throughout England, with Queen Mary's Catholic rule and persecution of Protestants as the hellish results.

Ponet's repeated emphasis on the importance of fearing God, on keeping his word, and on the devil's role in fomenting tyranny recalls the events of the primeval Fall. Indeed, the Fall undergirds Ponet's entire political theory, as we will see later. For now, it is enough to note how Ponet parallels Mary's regime with the events in Genesis, in order to admonish Englishmen who would excuse their toleration of her unjust rule. First, he chastises those who would appeal to the fact that they were victims of the tyrant's deception: "Did the plea that Eua made for offending in eating the forbidden apple . . . excuse her? Nothing lesse" (18). Next, Ponet turns to those who would explain that they were forced to accept tyranny by necessity: "Was it ynought for Adam our first father . . . to say, I durst not displease my wife: or to saye, as he sayed, The woman whome though gauest me, gaue it me? No, it auailed not" (19). It is important to remember here that the devil, "the prince that ruleth in the aire" to use the words of Saint Paul, was often presented as a tyrant, from patristic explanations of the atonement that charged him with exceeding his dominion over mankind in having Christ killed, to his comedic appearances as scheming usurper in the medieval cycle plays, to the Edwardian liturgy itself, as we will see later.[10] Ponet is clearly expecting his readers to recall this idea and thus to see the present tyranny in England as ultimately derived from the original tyrannical act in Eden.

To summarize, throughout the *Treatise* the devil and tyrants are continually linked: he is their "chief lorde and souraigne," their "master," and they are his "deputies." Moreover, by connecting human tyranny with the original tyranny of the devil, Ponet casts Adam and Eve's enslavement to sin and the devil's unlawful usurpation of Creation as the

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[10] Ephesians 2:2: "Wherein, in times past ye walked, according to the course of this world, *and* after the prince that ruleth in the aire, *euen* the spirite, that nowe worketh in the children of disobedience," from the Geneva Bible (1587). As the marginal gloss notes, "Men are therefore slaues to Satan, because they are willingly rebellious against God." In the Gospel of John, the devil is identified as the "prince of this world": see John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11. For the devil as a tyrant-type in the cycle plays, see especially the Wakefield "Creation and Fall of the Angels," in which he sits in God's throne and greedily overlooks the newly created world: "For I am lord of blis / Over all this warld, iwis. / My mirth is most of all. / The[r]for my will is this: / 'Master' ye shall me call" (95–98). Quoted in *Medieval Drama*, ed. David Bevington (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), 95–98.

original cataclysm in which all future tyrannies find their beginning. In other words, Adam and Eve's disobedience makes tyranny possible. Nevertheless, just as Ponet believes there is hope after the Fall in the church and its sacraments, with baptism being the first of these, so too does he hope in the comparable rescue of an English nation groaning under the rule of a devilish tyrant. Before we see how this is so, we must first examine Ponet's and the Edwardian church's theology of the Fall and baptism.

<div align="center">II</div>

Ponet's *A short catechisme, or playne instruction, conteynynge the summe of Christian learning* provides a crucial precedent for the later intersection of politics and theology in the *Treatise*. At one point in the *Catechism* Ponet states that "we longe for, and praye that it may at length come to passe and be fulfylled, that Christe may reign with his sainctes, accordinge to Gods promises: that hee maye lyue and bee Lorde in the worlde, accordynge to the decrees of the holye Gospell: not after the traditions and lawes of men nor pleasure of *worldlye tyrauntes*."[11] In his biography of Ponet, Winthrop Hudson draws attention to this passage, noting that it "foreshadows the attitude which Ponet was to take during his exile under Mary," expressed in the *Treatise*.[12] It is important, then, to pause here and consider both the religious and political links between the *Catechism* and the *Treatise* more fully.

The first known editions of the *Catechism* were published in 1553 in both Latin and English, with the king's Forty-Two Articles appended at the end. It has sometimes been supposed that Archbishop Cranmer, whose hand was behind the Articles, also composed the *Catechism* proper. However, evidence shows that the *Catechism* was actually written by Ponet, who served as Cranmer's chaplain.[13] Set forth as

[11] John Ponet, *A short catechisme* (London, 1553), lviii[r]. Hereafter referred to as *Catechism*. All citations are from this edition (*STC* 4812), which is in English and includes the *Articles*.

[12] Hudson, *John Ponet: Advocate of Limited Monarchy*, 53–54. "Sometime in 1552," as Hudson writes, "Ponet finally got around to the project which seemed to him to be of such vital importance for the further progress of the Reformation. This was the composition of a new catechism for the use of schoolmasters in the grammar schools" (5).

[13] Hudson reviews the two pieces of evidence for Ponet's authorship: first, a 1553 letter from Sir John Cheke to Heinrich Bullinger that refers to "the catechism of John, bishop of Winchester"; second, a 1552 note in the *State Papers, Domestic*, that states, "Bishop Poynet has set forth a catechism in Latin and English; begs that the bearer may have license for

a dialogue between a master and a scholar, the book proceeds through a number of crucial theological issues hotly and sometimes even violently contested during the Reformation, especially original sin, grace, and the sacraments, including baptism. More than once in the Articles, the Anabaptists are rebuked for their incorrect views on these matters. Of course, this controversy revolves around a particular understanding of the Fall, the primeval event that also undergirds Ponet's theorization of tyranny and resistance. Thus, although Cranmer's Articles assail the Anabaptists and their teachings more directly than the *Catechism*, Ponet in his *Treatise* enters the same disputes with the Anabaptists over property and original sin. The Fall and the closely related issue of baptism, then, link the *Catechism* and the *Treatise*, standing as they do at the heart of the Anabaptist controversy. Moreover, like the Fall, baptism has an important place in Ponet's political theory, as I will show later.

Cranmer's article on original sin, the eighth, is the first to mention the Anabaptists by name. This article declares that "Originall sinne standeth not in the folowing of Adam, as the Pelagianes doe vainely talke, *which also the Anabaptists do now a daies renue*"; rather "it is the fault, and corrupcion of the nature of euerye man, that naturallye is engendred of the ofspringe of Adam."[14] Here Cranmer, and Ponet by extension, charges the Anabaptists with an incorrect understanding of original sin that minimizes the impact of the Fall on humanity.[15] To

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the sole printing thereof" (*Limited Monarchy*, 52). Hudson's discussion of Ponet's time as the archbishop's assistant can be found on pages 19–35. As he notes, the "establishment of this intimate relationship with Thomas Cranmer was to be one of the most significant events in Ponet's life" (22).

[14] "[W]hereby manne is very far gone from his former righteousnesse, whiche he had at hys creation: and is of his own nature geuen to euyll" (Ponet, *A Short Catechism*, lxxi[r]; my emphasis).

[15] Actual Anabaptist teaching on original sin appears to be both more complex and more varied than either Cranmer or Ponet give it credit for being. Claus-Peter Clasen notes, "When it came to the question of baptizing children because they had been tainted with original sin, some Anabaptists in central Germany seem to have cast out the notion of original sin altogether. Man, like all other creatures, was created good and pure; therefore all children were in a state of innocence and blessedness." On the other hand, "many Anabaptists . . . admitted that there was a leaning toward evil in man. The Hutterites held that through his sin, Adam had imparted this evil tendency to all mankind. But if children were potential sinners, this weakness was not held against them" (*Anabaptism: A Social History, 1525–1618* [Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1972], 97). See also Balthasar Hubmaier, "Human Beings After the Fall," in the treatise *Concerning the Freedom of the Will*, printed in *Early Anabaptist Spirituality: Selected Writings*, ed. Daniel Liechty (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 26–30; and Peter Riedeman, "Concerning Original Sin," and "What Original Sin Is," both excerpted in *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources*, ed. Walter Klaassen (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981), 180.

contradict this error, the terrifying consequences of the Fall are stressed as the passage continues: "So that the fleshe desyreth alwaies contrary to the spirit therfore in euery person, born into this world, it deserueth Goddes wrathe and damnacion. And this infection of nature doeth re-mayne, yea in them that are baptyzed." Different explanations of this "desire of the flesh against the spirit," or concupiscence, are mentioned, before the passage concludes that this desire, however it is explained, is not subject to the law of God.[16] All in all, the article stresses the flawed, fallen nature of human beings, who are prone to rebellion against God.

The effects of original sin that Cranmer sets forth here are crucial to Ponet's political theory. First, as we have already seen, Ponet is aware in the *Treatise* that the Fall is not only the inauguration of the devil's tyranny over the world but also a pattern of tyrannies to come. How-ever, like other contemporary political theorists, Ponet sees original sin as also making good government necessary. He thus opens his *Treatise* by noting that "bicause through *the fall of the furst man*, his reason is wonderfully corrupt, and sensualitie hathe goten the ouer hande, [he] is not hable by himself to rule himself, but must haue a more excellent gouernour" (3; my emphasis). Ponet's description of the Fall's lasting effects shares the same emphasis and even a little of the same language ("corrupt," "sensualitie") with Cranmer's article on original sin cited above. And so it is no surprise that later, in discussing the necessary obedience owed to governors, Ponet criticizes Anabaptist doctrine on the question of original sin along the same lines as Cranmer: "Some ther be that will haue to littel obedience, as the Anabaptistes. For bicause they heare of a christian libertie, wolde haue all politike power taken awaye: and so in dede no obedience":

> *For the anabaptistes mistake christian libertie*, thinking that men maye liue without sinne, *and forget the fall of man*, wherby he was brought in to suche miserie, that he is no more hable to rule himself by himself, than one beast to rule another: and that therfore God ordained ciuile power (his ministre) to rule him, and to call him backe, whan so euer he should passe the limites of his duetie, and wold that an obedience should be geuen vnto him. (47–48; my emphasis)[17]

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[16] John Ponet, *A Short Catechism*, lxxi^{r-v}.

[17] Between these two statements Ponet chastises the "papistes" for committing the opposite error by asking for too much obedience to worldly governors. Ponet's attempts here and elsewhere in the *Treatise* to position himself (and the struggling Protestant church) between what he saw as the extremes of Anabaptism and Catholicism is indica-tive of the general tenor of his religious thought, which again anticipated the Elizabethan *via media*.

The Fall, then, explains not only tyranny but also the obedience that the men of the commonwealth owe to the good ruler. Here Ponet goes further than Cranmer in declaring the Anabaptists anarchical outright, a polemical move in keeping with the tone of the *Treatise* as a whole. Importantly, though, this controversialist thrust is still based on what Ponet, along with Cranmer, sees as a flawed Anabaptist theology that either distorts the meaning of the Fall or forgets it entirely.

The next of the Forty-Two Articles in Ponet's *Catechism* to deal with the Anabaptists is entitled "Christian mennes gooddes are not commune." This article, the thirty-seventh, states the following:

The riches & gooddes of Christians are not commune, as touchinge the righte title, and possession of the same (as certayn Anabaptistes do falsly boast) not withstanding euery man oughte of such thinges, as he possesseth, liberally to giue almes to the pore, according to his hability.[18]

After first treating their view of the Fall and original sin, Ponet returns to the Anabaptists later in his *Treatise* and like Cranmer condemns their practice of holding property in common.[19] However, he supersedes Cranmer's article by tracing the Anabaptist beliefs regarding property to their incorrect theology of the Fall yet again:

The Anabaptistes wresting Scripture to serue their madnesse, among other foule errours, haue this: that all things ought to be common, *they ymage man to be of that puritie that he was before the fall, that is, cleane without sinne, or that (if he will) he maie so be*: and that as whan there was no sinne, all thinges were common, so they ought now to be. *But this mingling of the state of man before the fall, and of him after the fall muche deceaueth them.* (79; my emphasis)

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[18] Ponet, *A Short Catechism*, lxxxxiiii^v.

[19] In fact, not all Anabaptists placed equal stress on the importance of shared property. Klaasen writes, "The majority of Anabaptists believed that property could be held privately, but that it could never be absolutely private. Property was viewed as a trust from God . . . such property should always be available to sisters and brothers in need" (*Anabaptism in Outline*, 232). See also his selection of Anabaptist writings on "Economics" in the same edition, 233–42. Liechty states, "The communal impulse was present among all Anabaptists. But it was among the Hutterians alone that this impulse was developed into an economic communism in which private possessions were actually forbidden and condemned as well" (*Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 137); see also in the same volume Peter Walpot's "True Yieldedness and the Christian Community of Goods" (1577), 138–96. Other scholars, while complicating this picture somewhat, basically agree on the unique and influential place that Jakob Hutter and the Hutterites with their practice of the *Bruderhof* hold in Anabaptist thought. Compare Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 191–94; Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "A Closed Community of Goods," in *The Anabaptists*, trans. Trevor Johnson (New York: Routledge Press, 1996), 22–25; William R. Estep, "Of Moravia and the Community of Goods," in *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 127–49.

In Ponet's fiery rhetoric, the Anabaptists are maddened persons who commit "foule errours" and are woefully deceived regarding the terrible spiritual and political state of postlapsarian mankind. He thus reemphasizes with sermonic repetition the dreadful consequences of the Fall—original sin and concupiscence—against this dangerous deception: "For by the fall, *and euer after the fall*, this corruptible fleshe of man is clogged with sinne, *and shall neuer be ridde of sinne*, as long as it is in this corrupt worlde, but shalbe alwaies disposed and prone to doo that is euil" (79; emphasis added to highlight Ponet's rhetoric). Peardon is correct when she writes that "ownership of property was for Ponet a natural right of subjects proceeding from the natural law." However, her conclusion that "on these grounds he condemned the Anabaptists for their denial of the rights of property"[20] neglects the importance of Ponet's understanding of the Fall, the doctrine that he identifies as the real fault line between himself and the Anabaptists. It is as if Ponet feared that a denial of the Fall would lead not only to anarchy but also to political complacency—and it is this fear that fuels his polemic against the Anabaptists in a *Treatise* ostensibly devoted to the question of resistance to tyranny.

After we acknowledge the overwhelming significance of the Fall in Cranmer's Articles and Ponet's *Treatise*, we must also examine the place of baptism in Ponet's *Catechism*, since this first sacrament addresses the Fall by inducting the Christian into the new life of grace. Although it is true, as Hudson notes, that the *Catechism* "represents an advanced position for most of the English reformers" in regard to the sacraments, we should also keep in mind with Wollman that Ponet "was closer temperamentally and doctrinally to the via media of the Edwardian and Elizabethan ideals."[21] Indeed, Ponet's treatment of baptism, like his treatment of original sin, is an attempt to navigate between Catholicism on the one hand and a more radical Protestant movement like that of the Anabaptists on the other—a movement that would deny the "wholesome effecte, and operacion" of baptism that he and Cranmer uphold.

Cranmer in the Articles is very careful to discourage superstition regarding the sacraments of the Eucharist and baptism, while still up-

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[20] Peardon, "Politics of Polemics," 44.

[21] Hudson, *Limited Monarchy*, 53; Wollman, "Biblical Justification," 32. See also Beer's statement that "because of Ponet's identification with what historians regarded as 'radical' Protestant doctrines, he is more frequently associated with the Puritan tradition that emerged only after his death than with the Anglican church that he helped to found" (*"Politike Power* Reassessed," 374).

holding their efficacy as signs bestowing grace. Thus, in his definition of what a sacrament is, Cranmer stresses that Christ ordained them not to be gazed upon but to be used and also that "they be certaine sure witnesses and effectuall signes of grace, & Goddes good wyll toward us: by the whiche he dothe worke inuisibly in vs: and doth not only quycken but also strengthen and confirme our faith in him."[22] Although he also maintains that the sacraments are only efficacious for those who worthily receive them, the Articles make clear that this is true for infants who are baptized: "The custom of the church to Christen yong children, is to be commended, and in anye wyse to be reteyned in the Church."[23] Cranmer's discussion of the effects of baptism itself also suggests a certain sacramental viewpoint that would be anathema to Anabaptists, especially with its focus on infant baptism. For Cranmer and the Edwardian church, baptism itself is not only a "sygne of profession" or "marke of difference"; it also functions as a "sygne and seale of our new byrth: wherby, as by an instrument, they that receyue Baptisme ryghtlye are grafted into the church." In addition to the incorporation of the Christian into the church, forgiveness of sin is promised by baptism, adoption into God's family is "visibly signed and sealed," and "faith is confyrmed: and grace increased, by vertue of praier to God."[24] Again, this declaration, speaking as it does of both infant and adult baptism, counters the Anabaptist embrace of the latter over and against the former.

   Ponet echoes Cranmer's sacramental language and point of view in his discussion between the Master and the Scholar, while also stressing even more the appropriateness of infant baptism. When the Master asks, "What doth baptisme represent & set befor our eyes?" the Scholar responds that baptism represents that "we are by the spirite of Christ new borne, and cleansed from syn," as well as the fact "that we be members and partes of his churche, receiued into the communion of sainctes."[25] Baptism, as Cranmer states, would be the efficacious sign of this transformation, while Ponet adds that the water also represents the Spirit, burial with Christ, and the future Resurrection. Ponet also has his Master ask the Scholar to explain how the sacrament of baptism is to be administered. The Scholar replies,

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22 Ponet, *A Short Catechism*, lxxix^v.
23 Ibid., lxxx^v.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., l^{r-v}.

Hym that beleueth in Christ: professeth the Articles of the Christian religion: & myndeth to be baptised (*I speake nowe of them that be growen to ripe yeres of discretion: sith for the young babes, theyr parentes or the churches profession sufficeth*) the minister dyppeth in, or washeth with pure & cleane water onlye, in the name of the father, and of the sonne, and of the holy ghost: & then commendeth him by praier to God, in to whose churche he is now openly as it wear enrowled, that it mai please God to graunte hym hys grace, whearby he may answer in belefe and life agreablye to his profession.[26]

In upholding infant baptism in his dialogue as an effectual use of the sacrament, Ponet concurs with the Forty-Two Articles and the Edwardian church against the Anabaptists. Claus-Peter Clasen has catalogued the many pejorative names that Anabaptists used in referring to infant baptism and has discussed as well instances where baptismal fonts were smashed or thrown into a river.[27] Awareness of the actual violence lying behind such polemical language is necessary if we are to fully appreciate Ponet's defense of this doctrine, a defense that, while it does not specifically name the Anabaptists, certainly has their radical position in mind.[28]

To summarize—just as in his discussion of the Fall and original sin, Ponet in his *Catechism* holds to the Edwardian orthodoxy regarding baptism against the teaching of the Anabaptists. However, this orthodoxy was not expressed solely in articles and catechisms. Rather, the teachings of the English church were fully realized only in the liturgy that Ponet celebrated and may have had a role in shaping.[29] The liturgy was where a correct understanding of the Fall's consequences and baptism's effects led to sacramental praxis. Thus, at the beginning of the

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[26] Ibid., xlviii^v–xlix^r.

[27] For the Anabaptists held that "infant baptism originated with the devil" (Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 95).

[28] We should keep in mind the sociological aspect of such polemics as well. Clasen states, "Most people who heard these arguments in the sixteenth century must have been shocked and horrified by what sounded like wild blasphemies" (*Anabaptism*, 96). Goertz similarly notes, "Certainly the way in which the Anabaptists separated themselves from the church and society of their day (through the first performances of rebaptism, which was what the new baptismal practice then amounted to) could not have violated contemporary norms and conventions more drastically" (Goertz, "Baptism as Public Confession of Faith," in *Anabaptists*, 68–69).

[29] D. G. Newcombe reports that, as Ponet served as Cranmer's chaplain, "it has been suggested that Ponet was engaged in research in support of Cranmer's preparation of the new English Book of Common Prayer, the ordinal, and the Book of Homilies" before his own appointment as bishop (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], s.v. "Ponet, John (c.1514–1556).")

baptismal ceremony in the 1552 Book of Common Prayer, the priest acknowledges that all men are conceived and born in sin and that they cannot enter the kingdom of God unless they be regenerate—born of water and the Spirit. He then calls on God to grant this new birth to the children about to be baptized.[30] As the theology of the Fall held a crucial place in Ponet's theorization of tyranny, then, so too is baptism—the first antidote to the Fall—intimately connected to Ponet's theorization of tyrannicide through its similar union of prayer and purifying action, as I will now show.

<p style="text-align:center">III</p>

Having demonstrated Ponet's linking of the devil and the tyrant, as well as his agreement with Cranmer and his Articles regarding the Fall and baptism against the Anabaptists, I now wish to approach Ponet's defense of tyrannicide from within the context of Cranmer's Edwardian liturgy, specifically its baptismal ceremony. Ponet's familiarity with the liturgy and its rites, I have already suggested, was more than a matter of personal devotion. Ordained a priest in 1536, Ponet later rose to become bishop of Rochester in 1550 and a year later was made bishop of Winchester. Quentin Skinner notes that Ponet continued to use "his style as a Bishop" even while in exile: his *Treatise* is signed D. I. P. B. R. W, for "Dr. John Ponet, Bishop of Rochester and Winchester."[31] During his education at Cambridge and later ecclesiastical career, Ponet forged connections with other Protestant luminaries, including the powerful Archbishop Cranmer. Ponet's service under Cranmer certainly had an impact on his political and religious thought at least as important as the influence of Scripture, as the *Catechism* witnesses. Now I will consider Ponet's own ecclesiastical role, in particular his leading of the liturgy. In the discussion that follows I will be drawing on the 1549 and 1552 Book of Common Prayer, focusing on the prayers in both that were spoken in preparation for baptism. Ponet, I contend, alludes to the language and substance of these prayers in arguing for tyrannicide. In particular, Ponet makes use of biblical typology and ideas of exorcism, engrafting, and headship that are referred to in the celebration of the sacrament. In addition, he refers to the baptismal vows that every Christian must make, including the sovereign. The sum of all these allusions is

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[30] "Baptisme bothe publique and priuate," Book of Common Prayer (London, 1552), Dii[v]. *STC* 16284.5. Hereafter cited as Book of Common Prayer (1552).

[31] Skinner, *Foundations*, note on page 221.

an implicit suggestion that tyrannicide can be as holy and liberating an act for the commonwealth as baptism is for the individual Christian—and therefore that prayer should precede tyrannicide as it does the sacrament.

It is crucial to note first that baptism was associated with the tyranny of Pharaoh in the typological interpretation of Scripture and that the baptismal rite refers specifically to this. That is, the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh and his forces were seen as prefiguring baptism, imbuing the liturgical celebration of the sacrament with a timeless sublimity. Thus, in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, the priest praises God in the following manner: "And when thou dyddest drowne in the read sea wycked kyng Pharao wyth all hys armie, yet (at the same tyme) thou dyddest leade thy people the chyldren of Israel safely through the myddes therof: wherby thou didest figure the washyng of thy holy Baptisme."[32] The 1552 Book of Common Prayer omits mention of Pharaoh and his wicked kingship, while still acknowledging that God "dyddest safely leade the chyldren of Israel, thy people through the redde Sea: figuring thereby thy holy Baptisme."[33] An implicit relationship between tyrannicide and baptism is thus preserved in the 1552 version, for those with a knowledge of Exodus from either the liturgy or their own reading of Scripture would still consider the worldly tyranny of Pharaoh over the Israelites as a figure for the spiritual tyranny of sin and the devil every time they witnessed a baptism—or, like Ponet, actually performed one.

In his *Treatise* Ponet hails this rescue of the Israelites from Pharaoh as a stunning example of God's liberation of his faithful from tyrannical oppression; furthermore, he likens the Exodus narrative to the tyranny occurring in England. "God," he states, "(to testifie that he hathe also power of the body) hathe many tymes in all ages *myghtily and miraculously deliuered his people from the power of tyrannes: as the Israelites from Pharao*, Mardocheus from Aman, etc." (51; emphasis added). Only a few folios later, Ponet returns to the account of Pharaoh and the Israelites found in Exodus, finding in the familiar story a mirror for Mary's corrupt rule and oppression:

Whan Pharao the tyranne commaunded the mydwyues of the Egipcianes, to kill all the male children that should be borne of the Israelites wyues: think ye,

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[32] "Of Baptisme, bothe publique and priuate," Book of Common Prayer (London, 1549), Aa1r. *STC* 16269. Hereafter cited as Book of Common Prayer (1549).
[33] Book of Common Prayer (1552), Diii.

he did only commaunde them? No without doubt: Ye maye be sure, he com-
maunded not only vpon threatned paynes, but also promised them largely
largely as those doo, that being desirous of children, procure the mydwyues
to saye, they be with childe, whan their bely is puffed up with the dropsie or
molle. . . and hauing bleared the common peoples eies with processioning, Te
deum singing, and bonfire banketting, vse all ceremonies and cryeng out . . .
another birdes egge is layed in the nest. (55–56)

Here Ponet suddenly switches the tyrant's gender, moving from the
male Pharaoh to a clear mockery of the female Mary and what John
Guy terms her "phantom pregnancies, which the courts of Europe
ridiculed."[34] Ponet proceeds to comment acidly on the Catholic rituals
of Mary's regime, attacking "processioning," "Te deum singing," and
"ceremonies."[35] This passage, then, belies Beer's statement that "Ponet
carefully avoided a direct attack on the queen although an imaginative
reader might readily see the similarity between Mary and his account
of the wicked Queen Athaliah."[36] Here Ponet explicitly links Mary's
tyranny to Pharaoh's, with the English people serving the role of the
Israelites suffering under her oppression and waiting for their own pas-
sage across the Red Sea to the promised land of renewed Protestant rule
and baptismal vows kept by both the sovereign and the people.

By comparing Mary Tudor to Pharaoh, Ponet suggests a violent end
for the Catholic queen that will, like the Israelites' escape through the
Red Sea and the drowning of Pharoah's forces, figure baptism by re-
moving a devilish tyrant from power. Later in the *Treatise*, Ponet sug-
gests how such a removal from power might actually take place, from
the actions of a constable of England representing the commonwealth,
or "som minister of the worde of God" bearing "the keyes . . . to ex-
communicate," to the act of "any priuate man" with "some special in-
ward commaundement or surely proued mocion of God" (117 and 112).
Surely it is no coincidence that when Ponet turns here to consider prece-
dents for tyrannicide he dwells longingly on the slayings of two female
tyrants from the Old Testament: Athaliah and Jezebel. Athaliah, like
Mary Tudor "childless, and past hope to haue any children," is killed
spontaneously by "the nobilitie and commones" who had just crowned

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[34] John Guy, *Tudor England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 228.

[35] Hudson notes that the installation of Ponet as bishop of Winchester (by proxy) was
"a very simple ceremony": "There was no altar, 'Te Deum' was not chanted, and the bells
were not rung. Nothing was done beyond the reading of the mandates appointing the
proctors and the taking of the required oaths" (*Limited Monarchy*, 50).

[36] Beer, "*Politike Power* Reassessed," 380.

Joas, having known too long "what miserie it was to lyue vnder the gouernement of a mischieuous woman" (114–15). Meanwhile, Jezebel, who encouraged the religion of Baal, an antitype of Catholicism for Ponet, is slain after the prophet Elias ("no ciuile magistrate" as Ponet makes sure to mention) calls for her death by defenestration, which is swiftly carried out (115–16). Still, Ponet seems to be most interested in the defeat of Pharaoh and the parallel triumph over the devil that takes place in baptism.

Since, as we saw in part one, Ponet charges the devil with lying behind all tyrants, the removal of a tyrant through tyrannicide is simultaneously a removal of the devil's influence from over the state. Here too Ponet's *Treatise* finds a parallel in the Edwardian liturgy, which includes a rejection of the devil made either by the baptismal candidate or his or her sponsors in the case of infant baptism. The first version of the Book of Common Prayer contains the strongest example of this rejection in an exorcism rite, wherein the priest looking upon the children pronounces the following:

I Commaunde thee, vncleane spirite, in the name of the father, of the sonne, and of the holy ghost, that thou come oute, and departe from these infantes, whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath vouchesaved, to call to his holy Baptisme, to be made membres of his body, and of his holy congregacion . . . And *presume not hereafter to exercise any tyrannye towarde these infantes*, whom Christe hath bought wyth hys precious bloude, and by this his holy Baptisme calleth to be hys flocke.[37]

This ritual with its explicit mentioning of the devil's "tyrannye" was not included in the 1552 rite.[38] However, while a direct reference to the devil's tyranny may have been omitted, baptism as set forth in the second version of the Book of Common Prayer still emphasizes the rejection of the devil that was supposed to take place before the sacrament. The priest asks the godparents whether they forsake the devil and all his works, as well as the vanity of the world and selfish desires. He also calls to mind the spiritual combat that the Christian must wage in praying for God to "Graunt that they [the children] may haue power and strength to have victorye and to triumphe agaynste the deuyll, the

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[37] Book of Common Prayer (1549), Aaiiᵛ; my emphasis.
[38] For a comparison of the ways that the language of the Book of Common Prayer changed in general between the 1549 and 1552 editions, see Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 28–34.

worlde, and the fleshe."[39] After these prayers, the baptism would seal this rejection of the devil through the reception of grace and enrollment in the church.

As Ponet casts tyranny as an echo of Satan's deception and Adam and Eve's disobedience, the removal of the tyrant in Ponet's system also becomes akin to a baptismal burying of the old Adam and the rising of the new. In other words, the sacrament of baptism counters the legacy of the first Adam by incorporating the Christian into the body of Christ, the second Adam. Thus, the 1552 Book of Common Prayer directs the priest to pray the following before the baptism: "Mercyfull God, graunt that the olde Adam in these chyldren maye be so buried, that the newe man maye be raysed up in them."[40] Ponet suggests this effect of baptism in connection to tyrannicide not only by linking tyranny with the Fall earlier but also by later describing tyrannicide as the replacement of an "incurable member" or "head" in the body politic.[41] That is, Ponet's language suggests the grafting of the Christian into Christ's body, the church, of which Christ is the head—one of the central functions of baptism highlighted both by Cranmer's articles and Ponet's *Catechism*.

For Ponet, overthrow of Mary's rule will recall the English nation from the idolatry of Catholicism to its true baptismal faith, confirming this faith in a way that hearkens back to the effects of the baptism itself as again defined in Ponet's *Catechism* and Cranmer's Articles. Skinner points to this aspect of Ponet's resistance theory when he writes that Ponet and the other resistance theorists "assure the people not that they will be damned if they resist the powers that be, but rather that they will be damned if they fail to do so, since this will be tantamount to breaking what Knox calls the 'league and covenant' which they have sworn with God himself."[42] As far as Ponet is concerned, the covenant that the Christian must principally keep in mind is his baptismal one, which supersedes all other laws: "But besides this lawe appointed for all kinges, *he that wilbe accompted a christian king or gouernour, must remember*, that he is a christian man, and that bi being made a king, *he is not exempt from the lawes and duetie of a christen man, which eueri one pro-*

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[39] Book of Common Prayer (1552), Diiii[r–v].

[40] Ibid., Diiii[v].

[41] "This lawe testifieth to euery mannes conscience, that it is naturall to cutte awaie an incurable membre, which (being suffred) wolde destroie the hole body. Kinges, Princes, and other gouernours, albeit they are the headdes of a politike body, yet they are not the hole body. And though they be the chief membres, yet they are but membres: nother are the people ordained for them, but they are ordained for the people" (108).

[42] Skinner, *Foundations*, 238.

fesseth in Baptisme" (90–91; my emphasis). Here Ponet implicitly charges Mary with forgetting her solemn baptismal vow. He calls for her removal not just for her tyranny but also for her having set up a false religion in the mold of wicked Old Testament rulers, instead of preserving the pure faith that was ascendant under her younger brother Edward, a kind of Josiah.

For Ponet, then, tyrannicide would have a baptismal—that is, exorcizing and redemptive—effect on England, as it would for any nation suffering under a satanically inspired tyranny that had managed to possess the body politic. Ponet further points to this link between spiritual and political exorcism with his calls to conversion at the end of his treatise, which echo the exhortations directed toward godparents about rejecting the world, flesh, and the devil noted above:

> [I]f ye wil in time earnestly repent you of your sinnes, leaue your Idolatrie, and honour and worship God truly, as ye were taught in blessed king Edwardes time. . . . [I]f ye wil obey Goddes commaundementes before your gouernours, and your gouernours in that is godly, honest, and iust, and not elles . . . if ye will absteine from curel murtherine of the Saintes of God . . . and inordinate desires of the trashe of this worlde. (181–82)

Here, as elsewhere in the *Treatise*, Ponet reveals that the priest's admonitions to the baptized, to "forsake the devyll and all his workes, and constantly beleue Goddes holy worde, and obediently kepe his commaundementes," are the best defense against tyranny.[43] If this kind of repentance takes place, then the people may indeed "aske of God in Christes name" for relief (182). Calling on God for mercy, the people will not only win salvation ("Ye shall auoide the eternal paines of hel prepared for sinners") but also receive the grace to purify England from the devil and the tyrant's influence: "you being a fewe, shalbe hable to withstande al the tirannes of the worlde, and enemies of God and our countrey, and vtterly confounde them and destroie them" (183). In other words, repentance and prayer lead to holy violence, a violence that the preceding passages have suggested will be reminiscent of God's destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. Thus, through a network of careful allusions to Scripture and the liturgy, Ponet's *Treatise* suggests that a divinely sanctioned tyrannicide would, in a process analogous to baptism, remove a fallen, tyrannous rule and substitute a holier government in its place, thus expelling the devil's influence and spiritually renewing the body politic.

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[43] Book of Common Prayer (1552), Diiii.

To conclude my discussion of Ponet, the extensive allusions to the devil and baptism in his treatment of tyranny and resistance explain the sudden turn to prayer at the end of his work, a turn that we witnessed scholars wrestling with at the beginning of this discussion. That is, the resonances between the baptismal liturgy and Ponet's discussion of tyrannicide suggest that tyrannicide is not forgotten with the call for prayer and repentance at the end of his work—that prayer and repentance are not options to be separated from tyrannicide and embraced when all else fails. On the contrary, when seen in the light of the baptismal rites of the Edwardian liturgy, Ponet's calls for prayer and repentance take their proper place as preparation for the commonwealth to dethrone the tyrant and purify the body politic through tyrannicide, as much as the priest prepares the baptismal candidate for baptism with similar prayers and exhortations. As the priest baptizes in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so Ponet appeals to the Holy Trinity at the end of his treatise in the hope that the triune God will soon redeem his suffering English nation from its devilish oppression. Prayer appropriately precedes tyrannicide for Ponet, just as baptism is preceded by rejection of the devil and sealed with the prayerful invocation of the Holy Spirit.

<div style="text-align:center">IV</div>

In books 1 and 5 of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser, like Ponet, establishes suggestive links between the devil and the tyrant, baptism and tyrannicide. My argument here is not that Ponet necessarily influenced Spenser directly, although the evidence that I present suggests that he probably did. Indeed, Spenser's early position as secretary under John Young, bishop of Rochester, provides a direct connection with Ponet, who kept his title as bishop of Rochester even in exile.[44] It is likely, then, that Spenser understood the tenor of Ponet's political and religious positions, even if he had not read Ponet's *Treatise*. But regardless of the degree of influence, the main point to be noted is that just as Ponet drew on the Edwardian liturgy for the matter of his *Treatise*, so too did

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[44] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Spenser, Edmund (1552?–1599)," by Andrew Hadfield; and Percy W. Long, "Spenser and the Bishop of Rochester," *PMLA* 31 (1916): 713–35. Young was also master of Pembroke Hall during Spenser's tenure there. In the September eclogue of his *Shepheardes Calender*, Spenser refers to Young as "Roffy" (an abbreviation of Rochester in Latin) and also identifies himself through his alter ego "Colin" as Roffy's "boye" (*The Shepheardes Calender*, "September," in *Edmund Spenser: The Shorter Poems*, ed. Richard A. McCabe [New York: Penguin Books, 1999], 176).

Spenser draw on the Elizabethan liturgy for the matter of his allegory. The fact that both Ponet and Spenser used this common source in similar ways means that an understanding of the Marian exile can illuminate the meanings of the new poet's allegory, including episodes disputed by scholars. It is this path of inquiry that I mainly wish to follow here, leaving aside the tempting question of influence for now.

I will begin by examining the House of Pride episode in book 1, for here the closest link between Spenser's epic and Ponet's *Treatise* can be found, as the female tyrant Lucifera rules in league with the devil. Next, I will turn to the penultimate canto in which the Red Cross Knight battles the dragon and is renewed by the Well of Life on the second day of his fight. Critics have differed in their interpretations of what the dragon and the well stand for in Spenser's allegory. For example, some have seen the dragon as death or the law rather than as the more obvious Satan, who also appears as a dragon in Revelation.[45] By the same token, scholars such as Rosemund Tuve and Anthea Hume have challenged the traditional reading of the Well of Life as a symbol for baptism, in part by questioning how Red Cross could be unbaptized throughout the Book of Holiness.[46] However, reading this canto

[45] See, for example: Linwood E. Orange, "Spenser's Old Dragon," *Modern Language Notes* 74 (1959): 679–81 (Dragon as death). For a consideration of romance sources and an argument for the dragon as a demonic beast similar to those in the medieval *Vision of Tundale*, see Whitney Wells, "Spenser's Dragon," *Modern Language Notes* 41 (1926): 143–57. In a recent analysis Patrick Perkins has relied on Martin Luther's theology of law and grace to argue for the dragon as representing the devilish use of the law against the Christian ("Spenser's Dragon and the Law," *Spenser Studies* 21 [2006]: 51–81). I agree with Perkins that the dragon is a satanic figure, but I differ in stressing his identity with the devil rather than with the law.

[46] Ben Jonson records the traditional reading of the Well of Life as baptism in his volume of Spenser. See his note to stanza 29 in James A. Riddell and Stanley Stewart's *Jonson's Spenser* ([Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1995], 167). The classic outlining of the traditional view can be found in R. E. Neil Dodge's "The Well of Life and the Tree of Life" (*Modern Philology* 6 [1908]: 191–96). The more general religious reading of the Well of Life is set out most notably by Tuve in her *Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity* ([Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966], 110–12). See also D. Douglas Waters's "Spenser's 'Well of Life' and 'Tree of Life' Once More" (*Modern Philology* 67 [1966]: 67–68), which nonetheless sees in the Tree of Life the sacrament of the Eucharist. For a more open Protestant reading that argues for this moment as a reminder and reinvigoration of Red Cross's previous baptism, see Darryl Gless's *Interpretation and Theology in Spenser* ([New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 165–67). For another "inclusive" reading that sees the Well of Life as more than a symbol of baptism, see Hume's, *Edmund Spenser: Protestant Poet* ([New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984], 104). For a patristic argument in favor of the baptismal reading, see Harold L. Weatherby, "The Well and the Balm," in *Mirrors of Celestial Grace* ([Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994], 25–43). For more on the Protestant context of Spenser's poem, see John King, *Spenser's Poetry and the Reformation Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). Carol

through both Ponet and the Elizabethan sacramental liturgy shows how
Red Cross's seemingly anachronistic baptism assumes a significance ex-
tending well beyond his own individual spiritual journey. That is, after
first demonstrating that Spenser identifies baptism with resistance to
the devil in this episode, I argue that Spenser here offers a political and
spiritual understanding of tyranny to the Protestant readers of his epic
virtually identical to that found in Ponet's *Treatise*. To support this argu-
ment I conclude this article with a discussion of how Spenser in book 5
continues to use baptismal imagery and language to suggest spiritual as
well as political and societal purification. Proceeding through *The Faerie
Queene* in the manner outlined above, we can observe how the House of
Pride and dragon episodes radiate out to the later episodes in the Book
of Justice, which seems at first glance to operate under different alle-
gorical principles from the Book of Holiness. On the contrary, my analy-
sis reveals that both books depend on a political, theological, and litur-
gical foundation virtually identical to Ponet's call for resistance.

In Lucifera and her corrupt court Spenser not only provides an alle-
gorical figure for Pride but also reflects, like Ponet, on how the tyrant
is a satanically inspired figure. Spenser's "proud Tyrannesse" (1.5.46.6)
thus serves as a symbol of worldly as well as spiritual tyranny—indeed
of the nexus between the two.[47] For example, while Lucifera's name
immediately links her with Satan, whose own sin of pride led to his
fall from heaven, her name would also have called to the mind of the
Protestant reader the Babylonian tyrant Nebuchadnezzar, identified as
Lucifer in a gloss in the Geneva Bible.[48] Spenser makes the dual spiri-
tual and political ramifications of his allegory explicit when Red Cross
discovers Lucifera's hell-like "deep dungeon" in which ancient biblical

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Kaske has explained Red Cross's seemingly anachronistic baptism by reading the events
of the battle as "non-mimetic recapitulations of earlier events in Book I" and pointing to
Red Cross's "representative role" as a type of Christian Everyman ("The Dragon's Spark
and Sting and the Structure of Red Cross's Dragon-Fight: *The Faerie Queene*, I.xi–xii,"
Studies in Philology 66 [1969]: 629). By showing how the battle fits into larger liturgical
patterns that Spenser and his readers were familiar with, I adopt a similar approach.

[47] The word is Spenser's own coinage (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "tyrannesse"). See
also Douglas Brooks-Davies, "Lucifera," in A. C. Hamilton, ed., *The Spenser Encyclopedia*
(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). All quotations from *The Faerie Queene* are
taken from A. C. Hamilton's edition (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2001) and are cited
parenthetically by book, canto, stanza, and line.

[48] See Isaiah 14:12: "How art thou fallen from heauen, O Lucifer, sonne of the morning?
and cutte downe to the grounde, which didest cast lottes vpon the nations?" The gloss
in the Geneva Bible notes, "Thou that thoughtest thy selfe most glorious, and as it were
placed in the heauen: for the morning starre that goeth before the sunne, is called Lucifer,
to whome Nebuchad-nezzar is compared."

and classical rulers are thrown together "Like carkases of beastes in butchers stall" (1.5.49.2), along with many who "Fell from high Princes courtes, or Ladies bowres" (51.6). Earlier in Lucifera's audience chamber Red Cross encountered similar "Lordes and Ladies" seeking to gain his attention: "Some frounce their curled heare in courtly guise, / Some pranke their ruffes, and others trimly dight / Their gaye attyre: each others greater pride doth spight" (1.4.14.7–9). The familiar anti-court satire in both of these passages suggests that readers were invited to see in Lucifera not just the abstract notion of Pride but also a recollection of tyrants from history, including the recent English and European past. Indeed, an early commentator on the poem, John Dixon, noted the following regarding Red Cross's grisly discovery: "kinges and princes that warre against god, are by the wilinese of satan brought to yᵉ pite of distruction."[49] Here is a neat summation of Ponet's understanding of tyranny, drawn from Spenser's poem by the alert Protestant reader.

In his description of Lucifera herself and her ministers Spenser provides a stronger invitation to read this episode politically and historically, while also more firmly aligning himself with Ponet's political theology. The narrator reports that Lucifera "made her selfe a Queene, and crownd to be, / Yet rightfull kingdom she had none at all / Ne heritage of natiue soueraintie" (1.4.12.2–4). Like most tyrants, then, she has seized her power without right:

> But [she] did *vsurpe with wrong and tyrannie*
> Vpon the scepter, which she now did hold:
> Ne ruld her Realme with lawes, but *pollicie*,
> And strong aduizement of six wisard olds,
> That with their counsels bad her kindome did vphold.
>
> (12.5–9; my emphasis)

This dwelling on details common to resistance literature suggests again that Spenser is making a political as well as a spiritual observation here. Ponet, as we saw, views "policy" as inspired by Satan and identifies it as one of the two "waies of the Deuil" by which tyrants gain power. Similarly, Spenser conveys that his tyranness and her policy are satanically inspired when he reveals that her counselors are the other six deadly sins. Moreover, when these dark advisors engage in a procession around the court with Lucifera, the devil himself is found among them: "And after all vpon the wagon beame / Rode Sathan with a smarting whip in

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[49] Graham Hough, *The First Commentary on "The Faerie Queene"* (Folcroft, PA: Folcroft Press, 1969), 1.5.45n.

hand, / With which he forward lasht the laesy teme" (1.4.36.1–3). The devil's mere presence in Lucifera's court is significant as it is his only explicit appearance in the epic. This fact suggests that Spenser had a special purpose in placing him in Lucifera's court. Since the House of Pride is also a demonic inversion of the courts of the Faerie Queene and Mercilla, both figures for Elizabeth, this special purpose may likely have been to allegorize the reign of Mary Tudor, Mercilla's sister and predecessor. That is, for the Protestant reader keenly aware of recent history, and also perhaps well-read in the Marian exiles and similarly outraged writers like Roger Ascham, the demonic Lucifera could have suggested the infamous Catholic queen and persecutor.

Whereas Lucifera appears ostensibly as a worldly tyranness in league with the devil, Spenser's dragon in the eleventh canto of the same book reminds the reader that the devil himself is the original tyrannical usurper. Throughout Red Cross's journey different characters identify the dragon as a tyrant. For example, in canto 7 Una tells Arthur upon meeting him that she sought a knight at Gloriana's court who might combat the dragon and who "Parents deare from *tyrants powre* deliuer might" (1.7.46; my emphasis). In canto 10, when Una comes with Red Cross to the House of Holiness, Celia welcomes her as "most vertuous virgin . . . That to redeeme thy woefull parents head, / From *tyrans* rage, and euer-dying dread, / Hast wandred through the world now long a day" (1.10.9.3–6). Not only is the dragon a tyrant, but the poem also suggests that his takeover of Una's kingdom is an allegory for Satan's tyranny over the world following Adam and Eve's Fall. While telling Arthur about her captured parents and their kingdom, Una reveals that they are king and queen of Eden. They "Did spred their rule through all the territories, / Which *Phison* and *Euphrates* floweth by, / And *Gehons* golden waues doe wash continually" (43.7–9), references to the rivers that surround the Garden of Eden in the second chapter of Genesis.[50] When these passages are taken together, it becomes clear that Spenser, like Ponet, is drawing on the ancient Christian notion that Satan's corruption of Adam, Eve, and all Creation was a tyrannical act, in which he made himself "the Prince of the power of the air." The monstrous dragon, then, complements the more earthly Lucifera—together they suggest that tyranny in the poem is worldly and spiritual, demonic and familiarly human.

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[50] Again, in the final canto Duessa, attempting to spoil Red Cross's bethrothal to Una, sends a letter to Una's father, whom she addresses as "most mighty king of *Eden* fayre" (1.12.26.1).

In accord with Ponet and his own Elizabethan liturgy, Spenser reveals baptism as the key to the Red Cross's victory over this tyrannical and satanic dragon. In the course of their battle, Red Cross is overthrown and happens to fall backward into a body of water once known as "The Well of Life" (1.11.29.9) before the dragon defiled its source. Despite the loss of its name, the well is still full of "great vertues, and for med'cine good":

> For vnto life the dead it could restore,
> And guilt of sinfull crimes cleane wash away,
> Those that with sicknesse were infected sore,
> It could recure, and aged long decay
> Renew, as one were borne that very day.
>
> (1.11.30.1–5)

These healing powers recall the effects of baptism as set out in the numerous prayers from the rite in the 1559 Book of Common Prayer. First, that the Well of Life washes away the "guilt of sinfull crimes" specifically recalls the following prayer to be said by the priest before baptizing the child: "we cal upon the for these infantes, that they, comming to thy holy Baptisme, may receyve remission of their sinnes by spiritual regeneracion."[51] Second, that the well is also a source of rebirth calls to mind the priest's prayer for the Father to send his Holy Spirit upon the infants so that they "may be borne againe, and be made heyres of everlasting salvacion, throughe our Lorde Jesus Christ."[52] Third and finally, the narrator's claim that the well excels the "*Iordan*" and other famous bodies of water (stanza 30) is perhaps a recollection of the beginning of yet another baptismal prayer: "Almighty and everlasting God, which . . . didst sanctify the flood Jordan and all other waters to the mystical washing away of sin."[53] Like baptism itself, the Well of Life follows on the promise of these legendary waters to provide true healing.

After Red Cross falls into this holy water, Spenser continues to incorporate both the language and imagery from the baptismal liturgy into his poem. Distraught over being unable to see her champion, Una spends the night in faithful watching and prayer (stanza 32), another likely reference to the prayers surrounding the sacrament of baptism.

[51] John E. Booty, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer 1559: The Elizabethan Prayer Book* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 271. Hereafter cited as The Book of Common Prayer (1559). The priest also prays that God "wilte mercifully loke upon these children, sanctify them and washe them with thy holy gost, that they beyng delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the Arcke of Christes churche."

[52] Ibid., 272.

[53] Ibid., 270.

In the morning she is rewarded with the sight of Red Cross emerging from the water, his resurrection described in an epic simile as being like an eagle rising from the "Ocean waue": "So new this new-borne knight to battell new did rise" (34.9). The threefold use of the word "new" here suggests another pre-baptismal prayer from the Book of Common Prayer: "grant that the old Adam in these children may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in them."[54] There is also the matter of the animal symbolism itself. As Beryl Rowland explains, conflation of Scripture and ancient natural history led to the eagle becoming a symbol of rebirth, since the aged eagle was supposed to ascend toward the sun, burning its wings, and then descend into a fountain three times, rejuvenating itself: thus, "a popular motif on baptisteries and fonts was the eagle plunging into the sea, the symbol of regeneration."[55] The threefold repetition of "new" suggests that Spenser had this pious legend in mind. Moreover, it reflects the invocation of the Trinity at the moment of the baptism, which is performed in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

When the Red Cross Knight is finally able to wound the dragon after this mystical immersion Spenser explicitly confirms baptism as the subject of his allegory. After the knight rises on the second day, he immediately strikes the dragon on his "crested scalp so sore . . . / That to the scull a yawning wound it made" (1.11.35.7–8). The narrator then offers the following possible explanations for Red Cross's newfound ability to wound the dragon:

> I wote not, whether the reuenging steele
>> Were hardned with that holy water dew,
>> Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feele,
>> Or his baptized hands now greater grew;
>> Or other secret vertue did enswe;
>> Els neuer could the force of fleshly arme,
>> Ne molten mettall in his blood embrew:
>> For till that stownd could neuer wight him harme,
> By subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor mighty charme.
>
> (1.11.36)

The fact that his hands are baptized is certain—what remains in doubt is the exact effect of this baptism. Although the narrator is not

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[54] Ibid., 274.

[55] Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls: A Guide to Bird Symbolism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978), 52–54. For this reason the eagle like the phoenix was also a symbol of Christ.

sure whether the water tempered the sword or rather made it keener, whether it strengthened Red Cross's hands or added some other power to his attack, it is clear that the water must have had some effect, since a merely physical attack ("force of fleshly arme") had never been able to hurt the dragon before. Given the certainty displayed earlier about the water's powers, the uncertainty here is likely intended to create a holy awe around this moment, as well as to suggest the mysterious workings of grace, invisible though figured forth symbolically before human eyes in the washing of baptism.

The wounding and ultimate defeat of the dragon also achieve greater meaning when placed alongside the language of the baptismal liturgy. Before and after administering the sacrament, the priest impresses upon the witnesses the new duty of the baptized Christian to oppose and overcome the devil. Speaking to the infant's sponsors, the priest notes that "these infants must also faithfully for their part promise by you that be their sureties, that they will forsake the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy Word." He then asks the sponsors directly, "Dost thou forsake the devil and all his works?"[56] The language of combat is also rife throughout the ceremony. Right before the baptism itself, the priest prays to God to "grant that they [the baptized] may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh." After the baptism, the priest makes the sign of the cross on the infant's forehead and states that this is a token that "hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil."[57] The physical combat between the Red Cross and the dragon—and Red Cross's ultimate victory—serve to allegorize this spiritual combat between the Christian and the devil that takes place with new intensity after baptism, a combat in which Christ, not the flesh, assures the victory.

As we have already seen in Ponet's *Treatise* and are beginning to see in *The Faerie Queene*, the close connection between the devil and tyranny can grant the slaying of a tyrant a sacramental aura. Recognizing Spenser's linking of the devil and the tyrant in the Book of Holiness, then, can enable us to appreciate the sacramental character of the tyrannicides and purifications carried out by Arthur and Artegall in the Book of Justice. For example, in canto 11 there is Arthur's threefold slaying

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[56] The Book of Common Prayer (1559), 273.
[57] Ibid., 275.

of "that Tyrant" (5.11.2.1) Gerineo, as well as Arthur's threefold exorcism of the demonic monster underneath the idol in the same episode: "Vpon the Image with his naked blade / Three times, as in defiance, there he strooke" (5.11.22.1–2). After slaying the Errour-like monster that emerges, Arthur smashes the idol and cleanses the altar. However, I would like to focus here on the second canto of book 5, which recalls not only Ponet's use of baptismal imagery to suggest political and societal purification but also his criticism of the Anabaptists.

As classic scholarship has recognized, Spenser attacks the Anabaptists and their views on government and property through the figure of the egalitarian Giant.[58] Of course, Spenser could find the Anabaptists and their views on property mentioned and dismissed in the Thirty-Nine Articles, just as Ponet could find them dealt with in Cranmer's Forty-Two Articles. Nevertheless, given Spenser's already demonstrated agreement with Ponet regarding the devil, tyranny, and baptism, his criticism of the Anabaptists here and elsewhere in his work is worthy of closer attention. Recent criticism by Stephen Greenblatt and Annabel Patterson has emphasized how the Giant's critique of a fallen world echoes Spenser's own in the proem to book 5.[59] As Mark Hazard has shown, Spenser also invokes an eschatological tension, in that Artegall and the Giant each appeal to different visions of the Apocalypse.[60] I wish to point here to another piece of political and theological common ground between the Giant, Artegall, and Spenser. That is, the Giant, like Spenser and also Ponet, is opposed to "Tyrants that make men subiect to their law" (5.2.38.6) and uses religious language to justify this

[58] Padelford, "Spenser's Arraignment of the Anabaptists," excerpted in *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, vol. 5, ed. Edwin Greenlaw et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), 336–41.

[59] See Greenblatt, "Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and the Representation of Rebellion," in *Representing the Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 1–29. According to Greenblatt, the episode can function as a "training in the rejection of subversive conclusions drawn from licensed moral outrage," as well as demonstrating a "separation between rhetoric and violence," a separation necessary to keep Artegall from a base encounter with the rebels (22). Patterson's response to Greenblatt identifies a more conflicted and daring Spenser and finds in both book 5 and *A View of the Present State of Ireland* a problematizing of icons and abstractions of Justice ("The Egalitarian Giant: Representations of Justice in History/Literature," in her *Reading between the Lines* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993]: 80–116). On the troubled issue of reading rightly in book 5 and the rest of the poem in light of this episode, see Kirsten Tranter, "'The sea it selfe doest thou not plainely see?': Reading *The Faerie Queene*, Book V," *Spenser Studies* 21 (2006): 83–107.

[60] Hazard, "The Other Apocalypse: Spenser's Use of 2 Esdras in the Book of Justice," *Spenser Studies* 14 (2000): 163–87.

opposition. Adopting the prophetic tone of John Knox and the other Marian exiles, the Giant channels Isaiah 40:41 ("Therefore I will throw downe these mountains hie, / And make them leuell with the lowly plaine" [1–2]), before declaring that he "will suppresse [these Tyrants], that they no more may raine" (7). This religious and anti-tyrannical rhetoric might seem to have authority in a book repeatedly concerned with the overthrow of unjust rulers, if not for the fact that Spenser has already safely identified the Giant with the Anabaptists and similar radical groups. For example, the Giant's political program includes the redistribution of wealth: "I will . . . Lordings curbe, that commons ouer-aw; / And all the wealth of rich men to the poor will draw" (7 and 8–9). In addition, the mob of the "vulgar" (33.1) that flock about him, seeking "uncontrolled freedome to obtaine" (5), recalls the unrestrained liberty that the Anabaptists were supposed to desire.

Spenser had attacked these same two Anabaptist tenets previously in "Mother Hubberd's Tale," a controversial poem from his 1591 *Complaints* volume, which landed him in trouble with Elizabeth's government for its criticism of William Cecil, Lord Burghley.[61] In this beast fable an ape and a fox attempt to cheat and steal their way through English society from the lowest to the highest levels, not stopping until they become king and chief minster and tyrannize over the people. Before beginning their journey, the Fox mounts an argument against their assuming honest labor, an argument with a theological edge: "For should he that is at libertie / Make himselfe bond? Sith then we are free borne, / Let vs all seruile base subiection scorne" (132–34).[62] As Frederick Padelford notes, referring to a sermon by the Archbishop John

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[61] Frederick Hard, "Spenser and Burghley," *Studies in Philology* 28 (1931): 219–34. On the possibility of an earlier draft of the poem that critiqued the French marriage proposal rather than Burghley alone, see Edwin Greenlaw, "Spenser and the Earl of Leicester," *PMLA* 25 (1910): 535–61. Alençon's master of wardrobe, Jehan de Simier, was known as Elizabeth's "ape." Compare A. C. Judson, "Mother Hubberd's Ape," *Modern Language Notes* 63 (1948): 145–49. For a contrasting interpretation of the Ape as Cecil's son, see Brice Harris, "The Ape in 'Mother Hubberds Tale,'" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 4 (1941): 191–203. See also a contemporary reaction to the controversy, discussed in Richard S. Peterson's "'Spurting Froth upon Courtiers': New Light on the Risks Spenser Took in Publishing *Mother Hubberds Tale*," *Times Literary Supplement* (May 16, 1997): 13–15. See also Harold Stein, *Studies in Spenser's "Complaints"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1934). On an Irish political context for the poem, see Thomas Herron, "Reforming the Fox: Spenser's 'Mother Hubberds Tale,' the Beast Fables of Barnabe Riche, and Adam Loftus, Archbishop of Dublin," *Studies in Philology* 105 (2008): 336–87.

[62] All quotations from "Mother Hubberds Tale" are taken from *Edmund Spenser: The Shorter Poems*, ed. McCabe, and will be cited parenthetically within the text by line numbers.

Whitgift in 1583, the Anabaptists were supposed to cite Galatians 5:1, "Stande fast therfore in the *libertie* wherwith Christe hath made vs free, and be not intangled agayne with ye yoke of *bondage*," in support of their resistance to civil magistrates.[63] However, Spenser in his attack on the Anabaptists here resembles not just Whitgift but also Ponet and his charge that "Some ther be that will haue to littel obedience, as the Anabaptistes. For bicause they heare of *a christian libertie*, wolde haue all politike power taken awaye: and so in dede no obedience" (47; my emphasis). Moreover, when the Fox argues for the redistribution of wealth, Spenser echoes Ponet's criticism of the Anabaptist understanding of the Fall. In opposing this unjust socioeconomic situation where "a few haue all and all haue nought" (141), the Fox refers again to a very Christian idea, that all men bought by Christ are equal: "Yet all be brethren ylike dearly bought" (142; a recollection of 1 Corinthians: "For ye are bought for a price").[64] However, he quickly turns away from Christian doctrine to the pagan myth of the "golden age of Saturne old," in order truly to justify his plot. Nature, he says,

> gaue like blessing to each creture
> As well of worldly liuelode as of life,
> That there might be no difference nor strife,
> Nor ought cald mine or thine: thrice happie then
> Was the condition of mortall men.
>
> (146–50)

The Fox's appeal to this Golden World, of course, overlooks the Judeo-Christian narrative of the Fall, so central to both Ponet's political thought and Spenser's epic as we have seen. As Ponet might say, "this mingling of the state of man before the fall, and of him after the fall muche deceaueth them" (79), and this seems to be what Spenser is saying here as well. Knowing that his poem was politically dangerous, Spenser may have taken these familiar swipes at the Anabaptists so as to render his satiric beast fable less threatening to the Elizabethan government.

By the same token, Spenser's decision to have Talus tumble the Giant into the sea may have been meant to further separate his own views

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[63] Padelford, "Spenser's Arraignment," 339. The Scripture citation is from the Bishop's Bible of 1568. Whitgift also quotes Galatians 5:13: "ye haue ben called into libertie."

[64] 1 Corinthians 6:19–20: "Knowe yee not, that your body is the temple of the holy Ghost, *which is* in you, whome ye haue of God? And yee are not your owne. For ye are bought for a price: therefore glorifie God in your bodie, and in your spirit: for they are Gods." See also 7:23: "Yee are bought with a price: be not seruants of men," both from the Geneva Bible.

from the Giant's political and economic radicalism in a way to this point unnoticed by critics. In other words, in giving his Giant death by water, Spenser may be mocking Anabaptist beliefs regarding adult baptism. An earlier episode in this same canto indicates that this may be the case, while furthermore suggesting that Spenser is activating the same link between baptism and tyrannicide that Ponet had found a generation before. Before Artegall meets the Giant, he decapitates the unscrupulous lord Pollente, who had been collecting unjust bridge tolls. Through his use of a trapdoor and the raging river below, Pollente is able to slay any knights who attempt to halt his crooked financial enterprise. However, he underestimates Artegall's strength and cunning and is slain on the river's shore. Artegall's robot enforcer Talus then disposes of Pollente's corrupt daughter Munera by dismembering her and throwing her in the same river that her father has charged people to cross. Significantly, the same word "drowned" is used both for this deed and the later slaying of the Giant. However, here the baptismal image is even more apparent: after Artegall decapitates Pollente, his body stains the river red with blood, but when Talus drowns Munera "in the durty mud: / . . . the streame washt away her guilty blood" (5.2.27.4–5). As Spenser confesses in book 1, the waters of baptism have a corresponding power to wash away the guilt of sin. It seems far from coincidental that the Giant, representing a kind of early modern communism, and Munera, representing a kind of early modern capitalistic greed, meet similar ends in the same canto. In the former case Spenser would seem to be ironically supporting the sacramental orthodoxy of the English church against the beliefs of the Anabaptists; in the latter case he would seem to be using baptismal imagery to signify the overthrow of tyranny and the ending of societal corruption. In making both of these moves Spenser is in agreement both with Ponet's political theology and with the liturgy of his own Elizabethan church.

Spenser's concord with Ponet is more clearly perceivable when set against the treatment of tyranny given by his friend and sponsor, Sir Walter Ralegh, in the seventeenth century. In the extraordinary preface to his *History of the World*, Ralegh runs through the rise and fall of England's kings, many of whom he claims were punished by God for the sins of their fathers. Thus, whereas Ponet emphasizes the sins of the people that allow a tyrant to take over, Ralegh is obsessed with the sins of kings and God's punishment of them, down to the third and fourth generation. For instance, the murder of Edward II is scourged through the purges of Richard's reign and Bolingbroke's usurpation,

which is itself punished through the turbulent reign of his grandchild, Henry VI.[65] It was this sort of reading of English history that undoubtedly led to the great displeasure of James I, from whom the imprisoned Ralegh was hoping for eventual release.[66] However, where Ralegh and Ponet (and Spenser by extension) differ most is in their analyses of the causes of tyranny. Though individual tyrants such as Richard III may act under the inspiration of Satan, Ralegh moves from spiritual to natural explanations in considering the issue of tyranny in general. Thus in the section under the partial heading "That in mans nature there is an affection breeding tyrannie, which hindreth the vse and benefit of the like moderation," Ralegh concludes that "in Mankind there is found, ingrafted euen by Nature, a desire for absolute dominion" (366). As Greenblatt comments, "from this perspective . . . the rise of so many tyrants throughout history is due not to God's desire to scourge wicked nations but to man's nature. . . . Likewise, the fall of tyrants is due to the natural return of violence and rapacity on their own heads."[67] Thus, although Ralegh, like Ponet and Spenser, speaks of tyrannesses and irreligious policy, tyranny is for him ultimately a moral or even a physiological issue rather than a spiritual one, as it is for Ponet and Spenser. Similarly, when Edward Sexby, writing against Oliver Cromwell in the middle of the century, comically states that the "natural and almost the only remedy against a tyrant" is "done by prayers and has tears, with the help of a dagger, by crying to the Lord, and the left hand of an Ehud," and further adds that "devotion and action goe wel together . . . for believe it, a Tyrant is not of that kinde of Devill that is to be cast out by only fasting and prayer," he is clearly having fun with an idea that Ponet and Spenser took far more seriously.[68]

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[65] Sir Walter Ralegh, *The History of the World*, ed. C. A. Patrides (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971), 51–52. All quotations from Ralegh's *History* are taken from this abridgement. Page numbers will be given in parentheses.

[66] On 5 January 1615, John Chamberlain wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton: "Sir Walter Raleigh's book is called in by the King's commandment, for diverse exception, but especially for being too saucy in censuring princes. I hear he takes it much to heart, for he thought he had won his spurs, and pleased the King extraordinarily" (qtd. in John Winton, *Sir Walter Ralegh* [New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1975], 291). On the political background and aim of Ralegh's *History*, see Anna R. Beer, "'Left to the World without a Maister': Sir Walter Ralegh's *The History of the World* as a Public Text," *Studies in Philology* 91 (1994): 432–63.

[67] Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 141. For more on Ralegh's conflicted view of history, see John Racin, *Sir Walter Ralegh as Historian: An Analysis of "The History of the World"* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur-Universität Salzburg, 1974).

[68] Edward Sexby, *Killing noe murder. Briefly discoursed in three quaestions* (Holland, 1657),

Spenser and Ponet, then, occupy nearly identical theological and political worlds, despite the distance of years and Elizabeth's triumphant Protestant reign. Although questions of influence must remain speculative for now, it is clear that Ponet should be recognized as presenting a powerful synthesis of political and religious notions of tyranny that writers such as Spenser or William Shakespeare in a play like *Macbeth* shared. Though recent scholarship has often focused on the classical roots underlying the theorization of tyrants and tyrannicide in the period,[69] Ponet and Spenser together demonstrate that there was also a theological tradition present in the liturgy that strongly supported notions of resistance and tyrannicide, most importantly by granting this violence a sacramental legitimacy.[70]

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10; Wing T1310. Sexby, like Ponet, also uses Pharaoh's tyranny as a figure for the contemporary tyranny he denounces (3). For more on Sexby, see James Hulston, "Forlorn Hope: Edward Sexby and the Republic," in *Ehud's Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2000), 305–66. See also Chad Schrock, "Plain Styles: Disillusioned Rhetoric in Edward Sexby's *Killing Noe Murder*," *Modern Language Review* 105 (2010): 329–44.

[69] See, for example, Rebecca Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990). See also Andrew Hadfield and David Scott Wilson-Okamura's exchange in *Spenser Studies* 17 (2003): 275–90, as well as Hadfield's original article, "Was Spenser a Republican?" (*English* 47 [1998]: 169–82).

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