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Imagine the following proposal for the reform of American society: All representatives of the people would be popularly elected in political districts so small each voter would know the character of every candidate. Legislatures would be peopled overwhelmingly by workers, farmers, and craftsmen. The owner of every large factory would "take every workman into partnership." Each such worker would "receive a proportionate share of the profits equivalent to his labor." Every farmer would be entitled to a minimum of 100 acres of land, but no farm family could ever have more than 2000 acres. Such a proposal was made, not by a nineteenth-century European utopian socialist, but in the eighteenth-century United States by a deeply religious farmer and lay preacher, Herman Husband, who "wish[ed] well to Liberty and Equallity."[1]

Husband called this vision the New Jerusalem, after the Book of Ezekiel, a place where, according to the Book of Revelation, Jesus would come and rule for a thousand years. He laid out his vision in four published pamphlets between 1782 and 1790, and in a pamphlet of sermons which remained unpublished at his death in 1795. Of the many millennialists in America in his day, Herman Husband was the most political and the most radical. And he was the only one who (on the basis of a vision sent by God) developed a full-scale egalitarian utopia.

He believed that ordinary people would predominate in any fair government because of their vast numerical superiority. Moreover, Husband thought that Jesus's Second Coming would be ushered in through the assumption of political power by those who produced society's wealth. Farmers cultivated the land, laborers toiled productively, and artisans made useful articles. The wealthy in contrast "rob[bed]" such people of the surplus they produced, and "live[d] upon their labour … in idleness …. To depend on the labour of other people for a living … especially in luxury and waste is the … [sin] most provoking to God." However, God was about to set matters right. "In the last days, the labouring, industrious people, the militia of freemen, shall prevail over the standing armies of kings and tyrants."[2]

Husband praised and supported the American Revolution, imagining that its popular democratic tendencies were the embodiment of God's progress. He thought that the Revolution heralded an even greater, millennial revolution. But developments in the 1780s, particularly the Constitutional Convention, "introduc[ed] Tyranny" and, in moving power from the people to elites, betrayed what to him were the principles of the Revolution. Husband sadly concluded that it "is the Case more or less in Every Revolution, where the People at Large are Called on to assist & Promised true Liberty[,] but when the forreign Oppressor is thrown off[,] as [popish] Rome over England and as England over these States[,] then our own Learned and designing men Emediately Aim to take their Places."[3]

Born in 1724 in Maryland into a prosperous Anglican slave-owning gentry family, Herman Husband was marked from childhood as intelligent, stubbornly

independent, and resourceful. Puncturing his adolescent frivolity, a December 1739 sermon by the itinerant dissenting Protestant preacher George Whitefield deeply impressed him. The first Great Awakening was sweeping through English North America with the message that each human could know God from his or her own inner light, “the voice of God in his own conscience.” Each sinful human could have a New Birth, enabling that person ”to deny and be master of his passions, … bring[ing] them subject to his reason.”[4] And some revivalist preachers stressed that the millennium of Jesus was nigh.

Husband experienced his New Birth about a year after standing among the hundreds in Whitefield’s audience. His piety deepened throughout the rest of his life, and he joyously awaited the Second Coming. His repeated condemnation of “riot[ous living] glutteny luxery waste and costly superfluity” came from a Calvinist austerity he took to heart.[5]

The inner light doctrine was revolutionary. Arrogant gentry-born ministers of the official Anglican church in Maryland told people what to believe, upholding the authority of the state and a society openly based upon class as ordained by God. Popular criticism of this official doctrine was forbidden. But dissenting Protestants, commencing with the English Revolution in the 1640s, overthrew these hierarchical constraints with a vengeance. All ordinary people could – and must, for the sake of their souls – come personally to know and speak with God. Now people could determine their own religious principles, preach, and even become prophets.

Many common people transformed such antiestablishment religious egalitarianism into anti-gentry political egalitarianism and democratic beliefs, as did Husband. Since each person was capable, mistakes made by "the learned and wealthy" were often shown "to be false by unlearned mechanics and laboring men." With experience gained through governing his family, followed by an apprenticeship in local government, Husband believed, "a Man, who will make a good Mechanick, or good Farmer" will "make a good Assembly-man to rule the State."[6] Husband went much farther towards a belief in egalitarian participatory democracy than his contemporaries. These views would anchor the New Jerusalem.

In Maryland in the 1740s and 1750s, Husband sought that dissenting Protestant group "which most closely resembled the apostolic church," as his biographer Mark Jones has noted. He became first a Presbyterian, then a Quaker – but he still had to pay the tithe, a tax to support the official church. He was "threatned with damages to a thousand pounds for treason against the Church for calling … the tythe, a yoke of bondage." Frustrated, in 1762 Husband moved to the Piedmont country of North Carolina, where a variety of dissenters had congregated in large numbers on rich farmland. This was the frontier of American development at the time, and had none of the slave plantations of the seaboard. He continued as a successful farmer, owning large tracts of land. He hoped to find there "a new government of liberty," but was soon disappointed.[7]

Small freeholders were being cheated mercilessly by land speculators, lawyers, court functionaries, and sheriffs. With poverty deepened by a lack of circulating money, debt-ridden farmers lost valuable animals through distraint, or worked off debts on elite farms while their crops went unharvested. When they made complaint, Governor William Tryon treated them as ignorant serfs, incapable of moral judgment. Ordinary farmers were a lower class to be ruled.

Outrages, culminating in a sheriff's seizure of a mare for taxes while its owner was riding it, brought an explosion of farmers' meetings and protests, and some violence. Calling themselves Regulators, reformers of a government gone astray (a term with English roots, in use in nearby South Carolina), the farmers were joined by Husband as their "Patron," that is, agitator and pamphleteer. Though he personally renounced killing and violence, Husband understood that only the threat of violence would enable ordinary folk to be heard by their governors, so he praised the "militia of freemen." Husband insisted that the common people claim their ancient English "natural rights and privileges," thundering that "God give all men a … true zeal to maintain [such privileges]" and that Regulators acted out God's will in a "Spirit of Enthusiasm … to redeem their Country."[8]

Summing up his role, Marjoleine Kars, historian of the North Carolina Regulation, concludes that Husband "quickly emerged as a spokesperson, arbitrator, and chief political thinker among the Regulators."[9] He was expelled from his elected seat in the legislature and twice jailed, targeted by Tryon who considered him the backbone of the disturbances.

Facing trial in September 1768, and told that he would surely hang, Husband wanted to flee to save his neck. However, his resolve was steadied both by ordinary Regulators who in grim humor said if he absconded they "would let the Governor do as he pleased,"[10] and by the extraordinary devotion of hundreds of men, women, and children who twice marched to free him from prison. Thereafter Husband never blinked at personal harm or death. His faith held true: a petit jury acquitted him in 1768 and a grand jury refused to indict him in 1771.

Husband's Regulator writings began to develop his theme of popular smallholder political and economic democracy. A Regulator petition Husband penned demanded the secret ballot, progressive taxation, a small claims court, a steady paper currency backed by realty, justice for squatters, and the termination of illegal land grants by the Governor to his noncultivating favorites. These "extraordinary" demands, as Kars writes, represented a "wide-ranging, radical, and concrete vision of agrarian reform" favoring ordinary farmers.[11]

Husband's fiery pamphlets were in the same vein. He excoriated tax-paid ministers, greedy lawyers, and land speculators who robbed "Thousands of poor families." Hardworking small producers contributed the most to the community and should be favored. Most crucially, he urged that the people personally monitor and instruct their government, since "the nature of an Officer is a servant to the Publick," and all citizens needed to know their representatives and to learn how their tax money was used. This popular democracy needed to be put into fundamental law. Husband wrote that "when a Reformation can be brought

about in our Constitution … then will commence that Thousand Years Reign with Christ."[12]

Tryon stonewalled, suspicious that farmers "assum[ed] to themselves Power and Authorities (unknown to the Constitution) of calling Publick Officers to a Settlement." The Regulators turned to the violence that Husband feared the elites "Endeavored to Drive the Populace to."[13] The governor's militia with its artillery easily put down 2000 disorganized Regulators at the Alamance River on May 19, 1771.

With a price on his head, Husband slipped out of North Carolina disguised as a minister, using the pseudonym "Tuscape Death." His wife Emy, pregnant, met him in Maryland in 1772, and they moved to western Pennsylvania where they built a prosperous new farm life. He could not stay quiet, however. For the next quarter century he would be drawn into political life.

Herman Husband was enthusiastic about the changes brought by the Revolution, from 1775 to 1785. Democratic constitutional reforms accelerated. The Revolution presented a fine model, organized as it was by "honest and undesigning … Committee-men [elected] in each Neighborhood, who met at the County Towns, and there chose a standing Committee for the County." Pennsylvania's constitution of 1776 extended the vote to all taxpayers, with annual elections to a unicameral legislature. Fondly calling it "our revolution," he believed that the "revolutionary struggle was what he intended at the time of the Regulation." He said excitedly in 1778 that Americans were "contend[ing] for

permanent Freedom" under a popular government "which will have for its Object not the Emolument of one Man or Class of Men only, but the Safety, Liberty and Happiness of every Individual in the Community."[14]

Elected to the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1777, he praised the state's new constitution, especially its adoption of the rights of free speech and freedom of religion ("Union without the Least force or Conformity in Opinion"). Its monumental changes had "been Preparing and forming in the Minds of the Workmen" for a century.[15] By the time the session ended, however, Husband had realized that reliance on free speech and "Annuall Ellections" was not enough. Despite having a majority of radical democrats, the legislature contained a full share of the "same sort of wicked Men … possessed of Wealth" who served their own interests that he had encountered before. The problem was the huge size of electoral districts. Most voters could only know their near neighbors and were forced to vote blindly on the recommendation of the powerful, or for wealthy "unsuitable" people they did know, "Tavern-keepers, Merchants, … Lawyers," officials, and the like.[16] Husband hated the class castigated in the Bible as 'the rich,' who cannot be saved. Only the poor would be saved.

"According to Herman Husband's own account," as his biographer Mark Jones recounts, "in June 1779, while walking through the mountains near Pittsburgh, he underwent a remarkable religious experience." He saw what he later described as a detailed vision of the New Jerusalem in the distance to the west.[17] In the context of the importance contemporaries put on the inner light,

and a widespread belief that Biblical passages referred to their own time, dissenting religious people firmly believed in the reality of visions, prophecies, and dreams. The vision showed Husband how and where the common people would undertake and perfect their governance.

Interpreting what he saw in the light cast by Biblical prophets, since "both the old and new testament was on the subject of Outward Civill Government," he believed that the trans-Appalachian "western country" would become "the glorious land of New Jerusalem." It would be "fifteen hundred miles square," its eastern "wall" would be the Appalachian Mountains, and other great mountain ranges would square off this huge area (see Figure 2, drawn by Husband). Farmers, artisans, and laborers would "at last produce an everlasting Peace on Earth," modeling further democratic change in the rest of the United States. He plucked a leaf from the Tree of Life and "felt its healing Virtue to remove the Curse and Calamities of Mankind in this World."[18] We will return to the details of the New Jerusalem.

Husband spent the remainder of his life proclaiming this good news to all. He wrote short items in almanacs, a favorite of common people. He wrote for newspapers. And he published an astonishing number of pamphlets, probably more than any other agrarian leader in the Revolutionary Era. In addition to five pamphlets expounding on New Jerusalem, Husband wrote the two Regulator pamphlets, an early treatise on his experience with established and dissenting religion, a plan to shift the burdens of the depreciation of paper money from

ordinary people to the wealthy, and a short plea to purchase needed land from the Indians.

The first of the New Jerusalem pamphlets, “Proposals to Amend and Perfect the Policy of the Government of the United States of America” (1782), introduced the vision at the end, as “an American riddle,” after setting forth at length many of his democratic proposals as though the two were unconnected. New Jerusalem seemed to be only the location of Jesus’s Second Coming, and Husband was still hopeful about the possibilities of expanding American democracy. By 1788, however, after the secretive Constitutional Convention had revealed its product and the states were close to ratification, he had become deeply alarmed.

The great defect of Pennsylvania’s constitution had been worsened. The new federal Constitution had made national electoral districts even larger, “put[ting] it out of the hands of the people to have any choice at all” in their representatives.[19] He published a series of pamphlets linking democratic reform with God’s promised land across the Appalachians, and he always carried copies of his pamphlets with him. The most notable of these was “XIV Sermons on the Characters of Jacob’s Fourteen Sons” (1789). A lengthy untitled pamphlet of sermons remained unpublished at his death.

The most important way for Husband to spread New Jerusalem to the non-readers who frequently formed his principal audience in the sparsely populated wilderness was word of mouth. Like many mechanic preachers during the radical Protestant outburst in England a century earlier, this millennial

prophet preached barefoot with unkempt hair and in homespun (like his auditors) in churches and wherever farmers and itinerant farm laborers gathered. After all, Jesus wore homespun. He regaled visitors of all classes about the New Jerusalem.

The highly educated could not hear his message. Pittsburgh lawyer and Princeton graduate Hugh Henry Brackenridge visited Husband's farm in 1780 and contemptuously concluded that his church must be "composed, like many others, of the ignorant and the dissembling." The German naturalist and traveler Dr. Johann David Shoepf in 1783 was "astonish[ed]" at the homegrown expertise Husband displayed in several scientific fields, but was only bemused by his expostulation of the New Jerusalem. Albert Gallatin, Swiss educated, an entrepreneur and Pennsylvania Assemblyman, later Secretary of the Treasury under Jefferson and Madison, called him "the crazy man of Bedford." Congressman Robert Smilie chuckled on the witness stand at Husband's 1795 sedition trial that he had "written some foolish things about the New Jerusalem."[20] The gentry would have no important place in New Jerusalem, and did not want to believe their eyes and ears.

Husband's ordinary neighbors in Bedford County, noting that he did not always make sense, did not find him a "crazy man". Without mocking him, plain farmer James Wilson stated matter-of-factly under oath at the 1795 trial that Husband was "employed in writing upon prophets, & making riddles" and – as though everyone must know what he was talking about – had "found the situation of New Jerusalem [to be] at Kentucky."[21] Other neighbors testified that he was

the most respected person in the county, being chosen chair of local meetings. They elected him to the Pennsylvania legislature twice, to the 1790 state Constitutional Convention, and as constable, township tax assessor, auditor of road-maintenance accounts, and county commissioner. Court records in Bedford County show no attempt by any fellow-citizen to discipline him for poor service in such positions, though it was not uncommon for officials to be so reprimanded. His neighbors marveled at his lack of pretension, his honesty, his frugality and industriousness, and his business acumen. They had no difficulty understanding the New Jerusalem, because it was what they needed and longed for. Husband was giving "the Lower Classes," in his words, "the same Knowledge" as the upper classes, to ensure reform and their salvation.[22]

"The populist and militant thrust" of Husband's New Jerusalem pamphlets, in the judgment of Ruth Bloch, historian of early American millennialism, offered an "intriguing vision of an autonomous western paradise." He envisioned a new society and government which he superimposed on a map of the United States as it was then known (see his diagram, Figure 2). Immediately west of the Alleghenies were the Great Lakes, and the Ohio, Illinois, and "Meshura" Rivers which flowed into the Mississippi down to the "Bay of Mexico."[23] The western boundary was the "Shining Mountains".

Inside the huge "city" of mountain walls, Husband's New Jerusalem was an intricately plotted agrarian utopia patterned directly upon Biblical passages relevant to his vision, with most of its features diametrically opposed to those of

the new Constitution. His chief concern was the common people, those he called "the lower classes." Social, economic, and legal structures had to be put in place to guarantee their continued political equality, achieving what he called proper "balance." The resulting body politic, "made up of different members and classes of officers united into one general interest," was designed to produce "universal peace and distribution of justice, judgment, and mercy throughout its extensive divisions," since "all should have the same care one for another, as the different [parts] of the body natural have for each other."[24]

The best security Husband could devise for the people was a multi-layered, interconnected government that they could control. The fundamental political unit was the township. About ten miles square, so that all residents would know each other, each township would elect its own legislature to coordinate local affairs. There would be nearly 21,000 townships, 144 of them in each of 144 states.

Townships would be combined into districts, while districts would be joined into counties, and counties into states. (See Figure 1.) Each district, county, and state would also have its own legislature. After the township, the most powerful unit was to be the state, "capable of exercising all the powers of government within itself."[25]

States would be combined into "empires," empires in turn joining into "quarters." (See Figure 2.) Each empire and quarter would have a council, while the five quarters together would be governed by a Supreme Council. The levels

of government above states were primarily to provide protection for the people, checks against abuses by the states and by executive officers.

The plan envisioned ordinary people as the rulers. Husband thought that "God sett up the true Republican form of Right Government … in which the body of the People will have Supream Power to choose their [governors], and their will [shall] be the Supream Law of the land."[26] The legislatures, the most powerful part of the government, and the councils (except the Supreme Council) would be staffed by members of the township legislatures, elected by and from among their own members in increasingly smaller groups to serve at the next level upwards. Since most members of the township legislatures would likely be farmers, artisans, and laborers, the great defects in both the Pennsylvania and new national constitutions were solved.

Since people could become eligible for a higher level only after serving a term in a lower legislature or council, Husband's proposal would be "a school to train up and learn [Mechanicks and Farmers] of the best Sense and Principles the Nature of all publick Business." It would give them practice at delivering a public address or engaging in debate. Natural ability needed education, but, well apprenticed, the people could rule, "the Goverment of a Famaly and that of a State being the same in nature." To keep legislators or councilors from venality, they would receive no pay, only their "bare maintenance." High salaries for lawmakers meant the end of liberty, and the distribution of offices "to the hands of a few wealthy men."[27]

Accountability of officeholders to those who put them into office was crucial. Government, Husband believed, was a trust (not, as it is thought today, a top-down, dictatorial business), all officials being "the trustees and servants of the people, … at all times accountable unto them." Men chosen under his plan would initially be "the most likely and best qualified to act," but even good men get drunk with power, "turn[ing] the outward letter of the law to answer their own private purposes." The people must be ready to "venture life and property" to make their democratic government work. Normally, the remedy against abuse of their trust by officials would be complaints, petitions, and eventually voting them out.[28]

The Supreme Council would consist of twenty-four men, elected by joint sessions of the quarter councils. Aged between fifty and sixty when elected, each would serve a single term of ten years and would receive no salary but only living expenses. Four (initially chosen by lot) would rotate off each year. Councilors would live apart from everyone else (in the ten-mile-square area marked "(b)" on Figure 2), would (like a church Board) hold whatever property they had in common, could not marry during their term, and must remain celibate (unless a wife was past childbearing), since without the care of a family they could devote themselves fully to government.

The former rebel wanted to eliminate the causes of rebellion. By majority vote the Council would appoint and set pay for the Supreme Court, divide overpopulated governmental units, and appoint a commander-in-chief of the militias to "quell insurrections" – but only after he inquired "into the causes of the

grievances," and treated them with the "lenity and forgiveness [of a father] when he finds them misguided." (Husband was disappointed that George Washington did not really act as the understanding and forgiving father of his country.) Offensive war, peace, alliances, and the appointment of ambassadors would lie with the quarter councils sitting together – that is, with the uppermost level of persons originally elected by the people in the townships. The Supreme Council's chief functions would be to rent or sell vacant lands after purchase from the Indians, to listen to popular petitions and complaints about official abuse, and "to redress their grievances."[29]

With legislation primarily being made at the state level, the people would be flooded with publicity about legislative debates. Upon passage each law would be read out loud in township meetings for three months. The vote of a majority of townships would decide the law's continuing validity. Empires, quarters, and the Supreme Council might also veto any law. Re-enactment then depended upon six months' broad public deliberation on the veto and a two-thirds vote in the state legislature. Husband provided for no executive veto.

Members of the executive at each level would be chosen by that level's legislature. Thus, county assemblies would appoint jurors, county surveyors, officers in charge of roads and strays, and the like. Executive officers would be merely ministerial, having no hand in the making of laws. They would receive pay, in order to get people to take the jobs. This would make them exactly like servants, who did someone else's bidding – in this instance, the people's.

Husband's judiciary proposals were similarly simple and easy to understand. He admitted that "obtain[ing] impartial judges of the law" was difficult, and that partial judges often "poisoned" juries. Even good judges were "surrounded" with venal clerks and lawyers, "whom our Lord called vipers." Husband viewed the judiciary "as an umpire" to settle controversies and to attend to the "ballancing" of governmental power. He trusted the Supreme Council to choose wise and impartial "elderly men" for the task, but proposed that judges would attend a school where state, empire, and quarter legislation would be kept, along with journals they would make of cases they heard.[30]

States needed to have approximately equal population, "so they may be as equal in Strength to one another as possible."[31] The western country would be founded upon such equality, and when two thousand families petitioned for admittance, a new state would be formed. To maintain equality, the Supreme Council could divide them if they grew too large. The existing states in the east violated this principle, but Husband – who sometimes hinted that New Jerusalem would be independent from the United States – usually thought that the wealth and moral power of the nation would quickly flow to the west, rendering eastern states increasingly less important, and eventually they would reform themselves.

New Jerusalem also was sensitive to the political implications of economic inequality. Because amassing land in one family led to a "nobility and lords to be over tenants – not freemen," Husband restricted the ownership of land. Each person (including women) would be entitled to land, but a nuclear family was limited to 2000 acres. The minimum plot would be 100 acres, guaranteed to

each family in perpetuity. Only by redistributing holdings in excess of 2000 acres, or lands not cultivated years after purchase, could government ever interfere with land ownership. Husband could not imagine overpopulating the vast agricultural plains of central North America. Not an advocate of "development," and a farmer himself, he never expected cities and business to predominate over farmers and farms.[32]

There was a place for industry, too. Husband located a large "metropolis city" in the center of New Jerusalem (marked "(a)" on Figure 2). Here would be "all sorts of manufactories, tavern-keepers, merchants, soldiers, &c." Husband's piercing eye caught the essence of capitalism. He hated the "carrying on [of] large works, by a wretched set of discontented laborers, kept in no better condition than slaves, and subsisting on pecuniary and scanty wages, from one haughty tyrant, living in luxury and waste, yet equally under the same misery, torment, and vexation of mind, how to cheat these workmen, and get their labor at as low a rate as possible." He advocated what would later be called cooperatives, in which the owner of a factory with "a great number of hands … takes every workman into partnership, … to receive a proportionate share of the profits, equivalent to his labor, and stock put in." For each workman to have "an interest in the whole, it will excite industry and care through the whole."[33]

As for state funding, Husband understood that the people disliked "Taxation more than any other Thing belonging to a free Government." Taxes on workers destroyed "that Fountain out of which [Prosperity] rises." He suggested as revenue sources the sale and renting of lands, plus "an easy [annual]

Quitrent" on lands sold. Public monopolies such as "saltworks, ferries, canals, &c." would produce duties. And he suggested excise taxes on alcohol and other "Superfluities of life,"[34] but dropped his earlier idea of progressive taxation. Taxes *always* fueled rebellions.

His most ingenious proposal was to tax the depreciation of paper currency. Unusual for his time, he perceived that depreciation of assets was normal. Paper money had depreciated wildly during the Revolution, causing many Americans to demand a return to hard money, but he recognized that gross swings in value could be regulated by an activist government. Husband liked the wide availability of paper money (as have most farmers) and argued that freeing money from the value of metal would allow the government to seize and stabilize its depreciation. A scheduled gentle, regular drop in value would be printed on the face of a fresh issue of bills. This would solve the cash-strapped situation ordinary people found themselves in. Husband's proposed forced exchange of war bonds for the new money would also get rid of much of the war debt that plagued ordinary folks through onerous payoff taxes. Since most surplus value produced by workers found its way into the pockets of landlords, merchants, tavern owners, bankers, lawyers, and fee-taking officials, Husband thought the difficulties of war debt repayment and the fluctuation in value of money would now be visited upon elites, who would mostly pay the depreciation tax. He advocated a government active in aiding the people who were the vast majority of its citizens, running the economy through careful regulation rather than allowing European and other merchants to control it via laissez-faire. Such

economic policy proposals went to the heart of the difficulties his ordinary neighbors endured and would have provided solutions they applauded.

Husband was opposed to oppression and exploitation of all kinds. He defined "oppression" as one man living off the labor of a hundred. He was also opposed to luxury, grandeur, and waste. Working people did not wear costly clothes, nor waste much in eating and drinking. He believed that such evils were those of elites, who spent their time scheming to exploit the people. In "Times of Distress," taxes on the rich should return the wealth to those who had originally produced it.[35]

Radically democratic for its day, New Jerusalem was also seriously flawed. Most importantly, the lands of the New Jerusalem west of the Appalachians were not vacant. They were owned by Native Americans, who had lived there for thousands of years. Husband was more pacific than the bloodthirsty white folk around him, who successfully advocated the unilateral seizing of Native lands and aggressive warfare against them. Husband wanted to purchase Indian land at something approaching a fair price. Further, whites would purchase only what was needed incrementally, in a controlled westward movement. However, he believed that "the uncultivated lands of this continent … is a prise worth all the kingdoms in Europe," and that the Indians, "savage" and "ignoran[t]," needed to "become civilized subjects to our form of government." In return the tribes nearest the boundary line of white cultivation would "protect [the whites] in peace from distant tribes and their own bad people."[36] It was only a

kinder, gentler form of the racist imperialism that has infected most white North Americans for three centuries.

Red people were more favored than black people, because they at least had a chance to become civilized. Husband opposed slavery because it took jobs and fertile land away from "poor labouring white" farmers and laborers – who could use the wages otherwise tied up in slave purchases to become freeholders "and thereby become able to employ more poor." As men, enslaved blacks would naturally desire freedom, so Husband also condemned slavery because it gave whites "discontent, and uneasiness" in fear of insurrection. Despite this concession he never allowed that blacks – "more forreign by one half" than Indians – would join his white civilization.[37]

He was much tenderer towards white women, yet remained, fundamentally, patriarchal. Husband thought women could not run a family (or, therefore, a government): "though a wiked Man does often Abuse this Supream Power Given to him [by God] over a Private famaly, yet a wiked Wooman Would Abuse it far Worse."[38] The extraordinarily egalitarian Husband did not extend his benevolent views of human worth to women or persons of color – consistent with the dominant white prejudices of his time.

In other ways he did not go as far as others liberated by radical Protestant thought. During the English Revolution in the 1640s and 1650s, mechanic preachers proliferated, who, as historian Christopher Hill shows, entertained "communist theories" of the mutual ownership of land and goods. That period's great theorist and pamphleteer of the common people, Gerrard Winstanley,

leader and preacher of the communalist Diggers, put forward a program that was in many ways like that of Husband. He proclaimed that a few should not rule over the many; that working for another, either for wages or to pay quitrent, was wrong; and that there should be universal religious toleration. But Winstanley also believed in the "free enjoyment of the earth," the communal cultivation of the land by the starving poor to feed themselves, which he too took from reading scripture and listening to his "inner light." The buying and selling of land would cease as well as the buying and selling of human labor. There would be full communal ownership of land, and there would be no need for government, prisons, nobility, lawyers, or priests. Unlike Husband, Winstanley saw the dangers of private property itself.[39]

Although for Husband human society had "no other aim but the common happiness of every individual," and the only social tie was "the common interest," neither happiness nor interest itself was communal. Government was necessary, Husband thought, to "secur[e] to every one the property he should acquire by … labor and industry" and to defend it "from the rest of the savage world."[40] Husband was a remarkably thoughtful, ingenious, and very democratic advocate of smallholders, but at heart he remained an individualist, an owner of land, and a devotee of private property, not a socialist.

After 1789, as the Washington administration enacted policies implementing the Constitution, it was clear to Husband that both were the very opposite of the ideals of New Jerusalem. The new Senate especially was

"calculated for actually creating a nobility." Husband was disgusted with "this stinking carcass of filthy lucre," the extravagant salaries awarded to the President and other executive officers, as demonstrated by their fine clothes and carriages. Men whose object was personal gain he thought unfit for office. He was upset that Washington, a hero to him during the Revolution, was now revealed as an elitist, showing more concern for his officers than for "the people (who were all half ruined in their estates by the war)."[41]

Hamilton's policy of using public debt to draw wealthy investors into support for the new government was "the curse of all curses," ensuring that all American children would "be born with a [tax] burden on their backs," and giving in turn "a show of justice to an unjust or unmerciful set of speculators," a handful of wealthy merchants who had purchased the United States's Revolutionary War debt for a pittance and were to be paid back by Hamilton with huge windfall profits. The people must use great exertions, "equal to [but not including] an insurrection," to regain their proper dominance.[42] New Jerusalem was designed to accomplish exactly that.

The message of the New Jerusalem was, as historian Dorothy Fennell puts it, "explosive." The corrupt, wasteful, people-robbing tyrants Husband talked about ceaselessly were encountered daily by his "westerner" Appalachian neighbors in their own communities – "millers who overcharged, … land jobbers who bought up improvements, court officers who defended them, merchants who cornered the market," politicians who bought votes with whiskey and cash gifts. The promise of democracy for all was being taken from them by designing men,

and it was up to ordinary citizens to reclaim their own. Since God had explicitly "chosen westerners to complete the promise of the American Revolution," it was their duty to contact their representatives, meet together, petition, remonstrate, and if necessary march, to "overthrow tyranny."[43] People's grievances with the Hamiltonian policies of the new American government came to a head in the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, misnamed by Hamilton who called it so in order to denigrate it; it was indeed a rebellion against all that he stood for.

On August 1, 1794, the rebels assembled in their militia units on Braddock's Field. Frightened observers estimated them to be between 5000 and 9000 strong. Raising liberty poles (which had proclaimed American separation from England during the Revolution) and newly fashioned six-striped flags of independence, they marched in orderly ranks on Pittsburgh. Its forewarned residents gave them a meal and persuaded them not to burn the town.

During July and August, the rebels held public meetings in various open-air locations to decide their course of action. The most important conclave, consisting of about 240 elected delegates from the Pennsylvania and Virginia townships west of the Appalachians, gathered on August 14 and 15 in a large field on a riverside bluff at Parkinson's Ferry, south of Pittsburgh. The delegates debated whether to defy or to give in to the Washington administration, which was threatening to send an army westward. Perhaps an equal number of ill-clad farmers and others stood near or rode around the outskirts of the meeting, suspicious that the slightly better-off, better-educated delegates might abandon the rebellion in the face of the news from the east.

Husband was one of the two Parkinson's Ferry delegates chosen from Bedford County. He was elected by the other delegates, along with moderates Albert Gallatin and Hugh Henry Brackenridge and firebrand David Bradford, to a committee to get their resolutions into shape. The two elite moderates disdained him. Gallatin thought Husband "out of his senses," Brackenridge smirkingly asked him about "his New Jerusalem reveries," and then moved hastily to the resolutions when Husband took a pamphlet from his pocket.[44]

The delegates also elected Husband to a committee of sixty to steer activity between meetings, as well as to a conference committee of twelve to meet with the representatives of Washington's government on August 28-29 (where Husband urged submission). He was thus repeatedly trusted by ordinary people to act for them in their crisis. If urbane observers like Brackenridge and Gallatin "viewed Husband as a backwoods eccentric, it is doubtful," historian Ruth Bloch argues convincingly, "that the people who continued to elect him to positions of leadership and to listen to his preaching would have concurred." Dorothy Fennell reports that the now-lost depositions of two persons caught up in the Rebellion testified to the widespread influence of Husband in the western countryside. The testimony given by farmer James Wilson at Husband's 1795 trial, quoted earlier, is a good example. Fennell and William Hogeland, historians of the rebellion, and his biographer Jones are all persuaded of Husband's importance.[45]

Husband's urgent message spread through the countryside for fifteen years was meant for ordinary people, it praised peoples' militias, it condemned

the very businessmen and officials who were oppressing them, and it assured them that their eternal salvation lay in erecting a democratic government. Moreover, as Bloch further notes, ”given the militant separatist tendencies within the Whiskey Rebellion it is certainly plausible if not provable that Husband’s exalted vision of the region as the New Jerusalem enhanced his leadership role.”[46]

The Washington administration was well aware of Husband, if not of the details of his message. He was excluded by name from its proclamation of amnesty to the rebels and he was singled out as a prime target for arrest as the administration moved quickly to crush the Rebellion with overwhelming force. Hamilton had expected that his fiscal program, redistributing the people’s wealth upward, would provoke deep opposition. A militia army of more than 13,000 was mustered and sent slogging westward. One of its first acts was to capture Husband at his Bedford County farm on October 20. After a swift hearing, federal district judge Richard Peters, traveling with the army, ordered his detention until trial. Commander-in-chief George Washington was elated: he had identified “Harmon Husband” as one of the three Rebel leaders he most wanted captured, and he tracked the progress of “Husbands” to a small jail cell in Philadelphia. The prophet wrote to his wife wryly that “A prison seems the safest place for one of my age and profession.”[47]

In early June, after more than seven months in prison, Husband went on trial for his life once more, for speaking on behalf of ordinary people. He and

another Bedford farmer, Robert Philson, were indicted by the Philadelphia grand jury for sedition (legally, “speech inciting rebellion”), both at the Parkinson’s Ferry meeting and when they returned home to report on it. Remarkably, Husband had more witnesses to testify for him than the government amassed to testify against him, despite their having to be contacted by someone friendly, to travel from the Pittsburgh area to Philadelphia, to incur large costs awaiting an uncertain date for trial in an expensive city, and to risk possible government retaliation for their courage.

Not a single witness could state that either man had said anything seditious at Parkinson’s Ferry. Defense witnesses testified that the two had been explicitly instructed by the people of Bedford County to promote peace and constitutional measures only, and that both believed deeply in following the instructions of the people. Several witnesses concurred that, upon their return, Husband and Philson were happy that the result of Parkinson’s Ferry would be peace, not war. Noting that Husband was honored by chairing the countywide meeting, they said that both men spoke vigorously in opposition to the policies of the Washington administration. But they also testified that Husband opposed war, the burning of houses, and tar-and-feathering. Both defendants had repeatedly emphasized peaceful and constitutional opposition, such as further petitioning and a second constitutional convention. Without much ado the petit jury – all easterners – found them innocent.

Even during a rebellion, and even when voiced by a person sneered at by their “betters,” these jurors did not share the opinion of their rulers that peaceful

verbal opposition to the government was seditious. Husband's faith in ordinary people once again proved wise. It was, however, Herman Husband's last triumph. The prophet fell ill in a tavern outside Philadelphia as he made his way home, and, in the loving care of Emy and his son John, after a long bout with fever he passed away, probably on June 18, 1795. He had reached threescore years and ten.

Herman Husband deserves to be remembered in the first rank of the heroes of American democracy. He was the only radical of the Revolutionary Era to articulate a fully developed utopian vision as a democratic alternative to the Constitution. Long depicted chiefly as a belligerent leader of violent backcountry rebellions in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, in reality the deeply religious Husband persistently advocated peaceful means of seeking redress of grievances. He exhorted ordinary people to stand up for the democracy they deserved and needed, while he praised and demanded genuinely open debate. He knew that people could live in harmony, safety, and prosperity in an egalitarian government if ruled from the bottom up. To work, such a government needed upper limits on the amount of property each family might have, and to provide the people with multiple avenues for the pursuit of grievances. Toward such ends, he elaborated the New Jerusalem.

For Further Reading

This essay has been adapted from my larger manuscript, "The Federal Whiskey Rebellion Cases of 1795 and the Rise of the National Security State," a study of the federal trials of the so-called Whiskey Rebels. My conclusions are based in large part upon research in the records of the Pennsylvania federal courts at the National Archives Federal Records Center in Philadelphia; the William Paterson Papers at the Askew Library of William Paterson University; the Rawle Family Papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; and the Albert Gallatin Papers at the New-York Historical Society. Contemporary newspapers, *The Documentary History of the United States Supreme Court* (Maeva Marcus, *et al*., eds.), and the published papers of Alexander Hamilton were helpful. Herman Husband's pamphlets and other published items are cited in the endnotes. Most are available in microform and are indexed in Charles Evans, *Early American Imprints*. His unpublished manuscript sermons are in the John Irwin Scull Collection at the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. His comprehensive personal journal has unfortunately been mislaid.

Mark Haddon Jones, "Herman Husband: Millenarian, Carolina Regulator, and Whiskey Rebel" (PhD diss., Northern Illinois University, 1983), provides the full account of Husband's life and is especially good on the religious context of the New Jerusalem. See also Jones's entry on Husband in the *American National Biography*. A study of the North Carolina Regulation which deftly emphasizes both religion and economics is Marjoleine Kars*, Breaking Loose Together* (Chapel Hill, 2002). For an overview of the conflicts of the era in

Pennsylvania, see Terry Bouton, *Taming Democracy: "The People," the Founders, and the Troubled Ending of the American Revolution* (New York, 2007). Dorothy E. Fennell, "From Rebelliousness to Insurrection" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1981), analyzes well the people and the economics involved in the Whiskey Rebellion, while its most recent student, William Hogeland, *The Whiskey Rebellion* (New York, 2006), writes in a comprehensive if folksy style, foregrounding many important details. On the early federal courts, see William R. Casto, *The Supreme Court in the Early Republic* (Columbia, S.C., 1995). For the outpouring of Protestant radicalism during the English Revolution, see Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (London, 1972). For millennial thought, see Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (New York, 1985). Alfred Young takes up "English Plebeian Culture and Eighteenth Century American Radicalism" in his book of essays, *Liberty Tree: Ordinary People and the American Revolution* (New York, 2006).

[1] Lycurgus III [pseud. Herman Husband], *XIV Sermons on the Characters of Jacob's Fourteen Sons* (Philadelphia, 1789), 45; A Common Farmer in the Western Country [pseud. Herman Husband], [*Manuscript Sermons*] (unpublished untitled manuscript, 1793?), Scull Collection, 8.

[2] Husband, *Manuscript Sermons*, 21, 34.

[3] Ibid, 47-48.

[4] Husband, *XIV Sermons*, 12.

[5] Husband, *Manuscript Sermons*" 103.

[6] Ibid, 24, 33.

[7] Jones, Herman Husband, 19; Herman Husband, Letter to John Earl Granville Viscount Carteret, "8 mo. 9th" 1756, in A. Roger Ekirch, 'A New Government of Liberty': Hermon Husband's Vision of Backcountry North Carolina, 1755, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 34 (Oct. 1977), 646, 643.

[8] Herman Husband, *A Continuation of the Impartial Relation* … (n.p., 1770), Archibald Henderson, ed.., *North Carolina Historical Review*, 18 (1941), 64, 68n; Herman Husband, *An Impartial Relation of the First Rise and Cause* … (n.p., 1770), in William K. Boyd, ed., *Some Eighteenth Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C., 1927), 329, 317, 268.

[9] Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 121.

[10] Husband, *An Impartial Relation*, 285.

[11] Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 173.

[12] Husband, *An Impartial Relation*, 309; Regulators' Advertisement No. 5, Mar. 22, 1768, quoted in ibid, 265; Husband, *A Continuation*, 64.

[13] William Tryon, Proclamation of June 21, 1768, quoted in Husband, *An Impartial Relation*, 271; ibid, 280.

[14] [Herman Husband*], Proposals to Amend and Perfect the Policy of the Government of the United States of America* (n.p., 1782), 8-9; Husband, *Manuscript Sermons*, 24; Report of Husband's Revolutionary War speech to former Regulators imprisoned for Toryism at Staunton, Va., in William S. Powell, e*t al.*, eds., *The Regulators in North Carolina: A Documentary History 1759-1776* (Raleigh, N.C., 1971), 566; [Herman Husband,] *A Proposal, or a general Plan and Mode of Taxation* … [n.p., 1778], inserted within Husband, *Proposals to Amend and Perfect*, 32-33.

[15] Herman Husband, Address to the Quakers, in Assembly (draft, 1780), manuscript room, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 5 (see Jones, Herman Husband, 257 n.13).

[16] Husband, Address to the Quakers, 4; Husband, *Proposals to Amend and Perfect*, 7, 3.

[17] Jones, Herman Husband, 262. The vision is most fully described in Husband, *Proposals to Amend and Perfect*, 35-36; Husband, *Manuscript Sermons*, 150-52.

[18] Ibid, 4, 150; Husband, *Proposals to Amend and Perfect*, 11, 36.

[19] Lycurgus III [pseud. Herman Husband], *A Sermon to the Bucks and Hinds of America* (Philadelphia, 1788), 9.

[20] Hugh H. Brackenridge, *Incidents of the Insurrection in the Western Parts of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1795), 1:95; Johann David Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation* (Alfred J. Morrison, trans.; Philadelphia, 1911), 1:297; Albert Gallatin to Hannah Gallatin, May 15, 1795, Albert Gallatin Papers, New-York Historical Society; Testimony of Robert Smiley [*sic*], June 3, 1795 (trial of Husbands [*sic*] and Filson [*sic*]) (Justice William Paterson's bench notes of testimony given at the sedition trial of Herman Husband and Robert Philson), William Paterson Papers, Askew Library, William Paterson University.

[21] Testimony of James Wilson, June 4, 1795 (Paterson's notes), Paterson Papers.

[22] Husband, *Manuscript Sermons*, 47.

[23] Husband, *XIV Sermons*, viii.

[24] Bloch, *Visionary Republic*, 183, 184; [Herman Husband,] *A Dialogue between an Assembly-Man and a Convention-Man* (Philadelphia, 1790), 5, 6.

[25] Ibid, 9, 10.

[26] Husband, *Manuscript Sermons*, 19-20.

[27] Husband, *Proposals to Amend and Perfect*, 10; Husband, *Manuscript Sermons*, 118; Husband, *XIV Sermons*, vii.

[28] Husband, *Proposals to Amend and Perfect*, 9; Husband, *Sermon to Bucks and Hinds*, 19, 20; Husband, *Manuscript Sermons*, 72.

[29] Husband, *Sermon to Bucks and Hinds*, 23, 25.

[30] Husband, *XIV Sermons*, viii, 19, 20, 27; Husband, *Sermon to Bucks and Hinds*, 24.

[31] Husband, *Proposals to Amend and Perfect*, 12.

[32] Husband, *A Dialogue*, 11.

[33] Husband, *XIV Sermons*, viii, 45-46.

[34] Husband, *Sermon to Bucks and Hinds*, 16; Husband, *Proposals to Amend and Perfect*, 21, 16, 17.

[35] Ibid, 20.

[36] [Herman Husband,] *The Common Farmer (Number 2)*, in James P. Whittenburg, 'The Common Farmer (Number 2)': Herman Husband's Plan for Peace between the United States and the Indians, 1792, *William*

and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 34 (Oct. 1977): 650.

[37] Husband, letter to Granville, 641, 643.

[38] Husband, *Manuscript Sermons*, 122.

[39] Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*, 115; Winstanley quoted in ibid, 135.

[40] Husband, *XIV Sermons*, Sermon 10 [separately paginated], 17; Husband, *A Dialogue*, 12.

[41] Husband, *Sermon to Bucks and Hinds*, 28; Husband, *XIV Sermons*, 33, 25.

[42] Ibid, 34; Husband, *A Dialogue*, 11, 4; Husband, *Sermon to Bucks and Hinds*, 2.

[43] Fennell, From Rebelliousness to Insurrection, 194, 202.

[44] Brackenridge, *Incidents*, 1:95; Testimony of Albert Gallatin, June 3, 1795 (Paterson's notes), Paterson Papers.

[45] Bloch, *Visionary Republic*, 184; Fennell, From Rebelliousness to Insurrection, 192-226; Hogeland, *Whiskey Rebellion*, 93-95, 117, 172, 179, 182-83, 203; Jones, Herman Husband, 350-59. See also Bouton, *Taming Democracy*, 9, 219, 242.

[46] Bloch, *Visionary Republic*, 184.

[47] Donald Jackson *et al.*,eds, *The Diaries of George Washington* (Charlottesville, 1979), 6:185; George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, Oct. 26, Oct. 31, 1794, in Harold C. Syrett *et al.*, eds., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, 1972), 17:344, 350; Herman Husband to Emy Husband, Oct. 22, 1794, quoted in E. Howard Blackburn & William H. Welfley, *The History of Bedford and Somerset Counties, Pennsylvania* (New York, 1906), 2:153.