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ABSTRACT
Clarendon’s ‘History of the Rebellion’ invites readers to understand the complexity and consequences of the moral decisions made by participants in the English Civil War.

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I. Writing history as a moral act

For Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, the writing of history was a moral act, designed to teach succeeding generations the truth about the English Civil War, or, as he thought of it, the Rebellion. Writing in exile in the Scilly Isles on 18 March 1646, he started his great work with the intention

> That posterity may not be deceived, by the prosperous wickedness of these times, into an opinion that less than a general combination, and universal apostasy in the whole nation from their religion and allegiance, could, in so short a time, have produced such a total and prodigious alteration and confusion over the whole kingdom; and so the memory of those few who, out of duty and conscience, have opposed and resisted that torrent which hath overwhelmed them may lose the recompense due to their virtue, and, having undergone the injuries and reproaches of this, may not find a vindication in a better, age.[1]

The *History* will memorialize those men who acted from fidelity, duty, and conscience, and preserve a record of the near-universal apostasy of the nation which Clarendon

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[1] Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641*, edited by W. Dunn Macray, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), i 1. Subsequent references to the *History* are given in parentheses in the text. Clarendon wrote the first part of the *History* in the Scillies and on Jersey from 1646 to 1648; during his second exile in France he wrote his *Life* between 1668 and 1670; then in 1671, having retrieved the manuscript of the *History*, he combined the two accounts and added some material to make the combined *History*. The unused portion of the *Life* was published separately in 1759 as *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Printing-House, 1759). For a detailed account of the composition, sources, and reliability of the *History* see C. H. Firth, ‘Clarendon’s “History of the Rebellion”’, *English Historical Review*, 19 (1904), 26–54, 246–62, 464–83. In the present essay I am primarily concerned with Clarendon’s interpretation of events rather than his factual accuracy, but there are some moments when his partial treatment of people (‘partial’ in both senses) raises questions about the moral integrity of his own writing: examples might be his failure to note that Sir Charles Lucas, executed by Fairfax at Colchester, had broken his parole; his reluctance to pursue his brief concession that Falkland handed unsavoury political duties over to others to preserve his own integrity; and his denunciation of the debauchery of his enemy General Goring. For studies of the *History* see Royce Macgillivray, *Restoration Historians and the English Civil War* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), ch. 8, and Martine Watson Brownley, *Clarendon and the Rhetoric of Historical Form* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985). The principal discussions of Clarendon as a moralist are by J. C. Hayward, ‘The *Mores* of Great Tew: Literary, Philosophical and Political Idealism in Falkland’s Circle’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1982 (esp. ch. 7), and his ‘New Directions in Studies of the Falkland Circle, *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987), 19–48; and Thomas H. Robinson, ‘Lord Clarendon’s Moral Thought’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 43 (1979), 37–59. Although Edward Hyde was not created Earl of Clarendon until 1661, I generally refer to him by his later title except where this would be too anachronistic.

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intends will be useful 'at least to the curiosity if not the conscience of men' (i 1), so that the work will ideally help to inform the consciences of readers through an account of the operation – and the failure – of men's moral principles during the course of the war. The individual characters for which the *History* is famous analyse the participants' strengths and weaknesses, often attending to those respects in which virtues may become faults. Nor, especially in the *Life*, does he spare himself, being conscious of his 'great Infirmities; which by a providential Mercy were seasonably restrained from growing into Vices, at least into any that were habitual', confessing specifically his ambition, his 'Delight in eating and drinking well', and a 'Nature inclined to Pride and Passion; and to a Humour between Wrangling, and Disputing, very troublesome' in his early years.[2] Clarendon's *History* repeatedly focuses on those moments when someone makes a consequential error, through weakness or pride, cowardice or ambition, and often through passions of various kinds, for in his eyes much rests upon the personal responsibility of individuals whose actions and omissions change the course of history.[3] The work often attends forensically to acts in contravention of that moral law which is written in divine scripture and in the hearts of men in the form of their private conscience, and in taking this approach Clarendon is informed by the discussions about theology which he enjoyed at Great Tew.[4] For him, it is individuals who make history, and Clarendon may be regarded as 'the great historian of the contingent, for whom everything in the civil wars might have happened differently'[5] if men had made different decisions, decisions which therefore carry a great moral freight. At the same time, he is aware that an overarching divine providence guides human affairs, bringing justice out of injustice and rectifying the errors of mankind, however hard it may have been for Hyde to see the hand of God in recent events when he sat down to compose his work in the spring of 1646.

II. The consequences of individual decisions

In his manuscript notes on *De Cive*, Hyde thought that Hobbes took away the responsibility of the individual for what they do by maintaining that the rightness or wrongness of an action consists in the act itself, not in the individual's mind or will; responsibility was also curtailed by Hobbes' denial of man's God-given freedom of the will.[6] But for Clarendon in his *History* it is from small acts or small omissions that great consequences may arise, and for these men may, indeed must, be held accountable. In narrating the passing of the Bill of Attainder against the Earl of Strafford Clarendon records some overlooked events in order 'that it may be observed from how little accidents[7] and small circumstances, by the art and industry of these men [*sc*. the leaders of the opposition], the greatest matters have flowed towards the confusion we now labour under' (i 322; cf. 392). Men often fail to foresee the consequences of their action – and often, for Clarendon, their culpable inaction. Sometimes men who pursued their own interests without necessarily wishing harm to the King or his cause nevertheless 'did sacrifice the public peace and the security of their master to their own passions and appetites, to their ambition and animosities against each other, without the least design of treachery or damage towards his majesty', so that 'want of discretion and mere folly produced as much mischieve as the most barefaced villainy could have done' (iv 2). Above all, the *History* shows 'how dangerous it is to step aside out of the path of innocence and virtue upon any presumption to be able to get into it again' (iii 199).

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[2] *Life*, i 68–9.

[3] See Firth, pp. 35–6; 42 n.48 (on courage).

[4] The Tew circle is discussed in *History*, iii 180 and *Life*, i 42–59.

[5] Blair Worden, *God's Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 378.

[6] See Hayward, '*Mores*', pp. 204–5, 216; cf. 211, and ch. 7 generally; and his 'New Directions'. Hyde's authorship of the notes on *De Cive* is probable but not certain. See also Perez Zagorin, 'Clarendon and Hobbes', *The Journal of Modern History*, 57 (1985), 593–616, and 'Clarendon against *Leviathan*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's 'Leviathan'*, edited by Patricia Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 460–76; Martin Dzelzainis, 'Edward Hyde and Thomas Hobbes's *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*', *The Historical Journal*, 32 (1989), 303–17; Jon Parkin, *Taming the Leviathan: The Reception of the Political and Religious Ideas of Thomas Hobbes in England 1640–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 313–22; and David L. Smith, *Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement, c. 1640–1649* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 250–1. Clarendon also referred to the mischief caused by Hobbes' 'wrong opinion of the Institution of Government' in his essay 'Of Liberty', written in Montpellier in 1670 (in *A Compleat Collection of Tracts, by that Eminent Statesman The Right Honourable Edward, Earl of Clarendon* (London: C. Davis, 1747), p. 143).

One of the key words in the *History* is 'if', as Clarendon draws attention to points at which the course of events might have turned out differently if only participants had made a different (more intelligent, or more principled) decision. The judges who sided with the King in questions such as Ship Money brought the judiciary into general contempt, and contributed to men's suspicion of the law and the government, whereas 'If these men had preserved the simplicity of their ancestors in severely and strictly defending the laws, other men had observed the modesty of theirs in humbly and dutifully obeying them' (i 88). But they did not, with the results which we all know. Great consequences flowed too from the passing of the Grand Remonstrance, for, evoking a poignant piece of counter-factual history, Clarendon records that Cromwell told Falkland that 'if the Remonstrance had been rejected, he would have sold all he had the next morning, and never have seen England more ... So near was the poor kingdom at that time to its deliverance!' (i 420). Sometimes Clarendon's 'if' is the historian's judgement which benefits from hindsight, as when he remarks of the war against the Scots that 'If the war had been now vigorously pursued, it had been as soon ended as begun' (i 153), or that 'if the King himself had stayed at London ... and sent the army on their proper errand, and left the matter of the war wholly to them, in all human reason his enemies had been speedily subdued' (ii 155). But Clarendon is also aware of the dangers of hindsight, and cautions readers against too easily imagining that Charles could have saved Strafford 'if his majesty had, instead of passing that Act, come to the House and dissolved the Parliament, or if he had withdrawn himself from that seditious city and put himself in the head of his own army', for such an assumption fails to recognize the complexity of the situation in which the King found himself: 'it is much easier upon the accidents and occurrences which have since happened to determine what was not to have been done, than at that time to have foreseen by what means to have freed himself from the labyrinth in which he was involved' (i 339–40). It is part of the historian's role to map the labyrinth within which moral choices have to be made – including those apparently small pragmatic choices which later turn out to have far-reaching moral consequences.

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[7] By 'accident' Clarendon seems to mean 'an unfortunate and typically unforeseen event' (*OED* 8) rather than 'chance, fortune' (*OED* 7): accidents can be unlooked-for events or circumstances caused by individuals who carry moral responsibility for them.

Underpinning such retrospective analysis there is usually an attention to the causes of individual misjudgements. In not having the 'courage' to take vigorous action against seditious preaching and printing, thinks Clarendon, the Privy Council allowed rebellion to flourish:

> if either the Privy Council, or the judges and the King's learned counsel, had assumed the courage to have questioned the preaching, or the printing, or the seditious riots … it had been no hard matter to have destroyed those seeds and pulled up those plants, which, neglected, grew up and prospered to a full harvest of rebellion and treason. (i 270)

Though this was a political decision, it appears to Clarendon as a failure of the personal moral virtue of courage, which led to catastrophic consequences for the country at large. Again, it was the obstinacy shown by the King in removing the Earls of Essex and Holland from their offices that led to disaster:

> if that resolution the King had taken had not been too obstinately pursued at that time, many of the mischieves which afterwards fell out would have been prevented; and without doubt, if the staff had remained still in the hands of the earl of Essex, by which he was charged with the defence and security of the King's person, he would never have been prevailed with to have taken upon him the command of that army which was afterwards raised against the King's. (ii 16)

Indeed, 'it had been utterly impossible for the two Houses of Parliament to have raised an army then if the earl of Essex had not consented to be general of that army. But the King was inexorable in the point' (ii 16), and would pay a bitter price for his obstinacy – as would his whole kingdom.

The most eloquent example of Clarendon's attentiveness to the implication of 'if … ' clauses and the counter-factual scenarios which they open out before the reader occurs when he reflects not upon an individual's misjudgement but upon the temper of the nation at large during the reign of James I, 'which indeed were excellent times *bona si sua norint*' (i 93).[8] This quotation from Virgil's *Georgics* –

> O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,
> agricolas! quibus ipsa, procul discordibus armis,
> fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus.[9]

which Dryden translates as:

> Oh happy, if he knew his happy State!
> The Swain, who, free from Business and Debate;
> Receives his easy Food from Nature's Hand,
> And just Returns of cultivated Land![10]

– stands as a rebuke to those discontented spirits who did not truly understand their own happiness. Having listed the material and spiritual blessings enjoyed by the nation in the early years of Charles' reign, he continues:

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[8] The quotation is repeated in a parallel passage in the *Life* (i 71) extolling the peace and prosperity of prewar England.

[9] Virgil, *Georgics*, ii 458–60.

[10] John Dryden, 'The Second Book of the Georgics', ll. 639–42, in *The Works of Virgil: Containing His Pastorals, Georgics, and Æneis*, Translated into English Verse by Mr. Dryden (London: Jacob Tonson, 1697), p. 90.

> But all these blessings could but enable, not compel, us to be happy: we wanted that sense, acknowledgement, and value of our own happiness which all but we had, and took pains to make, when we could not find, ourselves miserable. There was in truth a strange absence of understanding in most, and a strange perverseness of understanding in the rest: the Court full of excess, idleness and luxury, and the country full of pride, mutiny and discontent. (i 96)

Several kinds of moral defect coalesce here: an ingratitude for the blessings conferred upon England by God, and by his deputy the King; a defective understanding of the true nature of society; a corrupt court; and a country animated by pride and resentment.[11]

Clarendon says of himself that he learned to restrain and moderate those faults which might have grown into vices: his pleasure in the table was 'without any Approach to Luxury'; his ambition was sufficient 'to raise his Spirit to great Designs of raising himself; but not to transport him to endeavour it by any crooked, and indirect Means'; and 'good Company in a short Time, so much reformed, and mastered' his argumentative nature 'that no Man was more affable and courteous to all Kind of Persons; and They who knew the great Infirmity of his whole Family, which abounded in Passion, used to say, He had much extinguished the Unruliness of that Fire'.[12] Others did not master their passions, however, and a recurring motif in the *History* is the dominance of passion and appetite over reason, and over that civilized, questing debate for which Great Tew would always be Clarendon's touchstone. In the reign of James and the early years of Charles the country's 'calamities originally sprung from the inordinate appetite and passion of this young man' – Buckingham – 'under the too much easiness of two indulgent masters' (i 51). Pre-eminent among those who were inordinately the slaves of their own passions was the royalist commander Lord Goring, a man so inclined to drink and debauchery that he 'was not able to resist the temptation when he was in the middle of them [the enemy], nor would decline it to obtain a victory', so that 'the most signal misfortunes of his life in war had their rise from that uncontrollable license'. He 'would without hesitation have broken any trust, or done any act of treachery, to have satisfied an ordinary passion or appetite; and, in truth, wanted nothing but industry … to have been as eminent and successful in the highest attempt in wickedness of any man in the age he lived in or before' (iii 444–5).[13] Ironically, then, it was mere laziness that restrained Goring from total depravity. The character of the Earl of Essex identifies pride and vanity as his fatal weaknesses, and explains just how he came to be drawn away from his allegiance to the King: the new ideas which were being promoted about the respective powers of King and Parliament

> were too hard for him, and did really intoxicate his understanding, and made him quit his own to follow theirs who he thought wished as well and judged better than himself. His vanity disposed him to be *His Excellence*, and his weakness to believe that he should be the

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[11] Cf. *History*, i 51: the discontent which led to the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham was such that the nation 'grew satiated and weary of the government itself, under which it had enjoyed a greater measure of felicity than any nation was ever possessed of'.

[12] *Life*, i 68–9.

[13] Ronald Hutton (*ODNB*) plays down Goring's reputation as a hard-drinking, debauched cavalier, calling Clarendon's account of him 'brilliant and unscrupulous', and pointing out that Clarendon had had to defend himself against accusations brought by Goring. But Goring's most recent biographer quotes Secretary Digby warning him 'to beware debauches', and his own adjutant as saying that he 'strangely loved the bottle' (Florene S. Memegalos, *George Goring (1608–1657): Caroline Courtier and Royalist General* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 233).

> general in the Houses as well as in the field, and be able to govern their counsels and restrain their passions as well as to fight their battles; and by this means he should become the preserver, and not the destroyer, of the King and kingdom. And with this ill-grounded confidence he launched out into that sea where he met with nothing but rock and shelves, and from whence he could never discover any safe port to harbour in. (ii 542)

Deficient understanding of himself and others; vanity; weakness; ill-grounded confidence: γνῶθι σεαυτόν was evidently not the Earl's watchword.

These are some of Clarendon's analyses of the moral constitution of named individuals, but the *History* frequently turns to the vocabulary of unbridled passion and intoxication to describe the motivation of unnamed actors and groups on the Parliamentarian side, particularly its more radical elements. The opposition to the King was driven by 'fierceness' and 'fury' (i 400), by 'passion and fury' (i 250, 335), by 'humours' (i 370), by 'frenzy' and 'factious humour' (ii 470), by 'Presbyterian humour' (iv 257), and was 'inflamed' (i 400) by 'raging and fanatic distempers' (i 430; cf. iii 380). The Scots were 'furiously inclined' (ii 438) to alter the church, driven by their 'wild lust and impiety' (iv 210). Exceptionally, the Parliamentarian governor of the garrison at Gloucester was 'not intoxicated with any of those fumes which made men rave and frantic in the cause' (iii 131). Such frenzies and humours needed to be contained by law and tradition (i 7, 32). Clarendon writes of 'the ebbs and floods of popular councils, and of the winds that move those waters' (i 7), observing how easy it is for men to be swayed by the 'fluctuating and unsteady . . . applause of popular councils' (i 32), and be 'carried with the violence of the stream' (iv 428). This vocabulary of unbalanced bodily humours, madness, and intoxication, and the imagery of turbulent rivers, is braided through the *History* to deny much of the opposition any rationality and principle. It will reappear in *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) where Dryden, fearing a return of civil war, writes thus of the Whigs:

> For, as when raging fevers boil the blood
> The standing lake soon floats into a flood,
> And every hostile humour which before
> Slept quiet in its channels, bubbles o'er;
> So several factions from this first ferment
> Work up to foam, and threat the government.[14]

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[14] *Absalom and Achitophel*, ll. 136–41, in *The Poems of John Dryden*, edited by Paul Hammond and David Hopkins, Longman Annotated English Poets, 5 vols (London: Longman, 1995–2005), i 465. Both Clarendon and Dryden are drawing on the imagery through which Sir John Denham in his poem *Cooper's Hill* wrote about the danger of power, like a river in flood, overflowing the proper bounds which law and custom had set between subject and sovereign:

> When a calme River rais'd with sudden raines,
> Or Snowes dissolv'd o'reflows th'adjoyning Plaines . . .
> No longer then within his bankes he dwels,
> First to a Torrent, then a Deluge swels . . .
> Thus Kings by grasping more then they can hold,
> First made their Subjects by oppressions bold,
> And popular sway by forcing Kings to give
> More, then was fit for Subjects to receive,
> Ranne to the same extreame . . .
> Therefore their boundlesse power let Princes draw
> Within the Channell, and the shores of Law,
> And may that Law, which teaches Kings to sway
> Their Scepters, teach their Subjects to obey.

Sir John Denham, *Cooper's Hill* (1642 text), ll. 333–54, in *Expans'd Hieroglyphicks: A Critical Edition of Sir John Denham's 'Coopers Hill'*, edited by Brendan O Hehir (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 133–4.

And yet while some men are carried away by their passions, the guilt of others lies in their weakness, their inability to pursue the good which they recognize, or their lack of moral courage in the face of the wickedness or duplicity of others which makes them (perhaps unintentionally) complicit in rebellion. Aristotle called such weakness of will *akrasia*.[15] In a famous observation about the responsibility of individuals for the public good, John Stuart Mill remarked:

> Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing. He is not a good man who, without a protest, allows wrong to be committed in his name, and with the means which he helps to supply, because he will not trouble himself to use his mind on the subject.[16]

Clarendon would have concurred, for he wrote:

> I know not how those men have already answered it to their own consciences, or how they will answer to Him who can discern their consciences, who, having assumed their country's trust … by their supine laziness, negligence and absence were the first inlets to these inundations, and so contributed to those licenses which have overwhelmed us. (i 427-9; cf. ii 85)

Contrasting the vigour of Parliament's supporters with the Laodicean temperament of those who favoured the King's cause, he writes:

> they who inclined to the Parliament left nothing unperformed that might advance the cause, and were incredibly vigilant and industrious to cross and hinder whatsoever might promote the King's: whereas they who wished well to him thought they had performed their duty in doing so, and that they had done enough for him that they had done nothing against him. (ii 472)

Men were not sufficiently vigilant. When the Declaration for the Reformation of the Church appeared in 1642 it was designed 'to the lulling those asleep who began to be awake' to the dangers threatening the established church, and while 'this warily worded Declaration was evidence enough to wise men what they intended … yet to lazy and quiet men, who could not discern consequences … their fears were much abated, and the intentions of the Parliament seemed not so bad as they had been told' (ii 71). This laziness is a lack of intellectual curiosity, a lack of discernment about men's motives, and a failure to identify the arts of duplicity. Clarendon's use of 'quiet' here may seem strange, for its connotations are usually positive, referring to those who are placid and gentle (*OED* 1), moderate and restrained (*OED* 4), and who lead an undisturbed, secluded life (*OED* 9) with an untroubled mind and conscience (*OED* 10). As Marvell said of his garden,

> Fair Quiet I have found thee here,
> And Innocence thy sister dear![17]

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[15] Aristotle divides *akrasia* into *propeteia* (impetuosity) and *astheneia* (weakness) (*Nicomachean Ethics*, vii 1–10).

[16] John Stuart Mill, *Inaugural Address delivered to the University of St. Andrews Feb. 1st, 1867* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., [1870]), p. 36).

[17] 'The Garden', ll. 9–10, in *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, edited by Nigel Smith, Longman Annotated English Poets (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2003), p. 155. For the high religious and ethical value placed on contemplative retirement in this period see Maren-Sofie Røstvig, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Ideal: Volume I: 1600–1700*, second edition (Oslo: Oslo University Press, 1962).

But in time of war or civil upheaval, ‘quiet’ may be not a philosophically desirable state of mind but a reprehensible failure to engage in public life,[18] at least to the extent of applying one’s sceptical intellect to the analysis of what men are saying – the kind of thoughtful inquiry which Hyde and his friends in Falkland’s circle had conducted at Great Tew in the 1630s, where they set themselves to ‘examine and refine those grosser propositions which laziness and consent made current in vulgar conversation’ (iii 180). Later, ‘laziness and consent’ would prove fatal to the nation at large.

III. Serpents and doves

Such lack of insight into the true motives of others was particularly damaging, since for Clarendon deceit and dissimulation were characteristic of the King’s opponents. Clarendon prized honesty: he himself refused ‘to dissemble his own Opinions’, and records Queen Henrietta Maria telling one of her ladies in waiting that ‘She did verily believe, that *if He thought her to be a Whore, He would tell her of it*; which when the Lady told him, He was not displeased with the Testimony’.[19] At the opening of the *History* he numbers amongst the causes of the conflict ‘the spirit of craft and subtlety in some, and the rude and unpolished integrity of others, too much despising craft or art’ (i 4). The naivety with which men read other men might result from ‘unpolished integrity’, but was sometimes fuelled by a narrow concentration on their own interests, as happened at the faction-ridden royal court in 1640 where ‘every man sottishly thought him whom he found an enemy to his enemies, a friend to all his other affections,[20] or rather (by the narrowness of his understanding and extent of his passion having contracted all his other affections,) to that one of revenge’ (i 187). Such men are so much in thrall to their own passions that they cannot see clearly the true motives of others. Some more perceptive observers did see what lay hidden, however, and in recounting the apparently favourable reception accorded to the King in Scotland in 1633 Clarendon remarks: ‘nor were the sparks of murmur and sedition then so well covered but that many discerning men discovered very pernicious designs to lurk in their breasts who seemed to have the most cheerful countenance, and who acted great parts in the pomp and triumph’, and the loyalty of the Marquis of Hamilton ‘was even then suspected by the wisest men in both kingdoms’ (i 108).

Though he had himself been an early opponent of royal incursions into the rights of the subject, Clarendon has difficulty in according honesty and good intentions to the leaders of the Parliamentarian cause, stressing rather their lies, deceitfulness, and bad faith. Parliament repeatedly used artifices and stratagems (i 250; ii 439), and in the early days men concealed their true objectives, ‘for they pretended all public thoughts, and only the reformation of disapproved and odious enormities, and dissembled all purposes of removing foundations, which, though it was in the hearts of some, they had not the courage and confidence to communicate it' (i 250). Lord Widdrington 'observed the uningenuity[21] of the proceedings there, and the gross cheats by which they deceived and cozened the people' (v 185). Petitions were gathered by 'a strange uningenuity and mountebankry' (i 271). Hampden was a master of disguise, and 'No man had ever a greater power over himself or was less the man that he seemed to be, which shortly after appeared to every body when he cared less to keep on the mask' (i 246). Besides Hampden, there was the Scottish commissioner the Earl of Rothes, who was 'unrestrained by any scruples of religion, which he only put on when the part he was to act required it, and then no man could appear more conscientiously transported' (i 252). And besides Rothes there was Sir Henry Vane, endowed with

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[18] Cf. the debate described by Brian Vickers in ‘Leisure and Idleness in the Renaissance: The Ambivalence of *otium*’, *Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1990), 1–37 and 107–54.

[19] *Life*, i 68, 221; cf. 96. Clarendon’s friend Falkland was also an enemy to dissimulation (*Life*, i 92).

[20] *affections*] controlling emotions, passions (*OED* 1b).

> a great understanding, which pierced into and discerned the purposes of other men with wonderful sagacity, whilst he had himself *vultum clausum*, that no man could make a guess of what he intended. He was . . . of rare dissimulation . . . and if he were not superior to Mr. Hambden, he was inferior to no other man in all mysterious artifices. There need no more be said of his ability than that he was chosen to cozen and deceive a whole nation which excelled in craft and dissembling. (iii 216-17)

– that nation being the Scots, a people apparently unconstrained 'by any obligations, divine or human' (ii 519). While the King negotiated with the Independents in 1646,

> there were only three men, Vane, Cromwell, and Ireton, who governed and disposed all the rest according to their sentiments; and without doubt they had not yet published their dark designs to many of their own party, nor would their party at that time have been so numerous and considerable, if they had known, or but imagined, that they had entertained those thoughts of heart which they grew every day less tender to conceal and forward enough to discover. (iv 158)

Such duplicity was not found only on the Parliamentarian side, however, for Clarendon concludes his character of the debauched Lord Goring by saying that 'of all his qualifications dissimulation was his master-piece; in which he so much excelled, that men were not ordinarily ashamed, or out of countenance, with being deceived but twice by him' (iii 445).

Yet supreme in deceit was Cromwell, who 'carried himself with that rare dissimulation (in which sure he was a very great master)' (iv 223). In addressing the House of Commons in 1647, 'when he spake of the nation's being to be involved in new troubles, he would weep bitterly, and appear the most afflicted man in the world with the sense of the calamities which were like to ensue. But as many of the wiser sort had long discovered his wicked intentions, so his hypocrisy could not longer be concealed' (i 223). Indeed 'dissimulation had so great and supreme an influence upon the hearts and spirits of all those who were trusted and employed by Cromwell, that no man was safe in their company but he who resolved before not to believe one word they said' (iv 271). Clarendon devotes a long passage (iv 305–7), introduced by reflections on Machiavelli, to an account of Cromwell's craftiness, though the extended character which he provides towards the end of the *History* is more nuanced, acknowledging that 'he must have had a wonderful understanding in the natures and humours of men, and as great dexterity in applying them' (vi 91) – a necessary attribute for a leader in such troubled times – and concluding that 'as he had all the wickedness against which damnation is denounced and for which hell-fire is prepared, so he had some virtues which have caused the memory of some men in all ages to be celebrated; and he will be looked upon by posterity as a brave bad man' (vi 97).[22]

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[21] *uningenuity*] dissimulation, lack of honesty. The *OED* records only two uses of the word, the second being from Clarendon's *Tracts*.

In such a world some men came to grief because they were too trusting, too sincere, insufficiently machiavellian, and of these the prime example was Archbishop Laud,

> who, too secure in a good conscience and most sincere worthy intentions … thought he could manage and discharge the place and office of the greatest minister in the Court … without the least condescension to the arts and stratagems of the Court, and without any other friendship or support than what the splendour of a pious life and his unpolished integrity would reconcile to him; which was an unskilful measure in a licentious age. (i 82)

> he believed innocence of heart and integrity of manners was a guard strong enough to secure any man in his voyage through this world … nor cared to make his designs and purposes appear as candid as they were by shewing them in any other dress than their own natural beauty and roughness. (i 120, 125)

In his efforts to promote ecclesiastical discipline and liturgical reform 'he never studied the best ways to those ends; he thought, it may be, that any art or industry that way would discredit, at least make the integrity of the end suspected', and so 'he did court persons too little' (i 125). Laud trusted not only in his own personal integrity but in the stability of the Caroline state, and

> believed the government to be so firmly settled that it could neither be shaken from within or without, (as most men did,) and that less than a general confusion of Law and Gospel could not hurt him, (which was true too): but he did not foresee how easily that confusion might be brought to pass, as it proved shortly to be. (i 136)

Too trusting in his innocence and integrity to employ artifice and stratagems; too trusting in the existing order to see the fissures in the fabric; too poor a reader of men; in a word, too naive for those times. 'The Truth is', Clarendon reflected later, that he and Laud were alike in one crucial respect, for 'the Chancellor [Clarendon] was guilty of that himself which He had used to accuse the Archbishop *Laud* of, that He was too proud of a good Conscience. He knew his own Innocence, and had no Kind of Apprehension of being publickly charged with any Crime'.[23] Laud seems not to have paid enough attention to Christ's mandate to his disciples: 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves'.[24]

These fraught circumstances presented the adherents of the King with a dilemma which was simultaneously a matter of moral principle and of practical statecraft, for the deceitful methods used by the fomenters of rebellion were such that 'liberal-minded[25] men would not persuade themselves to entertain, even for the prevention of all the mischief the others intend', and anyone who observed such 'ill arts' 'would hardly give himself leave to use those weapons for the preservation of the three kingdoms' (i 429–30). And so a scrupulous reluctance to use such politic stratagems contributed to the loss of the King's cause. Clarendon recognizes that for one who holds high office in either church or state, purity and strict adherence to law are essential, yet can also be liabilities.

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[22] Clarendon's assessment is comparable with that of Cromwell's most recent biographer, Ronald Hutton, who writes: 'He was courageous, devout, resolute, principled, intelligent, eloquent, able, adaptable and dedicated, but also self-seeking, unscrupulous, dishonest, manipulative, vindictive and bloodthirsty: definitely not somebody to be taken simply at his word' (*The Making of Oliver Cromwell* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), p. 338).

[23] *Life*, iii 812.

[24] Matthew, x 16.

[25] *liberal-minded*] The *OED*'s definition 'having a generous character or disposition' does not quite match Clarendon's sense here, which is rather 'nobly-minded', 'honourably-minded'.

As bitter debate turned into open war, deceit began to be commonplace. Lawlessness and duplicity at Westminster were paralleled by a breakdown in the laws of war and codes of military honour, as if the country were descending into a Hobbesian state of nature, 'a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man', for 'Where there is no common Power, there is no Law', a condition which Hobbes illustrates by evoking 'the manner of life, which men that have formerly lived under a peacefull government, use to degenerate into, in a civill Warre'.[26] This breakdown of moral codes is evident primarily on the Parliamentarian side, though Clarendon also charts in detail the outrages perpetrated by Sir Richard Grenville, the royalist commander in the West Country (iv 64–70), who was accused by Cornish commissioners of 'several exorbitances and strange acts of tyranny' (iv 58), such as imprisoning people for imagined offences, and hanging a man without trial (iv 134, 60).[27] Clarendon also condemns the violation by the King's soldiers of the articles of surrender at Bristol: 'I wish', he says, 'I could excuse those swervings from justice and right, which were too frequently practised against contracts, under the notion that they with whom they were made were rebels, and could not be too ill used; when, as the cause deserved, so it needed, all the ingenuity and integrity in the propugners of it' (iii 112).[28] Soldiers captured and released by the King after they had sworn not to bear arms against him were told by Parliamentarian chaplains that they were not bound by that oath (ii 402). Articles of neutrality agreed by both sides in Yorkshire were repudiated by Parliament, while Fairfax and his associates who had signed the agreement 'contrary to their solemn promise and engagement, prepared themselves to bear a part in the war, and made all haste to levy men'. By contrast, the King's supporters in Yorkshire 'were so precise in promises and their personal undertakings … whilst the other exposed their honours for any present temporary conveniences' (ii 463). Two messengers sent from Oxford by the King to convey writs for the adjournment of the legal term were arrested as spies, and one of them executed (iii 252–3). When Colchester surrendered to Fairfax, the commanding officers Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle were promptly shot without being allowed to speak in their own defence (iv 387), so egregious an outrage that Nature herself protested, for it was said that no grass would grow on the spot where the two friends fell.[29]

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[26] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by Noel Malcolm, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012), ii 194–6.

[27] The man whom Grenville hanged as a spy was the lawyer who had previously acted for Grenville's estranged wife (Ian Roy in *ODNB*; Amos C. Miller, *Sir Richard Grenville of the Civil War* (London: Phillimore, 1979), p. 73). Clarendon seems not to have exaggerated Grenville's ruthless and vengeful character.

[28] *ingenuity*] freedom from dissimulation; honourable or fair dealing (*OED* 3). *propugner*] defender, champion (*OED*).

[29] Thomas Baskerville, quoted in M. A. Gibb, *The Lord General: A Life of Thomas Fairfax* (London: Lindsay Drummond, 1938), p. 203. According to martial law, Fairfax could claim some justification for the executions, since Lisle and Lucas had surrendered to him 'upon mercy', so that their fate was at Fairfax's discretion, whereas the lower ranks were accorded 'quarter', with the promise that their lives would be spared. Fairfax justified the executions on the grounds that the men were 'near to the condition of soldiers of fortune' (rather than principled soldiers serving their King), and because Lucas had broken his parole by taking up arms again after he had surrendered at Marston Moor. Fairfax reported to the Earl of Manchester that he had acted 'for some satisfaction to military justice, and in part of avenge for the innocent blood they have caused to be spilt'. Henry Ireton may have held some responsibility for the decision, and a record survives of an argument between him and Lucas about the legal basis for the judgement. Ireton called Lucas a traitor, to which Lucas retorted that he could not be a traitor in the service of his King. Whether or not it was technically in accordance with the protocols of war, the killing of the two men was unquestionably brutal, and caused outrage at the time. See Gibb, pp. 201–4, and Andrew Hopper, *'Black Tom': Sir Thomas Fairfax and the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 86–9.

Such savage treatment of those who trusted to the laws and customs of war was liable to be justified by an appeal to necessity. No wonder the great jurist Sir Edward Coke hoped ‘God send me never to live under the law of conveniency or discretion’.[30] Indeed, as Cromwell himself remarked, addressing Parliament as Lord Protector, ‘Necessity hath no law’. He continued by warning that ‘Feigned necessities, imaginary necessities, are the greatest cozenage that men can put upon the providence of God, and make pretences to break known rules by. But it is as legal and as carnal and as stupid, to think that there are no necessities that are manifest necessities, because necessities may be abused or feigned’.[31] But who has the authority to distinguish between manifest and feigned necessities? Is not necessity, as Milton has it, ‘The Tyrants plea’?[32] *Necessitas est lex temporis*,[33] said Seneca, and against that compulsion – or alleged compulsion – no moral law has power.

IV Conscience

Clarendon looked forward to a future age ‘when posterity shall recover the courage and conscience and the old honour of the English nation’ (i 349), for by those who figure in his *History* conscience is frequently invoked, abused, and discarded.[34] For him, the truly virtuous man should be both a thinker and a man of action,[35] those actions being directed by a properly informed conscience.[36] Some men were drawn to the royalist cause ‘by the impulsion of conscience’ and their respect for the law (ii 250), men like Sidney Godolphin, who joined the King ‘out of the pure indignation of his soul and conscience to his country’ (ii 457). It is harder to find examples of Clarendon according conscientious motives to those on the other side.[37]

But while conscience is an honourable motive, Clarendon shows that a resolute adherence to private conscience could be as disastrous as its neglect. At many points the King’s own conscience led him to oppose proposals which were put to him by Parliament. When he maintained that his conscience would not allow him to grant his consent to the Act of Attainder against Strafford (i 319), the Privy Council urged the King to set aside his conscience; when he demurred, they asked him to seek advice from his bishops:

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[30] *Commons Debates 1628*, edited by R. C. Johnson et al., 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), ii 545.

[31] Oliver Cromwell, speech to Parliament on 12 September 1654 (*The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, edited by Wilbur Cortez Abbott, 4 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945; reprinted Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), iii 460). The *OED* provides no evidence for the use of ‘legal’ in the derogatory sense ‘merely legal, legalistic’. In associating ‘legal’ with ‘carnal’ Cromwell implicitly places the inner illumination of the redeemed (such as himself) above those legal procedures which are the creation of man alone.

[32] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv 393–4, in *The Works of John Milton*, edited by Frank Allen Patterson et al., 18 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931–8), ii 120.

[33] Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae*, iv 4: ‘Necessity is the law of the moment’.

[34] See Hayward, ‘*Mores*’, and Clarendon’s essay ‘Of Conscience’ in *A Compleat Collection of Tracts*, pp. 162–7. However, Clarendon was often unsympathetic to Nonconformist pleas for liberty of conscience: see Paul H. Hardacre, ‘Sir Edward Hyde and the Idea of Liberty to Tender Consciences, 1641–1656’, *Journal of Church and State*, 13 (1971), 23–42. For Anglican discussions of conscience see H. R. McAdoo, *The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology: An Investigation of Principles* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), esp. ch. 3. One of Hyde’s associates at Great Tew, Henry Hammond, wrote a short treatise *Of Conscience* (1645).

[35] Robinson, p. 37.

[36] Robinson describes this as a ‘pragmatic Arminianism’ in its emphasis on the right and active use of free will (p. 46).

[37] Clarendon does record that Cromwell invoked his conscience when refusing the kingship, though he also notes his distracted manner of speech on that occasion, perhaps suggesting that Cromwell’s mind was not altogether at ease in using that word (vi 28).

> The archbishop of York was at hand; who, to his argument of conscience, told him that 'there was a private and a public conscience; that his public conscience as a king might not only dispense with, but oblige him to do, that which was against his private conscience as a man: and that the question was not, whether he should save the earl of Strafford, but, whether he should perish with him: that the conscience of a king to preserve his kingdom, the conscience of a husband to preserve his wife, the conscience of a father to preserve his children, (all which were now in danger,) weighed down abundantly all the considerations the conscience of a master or a friend could suggest to him for the preservation of a friend or servant.' And by such unprelatical, ignominious arguments, in plain terms advised him, 'even for conscience sake, to pass that Act.' (i 338-9)

Reprehensible though this advice was (in Clarendon's eyes), guilt also attached to the other bishops who seem to have stood aside and said nothing:

> Though this bishop acted his part with more prodigious boldness and impiety, the other of the same function (of whose learning and sincerity the King and the world had greater reverence) did not what might have been expected from their calling or their trust, but at least forbore to fortify and confirm a conscience upon the courage and piety of which themselves and their order did absolutelty depend. (i 339)

In saying nothing, these bishops betrayed their calling – and even their own self-interest. Charles did eventually give his assent to the attainder, a change of mind for which he expressed regret, even contrition, in the *Eikon Basilike*. Caught, he says,

> between my own unsatisfiedness in conscience and a necessity, as some told me, of satisfying the importunities of some people, I was persuaded by those that I think wished me well to choose rather what was safe than what seemed just, preferring the outward peace of my kingdoms with me before that inward exactness of conscience before God . . .
>
> I see it a bad exchange to wound a man's own conscience, thereby to salve state sores; to calm the storms of popular discontents by stirring up a tempest in a man's own bosom.[38]

It was perhaps his wounding experience in the case of Strafford that made Charles adhere so resolutely to his conscience in defending the established church, and the representatives sent from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 'quickly found the King too strongly fixed, to be swayed in a case of conscience by a consideration of convenience' (ii 516). Subsequently, Hyde told the commissioners negotiating a treaty at Uxbridge that 'if a peace could not be had but upon such conditions as his majesty judged inconsistent with his honour or his conscience, no man would have credit enough to persuade him to accept it', and that he himself would urge the King against such a proposal (iii 477). The King 'was too conscientious to buy his peace at so profane and sacrilegious a price as was demanded' (iv 204). In urging the extirpation of episcopacy, Parliament maintained that they 'did not intend to force but only to rectify his conscience', a distinction which did not impress the King, who replied that 'he was well pleased with their expression, that they did not intend to force his conscience; yet the manner of pressing him looked very like it'. When the commissioners 'urged many precedents of what had been done in former times upon convenience or necessity', the King 'confessed that necessity might justify or excuse many things, but it could never warrant him to deprive the Church of God of an order instituted for continual use' (iv 447).

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[38] *Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings*, edited by Philip A. Knachel (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press for The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1966), pp. 7–8.

To stand virtuously resolute by the law of one's own conscience in defiance of apparent necessity can bring disaster upon oneself and others, and yet Clarendon also points out the danger of self-deception in thinking that a small breach of the moral law does not really matter. Discussing the Earl of Holland's decision to desert the King's cause, Clarendon observes that this defection, which cost him his few remaining friends and won him no new ones,

> may teach all men how dangerous it is to step aside out of the path of innocence and virtue upon any presumption to be able to get into it again; since they usually satisfy themselves in doing any thing to mend the present exigent they are in, rather than think of returning to that condition of innocence from whence they departed with a purpose of returning. (iii 199)

Later he remarks in a similar vein that 'So aguish and fantastical a thing is the conscience of men who have once departed from the rule of conscience, in hope to be permitted to adhere to it again upon a less pressing occasion' (iv 497).

Conscience became a powerful watchword during this period, as men appealed to the authority of their own inner voice, often against the laws of the land. In the case of Ship Money, Clarendon thought that the judges themselves brought the law into disrepute, with the result that people considered themselves 'bound in conscience to the public justice not to submit' to a judicial process which had become an instrument of arbitrary rule, instead adhering to what they considered a higher rule to which their consciences directed them, that of 'public justice' (i 87). (This reliance upon individual conscience as a judge in matters of public justice is exactly the kind of eventuality which Hobbes feared, and tried to avert by defining 'conscience' as shared knowledge, maintaining that for one who lives in a commonwealth, 'Law is the publique Conscience'.[39]) Sir Harbottle Grimstone told the House of Commons that the judges who upheld the King's right to exact Ship Money 'did it against the *dictamen* of their own conscience' (i 175; cf. iii 477). However, some on the royalist side suspected that 'conscience', along with the increasingly important idea of 'liberty of conscience', was often merely a convenient cover for less respectable motives. The King thought that Scottish Presbyterians opposed the established church under mere 'pretence of conscience' (i 110). The Army resented the punishment of Anabaptists 'as a violation of the liberty of tender consciences, which they pretended was as much the original of the quarrel as any other grievance whatsoever' (iv 257), the word 'pretended' here hovering between meaning 'asserting' and 'claiming falsely'. Across the nation, 'Liberty of conscience was now become the great charter, and men who were inspired preached and prayed when and where they would ... never was such a scene of confusion as at this time had spread itself over the face of the whole kingdom' (iv 312). Clarendon himself reflected in his later essay 'Of Conscience' that

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[39] Hobbes, ii 98–100, 502.

> Conscience is so pure a Fountain, that no polluted Water can be drawn from thence; and therefore St. *Peter* pronounces a judgment upon those, who, upon their being free, *use their Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness*, cover their wicked Designs under the Liberty of Conscience, and so make God accessary to the Iniquity he abhors.[40]

and he lamented 'that Conscience should stir Men up to Rebellion, introduce Murther and Devastation, licence the Breach of all God's Commandments, and pervert the Nature of Man from all Christian Charity'.[41]

V. Falkland

Lucius Cary, second Viscount Falkland, owner of the house at Great Tew which Clarendon fondly remembered as 'a college situated in a purer air', and 'a university bound in a lesser volume' (iii 180), epitomizes the predicament of a sensitive and conscientious intellectual called to public service in a time of dissension and war.[42] 'He was', says Clarendon,

> a person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so flowing and obliging a humanity and goodness to mankind, and of that primitive simplicity and integrity of life, that if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed civil war than that single loss, it must be most infamous and execrable to all posterity.
>
> *Turpe mori, post te, solo non posse dolore.* (iii 179)[43]

In a world of unruly passions and inordinate ambition, Falkland 'was superior to all those passions and affections which attend vulgar minds, and was guilty of no other ambition than of knowledge, and to be reputed a lover of all good men' (iii 181). While other men took refuge in an appeal to necessity, he detested

> those exorbitancies which had been most grievous to the State; for he was so rigid an observer of established laws and rules that he could not endure the least breach or deviation from them, and thought no mischieve so intolerable as the presumption of ministers of state to break positive[44] rules for reason of state, or judges to transgress known laws upon the title of conveniency or necessity. (iii 181-2)

Having been elected to both the Short and Long Parliaments, he initially formed a high opinion of 'the uprightness and integrity' of Hampden and others who stood for the rights of the subject, and 'believed long their purposes were honest', so that it was some time before he recognized their true aims (iii 182). More dove than serpent, he was 'so ill a dissembler of his dislike and disinclination to ill men that it was not possible for such not to discern it', and on one occasion when the Speaker of the Commons invited those present to acknowledge some service that one of the members had performed by raising their hats to him, Falkland, believing that this service was of such a kind ‘that an honourable and generous person could not have stooped to it for any recompense’, made his dissent visible, and ‘instead of moving his hat, stretched both his arms out and clasped his hands together upon the crown of his hat, and held it close to his head’ (iii 188–9).

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[40] *Compleat Collection of Tracts*, p. 144.

[41] *Compleat Collection of Tracts*, p. 162.

[42] For biographical material on Falkland see J. A. R. Marriott, *The Life and Times of Lucius Cary Viscount Falkland* (London: Methuen, 1907; second edition 1908); Hayward, '*Mores*' and 'New Directions'; and David L. Smith in *ODNB*.

[43] The quotation is from Lucan, *Pharsalia*, ix 108: 'Shame to me if I cannot die simply of grief after you' (Pompey's wife lamenting his death).

[44] *positive*] formally laid down; proceeding from enactment or custom (*OED* 1).

Although he accepted the King’s commission to become his Secretary of State, Falkland was unable to deploy the arts – perhaps the necessary arts – of the politician. He had difficulty in accommodating the weaknesses of others, and ‘was so exact and strict an observer of justice and truth, *ad amussim*’,[45] that he could not bring himself to use ‘those necessary condescensions and applications to the weakness of other men, and those arts and insinuations which are necessary for discoveries and prevention of ill’ (iii 184). In particular, he refused to countenance the opening of other people’s letters ‘upon a suspicion that they might contain matter of dangerous consequence’, on the philosophical grounds that this would be ‘such a violation of the law of nature that no qualification by office could justify a single person in the trespass’; nor would he employ agents who by ‘dissimulation of manners wound themselves into such trusts and secrets as enabled them to make discoveries for the benefit of the State’, for ‘no single preservation could be worth so general a wound and corruption of human society’ which the employment of such deceitful methods would entail. Falkland was, however, ‘convinced by the necessity and iniquity of the time that those advantages of information were not to be declined, and were necessarily to be practised’, so he delegated such methods to others and evaded responsibility for them: ‘he found means to shift it from himself’, as Clarendon puts it, before passing on quickly ‘to speak of his integrity, and his high disdain of any bait that might seem to look towards corruption’ (iii 185). It was, says Clarendon, ‘as if he had lived *in republica Platonis, non in faece Romuli*’ – in Plato’s *Republic*, not in Romulus’ cesspool (iii 184). The quotation comes from one of Cicero’s letters to Atticus in which he reflects that the failure of the high-minded Cato to acknowledge political realities was actually causing trouble for others.[46]

But it was not at Great Tew, nor *in republica Platonis*, but *in faece Romuli* that Falkland had to live and to serve his King, and his high-principled refusal to be *politique* may have preserved his own moral integrity at the expense of that of other men. When the country descended into war, Falkland fell into an uncharacteristic depression. He ‘would passionately profess that the very agony of the war . . . took his sleep from him, and would shortly break his heart’ (iii 189). Hyde remonstrated with him about his habit of exposing himself to danger at the forefront of the fighting, which he thought wholly unfitting for the King’s Secretary of State, to which Falkland replied that ‘it concerned him to be more active in enterprises of hazard than other men, that all might see that his impatiency for peace proceeded not from pusillanimity or fear to adventure his own person’ (iii 189). At the battle of Newbury he charged recklessly through the gap in a hedge between Parliamentarian musketeers, and was shot. ‘In this Battle of *Newbury*, the Chancellor of the Exchequer [Hyde] lost the Joy and Comfort of his Life; which He lamented so passionately, that He could not in many Days compose himself to any Thoughts of Business'.[47] Whatever the motivation for Falkland's conduct at Newbury,[48] it had become clear that this was a world to which he no longer belonged.

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[45] *ad amussim*] precisely, very exactly.

[46] Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, II i 8.

VI. Providence

The moral law may be hard for individuals to recognize and to apply when they are caught up in turbulent times, but there is for Clarendon another, overarching law, which is that of divine justice and providence,[49] which he perceived to be acting through events, even though when he began his narrative in 1646 the country seemed to be 'like so many atoms contributing jointly to this mass of confusion now before us' (i 4), a Lucretian condition of random confusion. Most actors in this conflict who had any lively form of Christian belief scrutinized their own lives for signs of the divine will, and sought to discern the hand of Providence in national affairs.[50] Clarendon, in tracing the logic of cause and effect behind the events of this period, often sees a double explanation for what happens: the actions (or the omissions) of individuals for which they bear moral accountability, together with the secret workings of the divine purpose which may be discerned by the reverent observer.

The second paragraph of the *History* weaves together divine will and human motivation in a long and intricate sentence:

> though the hand and judgment of God will be very visible, in the infatuating a people (as ripe and prepared for destruction) into all the perverse actions of folly and madness, making the weak to contribute to the designs of the wicked ... letting the wise to be imposed upon by men of no understanding, and possessing the innocent with laziness and sleep in the most visible article of danger ... whilst the poor people, under pretence of zeal to Religion, Law, Liberty, and Parliaments ... are furiously hurried into actions introducing Atheism, and dissolving all the elements of Christian Religion, cancelling all obligations, and destroying all foundations of Law and Liberty ... I say, though the immediate finger and wrath of God must be acknowledged in these perplexities and distractions, yet he who shall diligently observe the distempers and conjunctures of time, the ambition, pride, and folly of persons, and the sudden growth of wickedness ... will find all this bulk of misery to have proceeded, and to have been brought upon us, from the same natural causes and means which have usually attended kingdoms swoln with long plenty, pride, and excess, towards some signal mortification, and castigation of Heaven. (i 1-2).

The *History* will reveal the hand of God at work in 'infatuating' a people 'ripe and prepared for destruction' as in some books of the Old Testament, but natural and supernatural causes lie braided together here; indeed, for a devout seventeenth-century mind there would be a distinction but no disjunction between the two forms of causation. The surfeit of 'pride and excess' led to the judgement of God upon the nation, a 'mortification' and 'castigation' of the people, which is also what tends to happen naturally – that is, it is natural to the body politic – in kingdoms 'swoln' by such vices, as in individuals corrupted by their passions.

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[47] *Life*, i 164.

[48] See Marriott, pp. 316–323, for a careful evaluation of the different testimonies to Falkland's actions and his state of mind. Smith's statement in *ODNB* that his death was 'tantamount to suicide' seems an undue simplification.

[49] See Michael Finlayson, 'Clarendon, Providence and the Historical Revolution', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 22 (1990), 607–32.

[50] See Worden, chs. 1 and 2.

Clarendon sees a form of logic or ironic symmetry to some events which he reads as an illustration of God's justice – for example, 'that the same principles, and the same application of those principles, should be used to the wresting all sovereign power from the Crown, which the Crown had a little before made use of for the extending its authority and power beyond its bounds, to the prejudice of the just rights of the subject' (ii 85–6). Events are frequently attributed to God's general or particular providence (iii 316, 360; iv 3; v 111; vi 143), as happened when the King seemed so trapped in the Midlands that 'nothing but Providence could conduct him out of that labyrinth'; yet 'the King gave not himself over', he says, implying that Charles despaired neither of human nor of divine resources (iv 126–7). God's justice seems apparent in the fate of Sir John Hotham and his son (iii 526, 529), or in that of Colonel Morrice, who 'by a wonderful act of Providence was put to death in the same place where he had committed a fault against the King' (iv 406). The oppressions of the Protectorate were 'manifestations of God's vengeance upon those ingrateful nations' (vi 4), and the Commonwealth was eventually ended by God 'in a wonderful manner' with 'miraculous expedition' (vi 234). 'Many visible impressions of the immediate hand of God' could be seen in the escape of Charles II after the Battle of Worcester (v 194), so that

> we may reasonably look upon the whole as the inspiration and conduct of God Almighty, as a manifestation of his power and glory, and for the conviction of that whole nation, which had sinned so grievously; and if it hath not wrought that effect in both, it hath rendered both the more unexcusable. (v 214)

Sagacious observers thought that Cromwell's refusal of the crown (which Clarendon attributes to an 'infatuation'[51]) was 'an immediate act of Almighty God towards the King's restoration' (vi 29), a Restoration eventually brought about not by Monck alone, 'the whole machine being so infinitely above his strength, that it could be only moved by a divine hand' (vi 164). And this happened only in God's good time, for he 'reserved the deliverance and restoration of the King to himself, and resolved to accomplish it when there appeared least hope of it and least worldly means to bring it to pass' (v 274).

Nevertheless, and despite such acknowledgements that men are ultimately subject to the divine law, Clarendon emphasizes that within the framework of God's purposes there remains individual responsibility: 'There were so many miraculous circumstances contributed to his [the King's] ruin, that men might well think that heaven and earth conspired it, and that the stars designed it', and yet this ruin was brought about by individuals who betrayed him or were intimidated by the power of Parliament (iv 491). As he reflected in his essay 'Of Patience in Adversity', written during his second exile in Montpellier in 1669, trust in Providence is no excuse for inactivity, for 'if we sit still, and without any Industry of our own look for supernatural Deliverance, we presume to put God to a Miracle, which he will work for us, and that he will countenance our lethargick Laziness'. Yet if inaction may be culpable, neither is a plea of necessity to be accepted as an excuse for acting in violation of the divine law: 'God expects we should perform all on our Parts that is lawful to be done for our own behoof; but when we have done that, he will have us rely on him for our Deliverance, how distant soever it seems from us, rather than attempt to deliver our selves by any means not agreeable to his precise Pleasure'.[52] For every man's actions, whether motivated by ambition or laziness, by conscience or deceit, are ultimately subjected to the providence – and the judgement – of God.

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[51] *infatuation*] To 'infatuate' is 'to turn (counsels, etc.) into folly, to reduce to foolishness, exhibit the foolishness of; to confound, frustrate, bring to nought' (*OED* 1). Clarendon means that God has intervened to turn Cromwell's mind to folly in rejecting the crown.

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[52] *Compleat Collection of Tracts*, pp. 124–5. See also his essay 'Of Industry', pp. 145–6.

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