

## **A Symposium on Devin Stauffer's *Hobbes's Kingdom of Light: A Study of the Foundations of Modern Political Philosophy***

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Devin Stauffer: *Hobbes's Kingdom of Light: A Study of the Foundations of Modern Political Philosophy*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. Pp. 336.)

### **Introduction**

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In *Hobbes's Kingdom of Light: A Study of the Foundations of Modern Political Philosophy*, Devin Stauffer argues that Hobbes's ambition of establishing political order on new grounds requires addressing two conceptually distinct but concretely intertwined foes: Christian theology and classical philosophy. Hobbes's new science of politics is, thus, first a supremely polemical and deeply critical political act. The new science can only be effective if it leaves the old science in ruins, and it fails as science if it fails to be efficacious. Hobbes's new political science must therefore address both what is above and what is below the city. By highlighting the radical and comprehensive character of Hobbes's project, Stauffer clarifies the fundamental questions that undergird not only modernity but political life as such. By foregrounding Hobbes's argument that traditional religion and classical philosophy lead only to internecine strife, Stauffer shows that peace requires a new philosophical authority. Absent the hegemony of Hobbes's scientific sovereignty, man is destined for practical disasters and theoretical absurdities. Stauffer thus intimates that Hobbes's most famous work, *Leviathan*, contains a crucial but often overlooked analogy. As God is to the monster in Job, so is Hobbes to his book, and just as God speaks out of the whirlwind, so too does Hobbes challenge those who might question his new teaching: "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?... Where were you when I laid the foundations of modernity?"