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Sir Walter Raleigh's Legacy:
His *History of the World* in the Seventeenth Century

A thesis
presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in History

by
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ABSTRACT

Sir Walter Raleigh's Legacy:
His *History of the World* in the Seventeenth Century
by
Steven Carriger

This thesis looks at the life and works of Sir Walter Raleigh. Specifically, this study will look at Raleigh's *History of the World* and its influence on two men, Oliver Cromwell and James Graham, Marquis of Montrose. This study will look at the impact this work may have had on the lives of these two men through their letters and public lives.

Necessarily this study will look mainly at the primary sources of these men including the letters and speeches of Cromwell as compiled by Thomas Carlyle and the *Memoirs of Montrose*, compiled and edited by Mark Napier. Obviously Raleigh's *History of the World* will also be a significant part of my research.

This study concludes that Sir Walter Raleigh's *History* had an emphatic impact on the lives of both Cromwell and Montrose, who took strikingly different paths in life.

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PREFACE

As I came in by Auchindoun
Just a wee bit fore the town
To the highlands I was bound
To view the Haughs of Cromdale

I met a man in tartan trews¹
And speared at him what was the news
Says he "The Highland army rues
That ere they come to Cromdale. . .

We were in our beds sir every man
When the English host upon us cam'
A bloody battle then began
Upon the Haughs of Cromdale

The English horse they were so rude
To bathe their hooves in highland blood
But our brave clans so boldly stood
Upon the Haughs of Cromdale

But alas we could no longer stay
So over the hills we came away
Sore we did lament the day
That ere we come to Cromdale

Thus the great Montrose did say
'Highland man show me they way
For I will over the hills this day
To view the Haughs of Cromdale'

But alas my lord you're not so strong
We scarcely have ten thousand men
Twenty thousand English tents on the plain
Are rank and file at Cromdale

Thus the great Montrose did say,
'Highland man show me the way
And we will over the hills this day
And view the Haughs of Cromdale'

They were at dinner every man
When the great Montrose upon them cam'
A second battle then began
Upon the Haughs of Cromdale.

The Grant, Mackenzie and Mackay
Soon Montrose they did espy
Then they fought most valiantly
Upon the Haughs of Cromdale

The McDonalds they returned again
The Camerons did our standard join

¹ Trousers.

MacIntosh played a bloody game
Upon the Haughs of Cromdale

The Gordons boldly did advance
The Fraizers fought with sword and lance
The Grahams they made the heads to dance
Upon the Haughs of Cromdale

Then the loyal Stewarts with Montrose
So boldly set upon the foe
Laid then low with highland blows
Upon the Haughs of Cromdale

Of the twenty thousand of Cromwell's men
One thousand fled to Aberdeen,
The rest of them lie on the plain
Upon the Haughs of Cromdale."²

² Michael Brander, *Scottish and Border Battles and Ballads*,
(London: Seeley Service and Company, Ltd., 1975), 187-89.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sir Walter Raleigh was a Renaissance man. An expert poet and a celebrated mariner, one who excelled in many professions in between, this jack-of-all-trades plowed the furrows of the English language, skillfully guiding the ship of his fortunes through the tumultuous political sea of late Tudor and Early Stuart England. He sought adventure on the Spanish Main, dared to attack the Spanish stronghold of Cadiz, and searched the jungles of Guiana for the fabled El Dorado. Home in England Raleigh composed some of the most beautiful poetry and prose of his time. During a stay in Ireland he aided, albeit as an editor, Edmund Spenser in his composition of his *magnum opus*, *The Fairy Queen*; and did, in fact, write a prefatory sonnet to that great work of literature. Raleigh also penned a reply to that most ubiquitous of Elizabethan poems, "The Shepherd to his Love" of Kit Marlowe.

Among many, however, Raleigh was known for less romantic and courtly reasons. Nobles detested him for his meteoric rise in royal favor, merchants loathed this parvenu for his control over notorious monopolies, and even King James called one of Raleigh's most enduring legacies,

that of tobacco, that vile weed.³ Raleigh's fortunes precipitously declined with the ascension of James VI of Scotland to the throne of England as James I. But the more his fiscal and political stock waned, the greater his reputation with commoners grew. Put on trial for his life on the dubious and unsubstantiated charge of being an associate of one proven to have been plotting to take the king's life, Raleigh defended himself with great aplomb, to the chagrin of the king's councilors and especially to that of Sir Edward Coke, the greatest judicial mind of his age. Despite his endearing performance, Raleigh's death sentence was likely a forgone conclusion. At the last second, his life and that of three other men was spared by a commandment from James, and Raleigh was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Tower of London.⁴ He was not content with his incarcerated state and set to work devising a return to good fortune for his wife, his sons, and himself. Perceiving his inability to regain the favor of James, Raleigh poured all his efforts into obtaining the favor of the king's first-born son, Prince Henry.

³ King James I, "A Counterblast to Tobacco," ed. Dan Boneva, archived at <http://www.la.texas.edu/research/poltheory/james/blaste>. Although Raleigh did not bring tobacco to England it was and still is commonly attributed to him.

⁴ Leanda de Lisle, *After Elizabeth: The Rise of James VI of Scotland*; de Lisle presents a readable and moving narrative of the circumstances surrounding Raleigh's arrest and his trial.

In the well-established tradition of didactic literature, Raleigh set out to present the prince with advice worthy of his status, a feat accomplished through a gargantuan work of patronage, his *History of the World*. In the seventeenth century, the Preface to the work "acquired the appropriate title of *Sir Walter Raleigh's Premonition to Princes*."⁵ Teeming with Biblical allusions to modern events, the *History* was intended as a manual for Henry to use to educate himself through the grand, religious medium of the world's history. Even the most devout Puritan could look to the book for satiation of his Bible-oriented intellect. Understandably Raleigh tried to brush over the fact that his work could be used to attack the present regime with impunity.⁶

The modern examples Raleigh brilliantly incorporates into both his preface and conclusion leave little doubt as to his purpose of making Henry a better prince by not making the mistakes of his father and transforming him into a Godly, righteous monarch who could rule without self-serving flatterers. Unfortunately for Raleigh, Henry died while his work was *in medias res* and the *History*, bereft of its most noble patron endured unfinished. Raleigh remained

⁵ Sir Walter Raleigh, *Selected Prose and Poetry*, ed Agnes M. C. Latham, (London: The Athlone Press), 1965, 175.

⁶ Sir Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World* Vol. II, lxxxii.

in obloquy in his prison cell and looked for another opportunity to regain his lost prestige. One presented itself, although from an unlooked for quarter.

King James authorized Raleigh to seek out again that fabled city of gold in Guiana under the stricture that he attack no Spanish garrison during his expedition. Raleigh became ill during the sea voyage and his captain, neglecting Raleigh's orders, attacked a Spanish settlement wherein Raleigh's hopes for worldly salvation died and so did his son, Wat.

For King James an embarrassing dilemma now presented itself. The same man he had sentenced to death for collaborating with the Spanish to assassinate him, now must, at the behest of the Spanish ambassador Count Gondomar, be executed for attacking that same empire's colonies. Remembering Raleigh's public performance at the first trial, a second covert tribunal convened and assented to Raleigh's sentence. The vigor and strength of his last, dying speech from the scaffold ensured Raleigh's fame beyond his lifetime and also ensured the success of that book that James I thought "too saucy in the censuring of princes," *The History of the World*.

Among a list of names said to have witnessed the execution of Raleigh included those of both John Hampden and

John Pym.⁷ No mention is made of Oliver Cromwell. Although we know little of Cromwell's doings in 1618, many distinguished historians believe that he may have studied law at the Inns of Court in London during this time and it is possible he could have attended the execution.⁸ Whether he was there or not matters little because he undoubtedly would have heard of it from countless pamphlets, witnesses, or those who claimed to be witnesses. Nevertheless, Raleigh, one of the last remnants of the days of Gloriana, had perished, leaving only the "beggars" in power in London.⁹

Cromwell began his life as a member of the gentry of East Anglia. He was legally, though not by blood, related to Henry VIII's famous councilor Thomas Cromwell. His family's fortunes were in decline as his relations had been less than parsimonious with their financial resources. After losing a legal battle in his native town, Cromwell was forced to abandon it for the country. Indeed, if not for a generous uncle's legacy, Cromwell might have ended

⁷ A.P. Kenyon, *Stuart England*, (New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978): 73.

⁸ J.C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell*, 15; John Buchan, *Oliver Cromwell*, 63; John Morrill, *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, 24; C.H. Firth, *Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England*, 7. In the case of which Inn he studied at, the debate goes on between Lincoln and Gray's.

⁹ Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 189. A popular rhyme at the time began with the lines: "Hark! Hark! The dogs do bark,/ The beggars have come to town./ Some in rags,/ And some in tags,/ And Some in velvet gowns."

his life a country gentleman. However, to see Cromwell simply as an obscure but fortunate individual would be to miss what was perhaps his greatest asset, his network of friends and relations. New scholarship from the eminent John Morrill reveals the depth and the breadth of the networking among "simple country gentlemen in Tudor and Stuart England."¹⁰ Cromwell was related through marriage to both the Lord Mayor of London and the powerful St. Johns.

Not only did these networks act as a net to save members from indignity, they also provided a forum for the sharing of new ideas. Many of the powerful families, including the Eliots and the St. Johns, were not only patrons of what Christopher Hill has called the New Learning but also actively sought it.¹¹ The material for this new education included the natural sciences, literature, and poetry. However, many of the meetings of the intellectual circles burgeoning in England were held behind closed doors and at night, giving the appearance to some, especially those with more conservative minds, that these meetings were furtive collaborations of n'er-do-wells. One famous school centered around Sir Walter Raleigh

¹⁰ Most work done on Cromwell before Morrill has cast Cromwell in the role of the obscure country gentleman who, through his own strength, pulled himself up to great heights.

¹¹ Christopher Hill, *The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution Revisited*, 90.

was branded, albeit by a contrary faction at court, as The School of Night.¹²

Cromwell was an educated man and based on his letters of advice to his son also an advocate of the New Learning. Cromwell's other letters also reveal his mentality, one that could have been ripped from the pages of Raleigh's *History*. Through a comparative study of Cromwell's letters and Raleigh's *History*, the credibility and seemingly astounding truth preached by Raleigh from his room in the Tower to a post-mortem audience in the seventeenth century is revealed.

Finally, a look at the influence of Raleigh's *History* on a young Scotsman, James Graham, Marquis of Montrose will conclude this thesis. Montrose's affinity for Raleigh's work shows its ubiquity. Born in 1612, Montrose came to see the work of Raleigh, an Englishman, as his favorite book. Montrose attended St. Andrews University and from an early age, unlike Cromwell, was groomed for a place in the great affairs of state. His family, the Grahams or Graems, are famous in the history of Scotland as both warriors and advisors. Montrose did not disappoint his ancestors.

¹² M.C. Bradbrook, *The School of Night*, (New York: Russell and Russell), 1965, 45.

But, what makes Montrose so interesting for this study is that, like Cromwell, he shared the same enthusiasm for Raleigh's *History* but, unlike Cromwell, Montrose the cavalier was a devoted supporter of the "purest Monarchy" of King Charles.¹³ Although Montrose did initially sign the National Covenant, he came to believe that he, much the same as his lord King Charles I, had been deceived by the lies of faithless, inveigling men. In a letter to Charles, Montrose outlined his advice to the monarch because he felt that all the men around him were leading him astray. Montrose had good reason to feel this way because when he was still a young man and had recently returned from his travels in Europe, James, Marquis of Hamilton, had told the king to be wary of such a young and overambitious gallant. At the same time he related to Montrose as a matter of fact that the king had little love for his Scottish subjects. Montrose, needless to say, was given an icy reception at court. However, once he grew older and time bore out the treachery of the men he had once named allies, he chose a historic course that would lead him to his death, one that has many morbid similarities to that of Raleigh.

Montrose looked upon the death of Raleigh as a heroic one and tried to imitate Raleigh's perfection of the *ars*

¹³ John Buchan, *Montrose*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949, 128.

moriendi. He baffled his accusers, wrote a poem detailing the transitory nature of time, and the next morning was hung thirty feet from a platform in Edinburgh.¹⁴ His composure and dignity at his death was enough to immortalize him, even in the eyes of his enemies. One onlooker was greatly impressed that even at his death, when he was pushed off of the gibbet, his countenance did not change.

Neither Cromwell nor Montrose ever declared "Raleigh made me do it;" however, many of their actions were similar to those of Raleigh and the letters of both men offer allusions to many of the themes of Raleigh's *History*, especially corrupt advisors being the ruin of a monarchy. This thesis will argue that Raleigh's work in fact had a larger role in shaping the mentality of the early seventeenth century than has been previously imagined.

Although the doctrines espoused by Raleigh in fact coincide with many Biblical doctrines, the fact that so noteworthy and noble a man, who was in the minds of many

¹⁴ Interestingly, all scholarly biographers see no reason to doubt an interesting and seemingly apocryphal story concerning the thirty feet of rope used to hang Montrose. So, keeping in line with the prophetic frame of mind of the seventeenth century, I choose to relate it here. During Montrose's youth when he was a zealous supporter of the Covenant, he jumped upon a platform in downtown Edinburgh and tried to excite the crowd to follow the National Covenant. A companion, obviously embarrassed, exclaimed, "James, you will not be satisfied until you are hung there from thirty feet of rope!" a prophecy that in fact came true.

imprisoned and executed falsely, reinforced his beliefs in a history of the world. Many at this time still put credence in stories detailing the prophetic battles in the sky between great men.¹⁵ G.M. Trevelyan, the seminal British historian, wrote—"the ghost of Raleigh pursued the House of Stewart to the scaffold."¹⁶ To this, in honor of Montrose it might be added, his ghost also fought for the House of Stewart's return.

¹⁵ Friedman, Jerome. "The Battle of the Frogs and Fairford's Flies: Miracles and Popular Journalism during the English Revolution." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23, no. 3 (Autumn 1992), 427

¹⁶ G.M. Trevelyan, *History of England*, 3rd ed. (1945) p. 338 quoted by Patrides in Raleigh, *History*, 13.

CHAPTER 2

SIR WALTER RALEGH

Sir Walter Raleigh's Interpretation of History

Strengu Raleghes to gestreone,
him geryhmde. His Devonisc ellen
wæs cyð on his deaðdæge. Wyrð þurh
his Dustsceawunge bið gelæfden.¹

Both in the eyes of contemporaries and of later generations, Sir Walter Raleigh was and continues to be a controversial figure. The eminent Elizabethan historian C.A. Patrides acknowledges the difficulty in classifying Raleigh, who could justifiably be called a scholar, a soldier, an explorer, a chemist, a poet, and a courtier.² Allegations of Raleigh's atheism abounded, not only from the people who knew him, but many historians have subsequently made the same misjudgments of his religious beliefs.³ Raleigh was quite religious, although atypically so because of his skeptical and individualistic attitudes. This side of Raleigh's personality is traditionally unexplored by historians and this thesis will to delve into Raleigh's writings in order to prove that his beliefs in fact coincided with many conventional Puritan doctrines.

¹ Raleigh's strength lifted him up to fortune. His Devonish courage was known on his death day. Fate is bequeathed through his studies of the dust.

² C.A. Patrides in Sir Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World* ed C.A. Patrides, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971): 3.

³ Cf. Edward Edwards, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, (London: Macmillan, 1868,) passim.

Raleigh left many poems that give posterity a better understanding of Elizabethan and Jacobean England, and also some shrewd observations of human nature. This study will focus on one poem in particular, one that has garnered for Raleigh the most virulent accusations of his atheism, entitled "The Lie."

Other works by Raleigh also possess a wealth of information that provide clues to understanding his view of the world and God. Raleigh's "Advice to His Son and to Posterity" illuminates some of the ideas that Raleigh thought fundamental enough to pass onto his son and any who wanted to read his widely disseminated advice in the future.

However, Raleigh's most important work, *The History of the World*, develops and immortalizes all of Raleigh's ideas discussed above. *The History*, because of its importance for the coherence of this thesis, will be discussed at length. In his Preface, Raleigh interwove sacred and secular history thus tying the rest of his work into events in Jacobean England. I will also look at the sections of the larger *History of the World* that further develop Raleigh's ideology as expressed in the Preface, especially the chapter concerning the failings of the Biblical king, Rehoboam. Finally, Raleigh's public trial and execution,

along with the speech that he made at the block, are imperative to understanding Raleigh's legacy for the subsequent revolutionaries in England and Scotland as a writer and a thinker. This chapter will look at Raleigh's ideology as it is represented in his work to show that his ideas were in agreement with much of the Puritan thinking at the time, especially the ideas of ill-advisors being the ruin of a monarch and history as a theatre wherein God's will is undeniably shown.

The scholarship of Leonard Tennenhouse has cast a useful light on Raleigh's *History of the World*; the *History* while futile in its intended goal, represents Raleigh's best effort to regain favor with the royal family through an elaborate yet delicate patronage network whose roots were firmly established in the court of Elizabeth I. Courtiers sought favor vigorously, with a "constant concern for patronage and clientage."⁴ The seemingly amorous poetry written by Raleigh and others during the reign of Elizabeth characterized real patronage relationships, and that poetry maintained the lines of communication that determined whether or not the writer would remain in favor at court or, to use an expression often applied to Raleigh's rise,

⁴ Leonard Tennenhouse, "Sir Walter Raleigh and the Literature of Clientage," *Patronage in the Renaissance* eds. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 235.

fall in a similarly meteoric fashion.⁵ While Raleigh was able to remain in favor for substantial periods in Elizabeth's reign, the ascension of James brought with it new centers of power and a new type of literary patronage.

James preferred intellectual and philosophical writings and so the patron-client relationship changed to fit his personality.⁶ His reign brought other transformations to the court and it was Robert Cecil's pre-eminence that marked the beginning of Raleigh's final decline in favor. Raleigh's dubious implication and eventual conviction in association with the Main Plot, an attempt on the life of James I, inspired a heroic attempt, discussed later in this chapter, to confound the baseless arguments of his accusers.

For his troubles Raleigh was assigned to a new room in the Tower of London where he began the attempt to reverse his fallen fortunes. He realized that to have any hope of survival he had to change his tactics in his attempts to regain favor in the Court. These attempts were marked by what the historian Stephen Greenblatt has termed Raleigh's

⁵ Tennenhouse, "Sir Walter Raleigh and the Literature of Clientage," 238.

⁶ Tennenhouse, "Sir Walter Raleigh and the Literature of Clientage," 247.

"urgent will to be heard" whether by "himself, his sovereign, or 'the world.'" ⁷

A genre of literature was emerging during Raleigh's lifetime and gained exceptional prominence during his stay in the Tower. The tradition of Puritan educational writing, later described in the work of Richard Baxter, held history in an important place—"a way by which those who would educate youth may sugar profitable instruction to youth's appetite". ⁸ William Haller in his seminal study, *The Rise of Puritanism*, offers the best analysis of this religious group before the Civil War and looks at this particular type of writing in great detail. His discussions are integral to understanding Raleigh's role in the Puritan educational tradition.

In the period before Raleigh's trial, Puritanism had grown exponentially. Preachers and intellectuals, perhaps best represented by Thomas Cartwright, brought their ideologies to the pulpit and the university.⁹ A generation of young men left their conversion stories to posterity, detailing the turmoil and turbidity of their souls during their youth before they accepted the Protestant truth of

⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and his Roles*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 3.

⁸ William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1938), 101.

⁹ Haller, *Puritanism*, 10-11.

the Gospel. This pious and edifying literature was generally of a private nature, only meant to be read by a son, daughter, or another family member. However, some prominent men and women left public journals in order to help save as many people as possible. Haller writes: "there was, indeed, a very considerable body of such literature which had been accumulating in oral tradition, manuscript and in print for at least a century."

Generally this type of literature was framed as father-to-son advice, but Haller points out that it could also instruct by showing the "Operations of the Blessed Spirit, by which he brings up Souls to God, and Conquereth the World, the Flesh, and the Devil."¹⁰ If Raleigh's work is seen as a part of this Puritan literary tradition, it begins to take on a much broader significance. The *History* is an appeal to James's eldest son Prince Henry and posterity communicated through the medium of history. A typical Puritan conversion journal only concerned itself with the conversion of the writer's soul. However, a king, as God's viceregent on earth, must be concerned with not only his soul but those of his subjects as well. Prince Henry, hope of the Protestants in England, could have made excellent use of the lessons that Raleigh believed could be

¹⁰ Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 101.

drawn from and deducible from the manifestation of God's will in the past.

Raleigh's early poems help the reader understand Raleigh and come to grips with his philosophy. His most controversial poem, "The Lie," has led many to doubt its author's Christian belief. Indeed, in "The Lie" Raleigh attacks the Great Chain of Being itself. Some modern scholars have asserted suspicions that Raleigh did not even compose the verses. However, Stephen J. Greenblatt in his work on Raleigh defends Raleigh's authorship, writing that "there is nothing in 'The Lie' that is inconsistent with Raleigh's writings or with what is known of his thought."¹¹ Nobility, church, and even potentates, all prominent themes in his *History* are all victims of his scorn. He writes:

Say to the court, it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Say to the church, it shows
What's good, and doth no good.
If the church and court reply,
Then give them both the lie.

These lines provide a poignant diagnosis of the problems that the Puritans found in England during the reigns of James I and Charles I. Although Raleigh's intent when he wrote the work is important, his perceived intent, after his execution and subsequent elevation from national

¹¹ Greenblatt, *Raleigh*, 175; For the opposing view see Pierre Lefranc, *Sir Walter Raleigh, Encrivain:: L'oeuvre et les ideas*, (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Universite: Laval,) 1968.

villain to hero, is much more significant to understanding how Puritans like Oliver Cromwell became so influenced by Raleigh's *History*. As a member of an intellectual circle called enigmatically The School of Night, that included such notable Elizabethan scholars as Thomas Hariott and Sir Philip Sidney, Raleigh came under the censure of nobles, perhaps jealous of his meteoric rise in favor, who gave him the title of atheist. But the very studies that provoked contemporaries, mostly in an opposing faction headed by the earl of Essex, to name him irreligious, "led him to an interest and tolerance for many beliefs."¹² The church as well, needed reform. For Puritans the Tudor Reformation was only half the battle; a "root and branch" reform was needed to fully extricate God's elect from the snares of worldly corpulence.

Not only did Raleigh attack the church and the court in "The Lie," but he attacked something much more ferocious, the "potentate." The church was effectively defanged by Henry VIII, but the court was now under the firm control of the most potent of the potentates, namely the sovereign. Raleigh continues:

Tell potentates they live
Acting by others' action;

¹² M.C. Bradbrook, *The School of Night*, (New York: Russell and Russell), 1965, 45.

Not loved unless they give,
Not strong but by a faction.
If potentates reply,
Give potentates the lie.

Raleigh is telling his reader to tell potentates that they are liars. He may not have intended for his work to be read as permission to tell the monarch that he or she was perfidious, but he was purposefully vague in his language of "potentate" in order to allow it to be interpreted however the reader wished without endangering himself. When read from the mindset of a Puritan in the seventeenth century during the reign of Charles I, these words could indeed seem like divine sapience. The court, its masques, the king's over-mighty favorites, Arminianism; it all reeked of the extravagance expected in Popish countries, not in God's realm of England.

Raleigh knew that the evidence to indict him for treasonable dealings with Spain was circumstantial. He entered the room of his trial at eight in the morning prepared to defend his life.¹³ Standing against him for the prosecution was one of the most subtle legal minds of the age, that of Sir Edward Coke. Raleigh began by entering a plea of not guilty. Coke asked him a vague question and

¹³ Leanda de Lisle, *After Elizabeth: The Rise of James of Scotland and the Struggle for the Throne of England*, (New York: Ballantine Books), 2005, 262-282. De Lisle offers a riveting account of the trial and the excellent speeches made by Raleigh.

Raleigh, sensitive to the trap, replied that if Coke would provide evidence he would confess himself to be "the most horrible traitor that ever lived, and worthy to be crucified with a thousand torments".¹⁴ Coke told him not to speak, but Raleigh answered, "It concerns my life".¹⁵ Sir Edward replied that Lord Cobham had implicated Raleigh as the instigator of the Main Plot, to which Raleigh retorted, if Cobham was a traitor, what did that fact have to with himself. Coke, exasperated, began to call Raleigh names—"I thou thee thou traitor"¹⁶. Raleigh calmly replied that Coke's frustration was an indication of his weakness.¹⁷

His composure was beginning to earn the admiration of the crowd and worry Robert Cecil and his allies. The only evidence that Coke could bring was that of Cobham's confession and Raleigh knew the precarious situation of the prosecution. With his next address, directly to the jury, Raleigh took advantage of the prosecution's imbalance—" [This poor evidence] is that which must either condemn or give me life; which must either free me, or send my wife and children to beg their bread on the streets."¹⁸ Here, Raleigh revealed his trump card and called for another witness,

¹⁴ de Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 262.

¹⁵ de Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 263.

¹⁶ Thou was a derogatory word used with ones social inferiors.

¹⁷ de Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 263-4.

¹⁸ de Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 264.

aside from Cobham, bringing an old law, established by Edward VI's statute of 1552 requiring two witnesses in cases of treason, into play.¹⁹ Although Coke was on the legal high ground with his insistence that only one witness was needed to convict, the two witness law, although revoked under the reign of Mary Tudor, still held a beloved place in the minds of Raleigh's audience.²⁰ Coke could not produce another witness and became angry with Raleigh exclaiming that Raleigh had him at a loss for words. Raleigh, with a customary unruffled dignity jabbed at Coke—"I think you want words indeed, for you have spoken one thing half a dozen times."²¹ By this time Raleigh had fully "caught the sympathy of the onlookers and to Cecil's horror Coke was loudly hissed."²²

Raleigh's fortune began to change and his career as a client took on a new look as a client of the public and posterity. Stephen Greenblatt illustrates Raleigh's change from public villain to public hero through his analysis of Raleigh as an actor through his public presence. Greenblatt considers his performance at trial and his subsequent piece

¹⁹ David M. Head, " 'Beyng Ledde and Seduced by the Devyll' The Attainder of Lord Thomas Howard and the Tudor Law of Treason," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 13, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 3-16; de Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 264.

²⁰ Catharine Drinker Bowen, *The Lion and the Throne: The Life and Times of Sir Edward Coke*, (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company), 1957, 191.

²¹ de Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 267.

²² de Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 267.

on the scaffold as a living art form used by Raleigh to further his reputation. One of James's advisors, Dudley Carleton, astutely saw the moment for what it was—"In one word, never was a man so hated and so popular, in so short a time."²³ Despite his rhetorical achievement, Raleigh was found guilty of treason and sentenced to a traitor's death.

An elaborate scheme had been created by James to spare the traitors their lives but teach them an enduring lesson. One by one the accused were brought to the scaffold and one by one they were spared for supposedly only a brief period of time. Eventually they were brought out together and they looked upon each other baffled and received the news that the king had spared their lives. Raleigh looked on this scene and realized that he too had been spared.²⁴ His death sentence was postponed indefinitely and in the Tower he began trying to reclaim his lost glory in the way that he was most familiar with—the patron-client relationship.

Another work of Raleigh's that shows his desire to communicate certain ideas to posterity is his "Instructions to his Son and to Posterity." In the first chapter of the Instructions, Raleigh tells his son to "take heed that thou

²³ de Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 268.

²⁴ De Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 247-76.

love God, thy country, thine prince, and thine own estate, before all others; for the fancies of men change, and he that loves to-day hateth to-morrow: but let reason be thy schoolmistress, which shall ever guide thee aright."²⁵ With this sage advice, Raleigh instructs his son to place God before all else. He does not maintain the ubiquitous Great Chain of Being, but tells his son to love his country more than his prince. In Chapter III of the Instructions Raleigh writes of flatterers and their abuse of wise men. "Know therefore," wrote Raleigh, "that flatterers are the worst kind of traitors; for they will strengthen thy imperfections, encourage thee in all evils, correct thee in nothing, but so shadow and paint thee in all thy vices and follies."²⁶ (Looking at the complaints of later Parliamentarians against the advisors of Charles I, this advice takes on a more complex meaning for future generations.) Raleigh next delivers advice concerning fights. Raleigh believes that they are to be avoided, but "if thou once be engaged, carry thyself bravely, that they may fear thee after."²⁷ A piece of advice well heeded by Oliver Cromwell. Raleigh also has much to say about those who speak too much—"he that is lavish in words is a niggard

²⁵ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. VIII, 559.

²⁶ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. VIII, 561.

²⁷ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. VIII, 562.

in deeds."²⁸ Raleigh finally sums up his work in the last chapter encouraging his son and posterity to "Serve God; let him be the author of all thy actions; commend all thy endeavours to him that must either wither or prosper them."²⁹

Raleigh's eventual execution, discussed later, ensured his popularity with posterity, but the *History of the World*, his *magnum opus*, gave him immortality. As a testament to its status, the *History* went through ten editions and seven reprints in the seventeenth century alone.³⁰ Beginning with the book of Genesis and continuing into the early years of Rome, Raleigh delves into the Biblical past using ancient scholars to supplement his historical narrative. He disperses among his observations on history philosophical ideals. The most important of these ideals for posterity are his theological approach to the past and that God's will is adducible the telling of history. However, Raleigh's genius lies not in the fact that he looked at history as an ineluctable working out of Providence but in the way that he accomplished it. He intertwines both secular and sacred history in his work, showing that the workings of God in the past continue to

²⁸ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. VIII, 563.

²⁹ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. VIII, 570.

³⁰ Patrides in Raleigh, *History*, 15.

occur in the present; in effect establishing continuity between his time and that of the patriarchs of the Bible. Instead of jumping directly into the ancient past in his Preface, he actually shows how the divine will is visible in the relatively immediate past. He looks at the reigns of the kings and queens of England and the reigns of similar potentates on the Continent. Thus, when the reader begins to look into the events of the distant past, the correlation and immutability of God's will in both ancient epochs and the modern era is easily discernable. History's continuity is established.³¹

Raleigh's Preface to his *History* contains a plethora of examples that provide clues to his philosophy of history. History, Raleigh believes, gives us "life in our understanding" because through it we can behold, living now, "the wise work of a great God."³² History is an object lesson in the divinity of God's will and His presence in history: "Though it hath pleased God to reserve the right of reading men's thoughts to himself; yet as the fruit tells the name of the tree, so do the outward works of men (so far as their cognitions are acted) give us whereof to

³¹ Patrides in Raleigh, *History*, 30.

³² Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Works of Sir Walter Raleigh* Vol. 2, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1829), v.

guess at the rest."³³ For Raleigh, men's actions reveal their thoughts; thus history is a perfect record into not only the actions of men but also their thoughts and the consequences of those cognitions. Raleigh asserts—"we may gather out of history a policy no less wise than eternal."³⁴ This is what makes Raleigh's work so significant as a piece of advisory literature, initially only to Prince Henry, but after his death to posterity.³⁵ The lessons adducible from history as a theatre of God's judgments show the immutable nature of God's will towards both good and bad actions and their respective rewards.³⁶ "The sea of examples of God's judgments on those of *all degrees* [emphasis mine] has no bottom," writes Raleigh.³⁷

His historiography also has dark undertones. Raleigh believed, perhaps understandably given his imprisoned and impoverished situation, in the ultimate futility of all human endeavors.³⁸ The reader detects a sharp cynicism from Raleigh for worldly pursuits as he looks back over his life; a belief quite amenable to the Puritan world-view. He writes of those whom he "know[s] [he] lost the love of . . . for my fidelity towards [Elizabeth] whom I must still

³³Raleigh, *Works*, iv.

³⁴ Raleigh, *Works*, vi.

³⁵ Greenblatt, *Raleigh*, 133.

³⁶ Raleigh, *Works*, vi-viii.

³⁷ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, vi.

³⁸ Raleigh, *Works*, vii.

honor in the dust;"³⁹ and of the hypocrisy of modern men, for many "profess [to] know God, but by works . . . deny him."⁴⁰ Raleigh, indigently opposed to the bestowment of Sherborne, the home for which he and his wife Elizabeth struggled so valiantly, writes that men should not raise themselves up or their "buildings at other men's ruins."⁴¹ However, he has a message for this type of person—"our portion in the world and our time in the world differ not much from that which is nothing."⁴² "There is no man," Raleigh believed, "so assured of his honors of his riches, health, or life, but that he may be deprived of either or all the very next hour or the day to come." The dark transience of life exemplified in these passages shows Raleigh's bitterness with the world and was perhaps aimed as a subtle jab at the conniving of James's infamous councilor, Lord Salisbury, Robert Cecil.

Continuing in this tone, Raleigh writes about those who attempt to put off their moment of redemption until death. "We shall think it enough for God, to ask him forgiveness at leisure, with the remainder and last drawing of a malicious breath."⁴³ "Ill doing," writes Raleigh, "hath

³⁹ Raleigh, *Works*, iii.

⁴⁰ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xxxii.

⁴¹ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xxxvii.

⁴² Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xxxvii.

⁴³ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xxxviii.

always been attended with ill success."⁴⁴ As Elizabeth's Captain of the Guard, he would have seen the just rewards of many criminals, and, having himself faced the three-fold death of a traitor, he could justifiably and soberly reflect upon the condition of a man condemned to death, "towards which we always travel both sleeping and waking."⁴⁵ He poetically compares life to an ever-running stream and a falling leaf.⁴⁶ Of the world, Raleigh believed, "[its] very age . . . renders it every day after other more malicious."⁴⁷ Not only are Raleigh's words and phrases important, but also his skeptical tone. Raleigh was a skeptic increasingly becoming cynical, of the world. Looking at his writing, it is evident that Raleigh was not an atheist. He had no illusions about the crassness of the world, but he believes that one has to look beyond the words of men to look into their hearts; sound advice in any age.

Most significant, for the purposes of this study is the idea that monarchs can make mistakes and concomitantly that their advisors and deputies sometimes falsely represent the monarch's desires. Raleigh adamantly believed

⁴⁴ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, viii; 48.

⁴⁵ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 60.

⁴⁶ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 60.

⁴⁷ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, v.

that "kings live in the world and not above it."⁴⁸ To support his claim that kings are punishable by God's judgments, Raleigh offers an account of the monarchies of England, France, and Spain. Beginning with William the Conqueror he recounts the miseries and blessings that befell the kings and queens of England through the succession of James I. Henry I, Raleigh writes, "both by force, craft, and cruelty . . . dispossessed, overreached, and lastly made blind and destroyed his elder brother Robert, Duke of Normandy, to make his own sons lords of this land; God cast them all, male and female, nephews and nieces, (Maud excepted), into the bottom of the sea."⁴⁹

God's vengeance for the death of the earl of Kent devised by Edward III is shown persuasively for Raleigh in the murder of Richard II.⁵⁰ The cruelties of Richard III were "cut off" by the "immediate instrument of God's justice," Henry VII.⁵¹ As for the capricious violence of Henry VIII, Raleigh believes that the prophecy of Samuel to the king of the Amalekites suffices to demonstrate God's judgment upon him—"as thy sword hath made other women childless thy mother be childless among other women."⁵²

⁴⁸ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xix.

⁴⁹ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, viii-ix.

⁵⁰ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, ix.

⁵¹ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xv.

⁵² Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xvii.

(Interpreted by Raleigh as meaning -"it pleased God to take away all his own.")⁵³ He next delves into the past searching for the record of God's judgments in the monarchical histories of other countries. Raleigh first looks at the son of Charlemagne, Louis Debonaire (the Bald), and his descendents. The violence of his reign God revisited upon him through the rebellion of his sons against his rule. "God raised . . . his own sons . . . up against him . . . to vex him."⁵⁴

After offering numerous other examples Raleigh proclaims "But what of all this? and to what end do we lay before the eyes of the living the fall and fortunes of the dead: seeing the world is the same as it has been . . . It is in the *present time* (emphasis mine) that all the wits of the world are exercised."⁵⁵ Powerfully and dramatically he has answered these questions earlier in his work—"a day, an hour, a moment is enough to overturn the things seemed to have been founded and rooted in adamant."⁵⁶ God, he writes, as revealed through history, "is not partial to even the most mighty of princes."⁵⁷

⁵³ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xvii.

⁵⁴ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xxi.

⁵⁵ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xxxi.

⁵⁶ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xi.

⁵⁷ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xi.

In the first pages of the *History*, Raleigh lays the foundations for the reader to use to interpret the rest of his work. Thus many of the digressions that seem to break up his work's continuity provide the reader with a context in which to read later episodes in history. One of the most important digressions is on Fortune. Raleigh looks into what men call fortune and its workings in the world. People, Raleigh believed, often complain about fortune favoring one person over another. This, he thinks, is not amazing considering the state of the world: "the man which prizeth truth and virtue, (except the season where in he liveth be of all these and of all sorts of goodness, fruitful,) shall never prosper by the possession or profession thereof."⁵⁸ Raleigh argues, as many have, that the truth is never well received. However, he believes that there are a "few black swans . . . who . . . value worldly vanities at no more than their own price."⁵⁹ "So many worthy and wise men depend upon so many unworthy and empty-headed fools."⁶⁰ Raleigh's interpretation of these 'empty-headed fools' who "prosper equally with the most virtuous" is significant later in his work for

⁵⁸ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 41.

⁵⁹ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, xli.

⁶⁰ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 40.

understanding how the wisest of rulers can be undone by bad council and surrounding themselves with "flatterers."⁶¹

The nobility, its various types and subsequent corruption, is another point of philosophical interest for Raleigh. He searches history immediately after the Flood and draws conclusions about a natural aristocracy that exercised authority flowing from their inherent nobility. This nobility he writes was not of "a succession of blood, but of virtue."⁶² The men and women who were awarded the prestige that was in Raleigh's time a mark of nobility were accorded the same deference in ancient days because of their noble character. Raleigh writes of another undesirable type of nobility, that of parchment, which has crept into legality since the ancient world. Of this type of nobility purchased by "silver" Raleigh writes: "But surely, if we had such a sense of our degeneration in worthiness as we have of vanity in deriving ourselves of such and such parents, we should rather know such nobility (without virtue) to be shame and dishonour than nobleness, and glory to vaunt thereof."⁶³ The only type of nobility that Raleigh values is that of those who in their hearts are in fact noble. He acknowledges that some of the men and

⁶¹ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 40-1.

⁶² Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 350.

⁶³ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 351.

women who claim titles are in fact noble, but who that are not should be recognized as such.⁶⁴ This digression on the 'unworthiness' of many who in Raleigh's time falsely claimed their nobility either derived from blood or bought by silver may seem to some to be simply an attack on an estate that had looked unfavorably on the rise of a mere gentleman from the West-country. (Raleigh's motives aside, this look into the seemingly rotten heart of an ancient institution will be important to remember later when Raleigh looks into the aggrandizement of favorites by the kings and potentates of other ages).

When Raleigh begins the main body of his work, he begins with the Creation and looking at the Biblical kings. He presents examples of God justly punishing kings and other "potentates," especially those who exercise their authority under the influence of favorites. Rehoboam, son and successor of the sapient Solomon, provides Raleigh with a figure he can use to draw parallels with the world of the Jacobean court, offering a damning indictment of the Stewart dynasty. At the beginning of Rehoboam's rule "the people presented a petition [to him], to be eased of those great tributes laid on them by his father."⁶⁵ During his

⁶⁴ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 351.

⁶⁵ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. IV, 556.

triumphal march into his new kingdom of England, James I was also presented with many petitions to try and bring to his attention many of the ills that had carried over from Elizabeth's reign, including the hated monopolies.⁶⁶

Similarly to James I, Rehoboam, after receiving these petitions, Raleigh writes, "took three days to deliberate before his answer; of whom therefore it could not be said as of David, that he was wiser than all his teachers."⁶⁷

The next passage, however, must be read in its entirety as the similarities between the events it describes and those usurpations of prerogative synonymous with the name Stewart, decried by the Parliamentarians:

For as he himself knew not how to resolve, so had he not the judgment to discern of counsels, which is the very test of wisdom of princes, and in all men else. But notwithstanding that he had consulted with those grave and advised men that served his father, who persuaded him by all means to satisfy the multitude; *he was transported by his familiars and favorites* [emphasis mine] not only to continue on the backs of his subjects those burdens which greatly crushed them; but (vaunting falsely of greatness exceeding his father's) he threatened in sharp or rather terrible terms, to lay yet heavier and more insupportable loads on them.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ de Lisle, *After Elizabeth*, 120-89.

⁶⁷ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. IV, 556.

⁶⁸ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. IV, 556-7

Rehoboam, unable to discern wisdom from folly, relied too heavily on his "witless parasites," thus he pushed the people of Israel away from his rule.⁶⁹

For a seventeenth-century mind bent on finding understanding for the current times in natural events and in the Biblical past,⁷⁰ this passage seems to have been prophetic of the politically endemic problems during the years leading up to the Civil War.⁷¹ In fact, if one looks at these passages with an allegorical mindset, the comparisons become even more prophetic. The prayer book of Archbishop William Laud, reeking of Arminianism, received a less than cordial review from the parish believers on whom it was forced.

Whether apocryphal or not, one notorious incident of violence supposedly occurred in Edinburgh when Jenny Styles threw a bench at the prelate who was attempting to read from the book. Rehoboam sent "Adoram, one of the taxers of the people, a man most hateful to all his subjects, to pacify them, whom they instantly beat to death with

⁶⁹ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. IV, 557.

⁷⁰ Jerome Friedman, "The Battle of the Frogs and Fairford's Flies: Miracles and Popular Journalism During the English Revolution," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23, no. 3 (Autumn, 1992): 419-42; Maurice S. Betteridge, "The Bitter Notes: The Geneva Bible and Its Annotations," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring, 1983): 57-8.

⁷¹ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and Feudal Law*, (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press), 1957, *passim*.

stones."⁷² After Rehoboam was driven out of Jerusalem, Jeroboam took control of the country and a civil war ensued. Both kings, Raleigh records, "forsook the law of the living God, and made high places, and images, and groves on every high hill, and under every green tree."⁷³ Through this civil war and the humiliation imposed upon the people of Israel through the impiety of their rulers, Raleigh is illustrating God's judgment upon those sovereigns who employ folly as their guide.

In the succeeding section Raleigh offers a bleak prediction for the future of the nations whose rulers behave similarly to Rehoboam. "Here we see how it pleased God to punish the sins of Salomon in his son Rehoboam . . . while he served God, was by God assured against all and the greatest neighboring kings, and when he forsook him, it was torn asunder by the meanest vassals."⁷⁴ Some, however, might argue that the Bible was sacred history, something completely different from that of the secular world and, therefore these metaphorical teachings in the Bible were simply metaphors. Raleigh offers an answer for this as well-

And as in those times wherein the causes were expressed, why it pleased God to punish both

⁷² Raleigh, *Works* Vol. IV, 557.

⁷³ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. IV, 560.

⁷⁴ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. IV, 563.

kings and their people, the same being both before and at the instant delivered by prophets; so the same just God, who liveth and governeth all things for ever, doth in these out times give victory, courage and discourage, raise and throw down kings, estates, cities, and nations, for the same offences which were committed of old, and are committed in the present.

In a later chapter Raleigh writes of the connections between sacred and profane histories and how it is important for the student of one type to be familiar with both. Did Raleigh consider himself a prophet? Probably not, as the next couple of lines indicate. Raleigh is setting down these causes, "that they might be as precedents for succeeding ages" because "God hath punished the same and like sins in all after times, and in these our days."⁷⁵ His intent in writing cannot be more explicit than as it is expressed in these lines.

For a Puritan like Oliver Cromwell reading Raleigh's *History* the lesson is clear in the need for reform. If the king is ruining the nation and the course is not reversed, "famine, plague, war, loss, vexation, death, sickness, and calamities" will be the inevitable result of his sin. In Raleigh's reading of history, God's will is crystal clear.

In the tradition of father-son advisory literature, Raleigh intended his work as a benefit to and to re-illuminate

⁷⁵ Raleigh, Works Vol. IV, 564.

his career under the ascending sun that was James's son, Prince Henry. Raleigh's plan succeeded for a time, until its interruption by the death of the prince. Raleigh, despairing of hope for his future in court, changed the hitherto advisory tone of the *History*: "for the portion of the text written after Henry's death is at variance with the work's original design, both in its method of narration and its implicit philosophy of history; and these perplexing changes in style can be correlated with a breakdown in the patronage relationship."⁷⁶ Thus after the demise of Prince Henry, Raleigh's end came swiftly and was only hastened by the exploits of his men in Guiana in a final attempt to locate the fabled El Dorado.

James desired to be rid of the turbulent relic of Elizabeth's reign but lacked legal grounds for his conviction. After all, James had sent him on his quest, and to kill the man who had only been doing his bidding in seeking El Dorado, but had attacked England's enemy of Spain to the King's displeasure, would provoke much sympathy with Londoners. Nonetheless, Raleigh, convicted by a private tribunal, prepared for a public execution that would enshrine

⁷⁶ Tennenhouse, "Sir Walter Raleigh and the Literature of Clientage," 248.

him in the memory of posterity as the emblem of lost Elizabethan virtue.

Raleigh asked for a delay of execution, but James saw that the Lord Mayor's Pageant was planned for October 29, 1618 and would attract possible spectators away from Raleigh and the show he might put on atop the scaffold. Raleigh had decided to die a "good" and "studied" death; result of "discipline, intelligence, timing, and careful preparation."⁷⁷ His performance on the scaffold to an audience that included John Pym and John Eliot, future hammers of the Stuarts and leaders of the Parliamentary cause, ensured his glorious legacy.⁷⁸ He transformed "a dreadful trial into a triumphant act of will."⁷⁹ He mounted the scaffold and shouted loudly his opening remarks to try and get the more wealthy attendants to come out from nearby homes to the scaffold so he could be heard. After absolving himself of the crimes of which he was accused, he joked with the axeman, refusing a blindfold.

He spoke an immortal phrase, that appears in his *History*. When asked if he would like to face east he stated—"So long as a man's heart be right, it matter not where his

⁷⁷ Greenblatt, *Raleigh*, 15.

⁷⁸ J.P. Kenyon, *Stuart England*, (New York: St. Martins Press), 1978, 72-3; Greenblatt also cites in *Raleigh* on page 19 that John Eliot was there as an associate of the Duke of Buckingham, George Villiers.

⁷⁹ Greenblatt, *Raleigh*, 15.

head lie".⁸⁰ He was executed and his strong wife Elizabeth took her husband's head and body for burial.⁸¹ Anna Beer has provided a detailed summary of the aftermath of his last speech and its implications. Pamphlets circulated memorializing different versions of Raleigh's atypical last words. Typically in Tudor and Stuart England a last speech provided listeners with injunctions against resistance to the state's justice and admissions of guilt of the condemned.⁸² Raleigh's speech did not fit these criteria and as Beer acutely points out, his final speech assured him of a patron-client relationship of a different kind⁸³, a historical one, one that would endure despite his death.

⁸⁰ Anna Beer, "Textual Politics: The Execution of Sir Walter Raleigh." *Modern Philology* 94, no. 1 (Aug. 1996), 19-38; Walter Oakshott, *The Queen and the Poet*, (New York: Barnes and Noble), 1961, 14, 141.

⁸¹Anna Beer, *My Just Desire : The Life of Elizabeth Raleigh Wife to Sir Walter*, (New York: Ballantine Books), 225.

⁸² J.A. Sharpe, " 'Last Dying Speeches' Religion, Ideology, and Public Execution in Seventeenth Century England," *Past and Present* no. 107 (May 1985): passim; see also, Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce, "The Final Moment before Death in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no. 2 (Summer, 1989): 259-75, passim.

⁸³ On the need to be heard in Elizabethan England see, Dewey D. Wallace Jr., "George Gifford, Puritan Propaganda and Popular Religion in Elizabethan England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 9, no. 1 (April, 1978), 27-49, passim. This work illustrates the need to be heard, to see the dissemination of one's ideas, as being a driving force in Elizabethan England.

CHAPTER 3

OLIVER CROMWELL

The study of Oliver Cromwell has produced more scholarly polemic than any other British ruler. Historian Peter Gaunt asserts that there have been more biographies written about Cromwell than any other British ruler.¹ Indeed, it is a tribute to the Lord Protector's enduring appeal that scholar and non-scholar alike have tried to force Cromwell into their own ideological mold to try and understand what made Cromwell such an important figure. He has been seen as a proto-Marxist, a hypocrite, or the paragon of Victorian virtue.² Christopher Hill saw him as "God's Englishman."³

Until recently most serious attempts to gain a understanding of Cromwell have put the Lord Protector into the context of whoever is writing about him, notable exceptions being C.H. Firth's still valuable account⁴ written at the turn of the nineteenth century and that of professor Hayward already mentioned. J.C. Davis in a

¹ Peter Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell*, (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 9.

² F.H. Hayward, *The Unknown Cromwell*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1934), *passim*. Professor Hayward offers a very complete account, for the time that it was written, of all the ways in which scholars have attempted to understand Cromwell.

³ Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the Puritan Revolution in England*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970), *passim*.

⁴ C.H. Firth, *Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England*, (New York: Putnam, 1990), *passim*.

recent historiography and biography of Cromwell brings the contextualization of Cromwell to the forefront of scholarly research while at the same time attempting to understand why Cromwell rose in power to become the first ruler of the British Isles.⁵ Davis, along with another although dated student of Cromwell, conclude that he was able to rise to so great a height through an extensive network of friends, and both their researches provide one tier upon which this essay will rest.⁶ Christopher Hill, another scholar in the study of the English Revolution, provides the other.

In *The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution*, Hill supplies extensive documentation demonstrating that many of the common people of England had been increasingly active in and originators of a new scientific thought that began to be espoused prominently by men like Sir Francis Bacon. Sir Walter Raleigh, in his *History of the World*, developed a formulation of both world and English history providing an intellectual environment favorable for the drastic changes that occurred during the

⁵ J.C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell*, London: Oxford University Press, 2001; see also John Morrill, "Textualizing and Contextualizing Cromwell," *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 3 (Sept., 1990), passim.

⁶ John Morrill, "The Making of Oliver Cromwell," *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* ed. John Morrill, (New York: Longman Limited Group, 1990): 19-48; for an older but nonetheless thorough account see, Stanley J. Weyman, "Oliver Cromwell's Kinsfolk," *The English Historical Review* 60, no. 21 (Jan. 1891): 48-60.

lifetime of Cromwell. Cromwell himself urged his son to read only Raleigh's *History*.⁷

This chapter presents the connection between Cromwell and the circles of New Learning that were developing in England at this time. Cromwell was himself quite caught up in the intellectual torrents swirling around England, and many of his actions were influenced by and rest upon his understanding of the world as it was seen by the advocates of the New Learning, a paradigm influenced greatly by Sir Walter Raleigh's understanding of the nature of history.

Before delving into Cromwell's relationship with Raleigh's works, this chapter must establish Cromwell's position as part of a society that treasured the *History* and how that society came to love that book.

Both Davis and Morrill assert that it was in fact Cromwell's close circle of friends, who themselves had important political connections, that allowed Cromwell to establish a network of associates to support him later in life. Cromwell was a member of a network of the godly.⁸ Davis is essentially battling the long-held interpretation

⁷ Christopher Hill, *The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution Revisited*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 198.

⁸ Davis, *Oliver Cromwell*, 65-87; Morrill, "The Making of Oliver Cromwell," passim; for an impressive listing of Cromwell's relations and networks of friends see, Weyman, "Kinsfolk," passim; also, for a less impressive listing and one centered more later in Cromwell's life, Robert Ramsey, *Studies in Cromwell's Family Circle*, (New York: Kennikat Press, 1971, passim.

of Cromwell's rise as that of a self-made lifting himself up from obscurity, "or, as it might be put in an American context, from log-cabin to White House."⁹ He elaborates on this point writing that while Cromwell did begin his life in political obscurity in a larger context, he is not the self-made man of legend and myth that many historians have seen him as.

Cromwell's family's fortunes were certainly declining throughout his youth as demonstrated by John Morrill in his recent essay on Cromwell's early life. He went to study at Cambridge, but in 1617 his father died and he was forced to return home to deal with the affairs of his family estate. Having seen to his private affairs, Cromwell went to London. At this point in his life many scholars believe that Cromwell went to the Inns at Court although there exists no record of this. Cromwell's earliest biographer, and believes John Morrill, his most reliable, writes that Cromwell's parents had ordered him to study law.¹⁰ Charles's tax on knighthood hurt Cromwell because he was on the fringe of those available for a knighthood and was barely able to afford the price. He seemed in fact destined

⁹ Davis, *Oliver Cromwell*, 65.

¹⁰ John Morrill, "The Making of Oliver Cromwell," *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* ed. John Morrill, (New York: Longman Limited Group, 1990): 24.

for an even higher degree of obscurity until in 1636 a wealthy uncle left him his estate in Ely.¹¹

What accounts for his rise in lieu of his declining fortunes? An answer begins to emerge looking at the events of 1636. "Cromwell's cousinage and network of in-laws was impressive and included John Hampden, Oliver St. John, and links with the Barringtons, the Mashams, and Richs...there were social resources, networks, connections, that could be advantageous to him. There was a context there for the recovery of his fortunes".¹² Davis goes on to redefine what Cromwell meant in his famous speech of September 1654 to Parliament, wherein he refers to himself as having emerged from obscurity. Obscurity, writes Davis,

meant lowliness of birth and Cromwell's self description is in this sense accurate. He did not think of himself as a lowly or isolated individual struggling unaided to make his way in the world. He repeatedly identified himself with networks and informal associations, connections, and throughout his life and career sought to build, maintain, and develop such networks . . . the Cromwells of the East Midlands/ East Anglia may have been declining materially, but were well and powerfully connected.¹³

Cromwell's family had cultivated connections with some of the most influential people in England and his letters reflect these ties. Using two of Cromwell's first letters Davis clearly demonstrates the extent of those networks and

¹¹ Morrill, "The Making of Oliver Cromwell," 19-48.

¹² Davis, *Oliver Cromwell*, 71.

¹³ Davis, *Oliver Cromwell*, 78-9.

concludes—"To think of Cromwell before 1640 as an isolated, obscure individual, whose advancement, if it was to come at all, had to be self-made, is then to miss the context of the networks to which he belonged and in which it was natural for him to move and think."¹⁴

Looking at Cromwell in this context and accepting the validity of Davis's scholarship, a new understanding of the relationships between the men who would be greatly involved in the events of the Civil War emerges. These were the godly men; they saw themselves as the elect of God, chosen for a higher purpose, to act as God's instruments in the world. There were no distinctions made between the religious and the political spheres. For many, religion was life and marked everything he or she touched. Religion tied these men together, whether in political, social, or personal relationships. So, in order to come to a more thorough understanding of the English Revolution one must look at the particular beliefs of the men who formed these networks. Christopher Hill, in his *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution*, fills in this piece of the puzzle.

Hill presents his reader with a view of a reformed England beginning in the middle to late sixteenth century. In this extremely detailed and documented work he cites the

¹⁴ Davis, *Oliver Cromwell*, 84-5.

thoughts of many of the men and women who played a similar role in the Intellectual Revolution to that of the noteworthies Sir Francis Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Edward Coke but are often overlooked. Importantly, he also establishes that many of these people developed intellectual connections to one another to the extent that Hill can describe the circles of men such as Raleigh and Sir Philip Sidney as being active intellectual entities,¹⁵ especially in the School of Night.¹⁶ Hill first illuminates the often dark recesses of the non-aristocratic mind. "England," Hill writes, "seems to have been unique in its vernacular scientific literature and in its level of popular scientific understanding."¹⁷ Books were written not in the traditionally scholastic Latin but in the tongue easily understood by the average person.

When Gresham College was established by Sir Thomas Gresham, "merchant and financier, son and nephew of Lord Mayors of London," the lecturers were told to teach in the vernacular for the benefit of the layman.¹⁸ Hill also points out, quoting Professor F.R. Johnson, that Sir Francis Bacon, "doubly related to Gresham" was simply the man who was able to synthesize and organize an organic and

¹⁵ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 119-28.

¹⁶ Bradbrook, *The School of Night*, 45.

¹⁷ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 17.

¹⁸ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 33.

popular body of thought regarding natural science.¹⁹ The common men and women in England, partly as a result of the Reformation's emphasis on personal experience over precedent, and partly because of the Tudor peace that had reigned in England, became interested in natural science, emphasizing secondary causes over primary ones. Many of the men in the new scientific circles were in fact Puritans, or at least expressed a deep and profound religious belief.²⁰ R.L. Greaves, in fact, believes (based on his reading of the Geneva Bible) that study of the liberal sciences was encouraged.²¹ However it must be noted that other studies, such as astronomy, were considered more "magickal" and were not.²² To put these studies into perspective, however, it was at this time still considered a potent omen and one for heated debate, whether frogs had merely hopped or marched!²³

The scientific work exemplified by that of Bacon, "fortified and gave deeper significance to the Parliamentary preference for the rule of law against

¹⁹ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 16 and 77.

²⁰ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 298.

²¹ R.L. Greaves, "Traditionalism and the Seeds of Revolution in the Socail Principles of the Geneva Bible," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 7, no. 2 (Oct., 1976): 94-109, 104.

²² J. Peter Zetterburg, "The Mistaking of 'the Mathematicks' for Magic in Tudor and Stuart England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11, no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 83-97.

²³ Friedman, "The Battle of the Frogs and Fairford's Flies," 439.

arbitrariness."²⁴ The importance of law is one of the most significant ideas being considered at this time as it promotes law over arbitrary rule. Hill notes a couple of important Baconians: Oliver St. John and John Pym. Oliver Cromwell, being born into the gentry and at least in his early years a fairly substantial family would have been exposed to much of this learning.

In fact, Cromwell did take more than a passing interest in legal disputes. He began his first foray into politics in his native village of Huntingdon. After losing a dispute over a bequest, Cromwell uprooted and moved himself a few miles away to St. Ives. John Morrill explains—"The likeliest hypothesis (it is hardly an explanation) of what had happened was this: that a bitter dispute over the Fishbourne bequest had led to a demand for a more settled charter; that those who had opposed Beard, including Cromwell, were ruthlessly omitted from the new, closed oligarchy, and that he responded by a bitter attack on their opponents . . ."²⁵ The lectureship created by the Fishbourne bequest is an example of what Hill calls the "free adult education" that was springing up all over England at this time, designed to provide educational

²⁴ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 98.

²⁵ John Morrill, "The Making of Oliver Cromwell," 33.

opportunities outside of the scholastically minded universities.²⁶ Although Morrill shows that the dispute over the lectureship was more of a political dispute than one of learning, this incident, complicated by the fact that there appears to have been already three other lectureships at the same time in the surrounding area, clearly shows that Cromwell would have been exposed to the new types of learning that Hill describes these lectures to have offered.

Hill compares Coke to Martin Luther saying that as Luther taught his pupils to interpret the Scriptures for themselves, so did Coke teach his students, including Oliver St. John (a very influential cousin of Cromwell), to interpret the law.²⁷ By teaching people to interpret the law for themselves, Coke was challenging the King's prerogative—"There could be no political neutrality in these matters. An attack on monopolies and royal charters to guilds was an attack on the prerogative: . . .The King has no prerogative, said Coke flatly, but that which the law of the land allows him".²⁸ Hill goes on to show that Coke did distinguish between disputable and indisputable prerogative; the former being a matter of property, the

²⁶ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 35.

²⁷ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 232 and 228

²⁸ Sir Edward Coke, quoted in: Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 217.

latter one such powers as declaring war or peace.²⁹ Hill believes Coke ultimately argued that precedents were as interpretable as the Bible.³⁰ The logical end of this argument is that people who have a vested interest in the law should be able to interpret its statutes.

Hill states that the property laws advocated by Coke were too conservative for some, and these men wanted a "root and branch" reform of the legal system making a complete break with precedent in favor of new interpretations; a reform similar to that desired by Cromwell in his "root and branch" reorganization policy for the ecclesiastical community.³¹ Among the advocates was the Lord Mayor of London (related by marriage to the Cromwells), and such prominent Independents as Bulstrode Whitlocke, Fleetwood, and even the eventual Lord Protector himself.³² Coke's political thought, made available to the average Englishman and followed through to its ultimate conclusions, provides a strong base from which to launch an assault against a ruler claiming divine right over the consciences of his subjects.³³ Cromwell and his

²⁹ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 217.

³⁰ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 226.

³¹ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 233.

³² Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 233.

³³ For a study on the development of the English Constitution see the seminal, Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*, passim.

associates were connected to the New Learning that was developing away from the traditional centers of learning in Cambridge and Oxford. These connections of the godly, established earlier, gave Cromwell a heightened awareness of the changes in thought that were swirling around him.

Cromwell saw himself as God's instrument. He thought of himself as being used to further the will of God. Although easily established through his letters, perhaps the cause of his devotion, aside from the Bible, has not been thoroughly studied. Cromwell himself recommended only one book, *The History of the World* to his son, saying—"It's a body of history and will add much more to your understanding than fragment of a story".³⁴ Cromwell believed that previous histories had not shown the true working out of Providence in history and that Raleigh's provided a more accurate representation of the will of God in history.³⁵ In this work Raleigh establishes humans as the instruments used by God to further His plan. Law, in fact, takes precedence over the unknown. "The whole emphasis of [Raleigh's] History, after a few preliminary genuflections, is on law against chance."³⁶ God works through nature, not against it. Over and over again in Cromwell's letters the reader

³⁴Oliver Cromwell quoted in: Firth, *Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970, 15.

³⁵ Firth, *Sir Walter Raleigh's History*, 15.

³⁶ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 132.

sees that Cromwell believed all was part of God's plan and all the glory for any battle won belonged to Him. As Hill puts it—"Raleigh shows the ineluctable working out of cause and effect at the human level, so that evil action ultimately but inevitably produce evil consequences for the doer."³⁷ Hill even quotes Raleigh's *Prerogatives of Parliaments*—"Should the head answer to the feet? Yes if they are grieved!"³⁸

James himself thought the *History of the World* should be banned for being "too saucy in censuring princes."³⁹ Raleigh was a believer in the rights of all men of property. The way that history unfolds in Raleigh's mind shows many similarities to the mature thought of Oliver Cromwell.

In Raleigh's Preface he states what he thinks to be the determining factor of men's characters—"And though it hath pleased God, to reserve the Art of reading men's thoughts to himself: yet, as the fruit tells the name of the Tree; so doe the outward works of men (so far as their cognitions are acted) give us whereof to guess at the rest . . . Neither can any man (saith Plutarch) so change himself, but

³⁷ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 162.

³⁸ Hill, *The Intellectual Origins*, 137.

³⁹ Quoted in: Firth, *Sir Walter Raleigh's History*, 15.

that his heart may be sometime seen at his tongues end."⁴⁰
Here Raleigh is espousing the doctrine that a man's actions demonstrate whether or not he is part of God's elect. The fruit we bear shows others what is at our heart.

A speech given by Cromwell before the outbreak of the hostilities that would constitute the second English Civil War demonstrates his understanding of this view. He addressed Parliament telling them how loathe he was to begin to fight again. He claimed that he had intended to go home to live as quietly as possible. Of course other factions in the House of Commons disagreed with him. He assured them that he was in fact telling the truth. "That I lie not in the matter is known to very many, but whether I tell a lie in my heart, as laboring to represent to you what was not upon my heart, I say to the Lord be Judge."⁴¹

Another instance important for understanding Raleigh's concern for history occurs when he looks into the doctrine of fore-knowledge. He concluded that God has foreknowledge of everything, but this foreknowledge "Is not the cause of anything futurely succeeding; neither doth Gods fore-knowledge impose any necessity or bind."⁴² God

⁴⁰ Sir Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World*, ed C.A. Patrides, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971), 47; spelling modernized for continuity.

⁴¹ Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches* Vol. I, 426.

⁴² Sir Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World*, 111.

knows what choices we will make, Raleigh is essentially saying, but this knowledge does not force us to make these choices. The world is God's will, but the choices we make can either run against or with the current of providence. In his first letter after what John Morrill and J.C. Davis consider to be his conversion experience, Cromwell demonstrates his firm belief in unbinding predestination. He attests that, "My soul is with the congregation of the First-born, my body rests in hope; and if here I may honor God by either doing or suffering, I shall be most glad."⁴³ Cromwell feels assured of his salvation. He also feels that he is a mere instrument of the Lord, anything that the Lord might will him to do, Cromwell would be grateful simply to be His instrument.

One passage that Cromwell may have found especially interesting in Raleigh's History involves a passage in Book IV chapter II—"Certainly the Princes of the World have seldom found good by making their ministers over great. . ."⁴⁴ Many of the attacks made on Charles were not in fact directed at him, but it was supposed that the ministers had corrupted the monarch. This passage almost seems prophetic when looking at the scandal over the duke of Buckingham and

⁴³ Thomas Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letter's and Speeches* Vol. 1, (Boston: Dana Estes & Company Publishers, 1849), 98.

⁴⁴ Raleigh, *History*, 318.

earl of Strafford that occurred during the reign of Charles I. Buckingham was seen by the general public as a Roman Catholic, a supporter of Popery, and one who, since he was a favorite of the king, had poisoned his ear.⁴⁵ The unfortunate earl of Strafford, Thomas Wentworth paid the ultimate price because he was an evil counselor who was destroying the king.

Having established the nature of both the intellectual life of England in years up to Cromwell's birth well into his adult life, along with the extent of the intermingled web of relationships that connected many of the men who would play a prominent role in the future of the country, it is possible to illustrate the connections between Cromwell, the intellectuals, and his ideology.

Cromwell's first letter, quoted earlier, aside from establishing his connections with influential families also shows him to have been moved by what would be today called a religious conversion experience.⁴⁶ This letter also reveals much about Cromwell's frame of mind. "My soul is with the congregation of the First-born, my body rests in hope; and if here I may honor God by either doing or

⁴⁵ David Hume, *History of England* Vol. V, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1850), 12.

⁴⁶ Although this may not be the case, most scholars agree that it is. see Morrill, "The making of Oliver Cromwell," 37-8; J.C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell*, 79-81.

suffering, I shall be most glad."⁴⁷ Cromwell feels assured of his salvation. He also feels that he is a mere instrument of the Lord, anything that the Lord might will him to do, Cromwell would be grateful simply to be His instrument. Cromwell also, at the end of the letter bids Mrs. St. John: "Salute your husband and Sister from me:-He is not a man of his word! He promised to write about Mr. Wrath of Epping; but as yet I receive no letters:-put him in mind to do what with conveniency may be done for the poor Cousin I did solicit him about."⁴⁸ Here Cromwell expresses his desire to hear from Oliver St. John. Cromwell also seems to have needed the patronage of St. John for a particular situation involving a cousin. Cromwell shared a personal relationship with the Baconian St. John. Cromwell also shows his belief in predestination as determined by providence in this letter. His body rests "with the congregation of the first born." The physical ills that might befall him matter little because his soul is secure and his actions can only elucidate to others his faith.

Another letter displaying Cromwell's devoutly religious and historical frame of mind comes directly after

⁴⁷ Thomas Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letter's and Speeches with Elucidations* Vol. 1, (Boston: Dana Estes & Company Publishers, 1849), 98.

⁴⁸ Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letter's*, 99.

the battle of Marston Moor. Here Cromwell is writing to Colonel Valentine Walton about the death of his son, although one can also read a deeper significance from the letter. "God made them as stubble to our swords. We charged their regiments of foot with our horse, and routed all we charged. The particulars I cannot now relate; but I believe, of twenty thousand the Prince hath not four thousand left. Give glory, all the glory, to God."⁴⁹ Cromwell goes on to exhort his comrade in arms to bear the "trials" that God gives him with the knowledge that his son is in paradise "never to know sin or sorrow any more."⁵⁰ Cromwell describing the last minutes of the young man's life, records him as saying: "One thing lay upon his spirit. I asked him What was that? He told me it was, That God had not suffered him to be any more the executioner of his enemies".⁵¹ He finishes up the letter on a very positive note—"You may do all things by the strength of Christ".⁵²

This letter is an excellent example of Cromwell's frame of mind. The hardships of life to Cromwell were merely trials for the strengthening of the saints. Cromwell himself had lost a son recently and thus could

⁴⁹ Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters*, 183.

⁵⁰ Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letter*, 183.

⁵¹ Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letter*, 183.

⁵² Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letter*, 184.

write at a very personal level to his brother-in-law. Not only do we see the sympathetic but strong Cromwell rising up in these letters, but another side of him also appears. They destroyed the enemy, cut them down like "stubble." No more remorse is expressed over the massacre than if he had been shaving. Granted the letter may not convey the true emotions that Cromwell felt after the battle, but there seems to be even a certain air of excitement over such a loss of men. The young man that Cromwell is writing about shows anguish, not that he was near death, but that he could not arise to kill more of God's enemies. Through this letter we may glimpse the world-view of Cromwell. The trials and tribulations of this world were simply fires that were used by God to temper those chosen to be his instruments on earth. When he chose to take them out of the world to be with Him, they simply pass into eternal life.

Raleigh also has a few words to say on battles, especially the Biblical ones that Cromwell would have enjoyed the most. After detailing how David made war on neighboring peoples and utterly destroyed his enemies, Raleigh makes a small note concerning the fates of the defeated peoples. David, he says, executed the survivors of his battles with "extreme rigor," a phrase quite apt for

the description of Cromwell's rout of the Cavaliers at Marston Moor.⁵³ Two more letters of Cromwell will help to emphasize the way Cromwell looked not only at his life and death, but history as well.

After the defeat of the king at the battle of Naseby, Cromwell penned a letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons in Parliament. In it he expresses his opinion of the events of the battle and its significance. "Sir, this is none other but the hand of God; and to Him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with Him. The General served you with all faithfulness and honor: and the best accommodation that I can give him is, That I daresay he attributes all to God, and would rather perish than to assume himself. Which is an honest and thriving way."⁵⁴ Cromwell is genuinely happy with the outcome of the battle and is exceedingly pleased that General Fairfax attributed his success to the hand of God.

Cromwell believes that Providence is the source of all human actions. God's will moves history towards its conclusion. Man can either give himself and his glory over to that inexorable force or fight a pointless battle with an inevitable conclusion. He also believes that the best

⁵³ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. V, 510.

⁵⁴ Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters*, 209.

way to "thrive" is to attribute all to God; one must never assume the mantle himself. God's will is acted out through humans, humans do not act out God's will, they are a part of it whether they fight against the inexorable currents or choose the path God has deigned for their benefit.

Cromwell died on September 3rd 1658, the anniversary of his two most famous victories, Dunbar and Worchester. Although not given the opportunity to have a public death akin to Raleigh, something of Raleigh remains in the way that he made his private peace. His final words to Parliament, although quite generic for the time, may harken back to his reading of Raleigh: "God be Judge between you and me!"⁵⁵ Some attendants with him during the last days of his life were able to copy down the words and actions in his last days and hours. In his final prayer Cromwell attunes his thoughts to his final moments and appeals to God, thanking Him for making him "a mean instrument to do [the world] some good," followed by an episode in self-depreciation worthy of a medieval poet: "Teach those who look too much upon Thy instruments to depend more upon Thyself."⁵⁶ Raleigh appealed to God to allow his death to be of some use to the world and although the similarities end there between the

⁵⁵ Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches* Vol. II, 287.

⁵⁶ Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches* Vol. II, 297.

deaths of Cromwell and Raleigh, one wonders if the folio of Raleigh's work was in his thoughts when he prayed that final prayer. After all, he may have remembered that Raleigh advocated men such as Cromwell as God had raised up "such spirits . . . in sundry ages . . . to erect and cast down."⁵⁷

Oliver Cromwell was a man of his time. He exemplified the gentry class of seventeenth century England in his associations and education. He was a well-connected man of the poorer sort, but his connections allowed him to rise out of his family's economic decline. His learning was also that of the new kind. He was educated not in the halls of Oxford and Cambridge but through the free lectureships and books Christopher Hill has shown were blossoming up across England at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century in order to provide for the education of the average Englishman.

J.C. Davis is right to point out that Cromwell was not what many Victorian writers have proclaimed him, a self-made man, but one who operated well within his circumstances. He was well read, certainly in the Bible, but also perhaps in other works, especially Raleigh's *History*. It may be fruitless to try and determine whether

⁵⁷ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. V, 311.

the New Learning he was a part of developed his viewpoints, or what he believed simply coincided with this type of education. Perhaps both ways of looking at Cromwell's thoughts are simply two sides of the same coin. Much of the work of Raleigh simply fit into the time in which it was written and Cromwell's thoughts were shaped by them as much as anyone else's who read them. As all ideologies do, these thoughts had their time in the spotlight and grew and changed, as organic as the men who dreamt them. Cromwell is simply Cromwell, no more and no less. His thoughts are there for any who would endeavor to read them, preserved in his numerous letters and speeches.

CHAPTER 4

JAMES GRAHAM

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not out it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all¹

The life of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose could justifiably be called legendary. However, comparatively little scholarly research has endeavored to look closely at him. Montrose's deeds were heroic, including crossing the highest part of the Grampians in the dead of winter to fall upon the rear of his pursuers at Inverlochy along with a victory in face of superior forces at Aldearn. The student of his life, after reviewing what little research exists, is forced to think that had his life not ended in a treacherous betrayal, his name would have been celebrated in story and song up to the present day and the English Civil Wars might have ended quite differently.

Although he and Cromwell never met, a song was later composed by a wistful bard who sang of an imaginary victory of Montrose over the doughty Oliver. At the "Haughs of Cromdell" the two poetic armies meet. First the "English horse" bathes its hooves in Highland blood, then the great

¹ Mark Napier, *The Memoirs of the Marquis of Montrose*, (Edinburgh: Macpherson and Syme, 1829), xxxiv.

Montrose joins the fight and "of twenty-thousand of Cromwell's men one thousand fled to Aberdeen, the rest of them lie on the plain there on the Haughs of Cromdell."² This wistful battle accorded Montrose with a victory, making him a savior of Scotland in death. As in most legendary accounts there is a hint of truth. Montrose and Cromwell did share a connection, but in an unlikely way.

Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*, was a favorite book of both. Having looked at Cromwell's application of Raleigh's wisdom this study turns to Montrose's. Unlike Cromwell, Montrose fought for King Charles. But he also believed in the National Covenant. This curious disposition of loyalty has led Montrose's most recent biographer to subtitle his work—"For Covenant and King."³ Montrose, caught up in the events of his day, left posterity with a tale more fittingly told around a campfire than on paper. This essay turns to the events of his life to try and see what power the thoughts of one of Elizabeth's favorite courtiers had on a Scottish youth who was only six when the man who wrote them was tried and executed.

² Brander, *Scottish and Border Battles and Ballads*, 187-89.

³ Edward J. Cowen, *Montrose: For Covenant and King*, (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1977).

Although the intellectual ties between Cromwell and Raleigh are easily seen, those between Montrose and Raleigh require a closer look. Much scholarly work exists illustrating the intellectual relationship between Puritanism in England and Presbyterianism in Scotland in the late 1500s. "Even from the Reformation, Anglo-Scottish ecclesiastical affairs were intermingled."⁴ The Scottish reformers had in fact begun by using the Common Prayer Book of England, although some, including John Knox, thought it still too riddled with Popery.⁵ The great Puritan divine Thomas Cartwright enunciated the Presbyterian program.⁶ Even in the seventeenth century the Solemn League and Covenant between England and Scotland produced an alliance on a "presbyterian-puritan" model.⁷

Although there is a substantial distance between Raleigh's room in the Tower and the abode of the young Montrose on the highland border, the experiences of one man, Robert Waldegrave, help to illustrate how quickly print culture could bound over the fells. Katherine S. Van Eerde in her article on Waldegrave looks at the printer as

⁴ Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland: Church and Nation through Sixteen Centuries*, (London: SCM Press, 1960), 73; see also, for a more conservative view of the influence of English reformers, William Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England: A Survey to 1707*. (Edinburgh: Donald Publishers, 1977), 92.

⁵ Donaldson, 80-1.

⁶ Donaldson, 74.

⁷ Donaldson, 84.

a link between Scotland and England and because Raleigh's work was indeed printed, it seems appropriate to look at her conclusions about the ties between the Puritans of England and the Presbyterians of Scotland.⁸ Waldegrave is best known for his role in the production of the notorious Marprelate tracts in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Waldegrave was a devout follower of the dissenter movement in England and before he was forced to flee to Scotland in 1590, he printed works of Calvin, Luther, and even those of the lesser known, but closer to home, Puritan ministers. Van Eerde argues in her essay that through the relatively new media of print ideas from both countries, in the hands of a sympathetic printer like Waldegrave, were spread between the two countries more rapidly than if the disseminators of those ideas had relied on word of mouth alone.

James Graham, later Marquis of Montrose, was born sometime in the year 1612; October if the family tradition is to be believed.⁹ The exact date is unknown, but when he sat for a portrait in 1629 affixed to the print was writing that indicated he was seventeen at the time of the sitting.

⁸ Katherine S. Van Eerde, "Robert Waldegrave: The Printer as Agent and Link Between Sixteenth-Century England and Scotland," *Renaissance Quarterly* 34, no.1 (Spring, 1981): 40-78, passim.

⁹ John Buchan, *Montrose*, (London: Houghton and Stoughton, 1949), 30-1.

As a young man, to prepare him for his stay at college a tutor named William Forrett was hired. It was under his tutelage that the young Montrose first came into contact with Raleigh's *History*. He attended the college of St. Andrews where he won the silver arrow as the best archer.¹⁰ He grew into a man and married, and in 1633, left with a few old schoolmates to travel, as was the fashion, in Continental Europe.

Of his personality at this time, writes his most noteworthy biographer John Buchan, "one is reminded of Sir Walter Raleigh."¹¹

Montrose's program of study was designed, at first, by his father, then taken up by Forrett. Napier notes that it included "a curious mixture of learned and romantic study."¹² Sometime after his arrival at Glasgow, Graham chose to relocate to St. Andrews and Forrett, also serving as something of a personal secretary to the young James, noted what he himself had been assigned to take with him and what James chose to take. "As for the *history written by Sir Walter Raleigh* [italics the author's], my lord himself conveyed it to St. Andrews, at my Lordship's first

¹⁰ Buchan, *Montrose*, 32.

¹¹ Buchan, *Montrose*, 36.

¹² Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 22.

thither going."¹³ Apparently, Montrose thought so highly of Raleigh's *History* that he took it with him on his trip to his new home at St. Andrews, while he allowed his other books, even his sword and military tools, to be left in the care of Forrett.¹⁴

Montrose, a well-educated man, would have ample opportunity to look to his studies and to explore the works of Raleigh. Not only was the first edition of the *History of the World* available to him, but perhaps also reproductions of the explosion of ballads concerning the death of Raleigh. John Chamberlain, who worked at the Stationers Registry, exclaimed nearly a month after the execution of Raleigh, "we are every day so full of Sir Walter Raleigh that almost every day brings forth somewhat in this kind, besides divers ballets, whereof some are called in, and the rest such poore stuff as are not worth the overlooking."¹⁵ The scholarship of Anna Beer also supports the claim of Chamberlain.¹⁶

Montrose's spirit certainly had an adventurous turn. Beside the *History*, which he carried with him on his

¹³ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 21.

¹⁴ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 21-2.

¹⁵ *A Pepysian Garland: Black Letter Broadside Ballads of the Years 1595-1639*, ed Hyder E. Rollins, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 89.

¹⁶ Beer, "Textual Poltics," passim, but especially 30-7.

travels¹⁷, he also patronized a traveling poet whom his father and grandfather had also supported. The works of this poet, who traveled to Jerusalem and the other areas in the Holy Land, was of special significance for Montrose as he was willing to foot the bill to have it bound and published.¹⁸ Certainly, Montrose was a giving man. C.V. Wedgwood records some of his expenditures for the upkeep of some poor souls:

To the poor at the gate 2/-
To the poor at the Kirk 4/-
To a dwarf begging from my Lord at his Chamber door 18/-
To a boy who brought some trout 8/-
To some more poor 2/- . . .¹⁹

Apparently dwarves who begged got more financial aid than the rest of the common beggars. Raleigh approved of the nobility of spirit such giving men possessed. He says—"For he is truly and entirely noble, who maketh a singular profession of public virtue, serving his prince and his country and being descended from parents and ancestors that have done the like."²⁰ Certainly Montrose fits these criteria. Thus it must follow that he is what Raleigh deems a truly noble man, one who is like a "pure fountain."²¹

His cavalier tastes can also be seen in his early selection

¹⁷ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 56.

¹⁸ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 57-8.

¹⁹ Wedgwood, *Montrose*, 16.

²⁰ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 351.

²¹ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. II, 350.

of books. He paid to have printed a copy of *Poliarchus and Argenus*, as Napier says, a "historical, political and allegorical romance," that "inculcates, with unmerciful prolixity, principles and maxims of monarchial government."²²

Montrose's most famous poem, entitled justly by Napier and others as "My Dear and only Love I Pray," has been subject to two different types of readings but with sub-categories within each. The poem ostensibly addresses the "love" of Montrose. The matter of debate has revolved around to whom or what Montrose is referring. Mark Napier and John Buchan both read the poem as being addressed to the state of Scotland. Napier sees it as simply addressed to the country, while Buchan thinks it may be a plea to the king. C.V. Wedgwood argues a more literal interpretation in that the work may simply be addressed to his wife. However Wedgwood only offers in support of this theory that it was the "literary fashion of the time."²³ Because there is no record to suggest that Montrose and his wife ever had any marital problems, it seems unlikely that he would tell her, "As Alexander I will reign and I will reign alone,/ My thoughts did ever more disdain a rival on my throne."²⁴ Both

²² Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 58.

²³ Wedgwood, *Montrose*, 58.

²⁴ Wedgwood, *Montrose*, 58.

Buchan and Wedgwood agree that the poem was written, as Buchan puts it, "before the storm broke," in Montrose's life, a year before he would begin his campaigning. Although it is impossible to know exactly what Montrose had in mind when he wrote the verses, the idea that he was trying to work out within himself some of the struggles of the times does not seem too far-fetched. He asks the object of his poem to be governed by nothing less than "purest monarchy." Confusion must not have a part, "which virtuous souls abhor," and cannot "hold a Synod" in its heart, for if confusion gets its way, he will "never love thee more." Later in the poem Montrose waxes eloquent and proclaims, prophetically, "But if thou wilt prove faithful then,/ and constant of thy word,/ I'll make thee glorious by my pen,/ and famous by my sword."²⁵

Two episodes in the life of Montrose did a great deal to determine the direction his life would take. The first of these was his first meeting with King Charles I. While Montrose did have the advantage of many friends, he, in the process of venturing out into the world, also gained enemies. One of the most virulent was James, the Marquis of Hamilton. Upon his arrival back in Scotland from his tour of the Continent, Montrose decided to venture a trip

²⁵ Buchan, *Montrose*, 128.

to England to the court of the man whose honor he was to die defending, Charles I. " A youth of such lineage, figure, and high accomplishments could not but anticipate the most gracious reception from his sovereign," but he was received "in as manner so repulsive as to intimate that his presence was not agreeable to the monarch."²⁶ Hamilton, fearing this "accomplished young man" who might become his rival at court, had given the king a less than favorable description of the adroit youth, citing Montrose as an "over-confident, ambitious young man," (with some claim to a royal lineage) "to whom His Majesty would be well advised to pay as little attention to as possible."²⁷ The duplicity and conniving of Hamilton only becomes apparent when it is seen that he had also played Montrose. He told the young earl that the King was not well disposed to Scots, so that Montrose would not realize that Hamilton had tricked him.²⁸ The importance of these events will become apparent later, but for now the second event which had a deciding impact in shaping the life of Montrose must be related, the signing of the Covenant.

Montrose believed that some of the members of the Scottish Parliament, in his own words, with "far designs

²⁶ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 94.

²⁷ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 95.

²⁸ Wedgwood, *Montrose*, 20-1.

unknown to us" had taken their authority too far. Even suggested was the "total abrogation of His Majesty's royal prerogative."²⁹ Montrose wrote a letter to an acquaintance that fortunately has survived. In this letter the Marquis presents his arguments for the continuation of monarchical government and some of the arguments he makes are strikingly similar to those made by Raleigh in the *History*.

Montrose presents his reasons for supporting the king. "The King's prerogative and the subject's privilege are so far from incompatible, that the one can never stand unless supported by the other."³⁰ Here Montrose demonstrates that he was an advocate of a *via media* between the king and his subjects. He favored a strong sovereign who, "being in full possession of his lawful power and prerogative" could assure the liberties of his subjects.³¹ So then, what could be the cause of the present situation in Scotland that has led to the unhappy state of affairs that had so recently Montrose matched in battle against the troops of his supposedly faithful sovereign? He admonishes the "meaner people . . . great men . . . [and] seditious preacher[s]" in turn, chastising each group for acts that have damaged the Great Chain of Being.

²⁹ Napier , *Memoirs* Vol. I, 223.

³⁰ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 287.

³¹ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 287.

Raleigh himself offers support for a good king. This benevolent monarch rules through virtue, through which God awards them crowns and with it, "the love of their people, thereby purchased, h[ould] the same crowns on their head."³² Montrose in fact had no problem with Charles but with his ministers and the developing religious oligarchy. He, a lover of Raleigh's work, had good reason to. Raleigh writes, "Now concerning the tyranny, wherewith a city or a state oppresseth her subjects, it may be appear in some ways to be more moderate than that of one man; but in many things it is more intolerable."³³ He then proceeds, over the next two pages, to drill into the reader a long list of the evils that befall the liberties of the common man, one who the true nobility is responsible for, when a religious oligarchy rules a kingdom.

A letter written a year later to Charles I clarified Montrose's position on the causes for the present "distemper" of Scotland.³⁴ He outlines the causes, including a xenophobic fear of "changes in religion" that through fear have turned the hearts of his subjects. This he feels is the cause of the average person's advocating the Covenant. However, there are some who would corrupt

³² Raleigh, *Works*, Vol. II, 349.

³³ Raleigh, *Works* Vol. VI, 132.

³⁴ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 311.

the king, offering ill-advice. He urges Charles in a Raleghesque manner to "harken not to Rehoboam's councilors: They are flatterers, and therefore cannot be friends: They follow your fortune and love not your person: Pretend what they will. Their hasty ambition and avarice make them persuade an absolute government."³⁵ He should let his councils rest on men of known "integrity" who are not obliged to their own ends or those of anyone other than the king.³⁶ How hauntingly familiar the present circumstances must have seemed to a man who as a boy had been so ardently enthralled with Ralegh's *History*.

Subjects must never be suffered to "meddle or dispute" the king's power.³⁷ Ralegh believes that if the people were to see the King, that all the rumors and distemper would flee, and a discourse could be engaged in, through parliament, to the better of all. In this statement it is apparent that Montrose believed that any problems he had communicating with the king had been the products of bad advice. The affair early in his career with the duplicitous Hamilton had shown the young man how faithless those courtiers with self-aggrandizing opinions could be.

³⁵ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 313.

³⁶ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 313.

³⁷ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 312.

Now it seemed equally apparent that the citizens of Scotland, bereft of their king for most of his reign simply needed to have a talk with him, without having to go through the men who surrounded themselves around the sovereign like vultures eager for the offal from the slaughter.

The greatest testament to Montrose's admiration for Raleigh can perhaps be found in his trial and death. Cromwell had not the opportunity to be put on trial or die on a scaffold, at least while he lived, like Raleigh, but Montrose, was afforded such an unfortunate opportunity. In an eerie coincidence the trial of Montrose was strikingly similar to that of Raleigh. Montrose's accusers were aware that "he had acted under the king's credentials, and therefore nothing in the nature of a trial could be allowed."³⁸ He, knowing his pleas to the tribunal were in vain, appealed to " 'the righteous Judge of the world, who must one day be your Judge and mine.' "³⁹ The men of the Kirk, being pious Christians, had decided that the Sabbath was the most appropriate day for his trial. Montrose comported himself as "handsomely as he could well do, intermixing Latin apothegms." He did not attack the king,

³⁸ Buchan, *Montrose*, 320.

³⁹ Montrose's own words quoted in Buchan, *Montrose*, 321.

as his accusers had hoped, instead claiming the he was only doing his duty and if that was a sin, then he was guilty.⁴⁰ The fore-ordained sentence was given and when Montrose tried to reply he was silenced. One observer noted that he behaved "with a great deal of courage and modesty, unmoved and undaunted as appeared, only he sighed several times."⁴¹

So, in an eerie similarity, Montrose was taken back to his cell in the Edinburgh Tollbooth where he was allowed pen and paper to write some final words. In his final poem Montrose morbidly contemplates his impending death and his hopes for a heavenly future:

Let them bestoweth on every airth a limb
Then open all my veins that I may swim
To Thee, my Maker, in that crimson lake;
Then place my parboiled head upon a stake,
Scatter my ashes, strew them in the air.-
Lord! Since thou knowest where all these atoms are
I'm hopeful Thou'lt recover once my dust,
And confident Thou'lt raise me with the just.⁴²

Although perhaps not as poetic or melancholy as Raleigh's final poem, "Even Such is Time," Montrose's lines are cast from a similar mold. The last two lines especially speak to the fact that Montrose was a great admirer of Raleigh. Sir Walter finishes his poem, "And pays us but with age and

⁴⁰ Cowen, *Montrose*, 296.

⁴¹ Cowen, *Montrose*, 297.

⁴² Buchan, *Montrose*, 322.

dust,/ from which the Lord shall raise me up, I trust."⁴³
Although the lines are not precisely alike, the tone is the same; a recognition of the nature of life, its slow but unrelenting amble towards death, with an appeal to God to raise him up at the end of time. Included also is an implication, on Montrose's part, of his ultimate vindication through the justice of God.

The next morning he combed his hair, and for it he was harassed by a group of men. He calmly told them that for the time being his head was his own and he would do with it as he wished.⁴⁴ As he was led out to the chosen spot for his death, a detachment of soldiers followed, fueling Montrose's romantic side—"What am I, still a terror to them? Let them look to themselves, my ghost will haunt them."⁴⁵ He was not allowed to address the sympathetic crowd, who, against the urgings of the presbyters in Edinburgh had refused to stone the Marquis as he was brought into the city, but a young man atop the scaffold later to become a historian, Robert Gordon, recorded his demeanor. Like Raleigh he absolved himself of any crime. He appealed to the true justice of the king, whom many of the ministers atop the scaffold had urged him to denounce. He

⁴³ Sir Walter Raleigh, *Works* Vol. VIII, 292.

⁴⁴ Buchan, *Montrose*, 322-3.

⁴⁵ Cowen, *Montrose*, 297.

believed that this death was justly a punishment of God for his private sins, not for anything he had done to imperil God's chosen in Scotland. In fact Montrose insisted that he was grateful that he was to be executed just as the late King Charles had been. He thanked God that he might glorify His causes in his death and offered a prayer for his tormentors. The hangman, realizing the loss that Scotland was about to experience, allegedly shed a tear to lose so valiant a man. He was pushed off the scaffold, a process called "turning" and hung there for three hours before his body was cut down and quartered.⁴⁶ An English onlooker wrote from his window as Montrose was turned, "He was just now a turning off from the ladder, but his countenance changes not."⁴⁷ Like Raleigh, through his carriage and demeanor, observed another spectator, "he hath overcome more men by his death, in Scotland, than he would have done had he lived."⁴⁸ True to his word, Montrose had died carrying his "fidelity and honor to the grave."⁴⁹

James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, led a storied life, one that Hollywood surprisingly has yet to ruin. While his actions were significant, the meaning behind those actions

⁴⁶ Buchan, *Montrose*, 323-5.

⁴⁷ Wedgwood, *Montrose*, 150.

⁴⁸ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. II, 805.

⁴⁹ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. II, title page. He said, "As Truth does not seek corners it needeth no favour: My resolution is to carry along fidelity and honor the grave."

is more important for this study. Based on his life, poetry, and letters, it is apparent that the *History of the World* of Sir Walter Raleigh, which enthralled him as a child, had a profound impact on him. The noted historian of the seventeenth century, S.R. Gardiner, describes Montrose as one who followed his own ideas and in the midst of a polarizing time, was able to steer a middle course for himself.⁵⁰ Yes, Montrose won great battles; his victories at Inverlochy and Aldearn are some of the most impressive ever won on British soil. But what is a warrior without a mind both subtle and quick? Montrose's taste for learning in the classics, coupled with what Napier termed a "romantic" turn and the pervasive influence of Raleigh's *History* were what made him strive for greatness. His life seems almost otherworldly and the noteworthy Frenchman Cardinal de Retz even compares him to one of the heroes of Plutarch; an epitaph that Montrose would have surely treasured.⁵¹ His outlook on the world and perhaps even more significantly the metaphysical, was greatly influenced by his readings as a young man, among which his favorite was Raleigh's *History*.

⁵⁰ S.R. Gardiner, *History of England 1603-1642* Vol. VIII, (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1896), 386-8.

⁵¹ Napier, *Memoirs* Vol. I, 61.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The lives of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, and Oliver Cromwell are tied together by the life, death, and writings of Sir Walter Raleigh. The wide appeal of Raleigh's work is revealed by the disparate backgrounds and careers of both Montrose and Cromwell. The vast difference in the fates of the two men who treasured Raleigh's *History* can best be seen in the respective second funerals as ordered by same "merry" monarch, Charles II. Cromwell's corpse was unceremoniously dug up and subjected to the three-fold death of a traitor, while that of Montrose was exhumed and given a funeral with all the honors accorded to Charles's "great" captain.¹ Both men read Raleigh's work and both seem to have arrived at similar conclusions— to follow their own God-fearing hearts to find a greatness and a place in history.

Cromwell has intrigued many scholars, and, as the chapter about him illustrated, interpretations of his actions and methods are as varied as the people who have done the interpreting. Cromwell was indeed a Puritan and as such the appeal of a work as religious as Raleigh's must have been great.

¹ Buchan, *Montrose*, 325.

Montrose, curiously, has been to a large extent left alone by scholars, save three notable biographies and a couple of compilations of his letters and poems, one by his minister, George Wishart, and another by a patron of one of Montrose's descendents, Mark Napier. As a young schoolboy Montrose came into contact with the work of Raleigh and, as is evidenced by his letters and especially his final poem, the *History* must have maintained a special place in his heart even until his dying day. Perhaps the sighs that he gave up before the tribunal in Edinburgh denoted a bit of anger that he was not to be executed in the same fashion as Raleigh. The importance of the conclusion of this thesis seems to lie in the apparent contradictions in the actions of Cromwell and Montrose. However, as Raleigh says in the Preface to the *History*, "as the fruit tells the name of the Tree, so do the outward works of men give us whereof to guess at the rest."² Although human beings may do seemingly disparate things, their motives may be the same. Both men reveal a devoted love for the reading of history advocated by Raleigh. Both had principles that they adhered to, even to death. Finally, and most importantly, both had a devoutly religious temperament. Although they fought on different sides, essentially the men advocated the same

² Raleigh, *History* Vol. II, iv.

ideas—support for God, the order of His rule, and their earthly country.

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