Eschatology and Community in the Radical Reformation: The Political Thought of Hans Hut and Hans Hergot

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Abstract

The present thesis investigates two perennial questions in the history of political thought: first, what is a legitimate community? Second, how should a community be regulated? Its focus is the Radical Reformation in the sixteenth century Europe in which many religious radicals were concerned with eschatological thought. The thesis explores the development of the idea of eschatology from early Jewish and Christian periods to the age of Reformation and demonstrates how eschatology has been transformed from a religious belief into a fervent political idea which drove religious radicals to establish their own communities. By conducting an interpretive reading of the works of Hans Hut and Hans Hergot, two radical reformers, the research highlights their political thought and answers to the two primary questions: at the heart of Hut's baptismal theology there is a theory of consent by which a Christian community can be legitimized, and Hergot's constitutional thought argues for democratic regulation of Christian communities.

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Introduction

> "Our obedience to spiritual and temporal lords will find an end. Also, the servants of the princes and lords will abandon their service. And if anyone thinks that he can maintain his social estate, it will be in vain."
>
> Hans Hergot[1]

In the present thesis I will investigate two perennial questions in the history of political thought: first, how a legitimate community can be formed, and second, how that community should be regulated. There have been various answers to these questions in the history of ideas of which the Radical Reformation, I will demonstrate, was a pivotal moment. Radical reformers' responses to these questions were imbued with democratic thought. They argued for consent and constitution as answers to the first and second questions respectively. These democratic ideas, however, arose from theological contexts of which eschatology was the most fervent.

The Radical Reformation was a movement in the age of Reformation in the sixteenth century Europe. The question of secular authority was a cardinal cause of bifurcation among reformers. The leading reformers, Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Calvin (1509-1564), Huldrych Zwingly (1484-1531), believed that the power of secular rulers and the magistrates is necessary to fight the corrupted church and to maintain order in the Christian society. That is why historians call them the magisterial reformers. Other reformers, most of whom were former colleagues of magisterial reformers, perceived the temporal rulers as corrupted as the church. They thus argued for a reform from below: everything must be reformed, for which historians identify them as radical reformers.[2]

[1] Hans Hergot, "On the New Transformation of the Christian Life," in *The Radical Reformation*, ed. Michael Baylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 211.

[2] Michael Baylor, "Political Thought in the Age of the Reformation," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. George Klosko (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 228.

The term "Radical Reformation" was coined by George H. Williams in 1962 in the book of the same name.[3] Williams divides radical reformers into three groups: The Spiritualists, the Evangelical Rationalists, and the Anabaptists.[4] The Spiritualists were not concerned with Biblicism and past traditions; rather, their goal was to implement the teachings of the spirit. Thomas Müntzer (1489-1527), Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1486–1541), and Sebastian Franck (1499-1543) were among the leading figures of the Spiritualists. Evangelical Rationalists were those who tried to purge Christianity from controversial doctrines such as predestination and original sin. Michael Servetus (1509-1553), Sebastian Castellio (1515-1563), and Faustus Sozzini (1539-1604) the founder of Socinianism, were the prominent Rationalists. These group had remarkable impact on early modern political thought, and philosophers such as Spinoza and Locke were in contact with them. The Anabaptists, as their name indicates, were those who objected to infant baptism. They are known for their biblical literalism and lifestyle. I will explore Anabaptism in more detail in chapter three.[5]

Despite the diversity of beliefs among radicals, they shared some common opinions. Theologically, they all believed in freedom of the will, a purer Christianity, and religious universalism.[6] Politically, radicals rejected all sorts of hierarchy; they sought an egalitarian society, and they opted for local autonomy. The distinction between theology and politics, however, is arbitrary. In the sixteenth century, "thinking about religion was also inherently political thinking."[7] This is so because theological language was so prevalent; concepts, unlike in the modern period, were still fluid between theology and political thought. For instance, the

[3] R. Emmet McLaughlin, "Radicals," in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. David M. Whitford (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 80.

[4] George H. Williams, ed., *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers: Documents Illustrative of the Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1957), 20.

[5] Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250-1550. An Intellectual and Religions History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 345-46.

[6] Williams, *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, 20-21.

[7] Michael Baylor, ed., introduction to *The Radical Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xvi-xvii.

notion of "*regnum Dei*" was tantamount with the idea of civil society.[8] What is more, religious and social life were firmly connected in the sixteenth century. Baptism, for example, was not a mere religious issue. Back then, membership to the Christian community was at the same time membership to the polity. Infant baptism thus was a theologico-political issue to which Anabaptists objected in that membership must arise from free will and faith; no child possesses such requirements. Radicals' rejection of established religious and temporal authorities led them to create their own communities with democratic features such as majority rule, political equality, and constitution.[9] For contemporary minds it is hard to grasp how revolutionary these ideas were.

The Radical Reformation, more generally, is an indispensable chapter in the history of Western political thought. On the one side, it is linked to the origins of modern political thought.[10] Foundational arguments such as freedom of the will and the question of the relationship between the revealed and the natural were present in the Radical Reformation to which religious radicals contributed significantly.[11] On the other side, the Radical Reformation is connected to the Enlightenment political thought.[12] Three basic principles of the Enlightenment period, secularism, toleration, and rationalism can be found in the Radical Reformation.[13]

[8] Mario Biagioni, *The Radical Reformation and the Making of Modern Europe*: *A Lasting Heritage* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 136.

[9] Baylor, introduction, xvii-xxi.

[10] For a classical survey of the origins of modern political thought see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[11] For an excellent discussion regarding the importance of these questions in the formation of modernity see Michael Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[12] See for instance Jonathan Israel's breathtaking work *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); see also Sarah Mortimer and John Robertson, ed., *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy 1600-1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[13] Biagioni, *The Radical Reformation*, 137.

The present thesis makes no claim to provide a comprehensive survey of the political thought of radical reformers.[14] Rather, its focus is the theological-political thought of two religious radicals: Hans Hut and Hans Hergot. Such a selection, however, is not arbitrary. There are two reasons: first, Hut and Hergot provide clear answers to the two primary questions of this thesis, that is, consent and constitution. Second, and more importantly, Hut and Hergot both were driven by eschatological thought.

In the second chapter, I will deal with the idea of eschatology. It is the foundation of the present thesis for two reasons. First, eschatology is another distinctive feature of radicals comparing to magisterial reformers. Eschatology is concerned with the last things, death, and afterlife. Thanks to technology and high life expectancy, today, we are more concerned with our life in the world than what would happen in afterlife, if we believed there is any. In the Medieval Period, however, life was short. If one could survive wars, the Black Death or other epidemic diseases, they could easily die for a simple cold. As a result, back then, many people were concerned with afterlife more than their real life. To put it simply, eschatology is tantamount with a common fictional question: "what would you do if you were told you were living your last years of life?" For religious people in the Middle Ages such a question was crucial; that is why they sought to reform not only their faith but also their society.

Second, eschatological thought, however, has always been an enduring Christian doctrine since the early Jewish period. In chapter two, I will investigate the historical development of the idea of eschatology. As a result, chapter two is, in its own, a practice in conceptual history.[15] What eschatology meant in the early Jewish and Christian periods is

[14] The political thought of the Radical Reformation has yet to receive the attention it deserves. However, there are some works which touch upon it briefly, see for instance Francis Oakley, "Christian Obedience and Authority, 1520–1550," in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 157-192; see also J. W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1957), I:3.

[15] See for instance Terence Ball, James Farr and Russell L. Hanson, eds., *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

profoundly different from what it meant in the Radical Reformation. The concept of eschatology had undergone a transformation from a belief in the last epoch into a social and political concept. Whereas for early Jewish and Christian people eschatology meant to wait for the kingdom of Christ, in the Radical Reformation, some religious radicals tried to establish the kingdom of Christ in the city of Münster. In other words, eschatology, as I will demonstrate, had changed from a passive concept to an active one. It will be depicted that Joachim of Fiore was a turning point in this transformation. Without these two notions of eschatological thought, that is, living in the last age and an active concept, we would not be able to grasp what prompted Hut and Hergot to reach their pens even though both knew they might be sentenced to death for their writings.

In chapter three, I will explore Anabaptist thought and communities. Anabaptism emerged out of theological disputes regarding infant baptism. Religious radicals claimed that Scripture does not support infant baptism, and they practiced adult baptism. Such a rejection caused them death sentence and exile. Anabaptists themselves, driven by eschatological thought, tried to establish their own communities based on pure Christian practice. Such communities needed to be organized and ruled for which they designed constitution.

In chapter four, I will interrogate Hut's and Hergot's political thought. First, I will explore circumcision and baptism as two prevalent covenant theories in Jewish and Christian thought. Then, I will investigate Hut's baptismal theology. Hut was a self-declared eschatological prophet which drove him to radical thought. To anticipate, he develops a tripartite baptismal theology: baptism by spirit, baptism by water, and baptism in blood. Baptism by water, he argues, is a consent for entering the Christian community. Finally, I will examine Hergot's constitutional thought. He also believed his time is the last age. Like Hut, he

also adopts prophetic language and foretells the future. He designs a world-constitution in which all leaders are elected democratically. His constitutional thought is unique in that, in contrast to Catholic and Protestant ideas, he argues for a single ruler for both temporal and spiritual matters.

Chapter 1
Methodology

> "There are no perennial problems in philosophy. There are only individual answers to individual questions, and potentially as many different questions as there are questioners. Rather than looking for directly applicable 'lessons' in the history of philosophy, we shall do better to learn to do our own thinking for ourselves."
>
> Quentin Skinner[16]

> "History seems rather to prove that all human thought, and certainly all philosophic thought, is concerned with the same fundamental themes or the same fundamental problems, and therefore that there exists an understanding framework which persists in all changes of human knowledge of both facts and principles."
>
> Leo Strauss[17]

> "Drawing on a suggestion made by Wittgenstein in his later work, I argued that there cannot be a history of unit ideas as such."
>
> Quentin Skinner[18]

As it was indicated in the introduction to this essay, I am concerned with two questions: what makes a community legitimate and how that community should be regulated. To which religious reformers' responses are, as I will show, consent and constitution. The purpose of the present thesis thus is to incorporate the history of religious thought into the history of political thought. More specifically, by analyzing sixteenth century religious radicals' texts and highlighting their political ideas, I aim to embed these ideas in the history of ideas. The execution of such a purpose both aligns with and departs from Skinner's methodological claims. I follow Skinner's contextual approach because Hut's adult baptism can only be meaningful when it is embedded in the context of the Radical Reformation and as a refutation

[16] Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1, *Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 88.
[17] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 23-4.
[18] Skinner, *Regarding Method*, 176.

of infant baptism. The texts I will examine here are political because they were written in particular contexts. More generally, the Radical Reformation itself can be understood when it is read in the context of the magisterial Reformation. My approach, however, departs from that of Skinner in two directions: first, there are perennial questions in the history of political thought; second, the history of these questions and their answers can be written.

There are perennial and fundamental questions in the history of political philosophy with which philosophers from Plato to Rawls have been concerned. This can be proved in two ways: historically and analytically. Historically speaking, political philosophy has always been concerned with crises. Ronald Beiner illuminates this point well:

> Plato's *Republic* was a response to moral crisis in the Greek world. Aristotle's *Politics* was a response to a crisis with respect to the very existence of the Greek polis. The work of Pierre Bayle was provoked by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Rousseau's *Social Contract* was a response to the crisis of the monarchical order in Europe. Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is a response to the collapse of aristocracy.[19]

In a similar line, Leo Strauss demonstrates that the question of religion, as one of the enduring perennial crises, has always occupied philosophers' minds:

> In spite of great disagreements among those thinkers, they were united by the fact that they all fought one and the same power – the kingdom of darkness, as Hobbes called it; that fight was more important to them than any merely political issue.[20]

Early modern political theorists, such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, and Rousseau, all were conspicuously engaged with the question of the relationship between religion and politics.[21] In his posthumously published *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*,

[19] Ronald Beiner, *Civil Religion*: *A Dialogue in the History of Political Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 4.

[20] Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1958), 231.

[21] For an excellent review see Beiner, *Civil Religion*: *A Dialogue in the History of Political Philosophy*, chapters 1-13.

Rawls also joins Beiner and Strauss and claims that the Reformation era, and the religious wars of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, was one of the origins of liberalism.[22] In other words, the liberal tradition can be depicted as a set of ideas which deals with the question of religion. Reading Beiner, Strauss, and Rawls together, religion is a perennial and fundamental problem in the history of political philosophy to which political philosophers from Machiavelli to present have tried to find different solutions.

The existence of perennial questions can also be demonstrated analytically. First, when we read and translate past works in political philosophy, it means we can understand them. This is so because we are able to translate them into our vocabulary. Contextualists also concede that all past works grapple with moral and political problems. However, they argue that those problem are theirs and not ours. But, if we can understand past works, we can also fathom the questions with which they were concerned. As a result, we can also retain those questions and reflect on. This is a proof for the existence of perennial problems.[23]

Second, if author B can read and comment on author A in the past, we can also read and comment on authors B and A in the past. Such a possibility arises from the fact that different authors from different contexts share some meanings, concepts, and beliefs.[24] In his *On the Social Contract*, Rousseau concedes that it was Hobbes who could successfully argue that religion and politics must be united.[25] In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls also reads Rousseau and criticizes his intolerance towards Catholics.[26] Needless to say, we too read and comment on Hobbes, Rousseau, and Rawls. In cases when there is no such a line of commentary, the burden of proof is on contextualists to demonstrate that every single author discusses and deals

[22] John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 11.

[23] Mark Bevir, "Are There Perennial Problems in Political Theory?" *Political Studies* 42 (1994), 663-66.

[24] Ibid., 667-69.

[25] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, ed. Roger D. Masters, trans. Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 127.

[26] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 215–216.

with a unique question which is completely different from what other past authors were engaged with. Historians of ideas show that there is no such a sharp distinction.[27] George H. Sabine, author of the influential *History of Political Theory*, contends that: "political problems and situations are more or less alike from time to time and from place to place."[28]

In conclusion, there are perennial questions in the history of political philosophy to which political philosophers from different contexts have provided different answers. Of perennial problems thus understood, the question of religion, especially since the early modern period, has always been the most persistent one. Having demonstrated that such perennial questions and answers do exist, now we turn to Skinner's other claim that the history of ideas cannot be written.

Drawing on Wittgenstein's theory of meaning in use, Skinner claims that the history of an idea cannot be written because ideas have different expressions and meanings in different contexts. Skinner asserts that the fact that historians of ideas assume it is possible to write, say, the history of the concept of consent is that different authors have used the same linguistic expression for the concept of consent. Yet, these authors have attributed different beliefs to the same linguistic expression. For instance, author A by *consent* means a and b which is completely distinct from what author B means by *consent*, which are d and e. As a result, consent has no core or essential meaning the history of which can be written. Skinner thus holds:

> one of the most important of the many injunctions contained in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* is that we ought not to think in isolation about 'the meanings of words'. We ought rather to focus on their use in specific language-games and, more generally, within particular forms of life.[29]

[27] Bevir, "Are There Perennial Problems in Political Theory?" 669.
[28] George H. Sabine, "What is a Political Theory?" *Journal of Politics* 1/1, (1939), 4.
[29] Skinner, *Regarding Method*, 103.

His claim is based on a famous passage in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* that: "For a *large* class of cases—though not for all—in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language."[30] Therefore, Skinner is right to assume that concepts do not have fixed meaning. He is also right to claim that for finding the meaning of a given concept, one needs to evaluate it in its linguistic context. He is wrong, however, to assume that there is no overlap between different linguistic contexts. Wittgenstein states that although the word "game" has different usages, and consequently, meaning, there is still similarity between them:

> I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way. — And I shall say: 'games' form a family.[31]

Consider the following example: author A by consent means a, b, and c, and author B by consent means c, d, e, and author C by the same concept means e, f, g. As a result, authors A and B have something in common (c), yet they are not identical; authors A and C do not share anything, yet, A and C form a family of which B is also a member. Thus, it is possible to write the history of an idea even though the idea in question has been used in different linguistic contexts and does not have a fixed meaning. Anthony Burns summarizes the possibility of writing the history of ideas as follows:

> it is not necessary that there should be certain essential features which *all* [theories of consent] possess (and must possess) in common. All that is necessary is that the various different [theories of consent] should share at least *some* characteristic features in common with other theories which have in the past themselves been considered to be [theories of consent]. They should have what Wittgenstein refers to as a "family resemblance" to one another.[32]

[30] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), §43, p. 20.

[31] Ibid., §67, p. 32.

[32] Anthony Burns, "Conceptual History and the Philosophy of the Later Wittgenstein: A Critique of Quentin Skinner's Contextualist Method," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 5 (2011), 66.

This is the methodological ground upon which the present thesis is based. First, as I will elaborate in chapter four, what Hans Hut means by baptism by water as an explicit consent for entering the Christian community is different with what Hobbes and Locke would later mean. Notwithstanding the differences, they all still share somethings in common, i.e. freedom of the individual. Second, the reason that we can read Hut's theory along with other theorists of the idea of consent is that they all have concerned with the same perennial question, i.e. the legitimacy of a community.[33]

[33] It seems Skinner himself does not insist on his early radical contextualism anymore. This can be seen in his paper titled "The State," in which he traces the concept of the state from the fourteenth century until Hobbes, see "The State," in Terence Ball, James Farr and Russell L. Hanson, *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, 90-131.

Chapter 2
Eschatology

> "'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'"
>
> (Mark 1:15)

The etymology of the word eschatology is derived from two Greek words: from Latinized form of Greek *eschatos*, meaning "last," "end," or "final,"[34] and from Latinized form of Greek *logia*, meaning "discourse," "teaching," or "speaking."[35] Although the term sounds very archaic, it was coined by the Lutheran theologian Abraham Calov (1612-1686).[36] It is, however, a Christian concept which means teaching about the last things: "It refers to a time in the future when the course of history will be changed to such an extent that one can speak of an entirely new state of reality."[37] In theology it concerns the Judeo-Christian beliefs regarding death, judgment, the afterlife, and the resurrection.

Eschatology, in this sense, is different from apocalypse.[38] The latter is derived from the Greek word *apokalypsis*, meaning "revelation" and "disclosure."[39] Painting with a broad brush, "every Christian view of history is in some sense eschatological insofar as it sees history as a teleological process and believes that Scripture reveals truths about its End."[40] Such a view,

[34] David L. Petersen, "Eschatology," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 575.

[35] Oxford Online Dictionary.

[36] Matthias Riedl, "Eschatology," in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Maryanne Cline Horowitz, vol. 2 (New Haven, Conn.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), 708.

[37] Petersen, "Eschatology," 575.

[38] For apocalypse in the Radical Reformation see Walter Klassen, *Living at the End of the Ages. Apocalyptic Expectation in the Radical Reformation* (London: University Press of America, 1992); For an excellent work on the relationship between apocalypse and political thought see Alison McQueen, *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[39] Paul D. Hanson, "Apocalypses and Apocalypticism: The Genre," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 279.

[40] Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 4.

however, does not necessarily drive an apocalyptic one since there is "a difference between a general consciousness of living in the last age of history and a conviction that the last age itself is about to end."[41] In other words, "while all apocalypses are eschatological, not all eschatology is apocalyptic."[42] It is still difficult, however, to distinguish apocalyptic writers from eschatological ones; the difference is a matter of degree not kind.[43]

Both eschatology and apocalypse are also distinct from prophecy.[44] In early Christianity, a prophet was defined as a person who believed to have been sent by his god to convey a message. In late Christianity, however, a prophet could be any person who can foretell and see the future, and they usually had a mission to reform present according to a glorious past or future.[45] Prophecy, in this sense, is not necessarily eschatological or apocalyptic. Thomas Aquinas's definition of prophecy is "things remote from our knowledge … the more remote things are from our knowledge the more pertinent they are to prophecy."[46] On the other hand, prophecy can be both eschatological and apocalyptic which can be seen, in the following sections, in the case of the Spiritual Franciscans, Taborites, and some of religious radicals in the Radical Reformation. These eschatological prophets, however, justified their prophecy by referring to Judeo-Christian roots of the concept of eschatology and its historical development to which we now turn.

[41] Ibid.

[42] McQueen, *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times*, 24.

[43] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 4.

[44] Perhaps the best biblical survey of the meaning of prophecy and prophets in the history of political thought is provided by Spinoza, see his *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. M. Silverthorne and J. Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), chap. 1, 2. Spinoza argues that analyzing prophecy and prophets demonstrates that theology is different from philosophy and they are not detrimental to each other.

[45] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 4.

[46] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Cincinnati, OH.: Benziger Bros., 1947), Second Part of the Second Part, Question 171, Article 3.

2.1. Early Jewish and Christian Periods

Christian eschatology is rooted in Jewish apocalypticism.[47] Judaism, however, was an eschatological belief in the first place; it became apocalyptic later. Jewish eschatology can be deciphered in the Old Testament. There are, at least, three eschatological traditions in ancient Israel. First, the patriarchal promise tradition which promised land and progeny to Israelites. Second, the David-Zion tradition which prophesized Davidic reigns, justice, peace, and the security of the city of David or Zion. Finally, the Sinai covenant traditions which concern the covenant between the people of Israel and their God, Yahuwah. This contract brought eschatological expectations such as blessing or curse should the people of Israel obey or disobey the agreement respectively.[48]

None of these prophecies, however, fully fulfilled. The Babylonian captivity was a major source of despondency for Jewish people. Even though they were emancipated by the Persian king Cyrus the Great in 539 BCE, which made them slightly hopeful (Isaiah 45: 1-13), later course of events, such as the experience of returnees and the continuity of non-Davidic empires, had led Jewish people to lose faith in themselves as God's elected people, the messiah, and the restoration of the kingdom of David. Such a despair drove Jewish people to seek the solution not in reality but in the Beyond.[49]

The discovery of the Beyond came from, at least, two sources. First, historians acknowledge that other ancient cultures, such as Persian,[50] Egyptian,[51] Greek, and, later, Roman

[47] Riedl, "Eschatology," 709.
[48] Petersen, "Eschatology" 577.
[49] Riedl, "Eschatology," 709.
[50] See for instance Anders Hultgård, "Persian Apocalypticism," in *Continuum History of Apocalypticism*, ed. Bernard J. McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 2003), 30‑63.
[51] See for example Richard J. Clifford, "The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth," in McGinn, Collins, and Stein, *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism*, 3–29.

had played a pivotal role in this shift from reality to the Beyond.[52] Greeks believed in the end of the world, the periodization of the world, and a stage of glory and peace after a period of decline. Their beliefs stemmed not from religion but Greek natural philosophy. The Stoics supposed that there are eternal series of world cycles.[53] Although Plato and Aristotle believed in an eternal cosmos, they both opined that civilization were destroyed and reborn naturally. During the Roman Empire, there was an expectation, pictured by poets such as Virgil, that the Saturnian golden age would restore.[54] Another important cultural influence comes from the combat myth. In all ancient cultures, there are a combat between two sides: good and bad. For instance, in ancient Greece the combat myth was between "Ouranos and Kronos, Zeus and the Titans, Zeus and Typhoeus, and Helios and Phaethon."[55] Analogue myths can be deciphered in Christianity. One side of this combat is Satan, Devil, or Lucifer, and the other side is Jesus. In early Christianity it was believed while Jesus freed humanity through his crucifixion, the final battle has yet to happen. This expectation became a crucial eschatological motif in Christianity.[56] For instance, Hergot opens his pamphlet with an epigraph reads "Guard yourself, devil – hell will soon collapse."[57]

These expectations had an impact on the second source of the discovery of the Beyond, that is, Jewish apocalyptic texts. Apocalyptic authors, however, claimed to have discovered the Beyond in their visions. The most influential apocalyptic text in the Old Testament is the Book of Daniel in which Nebuchadnezzar's and Daniel's dreams envision of succession of four

[52] For an overview of intertestamental texts in the Greco-Roman period see George W.E. Nickelsburg, "Eschatology: Early Jewish Literature," in Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2, 579-594.
[53] David E. Aune, "Early Christian Eschatology," in Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2, 601.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid., 600.
[57] Hergot, "On the New Transformation of the Christian Life," 210.

kingdoms that will end with God's judgment and universal reign (Daniel 2:31-33, 7:7-14).[58] Christianity eschatology emerged out this context.

Christian eschatology, however, differs from Jewish one in some respects of which the experience of Christ is pivotal. As we have seen above, there was no single eschatology in the Old Testament and early Jewish writings. The transformation of these different estimations of eschatology into one began with Jesus of Nazareth. Although he came out of early Judaism context, "his distinctive combination of eschatological motifs and themes and the way he related them to his own mission and message produced a new perspective which was inherited and broadened by his followers after his death and resurrection."[59] Christ's mission was understood as a moderator between this world and the Beyond; [60] "the kingdom of God is in midst of you" (Luke 17:21). Such mission and experience had brought a new perspective: the future is already present in the present: "The *eschata*, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and the creation of the new world, are therefore the completion of a process already started with Christ in this world."[61] In the next section, I will demonstrate that such a belief in the presence of the future will be radicalized by the Franciscans and Taborites in the fifteenth century.

Another difference between Jewish and Christian eschatology is that the former was based on a national homeland. Christ, however, did not bound his message and mission to any land or nationality. Paul of Tarsus categorized people into three groups: Jews, Greeks, and people of the church of God (1 Corinthians 10:32). Paul's concept of the church introduced two enduring eschatological themes. First, the *eschaton* is not the fate of an individual; rather,

[58] Thomas Müntzer would later provide a radical interpretation of these passages; see Matthias Riedl, "Apocalyptic Violence and Revolutionary Action: Thomas Müntzer's Sermon to the Princes," in *A Companion to the Premodern Apocalypse*, ed. Michael A. Ryan (Leiden: Brill, 2016): 260-296.

[59] Aune, "Early Christian Eschatology," 599.

[60] Riedl, "Eschatology," 709.

[61] Ibid.

it is a collective destiny.[62] The dead and the living members of the church will be united in the last judgment and will establish a community of salvation (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). Second, the *eschaton* is not a single event at the end of history; rather, it is a process by which the people of the Beyond gather in the church. As Christ was the presence of the future, the church, as the mystical body of Christ, is also the connection of "already now" and "not yet."[63]

The "processuality" of the church had brought another crucial concept into Christian eschatology: history. First, the church in the Bible has a history which consists of seven periods (Revelation 2:1-29, 3:1-22). This pericope will be interpreted differently by Augustine of Hippo, Joachim, Peter John Olivi, Melchior Hofmann to whom we will turn in the following sections. Second, the church in the world also became a historical reality and its amalgamation with the Roman Empire made it a powerful institution which bifurcated Christian eschatology. On the one hand, theologians such as Eusebius of Caesarea (c.263-c.339) developed an imperial eschatology according to which the Roman Empire is a mean by which God spreads Christianity; the perfection of the former thus leads to the perfection of the latter. In other words, Roman emperors are following Christ and, Christ would complete emperors' mission.[64] On the other hand, theologians such as Tertullian (c.155– c.240), Hippolytus (170–235), and Irenaeus (c.130- c.202) advanced a chiliastic or Millennial eschatology. Chiliasm, from Latinized form of Greek *chilia*, or Millennialism, from the Latin *mille*, means a thousand, according to which a day is equivalent to a thousand years in the Bible (Psalm 90:4). God created the world in six days and the seventh day is Sabbath (Genesis 1:1, 2-3). Correspondingly, history endures for six millennia, and the seventh is the direct rule of Christ

[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

who would establish the kingdom of God.[65] Chiliastic eschatology was apocalyptic and its followers justified their theology by referring to the Book of Revelation (20:4).[66]

The Revelation of John is the only apocalypse text in the New Testament, and it is the last book of the Christian Bible. It defines itself as "the apocalypse given by God to Jesus Christ ... to make known to his servant John" (1:1). McGinn describes it as "the most powerful apocalyptic work ever written."[67]

In sum, there are two sets of eschatological and apocalyptic events in the New Testament. First, there are cardinal apocalyptic events including the Second Advent (Acts 1:11; Revelation 16:15), the General Resurrection (Revelation 16:15), and the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-33; Revelation 10:12). The imminence of these events might be discerned by a group of secondary phenomena such as religious declension (Matthew 24:37-39; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12), the emergence of Antichrist or Satan (2 Thessalonians 2:7; John 2:18; Revelation 11:7, 13), and the first resurrection (Revelation 20:6).[68] However, there is no precise timetable to realize when these events would happen which invite theological interpretation. It would not be exaggeration to say that the Middle Ages was a long period during which theologians, from Augustine in the fifth century to Joachim in the twelfth century, and from the Franciscans in the thirteenth century to John Hus in the fifteenth century, all have tried to decipher the meaning of eschatological and apocalyptic events of the Old and the New Testaments. The Middle Ages is the period to which, and those are theologians to whom, we now turn.

[65] George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992), 506-507.
[66] Riedl, "Eschatology," 710.
[67] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 14.
[68] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 509.

2.2. The Medieval Period

As we have seen in the previous section, the Apostle Paul's conception of the church provided two ideas in Christian eschatology: collectivity and processuality.[69] The latter led theologians to the idea of church history both in the Bible and in the world. We have also observed that the history of the church in the world developed two estimations of Christian eschatology: imperial and millennial. To which theologians such as Origen (c.184-c.253) and Jerome (c.347-420) added a third account: non-millennialism, that is, a day is not necessarily a thousand years. Such an interpretation stems from their spiritual understanding of Scripture and the church.[70] In *On First Principles*, Origen rejects chiliasm,[71] and in his edition of Victorinus' *Commentary*, Jerome eliminates its chiliasm.[72] It was Augustine, however, following Origen and Jerome, provided a rigorous spiritual and non-millennial account of Christian theology.

2.2.1. Augustine

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) is undoubtedly one of the most influential theologians in the Christian history. He is also important to our discussion since while he developed eschatological thought, he was, like Jerome and Origen, deeply anti-apocalyptic.[73] His disagreement with apocalyptic thought emerged out of pagan criticism of Christianity which, in contrast to its apocalyptic claims, could not save Rome from being sacked in 410 BCE by Alaric. Augustine, however, argued that there is no relationship between divine protection and world history.[74] In other words, while he believed in eschatological interpretation of world ages, he refused to associate current events to apocalyptic literature in the Bible. In his *City of*

[69] Riedl, "Eschatology," 710.
[70] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 511.
[71] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 292.
[72] Ibid., 26.
[73] Ibid., 4.
[74] Ibid., 26.

God, he does not identify the two cities with any empirical reality; rather, the two cities are mystical societies which will become visible after the Last Judgment.[75]

By rejecting apocalypse, Augustine fetches the Pauline eschatology, and by following Origen and Jerome, he provides a spiritual and non-millennial interpretation of the world ages. Accordingly, the world ages are (1) from Adam to Noah, (2) from Noah to Abraham, (3) from Abraham to David, (4) from David to the Babylonian Captivity, (5) from the Captivity to Christ.[76] In the common interpretation of world history, after these five ages, there would be a sixth age, and the seventh and the final one during which Christ would rule directly. Augustine, however, believed that (6) Christ's rule began with his nativity. Augustine's spiritual reading of Scripture demonstrates itself conspicuously when he claims that within the sixth age there is a (7) seventh age in which "a spiritual church unfolding concurrently, looking to an eighth age, the eternal Sabbath."[77] The sixth/seventh age is known to the elect for whom baptism is the first resurrection "prior to Christ's Second Advent and the Last Judgment."[78] Augustinian eschatology, however, does not point to any event in the world as a sign of the last age. More importantly, Augustine himself did not believe that his time is the last epoch during which believers have a duty to prepare the world for the kingdom of God. These steps would be taken by Joachim of Fiore. After Joachim, nothing would be the same again.

2.2.2. Joachim of Fiore

Hans Hergot, whose work will be explored in chapter four, opens his pamphlet with a statement that there have been three transformations in history: that of the father, the son, and the holy spirit.[79] Such a tripartite account of history, however, began by Joachim of Fiore (c.1135-1202),

[75] Riedl, "Eschatology," 710.
[76] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 512.
[77] Ibid., 512.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Hergot, "On the New Transformation of the Christian Life," 210.

the most influential apocalyptic thinker of the Middle Ages.[80] His significance, however, is not bounded to his impact on the history of apocalypse. He was also a political thinker and person.[81] He met several popes and emperors, and he was an apocalyptic advisor to authorities in Rome. He joined the Cistercian order in Corazzo where he elected as an abbot. He gradually became dissatisfied with order and later established his own house from which the Florensian order began to disseminate. [82]

Three cardinal issues are at the heart of Joachim's thought: Scripture, the Trinity, and history.[83] Fiore's theory of the interpretation of Scripture is based on "*concordia*," that is, "every period, event, or person described in the Old Testament corresponds to an equivalent period, event, or person in the New Testament."[84] Such a concordance gave him a method by which he claimed to have found the meaning of the events in the Bible. Joachim, however, furthers his logic. If there is a concordance between the Old and the New Testaments, there must also be a correlation between Scripture and history. With Joachim eschatology and prophecy intersect.

The point at which Scripture and history converge is the Trinity. Joachim asserted that "the Father, Son, Holy Spirit are three persons but one essence."[85] Each person has an individual property which is determined by his relation to others. Accordingly, the Father does not procced from anything, but the Son and the Holy Spirit proceed from him, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son. Such a relationship also corresponds to the relationship between the two Testaments. The Father reveals himself in the Old Testament and the Son in the New

[80] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 126.

[81] For his political thought see Matthias Riedl, "Joachim of Fiore as Political Thinker," in *Joachim Fiore and the Influence of Inspiration*: *Essays in Memory of Marjorie E. Reeves (1905-2003),* ed. Julia Eva Wannenmacher (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 53-74.

[82] McGinn, *Visions of the End*,126-7.

[83] Ibid., 127.

[84] Riedl, "Joachim of Fiore as Political Thinker," 58.

[85] Ibid., 63.

Testament. Consequently, the New Testament stems from the Old Testament. When he was working on the Revelation of John, he had a spiritual experience which affected his theology.[86] Returning to the relationships between the three persons, "just as the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, spiritual understanding (*intellectus spiritualis*) proceeds from the Old and the New Testaments."[87] While the Father and the Son have already revealed themselves in the Old and the New Testaments, the Spirit is yet to be revealed in its own time.[88]

Joachim's philosophy of history thus follows his theology of the Trinity.[89] Accordingly, history has three statuses: that of the Father, that of the Son, and that of the Holy Spirit.[90] There is a progress between these three statuses. As a result, the first status is the one of after the fall. Mankind is in the lowest level of understanding. That is why God reveals himself as the Father to people to teach them. Thus, the primary goal of the first status is to establish a messianic empire on earth.[91] The second status begins when Christ reveals himself to humans to remind them of the afterlife. Instead of a messianic empire on earth, the goal of the second status is to prepare humans for the Kingdom of heaven.[92] The third and the final status is about to come in which Jews would convert and Latins and Greeks come to an agreement.[93] Joachim's tripartite theology of history also affects his doctrine of world ages. Here Joachim follows Augustine's account. He incorporates the seventh age into this world and identifies it with his account of the third status. The final age and redemption remains to fulfill in the eighth age.[94] The seventh

[86] Ibid., 63-65.
[87] Ibid., 65.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Karl Löwith argues that Joachim's theology of history paved the way for the secularization of history, see his *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 145-159, esp. 158.
[90] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 128.
[91] Riedl, "Joachim of Fiore as Political Thinker," 68.
[92] Ibid., 69.
[93] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 514.
[94] Riedl, "Joachim of Fiore as Political Thinker," 66.

age, during the third status, however, is a resemblance of the final age, a correspondence of heavenly kingdom, and a perfect social and political order.

Jochacim's theological account of history, therefore, had political implications. If there is a correlation between Scripture and history, history thus is the history of salvation. Furthermore, if the church is the body of Christ, it belongs to the second epoch. Consequently, the current church must give its place to the church of the Spirit in the last age. Such a spiritual interpretation of history undermines the official understanding of church as an institution which began with St. Peter and would last until the end of the world.[95] More importantly, and perhaps revolutionary, if there is no need of the church, all clerical hierarchy and privileges would be unnecessary since knowledge would come from divine Spirit and is at work in spiritual men like Joachim. Joachim goes further and composes a constitution for this new order titled "The Constitution of the New Order Pertaining to the Third Status after the Model of the Heavenly Jerusalem."[96] A pattern which would be followed in the Radical Reformation.

Joachim, however, believed his time belonged to the second status. As a result, he did not undermine the contemporary church. Yet, he prophesized that a messianic leader would come who set the ground for a spiritual revival for the coming of the kingdom of Christ.[97] These revolutionary steps would be taken by the Spiritual Franciscans.

2.2.3. The Spiritual Franciscans

After Joachim, both Dominicans and Franciscans claimed to represent a truly Christian society. The Franciscan is a mendicant order which harks back to the life and work of St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) in the thirteenth century.[98] St. Francis claimed that the true poverty and

[95] Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 150-51.
[96] Riedl, "Joachim of Fiore as Political Thinker," 71.
[97] Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 151.
[98] Pope Francis, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, is the 266th and current Pope who chose his papal name in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi.

imitation of Christ's life means to literally abandon all worldly goods.[99] St. Francis, in other words, asserted that Christ lived in absolute poverty. Such a way of life was extremely difficult, if not impossible. As a result, after his death, there was a bifurcation between St. Francis's followers. The majority, called Conventuals, favored a modest practice of poverty; the minority, however, rejected any relaxation and argued for absolute poverty.[100]

The radical wing of the Franciscans, called Spiritualist, were influenced by Joachim. They saw themselves as spiritual men who meant to establish the spiritual church soon.[101] Peter Olivi (1245-98), one of the main figures of the Spiritual Franciscans, applied Joachim's theology of history and advanced a tripartite advent of Christ according to which, Olivi claimed, St. Francis himself was the Second Advent of Christ and the Third Advent is yet to come. Olivi applies his three advents of Christ to world ages and asserts that Christ came in flesh at the beginning of the first age; he came again at the end of fifth and the beginning of the sixth period personified by St. Francis. As a result, the Franciscans believed their time is the last age. Another crucial aspect of Olivi's thought, which would influence the Reformation period, is that there is a continual quarrel within the church, and not between the church and enemies from outside. [102]

For the Spiritual Franciscans, the life of St. Francis was the criterion by which they judged the current church. The corrupted church thus needed to be replaced by a spiritual church which follows the life of St. Francis who followed the true life of Christ. Such a belief was a threat to the church and clerical hierarchy which caused many interventions from the papacy the most important of which was that of pope John XXII in 1323 who condemned the

[99] Brian McGuire, "Monastic and Religious Orders, c.1100–c.1350," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 4, *Christianity in Western Europe, c.1100–c.1500*, ed. Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 68.

[100] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 203.

[101] Ibid. For an overview of their thought see David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

[102] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 516.

radical interpretation of poverty and claimed that Christ did not live in absolute poverty.[103] The Spiritual Franciscans thus threatened the very existence of the church. They perceived themselves as the fulfillment of Joachim's prophecy. They reminded the church that if it had a beginning, it must also have an end. The church thus was in a dilemma: if eschatological expectations of Scripture meant to fulfill, it would mean the end of the church. The solution was to postpone the eschatological expectations. The Franciscans, however, believed in an imminent end. The conflict between the two thus was inevitable.[104] Such conflicts would turn into social movements soon.

2.2.4. Hussites and Taborites

The early fifteenth century was the point at which for the first time eschatological and apocalyptical thought instigated social, economic, and political uprising. The theological dispute raised because Bohemian preachers developed a sacramental theory called Utraquism according to which "the laity should receive communion under the forms of both bread and wine."[105] To which Orthodox Catholic objected. Furthermore, preachers in Bohemia were unsatisfied with the church reform and, by using apocalyptic language, called popes and emperors Antichrist. Among these apocalyptic preachers, John Hus (c.l372-1415) was prominent who, under the influence of the antipapal English thinker John Wycliff (d.1384), argued against the jurisdictional authority of Rome.[106] Hus was burnt as a heretic at stake.[107] His death, however, gave birth to a reform movement known as Hussite which spread across Bohemia and Central Europe and their thought survived in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Martin Luther would later see himself in line with Hus.[108]

[103] McGuire, "Monastic and Religious Orders," 69.
[104] Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 151-53.
[105] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 260.
[106] Ibid., 259-260.
[107] For an overview of Hus's thought see Ota Pavlicek and František Šmahel, eds., *A Companion to Jan Hus* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
[108] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 517.

The Hussite movement, like many other movements, was divided by moderate and radical thought. The radical wing called Taborites in that they began to gather at hilltops, which they identified it with mount Tabor, where Jesus's transfiguration took place,[109] and later they built a city called Tabor in southern Bohemia. Taborites embraced eschatological and apocalyptic outlooks, and, by following Joachim's tripartite world ages, they believed the new spiritual age began in Tabor, and Christ's second coming would be in 1420. They thus thought they had a duty to "cleanse the world in the name of Christ," to destroy all religious and secular orders, and to establish a "new model of society, ruled by the priests, dedicated to strict morality and marked by the common possession of goods."[110] They instigated a military movement and achieved remarkable successes such as defeating Emperor Sigismund (1410-1437) in Prague in May 1420. After initial successes, however, Taborites were defeated by moderate Hussites, and Tabor was destroyed in 1452.[111]

2.3. The Radical Reformation

So far, I have demonstrated that how eschatological elements of the Old and the New Testaments had been interpreted in ways in which believers tried to illuminate their own time and prophesize the future. Christ's second coming, Antichrist, the kingdom of God, the Book of Daniel, and the Revelation of John laid the ground upon which preachers had described popes, emperors, and Christendom. Whereas in early Jewish and Christianity believers were passive and waiting for things to happen, in the course of history they had become more active and took part in materializing eschatological and apocalyptic messages of the Bible. As we have observed in the previous section, the Franciscans, Hussites, and Taborites raged wars against cherished theologies and institutions. All these anticipated Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. He indeed declared that he is a successor of Hus, and many perceived him

[109] See Matthew 17:1–8, Mark 9:2–8, Luke 9:28–36, 2 Peter 1:16–18.
[110] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 261.
[111] Ibid., 262.

as one of the two promised adventual prophets (Revelation 11:3). Luther, however, soon renounced himself from Hus and apocalyptic portrait of the time. He instead argued that preaching the gospel would pave the way towards the kingdom of God and preached people to live according the current order.[112] Radicals, however, were impatience.

Early sixteenth century was witnessing the advancement of the Ottoman Empire in Central Europe. Hungary was defeated and Vienna was in danger. Yet the Catholic church and the Holy Roman Empire did not stop the persecution of reformers. Religious, social, and political life was unsatisfactory. All of these signs derived radical reformers to reconsider the common eschatological expectations. If Luther was reluctant to be an adventual prophet, religious radicals such as Thomas Müntzer, Hans Hut, and Melchior Hofmann were eager.

Freedom of prophecy thus became a central issue in the Reformation era. Two cardinal questions were at the heart of the debate about prophecy. First, could the gift of authentic prophecy exist after the apostolic age, and second, if it could, whether it could be given to the educated and authorized preachers, or it could be bestowed upon the whole congregation.[113] By referring to a pericope in 1 Corinthians 14:29-34, reads "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation [clarification] is made to another sitting (*sedenti*), let the first be silent,"[114] reformers argued for *lex sedentium*, that is, the right to speak, and they interpreted this pericope as the right of common prophecy.[115] Such a reading was shared with both magisterial and radical reformers. Zwingli established an institution of prophecy in Zurich which was maintained by his successor Henry Bullinger (1504-1575). Zurich's institution, however, was not concerned with eschatological and immanent apocalyptic issues. Radicals, however, believed the end is coming.

[112] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 517-18.
[113] Ibid., 518.
[114] Ibid., 519.
[115] Ibid.

In the Reformation era prophecy was understood in different ways of which "the prophet as visionary foreteller of the end" was common among radicals.[116] As it was elaborated above, the Spiritualist Franciscans were among the first preachers who were concerned with eschatological issues. In the Reformation, also a prominent Franciscans, Francis Lambert (c. 1486-1530), combined prophecy with eschatology and provided a timetable for which he is famous. More specifically, he opined that, in his own time, Pope and Turk represented Antichrist. That is why in the University of Marburg he democratized the practice of *lex sedentium* and common prophecy and advised Christian princes to provide such opportunities in their territories.[117]

It is not exaggeration to say all major radical reformers were obsessed with eschatological thought and prophecy. In chapter four, I will investigate Hut's and Hergot's eschatological theology. Here, I explore the eschatological thought of a prominent religious radical which deeply influenced radical reformers from Livonia to England.[118] Melchior Hofmann (1495-1543) was a lay traveler preacher who became Anabaptist in Strasbourg. He was influenced by both Joachim and Olivi. Like Joachim, he developed a three-stage world age, of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He also adopted the seven-period Church history. Like Olivi, he attacked the Church and argued that the direct rule of Christ was very short, and thus, the most of Church history had been under Antichrist rule. John Hus, he continued, undermined Antichrist, and he believed they were at the end of the last kingdom of Antichrist.[119]

Hofmann was even too radical for Anabaptists in Strasbourg which drove him to establish his own circle in the city.[120] He perceived himself as the new Elijah, as one of the two

[116] Ibid., 518.
[117] Ibid., 520-521.
[118] Ibid., 521.
[119] Ibid., 522-23.
[120] Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, trans. Trevor Johnson (London: Routledge, 1996), 28.

promised witnesses,[121] and debunked Luther for his false teaching. He associated Rome and Strasbourg with the Babylon of the Book of Revelation and the site of new Jerusalem respectively.[122] He tried to preach people inner purification and faith which is embodied in baptism as a covenant between man and God. He was arrested two times in Strasbourg. Once in 1530 from which he escaped and went to the Netherlands and eventually came back to Strasbourg where was arrested for the second times in 1533 and spent his life in prison until his death.[123] His thought, however, remained alive and formed the firs widespread Anabaptist movement in the Netherlands and the second Anabaptist community during the Radical Reformation. It is Anabaptism and their communities to which we now turn.

[121] "And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth," (Revelation 11:3).

[122] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 522.

[123] Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, 28-9

Chapter 3
Community

> "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."
>
> (2 Corinthians 6:17)

In the last chapter, we have observed how eschatological thought reached to Hofmann and his Anabaptists followers in the Low Countries. The Netherlands, however, was only one of the three foci of Anabaptism movement in the sixteenth century. The other two centers were Moravia and Swiss. Before I investigate these communities in detail, however, it is necessary to explore what baptism meant to Catholics and magisterial reformers and why Anabaptists repudiated it.

Baptism is a covenant between man and God in Christianity. The idea of covenant, however, is rooted in Judaism which comes from circumcision of Abraham represented in Genesis 17:9-14. God promises Abraham to make him fertile and become father of many nations (Genesis 17:4-6). Thus, circumcision becomes "a mnemonic sign of the covenant with God. It reminds both God and Israelites that they are God's and he is theirs; that he has chosen them and that they are in the sphere of his working."[124] According to Genesis 17:12, furthermore, children must be circumcised when they are eight days old. We will see below that Anabaptist conception of consent is based on opposing childhood sacraments.

In Christianity circumcision was replaced by baptism.[125] Baptism comes from the Greek word *baptein* meaning "dip frequently or intensively, plunge, immerse."[126] In Christianity, however, it refers to the baptism of John. Jesus himself was baptized by John as a sign of the relationship between Father and Son, repentance, righteousness, and a symbol for

[124] Robert G. Hall, "Circumcision," in Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1, 1029.
[125] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 1289.
[126] Lars Hartman, "Baptism," in Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1, 583.

later Christians.[127] Baptism was also adopted by the Church. However, whether the Church took it from John's or Jesus's baptism has been a controversial point. Certainly, it was embarrassing for the Church to accept that their Lord was baptized for his sin. Thus, it has been argued that baptism in early Church was based on John, to which Anabaptists would object.

Baptism, however, from the outset, was understood in different eschatological ways: "in demand for ethical responsibility in view of the approaching judgment; in references to the hope which looks forward to the final salvation or to the promised heritage; in the question how one enters the kingdom of God or receives eternal life."[128] Christ's resurrection was also perceived as an inaugurated eschatology, and baptism as a door to enter this inauguration. In other words, baptism was an opportunity for believers to left behind their sin and alienation from God and begin a new faithful life.[129] Like circumcision, baptism was also administered during childhood. If infant baptism is that important, could it be proved by Scripture?

3.1. Anabaptism

"No man on earth can prove it," Felix Manz responded.[130] Anabaptism was born on 21 January 1525 in the home of Manz (c.1498-1526), son of a Zurich canon, where the former priest Georg Blaurock (c.1492-1529) was rebaptized by, a layman, Conrad Grebel (c.1498-1526).[131] A few days before, on 17 January, Manz and Grebel participated in a public disputation about infant baptism held by the Zurich city council. The council rejected Manz's and Grebel's arguments, retained infant baptism, and decreed to punish dissidents by exile.[132] Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock all were former follower of Zwingli whose moderate and prudent leadership was unsatisfactory for them. The rejection of infant baptism would have religious, social, and

[127] Ibid., 587.
[128] Ibid., 594.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Flix Manz, "Protest and Defense," in Baylor, *The Radical Reformation*, 100.
[131] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 214.
[132] Manz, "Protest and Defense," 95.

political implications, since, in Europe, back then, a member of the church was a member of society simultaneously. Thus, rejecting the former, i.e. infant baptism, would result in refusing the latter, i.e. the legitimacy of the society.[133]

Anabaptism comes from the Latin word *anabaptismus* in which the Greek preposition *ana*, means "anew" or "again." Together, Anabaptism means new or second baptism. Anabaptism is rooted in literalness Biblicism and preferring practice over theology.[134] Anabaptism is distinguished from other radical groups, Spiritualists and Evangelical Rationalist, for its primitivism, promoting a simple yet disciplined Christian communal life, and their emphasis on freedom of faith.[135] It has been argued that they were inspired by humanism and especially by Erasmus.[136] The most distinctive feature of Anabaptists, however, is their claim that there is no biblical evidence for infant baptism. Manz, in his *Protest and Defense*, demonstrates his eschatological thought and asserts that infant baptism is the sign of Antichrist, i.e. the pope.[137] By referring multiple times to the New Testament, Manz continues that "a person should be baptized if he has been converted through God's word, if he has changed his mind and wants to live henceforth a renewed life."[138] No child can achieve such a level of religious conscientiousness. Thus, neither the church nor the state can assume a child voluntarily membership; as Mantz expresses it conspicuously: "civil and state laws are neither to be strengthened nor improved through baptism."[139]

[133] R. Emmet McLaughlin, "The Radical Reformation," in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 6: *Reform and Expansion, 1500-1660*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 47.
[134] Ibid., 46.
[135] Ozment, *The Age of Reform*, 345.
[136] Kenneth Davis, "Erasmus as a Progenitor of Anabaptist Theology and Piety." *MQR* 47 (1973): 163-78.
[137] Manz, "Protest and Defense," 95.
[138] Ibid., 98.
[139] Ibid., 99.

3.2. Anabaptist Communities

In February 1527 a conference was held in Schleitheim, a village on the border between Swiss and Germany, in which many Anabaptists participated. The result was a text known as *The Schleitheim Articles* in which Anabaptists agreed on their cardinal tenets. Accordingly, there are seven articles: "baptism, the ban [excommunication], the breaking of bread [Lord's Supper], separating from the abomination [the existing polity], shepherds in the community [ministers], the sword, the oath, etc."[140] As it is clear, the fourth article is a call for separation from existing societies which led them to establish their own communities. The article asserts that "we simply will not have fellowship with evil people, nor associate with them, nor participate with them in their abominations."[141] It goes further and defines who evil people are: "by this we mean all popish and neo-popish works and divine services, assemblies, ecclesiastical procession,"[142] which refers to both Roman Catholics and magisterial reformers.

Hans Goertz argues that the fourth article demonstrates Anabaptists eschatological thought in that, instead of avoiding certain aspects of existing societies, they called for complete separation to establish their own society which envisioned the kingdom of light. As a result, Anabaptists distinguished themselves from both the Church, Catholic and Protestant, and civil society. They perceived their own communities as "counter-world" a "prototype" of the kingdom of Christ.[143] Peter Blickle also calls this idea of separation as "communalization," that is, "the process by which peasants free themselves from the previously dominant system of organizational bonds, the feudal manor."[144] As it was indicated above, there were three reginal Anabaptist centers in which many Anabaptist communities were formed.

[140] Michael Slatter, "The Schleitheim Articles," in Baylor, *The Radical Reformation*, 174.
[141] Ibid., 175.
[142] Ibid., 176.
[143] Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, 13-14.
[144] Peter Blickle, "Communal Reformation and Peasant Piety: The Peasant Reformation and Its Late Medieval Origins," *Central European History* 20, no. 3/4 (1987), 221.

Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock shaped the first center of Anabaptism in Swiss. Another important figure of the first center was Hans Denck (c.1500-1527) who was banished from Nuremberg for holding Anabaptist belief on the very same day that Anabaptism was born in Zurich.[145] Denck was influenced, first, by humanist tradition, and then by Karlstadt and Müntzer. He believed that human possess freedom to accept God's work in them to guide them to a pure life. His life and career were short, but he was very influential and shaped many Spiritual and Anabaptist movements.[146] Hans Hut was one of those who was influenced by Denck to whom we will turn in the next chapter.

At the end of previous chapter, we already discussed Hofmann's eschatological thought which turned into practice in the Netherlands. His death left the Netherlandish Anabaptists leaderless whom were finally led by two Apocalyptic Dutch Anabaptists: Jan Mathijs and John of Leiden. They declared the city of Münster as the New Jerusalem, and John called himself king. Whereas Hofmann prophesized that 144,000 rebaptized would wait for Christ's second coming (Revelation 7:1-4), Münsterite Anabaptists adopted an active role and tried to pave the way for Christ's coming. They actually practiced polygamy, the common good, and established a war committee. The city, however, fell in 25 June 1533 after defeated by a Catholic-Protestant coalition.[147]

The third geographical locus of Anabaptism was formed in Moravia. It was first led by Balthasar Hubmaier (c.1484-1528) who was killed in Vienna. He accepted the authority of the secular power and established a magisterial Anabaptism. After his death, there was a lack of leadership which eventually filled by Jakob Hutter (1500-1536). Since then, Moravian Anabaptists had known as Hutterites after the name of their leader. They followed a community

[145] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 247.
[146] McLaughlin, "The Radical Reformation," 48.
[147] Ibid., 51-52.

of goods and believed in sharing wealth with those in need. Their acceptance of secular authority helped them to survive longer than other Anabaptists groups. However, the Thirty Years War caused them death and immigration to Central Europe.[148]

The fifth article of *The Schleitheim Articles* is concerned with how a community should be managed. It indicates that the leader "should be one who has a completely good reputation" and he must be elected by the community.[149] Hut and Hergot provide a detailed political thought for regulating a community to which we now turn.

[148] Ibid., 53-54.
[149] Slatter, "The Schleitheim Articles," 176.

Chapter 4
Consent and Constitution

> "Every authority has been established to improve the territory and not to corrupt it."[150]
>
> (2 Corinthians 10:8)

As it was stated in the introduction, this thesis is concerned with two perennial questions in the history of ideas: what is a legitimate community? And how should a community be ruled? So far, we have seen that eschatological thought led Anabaptists to separate themselves from existing societies and to establish their own communities. Hut argues that baptism could be true only when it emerges out of faith, and it could be the basis of the Christian community when it is a sign of consent. Such a community of believers, Hergot suggests, should honor God and promote the common good for which He design a constitution in which all leaders are elected. In the next two sections, I will investigate Hut's and Hergot's political thought.

4.1. Hut's Theory of Consent

Hans Hut (c.1490-1527) was not initially an Anabaptist, but he eventually became "the apostle of the Anabaptists."[151] He was influenced by Müntzer's Spiritualism and participated in the Peasant's War in Frankenhausen on 15 May 1525 from which he could escape. Hut was an itinerant bookseller, and after the war, due to prosecution, had to escape from city to city, from south of Germany to northern Austria. In Augsburg, He met Hans Denck by whom he was baptized on 26 May 1526. He then continued preaching about Anabaptism, and he was

[150] Cf. Anonymous, "To the Assembly of the Common Peasantry," in Baylor, *The Radical Reformation*, 107.

[151] Johann Loserth, Robert Friedmann and Werner O. Packull, "Hut, Hans (d. 1527)," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. Retrieved 13 May 2018, from http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Hut,_Hans_(d._1527)&oldid=144160.

very successful to convert people.[152] He died on 6 December 1527 in prison in Augsburg while waiting for execution for participating in the Peasants' War.[153]

Hut perceived himself as the new Elijah, the final prophet, and his followers as members of 144,000 elected.[154] Hut's eschatological and apocalyptic thought is also perspicuously present in his major Anabaptist work, *On the Mystery of Baptism*. At the beginning of the text, Hut reveals that "the last and most dangerous age of this world is now upon us."[155] As it was elaborated above, one of the features of the Radical Reformation is its emphasize on freedom of prophecy. Hut also highlights the importance of prophecy and connects it to his eschatological thought and opines that "everything that the prophets, patriarchs, apostles prophesised from the beginning and proclaimed for the future, is now coming about again and will be restored as Peter prophesised to us in the Acts of the Apostles."[156] He then disqualifies Catholic and magisterial reformers reasoning that "no one can learn the mystery of divine wisdom in the underworlds hangouts of every villainy, as is believed at Wittenberg or at Paris."[157] Back then, Wittenberg was the center of evangelical faith and Paris the center of Roman Catholicism. He accuses preachers at these places for preaching for money. Who then is the true prophet and preacher? Hut states that "look upon the poor, who are despised by the world and charged with being fanatics and devils, as were Christ and apostles."[158] He explicitly refers to people like himself who, as it was mentioned above, were under persecution. He also applies a prophetic language in the text such as "I warn all believing

[152] Ibid.
[153] McLaughlin, "The Radical Reformation," 49.
[154] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 443.
[155] Hans Hut, "On the Mystery of Baptism," in Baylor, *The Radical Reformation*, 152.
[156] Ibid., 152-53.
[157] Ibid., 154.
[158] Ibid.

people," and "I admonish [advise] all brothers and sisters."[159] Finally, he was portrayed with one of his disciples as "a prophet sent of God [to the nations]."[160]

Like his mentor, Denck, and building on 1 John 5: 6-8, Hut seems to have developed a tripartite baptismal theology according to which baptism by spirit is a covenant between man and God; baptism by water is a covenant between the believer and the Christian community, and baptism in blood with which Christ was finally baptized.[161] There is, however, an order and preparation for these baptisms: "First, Christ says, 'Go into the whole world and preach the gospel of all creatures.' Second, he says, 'He who believes,' and third, 'and is baptized,' will be saved."[162] Hut continues that "this order must be maintained if a true Christendom is to be established."[163] From the outset, it is clear that baptism is not a mere theological issue; rather, it is the foundation of a Christian community. Hut, however, knows that his baptismal theology debunks those of Catholic and magisterial Protestant. That is why he declares that his theory is necessary for Christian community "even if the whole world is destroyed because of it."[164]

As it was discussed above, what distinguishes Anabaptism from other divine covenant is that it is based on true faith. Hut's tripartite order is a process through which a believer reaches the sufficient level of faith to enter a covenant with God. As we have also seen above, the first part of Hut's order is "gospel of all creature" which is the basis of true Christian life. He thus begins by investigating what it really means. The key insight into the meaning of the gospel of all creature is, Hut argues, Paul's letters to Romans where he says, "the gospel that is preached to you in all creatures," (Romans 1:20). The pressing question thus is what "in all

[159] Ibid., 153-155.
[160] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 267.
[161] Earlier version of this part was developed in one of my term papers. This is an extensive revision.
[162] Hut, "On the Mystery of Baptism," 156.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.

creatures" means. Hut interprets that it does not mean that the gospel should be preached to animals like dogs, cats, or cows. Rather, it indicates that "Christ spoke or preached and showed gospel in all creatures through parables."[165] Hut states that Christ always presents the power of God and the kingdom of heaven to the common man "in creatures, through parables, through craftwork, and through all manner of work that people do."[166] In other words, Christ teaches the gospel to gardener, goldsmith, and carpenter through language and parables of trees, gold, and house respectively. Hut continues to refer to a list of these stories in the Bible to further support his interpretation.[167]

God's commandment, however, is not dependent on its language but "on the power of the spirit." Such a power, moreover, is revealed to those who are in the right relation to God, that is, they are ready to sacrifice their life for God. That is why God uses parables in which animals are scarified and suffered for God. Similarly, man must sacrifice and suffer in order to grasp God's word. All creatures, however, are subordinated to man. Likewise, Hut opines, man is subordinated to God. If man hunts and suffers animals to eat them, God suffers man to teach them. As a result, man must clean themselves both outwardly and inwardly. To illustrate, Hut refers to the Bible where the relationship between God and man is compared to that of carpenter and tree. A carpenter makes a house not by using the whole tree, but he cut it from the land and clean it from its branches. Similarly, if one wants to be a house in which God dwells, they must cut themselves from the world and cut all the desire for property, wife, and honors.[168] To recap, the gospel of all creatures refers to the gospel that is preached to man by using parable language. If we are to grasp this hidden meaning, we need to prepare ourselves by cleaning ourselves from all worldly desires.

[165] Ibid., 161.
[166] Ibid., 157.
[167] Ibid., 158.
[168] Ibid., 159-160.

So far, I have shown how a believer must preach the gospel and God. Such a preaching is an introduction to faith. For Hut, there are two kinds of faith: 1) justifying faith which is the basis of the Reformation in contrast to work in Catholicism; 2) tried faith which could be obtained through suffering.[169] Now, a believer is ready to enter the second part of the divine order, that is, one needs to believe in the gospel.[170] Hut states that the mere understanding of the gospel of all creatures does not necessarily direct us to a Christian life. While it is difficult to grasp, understanding alone is not enough. Thus, believers can and must prove their understanding of, and faith in, the gospel. As a result, the third part of the divine order, that is, "… and it baptized will be saved," must be added to the two first parts.[171] For Anabaptists, this is just the beginning of baptism.

Hut's baptismal theology is complicated and difficult to grasp. There are two prominent interpretations. George Williams argues that Hut provides a tripartite baptism. The first baptism is baptism by spirit which takes place after contemplation of the gospel and finding faith in God. Hut calls it "baptism in the water of every grief."[172] Thus, baptism by spirit is a covenant between the believer and God. This baptism did not begin in Jesus time; rather, "all the elect friends of God have been baptized in it, from Adam down to the present."[173] The second kind of baptism is baptism by water through which the believer makes covenant with his or her fellow Christians and enters the Christina community. Finally, there is baptism in blood or in Christ which is a constant process by which the believer fights against his or her sins.[174]

There is another train of thought that argues Hut's baptismal theology can be divided into two ways of configuration of faith and baptism. First, as it was shown above, there is

[169] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 264.
[170] Hut, "On the Mystery of Baptism," 161.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid., 163.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 266.

contemplation about the gospel from which faith emerges. Such a faith can be symbolized by baptism by water.[175] Second, there is a sequence of baptism followed by faith. Baptism by water is not enough for salvation, as Hut puts it: baptism by water "is incomplete and can free no one from sin for it is only a symbol, a preparation, and a pattern of true baptism in Christ."[176] Baptism by water, therefore, is an agreement to enter a permanent and constant baptism, a lifelong inner baptism which is a "conflict with sin through one's whole life."[177]

In any case, Hut's baptismal theory consists of two distinctive features. Theologically, it underlines Hut's eschatological thought. Hut transforms baptism by water into a preparatory step for baptism in Christ, a permanent baptism, which anticipates Second Coming of Christ.[178] Baptism by water, in other words, is no longer a final step for salvation, as it is in Catholic and Protestant sacraments; rather it is an interim step between an inner baptism, which emerges from faith, and another inner baptism which anticipates the Last Judgment.

Politically, Hut's baptismal theology is based on a theory of consent. For Hut, inner baptism is a covenant by which "a person consents to bear everything that will be imposed upon him by the father through Christ."[179] Outer baptism, i.e. baptism by water, on the other hand, is a covenant by which a person "consent before a Christian community which has received the covenant from God, and in the name of God."[180] The latter covenant cannot be ratified in infant baptism. This is so because "no person should be accepted into such a community and united with it unless he has heard and learned the gospel, believes what he has heard, and has consented to it."[181] Infant baptism, therefore, Hut announces, "is a piece of

[175] Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, 79.
[176] Hut, "On the Mystery of Baptism," 168.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, 79.
[179] Hut, "On the Mystery of Baptism," 161.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.,161-162

villainy, one with which the whole world deceives itself and denies Christ."[182] If baptism is about faith, suffering, and sins, then it has its own time, goal, and age. As a result, infant baptism "is a pure invention of man, without the word and commandment of God." Hut claims that there is no evidence in Scripture for it and thus is a threat to Christendom. Hut illuminates that "according to the words of Christ in the context of Scripture, no one should baptize another unless the baptized person is able, in passionate fidelity, to account for his faith and trust." Hut concludes that infant baptism is "not only useless, it is also the greatest hindrance to truth."[183]

To recap, while baptism as an article of faith is common among all Christian sects, what distinguishes Anabaptists from others is their rejection of infant baptism in that it is not based on free choice. Anabaptists believed in the purity of the Christian community. Therefore, they argued that a believer must consent to enter the community. Insofar as the history of ideas matters, Hut's theory of baptism had contributed to the origins of the idea of consent.[184]

4.2. Hergot's Constitutionalism

As we have seen, for Hut, baptism by water is a consent for entering the Christian community which consists of individuals who all anticipating Second Coming of Christ. As a result, the whole community becomes an eschatological community:

> It should not be seen as a repetition of child-baptism conferring legitimate entry into a separatist congregation. Instead it represented the 'signing' of scattered individuals with an eschatological seal and looked ahead, beyond the brief interval remaining, to God's judgment of sinners, in which those who had been sealed, now gathered together, would participate.[185]

Radical reformers, therefore, encounter a new question: how should a community be regulated? As it was shown above, Joachim of Fiore was among the first theologians who transformed his

[182] Ibid., 169.
[183] Ibid., 171.
[184] Francis Oakley also traces the idea of consent back to the Medieval Period, see his *Politics and Eternity: Studies in the History of Medieval and Early-Modern Political Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 96-137.
[185] Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, 79.

eschatological ideas into constitutional thought. Such a way of thinking was followed by radical reformers of whom Hans Hergot provided a world constitution to which we now turn.

Hans Hergot is one of the least known authors among radicals. He is mostly known for his printing shop in Nuremberg in which he printed many of reformists' books among which Luther's New Testament was reprinted five times. He never published radical tracts except for Thomas Muntzer's "Explicit Revelation of the False Faith" which was published in his printing shop while he was not there.[186] However, in his way back to Nuremberg he was arrested by Saxony authorities for carrying a "seditious" pamphlet that he wrote, *On the New Transformation of the Christian Life*. Hergot was sentenced to death by the Leipzig Council and beheaded on 20 May 1527.[187]

Hergot opens and ends his pamphlet with his eschatological ideas. At the beginning, he refers to a millenarian conception of history according to which there have been three transformations in history: first, the era of father, Judaism, and the Old Testament; second, the era of son, Christianity, and the New Testament. The third state is the final era in which people will be transformed from current unjust situation to a just society.[188] At the end of his pamphlet, Hergot divides history into three periods by using table as a metaphor. There have been three tables: "The first was superfluous and had too much on it. The second had a moderate amount and enough to satisfy the needs [of those who sat at it]. The third was completely wanting."[189]

[186] It has been argued that his death was one of the reasons why Anabaptists published few texts in the early Reformation period, see Brad S. Gregory, "Anabaptist Martyrdom: Imperatives, Experience, and Memorialization," in *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521-1700*, ed. John D. Roth, and James M. Stayer (Leiden, Brill: 2007), 491.

[187] Sigrid Looß, "Hergot, Hans," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* Vol 2, ed. Hans J. Hillebrand (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 233-34; see also Ferdinard Seibt, "Johannes Hergot: The Reformation of the Poor Man," in *Profiles of Radical Reformers*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Goertz (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1982), 97-106.

[188] Hergot, "On the New Transformation of the Christian Life," 210.

[189] Ibid., 225.

Hergot continues that there was a conflict between the first and the third tables both of which will be overturned by God who will maintain the middle table.[190]

It is clear that Hergot follows a tripartite account of history which we have seen its origin in Joachim. Like the Franciscans and Taborites, Hergot too entwins his eschatological thought with prophecy and declares that "I, a poor man, know those things which are in the future."[191] What he knows is that in the last transformation "God will humble all social estates, villages, castles, ecclesiastical foundations and cloisters."[192] He also provides specific prophecies that there will not be another peasant uprising because they failed in the first one. Rather, the next war, in addition to Turks, would be with the pope. Yet, he states that his pamphlet aims for peace and addresses all people of the world.[193]

In addition to eschatology, there are two other ideas which constitute Hergot's constitution: social and economic equality. Socially, Hergot asserts that in the new Christian society there is no hierarchy. He states that the nobility of birth should be abolished, and all male and female children should be raised in a common house which is regulated by a trusted father and a pious woman respectively. Hergot contends that "if anyone thinks that he can maintain his social estate, it will be in vain." Similarly, there is no religious hierarchy. He argues that clergies should be elected by the people. They do not receive any gift or payments; clergies must work to maintain their life.[194]

Economically, Hergot argues for abolishing private property. In *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1755), Rousseau asserts that civil society as the site of private property drives inequality. He claims that the first man who said "*this is mine*" is the true founder of

[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid., 210.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid., 223.
[194] Ibid., 210-13.

civil society and, consequently, inequality.[195] I do not claim that Rousseau was influenced by Hergot, or there is a link between them. Yet Rousseau was not the first person who uses that phrase to describes inequality. More than two hundred years before him, Hergot also states that in the new Christian life no one will say "*That's mine*."[196] He asserts that "everything is bestowed for common use, so that people will eat from one pot, drink from one vessel."[197] This is the only way, he continues, the society can assure that "no one is better off than another."[198] As a result, Hergot designs, in addition to children houses, two other common houses which is maintained by the community: houses for old people, and hospitals for physical and mentally ill people.[199]

To put these ideas together, Hergot designs a territorial constitution according to which every common spoken language forms an empire. As a result, there are three empires in the world: Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Each empire is divided into four quarters and each quarter is organized into twelve territories. Finally, each territory is divided into small communities.

The smallest unit in Hergot's worldwide constitution is an agricultural community. There are two cardinal goals in a community: honoring God and promoting the common good. To maintain these two goals, each community obeys a "sustainer of the community." Although Hergot does not explicitly argue, it can be inferred from the subsequent discussions that the sustainer is elected by the community. The sustainer is responsible to choose male and female leaders of children houses. Another electoral aspect of Hergot's prospective community is that,

[195] Jean-Jacque Rousseau, *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 164.
[196] Hergot, "On the New Transformation of the Christian Life," 210.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid., 212.
[199] Ibid., 213

as it was noted above, clergies, who are in charge of organizing and maintaining religious activities, will be elected by the people.[200]

The second political unit is a territory which consists of communities and villages. Each territory has a lord whom is elected by the community sustainers. He is responsible for supervising communities under his constituency. He has the power to wage a war if it is necessary for the honor of God and the common good. His office should be in the middle of his territory, and at least three times a year he should call all the community sustainers for consulting about the need of the territory. Furthermore, the territorial lord is responsible for rebuilding old churches, and he maintains a university in which the honor of God and the common good will be taught. The lord, however, does not have any especial social class, and he does not receive any payments. His job is to travel between communities to make sure the common good and the honor of God are maintained.[201]

The third political unit is called a "quarter" which consists of twelve territories. Each quarter is regulated by a "quarter lord" who is elected by the territorial lords. The quarter lord or overlord has to travel within his twelve territories to make sure the territorial lords rule correctly. He also meets once or twice a year all of the territorial lords under his jurisdiction to talk about their quarter. The overlord will establish a university in which the three languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, will be taught. Each spoken language consists of four quarter, and consequently, four quarter lords.[202]

Finally, the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew polities constitute the biggest political unit, that is, the world empire. The twelve quarter lords will elect the chief lord, i.e. the emperor. The

[200] Ibid., 211-213.
[201] Ibid., 214-215.
[202] Ibid., 216-217.

chief lord supervises the quarter lords and makes sure that they rule according to the God and the common good.[203]

There are two conceptual innovations in Hergot's constitutionalism. The community sustainers, the territorial lords, the quarter lords, and the chief lord have one important feature in common. They are both spiritual and political persons. This is significant in that it shows Hergot's disagreement with the Catholic and Protestant distinction between secular and religious authorities. It by no means, however, follows that Hergot opts for subjugating religious or secular authorities to one another; rather, he opines that the society should be united under a single authority. Hergot explicitly acknowledges that the tradition of "two shepherds," i.e. temporal and spiritual, will be ended. There will be "one shepherd and one flock."[204] Interestingly, there is no sign in the text which demonstrates Hergot's preference of religious shepherd over secular one. However, there is a sign which implies that Hergot prefers lay persons in that he argues that lords should have scriptural experts.[205] Second, Hergot's constitutional thought is based on majority rule. He explains that how laws should be ratified:

> All laws should be applied so that things are judged according to truth and justice, not from affection or favoritism. For this reason the holy spirit placed twelve men together, as God did the apostles. He did it for this reason: if five men fail to produce the right decision and let themselves be guided by their own spirit, the other seven are still in *majority*, and the law should be what the seven judge it to be.[206]

Hergot's world constitution, in other words, aims to establish a world state under rule of a single emperor who is elected democratically and under laws which are decided according to majority.

[203] Ibid., 217.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid., 215.
[206] Ibid., 219 (emphasis added).

Hergot's constitution, finally, provides a system of economy. First, he argues for a simple system of exchange of goods between people at the communal level.[207] Second, each community can also mint a coin, in the name of the community and Jesus, under the supervision of the lord of each territory. This coin is valuable everywhere. Third, the quarter lord also mints a coin the value of which is the sum of the twelve coins of his territory. That is why his coin should bear the image of God. Finally, the chief lord also coins a coin which values the sum of the twelve quarter coins. Furthermore, Hergot advises that each quarter should have a restricted number of shops and markets. Baylor interprets that Hergot's concern for detailed coinage system and marketing arises from his suspicion that money is the source of peasants' exploitation.[208]

In his pathbreaking work, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Skinner asserts that "all the most influential works of the systematic political theory which were produced in Catholic Europe in the course of the sixteenth century were fundamentally of a constitutionalist character."[209] Francis Oakley extends such a character and argues that constitutional thought can also be seen in Protestant political writers.[210] Hergot was neither Catholic nor Protestant. Like both, however, Hergot was a reformer in the sixteenth century who sought to design a perfect regulation for Christian communities which were waiting for the kingdom of God.

[207] Ibid., 214.
[208] Ibid., 216.
[209] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2, *The Age of Reformation*, 114.
[210] Oakley, *Politics and Eternity*, 137.

Conclusion

"Come, let us reason together."

(Isaiah 1:18)

The present thesis has investigated three ideas in the history of political thought. First, it has demonstrated that the concept of eschatology has been changed from a mere religious belief into a fervent political idea. In early Jewish and Christianity, eschatology was presented in different expectations: the messiah, Second Coming of Christ, and the kingdom of God. These expectations, however, have been interpreted differently throughout the Medieval Period. The first change took place by Augustine as he did not follow conventional chiliastic interpretations and provided a spiritual account of world ages. Spiritualism reached its climax in Joachim's theology of history. He designed a tripartite philosophy of history according to which the last age is the age of the Holy Spirit in which there is no need to the traditional church. His followers, the Spiritualist Franciscan, Hussites, and Taborites went further and waged war against the Catholic church and the Holy Roman Empire. In the Radical Reformation religious radicals, such as Hut and Hergot, perceived themselves as prophets who foresaw the coming end. They thus sought for a radical reform in all aspects of the Christian life.

Two of these aspects were, as I have tried to demonstrate above, the legitimacy of a community and its decision-making process. By rejecting infant baptism, Hut argued for a baptismal theology at the heart of which there is a theory of consent. He contended that the believer must first find faith in the gospel which is followed by baptism by water as the basis for establishing a Christian community. That community, Hergot argued, should be ruled by a single ruler, whom is elected democratically, and it should be based on majority decision-making. Hergot's constitutionalism, as we have seen, is also based on economic and political equality.

One does not need to agree with radicals' religious beliefs in order to admit their significant contribution to the history of democratic ideas. Historically speaking, despite its different contexts and argumentations, the Radical Reformation is a point at which the theological origins of modern political thought and the intellectual origins of modern democratic thought converge. In other words, as it was demonstrated above, religious radicals provided theological arguments for democratic ideas such as consent and constitution. This does not mean, however, that religious radicals were as democrat as, for example, Enlightenment political theorists. Radical reformers' ideal society was a male-dominated Christian community. Rather, it means both radical reformers, as I have tried to show, and Enlightenment political philosophers, as it is well-known,[211] were concerned with the same fundamental questions: what makes a community legitimate, and how it should be regulated.

[211] See for example Jonathan Israel, *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

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