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THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

OF

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BY

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INTRODUCTION

The various religious and political associations which arose during the time of the English Civil War were often strange indeed, so it is not surprising that this colorful and expressive period should excite a great deal of intensive study. Even taking into account the inherently quarrelsome temper of historians, however, it is hard to explain the enormous divergences of opinion which have arisen on almost all issues touching this area. Certainly one explanation lies in the nature of the questions disputed in this period. Essentially the central issues involved the nature of the political and social structure under which the English would live, and the place which religion would occupy in this structure; and since these questions are still matters of serious disagreement, it is understandable that those issues would be approached from a number of different viewpoints. Even so, it would seem that a far more serious cause of disagreement can be traced to a lack of sympathy and sensitivity in the attempts to interpret this period. Far too often the standards of our own age have been used to judge the words and actions of the seventeenth century, and when such a procedure is used it is inevitable that serious misunderstandings will arise. This is not to say that there is not a legitimate problem here, for if the issues of this earlier age are to be fully comprehensible
to our own time, some sort of interpretation is necessary. But if we are to avoid finding an artificial reflection of our own age in every historical situation we study, it will definitely be necessary to approach these situations with more sympathy and open-mindedness.

It is in this respect that the study of Gerrard Winstanley is of particular interest, for he offers a fairly difficult test of historical sympathy. Essentially Winstanley has nothing in common with our own age. His hopes and ideals were a part of a world view which had almost disappeared in his own day, so it is not surprising that we should find it strange. Often what he says seems to us hopelessly naive, while at other times he places great faith in theories which we know to be incorrect. Thus it is inevitable that much of what he says will appear foolish or obscure to us, but even so, if his works are approached sympathetically, they can be very profitable even for our own time. If nothing else, Winstanley’s ideas can add a certain perspective to our own mental outlook, for it must surely give one pause to realize that within the limits of the commonly accepted assumptions which Winstanley made, his view was entirely consistent and reasonable. In other words his philosophy is probably no more foolish than the philosophy of a systematic and rigorous thinker of our own day will seem in some three hundred years. Winstanley’s value
to the historian then, lies in the insight he offers in the understanding of the age in which he lived. If such an understanding is of value, so is the study of Winstanley.

Relatively little is known about Winstanley’s early life and career. Apparently he was baptized at Wigan in Lancashire on July 10, 1609. Almost nothing is known of his childhood but remarks from his pamphlets indicate that he was trained to be a tradesman and that later he carried on his trade in London. The disorders of the Civil War period appear to have brought Winstanley to financial difficulties, and after suffering bankruptcy he seems to have accepted the charity of friends in Surrey. Here Winstanley worked as a farmer until he began writing his pamphlets in 1649, and after the publication of his last work in 1652, he apparently returned to farming. The little evidence we have indicates that he was fairly successful in this occupation.¹

This much, then, is known with some certainty about Winstanley, and with these facts historians are in general accord. At this point, however, their agreement ends, for as we shall see, Winstanley’s works have been subject to the most varied interpretations.
NOTES

CHAPTER I

The tone of the first modern commentary upon Winstanley was one of slightly horrified amusement. W. A. Abram, the author of a brief article in The Palatine Note-Book, wrote in reference to his ideas that, "They have long ago lost what significance they ever had, and may be left in the limbo of exploded chimera."¹ Winstanley was of interest to Abram only as an example of the ridiculous extremes to which religious enthusiasm could lead one, but all later students of his works were to find in them material of the greatest significance. That each of these scholars found his work to be significant for entirely different reasons is an unhappy commentary upon the quality of work involved. In almost every instance the greater part of the scholarship and ingenuity went not to understanding Winstanley, but rather to proving him in some way significant and meaningful to our time. The best approach to this subject was that suggested by A. S. P. Woodhouse in the following thesis:

before we can arrive at the pattern of any period's thought we must surrender ourselves, at least temporarily, to its dominant terminology; only after so doing are we permitted (and perhaps constrained) to translate it into the terms of our own age — into those terms which it is our comfortable habit to regard as finally and even exclusively significant.²

It is precisely because almost every writer on this subject has attempted to interpret Winstanley solely in the terms
of our own age that so much needless confusion has arisen over his ideas.

The element in Winstanley's writings which first attracted notice was the similarity of many of his ideas to the teachings of the early Quakers. Thomas Hancock, the man who seems to have been responsible for Winstanley's resurrection from obscurity, confined himself merely to observing that this similarity existed, but later writers set out with determination to show that these doctrinal similarities were no mere accident. Thus arose the school of thought which argued that it was to Winstanley rather than to George Fox that the Quakers owed their origin.

Louis Berens, the first to attempt to support this point, based his identification of Winstanley with the early Quaker movement largely upon the fact that Winstanley used the phrase "Inward Light" to refer to the inspirations of God as did the Quakers. Upon this basis, he concluded that Winstanley's writings were "...the source whence the early Quakers, the Children of Light, drew their most characteristic tenets and doctrines,..."

The difficulty with this position was that there were simply no facts to support it. Berens had been able to bring forth no evidence that Winstanley had had any contact with Fox or any other Quakers, and Rufus Jones noted that while the thought of the two men was similar in certain
respects there were also a good many points at which they were not in agreement.

An attempt to meet these various objections was made by Winthrop Hudson in his "Gerrard Winstanley and the Early Quakers". Hudson sought to show that there was an active group of mystics which included such men as Giles Randall, William Dell, John Saltmarsh, and Gerrard Winstanley. It was Winstanley, Hudson argued, who provided the connecting link between this group and George Fox, the founder of the Quakers. The meeting ground of these two men, he claimed, must have been the shop of the publisher Giles Calvert, for it was Calvert who published the works of Winstanley, Saltmarsh, Dell, and the Quakers. Thus this shop must have been the center of a substantial exchange between these men.

The principal obstacle to the acceptance of this theory was the same as that which had thwarted the earlier attempts to prove Winstanley a Quaker, that is, there was simply nothing to support it except speculation. As George Sabine has observed, "The very best Quaker historians find no evidence of any external relationship or exchange between Winstanley and the Quakers despite the close similarity of his religious experience to that of George Fox and the first generation of the Friends." In opposition to this identification is the evidence of several important differences in the views of the two men, among them Winstanley's
devotion to social and economic reform, a devotion which, as we will see, sprang from the very heart of his philosophy. Fox, on the other hand, was not concerned with these problems, but rather was interested only in pursuing his religious work. This theory, then, adds nothing to an understanding of Winstanley's work, but rather serves only to blur important distinctions between his ideas and those of the Quakers.

A theory which occasionally supplemented the one claiming that Winstanley's mystical works provided the source from which the early Quakers drew their inspiration was that which saw in his social and economic works an anticipation of the teachings of the American social reformer, Henry George. The first person to notice this similarity was Morrison Davidson, a man who apparently owed his interest in the subject to Thomas Hancock. In a book entitled *Four Precursors of Henry George and the Single Tax*, Davidson included a chapter devoted largely to effusive praise of the simplicity and clarity of Winstanley's economic doctrines. He was sure that "Winstanley as an economist is worth all the Utopians and Utopias from the time of Plato's 'Republic' to Bellamy's 'Looking Backward' with Adam Smith and Karl Marx thrown in." Unfortunately Davidson did no more than make a few very casual references to the similarity of the ideas of the two men, and no attempt
whatever was made to provide evidence for these supposed similarities.

It was Winstanley's proposal for a peaceful sharing of the land which suggested comparison with the ideas of Henry George to Louis Berens. He asserted, "What Winstanley discovered and proclaimed in the Seventeenth Century, Henry George rediscovered and again proclaimed in the Nineteenth Century ..." Berens, like Davidson, made no attempt to compare in detail the ideas of these two men, but rather contented himself merely with suggesting the similarity as a reference point for modern readers. It is not surprising then, that the usefulness of this theory should suffer the same decline as has the memory of Henry George.

A far more influential interpretation of Winstanley owed its origin to one of the most important figures in the history of socialism, Eduard Bernstein. Bernstein, in analyzing the democratic and radical movements of the Civil War period, concluded that Winstanley had in almost all respects anticipated the nineteenth century Marxists. He concluded, "...we may say without exaggeration as to Winstanley that, although not 'armed with the whole science of his century' he was as a socialist ahead of his age." It was this assumption that Winstanley had anticipated the ideas of socialism which provided the foundation for the greater part of the scholarship devoted to Winstanley during the next fifty years.
Perhaps the most misleading idea which Bernstein suggested in his interpretation of Winstanley was that Winstanley's mystical language was employed only to serve as camouflage for ideas which he knew would not be approved by the leaders of his society. He said of Winstanley's works, "These pamphlets are couched in somewhat mystical phraseology, which manifestly serves as a cloak to conceal the revolutionary designs of the author." Bernstein was convinced that Winstanley was aiming at a violent social revolution in spite of the fact that the latter emphasized time and again the entirely peaceful nature of his movement. Bernstein failed to realize that this pacifism was an integral part of Winstanley's program and that as such he simply could not have entertained the possibility of a violent approach to the realization of this program.

Once Bernstein had made the initial suggestion that Winstanley in many ways anticipated the ideas of Marx, other writers of similar political persuasion were quick to find in his works positive proof that he had anticipated almost all the details of Marxist theory. Where Bernstein had suggested that Winstanley might possibly have had a labor theory of value, Margaret James could say with assurance, "It was Winstanley who anticipated the central point of Marxian economic doctrine, the labour theory of value." A more important and far more misleading interpretation
of Winstanley was that which claimed him as one of the first modern thinkers with a thoroughly materialistic outlook in his approach to the problems of his time. The first to extend the economic line of interpretation this far was John Strachey. "Winstanley, he claimed, "spoke for those workers who, if once the pall of ignorance which is imposed upon them can be lifted, must be natural materialists. For they live by understanding and controlling the forces of nature." While this statement in itself was not completely incorrect, the use of the word materialism to describe Winstanley's attitude was highly misleading. Winstanley was definitely interested in nature and in the creations of nature, but it was an interest born of his pantheism, his belief that God was inherent in all these natural things. Even so, the myth of Winstanley's materialism became an integral part of the Marxist interpretation of his thought. David Petagorsky in his persuasive if rather careless study of the Digger movement, agreed that Winstanley had a thoroughly materialistic outlook, and this idea was included by both Christopher Hill and Margaret James in their discussions of Winstanley. Actually, Winstanley was in almost no conceivable understanding of the word, a materialist. His entire program of reform was designed to lead men away from their devotion to material and earthly things. Materialism was the curse which was responsible
for all the evils existing in the world. For example, Winstanley said in reference to man's initial state of innocence, "...this continues till outward objects intice him to pleasure, or seeks content without him; And when he consents, or suffers the imaginary Covetousnesse within to close with the objects, Then he falls, and is taken captive, and falls lower and lower." What statement could be less indicative of a materialistic outlook?

Another modern element which the Marxist historians thought they saw in Winstanley was an advocacy of "direct action". Bernstein had been the first to suggest that Winstanley actually had plans for a violent revolution, and according to David Petegorsky this was one of Winstanley's primary distinguishing characteristics. Petegorsky claimed that, "...the necessity for direct action by the propertyless classes was a conclusion that flowed logically from the premises on which his social philosophy was based." However, even though Petegorsky was forced to admit that Winstanley never explicitly advocated direct action in any of his written works, he remained confident that such a belief was implicit in Winstanley's actions. Also Christopher Hill believed that the Digger movement was "...an attempt to proceed by direct action to a form of agrarian communism by members of the dispossessed rural proletariat."
The main difficulty with this claim is that in the last analysis it is either meaningless or incorrect. Certainly Winstanley, like all reformers, hoped to put his ideas into practice, but he was always determined to use only peaceful methods to achieve ends which he believed to be perfectly just. The term "direct action" implies a willingness to use force to bring about radical changes directly rather than through the established instruments of change. If the term is used in this sense, then, it is incorrect. If, on the other hand, the term is used simply to mean that Winstanley actually attempted to put his ideas into practice, then it is meaningless to compare this with the very different ideas attached to "direct action" by the Marxists of our own time.

A similar problem is involved in the Marxists' description of Winstanley as a scientific rationalist. Winstanley definitely believed in the value of direct observation over scholastic research, but this was because he believed God would be found sooner in the works of nature than in the works of man. The result may have been the same as that of the modern scientific outlook, but the motivation was completely different. The same is true of Winstanley's "rationalism". Winstanley's faith in the power of reason resulted solely from his belief that it was thus that God spoke to man. The difference between this concept and that
currently signified by the term rationalism is quite signif-
nificant, and in ignoring this difference the Marxist
historians seriously distorted the real meaning of Winstan-
ley's writings. Actually this mistake is simply a manifesta-
tion of a more basic flaw in the overall approach to history
employed by the Marxists. The nature of this defect is
revealed by Margaret James' admission that "It is a truism,
accepted by none more fully than by Marxists, that the
particular facts discovered by a researcher depend on the
bias, conscious or unconscious, of his interests." While
such honesty may be commendable it would seem that in ab-
andoning the ideal of historical impartiality the Marxist
historians involved in the Winstanley controversy completely
lost contact with the reality of the situation. The Marxists
generally sought to impose their own terminology upon Win-
stanely's ideas and thus in attempting to make these ideas
intelligible and meaningful to modern readers they actually
distorted them beyond recognition.

That both the Marxist and religious interpretations
of Winstanley could rely for support upon ideas quite ob-
viously in conflict with some of Winstanley's most definite
statements was made possible only by the commonly accepted
theory that Winstanley's ideas underwent a vast change during
the course of his brief career as a public figure. The first
to suggest that Winstanley had undergone such a development
was Louis Borens. "Nothing, he said, "seems to us more striking to show the broadening and development of his powerful mind than a comparison of the views here expressed [in Winstanley's last work, The Law of Freedom] with those contained in his earlier writings on the subject."\(^{29}\) It was only by assuming that such a change had taken place that Borens could argue that Winstanley's earlier works had inspired the Quakers while at the same time pointing out the similarity of his later works to the ideas of Henry George. He claimed it was in The New Law of Righteousness that, "...we see him move from the misty regions of cosmological, metaphysical, and theistical speculations to the somewhat firmer ground of social thought."\(^{30}\)

The Marxist historians, while they accepted neither of the two theories Borens was trying to reconcile, still agreed that Winstanley's thought did undergo a marked development in the course of his writing career. In this case, however, the change was from mysticism to a socially constructive communism. Petegorsky claimed, "His first two pamphlets of the early summer of 1643 are typical of the chiliastic mysticism so popular during the period.... A few months later he emerges as the most advanced radical of the century, convinced that social and economic reorganization is society's most vital and immediate need."\(^{31}\) Christopher Hill traced out a much more complex line of development,\(^{32}\)
but he considerably weakened his position by quoting from the same work to provide evidence for two different stages of this development.\textsuperscript{33}

Even the historians who rejected the Marxist interpretation of Winstanley agreed that his ideas changed considerably during the course of his career. Winthrop Hudson argued that this change took place just before the composition of Winstanley's last work, \textit{The Law of Freedom in a Platform}. Previous to this time, he claimed Winstanley had displayed a consistent "chiliastic mysticism" but sometime before the composition of his final work he joined the ranks of the Fifth Monarchy Men.\textsuperscript{34} The essential change needed for this conversion involved giving up the expectation of an imminent and instantaneous arrival of the millenium for a belief that this blessed state would only become possible after a period of reformation by the Saints. The difficulty with this theory lies in the ambiguity of the time element involved. Hudson believed that Winstanley, in his earlier works expected the advent of the millenium almost immediately and certainly within his lifetime. Winstanley himself, however, was not certain on this point. He urged people to wait patiently for God to do this work in His own time, for it would be presumptuous for any man to try to predict what God would do;\textsuperscript{35} but it is clear even in Winstanley's earlier works that he believed Sion would come into existence only gradually.\textsuperscript{36}
The assumption most often made with regard to Winstanley's "development" was that he changed from an anarchist to a social reformer. Wilhelm Schenk claimed, "In the Law of Freedom Winstanley ceased to be an anarchist. Of his earlier anarchism there can be no doubt." Walter Murphy believed that his earlier writings, which showed him to be a true spiritual anarchist gave no indication of his later interest in social reform. Perez Zagorin wrote, "Before our eyes, moreover, he consummates the transition between two classic types of utopian outlook: from the blazing chiliastic expectancy of the religious radical ... to the rationalistic communism, abounding in plans and projects, which appears as an aspect of the thought of the Enlightenment." The evidence of Winstanley's earlier anarchism, however, is actually non-existent. Winstanley might have been speaking of his later commentators when he wrote in his second published work, The Breaking of the Day of God, "Why now the ignorant common people are afraid that all Laws and Government shall be thrown aside, nay the Beast doth buz them in the head with such a conceit..." Nothing could be less ambiguous than his simple statement that, "Magistracie in the Commonwealth must stand, its Gods Ordinance." Winstanley, even in his very first works, was always careful to emphasize that he favored a reform rather than an elimination of government.
Thus Winstanley definitely did not begin his writing career as an anarchist, but neither did he end it as most have assumed as a mere social reformer. This contention, that Winstanley in his final work, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*, abandoned his earlier prejudice against governments to propose the creation of an ideal state found a place in several of the Marxist interpretations of Winstanley, for this theory accorded well with their belief that his works were dominated by a spirit of materialism and scientific rationalism. Both Petegorsky and Hill regarded this final work as an attempt to outline an ideal and lasting social order rather than as a description of the transitory aid to human salvation which Winstanley actually intended this work to be. Even those who repudiated the Marxist interpretation often continued to argue that Winstanley's final work was intended only as an outline of a social utopia. For example, Walter Murphy wrote, "Winstanley had a secularized concept of religion which, like the political religion of Bolshevism, would have replaced the hope of the next world with promises of material benefits in this existence." Perez Zagorin agreed that "Communism within the world was the only redemption he [Winstanley] expected or desired." Those who followed this interpretation, however, were always forced to conclude that in the last analysis Winstanley had proven himself sadly deficient as a social
reformer, for in his "utopia" he made no provision for the rising trading class, and the rapidly increasing role of commerce and industry. "Winstanley," wrote J. Max Patrick, "looked back to a primitive agrarian communism, which although it was to be aided by the new science, would hardly have been productive enough to provide a basis for English commercial expansion."\(^4^5\) Petegorsky and Zagorin also raised essentially the same objection in their consideration of Winstanley's final work.\(^4^6\) This objection, however, actually indicates a misunderstanding of the basic purpose of Winstanley's work. The objection would be valid if he had actually been trying to outline a social utopia in *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*, but such was not the case. The government Winstanley described in this work was to be the first step toward the realization of the Sion longed for by the millenarians. It was intended as an instrument to achieve the gradual perfection of man, and as such Winstanley purposefully excluded any consideration of the trading class and commercialism; both of which he regarded as depraved and corrupt things. The new social order was at once the producer and the product of Christ's second coming,\(^4^7\) and it would lead directly to final and complete redemption of mankind.

The problems and contradictions aroused by the exclusively social and economic interpretation of Winstanley
led eventually to a reconsideration of the religious aspects of his writings. George Sabine in his introduction to an edition of Winstanley's works did much to correct the misinterpretations which had arisen from the neglect of the religious element in Winstanley's thought. Sabine stressed the experimental, personal nature of Winstanley's beliefs and indicated that Winstanley's belief in individual inspiration was the very essence of his work.\(^4^3\) He even went so far as to conclude that "All Winstanley's reflection upon the religious and social problems of his day, which eventuated in his communism, was little more than an effort to carry through, relentlessly and to their final conclusions, the implications of this fundamental insight."\(^4^9\) However, even though Winstanley's belief in individual inspiration was an integral part of his thought it is possible to show that it was the consequence of an even more fundamental belief in the pantheistic nature of the universe. It is at this point that Sabine's analysis is somewhat deficient. He failed to realize that Winstanley's mystical works were actually an attempt to construct a kind of metaphysical system and that this system provided the basis for all of his later writings. Thus Sabine, in omitting these first four pamphlets from his edition of Winstanley's works obscured the basic unity of his thought.
Winthrop Hudson also emphasized the importance of studying Winstanley's ideas in the religious context in which they were formulated. He pointed out that the Diggers' attempt to cultivate the earth was primarily motivated by religious reasons. "The major purpose of the digging ... was to declare the divine desire, intention, and purpose and thereby warn the wicked and bring assurance to the righteous." Thus the Digger experiment was an eschatological sign, the purpose of which was to proclaim the will of God rather than an active move to overthrow violently the established social and political order, as the Marxist interpreters had assumed. However, even though he realized the importance of the religious background of Winstanley's work, Hudson too, failed to realize fully the significance of the mystical works in the development of Winstanley's other ideas.

When attention finally was given to these mystical works, the immediate result was rather disappointing. J. Max Patrick was quite correct in claiming that "... a knowledge of Winstanley's early religious tracts is essential to an understanding of the development of his ideas." and in saying that, "Both Sabine and Petegorsky dismiss them too lightly." but his attempt to support this thesis was definitely inadequate. Patrick claimed that Winstanley wrote in religious terms and used allegory and symbolism only
because no new terminology was available to express the radically new ideas which he was developing. Thus Patrick felt justified in claiming that when Winstanley spoke of the need for unity in Christ against the Serpent, he actually meant cohesion of the oppressed Saints against their wealthy oppressors, and that "His advocacy of unity in Christ amounts to a plea for the workers to unite..." Actually such an interpretation is completely superficial. Winstanley used a religious terminology because he was expressing religious theories, and when he resorted to allegory or symbolism he was always very careful to make his meaning quite clear. For example, the Serpent spoken of in the passage above symbolized selfishness and nothing else. To claim that it represented the wealthy oppressors of the Saints is completely unjustified.

A far more competent treatment of the religious nature of Winstanley's proposed social and economic reforms was given by Paul Elmen, who rightly claimed that "...all of Winstanley's many tracts in defense of the project depend on theological arguments even when for persuasive purposes the premises are only implied." Elmen distinguished the various levels of Winstanley's arguments and also pointed out their interrelation, but he too failed to realize the organic nature of the development of Winstanley's ideas. "...it is necessary," Elmen asserted, "to distinguish the
various phases through which Winstanley's thought moved. At first he seemed convinced as was Luther, that God would bring the new age, and that not doing but rather receiving was the true office of the Christian. However, when Elmen cited The New Law of Righteousness to support this statement, and then went on to claim that The New Law of Righteousness saw the transition to a more active attitude, he quite effectively destroyed his own thesis.

Essentially Wilhelm Schenk put his finger on the central problem involved in understanding Winstanley when he said, "We have separated religion and politics to such an extent that we find it difficult to imagine how it could be otherwise. But all the evidence we have suggests that no such division existed in Winstanley's mind." Indeed such was the case. Winstanley was so thoroughly religious that all of his thoughts and actions were ultimately motivated by religious considerations. It is not surprising, then, that his writings should begin with religious subjects and only later take up politics and economics. To Winstanley this was the natural order, and to him it meant no more than moving from the general to the particular. He begins his work on the largest scale possible, both chronologically and metaphysically, and gradually he becomes more specific and more "practical". Thus one can see in his works, not so much a development as an elaboration. In Aristotelian
terms it would accurately be described as a teleological development. As one might expect of a person with such an outlook, Winstanley's actions are as much a result of this teleological development as are his writings. He took up an active political career only at the point dictated by his religious outlook and at that point inaction would have been as inappropriate as action would have been earlier. Thus his various works should be regarded as an organic whole rather than as a series of tracts with ever shifting aims and ideas. Certainly there are contradictions in Winstanley's works, just as there are contradictions in the writings of almost all men, but they are relatively few in number. The elements of consistency and continuity in his writings are far stronger than the element of change, and it is this fact which has been universally ignored by those who have studied Winstanley.
NOTES


3. Thomas Hancock, "Early English Christian Socialists", 《The Church Reformer》, vol. VIII, nos. 3-5, p. 79.


5. Ibid. p. 51.


8. Ibid. p. 181.

9. Works, p. 11.

10. Ibid. p. 47.

11. Ibid. p. 51.

12. Davidson was a lawyer by trade so it seems unlikely that he discovered Winstanley on his own. Since the most valuable part of his work consists of a long quote of something Thomas Hancock said about Winstanley, I have concluded that Hancock was the source of his interest. See Morrison Davidson, 《Four Precursors of Henry George》, pp. 125-126.

13. Ibid. p. 110.


15. Eduard Bernstein, 《Cromwell and Communism》, p. 131.


17. Ibid. p. 114.


34. Winthrop S. Hudson, "Economic and Social Thought of Gerrard Winstanley, Was he a Seventeenth-Century Marxist?", *Journal of Modern History*, vol. XVIII, no. 1, pp. 1, 7.


36. See below p. 35.

37. Wilhelm Schenk, *The Concern for Social Justice in the Puritan Revolution*, p. 104. Schenk supports this statement by the following quote from Winstanley's *A Letter*
to the Lord Fairfax and his Council of War: "We [are] not, ... he told Fairfax, "against any that would have magistrates and laws to govern, as the nations of the world are governed, but as for our parts we shall need neither the one nor the other." The full quote is as follows: "We told you (upon a question you put to us) that we were not against any that would have Magistrates and Laws to govern, as the Nations of the world are governed, but as for our parts we shall need neither the one nor the other in that nature of Government;", Works, p. 282. (The emphasis is mine.) It seems to me that Schenk's omission of the last five words of this passage completely alters its meaning. Winstanley here, was simply saying that he opposed the corrupted forms of government which existed in the world. That he was simply advocating reform is, I think, clear from the following passage from the same work. "Whether all Laws that are not grounded upon equity and reason, not giving a universal freedom to all, but respecting persons ought not to be cut off with the King's head? We affirm they ought.", Works, p. 288.


41. Ibid. pp. 122-123.

42. Petegorsky, Left-Wing Democracy, pp. 177-178, and Hill's introduction to Gerrard Winstanley, pp. 6-7.

43. Murphey, "The Political Thought of Gerrard Winstanley", p. 236.

44. Zagorin, History of Political Thought, p. 53.


47. See below p. 63


50. Winthrop Hudson, "Economic and Social Thought of Gerrard Winstanley", p. 10.


CHAPTER II

Winstanley's first four publications, *The Mysterie of God*, *The Breaking of the Day of God*, *The Saints Paradise*, and *Truth Lifting up its Head above Scandals* are in many respects his most interesting and significant works. It is here that Winstanley outlines the basic concepts upon which all of his subsequent thought will depend, and without an understanding of these concepts the most essential meaning of his later works cannot be grasped.

The greatest amount of difficulty in understanding Winstanley's mystical works arises from the fact that he used a radically analogical method of interpreting scripture in an attempt to show that his beliefs were derived from the word of God as set forth in the Bible. He justified this practice by declaring that "...the whole of Scriptures are but a report of spiritual mysteries, held forth to the eye of flesh in words; but to be seen in the substantiall matter of them by the eye of the Spirit."¹ Winstanley realized that in viewing and interpreting the scriptures with the "eye of the Spirit" he ran the risk of being seriously misunderstood, so throughout these works in which he elaborated his theology he was always careful to define his terms and remind his readers of his special definitions.

Certainly the most fundamental of the beliefs which Winstanley turned to the Bible to justify was his essentially
pantheistic conviction that goodness in nature was equivalent to union with God. It is only when viewed in the light of his pantheistic orientation that Winstanley's writings and actions become intelligible as a unified and meaningful whole. The basic nature of this belief is seen in Winstanley's description of the creation of Adam. He made it clear that while Adam was a being distinct from God, God still dwelt within him. He continued, "...God would bring forth fruit to maintain his uncreated being and to swallow up all other beings into himself, and he to become all in all in every creature that he made." In the unpolluted state of creation, then, a sweet harmony existed throughout all the universe, and God ruled supreme in all of his creatures.

It was the fall of Adam which disrupted this harmony by introducing into the creation an element for which God was not responsible. In creating Adam as a being distinct from Himself, God had given him the power to create things for himself and when Adam began to take more delight in his own creations and being, than in the being of God, he fell from the initial state of perfection. "...truly this delight in self was the eating, and it was the chief forbidden fruit that grew up in the middle of the living garden Adam ..." To Winstanley, then, the very source and essence of evil was this separation from God, and since selfishness implied living for oneself rather than for God, this was the greatest
sin of which man was capable. Winstanley also believed that it was the fall of Adam which gave rise to all the subsequent evil in the world, for once man had, by his promotion of self, separated himself from God, then all of his later creations were evil in that they too were separate from God. "...this selfishnesse in the middle of the living Garden Adam is the forbidden fruit & this is called the Serpent, because it windes it self into every creature, and into every Created facultie & twists its self round about the Tree Mankinde." 4

In analyzing the Biblical story of Adam's fall, Winstanley concluded that Adam was not only the first man, who had lived at the dawn of creation, but he was also any man or woman who took more delight in the creations of the flesh than in those of God. Thus, "...when you see a man wholly delighting himselfe in the enjoyment of fellow creatures you may call him truly Adam, or the first man." 5 Winstanley found two levels of meaning in the story of Adam. The first and most obvious was the recounting of the historical (or social) fall of man while the second revealed the fate of each individual Christian as he lived his life in this corrupted social state. 6

In tracing the descent of the corruptive power from the time of its creation with Adam's fall to the time in which he lived, Winstanley outlined three and one half ages
through which this "Beast" or corruptive power had passed, assuming a different form with each age. The first of these ages, described in the scriptures as the day of the dragon, was the period of a depraved magistracy, and Winstanley always cites Nero as the most typical example of the dragon's followers. This form of evil, however, soon underwent a transformation and this brought on the age of the universal bishop, symbolized by the Leopard. Growing constantly more subtle, the Beast next assumed the form of the reformed Episcopacy, and in the Bible this was spoken of as the Lamb with two horns. Then in the half day or age, the Beast appeared in its most devious form; that is in the form of those who "...will not suffer Christ to choose his own Church out of the world; but ... will choose for him." That is, in the form of those who believed in an exclusive Elect. Thus Winstanley believed that the last stage of corruption and deception was that which declared that only a chosen few would be saved by God.

If he were completely on his own, man would never be able to defeat this Beast, but since God was all-forgiving, he had set about to restore mankind and all the world to its original state of innocence. "...he God will redeem his own whole Creation to himself, and will dwell and rule in it himselfe, and subdue the serpent under his feet, and take up all his Creation, mankinde, into himselfe, and will
become the only, endless, pure, absolute, and infinite
being, ..." The redemption of mankind, then, would be
accomplished only by a restoration of the pantheistic unity
which prevailed before the fall. Only when God again ruled
supreme in all creatures would evil disappear from the world.

Clearly it was this conviction that perfect good was
equivalent to the union of all being in God which led Win-
stanley to his belief in universal redemption. Winstanley
believed all men, even the most depraved and wicked would
eventually be saved and reunited with God, for anything
less than this universal salvation would represent a defect
in God's perfection. Since God had ordained the ultimate
elimination of all evil in the world, and since the very
essence of evil was the condition of separation from God,
then it followed that this elimination of evil would of
itself bring about the union in God of all men without ex-
ception. All men would eventually be saved, for the ex-
clusion of any one of them would mean that there still exist-
ed some evil, some being separate from God, in the world
and that the Beast had, in a measure, triumphed over God.
Such a possibility was, of course, unthinkable to Winstanley,
and in answer to those who believed that only the Elect would
be saved, he said, "Why then should you be offended and think
you are miserable, if your persecutors and enemies should
in God's time be delivered from under the curse and partake
of the glorie of the Citie, together with you."9 Thus by introducing the concept of universal salvation, Winstanley could explain the process of redemption in terms which were consistent with his belief that all sin grew out of the disruption of the original pantheistic unity of God and man.

According to Winstanley the process by which God would redeem mankind from sin was one which had been underway from the moment of the creation onward. This work proceeded by stages with each stage involving a further revelation by God of his nature to man. In all, Winstanley counted some seven of these revelations or dispensations. The first stage was that of man's innocence and it lasted until the time of the fall. The second stage or dispensation lasted from the time of Adam to that of Abraham; the third, from Abraham to Moses. The revelation of the Law to Moses initiated the fourth dispensation which endured until the coming of Christ. From the time of Christ until the time that God first began to manifest himself in the flesh of his Saints, man lived under the fifth dispensation, and it was this latter manifestation of God which signaled the advent of the sixth stage in which Winstanley himself lived.10 Winstanley believed that this sixth dispensation was rapidly drawing to a close which would be marked by the beginning of the Day of Judgment, the seventh and last stage in the process of human redemption.11 It was during this last stage that even those who were not
among the elect were to be saved. "...so in this last and
great day it [the tree of life or God] brings forth leaves to
heal the nations, or such as were not of the City; their time
to receive mercie comes, though it be at the last houre."12

With regard to Winstanley's subsequent writings the
most important aspect of this doctrine of successive dis-
pensations lies in his explanation of the process at work
during the sixth dispensation, the one in which he lived.
According to Winstanley this was the period during which
"...the elect which is so much spoken of in the scriptures,
are to be gathered into one City and perfected."13 This
statement is important in that it indicates Winstanley
believed the process by which Sion's Saints would be gathered
together and perfected would be a gradual one, lasting a
substantial length of time.14

So far as the salvation of mankind was concerned, the
most important of these dispensations was the coming of
Christ. Essentially Winstanley believed that Christ was a
man,15 but because He was the first man since the fall in whom
all evil had been eliminated, then by Winstanley's definition
of evil, that is, separation from God, we see that He was
completely identified with God. Winstanley believed that
it was only through Christ that man would be saved, but
although Christ had been engaged in this work during both
the fifth and sixth dispensations, he performed his function
in a different manner in each. The literal or historical Christ (God's first "Witnesse") during His lifetime brought about the salvation of many men and, in a broader sense, acted as a "witness" that God was about the work of man's salvation. That is to say, He provided proof that it was possible for a man to be redeemed to a state of absolute and perfect good. It was, however, the spiritual Christ, "the mysticall body of Christ," which was the most active agent in the process of salvation. It was this spirit, God's second Witness, who, during the period of the sixth dispensation, manifested Himself in various individuals and thus led these Saints or Elect to union with God.  

In a sense, then, Christ and the Saints or Elect were one; for the latter terms meant only that Christ was ruling within these individuals. As Winstanley said,

Now mind this, that though the Sants be many particular persons, yet as they stand in relation to Christ they are but one body, knit together by that one Spirit the Anointing; and Jesus Christ as he is called the Anointed of the Father, cannot properly be called a perfect man, if he should be separated or stand at a distance from the Saints, his body and spiritual house:..."  

Here we see again a manifestation of Winstanley's pantheism. Since the essence of goodness was union with God and since Christ was wholly united with God, then Christ could not be distinct from the individual revelations of goodness in the Saints. Winstanley was certain that these revelations
were the work of the spiritual Christ, for it was through Him that God had promised to redeem mankind. Thus he also believed that Christ and the Saints had to be one with the Father. "...the Anointing in the man Jesus, and the Anointing in the Saints, are made one with the Father, and the Father entered into Jesus and the Saints; so they likewise enter the Father, and pertake of his rest and peace. And this is God's kingdom, even God thus manifested in flesh." 18

Thus God, through Christ ruled a spiritual kingdom made up of all the Saints.

One of the most significant implications of this explanation of the role of the two Witnesses in the process of human redemption is that by interpreting the second Witness as Christ manifested in the body of Saints, Winstanley had in effect given the power of salvation to this collective body of Saints. Winstanley did not believe that this in any way diminished the power and glory of God, for indeed the Saints were only acting as a part of God, but the shift was none the less to be of enormous significance in the shaping of Winstanley's subsequent political and social theories. He indicated his belief that the collective body of the Saints possessed this power of salvation in his explanation of the meaning of a passage in Revelations. He says,

By Raine I understand the number of Saints that shall increase and spread like the multitude of drops in a shower of rain, or like sands upon
the Sea shoar; so that their number shall over-top the number of Babylons citizens: ... Now by this Raine the earth or Flesh of man is filled with fruits of righteousness and truth. I mean by the pleantifull discoveries of truth or brightness of Christ, and by the pleantiful increase of Saints, the destruction of the Beast or Ser-pents head in flesh is broken and consumed. ... But the Witnesses have a power to shut the Church or Heaven, from raining in this kinde, till their prophesie be ended as God appointed. 19

Even though the passage is a difficult one, it is reasonably clear that Winstanley believed that God's second Witness, the collective body of the Saints, had the power to increase or decrease the manifestations of God among individual men.

Later, Winstanley moved on to consider just how God manifested himself in men, and it was in this connection that he proposed his definition of God as Reason. "...this spirit which is called God, or Father or lord, is Reason: for though men esteem this word Reason to bee too mean a name to set forth the Father by, yet it is the highest name that can be given him. For it is Reason that made all things, and it is Reason that governs the whole Creation, ..." 20

While it might at first appear that this definition would revolutionize Winstanley's theology, it actually produced no such effect. Even though he used the word "Reason" in place of the word "God", Reason still retained all the characteristics which were normally attributed to God, so in this respect the definition was not of great significance.
This definition was of great importance, however, in explaining the way in which God revealed himself to man. The voice of unclouded reason in man was the voice of God. This was the universal force which could unite all men if they would but heed its instructions. "That spirit that knits all creation together in peace and sweet communion of love and meekness, must needs be King: And this doth reason, who is the essentiall father."\(^{21}\) Winstanley, of course realized that all men were not ruled by reason, for the power of fleshly imagination was very strong, but even so all men contained at least some spark of this divinity.

In answer to objections which were raised in connection with this use of the word "Reason" for "God", Winstanley later made it clear that he intended no radical departure from the traditional concept of God. He spoke of Reason as "...the living power of light that is in all things" and "the fire that burns up drosse" as well as He who "knits the whole creation togethert into a one-ness of life and moderation." Thus there can be little doubt that Winstanley had changed Reason into God rather than God into Reason.\(^{22}\)

The effect of God speaking as Reason within man was not an entirely pleasant experience at first. Winstanley was convinced that the Devil was nothing more than the process of God's reason illuminating the corruptions of
the flesh. It was this process which caused the soul such torment, and this suffering was a sign that the soul was being purified for its ultimate redemption.

When Winstanley's belief in the possession by the Elect of the power of salvation is considered in conjunction with his belief that God spoke to these Saints through the voice of reason, it is easy to see why he believed in the necessity of reform. If the Saints could effect a general reform of the government and church along the lines dictated by reason, they could thus weaken the power of corruption in such a way as to cause reason to triumph in many more people, and this in turn would hasten the day when all mankind would be reunited with God. In this way, God would work through his Saints to bring about the redemption of man.

Winstanley bitterly denounced the established ecclesiastical organization, for he believed that it was hindering God's work of redemption while deceiving men with promises of a glorious afterlife. He cautioned men not to seek a heaven somewhere beyond the stars, but rather to look within themselves, for he was sure that a heaven was to be found wherever God dwelt in power. Thus, "...every particular Saint is a true heaven, or place of glory; not only because the Father dwels in him, but because he dwels in the Father likewise ... so that here is a mutuall fellowship
of joy and oneness of love between them." Winstanley believed that those who argued that heaven was to be found only in the life hereafter, and that it was reserved for only a chosen few, were the disciples of the Beast, and he was sure that God would bring about their downfall in some way.

Closely involved in this religious corruption was the corruption of magistracy, but Winstanley was not, as most have assumed, an anarchist. He was not opposed to magistracy as such, but rather to its corruption. He speaks of the process by which, "...God shakes down corruption in Magistracy, which the Beast brought in, and so restores that Ordinance of God to purity and justice." When this process of reform was completed, there would still be laws and government, but they would be good laws and good government, and this would lead to harmony and good will between the people and the magistrates.

Thus we find that Winstanley's mystical works delinate an elaborate and thoroughly consistent theology. Beginning with his basic assumption that goodness was equivalent to oneness with God, Winstanley carefully developed a theological system which was entirely in accord with this belief. After using his basic premise to explain his concept of sin and to justify his belief in universal salvation, he then moved on to show how Christ would effect the redemption
of mankind by manifesting himself as Reason in the Saints or Elect. It would be the duty of these Saints to increase these manifestations of Christ or Reason in man by destroying the corruptive power of human creations. In this way God would gradually call into being his earthly Sion.
NOTES

1. Gerrard Winstanley, Truth Lifting up its Head above Scandals, (hereinafter referred to as Truth), p. 116. Winstanley made a sharp distinction between those who disclosed the true meaning of scripture under the influence of the divine spirit and those "parish gods" who made a profession of expounding scripture. For the latter he had nothing but contempt.

2. Gerrard Winstanley, Mysterie, p. 2.

3. Ibid, p. 5.

4. Ibid, p. 5.

5. Truth, p. 118.

6. Ibid, p. 120. Winstanley says there are three levels but he discusses only two of them.


8. Mysterie, p. 15.


10. Ibid, pp. 35-36.

11. Ibid, p. 50.


14. It is clear that Winstanley expected this gathering process to take at least the length of time of the ordinary life span, for he expected that even the Elect would die before its completion. See Ibid, p. 49. Presumably if they had established communion with Christ in their lifetimes this state would continue after their death. Thus they would have achieved heaven within their own lifetimes, as Winstanley always maintained. See The Saints Paradise, (hereinafter referred to as Paradise), p. 64. Since Winstanley also expected the unbelievers to live out their life spans and return to dust (Mysterie, p. 49), this indicates that he did not expect the beginning of the Day of Judgment, or seventh dispensation, for a considerable number of years.
15. Day of God, p. 111.
17. Ibid. p. 31.
18. Ibid. p. 111.
21. Ibid. p. 106.
24. Ibid. p. 85.
25. Ibid. p. 64.
27. Ibid. p. 122.
CHAPTER III

The publication of The New Law of Righteousness in 1649, marked the opening of a new phase in the development of Winstanley's thought. Hitherto, in outlining his theology he had emphasized the necessity of reestablishing the pantheistic unity which had existed between God and man at the time of the creation. The spirit of God speaking as reason in men would indicate the way in which this reunion could take place, but any merely human attempt to hasten this second coming would be bound to fail. Thus, even while stressing the need for reforms, Winstanley had always urged that the faithful wait patiently for God to reveal His intentions rather than embark without such a revelation on any extensive program of reforms. In The New Law of Righteousness, however, Winstanley indicated that God had now revealed to him how these reforms could be initiated. Here, for the first time, he showed how the metaphysical principles of his earlier works could be applied on a social, economic, and political level in such a way as to hasten the redemption of all mankind.

After summarizing the main points of his previous works in order that any new readers he might have would realize the religious significance of his proposed reforms, Winstanley told of the mystic revelation which inspired his new work. "As I was in a trance not long since, ... I heard
these words, Wörke together, Eat bread together, declare this all abroad. Likewise I heard these words. Whosoever it is that labours in the earth for any person or persons, that lifts up themselves as Lords & Rulers over others, and that doth not look upon themselves equal to others in the creation, the hand of the Lord shall be upon that labourer ..."² Thus did the Lord indicate to Winstanley how men should live in order that they might be purified.

Reexamining the fall of Adam, Winstanley now realized that the selfishness and delight in human creations which were responsible for the disruption of man's union with God were both dependent upon the principle of propriety. "The first Adam is the wisdome and power of flesh broke out and sate down in the chair of rule and dominion, in one part of man-kind over another. And this is the beginner of particular interest, buying and selling the earth from one particular hand to another, saying This is mine, ..."³ It was this principle of private ownership of land which had been the mainstay of earthly corruption throughout the ages, but now, during the sixth dispensation, the Saints would repudiate this principle by living together and owning the land in common.

It was this advocacy of the elimination of private land ownership which pushed Winstanley's position even beyond that of the radical Levellers with whom he was so commonly
associated by his contemporaries. Winstanley, however, did not reach this position by a mere extension of the Leveller principle of equality into the economic sphere. On the contrary, his advocacy of economic and social equality sprang from principles quite different from those which impelled the Levellers to propose that all men be granted equal political rights. As Woodhouse has shown, the Levellers reached their position by a process of analogical transference to the order of nature of the liberties implied by a belief that all the members of the Elect were equal in the order of grace. Moreover, since each of the Saints was supposed to have had a direct knowledge of God based on individual experience, the implication by analogy was that each member of the order of nature was entitled to a firm respect for his individualism. The end product of the Levellers' position was that each man as a man had certain rights which should not be infringed, and it was accepted that one of these rights was that of property ownership. The Levellers, then, were in accord with the general Puritan principle of the necessity of private property as a part of the social order. Winstanley, however, had an entirely different view of the social and political order. His eschatology prevented him from viewing the political structure as anything more than a tool for the salvation of mankind, and any social or political measure
which would benefit this cause was entirely justified. Winstanley's philosophy, then, led automatically to collectivism rather than individualism, for it was the duty of each Saint not only to work for his own purification and salvation but also to work for the salvation of others through social, political, and economic reform. Thus Winstanley's communism aimed not at granting an equal share of material benefits to each individual but rather at minimizing the corruptive influence of material things by the communal use of only what was necessary for survival.

The emphasis which Winstanley placed on communal responsibility as opposed to the individual responsibility stressed by the Levellers identifies him with a much older line of thought than that of this latter group. It was the new individualist outlook which was riding the wave of the future; the collectivist viewpoint was essentially a relic of the past. Ultimately this line of thought went back to that aspect of early Christian thought which recognized the responsibility of all Christians to help one another toward salvation. St. Thomas' incorporation of Aristotelianism into the dogma of the medieval Catholic church also served to strengthen this communal outlook, and by the time of the Reformation this was a fairly well established aspect of Catholic thought. Essentially it was the doctrine of Christian Liberty as expounded primarily by Luther which
was to be the vehicle of the change to a primarily individualistic outlook, but initially this was only one of several strains of thought produced by the Reformation. The collectivist outlook also found a much more radical expression during this period than it had ever found before. Perhaps the best example here, is that of the Anabaptists, for the extremists of this sect carried their collectivism to the point of favoring a kind of primitive communism. Thus even though collectivism was a tradition which by Winstanley's own day was far less powerful than the relatively new individualist outlook, the collectivist Sion which he envisaged was at least in some measure part of an ancient tradition of thought.

In discussing the nature of this collectivist Sion, Winstanley made it fairly clear that it could expect to achieve perfection only gradually. It was only under the steady influence of Christ manifesting himself as reason in men that they would see the wisdom of abandoning property to live in common with the Elect of Sion. Winstanley says, "even as wee see any tree, corn, or cattoll, grows up in the eye of man by degrees, for as these creatures doe not atteaine to perfection on a sudden, neither doth the spirit of Righteousnesse rise up on a sudden perfection, but by degrees." For this reason Winstanley cautioned his followers again and again to avoid any violent seizure
of property. The spirit of Christ worked only by peaceful methods so those who owned property should give it up only under the influence of this spirit acting within them. Meanwhile, all he asked for the landless Saints in whom this spirit already ruled was that they be allowed to till the heath and common lands which he believed were rightfully theirs. Winstanley never for a moment doubted that once the Saints had gained this right their labors would be richly rewarded, and he was sure that this prosperity would make an impression upon the landed classes. He says, "...let the world see who labours the earth in righteousness, and those to whom the Lord gives the blessing, let them be the people that shall inherit the earth." Winstanley was convinced that Sion would soon progress from its humble beginning to a state of glory which would be irresistible to all.

In this new Jerusalem which Winstanley foresaw arising from the turmoil of his time, all men would be united by the common ruling spirit of Christ, the spirit of reason. Since all land would be held in common and worked in common there would be no need for buying and selling or for money. Each would take from the common treasury of the earth just as much as he needed and no more. Since the spirit of reason would have revealed to all the corrupting nature of human creations, there would be no desire to own anything which was not essential for mere survival.
A negative benefit which this new Jerusalem would enjoy would be the absence of lawyers. Winstanley shared the common Puritan conviction that lawyers did nothing more than prey upon the ignorance of the common people. With the abolition of private land ownership the main source of legal disputes would be removed, and moreover, since all men would be united by the common ruling spirit of Christ, there would be no further disputes and thus no need for lawyers.

Realizing man's weakness, Winstanley foresaw that even in Sion there would occasionally be some who relapsed into their former depraved state, but he did not believe that such persons should be harshly punished. Instead he suggested that they should become the servants of the righteous until the rule of reason had regained mastery within them.

Another class which would be absent in the New Jerusalem would be the clergy. Since the Saints would be living in direct communion with Christ and through Christ with God, then obviously there would be no need for prayer or preaching. Christ would be living and ruling in each and every Saint so there would be no need to listen to any voice other than the voice of reason within. Gradually this rule of reason would eliminate the last vestiges of human corruption within each Saint.14
When Winstanley received the mystic revelation which ultimately led him to these conclusions regarding the nature of the New Jerusalem, he was told that he must declare this message all abroad. Thus after he had indicated the corruptive nature of property ownership and sketched the glories which its elimination would entail, he was able to say with pride that he had now declared the message by his pen. But this alone was not enough, for it was also his duty, he believed, to declare the message by word of mouth and by action. The latter he promised to do as soon as the Lord showed him the place and manner in which it should be done, and it was this promise which soon led to the attempted cultivation of St. George’s Hill in Surrey. The conviction that it was his duty to proclaim this message also explains why Winstanley subsequently felt it necessary to address appeals for his cause to all the influential segments of English society, and the confidence that this message came from God enabled him to trust fully his power of reason in explaining the implications of this revelation to these people.15

Now that Winstanley’s theory that God spoke to man through the voice of reason had been confirmed by an actual experience of this nature, he went on to develop one of the most important consequences of this belief. If Christ manifested himself in man through the power of reason then
the responsibility for salvation was shifted from God to the individual. This conclusion was implicit in his earlier works, but in The New Law of Righteousnes he made it clear that the salvation of each individual was dependent upon his heeding the voice of reason within him. Everyone began life in a state of innocence, but, "...there is a time in the entering in of the understanding age, wherein every branch of mankind is put to his choice, whether he will follow the Law of Righteousness... or whether he will delight self, in glorying in the objects of the earth unrighteously."16 This is not to say that a person remained in a state of innocence until he reached the age at which this spirit of reason could manifest itself, for the corrupted state of human society precluded such a possibility, but rather it meant that when reason did show the sinner the corruption of his ways he could either follow its dictates and move toward salvation, or he could ignore this warning voice and greatly increase the sinfulness of his nature.17

Winstanley believed that the individual would never cease to be responsible for his own salvation, but he was sure that with the advent of the New Jerusalem the individual would have a much greater chance of being successful in this goal. This was so because in abandoning land ownership the Saints would be dealing the Beast, or earthly
corruption, a mortal blow, and in this weakened state he would be a far less formidable opponent to the voice of reason than he had ever been before. Thus many who would otherwise have been lost would now achieve immediate salvation. In other words, Winstanley believed that if man lived apart from the corrupting influence of private ownership of land his chances of salvation would be much increased. This was the logical extension of the belief, stated in *The Breaking of the Bay of God*, that the Saints had the power of increasing or decreasing the manifestations of God among men, and it was this belief which was the driving force behind all of Winstanley's attempts at reform. Not only would those in whom Christ already reigned be perfected by dwelling in Sion, but the creation of such a state would extend Christ's reign to many whom it would not otherwise have immediately included.

Since Winstanley believed that the struggle between God and human corruption was waged within each individual it is not surprising to find that he conceived of heaven and hell in terms of the individual also. We saw in *The Saints Paradise*, that he defined heaven as any place in which God ruled in power, and thus he claimed that the Saints achieved a heaven even on this earth. Likewise, the City Sion was a more perfect heaven in that it included a great number of Saints and thus more nearly achieved the
pantheistic ideal of union of all being. In The New Law of Righteousnes Winstanley extended this idea to argue convincingly for the existence of a hell within man. In speaking of sinners he says, "...their hell or place of torment is within themselves, seeing and feeling themselves chained up in bondage, to fears, terours, sorrows, affrights-ments, intolerable vexations, and powers of lust, and under all that cursed darknesse, until the judgment of the great day." Such was the fate of those who chose to ignore the voice of reason.

It is not difficult to find in The New Law of Righteousnes the same principles which form the basis of Winstanley's earlier, purely theological works. Here too the unifying principle is pantheism, for by eliminating the economic and social barriers which divided men, they would be free to unite in the common spirit of Christ and thus God would again be rejoined with the creatures which left him with the Fall. Winstanley's reforms were intended solely to aid man in his quest for salvation, and since a materialistic outlook was the greatest hindrance to this process he foresaw a Sion which would minimize the tempta-tions of material things, a Sion based on a system of ag-rarian communism.

The year from April 1649 to April 1650 was one of the most active of Winstanley's career. During this period the
Diggers attempted to put their ideas into practice by cultivating the common lands at St. George's Hill and Cobham in Surrey, and it was also during this period that Winstanley either composed or helped in the composition of some dozen pamphlets, all of which were aimed at winning support for the Diggers' cause.

On April 1, 1649, some six or seven Diggers began their cultivation of the common land at St. George's Hill with the preparation of the land for planting parsnips, carrots, and beans. Others were then invited to join the venture, and for the first few days all went well for the colony. To Winstanley this was the high point of his career; the first step in the establishment of the earthly Sion had been taken. If this experiment succeeded he was convinced that the opposition to his ideas would melt away, and he was sure that if it were left in peace it would succeed. For this reason he spared himself no pains in making his intentions clear to all. As he had declared in his earlier works, the purposes of the Diggers were entirely peaceful. They wanted nothing more than to be allowed to cultivate the heath and common lands in peace, and their right to this privilege, Winstanley believed, was beyond question.

In devoting himself so entirely to this work Winstanley was almost certainly motivated by the belief that the degree
of perfection he would attain as a member of Sion in communion with Christ would be all the greater in proportion to the number of persons which this New Jerusalem included. Thus he and every Saint had a personal stake in the promotion of this experiment. Moreover, the Lord had told him to declare the mystic message all abroad, so every pamphlet he wrote also helped fulfill this divine requirement. In the composition of these pamphlets, Winstanley was always very careful to shape his arguments with regard to the audience for which the work was intended. But even though the language and tone varied from piece to piece, the basic purpose was always to try to persuade people that the Diggers should be allowed to carry on their righteous work unmolested.

The local landowners, however, were far from convinced that the attempt to cultivate St. George's Hill was a righteous work. They were quick to realize that it struck at the very base of the established social order, and they did not hesitate to discourage the attempt. Appealing first to the local authorities, they had the Diggers brought to Walton and Kingston for questioning. When this failed to discourage them, the landowners then sent an appeal to the Council of State. Fairfax responded by sending Captain John Gladman to investigate the matter, and on April 20 this gentleman reported back that the seriousness of the
situation had been greatly exaggerated. He also informed the Council that the Diggers had promised to give a personal account of their actions and purposes to the Council in the near future.²³

It was also on the twentieth of April that Winstanley and his band issued their first explanation of why they were engaged in this work. Winstanley addressed this pamphlet, The True Levellers Standard Advanced, to all the powers of England and of the world. He warned the leaders of the Commonwealth that the poor of England were as much in bondage as ever and that they would remain so as long as propriety was retained.²⁴ To prove the evil nature of land ownership he expounded the theory that this institution owed its origin to the Norman conquest,²⁵ and then went on to conclude that since the English had finally freed themselves from the other aspects of the Norman yoke (kingly government and an episcopal church) they should complete their emancipation by eliminating the curse of private land ownership. If the landowners did not wish to go this far, then they should at least grant the landless the right to cultivate the heath and common lands.²⁶ It was only the Norman conquest which had cheated them of this right, and now that the conquest had been overthrown, Winstanley believed that this privilege should naturally revert to them.
Here again, Winstanley indicated his belief that God had granted the Saints the power and responsibility to bring about man's salvation. He explained that the reason for their attempt at cultivating the earth was to "...lift up the Creation from bondage." He then went on to suggest to the poor that they should boycott the rich since their labors only served to further their own enslavement. Also he made clear again the sincerity of the Diggers' determination to avoid tumult of any kind, a determination which can hardly be doubted in the light of Winstanley's pantheistic belief that division and strife were the very essence of evil.27

In emphasizing the purely peaceful approach of the "true Levellers" Winstanley may have hoped to disassociate his movement from the increasingly violent approach of the army Levellers. This group, led by John Lilburn, had become increasingly dissatisfied with the policies of the Council of Officers, and in May, 1649, important segments of the army declared themselves in sympathy with the Leveller leaders who had meanwhile been imprisoned.28 By May 14 this army mutiny had been crushed, but due to a confusion of names (the Leveller, Captain Everard was mistakenly identified with the Digger, William Everard) many people seem to have believed that the Diggers were connected with the uprising;29 and it is possible that this belief
may have reinforced the opposition of the landowners to the Digger colony.

In spite of this opposition, however, the Digger colony seemed to be enjoying a certain degree of prosperity, for on June 1, a second manifesto signed by 45 persons (as compared with 15 for the first) was issued. In *A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England*, Winstanley joined with the other members of the Digger colony to declare their purposes and demand their rights. This time he advanced four reasons for the Diggers' claim to the land. First of all, they had been promised freedom under the Solemn League and Covenant, and freedom without land was meaningless. Secondly, they claimed the land as a reward for their part in helping to overthrow King Charles. Thirdly, they had a natural right as Englishmen to the land of England; and last of all, the Law of the Creation gave them a claim to the land.

Winstanley next addressed a letter to no less a personage than Lord Fairfax himself. Using noticeably more restrained and respectful language than in any of his previous writings, he reminded the general that the Diggers were working for a reform of magistracy rather than an elimination of it. Also he stressed the need for religious toleration and legal reform in addition to giving the now routine explanation of the Diggers' claims.
Apparently Fairfax replied to this letter in a not altogether unsympathetic vein, but he certainly evidenced no desire to become entangled in the conflict between the Diggers and the local landowners. The latter group, however, was not to be deterred by official indifference to their problem, and early in June a mob attempted to destroy the colony by force. In *A Declaration of the Bloodie and Unchristian Acting of William Starr and John Taylor of Walton* Winstanley described this brutal attack upon the Digger community. He considered this wickedness just one more proof of the corruptive nature of land holding.\(^{30}\)

The attempt at violence proved no more effective against the Diggers than had the earlier, gentler attempts to discourage them, so on June 23 several of the land owners filed suits at Kingston asking damages for trespass.\(^{31}\) Winstanley responded by explaining his case in *An Appeal to the House of Commons*. He first reminded this body that it was their duty to provide laws which would benefit the nation as a whole rather than any single class or group, and then went on to show how granting the Diggers' demands would have just this advantage. He argued that this concession would not only quiet the oppressed classes but would eventually make England the strongest country in the world.

A month later Winstanley addressed an appeal to the city of London and the army, but his *A Watch-word to the City of London and the Armie* was quite different in tone
from the appeals to Parliament and Fairfax. Where before he had argued with restraint and respect he now gave full vent to his passion, perhaps thinking that this would be more effective in gaining the attention of the somewhat more volatile audience he was now addressing. He bitterly condemned the "thieving art of buying and selling" at which the city excelled and warned that the kingly power they had fought so hard to overthrow would creep back into power unless they continued their reform work by revamping the laws and social structure. In closing he pleaded, "...England, that sleps and snorts in the bed of covetousnesse, awake, awake, the Enemie is upon thy back, he is ready to scale the walls and enter Possession, and wilt thou not look out." 32

The efforts of the St. George's Hill landowners were finally rewarded when, in the Autumn of 1649, the Diggers left this site to take up their efforts again in nearby Cobham Manor. Here they prepared to sow winter crops, but once again their efforts were firmly resisted - this time by Parson Platt, the owner of the land. Platt too tried to obtain the aid of Fairfax in ejecting the Diggers from his land, but he was no more successful than the St. George's Hill landowners had been. Finally, however, some soldiers were persuaded to join in a raid on the colony, and in this attack several of the Diggers' houses were destroyed. 33
This intervention by the soldiers prompted Winstanley to send two more letters of protest and explanation to Fairfax and the Council in December 1649. He then began the new year with the publication of *A New-Year's Gift for the Parliament and Armie*. In this work, as in the others of this period, Winstanley devotes some considerable space to denouncing laws, lawyers, and clergy as well as putting forth and supporting the claims of the Diggers to land, but he also gives an exceptionally clear explanation of the pantheistic nature of his communism. He speaks of two communities, the first of which was the Community of Mankind resulting from Christ's manifesting himself in men and "...leading mankind into all truth, and to be of one heart and one mind.", while the second was the Community of the Earth which had by now become familiar to his readers. Winstanley explained that these two communities were actually but one in two branches, and for this reason he made no effort to distinguish one as cause and the other as effect. As Christ manifested himself in men he would make clear to them the wisdom of living in a community of the earth, and if men lived in such a community it would be much easier for Christ to manifest himself to them. Since both the perfection of the individual and the growth of Sion were gradual processes these two communities would support and strengthen each other. This is what Winstanley
meant in speaking of Christ as the head Leveller; community in Christ was inseparably connected with a community of the earth and social equality.  

Early in 1650 the Digger colony was somewhat encouraged by the report that their example was being followed in other parts of England, but this favorable development was offset by a stiffening of resistance to their work at Cobham Manor. Thus, after a short work in which Winstanley repudiated the accusation that the Diggers believed in such a sinful thing as community of women, he again appealed to the English people as a whole. An Appeal to All Englishmen contained little that was new in substance, but the tone was somewhat more violent and denunciatory than his previous works, and there were indications in references to the poverty and hardships of the Digger colony, that continuous public opposition was beginning to undermine their determination.

The Cobham landowners, like their neighbors at St. George's Hill, eventually realized that violence was the most effective weapon against these peaceful folk, and after a series of raids upon the colony, they finally posted an armed guard on the land to watch it day and night.

In the last of this series of pamphlets, An Humble Request to the Ministers of Both Universities and to all Lawyers in every Inns-a-court, Winstanley virtually admits
to his enemies that they have triumphed for the moment, but he warned them that the Digger cause was a just one and that it would ultimately win out over the power of the flesh which they represented. It is of interest to note that Winstanley was much more scholarly than usual in this work and that it was one of the few works in which he used a Latin phrase in his arguments - occurrences which suggest that he did not wish to appear at a disadvantage to his learned antagonists.39

With the failure of the Digger colony at Cobham, the series of pamphlets written to gain support for the experiment also came to an end. These works certainly show Winstanley's skill at supporting his cause, for in the course of his campaign he advanced almost every conceivable argument in its favor, but even though the supporting arguments vary from pamphlet to pamphlet the basic principles which underlie these works are the same as those of Winstanley's first works. The pantheistic nature of his agrarian communism is apparent in all the pamphlets, but it is particularly clear in his discussion of the two Communities in A New-Yeers Gift. His belief that man had the power and responsibility to effect his own salvation is implicit in his entire program of reform, and in The True Levellers Standard Advanced he explicitly states this conviction. His faith that Sion would arise only gradually
from its beginning at the Digger community lies behind his confidence that the landed classes would eventually bring their resources into the community of their own accord. Thus his belief in the gradual reformation of society is also reaffirmed in these works.
NOTES

1. Mysterie, p. 66.
2. Works, p. 190.
3. Ibid. p. 158.
5. Ibid. p. 69.
7. See above p. 45
8. G. H. McIlwain, The Growth of Political Thought in the West, p. 120.
12. Works, p. 166.
15. Ibid. pp. 190, 194.
16. Ibid. p. 212.
17. Ibid. p. 236.
18. See above p. 38
19. See above p. 36
21. Works, p. 11. Sabine's work on the history of this experiment has not been surpassed.
22. Ibid. p. 7.


25. Winstanley was simply borrowing the current popular explanation of the cause of the various evils in English society. For a full discussion of this idea see Christopher Hill's Puritanism and Revolution, Chapter 3, "The Norman Yoke".


27. Ibid. pp. 260, 266.


29. Works, p. 103.


31. Ibid. p. 17.


33. Ibid. pp. 18-19.

34. Ibid. pp. 386, 390.

35. Ibid. p. 20.

36. A Vindication of those whose Endeavors is only to make the Earth a common Treasury, called Diggers, Works, p. 599.

37. Ibid. p. 409.

38. Ibid. p. 20.

39. Ibid. p. 430.
Although somewhat disillusioned by the failure of the Digger colony, Winstanley remained convinced that his stand was the correct one and that ultimately it would triumph. Thus his final two works, *Fire in the Bush* and *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*, were devoted to collecting and systematizing the ideas of his previous writings in a last attempt to persuade people of the justice of his cause.

In *Fire in the Bush* he once again developed from Scripture the essential tenets of his faith. This work was addressed to the Presbyterian and Independent churches, and in view of his introductory statement that "...there is a great striving as it were for life among you, and yet you lie under the power of death and bondage..." it seems likely that Winstanley entertained some hope of converting these people to his creed.

He began by developing the idea that the Garden of Eden was actually an allegorical representation of man himself. In this garden there were five rivers which served to refresh and preserve it, and these rivers represented the five senses, hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, and feeling. At the time of the creation, God, or the Spirit of Love, took delight in walking in this garden, man. Within this garden grew the tree of good and evil which,
Winstanley explained, was a symbol for human Imagination, "...which is his weaknesse and disease." Now when man ate of this tree, when he began to be ruled by this power of Imagination, then he was deprived of his true nature as a garden for God's delight and became a weed patch of vices and corruption.²

Man was not without hope, however, for in the garden there was another tree, the Tree of Life, which represented the power of universal Love or pure Reason, and this power would eventually redeem all men. It is this power of Love or Reason within man which saved him by drawing him back into his true nature "...to live in the enjoyment of Christ, the righteous spirit within himselfe ..." In this life, men would renounce materialism and property to live in true community with one another. God's purpose in allowing man to fall from this blessed state was to show his power and mercy.³

Thus does Winstanley read into the Bible his concept of the nature of man's inner being. The two forces, Reason and Imagination, struggled within man, and if the spark of divinity, Reason, won, the individual would be united with God. If the power of Imagination won, his salvation would have to await the day of judgment.

With the fall of man this power of Imagination gained ascendancy, and man began to delight in property and in
his other creations. It was these creations of the Imagination which collectively made up the power of the Beast and which thus held man in bondage. Winstanley now made it quite clear that he believed it was the corruption of human society which prevented the divine element from triumphing in man's nature. The Beast perpetuated himself by corrupting children and thus strengthening the power of Imagination. "Looke upon a childe that is new borne, or till he growes up to some few yeares, he is innocent, harmless, humble, patient, gentle, easie to be entreated, not envious ... and this continues till outward objects intice him to pleasure ..." 4

If mankind was to be saved, all these creations of the Imagination would have to be destroyed. As Winstanley advised the members of the various churches, "...before you be bound into one universall body, all your particular bodies and societies must be torne to pieces..." The most pernicious of the creations of fleshly Imagination were four institutions of society which had been the curse of man throughout recorded history. The first of these was the imaginary teaching power which depended on books rather than on direct experience. The class which perpetuated this evil scholasticism was, of course, the clergy. The second source of corruption was kingly power which established and maintained itself by violence. The third creation
was the system of laws which these conquerors established to support their power over their subjects, and the hated purveyors of this evil creation were the lawyers. The fourth of these great evils was the art of buying and selling, and this served only to divide men and cause disputes. These were the greatest evils of society, and they would all have to be rooted out and destroyed before man could look for salvation.

For the Commonwealth government which had falsely promised such a reform, Winstanley had nothing but contempt, and he predicted that "...your overturning, overturning, overturning, is come on to you as well as to your fellow break-promises, that are gone before, You that pretend to be saviours of the people, and to seek the peace of the whole Nation, and yet serve your selves upon the peoples ruines,..." However, he stressed once again that this overthrowing would be a completely non-violent affair, for violence was the weapon of the Beast. The reformation which Winstanley foresaw would be accomplished by the leveling power of Christ in man.

While denouncing the government of the Commonwealth for its lack of thoroughness and selflessness in reform, Winstanley made it clear once again that he was not opposed to government as such but rather to its corruption. "This man will have no government some will say. I answer, you
run too fast; True Government is what I long for."8
Just what form he believed this true government should take he was soon to make quite clear in his last work, _The Law of Freedom in a Platform_.

In a sense this final pamphlet was the culmination of Winstanley's work, for it is here that he discusses the nature of the Sion of which he spoke so often. Due, however, to the nature of Winstanley's beliefs, the ideal state he outlined here was of necessity an imperfect Sion. As he had made clear many times in his writings, Winstanley believed that man's salvation was to be effected by stages and that the Saints would only gradually be gathered into Sion and perfected. Thus the government which he outlined in _The Law of Freedom in a Platform_ was only intended to serve as a starting point from which mankind would be able to progress. It was a government which would eliminate the institutions by which human corruption was perpetuated,9 but Winstanley realised that it would take time for the existing corruption in the hearts of men to be eliminated. Winstanley indicated the provisional nature of his proposals when he said in his introduction, "Though this Platform be like a piece of Timber rough hewd, yet the discreet workman may take it, and frame a handsome building out of it."10

Winstanley, in his introduction, addressed himself to Oliver Cromwell, advising him that unless he espoused God's
cause of reformation, he too would be overthrown. To com-
plete the process of reformation all traces of kingly power
and law would have to be removed. This meant that all laws
which were not equally fair to all men would have to be
destroyed, that there would have to be a reform of religious
practices, and that there would have to be an elimination
of the evil art of buying and selling.

Again Winstanley stated his willingness that persons
who wished to remain outside this government be allowed to
do so. "I do not say, nor desire, That every one shall be
compelled to practice this Commonwealths Government, for
the spirits of some will be Enemies at first, though after-
wards will prove the most cordial and true friends thereunto." Presumably such persons would live and trade among them-
selves in the midst of, but apart from, the government
which Winstanley was suggesting.

The sincerity of such an apparently impractical sug-
gestion has been questioned, but here again it can be seen
that the idea sprang from the very nature of Winstanley's
philosophy. Employing the terms of Woodhouse's analysis
of the Puritan mind, we find that at least on the surface
both the conflicting strains of Puritanism are present
in Winstanley's ideas. His belief in the importance of
individual religious inspiration and experience led him to
favor a considerable degree of individual freedom, while at
the same time his millenarian convictions led him to advocate reforms which very seriously restricted the freedom of each individual. Winstanley reconciled these conflicting tendencies to the actual if unrealized detriment of the former, for his theology led him to believe that each individual would undergo almost exactly the same sort of religious experience and that they would thus all favor the reforms he proposed. His individual freedom, then, was freedom only to obey the spirit of Christ which ruled within all men. Even with this qualification, however, Winstanley's beliefs did lead him to a much more tolerant position than that of such other millenarians as the Fifth Monarchy Men. This sect believed that an exclusive Elect should glorify God by physically enforcing the supremacy of the order of grace upon the order of nature, but Winstanley's pantheism in effect denied the distinction between these two orders, and assumed that God dwelt at least in some measure in all men. It was this pantheism in combination with his belief in the gradual and universal salvation of all men which led him to suppose that Sion could coexist with the old order without violence. Since he expected that the mere example of Sion would cause reason to triumph within most of the members of the old order, and since his repudiation of the idea of an exclusive Elect removed any barrier to these people taking their place beside other members of Sion,
he was willing to tolerate the temporary continuance of the old order, secure in the knowledge that it would not long endure. Until the breakdown of the old order brought a flood of converts with their private land holdings, the new state would be based on an agrarian communism which would utilize only the common and waste lands as well as those lands retrieved from the King and his followers in the Civil War.

Winstanley began his construction of his reformed commonwealth with the following definition of government: "Government is a wise and free ordering of the Earth, and the Manners of Mankind by observation of particular Laws or Rules, so that all the Inhabitants may live peaceably in plenty and freedom in the land where they are born and bred."

The three essentials for this kind of government were good laws, fit officers, and a faithful execution of these laws by these officers.

The apparent corruption of the traditional legal system had made a deep impression upon Winstanley. It seemed to him that lawyers took advantage of ambiguities and generalities in the legal code to pervert the basic intent of the code. For this reason, he felt that there would have to be specific laws for all occasions instead of a few general laws.

The source of inspiration for these new laws would be the spirit of universal righteousness which was currently
arising in man. This spirit would formulate laws for the legitimate purpose of common preservation as opposed to the aim of self preservation which lay at the bottom of the existing law code.

Since the administration of these laws was at least as important as the laws themselves, Winstanley was very careful to set forth certain rules as to how these administrators should be selected, how long they should serve, and their qualifications for office. In the matter of selection, Winstanley made it very clear that the magistrates should be chosen by the people, for it was only in this way that the interest of common preservation would remain paramount. These magistrates were thus to be elected by universal manhood suffrage with only those who had been supporters of kingly government to be excluded. The officers so chosen were to serve for a single year only, for any longer term might lead to their corruption. Winstanley stated this principle quite well. "...Nature tells us That if water stand long, it corrupts; whereas running water keeps sweet, and is fit for common use." The general qualifications for holding office were to be the same as those for voting except that the morally and intellectually unfit would be excluded. In addition, Winstanley would require that these magistrates be more than forty years of age.16
Winstanley had a very elaborate system of magistrates in mind for his commonwealth, but the details of this system need concern us only in a few instances. At the town level he provided for some five different kinds of officers whose duty it was to provide a very close regulation of civic life. A rather surprising officer for Winstanley to have included was the Executioner, who was to execute punishments, including death if necessary. On the county level, the primary officer was the Judge, and it was his job to speak the law. Winstanley made it clear that this officer was never to interpret the law in any sense, but rather he was merely to pronounce it. Of the national institutions the Parliament was the most important. This body was to serve as the highest Court of Equity in the realm. Parliament was to oversee the work of all the lower courts and magistrates and settle problems which these lower officers could not. Also Parliament would have the all important job of destroying the corrupt institutions of the old order such as land holding and old laws. In addition it would have the duty of raising an army to defend the nation in time of war or civil disturbance.17

The provision for an army to quell civil disturbances when considered in connection with Winstanley's suggestion that each town have its own Executioner points out the disillusionment he suffered as a result of the failure
of his colony. His faith in the validity of his theology was, of course, unshaken, but he was now less convinced that England would be the country chosen by God to begin His work, and the millenium seemed far less immanent to him than it had in 1649. Thus these proposals were made in order that his ideal government (if accepted) might survive in the face of the initial hostility which he now realized it would inevitably meet. These contradictions of his earlier teachings are the result of the somewhat corrosive effect of his belief that God would establish and perfect His Sion only gradually. Winstanley was often tempted by this belief to make compromises with the existing order in the hope that the reforms he did obtain might be the seed from which Sion would grow. For the most part Winstanley resisted this temptation, but there are several examples of such compromises in his last work.13

Another of the institutions which Winstanley provided for in his ideal commonwealth was that which he called a Commonwealth Ministry, but he used this term in a manner peculiar to himself. Each parish would choose a minister to serve for a year, and the duty of this officer would be to keep the public well informed. One aspect of his office would be to give lectures upon the affairs of the whole land, and in this capacity he would work in conjunction with the Post-master, who was to collect the news from the
other county Post-masters and send out in return reports of the news in his own district. These reports would be compiled and printed to form a history of the land. Also the Ministers would be obliged to read the laws of the land to the people in order that they be familiar enough with them to prevent their abuse. In addition he would give lectures on history, arts and science, and the "Nature of Mankind". The right to give lectures was to be granted to any who had direct knowledge of some subject. None who were inspired by mere imagination, however, were to be allowed to give such speeches.19

These provisions indicate once again Winstanley's belief that God revealed himself to man through the power of reason. "God manifests himself in actual knowledge, not in imagination." This belief taken in conjunction with his pantheism shows why Winstanley emphasized the study of nature as the proper exercise of man's mind. He says, "To know the secrets of nature, is to know the works of God; And to know the works of God within the Creation, is to know God himself, for God dwells in every visible work or body." To Winstanley, then, the study of nature was a religious duty, and for this reason he devoted particular attention to his provisions for education in his commonwealth. All children were to be trained for some worthwhile trade, so that they would be able to play a
significant and useful part in the life of the community. The five trades which Winstanley recognized as legitimate were agriculture, mining and refining, animal husbandry, forestry and carpentry, and investigation of nature. 20

Most of the other provisions of The Law of Freedom in a Platform dealt either with the detailed application of these ideas or with the necessity of eliminating the state of corruption existing in the world. Winstanley concluded the work with suggestions for a basic law code for the commonwealth. 21

In these two final summations of his religious and political theories, Winstanley showed once again how intimately these subjects were related in his mind. For him, the only true purpose of government was to speed the salvation of mankind, and thus his political theory was always subordinate to his theology. His "communism" was simply the economic expression of his pantheism, and his "utopia" was never intended to be more than a tool to speed man's reunion with God. If, in his later works, he devoted more time to his politics than to his theology, it was because political activity was the most immediate expression possible for a theology which accorded society the power of salvation. Thus his final works were built upon the theological foundations of his initial works.
His pantheism, his faith in the gradual but universal salvation of mankind, his conviction that man had the power to effect his own salvation, and his belief that God revealed himself to man as reason were all integral parts of his final works.
NOTES

2. Ibid. p. 452.
7. Ibid. p. 471.
8. Ibid. p. 472.
9. Winstanley said, "...I am assured that if it be rightly searched into, the inward bondages of the minde, as covetousness, pride, hypocrisy, envy, sorrow, fears, desperation, and madness, are all occasioned by the outward bondage, that one sort of people lay upon another." Works, p. 520.
10. Ibid. p. 510.
15. Ibid. p. 523.
18. Perhaps the most damaging of these compromises is the one Winstanley offers in the following statement: "But if the minds of the people through Covetousness and proud Ignorance will have the Earth governed by buying and selling still, this same Platform, with a few things subtracted, declares an easier way of Government of the Earth for the quiet of peoples minds, and preserving Peace in the Land." Works, p. 581.

CONCLUSION

In attempting to assess Winstanley's relationship to the political thought of his own time, one is immediately faced with something of a dilemma. The more carefully and closely Winstanley's ideas are examined, the more apparent it becomes that he is not really a part of the general movement with which he was identified not only in the minds of his contemporaries, but also in his own mind.

As we have seen, Winstanley's movement, at least on the ideological level, was not closely related to the Leveller movement. Even though they were often confused by their opponents, and even though Winstanley at times referred to himself as a Leveller, the differences separating these two groups were fundamental ones. The Levellers arrived at their doctrinal position by a rigorous application of principles basic to the Calvinist tradition, while the Diggers, on the other hand, arrived at a superficially similar position as a direct consequence of a pantheism foreign to this line of thought. On the purely practical level, the two groups were separated by very different attitudes toward private property. Whereas Winstanley and the Diggers traced all evil back to the first appearance of private property, the Levellers accepted this institution with few reservations, and they formulated their
reforms on the assumption that the right to own land was a principle which could not be questioned.

Although fundamental differences existed between the Levellers and the Diggers, the latter were ideologically no closer to the Fifth Monarchy Men, the other radical group with whom they were most often compared. Winstanley did share this sect's millenarian expectations, and also like them, he favored positive and even drastic efforts at reform, but his belief in universal salvation and his denial of the doctrine of the two orders gave an entirely different orientation to his thought from that of the Fifth Monarchists. The belief of this latter group that it was their duty as the Elect of God to clear a path for the second coming of Christ led them to propose the creation of a government under the strict control of this Elect, and if this also meant the enjoyment of certain material benefits to which only those who were members of the Elect would have access, then they assured themselves that this too was a part of the divine order. The Fifth Monarchists had no quarrel with private land ownership or even with a certain amount of attention to material prosperity, but they were anxious that those to whom God had shown his favor by granting material success in this life should be given their rightful position as the directors of the political life of the country. Thus the ideals of the Fifth Monarchists
like those of the Levellers were essentially within the Calvinist tradition, and both these groups could propose their reforms in terms which did not challenge the basic assumptions of this tradition.

It is fairly clear, however, that Winstanley's ideas actually are not in the line of this Calvinist tradition. Certainly he was greatly influenced by certain aspects of Calvinist thought, but in the last analysis the factor which molded all others was Winstanley's pantheism, a belief which certainly was not a product of this heritage. Winstanley himself, in the course of his brief political career came increasingly to realize how little he had in common with the people who had led the Puritan revolution. He found that they were interested not in speeding the salvation of all men by establishing a community in Christ, but in securing a dominant social and political position for those Elect whom God had blessed with material prosperity in this life. Winstanley believed the Elect were entitled to no such privileged position. They were merely the first to be invested with the spirit of Christ and it was their duty to encourage the growth of this spirit in others by the establishment of a social order based on communal ownership of land and industries. Since his ideal social also demanded the elimination of all commercial activities, Winstanley found himself squarely opposed to the two most
powerful groups in mid-seventeenth century English society, the landed gentry and the urban trading class. Since these two groups were powerful enough to rule England for almost a century and a half on the basis of the principles established in this revolution, it is not surprising that Winstanley's experiment should fail in the face of their opposition.

Strangely enough the contemporary Winstanley seems to have most resembled, at least in so far as political theory is concerned, is Archbishop Laud. Laud too, in attempting to reestablish a measure of the social harmony and communal responsibility which he believed existed before the English Reformation, came into conflict with the same two classes which Winstanley opposed. Laud's ideal was the recreation of a truly united society in which each class realized not only their responsibility to themselves but also their responsibility to the social order as a whole. Such a goal was essentially foreign to the Puritan outlook which emphasized individual liberty and individual responsibility.

It may be objected that Laud's insistence on the importance of the established church in his ideal social order would create a fundamental distinction between his political theory and that of Winstanley, since the latter believed in complete separation of church and state. Even here, however, the difference is more apparent than real.
In the society which Laud envisioned, the social purpose of the church would be to bind society together by giving all classes a common goal and orientation, while in Winstanley's society, the spirit of Christ would perform exactly the same function. For both men, the ultimate purpose of a united and communally responsible society was human salvation. Winstanley's pantheistic deity would create an internal unity and social accord which almost exactly corresponded with the purpose of the external church structure which Laud hoped to create. The former idea may indeed seem naive to our time, but to Winstanley it offered a far more valid hope than any mere created church structure could ever hold forth.

That Winstanley's radicalism had, so to speak, come the full circle is seen from Woodhouse' analysis of the element of English democracy which owed its origin to the Anglican tradition. "The chief contribution of Anglicanism," Woodhouse said, "is not to the winning of democracy, but to the habits of thought and feeling on which democracy must necessarily rely, and in whose absence it would inevitably break down; a sense of the oneness of, and the individual's oneness with, the community, an overriding loyalty to the community and a habit of steady obedience to the decrees of its government."

Woodhouse here, was referring to the writings of such men as Hooker and Laud,
but this comment also aptly summarizes one of the central messages of Winstanley's works.

Actually, Winstanley seems to have reached this position not as a result of any direct influence from contemporary Anglican thought, but rather through the more deeply ingrained tradition of which Anglicanism itself was the descendant, that is the mediaeval Catholic tradition. The similarity of Winstanley's beliefs to those of this tradition is seen in C. H. Mollwain's statement that the ideal social view of the middle ages involved the belief that, "...slavery is only an external, accidental status, historical in origin, and against nature in character; that government may not be far different from it in origin at least; and that private property ought to be limited to the use of external goods, charity to be enforced as a duty, and poverty encouraged as a virtue." Certainly this statement also provides a very good description of Winstanley's outlook.

On the other hand, even with this striking parallel between Winstanley's thought and that of the mediaeval period, there remains much in Winstanley's works that is clearly a part of the Calvinist tradition. This is perhaps most immediately apparent in a similarity of terminology, for even when Winstanley completely changed the meaning of term, as he did for example with the concept of the
Elect, he still continued to use the term in his works. In addition, his abandonment of the scholastic approach to learning in favor of the "experimental" approach, as well as his attacks on the clergy and the ecclesiastical structure, show the influence of the Calvinist line of thought. It is clear then, that the Calvinist influence can by no means be discounted in evaluating Winstanley's ideas.

The relation in which these two traditions stand in Winstanley's works is difficult to assess, but it would seem that the older mediaeval Catholic influence is also the more basic, if less obvious, of the two, and that to a large extent it dictates the use to which the elements derived from Calvinism will be put. This is not to say that Winstanley was in any way trying to disguise his "reactionary" beliefs by a thin cover of radicalism. Winstanley almost certainly had no inkling of the origin of his most basic convictions; they were simply the residue of an age and a culture now long past - a residue which quite naturally endured longest in those classes least affected by changes in the intellectual climate, the normally inarticulate rural working class. Nor can it be claimed that the elements of Calvinism in Winstanley's thought are purely surface elements, for in many cases they go to the very heart of his arguments, but in the last analysis
the most influential element, Winstanley's pantheism, is an outgrowth of the earlier mediaeval tradition.

It would seem, then, that what is most remarkable about Winstanley is first of all the mental vigor with which he unites these very different cultural strains into a reasonably consistent whole, and secondly the considerable skill with which he then gives expression to these ideas. Thus it follows that Winstanley's value to the historian must lie chiefly in the extent to which his works reflect the process of cultural transition which England was undergoing at this time. Even though his works reflected elements of both the past and future views of society, however, it was the older viewpoint which predominated, and it was this ideal which, with the fall of Archbishop Laud, forever passed from a position of dominance in English political thought.
NOTES


2. C. H. McIlwain, *The Growth of Political Thought in the West*, p. 120.
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