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[Brackets] enclose editorial explanations. Small ·dots· enclose material that has been added, but can be read as though it were part of the original text. Occasional •bullets, and also indenting of passages that are not quotations, are meant as aids to grasping the structure of a sentence or a thought. Four ellipses . . . . indicate the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth.

Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* in Latin and in English; it is not always clear which parts were done first in English and which in Latin. The present text is based on the English version, but sometimes the Latin seems better and is followed instead. Edwin Curley's fine edition of the English work (Hackett, 1994) has provided all the information used here regarding the Latin version, the main lines of the translations from it, and other information included here between square brackets. Curley has also been generous in his personal help with difficult passages in the English version. --The name 'Leviathan' comes from the Book of Job, chapter 41. See Hobbes's chapter 28, last paragraph. --Because of an unsolved software problem, the pagination here is not exactly the same as that of the separate Parts.

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# LEVIATHAN

## By Thomas Hobbes

### Introduction

[Hobbes uses 'art' to cover everything that involves thoughtful planning, contrivance, design, or the like. The word was often used in contrast to 'nature', referring to everything that happens not *artificially* but *naturally*, without anyone's planning to make it happen. Hobbes opens this Introduction with a rejection of that contrast.]

Nature is the art through which God made the world and still governs it. The art of man imitates in it many ways, one of which is its ability to make an *artificial animal*. Life is just a motion of limbs caused by some principal part inside the body; so why can't we say that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as a watch does) have an artificial life? For what is the heart but a spring? What are the nerves but so many strings? What are the joints but so many wheels enabling the whole body to move in the way its designer intended? Art goes still further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, *man*! For by art is created that great *Leviathan* called a 'commonwealth' or 'state', which is just an artificial man - though bigger and stronger than the natural man, for whose protection and defence it was intended. Here are some details of the analogy between a commonwealth and a natural man.

--The chief authority in the commonwealth is an artificial •soul, giving life and motion to the whole body ·as the soul does to the body of a natural man·;

--the magistrates and other officers law are artificial •joints;

--reward and punishment are artificial •nerves; they are connected to the seat of the chief authority in such a way that every joint and limb is moved to do his duty, as natural nerves do in the body of a natural man.

--the wealth and riches of all the members of the commonwealth are its •strength;

--the people's safety is the commonwealth's •business;

--advisors, by whom everything it needs to know is suggested to it, are its •memory;

--justice is its artificial •reason;

- laws are its artificial •will;
- civil harmony is its •health;
- sedition is its •sickness; and
- civil war is its •death.

Lastly, the pacts and agreements by which the parts of this *body politic* were at first made, put together, and united, resemble that *fiat* - that 'Let us make man' - pronounced by God when he was creating the world.

To describe the nature of this artificial man, I will consider: ·In Part I·: •what the commonwealth is made of (men) and who made it (men). ·In Part II·: •How and through what agreements the commonwealth is made; what are the rights and legitimate power or authority of a sovereign; and what it is that can preserve a commonwealth and what can dissolve it. ·In Part III·: •What is a Christian commonwealth. ·In Part IV·: •What is the kingdom of darkness. [The present document is Part I; Part II is also available on this website, which does not contain III or IV.]

Concerning the first topic, there is a saying that has recently become fashionable, that

Wisdom is acquired not by reading books but by reading men.

On the basis of this, people who show few other signs of wisdom take pleasure in showing what they think they have 'read in men' - by saying nasty things about them behind their backs. But there is another saying - not properly understood in recent times - through which men might learn truly to read one another, if they would take the trouble. The saying is

*Nosce teipsum* [Latin for 'know yourself'] - read yourself.

This has come to be used •to excuse the barbarous conduct of men in power towards their inferiors, or •to encourage men of low degree in disrespectful behaviour towards their betters. But that's not what it was meant for. It was meant •to teach us that if you are interested in the similarity of the thoughts and passions of one man to those of another, you should look into yourself, and consider what *you* do when you think, believe, reason, hope, fear, etc. and on what grounds you do so. That will enable you to 'read' and know what the thoughts and passions of all other men are on similar occasions. I say the similarity of passions, which are the same in all men - desire, fear, hope, etc. - not the similarity of the *objects of* the passions, which are the things desired, feared, hoped, etc. ·There is less similarity among these·, because what a person wants, fears, etc. depends on his individual character and upbringing. ·The objects of someone's passions are also harder to know about, because· they are easy for him to hide; so much so that the writing in a man's heart (·to continue with the 'reading' metaphor·), so blotted and mixed up by dissembling, lying, faking and false beliefs, can be 'read' only by someone who can search hearts. We can sometimes learn from men's actions what they are up to; but to do this without comparing those actions with our own while taking into account all the relevant differences, is to decipher without a key, and to be for the most part deceived - by too much trust or too much distrust, depending on whether the 'reader' is himself a good man or a bad one.

Anyway, however skilled someone is at 'reading' others by their actions, that can serve him only with the few people he knows personally. Someone who is to govern a whole nation must read in himself not this or that particular man but *mankind*. This is hard to do, harder than learning any language or science; but when I have set before you in an orderly and clear manner my own 'reading' ·of myself·, you will be left only with the task of considering whether it also applies to you. There is no other way to prove a doctrine of this kind.

## Part I. Man

### Chapter 1. Sense

Concerning the thoughts of man, I will consider them first taken one at a time, and then in a sequence with one thought depending on another. Each single thought is a representation or appearance of some quality or feature of a body outside us - what we commonly call an *object*. Such objects work on the eyes, ears, and other parts of a man's body, and by working in different ways they produce different appearances.

The source of all those appearances is what we call SENSE; for there is no conception in a man's mind that wasn't first - either as a whole, or in parts - produced through the organs of sense.

For present purposes it isn't necessary to know what the natural cause of sense is, and I have written about that at length elsewhere. Still, to make my presentation complete, I will briefly discuss it here.

The cause of sense is the external body or object which presses the organ proper to each sense - either •immediately, as in taste and touch; or •through an intermediary, as in seeing, hearing, and smelling. This pressure is passed inwards, along the nerves and other strings and membranes of the body, to the brain and heart; there it causes a •resistance, or •counter-pressure, or •endeavour by the heart to deliver itself [= 'to disburden itself', 'to speak what is on its mind']. Because this endeavour (·or counter-pressure·) is *outward*, it seems to be some matter outside the body; and this seeming, or fancy [= 'mental representation or image'] is what we call 'sense'. For the eye it consists in shaped light or colour; for the ear, in a sound; for the nostril, in an odour; for the tongue and palate, in a taste; and for the rest of the body, in heat, cold, hardness, softness, and such other qualities as we detect through touch. All these 'sensible' qualities are - in the object that causes them - merely different motions of the matter by which the object presses on our organs. In us too - the ones who are pressed - the qualities are merely various motions; for ·they are caused by motions, and· motion produces nothing but motion. But to us their appearance is *fancy*, the same waking as dreaming. And as pressing, rubbing, or striking the eye makes us *fancy* a light, and pressing the ear produces a ·fancied· noise, so also the bodies that we see or hear produce the same results through their strong though unobserved action. ·Those colours and sounds are *in us*·; for if they were in the bodies or objects that cause them, they couldn't be separated from them. We know they *can* be separated from them, because through the use of a mirror the appearance can be in one place and the object in another; and echoes provide something similar for sounds. And though at the right distance ·and in the right circumstances· the actual object seems to be clothed with the fancy that it causes in us, *still* the object is one thing the image or fancy is another. So that •sense in all cases is nothing but •fancy that is caused by the pressure - that is, by the motion - of external things on our eyes, ears, and other organs having that function.

But the philosophy schools through all the universities of the Christian world, on the basis of certain texts of Aristotle's, teach a different doctrine. For the cause of vision they say that the thing that is seen sends out in all directions a *visible species*, and that seeing the object is receiving this visible species into the eye. (In English, a 'visible species' is a visible show, apparition, or aspect, or being-seen.) [Hobbes includes 'being-seen' on the strength of the fact that several dominant senses of the Latin *species* involve seeing. Other senses of the word don't, but Hobbes's unkind reason

for his choice will appear in a moment.] And for the cause of hearing they say that the thing that is heard sends forth an *audible species* (that is, an audible aspect, or audible being-seen) which enters the ear and creates hearing. Indeed, for the cause of understanding they say that the thing that is understood sends out *intelligible species*, that is, an intelligible being-seen, which comes into the understanding and makes us understand! I don't say this in criticism of universities; I shall come later to the topic of their role in a commonwealth. But on the way to that I must take every opportunity to let you see what things would be amended in them ·if they played their proper role properly·; and one of these is the frequency of meaningless speech.

## Chapter 2. Imagination

Nobody doubts this:

When a thing lies still, it will lie still for ever unless something else moves it.

But this:

When a thing is in motion, it will eternally be in motion unless something else stops it is not so easily assented to, although there is the same reason for it, namely, that nothing can change itself. That is because men measure not only •other men but •all other things by *themselves*: because they find that after moving *they* are subject to pain and fatigue, they think that *everything else* grows weary of motion, and of its own accord seeks rest. They don't consider the possibility that the desire for rest that they find in themselves consists of some other motion. And so we find the schools saying that heavy bodies fall downwards out of an appetite [= 'desire'] for rest, and so as to conserve themselves in the place that is most proper for them; absurdly ascribing to inanimate things both •appetite and •knowledge of what is good for self-preservation - when such knowledge is more than man has! [By 'the schools' Hobbes refers to universities that teach philosophy in a manner heavily influenced by Aristotle. The term 'schoolmen' refers to teachers in such universities.]

When a body is once in motion, it moves for ever unless something else stops it; and whatever stops it does so gradually, over a period of time; it can't extinguish the motion in an instant. We see that •when wind creates waves in the sea, the waves keep rolling for a long time after the wind stops; and the same thing happens with •the motion that is made in the internal parts of a man when he sees, dreams, etc. For after the object is removed or the eyes closed, we still retain an image of the thing we have seen, though more obscure than when we saw it. This is what the Latins call *imagination*, from the image made in seeing, and they improperly apply the term to all the other senses as well. But the Greeks call it *fancy*, which means 'appearance', and is equally proper for all the senses. So •IMAGINATION is nothing but •decaying sense. It is found in men and many other living creatures, and occurs when they are sleeping as well as when they are awake.

The decay of sense in a person who is awake is not •the dying-down of the motion made in sense. Rather, it is an •obscuring of that motion, in the way the light of the sun obscures the light of the stars. In daytime just as much as at night, stars exercise their power to make themselves visible; but among the many strokes that our eyes, ears, and other organs receive from external bodies only the predominant one is sensed; so when the light of the sun is predominant we aren't affected by the action of the stars. And when an object is removed from our sight, the impression it made in us continues, but as it is followed by other objects that are more present to us and that work on us, the imagination of the past ·object· is obscured and weakened, as the voice of a man is drowned by the noise from the street.s

From this it follows that •the longer the time is since the sight or •other• sensing of any object, •the weaker is the imagination •of it•. For the continual changes in a man's body eventually destroy the parts that were moved in sensing; and that is why distance of time has the same effect on us as distance in space. Just as at a great spatial distance the thing we look at appears dim, and fuzzy in its details, so also after great distance of time our imagination of the past is weak, and we lose (for example) particular streets of cities we have seen, and particular details of events we have experienced. •We have two ways of talking about• this decaying sense: when we want to talk about •the thing itself - the fancy itself - we call it 'imagination', as I said before: but when we want to talk about •the decay, and signify that the sense is fading, old, and past, we call it 'memory'. So imagination and memory are a single thing that has different names for different purposes.

Much memory, or memory of many things, is called 'experience'. Imagination is always of things that have been formerly perceived by sense, either •all at once or •by parts at several times. In the former case, imagining the whole object as it was presented to the senses, we have •*simple* imagination - as when you imagine a man or horse that you have seen before. The other is •*compounded* imagination, as when from the sight of a man at one time and of a horse at another you conceive in your mind a centaur. So when a man compounds the image of his own person with the image of the actions of someone else - as when a man imagines himself a Hercules or an Alexander (which happens often with devoted readers of romances) - it is a compound imagination, and strictly speaking just a fiction of the mind. There are other imaginations that arise in men (while they are awake) as a result of especially strong impressions made on them in sensing: for example, •gazing for a long time at the sun creates an image of the sun that stays before our eyes for a long time afterwards; and •from a long and fiercely focussed attention on geometrical figures, a waking man may when in the dark have the images of lines and angles before his eyes. This kind of fancy has no particular name, because it is not something we talk about much.

The imaginations that people have while asleep are what we call 'dreams'. A dream, like all other imaginations, has previously been in the senses, either all together as a whole or in bits. The brain and nerves, which are the necessary organs of sense, are so benumbed in sleep that they can't easily be moved by the action of external objects; and therefore in sleep no imagination - and therefore no dream - can occur except as a result of the agitation of the inner parts of the person's body. And •even• when these inner parts are out of order, their connection with the brain and other organs enables them to keep these in motion, In this way the imaginations formerly made inside the man appear as if he were awake, except for this: the organs of sense are now (in sleep) benumbed, so that no new object can dominate and obscure the imaginations with a more vigorous impression; and so, in this silence of sense, a dream must be *more* clear than are our waking thoughts. That is how it comes about that it is difficult - some think impossible - to distinguish exactly between sense and dreaming. For my part, when I consider that •in dreams I don't often or constantly think of the same persons, places, objects, and actions that I do waking; and that •I don't remember as long a sequence of coherent thoughts in dreams as at other times; and that •when I am awake I often note the absurdity of dreams, but never dream of the absurdities of my waking thoughts; I am well satisfied that when I am awake I know that I am not dreaming, even though when I dream I think I am awake.

And because dreams are caused by the disorder of some of the inner parts of the body, different disorders are bound to cause different dreams. For being cold in one's sleep breeds

dreams of fear, and raises the thought and image of some fearful object (because the motion from the brain to the inner parts is matched by an opposite motion from the inner parts to the brain). Another example: just as •anger causes •heat in some parts of the body when we are awake, so when we sleep •the over-heating of the same parts causes •anger, and raises up in the brain the imagination of an enemy. Another example: just as natural kindness when we are awake causes desire, which creates heat in certain other parts of the body, so also too much heat in those parts while we are asleep raises in the brain an imagination of some kindness shown. In short: our dreams are the reverse of our waking imaginations. The motion when we are awake starts at one end. and when we dream it starts at the other.

It is hardest for a man to distinguish a dream from his waking thoughts when for some reason he doesn't realize that he has been asleep. This can easily happen to someone who is full of fearful thoughts and has a conscience that is much troubled, and to someone who sleeps without the performance of undressing and going to bed - e.g. someone who nods off in his armchair. Someone who takes trouble readying himself for sleep isn't likely to think that any weirdly unfamiliar fancy that comes to him is anything but a dream. We read of Marcus Brutus (who owed his life to Julius Caesar, and was his favourite, yet murdered him) how at Philippi, the night before he gave battle to Augustus Caesar, he saw a fearful apparition. Historians usually call it a vision; but considering the circumstances, one may easily judge it to have been merely a short dream. For sitting in his tent, brooding and troubled with the horror of his rash act, it was not hard for Brutus, slumbering in the cold, to dream of what frightened him most; and as this fear gradually woke him up, it must also have made the apparition gradually vanish; and not knowing for sure that he had been asleep, he could have no reason to think it a dream, or anything but a vision. And this is not a rare occurrence; for even people who are wide awake, if they are nervous and superstitious and full of scary stories and alone in the dark, are apt to have such fancies and to believe they see spirits and dead men's ghosts walking in churchyards - when really it is either their fancy or else trickery by others making use of such superstitious fear to pass disguised in the night to places they don't want to be known to frequent.

This ignorance of how to distinguish •dreams and other strong fancies from •seeing and sensing is the chief source of the religion of the pagans of past centuries, who worshipped satyrs, fawns, nymphs, and the like; and the source of the belief that uneducated people have *now* in fairies, ghosts, and goblins, and in the power of witches. I include witches in that list because I don't think that their witchcraft is any real power. Still, I think they are justly punished for their false belief that they can do such mischief, together with their intention of doing harm if they can; so that their trade is nearer to a being a new religion than to being a craft or science. As for fairies and walking ghosts, I think the belief in *them* has deliberately been taught (or not challenged) so as to keep people believing in the use of exorcism, of crosses, of holy water, and other such inventions of ghostly men [here = 'religious men', a joke usage].

No doubt God *can* make unnatural apparitions; but it is no an article of the Christian faith that he does this so often that men should fear such things more than they fear a stoppage of, or change in, the course of nature - either of which God can also bring about. But •claims about the frequency of divinely sent apparitions continue to be made, because •evil men, under pretext that God can do anything, are impudently willing to say *anything* when it suits their purposes, even if they think it untrue. A wise man will believe them no further than right reason makes what they say seem credible. Men would be much more fitted than they are for civil obedience if •this superstitious fear of spirits •or apparitions• were got rid of, and with it •future-reading based on

dreams, •false prophecies, and •many other effects of such superstition by which crafty ambitious men abuse simple people,

This ·cleansing operation· ought to be the work of the schools, but instead of doing it they *encourage* such doctrines. Because the schoolmen don't know what imagination or the senses are, ·they have no defences against error in these matters, and so· they teach what they have been taught. Some say that •imaginings arise spontaneously and have no cause; others, •that they usually arise from the will, and that good thoughts are blown (inspired) into a man by God, and evil thoughts blown in by the Devil, or that good thoughts are poured (infused) into a man by God, and evil ones poured in by the Devil. [Hobbes is mockingly exploiting the fact that 'inspire' and 'infuse' come from Latin meaning 'breathe in' and 'pour in' respectively.] Some say that •the senses receive the 'species' of things and pass them on to the 'common sense', thence to the imagination, to the memory, to the judgment - like passing *things* from hand to hand, with many words making nothing understood. [For 'species' see the last paragraph of chapter 1; 'common sense' is a supposed organ or faculty which, according to Aristotle, integrates the materials provided by the five specialized senses.]

The imagination that is raised in man (or any other creature capable of imagining) by words or other voluntary signs is what we generally call *understanding*. It is common to man and beast; for a dog will through custom come to understand the call, or the scolding, of his master, and so will many other beasts. ·That, however, involves only understanding what his master *wants*·. The understanding that is special to man ·and not shared with the beasts· is the understanding not only of what others *want* but also of what they *think* and *believe*; and this understanding is based on the how sequences of names of things into are woven together into affirmations, negations, and other forms of speech. I shall discuss this kind of understanding later.

### Chapter 3. The consequence or train of imaginings

By 'consequence of thoughts' or 'TRAIN of thoughts' I mean the occurrence of thoughts, one at a time, in a sequence; we call this 'mental discourse', to distinguish it from discourse in words.

When a man thinks about something, what his *next* thought will be is not quite as accidental a matter as it seems to be. It isn't the case that any thought is as likely as any other to follow a given thought. On the contrary: just as we never have •an imagination that hasn't previously been presented to us - as a whole or in parts - by our senses, so we never have •a transition from one imagination to another that is unlike any transition we have had in our senses. Here is why. All fancies are motions inside us, left-overs from the motions made in sensing; and when one motion is immediately followed by another in sensing, that sequence of motions also continues after the sensing is over, because when the former motion again occurs and predominates, the latter motion follows, by coherence of the matter moved [Hobbes's exact phrase]. ·A familiar example of the same phenomenon: When water is pooled on a flat surface, and you draw some of it in one direction with your finger, the rest of the water follows. However, a thing perceived by the senses will be followed sometimes by one thing and sometimes by another, so that in due course ·there come to be rival candidates for the role of follower of a given imagination·. Thus, when someone imagines something, there is no certainty about what he will imagine next; but it *is* certain that it will be something that followed the other at one or another earlier time.

This train of thoughts, or mental discourse, is of two sorts. The first is unguided, unplanned, and inconstant. In this the sequence of thoughts is not governed by any passionate thought which could direct the whole sequence towards some chosen end; and the thoughts are said to 'wander', and seem irrelevant to one another, as in a dream. Men often have thoughts like this when they

are alone and not absorbed in any cares; their thoughts are still as busy as at other times, but there is no harmony to them - like the sound of an untuned lute or of a tuned one played by an incompetent. Yet in this untamed roaming of the mind we can still often see what is going on, and grasp how one thought depends on another. For in a discussion about England's present civil war, what could seem more irrelevant than to ask, as someone did, *What was the value of a Roman penny?* But I saw its relevance plainly enough: the thought of •the war introduced the thought of •the delivering up of the king to his enemies, which brought in the thought of •the delivering up of Christ, which led to the thought of •the 30 pennies ['thirty pieces of silver'] which was the price of that betrayal; and from that the malicious question 'about the value of a Roman penny' easily followed. All this happened in a moment of time, for thought is quick.

The second 'sort of train of thoughts' is more constant, being regulated by some desire, and some design. The impression made by things that we desire or fear is strong and permanent, or if it stops for a time it comes back quickly. It is sometimes so strong that it keeps us awake at night, or interrupts our sleep. From •desire arises •the thought of some means that we have seen produce something like what we aim at; and from that comes •the thought of means to those means, and so on, continually, until we come to some beginning that is within our own power. What we are aiming at - our *end* - makes a strong impression and so comes often to mind, so that if our thoughts begin to wander they are quickly brought back into line 'by this strong and frequently-present impression of the end'. It was his knowledge of this that led one of the seven wise men to give his followers the injunction (now a cliché) *Respice finem* [Latin, = 'look to the end']; that is to say, in all your actions keep an eye on what you are aiming at, letting your view of that direct all your thoughts about how to achieve it.

The train of regulated thoughts is 'itself' of two kinds. •In one we imagine an effect and look for the causes or means that 'would' produce it; and this is common to man and beast. 'It is the kind of thinking I focussed on in the preceding paragraph'. •The other occurs when we imagine something - *anything* - and look for all the possible effects that could be produced by it; that is, we imagine what we can *do with it* when we have it. I have never seen any sign of this except in man; for this kind of curiosity, asking 'What can I *do with it?*', has little grip on a living creature that has no passions except sensual ones such as hunger, thirst, lust, and anger. In sum, the discourse of the mind when it is controlled by some aim or plan is nothing but *seeking*, or the faculty of invention [here = 'discovery'], which the Latins called *sagacitas* and *solertia* [= 'keenness of scent' and 'skill' or ingenuity']. It is a hunting out of the causes of some present or past effect, or of the effects of some present or past cause. Sometimes a man seeks something he has lost; and from the place and time where he missed it his mind runs back, from place to place and time to time, to find where and when he had it; that is to say, to find some definite limited time and place in which to start searching. Again, from there his thoughts run over the same places and times, to find what action or other occasion might have made him lose it. We call this 'remembrance' or 'calling to mind'. The Latins call it *reminiscentia*, as it were *scanning again* our former actions.

Sometimes a man knows a definite place within which he has to search; and then his thoughts run over all the parts of it, in the way one would sweep a room to find a jewel, or as a spaniel runs all over a field till he picks up a scent, or as a man might run through the alphabet to make a rhyme.

Sometimes a man wants to know the outcome of an action; and then he thinks back to some earlier action of the same kind, and the sequence of *its* outcomes, supposing similar outcomes will follow similar actions. For example, someone may foresee what will become of a criminal by



running over what he has seen follow from similar crime before, having these thoughts in this order: the crime, the arresting officer, the prison, the judge, and the gallows. Thoughts of this kind are called *foresight* and *prudence* or *providence*, and sometimes *wisdom*; though this kind of guesswork is very fallacious, because of the difficulty of taking into account all the relevant circumstances. Still, this much is certain: if one man has more experience of things past than another does, the former will be correspondingly more prudent than the latter, and less often wrong in his expectations. Only the present has an existence in nature; things past exist in the memory only; and future things don't exist at all, because the future is just a fiction [= 'creation'] of the mind, arrived at by noting the consequences that have ensued from *past* actions and assuming that similar *present* actions will have similar consequences (an assumption that pushes us forward into the supposed *future*). This kind of extrapolation is done the most securely by the person who has the most experience, but even then not with complete security. And though it is called 'prudence' when the outcome is as we expected, it is in its own nature a mere presumption. For the ability to *see in advance* things that are to come, which is *providence* [from Latin *providentia*, the power to see into the future], belongs only to God, whose will will *make* them come. He alone can prophesy, and he does it supernaturally. The person who does the best job of prophesying *naturally* is the best guesser; and the best guesser is the one who knows most about the matters he guesses at and has studied them most thoroughly, for he has most signs to guess by.

A *sign* is the evident antecedent of the consequent, and in the other direction the consequent of the antecedent. For example, dark clouds may be a sign that rain is to come; a burning tree may be a sign that lightning has struck. This requires that similar consequences have been observed before; and the oftener they have been observed, the less uncertain is the sign. And therefore he who has most experience in any kind of business has most signs by which to guess what the future holds, and consequently is the most prudent: and his advantage in prudence over someone to whom that kind of business is new is not counterbalanced by any advantage that the latter may have in natural cleverness and quick-wittedness - though perhaps many young men would disagree with this!

Nevertheless, prudence is not what distinguishes man from beast. Some beasts when one year old observe more, and more prudently pursue what is for their good, than a child can do at age ten.

As prudence is a presumption about the future condensed from experience of the past, so also there is a presumption about past things on the basis of other past things. Someone who has seen how and to what extent a flourishing state has come first into civil war and then to ruin, when he sees the similarly ruined condition of any other state will guess that the latter has had a similar war brought about in a similar way. But this kind of conjecture is nearly as uncertain as conjectures about the future, both being based only on experience.

This is the only kind of mental act I can think of that is *naturally* planted in man, so that all he needs in order to be able to perform it is to be born a human and to live with the use of his five senses. The other faculties that I shall discuss later - ones that seem to be possessed only by men and not by the beasts - are acquired and improved by study and hard work. Most men get them through instruction and discipline; and they all come from the invention of words and speech. For the mind of man has no motions except those of sense, thoughts, and sequences of thoughts, but through the help of speech, and method, those same faculties can be improved to an extent that marks men off from all other living creatures.

Whatever we imagine is *finite*. Therefore there is no idea or conception of anything we call *infinite*. No man can have in his mind an image of infinite size, or conceive infinite speed, infinite time, infinite force, or infinite power. When we say something is 'infinite' we signify only that •we can't conceive its ends or boundaries, having no conception of infinity except that of •our own inability. And therefore the name of God is used •not to make us conceive him (for he is incomprehensible, and his greatness, and power can't be conceived) but •to get us to honour him. Also, recall what I said before, namely that anything we conceive we have first perceived by sense, either all at once or in parts; a man can't have a thought representing something that couldn't be sensorily perceived. So anything a man can conceive must be conceived •as being •in some place, and •having a definite size, and •divisible into parts; and he can't conceive that something can be all in *this* place and all in *that*, or that two or more things can be in one and the same place at once. None of these things has - none of them *could* - ever be presented through the senses. They are merely absurd ways of talking, credulously taken over - in all their meaninglessness - from deceived scientists and deceived (or deceiving!) schoolmen.

## Chapter 4. Speech

The invention of •printing, though ingenious, is a minor affair compared with the invention of •writing. (We don't know who first discovered the use of writing. It was first brought into Greece, they say, by Cadmus, the son of King Agenor of Phoenicia.) Writing was a *profitable* invention - good for continuing the memory of the past, and also for inter-connecting people who are dispersed into so many and such distant regions of the earth. But it was also an invention that was *difficult* to make: it required careful observation of the different movements of the tongue, palate, lips, and other organs of speech, so as to make correspondingly different letters to remember them by. But the most noble and profitable invention of all was that of •SPEECH, consisting of names or appellations, and ways of connecting them. Men use speech to •register their •present thoughts, to •recall their past thoughts, and to •declare their thoughts to one another for mutual utility and conversation. Without speech men would not have had commonwealth, or society, or contract, or peace - any more than lions, bears, and wolves do. The first author of speech was Adam, who named the created things that God presented to his sight; •we don't know *how* he went about doing this; for the Scripture says no more about it. But this was sufficient to lead him •to add more names, as his experience and use of created things gave him a need for them; and gradually •to come to join them together in ways that would let him make himself understood. And so in the course of time he could achieve as much language as he found a use for, though not as rich a language as an orator or philosopher needs. For I don't find anything in the Scripture which explicitly says, or which implies, that Adam gave names to every variety of figures, numbers, measures, colours, sounds, fancies, relations; much less that he imposed the names of words and •parts or kinds of speech, such as 'general', 'special', 'affirmative', 'negative', 'interrogative', 'optative', 'infinitive', all which are useful; and least of all •the likes of 'entity', 'intentionality', 'quiddity', and other insignificant words of the schools.

But all this language that was achieved and enlarged by Adam and his descendants was lost again at the tower of Babel, when by the hand of God every man was punished for his rebellion by being made to forget his former language. And as they were forced by this to disperse into different parts of the world, it must be that the variety of tongues that we now have was gradually brought about by them - •that is, by men scattered throughout the world - in such ways as met

their needs (need being the mother of all inventions); and the course of time language everywhere became more copious.

What speech is for - to put it in the most general terms - is to carry our mental discourse over into verbal discourse, or the train of our thoughts into a train of words. This is useful to us in two ways, 'one private, the other public'. •One is the registering of our thought-sequences; these are apt to slip out of our memory, putting us to the trouble of recovering them, and we can be helped in that by recalling the words they were marked by. So that the first use of names is to serve for *marks* or *notes* of remembrance. •The other occurs when many people use the same words to signify to one another (by the connection and order of the words) what they conceive or think about each matter; and also what they desire, fear, or have any other passion for. Words used in this way are called *signs*.

Special uses of speech are these. (1) To register what we have found through our thoughts to be •the cause of anything, present or past; and what we think •the effects will be of things present or past. All this amounts to the acquiring of arts [= 'knowledge relating to practical skills']. (2) To show to others the knowledge we have attained; which is to advise and teach one another. (3) To make known to others our wants and purposes, so that we can help one another. (4) To please and delight ourselves and others by innocently playing with our words, for pleasure or ornament.

Corresponding to these uses, there are four misuses 'of speech'. (1) When men register their thoughts wrongly through inconstancy in the meanings of their words, leading them to register for their conceptions something that they never conceived, thus deceiving themselves. (2) When they use words metaphorically, that is, in senses other than the ones they are ordained to have, thereby deceiving others. (3) When by words they declare something to be what they want which isn't 'what they want'. (4) When they use words to injure one another; for seeing that nature has enabled living creatures to injure their enemies - some with teeth, some with horns, and some with hands - it is just a misuse of speech to injure someone with the tongue, unless it is someone whom we are obliged to govern, and 'even' then our role is not to injure but to correct and improve. [In Hobbes's time 'injure' could mean 'insult'.]

How does speech help us to remember sequences of causes and effects? By imposing names on things, and making connections among the names.

Some names are *proper* and apply to only one thing - for example, 'Peter', 'John', 'this man', 'this tree'. Others are common to many things, for example 'man', 'horse', 'tree'. Each of these is just a single name, but it is the name of many particular things; and considered as a name of all of them together it is called *a universal*; for the only universal things in the world are merely names. The things named are every one of them individual and singular.

One universal name is imposed on many things on the basis of their likeness in some quality or feature; and whereas a proper name brings to mind only one thing, universals recall any one of those many.

Among universal names, some are of greater extent and some of less, with the former including the latter 'in their extent'; and some 'pairs of universal names' are of equal extent, each including other. For example, the name 'body' has a larger range of application than the word 'man', and includes it; and the names 'man' and 'rational' are of equal extent, each including the other. I should point out that a 'name' is not necessarily a single word (as it is in grammar). Sometimes it consists of many words together. For the words 'he who in his actions observes the laws of his country' constitute a single name, equivalent to the one-word name 'just'.

By this imposition of names, some with wider scope and some with narrower, we turn calculations concerning sequences of •things imagined in the mind into calculations concerning sequences of •names. Here is an example. Suppose that a man who has no use of speech at all (like someone who is born totally deaf and dumb, and remains so) looks at a triangle and, beside it, two right angles such as the corners of a square. He may thoughtfully compare them and find that the three angles of that triangle are equal to the two right angles at its side. But if *another* triangle is shown to him, different in shape from the former one, he can't know without working it out all over again whether the three angles of this second triangle are also equal to the two right angles. Compare that with someone who has the use of words. When *he* observes that the equality depends not on •the length of the triangle's sides or on any other details about it, but only on the fact that •its sides are straight and its angles three, and that *this was the basis for his naming it a 'triangle'*, he will boldly draw the universal conclusion that such equality of angles occurs in all triangles whatsoever; and will register his discovery in these general terms: *Every triangle has its three angles equal to two right angles*. And thus the thought-sequence found in one particular case comes to be registered and remembered as a universal rule; that clears *time* and *place* out of our mental calculation, lets us off from all labour of the mind except the first •labour of proving the universal rule; and makes what we find to be true *here* and *now* to be true at all times and places.

But the use of words in registering our thoughts is nowhere else as evident as it is in numbering. A natural fool [= 'a congenitally intellectually deprived person'] who could never learn by heart the order of the numerals 'one', 'two', and 'three', may •hear every stroke of the clock and nod to it, or •say 'one', 'one', 'one'; but he can never •know what hour it strikes. And it seems that there was a time when those names of numbers were not in use, and men had to use the •fingers of one or both their hands to keep tallies of things; and that that's why numeral words today go no higher than •ten in any nation, and in some only up to five, and then they begin again. And someone who can count to ten will, if he recites the numerals out of order, lose himself and not know when he has recited them all. Much less will he be able to add, and subtract, and perform all the other operations of arithmetic. So that without words it is impossible to calculate with numbers, still less with sizes, speeds, degrees of force, and other things that have to be calculated if mankind is to survive and flourish.

When two names are joined together into a sequence or affirmation such as 'A man is a living creature' or 'If he is a man, he is a living creature', if the second name 'living creature' applies to everything that the first name 'man' applies to, then the affirmation or name-sequence is true; otherwise it is false. For 'true' and 'false' are attributes of *speech*, not of *things*. Where there is no speech, there is neither truth nor falsehood. There may be *error*, as when we expect something that doesn't happen, or suspect something that has not happened; but in neither case can a man be accused of untruth.

Seeing then that truth consists in the right ordering of names in our affirmations, a man who seeks precise truth needs to remember what every name he uses stands for, and to place it accordingly; otherwise he will find himself entangled in words like a bird in lime twigs: the more he struggles the more thoroughly he is belimed [= 'caught in the sticky stuff']. And therefore in geometry, which is virtually the only precise science, men begin by settling the meanings of their words in what they call 'definitions', which they place at the start of their calculations.

This brings out how necessary it is for anyone who aspires to true knowledge to examine the definitions of previous authors, and either to make them his own or, when they are negligently

set down, to correct them. For errors in definitions multiply themselves as the calculation proceeds, leading men into absurdities which eventually they •see, but can't •avoid without starting again from the beginning, which contains the source of their errors. That is how it happens that those who trust *books* behave like those who add up many little sums into a bigger one without considering whether the little ones they started with were rightly calculated; and when at last they see that something has gone wrong they don't know how to clear themselves of error. Instead of •mistrusting the principles of their masters as laid down in the books from which they started, they spend time •fluttering over their books like birds trapped in a room, who flutter at the false light of a glass window because they haven't the intelligence to consider that they came in through the chimney.

So the first use of speech is in the right definition of names, which is the acquisition of science; and the first misuse of language is in wrong definitions or the lack of definitions. The latter is the source of all false and senseless tenets, which make •men who try to learn from the authority of books rather than from their own meditation to be as much below the condition of •merely •ignorant men as •men endued with true science are above it. For between true science and erroneous doctrines, •mere ignorance is in the middle - worse than true science but better than false doctrines. Natural sense and imagination are not subject to absurdity. Nature itself can't err; error is possible only where there is language. When someone comes to have a richly expressive language he becomes wiser than average - or madder! A man needs the use of writing if he is to become excellently wise - or excellently foolish (unless his memory is damaged by disease or physical defect). For words are wise men's •counters, used merely in calculations; but they are the •money of fools, who value them on the authority of an Aristotle, a Cicero, a Thomas Aquinas, or any other teacher whatever.

Names can be used for anything that can enter into or be considered in an account - any things that can be added one to another to make a sum, or subtracted one from another and leave a remainder. The Latins called accounts of money *rationes*, and they called accounting *ratiocinatio*; and what we in bills or account-books call 'items' they called *nomina*, that is, *names*; and from that usage they seem to have gone on to extend the word *ratio* [= 'reason'] to the ability to calculate generally, in all other things as well as with numbers. The Greeks have only one word, *logos*, for both speech and reason; not because they thought there is no speech without reason, but because they thought there is no reasoning without speech; and they called the act of reasoning *sylogism*, which means *summing up* the consequences of one statement to those of another. And because a single thing can enter into an account on the basis of different features of it, the names of things are variously diverted from their original meanings and diversified, so as to express the differences of features. This variety among names can be brought under four general headings.

(1) A thing may enter into account as matter or body under such labels as 'living', 'sensible', 'rational', 'hot', 'cold', 'moved', 'quiet'; with all these names the word 'matter' or 'body' is understood, because they are all names of matter - that is, stand for properties that only matter can have.

(2) A thing can enter into account, or be considered, for some feature or quality that we conceive to be in it - for example, being moved, being a foot long, being hot, etc. - and then we take the name of the thing itself and change or divert it into a name for that feature or quality that we are considering: for 'living' we put into the account 'life', for 'moved' we put 'motion', for 'hot' we put 'heat', for 'long' we put 'length, and the like: and all such names as these are the

names of the features and properties by which one matter (body) is distinguished from another. These are called *abstract* names, not because the features or properties are separated from matter, but because their names are separated from the account of matter.

(3) We bring into account the properties of our own bodies through which we distinguish things. For example, when we see something we don't talk about the thing itself but rather the sight, the colour, the idea of it in the fancy; and when we hear something we talk not about it but about the hearing or sound only, which is our fancy or conception of it through the ear. Such words as 'green' and 'loud' are names of fancies.

(4) We bring into account and consider and give names to *names* themselves, and to *speeches*. For 'general', 'universal', 'special' and 'equivocal' are names of •names. And 'affirmation', 'interrogation', 'commandment', 'narration', 'syllogism', 'sermon', 'oration', and many other such, are names of •speeches.

And that is all the variety of positive names, which are used to mark something that exists in nature or is invented by the mind of man: (1) bodies that exist or are conceived to exist, or (2) bodies whose properties exist or (3) may be feigned [= 'supposed'] to exist, or (4) words and speech.

There are also other names, called 'negative', whose role is to signify that a word is *not* the name of the thing in question - for example, 'nothing', 'no man', 'infinite', 'unteachable', and the like. [The next bit is difficult.]

<u>Hobbes's text</u>	<u>One reading</u>	<u>Alternative reading</u>
which are nevertheless of use in reckoning, or in correcting of reckoning, and call to mind our past cogitations, though they be not names of any thing, because they make us refuse to admit of names not rightly used.	They're of use in calculating, and correcting calculations; they •call to mind our past thoughts; but they are •not names of anything, because all they do is to signify that some name, properly used, is <i>not</i> applicable to the item in question.	Calling to mind our past thoughts (though without being names of anything), they are of use in calculating and in correcting calculations because they get us to refuse to apply names that are wrongly used.

All other names are merely insignificant sounds. There are two kinds of them. •One occurs when a word is new, and its meaning not explained by definition; the schoolmen have coined new terms in abundance, thereby puzzling philosophers.

•The other occurs when men put together into a single name two names whose meanings are contradictory and inconsistent - for example, 'an incorporeal body', or (same thing) 'an incorporeal substance', and a great many more. For whenever an affirmation is false, the two names of which it is composed, when put together and made into a single name, one, signify nothing at all. For example, if it is false to say that *a quadrangle is round*, the word 'round quadrangle' signifies nothing and is a mere sound. Similarly, if it is false to say that virtue can be poured, or blown up and down, the words 'in-poured virtue' and 'in-blown virtue', are as absurd and insignificant as 'round quadrangle', although people have, absurdly, written of virtue as being 'inspired' and 'infused'. When you encounter a senseless and insignificant word, it is nearly always composed of Latin or Greek names. . . .

When a man hears some speech and has the thoughts that those words in that order were ordained and constituted to signify, then he is said to *understand* it; understanding being nothing but *conception caused by speech*. So if speech is confined to man (as for all I know it is), then understanding is also confined to him. It also follows that there can be no question of *understanding* an affirmation if it is universally absurd and false; though many think they are understand something when really they are merely repeating the words in a murmur or running over them in their mind.

I shall talk about what kinds of speeches signify the appetites, aversions, and passions of man's mind, and of their use and misuse, after I have treated the passions.

The names of things that please or displease us have inconstant meanings in common discourse, because likes and dislikes vary from person to person, and even for one person at different times. All names are designed to signify our conceptions, and all our states are merely conceptions; so when you and I conceive one thing differently we can hardly avoid naming it differently. Although the nature of the thing we conceive is the same, our different receptions of it - because of how we differ in the constitutions of our bodies and the prejudices of our opinions - gives everything we say some flavour of our different passions. In reasonings, therefore, we must *watch the words*; for a word, besides signifying what we imagine to be the nature of the thing to which the word applies, also signifies the nature, disposition, and interests of the speaker. The names of virtues and vices are examples of this: one man calls 'wisdom' what another calls 'fear', one calls 'cruelty' what another calls 'justice', one calls 'wastefulness' what another calls 'generosity', and so on. And therefore such names can never be secure bases for reasoning. Nor can metaphors and figures of speech; but these are less dangerous, because they announce their inconstancy, which the others do not.

## Chapter 5. Reason and science

When a man reasons, all he does is to conceive a sum total from the •*addition* of portions, or conceive a remainder from the •*subtraction* of one sum from another. If this is done in words, it is •conceiving the name of the whole as coming from the names of all the parts, or •conceiving the name of one part as coming from the names of the whole and of the other part. For some things (such as numbers) we have not only 'adding' and 'subtracting' but also names for other operations, such as 'multiplying' and 'dividing'. Yet these are not wholly new operations; for multiplication is merely adding equal things together, and division is nothing but subtracting one thing as often as we can. These operations are performed not only with numbers but with all sorts of things that can be added together and subtracted one from another. Just as arithmeticians teach how to add and subtract in numbers, so the geometricians teach how to do the same with lines, figures (two- and three-dimensional), angles, proportions, times, degrees of speed, force, power, and the like; the logicians teach the same with respect to sequences of words, adding together two names to make an affirmation, two affirmations to make a syllogism, and many syllogisms to make a proof; and from the sum - or conclusion - of a syllogism they subtract one proposition to find the other. Writers on politics add together treaties and agreements to find men's duties; and lawyers add together laws and facts to find what is right and wrong in the actions of private men. In brief: •wherever there is a place for addition and subtraction, there also is a place for reasoning; and •where these have no place, reason has nothing to do.

Out of all this we can define (that is to say, fix) what is meant by the word 'reason', taken as naming one of the faculties of the mind. For REASON in this sense is nothing but calculating

(that is, adding and subtracting) sequences of general names agreed on to mark and signify our thoughts - *mark* them when we calculate by ourselves, and *signify* them when we are demonstrating or recommending our calculations to other men.

People who are not practised in arithmetic are bound to make mistakes and get wrong answers, and even expert arithmeticians can do so. Similarly in any other subject of reasoning the ablest, most careful, and most practised men can deceive themselves and infer false conclusions. This is not to deny that •reason itself is always right reason, but no •one man's reason - nor even the reason of any group of men, however large - makes the conclusion certain. Similarly, arithmetic •itself is a certain and infallible art, but no calculation is guaranteed to be right just because a great many men have unanimously approved it. So when there is •a controversy about some calculation, the disputants must on their own initiative agree on some arbitrator or judge whose reason they will accept as right reason, since no standard for right reason has been set up by nature; and the same thing holds in •all debates of every kind. And when men who think themselves wiser than everyone else clamour and demand that *right reason* be the judge, yet actually seek that things should be settled by *their* reason and no-one else's, it is as intolerable in the society of men as it would be in a card game if, after trumps had been settled, someone always played as trumps whatever suit he had most of in his hand at that moment. For that's what people are doing when they insist, in any controversies they are involved in, that their strongest passion at a given moment shall count just then as right reason - revealing their *lack* of right reason by the claim they lay to it!

What reason is for - and the right way to use it - is not to find the added-up truth of one, or just a few, •word-sequences that are remote from the first definitions and settled meanings of names; but to begin with the latter and proceed from one sequence to another. For one can't be certain of the final conclusion without being certain of all the affirmations and negations from which it was inferred. Suppose that the master of a household, when making up his accounts, adds up the sums of all the bills of expense into one large sum, without looking into •how each bill has been added up by those who presented them to him, or into •what he is paying for •in each; he does himself no more good than if he just accepted the bottom-line sum •as calculated for him by an accountant; trusting the skill and honesty of *all* the accountants. •There is no point in checking *some* parts of the calculation if one doesn't check them *all*. In the same way, someone who in reasoning about something - anything - starts by taking on trust the conclusions of authors, and doesn't derive them •for himself from the •proper starting-points in every calculation (namely, the meanings of names as settled by definitions), wastes his labour; and •at the end of it all he doesn't *know* anything but merely *believes*.

Suppose a man is calculating without the use of words. (This is possible in relation to particular things, as when on seeing one thing we conjecture what was likely to have preceded it or is likely to follow it.) If what he thought likely to follow doesn't follow, or what he thought likely to have preceded didn't precede, this is called 'error'; and even the most prudent men are subject to it. But when we are reasoning in words with general meanings, if we employ a general inference that is false, though this will commonly be called 'error', it is really an *absurdity*, or *senseless speech*. For error is merely going wrong in presuming that something is past or to come - something which, even if •in fact it is neither past nor to come, is not •impossible so far as we can discover. But when we make a general assertion, unless it is a true one, the possibility of it is inconceivable. And words by which we conceive nothing but the sound are what we call 'absurd', 'insignificant', and 'nonsense'. Thus, if a man were to talk to me of



a round quadrangle,  
 qualities of bread in cheese,  
 immaterial substances,  
 a free subject, a free will, or any sort of 'free' other than freedom from being hindered by  
 opposition,

I wouldn't say he was in error, but rather that his words had no meaning, that is to say, absurd.

As I said in chapter 2, man surpasses all other animals in this: when he thinks about anything whatever, he is apt to enquire into the consequences of it and into what he can do with it. And now I add this other degree of the same excellence - that is something else in which man surpasses the other animals, though really it is a development of the 'enquiry' excellence just discussed. It is that man can, by the use of words, get the conclusions he arrives at into general rules, called 'theorems' or 'aphorisms'. That is, he can reason or calculate not only with •numbers but with •things of any sort in which one can be added to or subtracted from another.

But this privilege is lessened through being accompanied by another, namely the 'privilege' of absurdity! Absurdity besets no living creature except man; and among men, the ones who are most subject to it are the philosophers. For what Cicero says of them somewhere is most true - that there can be nothing too absurd to be found in books by philosophers. The reason for this is obvious. It is that they never begin their thinking from the starting-point of definitions or explanations of the names they plan to use; which is a method that has been used in geometry - making its conclusions indisputable - and hasn't been used anywhere else. I shall now list seven causes of absurdity.

The first cause of absurd conclusions is the lack of method - or anyway of the *right* method - in that they don't start from definitions, that is, from settled meanings for their words; as if they could make up accounts without knowing the value of the numeral words 'one', 'two', and 'three'.

As I mentioned in chapter 4, bodies enter on the basis of different features of them and ways of looking at them, and those bring with them differences in names. (For example, a single lump of stuff may bring in the word 'body' if we thinking of it just as a lump of material stuff, 'golden' if we are thinking of what kind of stuff it is composed of, 'cube' if we are thinking of its shape, and so on.) This allows various absurdities to come from confusion these different names and connecting them improperly into assertions. And therefore,

The second cause of absurd assertions is the giving of names of •bodies to •qualities, or of qualities to bodies. That's what people do when they say that faith is 'infused' or 'inspired' into someone; when really only *body* can be poured or breathed into anything; or that extension is body, when really it is a quality of body; that phantasms are spirits, when really they are states of animals; and so on.

The third cause of absurdity is the giving of the names of •qualities of bodies external to us to •qualities of our own bodies; which is what people do when they say that the colour is in the body, the sound is in the air, and so on.

The fourth cause is the giving of names of •names or speeches to •bodies, which is what people do when they say that there are universal things, that a living creature is a genus or a general thing, and so on. [Hobbes puts it the other way around: giving names of •bodies to •names or speeches; but his examples show that this was a slip.]

The fifth cause is the giving of names of •names and speeches to •qualities, which is what people do when they say that the nature of a thing is its definition, a man's command is his will,

and the like. [Another reversal: Hobbes writes of giving names of •qualities to •names or speeches; but again the examples show what was meant.]

The sixth cause of absurdity is the use of metaphors, figures of speech, and other rhetorical devices, instead of words used strictly in their proper senses. In common speech it is all right to say, for example, 'the path goes that way' or '. . . leads that way', or to say 'the proverb says such-and-such'; but really paths cannot go, and proverbs cannot speak; so that in calculation and seeking the truth such turns of phrase are not to be admitted.

The seventh cause of absurdity is the use of names that don't mean anything, but are learned by rote from the schools - for example, 'hypostatic', 'transubstantiate', 'consubstantiate', 'eternal-now', and similar cant from the schoolmen.

Someone who can avoid all these things won't easily fall into any absurdity, unless what he is saying or writing is very long and in the later parts he forgets what he said earlier. For all men naturally reason in the same way, and reason well, when they have good principles. No-one is so stupid as both •to make a mistake in geometry and also •to persist in it after it has been pointed out to him!

From all this it appears that reason is not •born with us, like sense and memory; or •acquired through experience alone, as prudence is; but •achieved through *work*. First there is the work of giving suitable names to things; then the work of developing a good and orderly method for proceeding from •the elements - names - to •assertions made by connecting names with one another, and thence to •syllogisms, which are the connections of one assertion to another, till we come to •knowledge of all the consequences of names relating to the subject in hand; and that is what men call SCIENCE. [In this text, 'sequence' often replaces Hobbes's 'consequence' - a word which could in his time mean merely 'sequence', and often does so in what he writes. This last occurrence of 'consequence' is probably best understood in that way too: knowledge of all the [true] name-sequences, i.e. propositions, relating to the topic in hand. But it has been left as 'consequences' in preparation for what is to follow.] And whereas sense and memory are merely knowledge of *fact*, which is a past thing, and irrevocable because it is past, science is the knowledge of *consequences* and of the *dependence* of one fact on another. It is *this* knowledge that enables us, given that we can do x now, to know how to do a similar thing y at a later time if we want to; because when we see how something comes about, in what manner and through what causes, when similar causes come into our power we can see how to make them produce similar effects.

So children are not endowed with reason at all until they have acquired the use of speech; they are said to be 'reasonable creatures' because it is obviously possible for them to have the use of reason in time to come. As for the majority of men: they have a limited use of reasoning, for example in elementary numbering; but reason is not much good to them in everyday life, in which their guide is not something that makes them alike, *reason*, but rather things that differentiate them from one another. For they govern themselves - some better, some worse - on the basis of •their differences of experience and •quickness of memory, •the different goals that they severally have, and specially of •their good or bad luck and of •the errors they make or that others around them make. They are so far from having *science*, or secure rules to guide their actions, that they don't even know what it is. They have thought of geometry as some kind of magic trick, and have made some use of it in that spirit; but as for other sciences, those who haven't been taught the starting-point and some of the first moves, so that they can see how the science is acquired and generated, are in this respect like children who have no thought of biological generation and

are convinced by their mothers and nurses that their brothers and sisters are not born but found in the garden.

Still, those who have no science are in a better and nobler condition with their natural caution than are men who make mistakes in reasoning - or trust others who have made such mistakes - and are led by this to accept false and absurd general rules. For ignorance of causes and of rules doesn't lead men as far astray as does reliance on false rules, and thinking that what they want will be caused by something which in fact will cause the contrary.

To conclude: clear words, freed from ambiguity and clarified by exact definitions, are the light of human minds, reason is the stride, growth of science is the path, and the well-being of mankind is the end of our journey. [Here 'end' probably has both its senses - our goal and our terminus.] And on the other side, metaphors and senseless and ambiguous words are like will-o'-the-wisps, reasoning with them is wandering among countless absurdities, and contention and sedition, or contempt, is their end.

Just as having *much experience* is having *prudence*, so knowing *much science* is having *sapience*. For though we usually use the one name 'wisdom' for both of these, the Latins always distinguished *prudencia* from *sapientia*, ascribing the former to experience and the latter to science. To make the difference between them appear more clearly, let us compare

a man endowed with an excellent natural use and dexterity in handling his arms  
with

a man who has all those skills and *also* has an acquired science of combat, a system of general principles concerning where he can hurt his adversary or be hurt by him, in every possible posture or position.

The ability of the former would be to the ability of the latter as *prudence* is to *sapience*: both useful, but the latter infallible. In contrast to both of these, those who trust only to the authority of books and blindly follow the blind, are like a man who relies on the false rules of an incompetent fencing master, and rashly attacks an adversary who kills or disgraces him.

Some of the signs of a person's having science - that is, being *sapient* - are certain and infallible; others are uncertain. We have a certain sign when someone who claims to have the science of something can teach it, i.e. can demonstrate its truth clearly to someone else; and we have an uncertain sign when only *some* particular events make good his claim to knowledge, while on many other occasions things are not as he says they will be. Signs of *prudence* are all uncertain, because it is impossible to observe by experience and to remember *all* the circumstances that may affect a given outcome. But in any business in which you don't have *infallible science* to guide you, you should rely on your own *natural judgment*; to forsake that and instead to let yourself be guided by *general opinions* that you have read in books - generalizations that are subject to many exceptions - is a sign of folly such as is generally scorned by the name of 'pedantry'. There are men who in parliamentary debates love to show off how well-read they are in politics and history; but very few even of *them* are like this in their domestic affairs, where their personal welfare is at stake. They have plenty of *prudence* for their private affairs, but in public they are more concerned with the reputation of their own intelligence than with the outcome of anyone else's affairs.

## Chapter 6. The interior beginnings of voluntary motions, commonly called the passions, and the speeches by which they are expressed

There are in animals two sorts of motions that are special to them. (1) One kind is called *vital* motion; it starts when the animal is generated, and continues without interruption through its whole life: the circulation of the blood, the pulse, breathing, digestion, nutrition, excretion, and so on; none of which motions need any help from the imagination. (2) The other kind is *animal* motion, otherwise called *voluntary* motion - for example •walking, •speaking, •moving any of our limbs in whatever manner is first fancied [= 'imagined'] in our minds. I have already said in chapters 1 and 2 that

*sense* is motion in the organs and interior parts of a man's body, caused by the action of things that he sees, hears, etc.,

and that

*fancy* is merely what remains of that same motion after sense has stopped.

And because •walking, •speaking and other such voluntary motions always depend on a preceding thought of •where ·to walk to· and by what route, and •what ·to say·, it is evident that the imagination is the first internal beginning of all voluntary motion ('because that preceding thought occurs in the imagination, which I have said is also known as 'the understanding'). Uneducated people don't think of any motion as occurring when the moving thing is invisible or the distance it moves is too short to be perceptible; but such motions *do* occur. Take a distance as short as you like, anything that moves across a distance *including* that one has to move across that little distance itself. These small beginnings of motion inside the body of man, before they appear in walking, speaking, striking and other visible actions, are commonly called ENDEAVOUR.

When this endeavour is ·a motion· •toward something that causes it, it is called APPETITE, or DESIRE; the latter being the general name, while the other is often restricted to hunger and thirst, that is, the desire for food ·and drink·. And when the endeavour is •away from something, it is generally called AVERSION. The words 'appetite' and 'aversion' come to us from the Latins; and they both signify *motions*, one of approaching, the other of withdrawing. [The Latin 'appeto' has meanings that include 'reach for, stretch out towards', and 'averto' can mean 'turn aside from'.] So also do the Greek words for the same. . . . It is interesting that those original word-meanings embody truths that were lost to, or denied by, philosophers: For nature itself often presses onto men truths that they stumble at when, later, they look for something beyond nature. The schools find no *actual* motion in a mere *desire to walk* or *to move*; but because they have to admit that motion is somehow involved they call it 'metaphorical motion'; which is an absurd thing to say, because although words may be called 'metaphorical', bodies and motions cannot.

What men desire they are also said to LOVE, and they are said to HATE the things for which they have aversion. So that desire and love are the same thing, except that by 'desire' we always signify the absence of the ·desired· object, whereas by 'love' we usually signify that the object is present. So also by 'aversion' we signify the absence of the object, and by 'hate' its presence.

Of appetites and aversions, a few are born with men. Among those few are the appetite for food, and the appetite for urination and excretion - and these would be better characterized as aversions from certain bodily feelings. All our other appetites are for particular things - ·or specific kinds of things· - and they come from experience, trying the effects of things on ourselves

or on other people. The only •desire we can have relating to things that we don't know at all, or that we believe don't yet exist, is the desire to taste and try them. But we can have •aversion not only for things that we know have hurt us but also for things of which don't know whether they will hurt us.

Things that we neither desire nor hate we are said to contemn, CONTEMPT being nothing but the heart's immobility or stubborn resistance to the action of certain things. It occurs when the heart is already moved in some other way by objects more powerful than the contemned ones, or from lack of experience of the latter. [Here and throughout this chapter, Hobbes uses 'contemn' and 'contempt' in their weakest sense, which doesn't require outright despising something, and may be merely holding it to be of little account.]

And because the constitution of a man's body is continually altering, it is impossible that all the same things should always cause in him the same appetites and aversions; much less can all men agree in desiring the same object (except for a very few objects).

Whatever is the object of any man's appetite or desire is what *he* calls 'good', the object of his hate and aversion he calls 'evil' or 'bad', and the object of his contempt he calls 'low' and 'inconsiderable'. For the words 'good', 'evil', 'bad' and 'contemptible' are always used in relation to the person using them. Nothing is simply and absolutely - that is, just considered in itself - good or bad; there is no common rule of good and bad to be taken from •the nature of the objects themselves. All one has is a rule taken from •oneself (where there is no commonwealth) or, where there is a commonwealth, from •the person who represents it, or from •an arbitrator or judge whom disputing men agree to set up, making his judgment the rule of good and bad.

The Latin language has two words whose meanings are close to those of 'good' and 'evil', though not precisely the same. They are the words *pulchrum* and *turpe*. The former signifies anything that by some apparent present signs promises good; and the latter whatever promises evil. But in English we don't have such general names as these. For *pulchrum* we say of some things 'fair', of others 'beautiful', or 'handsome', or 'gallant', or 'honourable', or 'comely', or 'amiable'; and for *turpe* we say 'foul', 'deformed', 'ugly', 'base', 'nauseous', and the like, as the subject shall require. All these words in their proper places signify nothing but the look or bearing or countenance that promises good or evil. So there are three kinds of good: good •in the promise, that is *pulchrum*; good •in effect, as the end desired, which is called *jucundum*, delightful; and good •as a means, which is called *utile*, profitable. Similarly on the bad side: for bad •in promise is what they call *turpe*; bad •in effect and as an end is *molestum*, unpleasant, troublesome; and bad in the means is *inutile*, unprofitable, hurtful.

When we *sense*, as I have said before, what •really happens inside us is only motion caused by the action of external objects, though it •appears to the sight as light and colour, to the ears as sound, to the nostrils as odour, and so on. Similarly, when the effects of that same object are continued from the eyes, ears, and other organs to the heart, the •real effect there is nothing but motion or endeavour, which consists in appetite towards or aversion away from the object that caused the motion. But the •appearance or sense of that motion is what we call 'delight' or 'trouble of mind'.

This motion that is called 'appetite' (or 'delight' or 'pleasure' considered as an appearance) seems to strengthen vital motion and to be a help to it; which is why it was appropriate for things that caused delight to be called *jucunda*, from helping or strengthening, and the contrary things to be called *molesta*, 'offensive', from hindering and troubling the vital motion.

So pleasure or delight is the appearance or sense of good; and molestation or displeasure is the appearance or sense of bad. And consequently all appetite, desire, and love is accompanied with some delight, more or less, and all hatred and aversion with more or less displeasure and offence.

Of pleasures or delights, some arise from the sense of a present object; and those can be called 'pleasures of sense'. (They are sometimes called 'sensual' pleasures, but only by those who condemn them; so 'sensual', 'being value-laden', has no place until there are laws.) Of this kind are all operations and exonerations of the body - 'that is, loading food and unloading excrement' - as also everything that is pleasant to see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. Other pleasures arise from the expectation that comes from foreseeing some end or consequence of things, whether those things actually please or displease our senses when they happen. These are pleasures of the mind of the person who draws those consequences 'and forms the corresponding expectations', and are generally called JOY. Similarly, some displeasures are in the senses, and are called PAIN; others in the expectation of consequences, and are called GRIEF.

Each of these simple passions called 'appetite', 'desire', 'love', 'aversion', 'hate', 'joy', and 'grief' has different names for different contexts in which it occurs. (1) When they one succeed another, they are variously labelled according to men's opinion about the likelihood of attaining what they desire. (2) They can be variously labelled in terms of the object loved or hated; or (3) from the consideration of many of them together; or (4) from the alteration or succession itself.

Appetite with an expectation of success is called HOPE.

Appetite without such an expectation is called DESPAIR.

Aversion with the opinion that hurt will come from the object, FEAR.

Aversion, with a hope of avoiding that hurt by resistance, COURAGE.

Sudden courage, ANGER.

Constant hope, CONFIDENCE in ourselves.

Constant despair, DIFFIDENCE about ourselves.

Anger for great hurt done to someone else, when we think it was done wrongly, INDIGNATION.

Desire for someone else's good, BENEVOLENCE, GOOD WILL, CHARITY. If to man generally, GOOD NATURE.

Desire for riches, COVETOUSNESS: a name always used to express blame, because anyone contending for riches is displeased with anyone else's getting them; though the desire in itself ought to be blamed or not according to the means by which riches are sought.

Desire for office or rank, AMBITION: a name used also in the blame-expressing sense, for the reason just given for 'covetous'.

Desire for things that do little to further our ends, and fear of things that are little of a hindrance, PUSILLANIMITY [= 'pettiness of soul'].

Contempt towards little helps and hindrances, MAGNANIMITY [= 'greatness of soul'].

Magnanimity in face of danger of death or wounds, VALOUR, FORTITUDE.

Magnanimity in the use of riches, LIBERALITY.

Pusillanimity in the use of riches, WRETCHEDNESS, MISERABLENESS, or - if the speaker likes it - PARSIMONY.

Love of persons for society, KINDNESS.

Love of persons only for pleasure of the senses, NATURAL LUST.

Love of the same, acquired from thinking over past pleasures, LUXURY.

Love of one person in particular, with a desire to be exclusively beloved, THE PASSION OF LOVE. The same, with fear that the love is not returned, JEALOUSY.

Desire by hurting someone to make him condemn some past action of his own, REVENGEFULNESS.

Desire to know *why* and *how*, CURIOSITY. This occurs in no living creature but man; so that man is distinguished from other animals not only by his reason but also by this singular drive of curiosity. In the other animals, the appetite for food and the other pleasures of the senses push aside any concern for knowing causes. Curiosity is a lust of the mind which, because of the *lastingness* of delight in the continual and unresting accumulation of knowledge, surpasses the brief intensity of any carnal pleasure such as lust of the body.

Fear of invisible powers, whether privately invented or taken from stories that are publicly allowed, RELIGION; from stories that are not allowed, SUPERSTITION. And when those powers are really such as we have imagined them to be, it is TRUE RELIGION.

Fear, without knowing what one is afraid of, or why, is PANIC TERROR, so-called from the fables that make Pan the author of them. Though really the first person in a group to experience such fear always has some notion of why, and the rest follow his example in running away, everyone supposing that the others know why. That is why this passion happens only to large groups of people.

Joy at something new, ADMIRATION [= 'surprise or wonder']; exclusive to man, because it excites the appetite for knowing the cause.

Joy arising from imagining one's own power and ability is the exultation of the mind called GLORYING. If this is based on experience of one's own former actions, it is the same as *confidence*: but if based on the flattery of others, or supposed by oneself only for delight in the consequences of it, it is called VAINGLORY. This is a good name for it; because a well grounded confidence leads one to attempt things, whereas a mere supposition of power does not, and is therefore rightly called 'vain' [= 'pointless'].

The vainglory that consists in the pretending or supposing we have abilities which we know we don't have occurs mostly in young men. It is nourished by the histories or fictions of heroes, and is often corrected by age and employment.

Grief from a belief that one lacks power is called DEJECTION of mind.

Sudden glory is the passion that causes those grimaces called LAUGHTER. It is caused either by •some sudden act of the person's own, that pleases him, or by •his awareness of something wrong with someone else, by comparison with whom he suddenly applauds himself. This happens mostly in people who are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves: they are forced to keep themselves in their own favour by observing the imperfections of other men. So, much laughter at the defects of others is a sign of small-mindedness. For one of the proper works of a great mind is to help and free others from scorn, and to compare itself only with the most able.

On the other side, sudden dejection is the passion that causes WEeping; and is caused by events that suddenly dash one's dearest hopes or kick away some prop of one's power; and it occurs mostly with those who - like women and children - rely principally on external helps. Some weep for the loss of friends, others for their unkindness; yet others for a reconciliation that puts a sudden stop to their thoughts of revenge. In all cases, both laughter and weeping are *sudden* motions, each taken away by the passage of time. For no man laughs at old jokes or weeps over an old calamity.

Grief for the discovery of some defect in one's own abilities is SHAME, or the passion that reveals itself in BLUSHING. It consists in the awareness of something dishonourable in oneself; in young men it is a sign of the love of good reputation, and is commendable; in old men it is a sign of the same, but is not commendable because it comes too late.

The contempt for good reputation is called IMPUDENCE.

Grief for the calamity of someone else is PITY. It arises from the thought of a similar calamity befalling oneself, which is why it is called also COMPASSION [= 'feeling with'], and in the recently popularized phrase FELLOW-FEELING. That is why, for a calamity arising from great wickedness on the part of the person who suffers the calamity, it is the best men who have the least pity; and for any given calamity, the least pity will come from those who think themselves least liable to something similar.

Contempt or little regard for the calamity of others is what men call CRUELTY; and it comes from the person's confidence about his own good fortune. I don't think it possible that any man should take pleasure in other men's great harms without some goal of his own playing a part in his motivation.

Grief over the success of a competitor in wealth, honour, or other good, if it is combined with an endeavour to exercise one's own abilities to equal or exceed him, is called EMULATION; but when combined with an endeavour to trip up or hinder a competitor, it is ENVY.

Sometimes in the mind of a man appetites alternate with aversions, and hopes with fears, all concerning one thing. That happens when various good and bad consequences of doing or not doing the thing in question come successively into his thoughts, so that sometimes he has an appetite for it and sometimes an aversion from it. sometimes a hope to be able to do it and sometimes despair about that or fear to attempt it; and the whole sum of desires, aversions, hopes and fears, continuing until the thing is either done or thought impossible, is what we call DELIBERATION.

So there is no deliberation about past things, because it is manifestly impossible for them to be changed; or about things known (or thought) to be impossible, because men know (or think) that such deliberation is pointless. But we can deliberate about something that is impossible if we think it possible, because in that case we don't know that deliberation is pointless. It is still called 'deliberation', because it is a process of putting an end to the freedom we had to do or not do according to our appetite or aversion.

This alternation between appetites and aversions, between hopes and fears, occurs just as much in other living creatures as in man: and therefore beasts also deliberate.

Every deliberation is said to *end* at the point where the thing in question is either done or thought to be impossible, because until then we are free to do or not do it, according to our appetite or aversion.

In deliberation, the *last* appetite or aversion - the one that attaches *immediately* to the doing or to the not-doing - is what we call the WILL. This is the *act* of willing, not the faculty of willing [= 'the *ability* to will']. Beasts that deliberate must necessarily also have 'the ability to' will. The schoolmen would deny this, but for an invalid reason. The schools commonly define the will as a 'rational appetite', but this is not a good definition. If it were sound, there could be no voluntary act against reason; for a voluntary act is simply one that proceeds from the will. But if instead of a 'rational appetite' we say an 'appetite resulting from a preceding deliberation', then the definition is the same as I have just given. *Will* therefore *is the last appetite in deliberating*. And though in ordinary talk we may say 'He once had a will to do that, but he didn't do it', that 'will' is strictly



just an *inclination*, which is not enough to make an action voluntary, because the action depends not on it but on the *last* inclination or appetite. . . .

This makes it obvious that voluntary actions include not only •ones that come from greed, ambition, lust, or other appetites for the thing under deliberation, but also •ones that come from aversion or fear of the consequences of not doing the thing.

The forms of speech through which the •passions are expressed are partly the same as, and partly different from, those by which we express our •thoughts. First, generally all passions can be expressed •indicatively, as in ‘I love’, ‘I fear’, ‘I joy’, ‘I deliberate’, ‘I will’, ‘I command’. Some of them have modes of speech all of their own, which are not affirmations although they can licence inferences to affirmations, inferences that come from the speech in question but not from the passion it expresses. [The following addition is based on help from Edwin Curley.] For example, *wishes* have the *optative* form: ‘Would that the Queen had married!’ is not an affirmation, expresses a passion (a wish), and supports an inference to the affirmation ‘The Queen did not marry’, which is a consequence of the optative but not of the wish it expresses. And *desires* have the *imperative* form: ‘Return the money you stole!’ is not an affirmation, expresses a passion (a desire), and supports an inference to the affirmation ‘You stole money’, which is a consequence of the imperative but not of the desire it expresses.

•Deliberation is expressed •subjunctively, this being the right form of speech to signify suppositions and their consequences, as in ‘If this be done, then that will follow’. This is the same as the language of reasoning, except that reasoning is conducted in general words, whereas deliberation mostly concerns particulars. The language of desire and aversion is •imperative, as in ‘Do this’ and ‘Don’t do that’. When the person spoken to is obliged to do or not do, this is a *command*; otherwise it is a *request* or else *advice*. The language of vainglory, of indignation, pity and revengefulness is •optative, as in ‘If only they would make me king!’. To express *the desire to know* there is a special form called the •interrogative, as in ‘What is it?’ and ‘When will it?’ and ‘How is it done?’ and ‘Why?’ Those are the only forms of speech for expressing the passions that I can find. As for cursing, swearing, reviling, and the like: they aren’t speech, but merely the actions of a tongue that has acquired bad habits.

These forms of speech, I repeat, are *expressions* or *voluntary significations* of our passions; but they are not *certain signs* that the speaker has the signified passions, because anyone is free to use any one of them without having the associated passion. The best *signs* of a man’s passions at a given time are his facial expression, how he moves his body, and what we can work out from what we know independently of his actions and his goals.

In deliberation the appetites and aversions are raised by what we think will be the good or bad consequences and upshots of the action we are deliberating about; and estimating this good or bad depends on foreseeing a long chain of consequences, of which one is seldom able to see to the end. But if *so far as a man can see* the good in those consequences outweighs the bad, the whole chain of consequences is - as writers say - ‘apparent good’ or ‘seeming good’. And when the bad outweighs the good so far as the man can see, the whole chain is ‘apparent evil’ or ‘seeming evil’. So the person whose experience or power of thought gives him the longest and surest view of consequences does the best job of deliberating for himself and, when he is willing to, of advising

Continual success in obtaining the things you want when you want them - that is, continual prospering - is what men call HAPPINESS. [Throughout this text ‘happiness’ replaces Hobbes’s ‘felicity’.] I mean the kind of happiness of which we have some chance in this life. For there is no such

thing as perpetual tranquillity of mind here on earth, because life itself is nothing but motion, and can never be without desire, or without fear, any more than it can be without sense. What kind of ·heavenly· happiness God has ordained for those who devoutly honour him is something we can't know in advance of enjoying it; for those ·heavenly· joys are to us now as incomprehensible as the schoolmen's phrase 'beatific vision' is unintelligible!

The form of speech through which men signify their belief in something's goodness is PRAISE. The form through which they signify something's power and greatness is MAGNIFYING. . . . And for present purposes that is enough about the PASSIONS.

## Chapter 7. The ends or resolutions of discourse

All discourse that is governed by a desire for knowledge eventually comes to an end - either in success or in abandonment of the search. And when something interrupts a chain of discourse, there is an end of it for that time.

If the discourse is merely mental, it consists of thoughts that the thing *will be*, *won't be* (or *has been*, *hasn't been*), alternately. So that wherever you break off the chain of a man's discourse, you leave him in a presumption of *it will be* or *it won't be* (or *has been* or *hasn't been*). All this is *opinion*. And •the alternation of appetites in deliberating about good and bad is exactly the same in shape as •the alternation of opinions in enquiring into the truth about past and future. And just as the last appetite in deliberation is called the 'will', so the last opinion in a search for the truth about past and future is called the JUDGMENT, or firm and final *sentence* of the person in question. And just as the whole chain of alternating appetites in the question of good or bad is called *deliberation*, so the whole chain of alternating opinions in the question of true or false is called DOUBT.

No discourse whatever can end in absolute knowledge of any past or future fact. For the knowledge of fact starts as *sense*, and from then on it is *memory*. As for the knowledge of consequences - which I have said before is called 'science' - it is not •absolute but •conditional. No man can know through discourse that

this or that is, this or that was, this or that will be,  
which is to know •absolutely; but only that

if this is so, so is that; if this was so, so was that; if this will be so, so will that;  
which is to know •conditionally. Furthermore, it is not about one *thing's* being consequent on *another thing*, but one *name's* being consequent on another *name of the same thing*.

So when a discourse is put into speech, and begins with •the definitions of words, proceeds by connecting these into •general affirmations, and of these again into •syllogisms, the end or final sum - ·the bottom line of the calculation· - is called •the conclusion. And the state of mind that it signifies is the conditional knowledge, or knowledge of the consequence of words, which is commonly called SCIENCE. But if such a discourse is not ultimately based on definitions, or if the definitions are not rightly joined together into syllogisms, then the end or conclusion is again OPINION - namely, opinion about the truth of something said, though sometimes in absurd and senseless words with no possibility of being understood.

When two or more men know one and the same fact, they are said to be CONSCIOUS of it one to another; which is to know it together. [The Latin roots of 'conscious' are 'con' = 'with', and 'scire' = 'know'.] And because several men in agreement are the best witnesses concerning actions by one of them or by someone else, it was and always will be thought a very bad act for any man to speak against his *conscience* [same Latin roots], or to corrupt or force anyone else to do so, for the plea of

‘conscience’ has been always heard with respectful sympathy. This word ‘conscience’ came to be misused in two ways: First, men used the word metaphorically, to stand for their knowledge of their own secret acts and thoughts; it’s in that usage that it is rhetorically said that the conscience is a thousand witnesses. And then men who were passionately in love with their own new opinions (however absurd), and obstinately determined to stick up for them, gave those opinions of theirs the revered name of ‘conscience’, apparently wanting to suggest that it would be unlawful to change them or speak against them; and so they claimed to *know* they are true, when the most that they know is that they think them true.

When a man’s discourse doesn’t begin with definitions, it begins either •with some other contemplation of his own, and then it is still called ‘opinion’ or with •something said by someone else whose ability to know the truth, and whose honesty, is not doubted by the man in question. In the latter case, the discourse is not so much about its ostensible topic as about the •trusted person; and its resolution - its ‘bottom line’ - is called BELIEF and FAITH. Faith in the man; belief both of the man and of the truth of what he says. Thus, in *belief* there are two opinions - one of what he says, the other of his virtue. To have faith in a man, or to trust a man, or to believe a man, signify the same thing - namely the opinion that •the man is truthful, but to believe what is said signifies only the opinion that •what he says is true. It should be noted that the phrase ‘I believe *in* . . .’ never occurs except in the writings of theologians. In other writings we don’t find ‘believe *in*’ but rather ‘I believe him’, ‘I trust him’, ‘I have faith in him’, ‘I rely on him’. . . . This peculiarity in the ecclesiastical use of the word has raised many disputes about the right object of the Christian faith.

By ‘believing in’, as it occurs in the creed, is meant not •trust in the person but •confession and acknowledgment of the doctrine. For not only Christians but all sorts of men do believe in God in such a way as to regard as true everything they hear him say, whether or not they understand it. That is as much faith and trust as can possibly be had in a person - *any* person - but they don’t all *believe the doctrine* of the creed.

From this it follows that when we believe some statement to be true, on the basis not of •facts about the subject-matter of the statement, or of •the principles of natural reason, but of •the authority and good opinion we have of the person who made the statement, then the object of our faith is the speaker - that person - whom we believe in, or trust in, and whose word we take; and our believing does honour to *him* only, and not to *the statement* he has made. And consequently, when we believe that the Scriptures are the word of God, having no immediate revelation from God himself, we are taking the church’s word for it. Our belief, faith, and trust is just in the church. And those who believe what a prophet tells them in the name of God take the word of *the prophet*, do honour to *him*, and trust in *him*. . . . That is also how things stand with all other history as well. For if I didn’t believe everything written by historians about the glorious acts of Alexander, or Caesar, I don’t think the ghost of Alexander or Caesar would have any just cause to be offended - nor would anybody else except the historians. If Livy says the Gods once made a cow speak, and we don’t believe it, that expresses our distrust not of the Gods of but Livy. So that it is evident that whenever we believe something for no other reason than what is drawn from authority of men and their writings, whether they or not they are sent from God, our faith is only in men.

## Chapter 8. The virtues commonly called intellectual, and their contrary defects

Virtue generally, in all sorts of subjects, is something that is valued as making one stand out, and it depends on comparison. For if all qualities were equally present in all men, nothing would be prized. And by INTELLECTUAL virtues we understand such abilities of the mind as men praise, value, and desire for themselves. They commonly go under the name of ‘good wit’, though ‘wit’ is also used in a narrower sense to distinguish one particular intellectual ability from the rest.

These intellectual virtues are of two sorts - natural and acquired. By ‘natural’ I don’t mean that a man has them from his birth, for *sensing* is the only thing of which that is true; and in their sensing abilities men differ so little from one another - and indeed from brute beasts - that sensing is not to be counted among virtues. What I mean by ‘natural intellectual virtue’ is the wit that is acquired purely through use and experience, without technique, development, or instruction. This NATURAL WIT consists mainly in two things: •speed of imagining (that is, swift succession of one thought after another) and •steady direction to some approved end. On the other side, a slow imagination makes the defect or fault of the mind that is commonly called ‘DULLNESS’, ‘stupidity’, and sometimes by other names that signify slowness of motion or resistance to being moved.

This difference in quickness is caused by differences in men’s passions. People vary in what they like and dislike, and therefore some men’s thoughts run one way and some another, and men differ in what they attend to and what they retain of the things that pass through their imagination. In this succession of men’s thoughts there is nothing to attend to in the things they think about except •in what ways they are like one another, •in what they are unlike, •what use they are, and •how they serve for a given purpose. Those who notice likenesses that are rarely noticed by others are said to have ‘a good wit’, which in this context means a good fancy. Those who notice differences and unlikenesses - which is called ‘distinguishing’ and ‘discerning’ and ‘judging between thing and thing’ - where the differences are not easy to spot, are said to have ‘a good judgment’; and in conversational and business contexts where times, places, and persons have to be carefully and accurately distinguished, this virtue is called DISCRETION [here = ‘the ability to discern, to make distinctions’]. •Fancy without the help of judgment is not commended as a virtue; but •judgment and discretion is commended for itself, even without the help of fancy. Besides the discretion of times, places, and persons that is necessary for a good fancy, there is also required a frequent relating of one’s thoughts to their purpose - that is, to some use to be made of them. Someone who has this virtue of discretion, if he is careful to relate his thoughts to their purpose, will easily find similarities and comparisons that will give pleasure not only as illustrating his discourse and adorning it with new and apt metaphors, but also insights that are rare and unusual. But when a great fancy is not accompanied by steadiness and direction to some end, it is one kind of madness - the kind possessed by people who, when they enter into any discourse, are snatched from their purpose by everything that comes in their thought, being drawn into so many digressions and parenthetical passages, and such long ones, that they utterly lose themselves: I know no particular name for this kind of folly, but I know some causes of it. One cause of it is lack of experience, which results in a man’s thinking to be new and rare something with which others are familiar; another cause is pusillanimity [= ‘pettiness of soul’], whereby •someone sees as great something which to others is a trifle, and •whatever is new or great in his estimation and therefore thought fit to be told gradually nudges the man off his intended course.

In a good poem - whether epic or dramatic - and also in sonnets, epigrams, and other pieces, both judgment and fancy are required; but the fancy must be more conspicuous, because poems please through their oddities (though they ought not to displease by indiscretion).

In a good history, *judgment* must be uppermost, because the goodness of a history consists in its method, its truth, and its choice of subject-matter. Fancy has no place here except in adorning the style.

In speeches of praise (and in invectives) the fancy is predominant, because the aim is not to speak the truth but to honour (or dishonour), which is done by noble (or nasty) comparisons. The judgment merely suggests what circumstances make an action laudable (or culpable).

In urgings and pleadings, it depends on what serves best for the design in hand: if it is •truth, then there is more need for judgment; if it is •disguise of the truth, then fancy is more required.

In demonstrations, in advice, and in all rigorous search for the truth, judgment does everything; except that sometimes the hearer's understanding needs to be *opened* by some apt comparison, and that requires some use of fancy. But metaphors are utterly excluded in this context. A metaphor openly announces its own untruthfulness, so it would obviously be foolish to admit it into advice or reasoning.

In any discourse whatever, if there is clearly a lack of discretion then, however wildly lavish the fancy is, the discourse as a whole will be taken as a sign of lack of wit; which will never happen when discretion is manifest, however humdrum the fancy is. [Hobbes is now using 'discretion' - the ability to make distinctions - in the special (and these days more usual) sense of 'the ability to distinguish occasions when some kind of behaviour is appropriate from ones where it is not'. See his next paragraph.]

A man's *secret thoughts* can run over anything - holy, profane, clean, obscene, solemn, frivolous - without his being ashamed or blamed; but *discourse in words* can introduce such topics only subject to the judgment's approving of the time, place, and persons. It is all right for •an anatomist or a physician to speak or write his opinion about unclean things, because he is speaking or writing not to please but to inform; but if •another man writes wild and whimsical fancies on such a subject, he is like someone who presents himself before good company after having been tumbled into the dirt. The •latter person's lack of discretion is what makes the difference. Another example: it is all right for •someone who is engaged with his friends in openly casual conversation, to play with the sounds and ambiguous meanings of words, coming up with many colourful turns of phrase; but •in a sermon or public address, to an audience of people whom one doesn't know or whom one ought to reverence, *any* playing around with words will be regarded as folly; and •again the difference is only in the lack of discretion. So that where wit is lacking, what is missing is not fancy but discretion. Judgment without fancy, therefore, is wit, but fancy without judgment is not.

When a man who has a design in hand thinks about a multitude of things, noting how they fit in with this design or what •other design they might fit in with, if his thoughts along these lines are not obvious and usual ones, this exercise of his wit is called PRUDENCE. It requires one to have had much experience, and memory of similar matters and their consequences on previous occasions. Men don't differ as much in prudence as they do in fancy and judgment, because two men of about the same age don't differ much in the *amount* of experience they have had; where they differ is in the *kinds* of experience they have had, because everyone has his own private designs •and his own personal history. Governing a household well, and governing a kingdom well, don't require different degrees of prudence; they are simply different sorts of business. Just

as painting a miniature and painting a life-size portrait don't require different degrees of artistic skill. •A plain farmer is more prudent in the affairs of •his own household than •a high statesman is in the affairs of •someone else.

If to prudence you add the use of unfair or dishonest means, such as men are usually led to by fear or need, you have the crooked wisdom known as CRAFT [= 'craftiness'], which is a sign of pusillanimity. For magnanimity - 'the opposite of pusillanimity' - is contempt for unfair or dishonest helps. And what the Latins call *versutia* (translated into English as 'shifting') consists in putting off a present danger or inconvenience by getting into a greater 'future trouble', as when a man robs one person in order to pay another. This is just *shorter-sighted craft*. Its Latin name comes from *versura*, which signifies borrowing money in order to pay interest on a previous debt.

I have been writing about *natural wit*, as I called it near the start of this chapter. As for *acquired wit* - by which I 'still' mean wit acquired by method and instruction - the only example of it is *reason*. This is based on the proper use of speech, and *the sciences* are based on it. But I have already spoken of reason and science in chapters 5 and 6.

The causes of the difference of wits 'that I have noted throughout this chapter' lie in the passions; and the difference in passions comes partly from •differences of bodily constitution, and partly from •difference of upbringing. For if the differences 'of wits' came from 'differences in' the state of the brain and the exterior or interior organs of sense, men would differ as much in their sight, hearing, or other senses as they do in their fancies and discretions. So the differences of wits come from the passions; and differences in *those* comes not only from difference in men's physical constitutions but also from differences in their customs and education.

The passions that mostly cause the differences of wit are people's greater or lesser desire for power, for riches, for knowledge, and for honour. And all of that comes down to the first - the desire for power - because riches, knowledge, and honour are just various kinds of power.

Consider a man who has no great passion for any of these things - a man who is, as they say, 'indifferent'. Though he may be a good man, in that he doesn't do anything wrong, he still can't possibly have either a great fancy or much judgment. For the thoughts serve the desires as scouts and spies, to explore the territory and find the path to the things that are desired; and all steadiness of the mind's motion, and all quickness of thought, come from this 'scouting activity'. To have no desires is to be dead; to have weak passions is dullness; to have 'strong' passions indiscriminately for everything is GIDDINESS and distraction; and to have stronger and more intense passions for something than is ordinarily seen in others is what men call MADNESS.

There are almost as many kinds of madness as there are kinds of passions. Sometimes •an extraordinary and extravagant passion is caused by •some defect in the organs of the body or some damage to them; and sometimes - 'in the reverse direction' - •the damage and indisposition of the organs is caused by •the intensity or long continuance of a passion. Either way it is exactly the same kind of madness.

The passion whose violence or continuance constitutes madness is either great vainglory (commonly called 'pride') or great dejection of mind.

Pride subjects a man to anger, and the excess of *that* is the madness called RAGE and FURY. That's how it comes about that •excessive desire for revenge, when it becomes habitual, damages the organs 'of the body' and becomes rage; that •excessive love - with jealousy added in - also becomes rage; •excessive 'good' opinion of oneself - as having divine inspiration, as being wise, learned, handsome, or the like - becomes distraction and giddiness, and when envy is

combined with *that* the result is rage; and •intense belief in the truth of something that others contradict is rage.

Dejection subjects a man to causeless fears, which is a madness commonly called MELANCHOLY. This also shows itself - 'as rage does' - in various kinds of behaviour: in the frequenting of lonely places and graves, in superstitious behaviour, and in fearing some particular thing (different things for different sufferers). Summing up: all passions that produce strange and unusual behaviour are given the general name 'madness'; but someone who was willing to take the trouble could list hosts of different kinds of madness. And if the excesses 'of passion' are madness, there is no doubt that any passion that tends to evil is a mild madness, 'even if it is not excessive'.

For example, though the madness of someone who thinks he is 'divinely' inspired may not result in any very extravagant action on his part, when many such people work together the rage of the whole multitude is visible enough. For what stronger evidence of madness can there be than to clamour, strike, and throw stones at our best friends? Yet this is what some quite small groups do: they clamour, fight against, and destroy those by whom they have been protected against injury throughout their lifetimes. And if this is madness in the group, it is the same in every individual man. A man standing in the waves doesn't hear any sound from the part of the water that is right next him, but he knows perfectly well that that part contributes as much to the roaring of the sea as does any other part of the same size. In the same way, although we notice no great disturbance in one or two men, we can be very sure that their individual passions are parts of the seditious roaring of a troubled nation. And if nothing else showed their madness, their mere claim to be inspired is evidence enough. If a man in the madhouse says he is God or Christ, we will know why he has been shut up there!

This belief that one is inspired (commonly called 'private spirit') very often begins from some lucky discovery of an error in a commonly accepted belief. The discoverer doesn't know or doesn't remember what reasonable process brought him to this notable truth (as he thinks it to be, though in many cases what he has 'discovered' is an untruth), so he is immediately struck with wonder at himself, as being in the special grace of God almighty who has revealed this truth to him supernaturally.

For further evidence that madness is nothing but a powerful and disproportionate passion, consider the effects of wine. They are the same as the disorders of the bodily organs 'that produce excessive passions'. The variety of behaviour in men who have drunk too much is the same as that of madmen: some of them raging, others loving, others laughing - according to their different dominant passions - all doing it extravagantly. That is because the effect of the wine is merely to hide from the drinker how ugly his passions are, so that he doesn't mind letting them show. For I believe that 'even' the most sober of men, when they are on their own, relaxed, and not thinking about business, have thoughts whose vanity and extravagance they would not want to be publicly seen; which amounts to accepting that unguided passions are mostly mere madness.

In ancient times and more recently there have been two common opinions regarding the cause of madness. Some have held •that madness comes from the passions; others •that it is caused by good or bad demons or spirits which (they think) enter into the man, take him over, and move his organs in the strange and unfamiliar manner that is customary in madmen. •The former sort call such men 'madmen'; but •the latter have sometimes called them demoniacs (that is, possessed with spirits). . . .

There was once a great gathering of people in the Greek city of Abdera, to see the acting of the tragedy *Andromeda* on an extremely hot day. Many of the spectators fell into fevers as a result of the heat and the tragedy jointly, leading them to do nothing but pronounce lines of verse containing the names of Perseus and Andromeda. This behaviour was cured, as was the fever, by the advent of winter; and this madness was thought to have come from the passion imprinted by the tragedy. In another Greek city there reigned a fit of madness which seized only the young maidens, and caused many of them to hang themselves. Most people thought this was an act of the Devil. But someone suspected that the young women's disregard for their own lives might come from some passion of the mind, and conjectured that they wouldn't similarly disregard their honour - including their personal modesty, this being a passion that might outweigh the fatal one by which they were gripped. So he advised the magistrates to strip each woman who had hanged herself, letting them all hang out naked. This, the story says, cured that madness. But, on the other side, those same Greeks often ascribed madness to the operation of the Eumenides (or Furies), and sometimes to Ceres, Phoebus, and other gods. This is an example of how much reality they attributed to phantasms, going so far as to think them to be airy living bodies, and to classify them as 'spirits'. The Romans shared these beliefs with the Greeks, and so also did the Jews: they called madmen 'prophets' or 'demoniacs' (depending on whether they thought the spirits good or bad); some of them characterized both prophets and demoniacs as 'madmen'; and some called the same individual man both 'demoniac' and 'madman'. This is not surprising in the non-Jewish peoples, because they classified as 'demons' (and worshipped as such) diseases and health, vices and virtues, and many natural states and features. So that among them a man could use the word 'demon' to refer to a fever as well as to a devil. But for the Jews to have such an opinion is somewhat strange. For Moses and Abraham claimed to prophesy on the basis not of being possessed by a spirit but of hearing the voice of God, or of a vision or dream. And in the law of Moses there is nothing - moral or ceremonial - which taught the Jews that there is any such thing as possession by a spirit. . . . When the Scriptures refer to 'the spirit of God in man' they mean the spirit of a man who is inclined to godliness. And where the Bible says 'whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom to make garments for Aaron' (*Exodus 28:3*) it doesn't mean that a spirit that can make garments has been put into them. Rather, it is referring to *their own* spirits' wisdom in that kind of work. Similarly, when the spirit of man produces unclean actions, it is ordinarily called 'an unclean spirit', and the same for other kinds of spirits - not absolutely always, but whenever the virtue or vice in question is extraordinary and conspicuous. Nor did the other prophets of the old Testament claim that they were possessed by spirits, or that God spoke *in* them; rather, they claimed that God spoke *to* them - by voice, vision, or dream. As for 'the burden of the Lord': this was not possession, but command. How, then, could the Jews succumb to this belief about possession? The only cause I can think of applies not just to Jews but to all men: their lack of curiosity about natural causes, and their tying of happiness to the acquiring of the gross pleasures of the senses and of things that most immediately produce them. When such people see that a man's mind has some strange and unusual ability or defect, unless they also see what probably caused it, they can hardly think it natural; and if they think it is not natural, they have to think it supernatural; and then (they conclude) what can it be but that either God or the Devil is in him?

And so it happened that when our Saviour was hemmed in by the crowd, his friends feared that he was mad and tried to restrain him; but the scribes said that he had the Devil in him, and that *that* was what enabled him to cast out devils - as if the greater madman had awed the lesser!



(*Mark 3:21*). And it happened that some said ‘He has a devil’ and ‘He is mad’, whereas others took him to be a prophet, and said ‘These are not the words of someone who has a devil inside him.’ (*John 10:20*). Again, in the old Testament a prophet came to anoint Jehu, but some of Jehu’s people asked him ‘What is that madman doing here?’ (*2 Kings 9:11*). Clearly, then, whoever behaved in extraordinary manner was thought by the Jews to be possessed with either a good or an evil spirit; except for the Sadducees, who erred so far in the other direction as not to believe there were any spirits at all (which is very near to direct atheism), which may have provoked others to label them as ‘demoniacs’ rather than as ‘madmen’.

But why then does our Saviour go about curing of them as though they were possessed, not as though they were mad? I reply that arguments taken from a mere *manner of speaking* are not solid. Consider how often sacred Scripture speaks of the earth as immobile, though almost all scientists today think there is very clear evidence that it moves! Scripture was written by the prophets and apostles not •to teach science, which God leaves to the exercise of natural reason in thought and debate, but •to teach piety and the way to eternal salvation. This objective of promoting our obedience and subjection to God almighty is not in the least affected by •whether day and night are made by the movement of the earth or of the sun, or by •whether men’s weird actions come from passion or from the devil - so long as we don’t *worship* the devil.

As for the fact that our Saviour speaks to the disease as to a person: that is usual among those who cure by words alone, as Christ did (and as enchanter claim to do, whether they speak to a devil or not). For isn’t Christ also said to have rebuked the winds? (*Matthew 8:26*.) But in case you reply that winds are spirits, I add another example: Isn’t he also said to rebuke a fever? (*Luke 4:39*.) Yet this doesn’t show that Christ thought that a fever is a devil. Many of those ‘devils’ are said to have acknowledged Christ, but we can interpret those passages as saying only that those madmen acknowledged him. Then there is the passage (*Matthew 12:43*) where our Saviour speaks of an unclean spirit that goes out of a man, wanders through dry places seeking rest, and finding none and returns into the same man bringing with it with seven even worse spirits. This is obviously a parable; it concerns a man who makes some attempt to quit his lusts, is defeated by the strength of them, and thus becomes seven times worse than he was. So that I see nothing at all in the Scripture requiring a belief that ‘demoniacs’ were anything but madmen.

Writing about •misuses of words in chapter 5, I discussed one that can also be classified as •a sort of madness; namely *absurdity*. That is what we have when men in their speech string words together in such a way as to have no meaning at all. Some people *accept* these ‘absurd strings’ through misunderstanding what they hear, and then repeat them parrot-fashion thus prolonging their life; other people perpetuate them out of an intention to deceive through obscurity. This occurs only in discourse about questions in incomprehensible matters, as the schoolmen do, or about questions in abstruse philosophy. Ordinary people seldom speak meaninglessly, which is why they are regarded as idiots by those other *distinguished* persons! But to be assured that the latter’s words have nothing corresponding to them in the speaker’s mind, you may want some examples. If you do, get hold of a schoolman and see if he can translate •any one chapter about one of the difficult points - the Trinity, the Deity, the nature of Christ, transubstantiation, free-will, or the like - into •any of the modern languages, so as to make it intelligible; or into •any tolerable Latin such as people knew back when the Latin tongue was an everyday language. What is the meaning of these words?

The first cause does not necessarily inflow anything into the second, by force of the essential subordination of the second causes, by which it may help it to work.

They translate the title of chapter 6 of Suarez's first book, *Of the Concourse, Motion, and Help of God*. When men write whole volumes of such stuff, are they not mad, or don't they intend to make others so? And especially in the question of *transubstantiation*, where after uttering certain words they that say that

the whiteness, roundness, magnitude, quality, corruptibility - all which are incorporeal, etc.  
- go out of the communion wafer into the body of our blessed Saviour,

don't they treat those *nesses*, *tudes*, and *ties* as a bunch of spirits possessing his body? For by 'spirits', they mean things that are incorporeal but nevertheless can move from one place to another. So that this kind of absurdity can rightly be counted as a sort of madness. People who are subject to it do sometimes avoid disputing or writing in such terms; those times - when the people are guided by clear thoughts relating to worldly pleasures - are merely lucid intervals between long periods of madness.

That is all I have to say about intellectual virtues and defects.

## Chapter 9. The various subjects of knowledge

There are two kinds of KNOWLEDGE: •knowledge of fact, and •knowledge concerning what propositions are consequences of what others. •The former is nothing but sense and memory, and is *absolute* knowledge; as when we see something happen or remember it happening; and this is the knowledge required in a witness. •The latter is called 'science', and is not absolute, but *conditional*; as when we know that, *if* this figure is a circle then any straight line through the centre will divide it into two equal parts. And this is the knowledge required in a philosopher [here = 'philosopher or scientist'], that is to say, someone who claims to be reasoning.

The record of knowledge of fact is called 'history', which falls into two sorts. •One is called 'natural history'; it is the history of facts (or effects of nature) that don't in any way depend on man's will - for example the histories of metals, plants, animals, regions, and the like. •The other is civil history, which is the history of the voluntary actions of men in commonwealths.

The records of science are whatever books contain demonstrations of how one proposition is a consequence of another; they are commonly called books of 'philosophy' [again = 'philosophy or science']. This has many kinds, because of the different subject-matters that branches of science can have. The kinds are set out in the remainder of this chapter:-

SCIENCE, that is, knowledge of consequences; also called PHILOSOPHY.

This divides into two:

1. Consequences from the features of •natural bodies; which is called NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.
2. Consequences from the features of •politic bodies; which is called POLITICS, and CIVIL PHILOSOPHY.

Before turning to the more complex divisions of 1, I shall get the divisions of 2 out of the way. It divides into:

- 2.1 Of consequences from the institution of COMMONWEALTHS to the rights and duties of the body politic, or sovereign.
- 2.2 Of consequences from the institution of COMMONWEALTHS to the duty and right of the subjects.

[In presenting the divisions and sub-division of (1) natural philosophy, bold type will be used for each item that is not further sub-divided.] The first division is into:

1.1 Consequences from the features that all natural bodies have, namely *quantity* and *motion*.

1.2 PHYSICS, or consequences from *qualities*.

The primary division of 1.1 is into:

1.1.1 Consequences from *quantity and motion as such*, which, being the principles or first foundation of philosophy, is called **first philosophy**.

1.1.2 Consequences from *specific facts involving motion and quantity*.

The principal division of 1.1.2 is into a branch leading through one further sub-division to **geometry** and **arithmetic**, and a branch leading through several further sub-divisions to **astronomy**, **geography**, **engineering**, **architecture**, **navigation**, and **meteorology**.

The principal division of (1.2) physics is into:

1.2.1 Consequences from the qualities of transient bodies, such as sometimes appear and sometimes vanish, **meteorology**.

1.2.2 Consequences from the qualities of permanent bodies.

One branch of this concerns *stars* and *the sun*, and yields the sciences of **sciography** [= ‘theory of sundials’] and **astrology**. A second branch concerns ‘liquid bodies that fill the space between the stars; such as are the air or ethereal substances’. The third branch is:

1.2.2.3 Consequences from the qualities of terrestrial bodies.

These divide into •non-sentient and •sentient bodies. The former branch yields **mineralogy** and **botany** [though Hobbes does not label them as such]. The latter branch divides into •animals in general and •men in particular. Under •‘animals in general’ we get **optics** and **music** and ‘consequences from the rest of the senses’. Under •‘men in particular’ we have two branches, one concerning ‘consequences from the passions of men’, **ethics**; the other concerning ‘consequences from speech’. The latter divides into ‘magnifying, vilifying etc.’ (**poetry**), ‘persuading’ (**rhetic**), reasoning (**logic**), and ‘contracting’ (**the science of just and unjust**).

[Curley calls attention to the significant fact that for Hobbes the science of just and unjust belongs to natural philosophy, not civil philosophy.]

## Chapter 10. Power, worth, dignity, honour, and worthiness

In the broadest and most general sense, a man’s *power* is his present means to obtain some future apparent good. Power is either •original (·natural·) or •instrumental.

•Natural (·original·) power is outstandingness in the faculties of body or mind, such as extraordinary strength, good looks, prudence, practical skill, eloquence, generosity, nobility. •Instrumental powers are acquired through natural powers or through luck; they are means and instruments to acquire more, for example riches, reputation, friends, and the secret working of God which men call good luck. For power is like fame in that it increases as it proceeds; or like the motion of ·falling· heavy bodies, which go faster as they go further.

The greatest of human powers is that possessed by one natural or civil person (·that is, one human person or one person-like political entity·) to whom most men have agreed to hand over their individual powers. It may be that •this one ‘person’ decides how the powers are to be exercised, as happens in a commonwealth; or it may •depend on the wills of the individual men, as happens in a faction or an alliance of several factions. Therefore to have servants is power; to have friends is power; for they are strengths united.

Also riches joined with generosity is power, because it procures friends and servants; without generosity, not so, because in that case the friends and servants don't defend the rich man but rather regard him as prey.

A reputation for having power *is* power; because it attracts the adherence of people needing protection.

So is a reputation for loving one's country (called 'popularity'), for the same reason.

Also, any quality at all that makes a man loved or feared by many people, or the mere reputation for having such a quality, is power; because it is a means to getting the assistance and service of many people.

Success is power, because it gives one a reputation for wisdom or for good luck, and that leads to one's being feared or relied on.

Amiability on the part of men already in power is *increase* of power; because it gains love.

A reputation for prudence in the conduct of peace or war is power; because we are more willing to be governed by prudent men than by others.

Noble rank is power - not everywhere, but only in commonwealths where high rank brings privileges, for it is the privileges that constitute the power.

Eloquence is power, because it gives the appearance of prudence.

Good looks are power, because they are a promise of good behaviour, which recommends a handsome man to the favour of women and strangers.

The sciences are small power, because nobody is outstanding in his scientific knowledge and skill, so nobody is thought of in those terms. (For science is something that nobody can recognize in someone else unless he has a good deal of it himself.) Indeed, few men have any scientific knowledge, and those who *do* have it about only a few things.

Arts [in the sense explained at the start of the Introduction] that are of public use - such as fortification, and the construction of siege-engines and other instruments of war - contribute to defence and to victory, so they are power: and though their true mother is a science - namely, mathematics - they are brought into the light by the hand of the manufacturer, and so they are counted as *his* offspring by the common people for whom the midwife passes as the mother.

The value or WORTH of a man is - like the value of anything - his *price*; that is to say, the amount that would be given for the use of his power. So it is not absolute but conditional, because it depends on someone else's need and judgment. An able leader of soldiers has a great price when war is present or imminent, but in peace not so. A learned and uncorrupt judge is worth much in time of peace, but not so much in war. And with men as with other things, it is not the seller but the buyer who fixes the price. A man may rate himself at the highest value he can (as most men do); but his true value is no more than others reckon it to be.

Showing the value we set on one another is what is commonly called 'honouring' and 'dishonouring'. To value a man at a high rate is to honour him; at a low rate, to dishonour him. But in this context 'high' and 'low' are to be understood by comparison to the rate that each man sets on himself.

The public worth of a man, which is the value set on him by the commonwealth, is what men commonly call DIGNITY. And this value that the commonwealth assigns to him is shown by offices of command, judicature, or other public employment, or by names and titles that are introduced to mark out such value.

To request someone for aid of any kind is to HONOUR him, because it shows that we think he has power to help; and the more difficult the aid is, the greater the honour.

To obey someone is to honour him, because no man obeys those who he thinks have no power to help or hurt him. And consequently to disobey is to dishonour.

To give large gifts to a man is to honour him, because it is buying protection and acknowledging power. To give little gifts is to dishonour, because it is merely alms-giving, and signifies one's belief that the recipient stands in need of small helps.

To be diligent in promoting someone else's good - and also to flatter - is to honour him, as a sign that we seek his protection or aid. To neglect someone is to dishonour him.

To give way to someone else, letting him go ahead of one in getting some advantage, is to honour him by acknowledging his greater power. To claim precedence for oneself is to dishonour the other man.

To show any sign of love or fear towards someone else is to honour him, for loving and fearing are both *valuing*, To treat someone as negligible, or to love or fear him less than he expects, is to dishonour him by undervaluing him.

To praise or magnify someone or call him happy is to honour him, because nothing but goodness, power, and happiness is valued. To revile, mock, or pity someone is to dishonour him.

To speak to someone with consideration, to present oneself to him in a polite and humble fashion, is to honour him, because this shows fear of offending him. To speak to him rashly, or to do anything obscene, sloppy or impertinent is to dishonour him.

To believe, trust, or rely on someone else is to honour him by showing one's opinion of his virtue and power. To distrust or disbelieve is to dishonour.

To take heed of a man's advice, or of what he says of any other kind, is to honour him, as a sign we think him wise, eloquent, or witty. To sleep or leave the room or talk oneself while he is speaking is to dishonour him.

To do towards someone else the things that *he* takes for signs of honour, or which *the law or custom* makes so, is to honour him; because in approving the honour done by others one acknowledges the power that others acknowledge. To refuse to do those things is to dishonour.

To agree with an opinion of someone else is to honour him, by signifying that you approve his judgment and wisdom. To dissent is dishonour; and to dissent in many things and scold the person for his errors is worse than mere dishonouring, for it is outright folly.

To imitate is to honour; for it is to approve emphatically. You dishonour someone if you imitate his enemy.

To honour those whom someone else honours is to honour him, by signifying your approval of his judgment. To honour his enemies is to dishonour him.

To employ someone as an advisor, or as an agent in some difficult matter, is to honour, by signifying your opinion of his wisdom or other power. To deny employment in such cases to those that seek it is to dishonour them.

All these ways of honouring are *natural*: they can occur outside commonwealths as well as within them. But in commonwealths, where whoever has (or have) the supreme authority can make anything he likes (or they like) count as a sign of honour, there are other honours.

A sovereign honours a subject with any title, or office, or employment, or action that the sovereign himself has *taken to be* a sign of his wish to honour that subject.

The king of Persia honoured Mordecai when he decreed that he should be led through the streets in the king's garment, on one of the king's horses, with a crown on his head, and ahead of him a prince proclaiming 'This is what will come to someone whom the king wants to honour'. And a different king of Persia - or the same king at another time - dealt differently with a subject

who asked, as a reward for some great service, to be allowed to wear one of the king's robes. This king gave him permission to do so, but added that he was to wear it as the king's fool [= 'clown', 'conjurer', 'jokester']; and that made the wearing of the king's robe a dishonour. Thus, for civil honour - as distinct from natural honour - the source is the person of the commonwealth, and depends on the will of the sovereign. So such honours are temporary. Examples of civil honours are magistracy, offices, titles - and in some places painted badges and coats of arms. Men honour people who have these, as having so many signs of favour in the commonwealth - which favour is power.

Any possession, action, or quality that is evidence of power is *honourable*.

And therefore to be honoured, loved, or feared by many people is honourable, as evidence of power. To be honoured by few or none is dishonourable.

Dominance and victory are honourable, because acquired through power; and servitude - if arising from need or fear - is dishonourable.

Lasting good fortune is honourable, as a sign of the favour of God. Ill fortune, and losses are dishonourable. Riches are honourable, for they are power. Poverty is dishonourable. Magnanimity, liberality, hope, courage, and confidence, are honourable, because they come from one's awareness of one's own power. Pusillanimity, meanness, fear, and distrust are dishonourable.

Promptness in deciding what to do is honourable, as involving a disregard for small difficulties and dangers. And indecision is dishonourable, as a sign of caring too much about little obstacles and little advantages; for if a man weighs the pros and consequent for as long as time permits, and still doesn't decide, the difference of weight can't be large; so in not deciding he is overvaluing little things, which is pusillanimity.

All actions and speeches that come or seem to come from much experience, science, discretion, or wit are honourable; for all these are powers. Actions or words that come from error, ignorance, or folly are dishonourable.

Gravity [= 'dignified heaviness of manner'] is honourable when it seems to •come from a mind employed on something else, because employment is a sign of power. But if it seems to •come •merely from a desire to appear grave, it is dishonourable. For the gravity in the former case is like •the steadiness of a ship loaded with merchandise; but the latter is like •the steadiness of a ship ballasted with sand and other trash.

To be conspicuous - i.e. to be *known* - for wealth, office, great actions, or any outstanding good is honourable, as a sign of the power for which one stands out. On the other side, obscurity is dishonourable.

To be descended from conspicuous parents is honourable, because then one has ancestors from whose friends one can more easily get help. On the other hand, to be descended from obscure parentage is dishonourable.

Actions that are based on fairness and involve one in loss are honourable, as signs of magnanimity; for magnanimity is a sign of power. On the other side, craftiness, trickery, and neglect of fairness are dishonourable.

To be covetous of great riches and ambitious for great honours are honourable, as signs of power to obtain riches and honours. To be covetous and ambitious for little gains or promotions is dishonourable.

If an action is great and difficult, and consequently a sign of much power, its status as honourable isn't affected by whether it is just or unjust; for honour consists only in the belief in

someone's power. So the ancient pagans didn't think they dishonoured the Gods - indeed they thought they greatly honoured them - when they introduced them into their poems as committing rapes, thefts, and other great - but unjust or unclean - acts. This went so far that nothing about Jupiter is so much celebrated as his adulteries, nor about Mercury as his frauds and thefts. In a hymn by Homer, the greatest praise of Mercury is that having been born in the morning he had invented music at noon, and before night had stolen Apollo's cattle away from his herdsman.

Until great commonwealths were constituted, there was not thought to be any dishonour in being a pirate or a highway thief, these being regarded as lawful trades. Not only among the Greeks, but also among all other nations, as can be clearly seen in the histories of ancient times. And even today in *this* part of the world although private duels are unlawful they are honourable (and will continue to be so until the time comes when shame goes to the man who challenges someone to a duel, and honour is given to the man who refuses the challenge). For duels are often effects of courage, and courage is always based on strength or skill, which are power; though for the most part duels are outcomes of rash talk and of the fear of dishonour, in one or both the combatants; hooked in by rashness, they are driven to fight so as to avoid disgrace.

Hereditary badges and coats of arms are honourable if they carry any outstanding privileges with them, but not otherwise, for their power consists in such privileges, or in riches, or something of a kind that is equally honoured in other men, i.e. ones that don't have coats of arms or the like. This kind of honour, commonly called 'gentry' [here = 'superiority of birth or rank'] has come from the ancient Germans. For no such thing has ever been known in places where German customs were unknown. Nor is it in use now anywhere where the Germans haven't lived. When the ancient Greek commanders went to war, they had their shields painted with whatever devices [= 'pictures or patterns or mottoes'] they pleased, because an unpainted shield was a sign of poverty, marking one as a common soldier; but they didn't pass them on to their descendants. The Romans did transmit to their descendants the marks of their families; but those marks were *portraits* of the Romans' ancestors, not their *devices*. Among the people of Asia, Africa, and America no such thing does or ever did exist. Only the Germans had that custom; and from them it has spread into England, France, Spain, and Italy, at times when great numbers of Germans aided the Romans, or when the Germans made their own conquests in these western parts of the world.

Like all other countries, Germany started out divided among countless little lords or masters of families that were continually at war with one another; those masters or lords painted their armour or their coat with a picture of some animal or other thing, and also put some conspicuous mark on the crest of their helmets; doing this partly for ornament but mainly so that their followers could recognize them when they were covered with armour. And this ornament of the arms and the crest was inherited by their children; going to the oldest son in its pure form, and to the others with some change approved by the herald. [Hobbes includes a conjecture, not now accepted, about the origin of the word 'herald'; and adds something concerning the office of the herald.] And the descendants of these lords constitute the great and ancient gentry [here = 'people of good birth'], who for the most part have on their coats of arms pictures of living creatures that are noted for courage and ferocity, or of castles, battlements, belts, weapons, bars, palisades, and other warlike things, because in those times nothing was honoured but military prowess. Afterwards, not only kings but also popular [= 'democratic'] commonwealths awarded various sorts of badges to those who went off to war (as encouragement) and to those who returned from war (as reward). An attentive reader can find all this confirmed in such of the ancient histories, Greek and Latin, as mention the German nation and its customs.

Titles of honour, such as ‘duke’, ‘count’, ‘marquis’, and ‘baron’, are honourable; as signifying the value set on the person by the sovereign power of the commonwealth. In earlier times, these were titles of *office* and of *command*, variously derived from the Romans, the Germans, and the French. •Dukes, in Latin *duces* [leader], were generals in war: •counts, in Latin *comites* [companion], were those who kept the general company out of friendship, and were left to govern and defend places that had been conquered and pacified: •marquises, French *marche* [frontier province], were counts who governed the marches or borders of the empire. These titles ‘duke’, ‘count’, and ‘marquis’ came into the Roman empire at about the time of Constantine the Great, from the customs of the German militia. [Hobbes then offers conjectures about the origin of ‘baron’.] In the course of time, because the power of certain men in England was inconvenient, the powers associated with these titles ceased or were taken away, and in the end the titles were conferred on the rich or on those who had deserved well, for no other reason than to make a distinction among the orders of citizens; and men were made dukes, counts, marquises, and barons of places where they owned nothing and had no authority; and other titles were also invented for the same purpose.

WORTHINESS is something different from a man’s worth or value, and also from his merit or desert. It consists in a specific power or ability for whatever it is that he is said to be worthy of (this specific ability is usually called FITNESS or aptitude).

The man is worthiest to be a commander, to be a judge, or to have any other responsibility, who is best equipped with the qualities required to do the job well; and he is worthiest of riches who has the qualities required for using riches well. Someone may lack those qualities yet be a worthy man and valuable for something else. Again, a man may be worthy of riches, office, and employment yet not have any right to have it before someone else, and therefore can’t be said to merit or deserve it. For merit or desert presupposes a right, and presupposes that the thing deserved is owing to the man because of a promise. I shall say more about this later, when I speak of contracts.

## Chapter 11. The difference of manners

By ‘manners’ I don’t mean here •decency of behaviour - how one man should greet another, or how a man should wash his mouth, or pick his teeth in public, and other such points of minor morality - but rather •the qualities of mankind that concern their living together in peace and unity. Moving in on this topic, we should bear in mind that happiness in this life does not consist in the calm of a satisfied mind. For there is no such *finis ultimus* (ultimate aim) or *summum bonum* (greatest good) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers. A man can no more live when all his desires are at an end than he can live when his senses and imaginations have come to a halt. Happiness is a continual progress of desires from one object to another, the attaining of one being merely the path to the next. This is because the object of man’s desire is not to enjoy something only once and for one instant of time, but to assure for ever the path of his future desire. That is why all men’s voluntary actions and inclinations tend not only to •procuring but also to •assuring a contented life; and they differ only concerning the way to that. Those differences arise partly from the fact that different men have different passions and thus want and fear different things; and partly from differences in what they know or think about which causes will produce the desired effect.

So I give primacy, for a general inclination of all mankind, to **a perpetual and restless desire for power after power, a desire that ceases only in death**. The cause of this is not



always that a man hopes for a more intense delight than he has already achieved, or that he can't be content with a moderate power. Often it is rather that a man cannot assure his present level of power and of means for living well without acquiring more power. That is how it comes about that kings, whose power is greatest, direct their efforts to assuring it at home by laws or abroad by wars; and when that is done, some new desire turns up - in some a desire for fame from new conquests, in others for ease and sensual pleasure, in yet others for admiration or flattery for their excellence in some art or other ability of the mind.

Competition for riches, honour, command, or any other power tends to produce quarrelling, enmity, and war; because one competitor's path to the achievement of his desire is to kill, subdue, outwit, or repel the other competitor. Here is a subtly disguised example of this. Competition for praise tends to produce reverence for antiquity, for in this context men are contending with the living, not with the dead: they are ascribing to the ancient dead more than their due, so that this will dim the glory of the others, i.e. their living competitors.

Desire for ease and sensual delight disposes men to obey a common power, because ease and sensuality lead a man to abandon the protection he might have hoped for from his own hard work, and so he seeks the protection of the common power. Fear of violent death and of wounds disposes men the same way, and for the same reason. On the other hand, men who are tough but in need and not contented with their present condition, and also men who are ambitious for military command, are inclined to keep wars going and to stir up trouble and sedition; for there is no military honour except through war, and the best hope of getting better cards is to re-shuffle the deck.

Desire for knowledge and for arts of peace inclines men to obey a common power: For that desire contains a desire for leisure, and consequently protection from some other power than their own.

Desire for praise disposes men to praiseworthy actions - ones that will please the people whose judgment they value. Not other people, for when we have no regard for someone we also have no regard for his praises. Desire for fame after death does the same. After death there is no awareness of the praise given us on earth - such awareness being a joy that is either swallowed up in the unutterable joys of Heaven or extinguished in the extreme torments of Hell. Still, such fame is not worthless to us; for men have a present delight in foreseeing such praise, and the benefit that their posterity may get from it. They don't now see the praise or the benefit, but they imagine it; and anything that is a pleasure when perceived through the senses is also a pleasure in the imagination.

To have received greater benefits than we have any hope of repaying, from someone whom we think of as our equal, disposes us to pretend that we love him but really to hate him. This state of affairs puts a man into the situation of a desperate debtor who, choosing not to see his creditor, silently wishes he would go where the debtor would never see him again. For a benefit creates an obligation, which is servitude, and an obligation that can't be discharged is perpetual servitude, which is hateful if the other person is one's equal. But to have received benefits from someone whom we acknowledge as our superior inclines us to love him; because the obligation doesn't press us down any further, and cheerful acceptance of it (which men call 'gratitude') is an honour done to the obliger that is generally understood to be repayment. Also to receive benefits, even from an equal or an inferior, disposes one to love him as long as there is hope of repayment; for in such a case the receiver sees the obligation as one of giving comparable help in return; and this gives rise to a competition for who will give the greater benefit - the most noble and

profitable contest possible, with the winner being pleased with his victory, and the loser 'getting his revenge' by admitting defeat!

Harming a man more than one can (or is willing to) make amends for inclines one to hate the sufferer. For one must expect revenge or forgiveness, both which are hateful.

Fear of oppression disposes a man to strike first, or to seek aid through society, for there is no other way for a man to secure his life and liberty.

In a time of tumult and sedition, •men who distrust their own subtlety are in better shape for victory than •those who suppose themselves to be wise or crafty. For •the latter love to consult, whereas •the former (fearing to be outdone in any negotiations) prefer to strike first. And in sedition, where men are always in the vicinity of a battle, •holding together and using all advantages of force is a better tactic than •any that can come from subtlety of wit.

Vainglorious men of the kind who aren't conscious of any great adequacy in themselves, but delight in pretending to themselves that they are gallant men, are inclined only to •put on a show of strength and courage, but not actually to •attempt anything requiring those virtues; because when danger or difficulty appears, all they expect is that their inadequacy will be revealed.

There are also vainglorious men of a different kind. They are ones whose estimate of their own adequacy is based on the flattery of other men, or on some past success of theirs, but who don't have any true knowledge of themselves that would give them a secure ground for hope of their own future performances in difficulties. They are inclined to approach conflicts rashly; but when danger or difficulty come close, they withdraw if they can. Not seeing any way of staying safe in the fight, they would rather risk their reputations, which may be rescued with an excuse, than risk their lives, for which no rescue is sufficient if they stay in the fight.

Men who have a strong opinion of their own wisdom in matters of government are inclined to be ambitious, because (they think) the honour of their wisdom is lost if they are not publicly employed as legislators or judges. That is why eloquent speakers are inclined to ambition; for eloquence appears to be wisdom, both to the speaker and to his listeners.

Pusillanimity [= 'pettiness of soul'] makes men tend to be indecisive, so that they miss their best opportunities for action. When men have deliberated right up to the time when action must be taken, if it isn't obvious *then* what it would be best to do, then that is a sign that there is no great difference between the case for acting in one way and the case for acting in the other; in which case it is pusillanimous not to decide the issue, and to let the opportunity go by while one weighs up trifles.

Frugality, although a virtue in poor men, makes a man unlikely to succeed in actions that require the strength of many men at once; for it weakens the efforts of the potential helpers - efforts that need to be nourished and kept strong by rewards.

•Eloquence, when used in •flattery, inclines men to trust those who have it, because eloquence seems like wisdom and flattery seems like good will. Add •military reputation to the mix and men are inclined to affiliate themselves with, and subject themselves to, a man who has this trio of characteristics. The first two have reassured them regarding danger from *him*; the third reassures them against danger from *others* if they are under his protection.

Lack of science (that is, ignorance of causes) inclines a man to rely on the advice and authority of others - indeed it *forces* him to do this. For all men who are concerned with the truth, if they don't or can't rely on their own opinion, must rely on the opinion of someone else whom they think to be wiser than themselves and whom they see no reason to suspect of deceitfulness.

Ignorance of the meanings of words, which is lack of understanding, inclines men to take on trust not only •the truth that they don't know but also •the errors and, what's more, the •nonsense of the people they trust; for neither error nor nonsense can be detected without a perfect understanding of words.

That same lack of understanding brings it about that men give different names to one and the same thing, because of difference in their passions. For example, those who approve some opinion that isn't part of any official doctrine call it an 'opinion', while those who dislike it call it 'heresy' - though really 'heresy' means the same as 'unofficial opinion' except for adding a suggestion of anger.

It also comes about from that same lack of understanding that men have to think very hard to see how to distinguish •one action of one multitude from •many actions of many men; for example, distinguishing •one action of all the senators of Rome in killing Cataline from the •many actions of a number of senators in killing Caesar. That inclines men to view as the •action of the people (·with *the action* and *the people* each thought of as a single item·) what is really a multitude of •actions done by a multitude of men, perhaps led by the persuasion of one.

Ignorance of the •sources of right, equity, law, and justice, and of their •fundamental nature, inclines a man to regulate his behaviour in terms of *custom and example*. So he thinks *unjust* whatever has customarily been punished, and thinks *just* anything for which he can find a previous example that was approved and not punished. (It is only lawyers who use this false measure of justice; instead of 'example' they use the barbarous term 'precedent'.) This is to behave like little children who have no rule of good and bad manners except the correction they get from their parents and teachers. The only difference is that children constantly obey their rule, whereas, adults don't: having grown up and become stubborn, they invoke reason against custom, and custom against reason, as it suits their purposes. They back away from custom when their interests require them so, and set themselves against reason whenever reason is against them; which is why there are perpetual disputes - on paper and on battlefields - about the doctrine of right and wrong. No such thing happens with the doctrine of lines and figures, because nobody has to fear that the truth in geometry will interfere with his ambition, profit or lust. Consider the proposition that *the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right-angles*. If this had conflicted with somebody's right to wield political power, or with interests of men who have such power, the threatened person would have done his best to suppress this proposition by having all books of geometry burned.

Ignorance of •distant causes inclines men to attribute all events to their •immediate causes, because these are the only ones they perceive. That is how it comes about that in all nations men who are aggrieved about paying taxes aim their anger at the tax-collectors, and ally themselves with those who find fault with the government. And when they have gone too far in this to have any hope of justification, they ·physically· *attack* the supreme authority, because they are afraid of punishment or ashamed of being pardoned.

Ignorance of natural causes tends to make a man so credulous that he often believes impossibilities: he can't detect the impossibility, because he doesn't *know* anything that shows it to be such. And because men love to be listened to, a credulous person is inclined to tell lies [here = 'untruths', not necessarily ones that the speaker believes to be untrue]; so that ·even· when there is no malice, sheer ignorance can lead a man both to believe lies and to tell them - and sometimes also to invent them.

Anxiety regarding the future inclines men to investigate the causes of things; because knowledge of causes enables men to make a better job of managing the present to their best advantage.

Curiosity, or love of the knowledge of causes, draws a man from consideration of the effect to seek the cause, and then for the cause of that cause, and so on backwards until finally he is forced to have the thought that

there is some cause that had no previous cause, but is eternal; this being what men call 'God'.

So you can't conduct any deep investigation into natural causes without being inclined by it to believe there is one eternal God; though we can't express his nature in any idea in our mind. A man born blind, hearing men talk of warming themselves by the fire and being brought to warm himself in the same way, can easily conceive and firmly believe that there is *something there* that men call 'fire', and that causes the heat he feels; but he can't imagine what it is like visually, nor can he have an idea of it in his mind like the idea that sighted people have. Well, similarly, the visible things of this world, and their admirable order, can lead one to be certain that there is a cause of them, which men call 'God', although one has no idea or image of God in one's mind.

Even those who make little or no enquiry into the natural causes of things, still have causal beliefs of a sort. Their ignorance of whether or not there is some power by which they can be helped or harmed generates *fear*, which inclines them to suppose - to dream up for themselves - various kinds of invisible powers, and to stand in awe of their own imaginations! In times of distress they invoke these invisible powers for aid, and at times of unexpected good fortune they give them thanks - thus making *gods* out of the creatures of their own imagination. In this way it has come about, through the endless variety of men's imaginations, that they have created in the world an endless variety of gods. This fear of invisible things is the natural seed of what each person calls 'religion' (speaking of his own version of it) or 'superstition' (speaking of those who worship or fear the invisible powers in some way other than his).

Of the many people who have been aware of this seed of religion, some have been inclined to nourish it, dress it up, and form it into laws; and to add to it further propositions about the causes of future events - propositions which they have invented, and which they have thought would help them to induce others to serve them.

## Chapter 12. Religion

Seeing that there are no signs or fruits of religion except in man, there is no reason to doubt that the seed of religion is also only in man, and that it consists in some special quality that other living creatures don't have, or anyway not in such a high degree. There are three such special qualities of mankind.

Firstly: men want to know about the causes of the events they see - some want this more strongly than others, but all men want it enough to care a good deal about the causes of their own good and bad luck.

Secondly: on seeing anything that has a beginning, a man will think it had a cause that made it begin at that time rather than sooner or later.

Thirdly: a man observes how one event has been produced by another, and remembers the order in which they occurred; and when he can't be sure of the true causes of things (which often happens, for the causes of good and bad luck are mostly invisible), he either *supposes* causes for them on the prompting of his imagination or forms *beliefs* about their causes because he trusts to

the authority of other men whom he thinks to be his friends and to be wiser than himself. In contrast with this, beasts have no happiness except that of enjoying of their daily food, lazing, and lusts; and have little or no foresight of the time to come, because they don't notice and remember the order, consequence, and dependence of the things they see.

The two first create anxiety. Being certain that there are causes for everything that has happened and everything that will happen, it is impossible for a man who continually tries to make himself safe against the evil he fears and to procure the good he desires not to be in a perpetual state of anxiety about the future. Thus, all men, and especially those who are exceptionally provident, are in a state like that of Prometheus (whose name means 'the prudent man'). He was tied down on the hill Caucasus, a place with a wide view, where an eagle fed on his liver, devouring each day as much as was repaired in the night. Similarly, a man who looks too far ahead in his concern for the future has his heart chewed away every day by fear of death, poverty, or some other calamity; and he has no rest, no relief from his anxiety, except in sleep.

In its ignorance of causes, being always in the •dark (so to speak), mankind carries with it this perpetual fear, which must have something as its object - that is, men must have something to be afraid of. So when there is nothing to be •seen, the only thing they can hold responsible for their good or bad luck is some •invisible power or agent. That may be what some of the old poets meant when they said that *the gods were at first created by human fear*, which is perfectly true when said about the many gods of the pagans. But the acknowledging of one God, eternal, infinite, and omnipotent, can more easily be traced to men's •desire to know the causes of natural bodies and of their various powers and operations than to their •fear of what would happen to them in the future. For someone who sees something happen and reasons his way to its immediate cause, and then to the immediate cause of *that* and so on backwards, plunging deep into the pursuit of causes, will eventually reach the conclusion that there must be (as even the heathen philosophers acknowledged) one *first mover* - that is, a first and eternal cause of all things - which is what men mean by the name 'God'. And he can go through all this with no thought of his own future good fortune, and with prompting from that concern for his own future that tends to have two effects which jointly produce pagan-type religions. It •inclines a man to be afraid, and it •hinders him from searching for the causes of other things; and through the workings of these two together it leads to the inventing of as many gods as there are men who invent them. [The Latin version, in place of 'as even the heathen philosophers acknowledged', has 'with the sounder of the ancient philosophers', which Curley says is 'apparently a (rare) approving reference to Aristotle'.] I shall discuss four aspects of how humans relate to these supposed gods.

•First: What about •the *matter* or *substance* of these imagined invisible agents? Thinking about this in a **natural** way, men couldn't arrive at any idea except that it is the same as •the matter or substance of the soul of man; and that the soul of man is of the same substance as •what appears in a dream to someone asleep or in a mirror to someone awake. Not knowing that such appearances are nothing but creatures of the fancy, men think them to be real, and to be external substances, and so they call them 'ghosts'. The Latins called them *imagines* [pictures] and *umbræ* [shadows], and thought them to be spirits, that is, thin airy bodies; and thought that the invisible agents which they so feared are like them except that *they* appear and vanish when they please. But the opinion that such spirits are *not* bodies, are *not* made of matter, could never enter into a human mind in a natural way, because although men can put together *words* of contradictory signification (such as 'spirit' and 'incorporeal'), they can't imagine anything corresponding to them; and so men who have thought their way through to the acknowledgment of one infinite,

omnipotent, and eternal God, prefer •admitting that he is incomprehensible and above their understanding to •defining his nature by the phrase ‘incorporeal spirit’, without the authority of Scripture, and then admitting that their definition is unintelligible. Or if they give him such a title, it is offered not as dogma, intending to make the divine nature understood, but as a pious attempt to honour God with attributes whose meanings are as remote as possible from the grossness of visible bodies. [The Latin version explains why ‘spirit’ is inconsistent with ‘incorporeal’: ‘A spirit is determined by place and shape, i.e. by limits and some size of its own. Therefore it is a body, however rarefied and imperceptible.’]

·Second·: when it comes to thinking about *how* these invisible agents bring about their effects - what immediate causes they employ in making things happen - men who don’t know what causing *is* (and that’s almost everybody) have no other rule to guess by but this:

Observe ·the present event· and remember what you have seen to precede events like it on one or more previous occasions.

This doesn’t enable them to see any dependence or connection at all between the first event and the second one; so all they can do is to expect an event of a given kind to be followed by a second event like ones that have followed the first kind of event in the past. In a *superstitious* way they hope for good luck from things that have no part at all in causing it - ·such as the blunder of thinking that victory in a past battle was caused by the name of the general on the winning side·. That is what the Athenians did in their war at Lepanto, where they wanted another leader named Phormio; and the Pompeian faction for their war in Africa, who wanted to be led by another Scipio; and similar things have happened on various later occasions. Similarly, ·in a manner that is equally superstitious but also equally **natural**· they attribute their fortune to a bystander, to a lucky or unlucky place, to spoken words (especially if ‘God’ is one of them, as in charming and conjuring, the liturgy of witches), to the point where they believe ·that by uttering the right words· they can turn a stone into bread, bread into a man, or anything into anything.

Thirdly, the worship that men **naturally** show towards invisible powers can only consist in expressions of their reverence, of the kind they would use towards ·other· men: gifts, petitions, thanks, bowing down or kneeling, careful addresses, and other things of that kind. For bloody sacrifices are not a dictate of nature, since they were instituted in the beginning by commonwealths to support those performing the sacrifices. Nor does oath-taking seem to be natural worship, because there is no place for it outside the civil state. Natural reason doesn’t suggest other forms of worship besides those I have mentioned; it leaves anything beyond those to the laws of particular commonwealths.

·Fourthly and· lastly, concerning how these invisible powers tell men what is going to happen - especially concerning their good or bad luck in general, or success or failure in any particular undertaking - men are **naturally** at a loss about this; except that they are very apt - judging the future by the past - not only •to take ·the outcomes of· casual episodes that they have encountered only once or twice to be omens portending ·similar outcomes for· similar episodes ever after, but also •to believe similar omens from other men of whom they have at some time had a good opinion.

In these four things - •belief in ghosts, •ignorance of second causes, •devotion towards what men fear, and •taking causal episodes to be omens - consists the **natural** seeds of religion. [By ‘second causes’ Hobbes means ‘causes that also *had* causes’, unlike the uncaused original primary *first* cause.] Because of how men differ in their imaginations, judgments, and passions, these seeds have grown

up into ceremonies that greatly differ from one another - so much so that ones approved by the law in one commonwealth are derided in another.

For these seeds have been cultivated by men of two sorts - •those who have nourished and developed the seeds through their own ingenuity; and •those who have done it by God's commandment and direction - but both sorts have done it intending to make their initiates more obedient to themselves. So •religion of the former sort is a part of *human politics*, and teaches part of the duty that earthly kings require of their subjects. And •religion of the latter sort is *divine politics*, and contains commands to men who have consented to be subjects in the kingdom of God. Of •the former sort were all the founders of commonwealths and the lawgivers of the pagans; of •the latter sort were Abraham, Moses, and our blessed Saviour, from whom the laws of the kingdom of God have come down to us.

As for the part of religion that consists in opinions about the nature of invisible powers, there is hardly anything that has a name that hasn't been looked up to by pagans, in one place or another, as a god or a devil, imagined by their poets as being animated, inhabited, or possessed by some spirit or other.

The unformed matter of the world was a god named 'Chaos'.

The heavens, the ocean, the planets, the fire, the earth, the winds, were all gods.

Men, women, a bird, a crocodile, a calf, a dog, a snake, an onion, and a leek have all been treated as gods. Besides that, the pagans filled almost all places with spirits called 'demons': the plains with Pan, and panises or satyrs; the woods with fawns and nymphs; the sea with tritons and other nymphs; every river and fountain with a ghost bearing its name, and with nymphs; every house with its *lares* or household gods; every man with his genie; hell with ghosts and spiritual officials such as Charon, Cerberus, and the Furies; and in the night time they peopled all places with disembodied spirits, shades, ghosts of dead men, and a whole kingdom of fairies and hobgoblins. They have also treated as gods - and built temples to - mere *features and qualities*, such as time, night, day, peace, harmony, love, contention, virtue, honour, health, rust [lust?], fever, and the like. When the pagans prayed *for* or *against* night, harmony, contention, etc. they prayed *to* them, as though there were ghosts named 'Night', 'Harmony', 'Contention' etc, hanging over their heads, able to bring or withhold the good or evil in question. They invoked also their own wits, which they called 'Muses'; their own ignorance by the name 'Fortune'; their own lust by the name 'Cupid'; their own rage by the name 'Furies'; their own private parts by the name of 'Priapus'; and attributed their wet dreams to Incubi and Succubi - to the point where there was nothing that a poet could introduce into his poem as a person which they didn't make into either a god or a devil.

The same authors of the religion of the pagans, taking note of the second ground for religion - namely, men's ignorance of causes, leading them to attribute their fortune to causes on which there was no evident dependence at all - took the opportunity to force onto their ignorance (instead of *second causes*, which is what they were ignorant about) *second gods*, taking Venus to be the cause of fecundity, Apollo the cause of arts, Mercury the cause of subtlety and craftiness, and Aelous the cause of tempests and storms, and assigning other effects to other gods; to the point where among the heathen there was almost as great a variety of gods as of occupations.

To the worship that men naturally thought fit to use towards their gods - namely offerings, prayers, thanks, and the others mentioned above - those same legislators of the pagans have

added portraits and sculptures of the gods, so that the more ignorant sort of people (that is to say, most people, the general run of people) would think that the depicted gods were really *in* - as it were, *housed in* - the pictures and statues, being led by this to stand in even greater fear of them.

The legislators also

endowed the gods with land, houses (·called ‘temples’·), officers (·called ‘priests’·), and revenues, set apart from all other human uses (that is, consecrated and made holy for their idols - ·as has happened with· caverns, groves, woods, mountains, and whole islands).

They also

attributed to the gods not only the •shapes of men (or in some cases of beasts or of monsters) but also the •faculties and •passions of men and beasts - such as sense, speech, sex, lust, procreation.

The legislators have had the gods

procreating not only by ·sexually· uniting with one another (generating different kinds of god) but also by uniting gods with men and women (to generate mongrel gods and ·creatures that are not gods at all, but· mere ·mortal· inhabitants of heaven, such as Bacchus, Hercules, and others).

They have also

attributed to the gods anger, revenge, and other passions of living creatures, and the actions that come from those passions - such as fraud, theft, adultery, sodomy, and any vice that can be thought of as an effect of power or a cause of pleasure - and all the vices that are regarded in human societies as illegal rather than dishonourable.

Lastly, these same authors of the religion of the pagans have

added to the omens regarding the future - omens that are •naturally mere conjectures based on past experience, and •supernaturally are based on divine revelation. On the strength of claimed experience and claimed revelation, they have added countless other superstitious ways of divining the future, getting men to believe they could find what was in store for them.

Of the innumerable pointless devices they thought up for this purpose, here are some:

- The ambiguous or senseless answers of the priests at Delphi, Delos, Ammon, and other famous oracles; answers that were deliberately made ambiguous by design, so that the oracle could be claimed to have been right, whatever happened; or they were absurd, because of the intoxicating vapour of the place, which is very common in sulphurous caverns.
- The pages of the Sibyls, of whose prophecies . . . there were some books that were held in respect at the time of the Roman republic.
- The meaningless talk of madmen, who were supposed to be possessed with a divine spirit (this possession being known as ‘enthusiasm’). . .
- How the stars looked at the time of a person’s birth; this was called ‘horoscopy’, and was a respected part of judicial astrology. . .
- The predictions of witches, who claimed to be conferring with the dead; which is called ‘necromancy’, ‘conjuring’, and ‘witchcraft’, but is really just trickery and conspiracy to defraud.
- How birds happen to fly, or to eat; known as ‘augury’.
- The entrails of a sacrificed beast; which was ‘aruspicina’.
- Dreams.
- The croaking of ravens, or chattering of other· birds.
- The features of a person’s face; which was called ‘metoposcopy’, or the lines of his hand (‘palmistry’).
- Casual words, called ‘omina’.
- Monsters, or unusual events such as eclipses, comets, rare atmospheric phenomena, earthquakes, floods, monstrous births, and



the like; they called these 'portenta' and 'ostenta', because they thought them to portend or foreshow some great calamity to come. •Mere chance - tossing a coin, counting the holes in a sieve, choosing verses in Homer or Virgil at random.

That shows how easy it is to get men to believe anything that comes to them from people whom they have come to trust and who can with gentleness and dexterity take hold of their fear and ignorance.

So the first founders and legislators of commonwealths among the pagans, simply wanting to keep the people obedient and peaceful, have everywhere taken care of three things. (1) First, to imprint in their subjects' minds the belief that •their commandments regarding religion were not of *their* making, but came from the dictates of some god or other spirit; or else •that they themselves were of a higher nature than mere mortals; either way so that their laws would be more easily accepted. Thus Numa Pompilius claimed to have received from the nymph Egeria the ceremonies he instituted among the Romans; the first king and founder of the kingdom of Peru claimed that he and his wife were children of the Sun; and Mahomet in setting up his new religion claimed to be in communication with the Holy Ghost in form of a dove. (2) Secondly, to get their subjects to believe that actions forbidden by the laws are displeasing to the gods. (3) Thirdly, to prescribe ceremonies, petitionary prayers, sacrifices, and festivals by which the people were to believe that the anger of the gods might be appeased; and they were also to believe that failure in war, plagues, earthquakes, and each man's private misery all came from the gods' anger, which in turn came from people's neglect of their worship, or their forgetting or getting wrong some detail in the ceremonies required. And although among the ancient Romans men were not forbidden to deny what the poets had written about the pains and pleasures of the after-life, although indeed many very serious and authoritative people made speeches openly mocking all that, still belief was always more cherished than rejected.

Through these and other such institutions, the legislators brought it about that the common people in their misfortunes were less apt to mutiny against their rulers, because they attributed their troubles to neglect or error in their ceremonies, or on their own disobedience to the laws. (From the rulers' point of view, what all this was *about* was maintaining the peace of the commonwealth.) And being entertained with the pomp and pastime of festivals and public games conducted in honour of the gods, the people needed nothing else but bread to keep them from discontent, grumbling, and commotion against the state. That is why the Romans, who had conquered most of the then known world, had no hesitation in tolerating in the city of Rome itself any religion whatever, unless something in it conflicted with their civil government. The only religion we read of that was forbidden in Rome was that of the Jews, who thought it unlawful to submit themselves to any mortal king or state whatever (because they thought they belonged to the special kingdom of God). So you can see how the religion of the pagans was a part of Rome's system of government.

But where God himself planted religion by a supernatural revelation, *there* he also made for himself a special kingdom. And he gave laws, not only for behaviour towards himself but also for men's behaviour towards one another; so that in the kingdom of God the civil •system of government and laws are a part of •religion; so that in that kingdom the distinction between •temporal and •spiritual authority has no place. It is true that God is king of all the earth; still, he may be the king of a special chosen nation. There is no more incongruity in this than in having a whole army commanded by a general who also has one special regiment or company of his own. God is king of all the earth by •his power, and king of his chosen people by •covenant [=

‘agreement’]. But a fuller discussion of the kingdom of God, both by nature and by covenant, I have reserved for chapter 31 and [not on this website:] chapter 35.

From the way religion grows and spreads, it isn’t hard to understand how it has arisen from its first seeds or generators, which are simply the belief in a deity, in invisible powers, and in the supernatural. These seeds can never be so thoroughly wiped out of human nature that new religions won’t grow from them if there are suitable gardeners.

·Here is the reason why new religions are bound to crop up from time to time·. All formal religions are initially founded on the faith that a multitude of people have in some one person, whom they believe not only to be a wise man, and to be working to make them happy, but also to be a holy man to whom God himself condescends to declare his will supernaturally. So it is inevitable that when those who govern a religion find that people have started to suspect either the •wisdom of the founders, their •sincerity, or their •love, or that they (the governors) can’t produce any plausible evidence of •divine revelation, the religion they want to uphold must also be suspect, so that it can be contradicted and rejected without fear of civil penalties. ·I shall now give a paragraph to each of these four possible sources of the weakening of religious faith·.

What takes away the reputation of •wisdom in someone who starts a religion, or who adds to it later on, is his telling people to believe contradictories; for both parts of a contradiction can’t possibly be true; and therefore to tell someone to believe them both is evidence of ignorance. In showing that the speaker is ignorant, it discredits him in everything else he may offer as coming from supernatural revelation; for a man may indeed receive revelations of many things that are *above* natural reason, but not of anything that is *against* it.

What takes away the reputation of •sincerity is the doing or saying of things that seem to show the speaker requiring other men to believe things that he doesn’t believe himself. All such doings or sayings are therefore called ‘scandalous’ [from a Greek word meaning ‘snare to trip up an enemy’], because they are stumbling blocks that make men who are on the path of religion fall down. Examples ·of scandalous doings· are injustice, cruelty, unholiness, greed, and luxury. If a man commonly does things that come from any of these roots, who can believe that he thinks he has to fear any such invisible power as he invokes to scare other men for lesser faults?

What takes away the reputation of •love is being found to have private goals; as when someone demands that others believe something that conduces or seems to conduce to the acquiring of power, riches, dignity, or secure pleasure only or mainly by *him*. For when a man does something that brings benefit to himself, he is thought to have acted for his own sake and not for the love of others.

Lastly, the only evidence men can give of their •divine calling is the operation of miracles, or true prophecy (which is just one kind of miracle), or extraordinary happiness. It can happen that to the articles of religion that have been accepted from someone who did such miracles, further articles are added by people who don’t prove their calling by miracles. In such a case, the latter get no more belief than what comes from the custom and laws of the place in question - i.e. what comes from education. For just as in natural things men of judgment require natural signs and evidences, so in supernatural things they require supernatural signs (which are miracles) before they consent inwardly and from their hearts.

All these causes of the weakening of men’s faith appear plainly in the following examples. •First, Moses proved his calling to the children of Israel by miracles, and by successfully leading them out of Egypt; yet when he was absent from them for a mere 40 days, the people revolted from the worship of the true God that he had recommended to them, and set up a golden calf as

their god, relapsing into the idolatry of the Egyptians from whom they had so recently been delivered (*Exodus* 32:1-2). •And again, after Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and the whole generation that had seen the great works of God in Israel, were dead, another generation arose and served Baal (*Judges* 2:11) . Thus, when miracles failed, so did faith.

•The sons of Samuel were made judges in Bersabee by their father; when they took bribes and judged unjustly, the people of Israel refused to have God as their king any more, except in the way in which he was the king of other peoples; and so cried out to Samuel to choose someone to be their king in the way that ·ordinary· nations have kings (1 *Samuel* 8:3). So that when justice failed, so did faith - so much so that the people deposed their God from reigning over them.

•With the planting of the Christian religion, the ·pagan· oracles ceased in all parts of the Roman empire, and the number of Christians increased amazingly every day, and in every place, through the preaching of the Apostles and the Evangelists. But much of that success can reasonably be attributed to the contempt into which the pagan priests had brought themselves through their uncleanness, their greed, and their prophecies that were false or ambiguous. (They went in for ambiguity as a way of staying in favour with their royal masters, avoiding accusations of having prophesied *falsely!*) And the religion of the church of Rome was abolished in England and many other parts of the Christian world, partly for the same reason (the failure of virtue in the clergy made faith fail in the people), though also partly for a different reason - namely the schoolmen's bringing the philosophy and doctrine of Aristotle into religion. From this there arose so many contradictions and absurdities that the clergy acquired a reputation for ignorance and for fraudulent intentions; and this inclined people to turn away from them, either against the will of their own princes (as in France and Holland) or with their will (as in England).

•Lastly, among the articles of faith that the church of Rome declared to be necessary for salvation there are so many that are obviously to the advantage of the Pope, and of his spiritual subjects [meaning: priests, bishops, and cardinals] living in the domains of other Christian princes, that if it weren't for the rivalries *among* those princes they could peacefully have rejected all foreign [here = 'Roman Catholic'] authority, just as easily as it was rejected in England. For anyone can see to whose benefit it conduces to have it believed •that a king doesn't have his authority from Christ unless a bishop crowns him, •that if a king is a priest he can't marry, •that whether a prince is born in lawful marriage must be decided by an authority in Rome, •that subjects can be freed from allegiance to their king if a court in Rome judges him to be a heretic, •that a king may be deposed by a pope for no reason (as Pope Zachary deposed King Chilperic of France), and his kingdom given to one of his subjects, •that the clergy and members of religious orders in any country at all are exempt from the jurisdiction of their king in criminal cases. And anyone can see who profits from the fees for private masses, and the money paid to shorten someone's time in purgatory. There are also other signs of private interests - enough of them to drain the life out of the most lively faith, if the law of the land and custom were not doing more to hold it up than is done by any opinion the faithful have about the sanctity, wisdom, or honesty of their teachers! So I can attribute all the changes of religion in the world to the very same single cause, namely *unpleasing priests* - not only among Catholics but even in the church that has most presumptuously claimed to be reformed. [Curley suggests that this is aimed at the Presbyterians.]

### Chapter 13. The natural condition of mankind as concerning their happiness and misery

Nature has made men so equal in their physical and mental capacities that, although sometimes we may find one man who is obviously stronger in body or quicker of mind than another, yet taking all in all the difference between one and another is not so great that one man can claim to have any advantage of strength or skill or the like that can't just as well be claimed by some others. As for strength of body: the weakest man is strong enough to kill the strongest, either by a secret plot or by an alliance with others who are in the same danger that he is in.

As for the faculties of the mind: I find that men are even more equal in these than they are in bodily strength. (In this discussion I set aside skills based on words, and especially the skill - known as 'science' - of being guided by general and infallible rules. Very few people have this, and even they don't have it with respect to many things. I am setting it aside because it isn't a natural faculty that we are born with, nor is it something that we acquire - as we acquire prudence - while looking for something else.) Prudence is simply experience; and men will get an equal amount of *that* in an equal period of time spent on things that they equally apply themselves to. What may make such equality incredible is really just one's vain sense of one's own wisdom, which most men think they have more of than the common herd - that is, more than anyone else except for a few others whom they value because of their fame or because their agreement with them. It's just a fact about human nature that however much a man may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned than he is, he won't easily believe that many men are as wise as he is; for he sees his own wisdom close up, and other men's at a distance. This, however, shows the equality of men rather than their inequality. For ordinarily there is no greater sign that something is equally distributed than that every man is contented with his share!

*Competition*: This equality of ability produces equality of hope for the attaining of our goals. So if any two men want a single thing which they can't both enjoy, they become enemies; and each of them on the way to his goal (which is principally his own survival, though sometimes merely his delight) tries to destroy or subdue the other. And so it comes about that when someone has through farming and building come to possess a pleasant estate, if an invader would have nothing to fear but that one man's individual power, there will probably *be* an invader - someone who comes with united forces to deprive him not only of the fruit of his labour but also of his life or liberty. And the successful invader will then be in similar danger from someone else.

*Distrust*: Because of this distrust amongst men, the most reasonable way for any man to make himself safe is to *strike first*, that is, by force or cunning subdue other men - as many of them as he can, until he sees no other power great enough to endanger him. This is no more than what he needs for his own survival, and is generally allowed. And it goes further than you might think. Some people take pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, pursuing them further than their security requires, and this increases the security needs of others. People who would otherwise be glad to be at ease within modest bounds have to increase their power by further invasions, because without that, in a purely defensive posture, they wouldn't be able to survive for long. This increase in a man's power over others ought to be allowed to him, as it is necessary to his survival.

*Glory*: Every man wants his associates to value him as highly as he values himself; and any sign that he is disregarded or undervalued naturally leads a man to try, as far as he dares, to raise

his value in the eyes of others. For those who have disregarded him, he does this by violence; for others, by example. I say 'as far as he dares'; but when there is no common power to keep them at peace, 'as far as he dares' is far enough to make them destroy each other. That is why men don't get pleasure (and indeed do get much grief) from being in the company of other men without there being a power that can over-awe them all.

So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of discord. First •competition, secondly •distrust, thirdly •glory.

The first makes men invade for •gain; the second for •safety; and the third for •reputation. The first use violence to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second use it to defend them-selves and their families and property; the third use it for trifles - a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of a low regard for them personally, if not directly then obliquely through a disrespectful attitude to their family, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name.

This makes it obvious that for as long as men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in the condition known as 'war'; and it is a war of every man against every man. For WAR doesn't consist just in •battle or the act of fighting, but in •a period of time during which it is well enough known that people are willing to join in battle. So the temporal element in the notion of 'when there is war' is like the temporal element in 'when there is bad weather'. What constitutes bad weather is not a rain-shower or two but an inclination to rain through many days together; similarly, what constitutes war is not actual fighting but a known disposition to fight during a time when there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE.

Therefore, whatever results from •a time of war, when every man is enemy to every man, also results from •a time when men live with no other security but what their own strength and ingenuity provides them with. In such conditions there is

no place for hard work, because there is no assurance that it will yield results; and consequently no cultivation of the earth, no navigation or use of materials that can be imported by sea, no construction of large buildings, no machines for moving things that require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no practical skills, no literature or scholarship, no society; and - worst of all - continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

It may seem strange to you, if you haven't thought hard about these things, that nature should thus separate men from one another and make them apt to invade and destroy one another. So perhaps you won't trust my derivation of this account from the nature of the passions, and will want to have the account confirmed by experience. Well, then, think about how *you* behave: when going on a journey, you arm yourself, and try not to go alone; when going to sleep, you lock your doors; even inside your own house you lock your chests; and you do all this when you know that there are laws, and armed public officers of the law, to revenge any harms that are done to you. Ask yourself: what opinion do you have of your fellow subjects when you ride armed? Of your fellow citizens when you lock your doors? Of your children and servants when you lock your chests? In all this, don't you accuse mankind as much by your actions as I do by my words? Actually, neither of us is criticising man's nature. The desires and other passions of men aren't sinful in themselves. Nor are actions that come from those passions, until those who act know a law that forbids them; they can't know this until laws are made; and they can't be made until men agree on the person who is to make them. But why try to demonstrate to learned men something

that is known even to dogs who bark at visitors - sometimes indeed only at strangers but in the night at everyone?

It may be thought that there has never been such a time, such a condition of war as this; and I believe it was never generally like this all over the world. Still, there are many places where people live like that even now. For the savage people in many parts of America have no government at all except for the government of small families, whose harmony depends on natural lust. Those savages live right now in the brutish manner I have described. Anyway, we can see what way of life there *would be* if there *were* no common power to fear, from the degenerate way of life into which civil war has led men who had formerly lived under a peaceful government.

Even if there had never been *any* time at which •individual men were in a state of war one against another, this is how •kings, and persons of sovereign authority relate to one another at *all* times. Because of their independence from one another, they are in continual mutual jealousies. Like gladiators, with their •weapons pointing and their •eyes fixed on one another, sovereigns have •forts, garrisons, and guns on the frontiers of their kingdoms, and permanent •spies on their neighbours - this is a posture of war, as much as the gladiators' is. But because in this the sovereigns uphold the economy of their nations, *their* state of war doesn't lead to the sort of misery that occurs when *individual men* are at liberty from laws and government.

In this war of every man against every man nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice have no place there. Where there is no common power, there is no law; and where there is no law, there is no injustice. In war the two chief virtues are force and fraud. Justice and injustice are not among the faculties [here = 'natural capacities'] of the body or of the mind. If they were, they could be in a man who was alone in the world, as his senses and passions can. They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude. A further fact about the state of war of every man against every man: in it there is no such thing as ownership, no legal control, no distinction between *mine* and *thine*. Rather, anything that a man can get is his for as long as he can keep it.

So much for the poor condition that man is actually placed in by mere •nature; but as I now go on to explain, he can extricate himself from it, partly through his •passions, partly through his •reason.

The passions that incline men to peace are •fear of death, •desire for things that are necessary for comfortable living, and a •hope to obtain these by hard work. And reason suggests convenient items in a peace treaty that men may be got to agree on. These items are the ones that in other contexts are called the Laws of Nature. I shall have more to say about them in the two following chapters.

## Chapter 14. The first and second natural laws, and contracts

The RIGHT OF NATURE, which writers commonly call *jus naturale*, is the liberty that each man has to make his own decisions about how to use his own power for the preservation of his own nature - i.e. his own life - and consequently 'the liberty' of doing anything that he thinks is the aptest means to that end. [The Latin phrase *jus naturale* standardly meant 'natural law'; but *jus* could mean 'right', and Hobbes is clearly taking the phrase to mean 'natural right'.]

The proper meaning of LIBERTY is the absence of external obstacles. Such obstacles can often take away part of a man's power to do what he wants, but they can't get in the way of his using his remaining power in obedience to his judgment and reason.

A LAW OF NATURE (*lex naturalis*) is a command or general rule, discovered by reason, which forbids a man to •do anything that is destructive of his life or takes away his means for preserving his life, and forbids him to •omit anything by which he thinks his life can best be preserved. For although those who speak of this subject commonly run together right and law (*jus* and *lex*), they ought to be distinguished. RIGHT consists in the liberty to do or not do •as one chooses•, whereas LAW picks on one of them - either doing or not doing - and commands it. So law differs from right as much as obligation differs from liberty - which •are so different that• it would be *inconsistent* to suppose that a person had both liberty and an obligation in respect of the same action.

As I said in chapter 13, the condition of man is a condition of war of everyone against everyone, so that everyone is governed by *his own* reason and can make use of anything he likes that might help him to preserve his life against his enemies. From this it follows that in such a condition every man has a right to everything - even to someone else's body. As long as this continues, therefore - that is, as long as every man continues to have this natural right to everything - no man, however strong or clever he may be, can be sure of living out the time that nature ordinarily allows men to live. And consequently it is a command or general rule of reason that •every man ought to seek peace, as far as he has any hope of obtaining it; and that •when he can't obtain it he may seek and use all helps and advantages of war. •The first branch of this rule contains the first *law* of nature - the fundamental one - which is this:

**First law of nature:** Seek peace and follow it.

•The second branch contains in summary form the *right* of nature, which is the right to defend ourselves by any means we can.

From this fundamental law of nature, by which men are commanded to seek peace, is derived this second law:

**Second law of nature:** When a man thinks that peace and self-defence require it, he should be willing (when others are too) to lay down his right to everything, and should be contented with as much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself.

For as long as every man maintains his right to do anything he likes, all men are in the condition of war. But if other men won't also lay down *their* right, there is no reason for him to divest himself of *his*; for •if he alone gave up his rights• that would be to expose himself to predators (which no man is obliged to do) rather than to dispose himself to peace. This is the law of the Gospel:

Whatever you require others to do to you, do it to them.

And this law of all men:

*Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris* - •Don't do to others what you don't want done to you•.

[In the interests of clarity, the next paragraph is written in terms of 'I and 'you', replacing Hobbes's 'a man' and 'another'.]

For me to lay down my right to something is for me to deprive myself of the liberty of blocking you (for instance) from getting the benefit of *your* right to the same thing. In renouncing or giving up my right I don't give anyone else a right that he didn't previously have, because every man has a right by nature to *everything*. All I do •in renouncing my own right• is to stand out of your way, so that you can enjoy your own original right without interference from me; but you may still be impeded by some third person. Thus, the effect on you of my lacking a certain right is just a lessening of hindrances to your exercise of your original right.

A man can lay aside a right either by simply renouncing it or by transferring it to someone else. He RENOUNCES it when he doesn't care who gets the benefit. He TRANSFERS it when he intends the benefit to go to some particular person or persons. And when a man has deprived himself of a right in either of those ways - abandoning it or giving it away - he is said to be OBLIGED or BOUND not to hinder those to whom such right is given or abandoned from having the benefit of it; and it is said that he ought, and that it is his DUTY, not to deprive that voluntary act of his of its effectiveness; and if he does so, that hindrance is what we call INJUSTICE and INJURY. [The word 'injury' comes from 'in-' as a negater and *jure* which is Latin for 'right'. Hobbes gives this explanation in compact form.] So that •injury or injustice in the controversies of the world is a little like •absurdity in the disputations of scholars. For as scholars call it 'absurdity' to contradict what one maintained at the outset, so in the world it is called 'injustice' and 'injury' voluntarily to undo something that one had voluntarily done at the outset. *How* a man either renounces or transfers a right is by a declaration or indication - using some voluntary and sufficient sign or signs - that he does or did renounce or transfer the right to the person who accepts it. And these signs are either words only, or actions only, or (as most often happens) both words and actions. Those words and/or actions are the BONDS by which men are bound and obliged: bonds whose strength comes not from their own nature (for nothing is more easily broken than a man's word) but from fear of some bad consequence of their being broken.

Whenever a man transfers or renounces a right, he does so either in consideration of some right reciprocally transferred to himself or for some other good he hopes to get from what he is doing. For it is a voluntary act, and the goal of the voluntary acts of every man is some good to himself. It follows that there are some rights that no man can be taken to have abandoned or transferred, no matter what words or other signs he uses. First and foremost: a man cannot lay down the right of resisting those who bring force against him to take away his life, because he couldn't be understood to be doing that with the aim of getting some good for himself. The same may be said of wounds, and chains, and imprisonment; both because •there is no benefit to be got from putting up with such things, as there is or may be to be got from allowing *someone else* to be wounded or imprisoned; and also because •when a man sees others coming against him by violence, he can't tell whether they intend his death or not. There is also a third reason. Lastly, the *point* of the procedure of renouncing and transferring rights - the motive and purpose for which it exists - is simply to preserve a man's security in his person, in his life, and in his means for preserving his life in a manner that won't make him weary of it. So •if a man by words or other signs seems to deprive himself of the very thing for which those signs were intended, he should not be understood to have meant it; rather, we should take it that he was ignorant of how such words and actions ought to be interpreted.

The mutual transferring of a right is what men call a CONTRACT.

Transferring a *right to a thing* is different from transferring or delivering *the thing itself*. The two can happen together. For a thing may be delivered along with the transfer of the right to it, as in buying and selling with cash, or exchanging goods or lands. But they can be separated, and the thing may be delivered some time after the right to it has been transferred.

Something else that can happen is this. One of the contractors [= 'parties to the contract'] may do his part by delivering the thing contracted, leaving it to the other contractor to do *his* part at some specified later time, trusting him in the meantime. In such a case, the contract on the latter person's side is called a PACT or COVENANT. Or it can happen that both parties contract now to do something later. In such a case, when someone who has been trusted to perform at a later



time *does* perform, this is called 'keeping a promise' or 'keeping faith'; and if he fails to perform, and his failure is voluntary, it is called 'violation of faith'.

When the transferring of a right is not two-sided, but one of the parties transfers a right in the *hope* that this will •bring him friendship or service from someone else, or will •get him a reputation for charity or magnanimity, or will •bring him a reward in heaven, or when he does it so as free his mind from the pain of compassion (•e.g. giving money to a beggar so as to relieve one's oppressive feeling of pity for him•), this is not a contract but a GIFT, FREE-GIFT, GRACE - all of which mean the same thing.

Contracts are expressed either •explicitly or •by inference. •Explicitly when words are spoken with understanding of what they mean, and they speak of either the present or the past ('I give', 'I grant', 'I have given', 'I have granted', 'I will that this be yours') or the future ('I will give', 'I will grant') - the words concerning the future are called PROMISE.

Signs •by inference involve drawing a conclusion from words, from silence, from actions, or from non-actions. Quite generally, a sign by inference of a contract can be anything at all that sufficiently shows what the will of the contractor is.

Words alone, if they concern the future and contain a bare promise, are not an adequate sign of a free-gift and therefore do not create obligations. For if they concern the time to come - as with 'Tomorrow I will give . . .' - they are a sign that I haven't given yet, and consequently that my right has not been transferred and remains mine until I transfer it by some further act. But if the words concern the present or past - as with 'I have given . . .' or 'I now give to be delivered tomorrow . . .' - then my *tomorrow's* right is given away *today*; and the mere words have brought that about, even if there is no other evidence of what I will. And there is a great difference in meaning between •'I now will that this be yours tomorrow' and •'I will give you this tomorrow'. In •the former, the word 'will,' signifies a *present* act of the will (•something like 'I now hereby order that this be yours tomorrow'•); but in •the latter, 'will' signifies a *future* act of the will; and so •the former words, being of the present, transfer a future right, whereas •the latter, concerning the future, transfer nothing. But if there are other signs of the person's will to transfer a right, besides words, then even if the gift is free the right can be understood to be transferred by words about the future. For example, if a man offers a prize to whomever wins a certain race, the gift is free; but although his words •in offering the prize• concern the future, the right is transferred; for if he didn't want his words be understood in that manner he shouldn't have uttered them.

In contracts •as distinct from free gifts•, the right is transferred not only when the words concern the present or past, but also when they concern the future. That is because every contract is a two-way transfer, an exchange of rights; so someone who promises just because he has already received the benefit for which he is giving the promise, should be understood intending the right to be transferred •at the time of the promise•; for unless he had been willing to have his words understood in that way, the other •party to the contract• would not have performed his part first. That is why in buying and selling and other acts of contract a promise is equivalent to a covenant, and is therefore binding.

He who performs first in the case of a contract is said to MERIT whatever it is that he is to receive through the performance of the other party; and he has it as his *due*. Also when a prize is offered to many, to be given to the one of them who wins •some contest•, or when money is thrown into a crowd to be enjoyed by those who catch it, this is a free gift, and yet to win the prize or to catch the money is to *merit* it and to have it as one's DUE. For the right is transferred

in the act of offering the prize or throwing the money, even though the decision about *whom* it is transferred to is made only by the outcome of the contest or the scramble.

Between these two sorts of merit there is this difference: •in a contract I merit by virtue of my own power and the other contractor's need; but •in the case of a free gift it is only the giver's kindness that enables me to merit anything. •In contract, I merit at the contractor's hand that he should part with his right; •in the case of gift, I don't merit that the giver should part with his right, but only that when he has parted with it it should be mine rather than someone else's. I think this is the meaning of the distinction they make in the Schools between *meritum congrui* and *meritum condigni* [Latin = roughly 'what you deserve because you have obeyed the rules' and 'what you deserve because of your own intrinsic worth']. God almighty has promised Paradise to any men (blinded though they are by carnal desires) who can walk through this world according to the commands and limits prescribed by him. And the Schoolmen say that someone who does this will merit Paradise *ex congruo* (that is, in the first way). But no man can demand a right to Paradise on the grounds of his own righteousness, or of any other power in himself, . . . and they express this by saying that no man can merit Paradise *ex condigno* (that is, in the second way). I repeat: I *think* this is the meaning of that distinction; but because disputers don't agree on the meanings of their own technical terms for any longer than it suits them to, I shan't affirm anything about what they mean. I say just this: when a gift is given indefinitely as a prize to be contended for, he that wins the contest merits the prize and may claim it as his due.

What if a covenant is made in which the parties do not perform now, but trust one another to perform at an appropriate time in the future? •If this happens in the condition of mere nature (which is war of every man against every man), the contract is void if one of the parties has a reasonable suspicion that the other is not going to perform. For the one who performs first has no assurance that the other will perform later, because the bonds of words are too weak to rein in men's ambition, greed, anger, and other passions - unless there is something to be feared from some coercive power; and in the condition of mere nature, where all men are equal and are judges of the reasonableness of their own fears, there can't possibly be such a power. So he who performs first merely betrays himself to his enemy, which is contrary to his right (which he can never abandon) to defend his life and his means of living.

On the other hand, •if there is a common power set over both parties to the contract, with right and force sufficient to compel performance, the contract is not made void by the suspicions of either party to it. When there is a power set up to constrain those who would otherwise violate their faith, that fear - namely, the suspicion that the other party will not perform - is no longer reasonable; so he who has covenanted to perform first is obliged to do so.

For someone's fear or suspicion to make such a covenant invalid, it must arise from something that happened after the covenant was made - perhaps some new act or other sign of the other party's planning not to perform. Otherwise it can't make the covenant void; for something that didn't hinder a man from promising oughtn't to count as a hindrance to his performing.

He who transfers a right transfers - as far as he is able to - the means of enjoying it. For example, someone who sells land is understood to be transferring also everything that is growing on it; and someone who sells a mill can't divert the stream that drives it. And those who give to a man the right to govern them as sovereign are understood to give him the right to impose taxes to maintain soldiers, and to appoint magistrates for the administration of justice.

It is impossible to make covenants with brute beasts, because they don't understand our speech, and so don't understand or accept any transfer of rights, and can't themselves make any such transfer; and where there is no acceptance on both sides there is no covenant.

It is impossible to make a covenant with God except through mediators to whom God speaks (either by supernatural revelation or by his lieutenants who govern under him and in his name); for without such mediation we don't know whether our covenants have been accepted or not. And therefore those who vow anything to God that is •contrary to any law of nature vow in vain, because it is unjust to keep to such a vow. And if it is something •commanded by the law of nature, the vow is pointless because what binds then is not the vow but the law.

When someone covenants to do something, *what* he covenants to do is always something he can deliberate about (for covenanting is an act of the will, i.e. an act - indeed the last act - of deliberation); so it is always understood to be something in the future that it is possible for him to perform.

Therefore, to promise to do something that is known to be impossible is not to covenant. But if something turned out later to be impossible but was at first thought possible, the covenant is valid and binding. It doesn't ·of course· bind the person to do the thing itself, but it does bind him to ·do something equal to· the value ·of what he promised to do·; or, if that is also impossible, to try without pretence to perform as much as is possible ·of what he promised to do·; for no man can be obliged to do more than that.

Men are freed from their covenants in two ways: •by performing, and •by being forgiven, ·as one may forgive a debt·. For •performance naturally brings obligation to an end, and •forgiveness restores liberty, because it hands back the right in which the obligation consisted.

Covenants entered into by fear in the raw condition of nature are binding. For example, if I covenant with an enemy to pay a ransom or do a service in return for my life, I am bound by it. For it is a contract in which one party receives the benefit of life, while the other receives money or service in return; and consequently the covenant is valid unless some other law forbids the performance, which is not the case in the raw condition of nature . Therefore prisoners of war who are trusted to secure the payment of their ransom are obliged to pay it; and if a weaker prince make a disadvantageous peace with a stronger one, out of fear, he is bound to keep it - unless (as I said earlier) the war is renewed by some new and just cause of fear. And even in commonwealths (·as distinct from the condition of nature·) if I am forced to rescue myself from a thief by promising him money, I am bound to pay it until the civil law clears me of that obligation. For anything that I can lawfully do without obligation I can lawfully covenant to do through fear; and what I lawfully covenant I cannot lawfully break.

An earlier covenant makes void a later one. For a man who gave his right to one man yesterday doesn't *have* it to give to someone else today; so the later promise doesn't transfer any right, and is null.

A covenant not to defend myself from force by force is *always* void. The reason for this is something I explained earlier. The avoidance of death, wounds, and imprisonment is the only purpose for laying down any right; so nobody can transfer or give up his right to save himself from death, wounds, and imprisonment; and so a promise not to resist force doesn't transfer any right and is not binding. A man can make this covenant:

Unless I do such and such, kill me;  
but he cannot make this one:

Unless I do such and such, I won't resist you when you come to kill me.  
For man by nature chooses the lesser evil, which is the danger of death from resisting, rather than the greater, which is certain and present death from not resisting. Everyone accepts this, as is

shown by their leading criminals to execution or to prison with armed guards, despite the fact that the criminals have consented to the law under which they are condemned.

A covenant to accuse oneself, without assurance of pardon, is likewise invalid. For in the condition of nature where every man is a judge, there is no place for accusation, so the question doesn't arise there; and in the civil state the accusation is followed by punishment, and because that is *force* a man is not obliged give in to it. The same is also true of the accusation of those whose condemnation would put a man into misery and who are presumed to be strongly well-disposed towards him (such as a father, wife, or benefactor). For if the testimony of such an accuser is not willingly given, it is presumed to be corrupted by nature, and therefore not to be believed; and where a man's testimony is not to be credited, he is not bound to give it. Also accusations made under torture should not be regarded as testimonies. For torture should be used only as a way of getting ideas and leads for the further search for truth; and what is said under torture tends to the ease of the person being tortured, not to the informing of the torturers; and so it ought not to be accepted as a sufficient testimony; for whether the accusations through which he relieves his own situation are true or false, in bringing them he is exercising his right to preserve his own life.

The force of words is (as I remarked earlier) too weak to hold men to the performance of their covenants, and man's nature provides only two conceivable ways of strengthening it. Those are •fear of the consequence of breaking their word, or •glory or pride in appearing not to need to break it. This latter is a •grandness of conduct too rarely found to be relied on, especially in those who pursue wealth, power, or sensual pleasure - who are the greatest part of mankind! The passion to be relied on is •fear, which may be of either of two very general objects - the power of invisible spirits, and the power of men who will be offended if the covenant is broken. Invisible spirits have the *greater power*, yet the fear of the power of men is commonly the *greater fear*. Each man's •fear of invisible spirits is his own religion, which has a place in the nature of man before civil society. The •fear of men's power does not have such a place in human nature independently of civil society, or at least not enough of a place to make men keep men their promises; because in the raw condition of nature the inequality of power is evident only in the outcome of battle.

So that before the time of civil society, or in the interruption of it by war, the only thing that can strengthen a covenant of agreed-on peace - to withstand the temptations of avarice, ambition, lust, or other strong desires - is the fear of that •invisible power which everyone •worships as God and •fears as a revenger of his treachery. Therefore, all that can be done between two men who are not subject to civil power is for each to get the other to swear by the God whom he fears. This swearing, or OATH, is a form of speech, added to a promise, by which the person who promises indicates that if he fails to keep his promise he renounces the mercy of his God, or calls on God for vengeance on himself. Such was the heathen form *Otherwise let Jupiter kill me, as I kill this beast*. Our form also, when we say *I shall do such and such, so help me God*. This is accompanied by the rites and ceremonies that each person uses in his own religion, so as to increase the fear of the divine consequences of breaking faith.

From this it appears that an oath taken according to any form or rite that the oath-taker doesn't believe in is pointless, and not a real oath; and that there is no swearing by anything that the swearer thinks is not God. Men have sometimes been accustomed to swear by their kings, out of fear or flattery, but they meant it to be understood that in taking such an oath they were attributing divine honour to their king. Swearing unnecessarily by God is just profaning his name,

and swearing by other things, as men do in ordinary talk, is not swearing at all, but merely an impious custom that has arisen from unduly emphatic ways of talking.

It is also apparent that the oath adds nothing to the obligation. If a covenant is lawful, it binds in the sight of God without an oath as much as with one; and if it is unlawful, it doesn't bind at all even if it has been confirmed with an oath.

## Chapter 15. Other laws of nature

From the second law of nature, which obliges us to transfer to someone else any rights of ours the retention of which would hinder the peace of mankind, there follows a third:

**Third law of nature:** Men should perform the covenants they make.

Without this, covenants are useless, are mere empty words, and all men retain the right to all things so that we are still in the condition of war.

This third law of nature is the source of JUSTICE. When no covenant has been made, no right has been transferred, so every man has a right to everything, so no action can be unjust. But when a covenant is made, to break it is unjust; and the definition of INJUSTICE is simply the non-performance of a covenant. And whatever is not unjust is just.

As I said in chapter 14, covenants of mutual trust are invalid when one part fears that the other party will not perform. Although the origin of justice is the making of covenants, there can't be any actual injustice until the reason for such fear be taken away, which can't be done while men are in the natural condition of war. So the labels 'just' and 'unjust' can have application only when

there is some coercive power to •compel all men equally to perform their covenants, through the terror of some punishment greater than the benefit they expect from breaking their covenant, and •thereby to •ensure that men *get* the benefits they *contract for*, this being their compensation for giving up some of their rights.

And there is no such power before the creation of a commonwealth.

This can also be gathered from the ordinary definition of *justice* in the Schools; for they say that *justice is the steady willingness to give every man his own*. Where there is no *own* - that is, no property - there is no injustice, and where no coercive power has been set up - that is, where there is no commonwealth - there is no property (all men having a right to all things); therefore where there is no commonwealth, nothing is unjust. So that justice consists in the keeping of valid covenants; but the validity of covenants begins only with the setting up of a civil power sufficient to compel men to keep them; and that is when *property* is also begins.

[In the background of the next paragraph is the start of Psalm 53: 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' The Hebrew word translated by 'fool' implies moral rather than intellectual deficiency.]

The fool has said in his heart, *There is no such thing as justice*, sometimes even saying it aloud. He has seriously maintained that

since every man is in charge of his own survival and welfare, there could be no reason for any man not to do anything that he thought would conduce to that end; so that making or not making covenants, keeping them or breaking them, is not against reason if it conduces to one's benefit.

He isn't denying that there *are* covenants, that they *are* sometimes broken and sometimes kept, and that breaches of them may be called 'injustice' and the observance of them 'justice'. But he is suggesting that injustice may sometimes have on its side the reason that dictates to every man his own good, especially when the injustice conduces to a benefit that will enable the man to

disregard not only men's dispraise and curses but also their power. (He doesn't maintain this when the fear of God comes into the story, but this same 'fool' has said in his heart there is no God.)

·In *Matthew* 11:12 we find: 'And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.' The fool echoes this in what he says next, though of course his real topic is not the kingdom *of God* (in which he doesn't believe) but rather earthly kingdoms:

The kingdom of God is achieved by violence; but what if it could be achieved by unjust violence? Would it be against right reason to achieve it in that way, when it is impossible to be hurt by doing so? And if it is not against reason, it is not against justice. If you deny this, you break the link between acting justly and producing good.

From such reasoning as this, successful wickedness has come to be called 'virtue'; and some people who have disallowed the breaking of promises in all other things have nevertheless allowed it when it is for the getting of a kingdom. The heathen who believed that Saturn was deposed by his son Jupiter still believed that Jupiter - that same Jupiter - was the avenger of injustice. This is a little like a piece of law in Coke's Commentaries on *Littleton*, where he says that if the rightful heir to the crown is convicted of treason, the crown shall nevertheless come down to him ·on the death of the present king·, and at that instant his conviction will be void. From these instances (·Jupiter and Coke·) one may be apt to infer that

when the heir apparent of a kingdom kills him who has the throne, even if it is his father, you may call it 'injustice' or anything else you like; but it can't be against reason, seeing that any man's voluntary actions *all* tend to his own benefit, and those actions are most reasonable that conduce most to one's own ends.

This reasoning, though plausible, is nevertheless false.

For this is not a question about mutual promises in the natural condition of men where there is no security of performance on either side - e.g. when there is no civil power governing the people making the promises - for *those* promises are not covenants. Our question is rather this: where one of the parties has performed already, or where there is a power to make him perform, is it against reason for the other party to fail to perform *his* part? I say he acts against reason and most imprudently. ·My case for this has two parts·. •When a man does something that tends to his own destruction, so far as one can tell in advance, even if some chance event that he couldn't have expected makes it turn out to his benefit, *that* doesn't make his original action reasonably or wisely done. •Secondly, in the natural condition where every man is an enemy to every other man, no-one can live securely without the aid of allies. But who, except by ignorance, will admit into society (which one enters by mutual covenants for the defence of individual members) a man who thinks it rational to break covenants? Who, except through ignorance, will retain him if he has been admitted? So either •he will be thrown out of society, and perish, or •he will owe his not being thrown out to the ignorance of others who cannot see the danger of their error; and a man cannot reasonably count on such errors by others as the means to his security. Either way, then, what he does is contrary to right reason.

·Let us follow this up considering separately the two kinds of kingdom, heavenly and earthly·. •As regards the idea of gaining the secure and perpetual happiness of heaven by unjust means: this is frivolous, for there is only one means imaginable, and that is by not breaking but keeping covenants.

•As for the other prospect, namely attaining sovereignty of an earthly kingdom by rebellion: any attempt to do this is against reason, even if the rebellion succeeds. There are two reasons for this. The attempt can't reasonably be expected to succeed, but rather the contrary; and if it does succeed, that teaches others to try the same thing in the same way. Therefore justice - that is to say, the keeping of covenants - is a rule of reason by which we are forbidden to do anything destructive to our life, and so it is a law of nature.

Some people go even further, denying 'law of nature' status to the rules that conduce to the preservation of man's life on earth, allowing it only to rules that conduce to the attaining of eternal happiness after death. They think that a breach of covenant may conduce to *that* end, and consequently be just and reasonable (for example those who think it a work of piety to pursue, depose, and kill their kings under the pretext of a war of religion). But there is no natural knowledge of what man's situation will be after death, much less of what reward will then be given for breach of faith - only a belief based on other men's saying that they know this supernaturally, or that they know people who knew people who knew others who knew it supernaturally! - so breach of faith can't be called a command of reason or of nature.

Others who allow that the keeping of faith is enjoined by a law of nature, nevertheless make an exception for covenants with certain persons such as heretics and people who commonly don't perform their covenants with others; and I say that this exception is also against reason. If any fault of a man is sufficient to nullify a covenant we have made with him, the same fault ought in reason to have sufficed to prevent us from making it in the first place.

The names 'just' and 'unjust' mean one thing when applied to men and another when applied to actions. To call *a man* 'just' (or 'unjust') is to say that his manners - his over-all ways of behaving - conform (or don't conform) to reason. But in calling *an action* 'just' or 'unjust' one is talking about the conformity (or non-conformity) to reason of that particular action, not of anyone's manners or way of life. So a just man is one who takes all the care he can that his actions are all just; and an unjust man is one who neglects that. The labels 'righteous' and 'unrighteous' are more often applied to such men than 'just' and 'unjust', but the meaning is the same. A righteous man, therefore, doesn't lose that title through performing one or a few unjust actions that come from sudden passion, or from mistakes about things or persons; nor does an unrighteous man lose his character for things that he does (or things he doesn't do) because of fear; because in these actions or refrainings his will is not shaped by the justice of his conduct but by its apparent benefit to him. What gives human actions the savour of justice is a certain rarely found nobleness or gallantness of courage, by which a man scorns to owe the contentment of his life to fraud or breach of promise. This justice of manners - justice of customary conduct - is what is meant when justice is called a virtue and injustice a vice.

An action's being just doesn't make the person just; it merely makes him guiltless in this instance. And an action's injustice (which is also called 'injury') makes the person not necessarily unjust but guilty in this instance.

*Injustice of manners* is the disposition or tendency to do injury, and is injustice even before it leads to any action, and even if no individual person is actually injured. But the *injustice of an action* (that is to say *injury*) involves there being some individual person who is injured, namely the one to whom the covenant was made; and therefore it often happens that the *injury* is suffered by one man but the *damage* goes to someone else. For example: the master commands his servant to give money to a stranger, and the servant doesn't do it; the *injury* is done to the master, whom the servant had covenanted to obey, but the *damage* goes to the stranger, towards

whom the servant had no obligation and therefore could not *injure* him. So also in commonwealths a private citizen can let a debtor off from his debt to him, but not from robberies or other violences through which he is harmed; because the non-payment of a debt is an injury only to the creditor, whereas robbery and violence are injuries to the person of the commonwealth.

Whatever is done to a man in conformity with his own will, if his will has been indicated to the doer, is no injury to him. For if the doer hasn't by some antecedent covenant given up his original (·basic, natural·) right to do what he pleases, there is no breach of covenant, and therefore no injury has been done. And if he *has* ·covenanted to give up his original right·, he is now released from that covenant by the other person's signifying his willingness to have the action done, and so again no injury is done.

Justice of actions is divided by ·Aristotle, Aquinas, and other· writers into *commutative* and *distributive*. . . . •They identify *commutative* justice with

the equality of value of the things contracted for (as if it were an injustice to sell dearer than we buy); ·but this is a useless notion, because· the value of anything that is contracted for is measured by the desires of the contractors, and therefore what they are contented to give *is* the just value. •And these same writers identify *distributive* justice with

the distribution of equal benefit to men of equal merit (as if it were an injustice to give more to a man than he merits). ·This is wrong too, because· merit is rewarded only by grace and isn't owed anything as a matter of justice. (The only exception to this is the kind of merit that goes with covenants - one party's performance *merits* the performance of the other party - and this falls within the scope of commutative justice, not distributive.)

So this distinction, understood in the usual manner, is not right. Using the term properly, •*commutative* justice is the justice of a *contractor* - that is, doing what one has covenanted to do in buying and selling, hiring and letting to hire, lending and borrowing, exchanging, bartering, and other acts of contract.

And •*distributive* justice is the justice of an *arbitrator* whose job it is to define what is just. Having been trusted by those who make him arbitrator, if he performs his trust he is said to *distribute* to every man his own. This is indeed just distribution, and it could (though improperly) be called 'distributive justice'; but a more proper label is 'equity'. That is also a law of nature, as I will show a little later.

As justice depends on a previous covenant, so GRATITUDE depends on a previous grace, that is to say, a previous free-gift. There is a law of nature about this, which can be put thus:

**Fourth law of nature:** A man who receives benefit from another out of mere grace should try to bring it about that the giver of the benefit doesn't come to have reasonable cause to regret his good will.

For no man gives except with the intention of bringing good to *himself*, because giving is voluntary, and the aim of each voluntary act is the good of the person whose act it is. If men see that they will be frustrated in that aim - ·as they will be if ingratitude is prevalent· - there will be no beginning of benevolence or trust, or (consequently) of mutual help, or of reconciliation of one man to another; so that men will be left still in the condition of war, which is contrary to the first and fundamental law of nature, which commands men to seek peace. The breach of this ·fourth·



law is called 'ingratitude'. It has the same relation to *grace* that *injustice* has to *obligation by covenant*.

A fifth law of nature enjoins COMPLAISANCE. That is to say,

**Fifth law of nature:** Every man should strive to accommodate himself to the rest.

To understand this, think about the fact that differences in men's affections create differences in how fit they are for society; like differences among stones that are collected for building of an edifice. If •a stone's roughness and irregularity of shape causes it to take more space from others than it itself fills, and if •it is too hard to be easily smoothed, it is awkward to build with and the builders discard it as unprofitable and troublesome. Similarly, a man •who is led by the roughness of his nature to try to keep for himself things that others need and he does not, and •whose passions are so stubborn that he can't be corrected, is to be dropped or thrown out of society as giving it too much trouble. For seeing that every man is supposed - not only by right, but also by necessity of nature - to do all he can to obtain what he needs for his own survival, anyone who goes against *this* in order to have things he doesn't need is guilty of the war that his conduct will start; and that is contrary to the fundamental ·or first· law of nature, which commands the pursuit of peace. Those who observe this ·fifth· law may be called SOCIABLE, and those who break it may be called 'stubborn', 'unsociable', 'perverse', 'intractable'.

And then there is this:

**Sixth law of nature:** A man ought to pardon the past offences of those who repent of their offences, want to be pardoned, and provide guarantees of good behaviour in the future.

For PARDON is simply the granting of peace. If granted to people who persevere in their hostility, it isn't peace, but fear; but if it is not granted to people who give guarantees of their future conduct, that is a sign of aversion to peace, and is therefore contrary to the ·first· law of nature.

And this:

**Seventh law of nature:** In revenge (that is, returning evil for evil), men should look not at the greatness of the past evil but at the greatness of the future good.

This forbids us to inflict punishment with any purpose other than to correct of the offender or to direct others. This law follows from its immediate predecessor, which commands pardon when there is security for the future. Besides, taking revenge without thought for the example that is being set or for the profit that will come from it is triumphing or glorying in someone else's pain. And it is •doing so without aiming at any *end*, for the end is always something in the future; and •glorying to no end is vainglory and contrary to reason, and •to hurt without reason tends to start war, which is against the ·first· law of nature. Such conduct is commonly called 'cruelty'.

Because all signs of hatred or contempt provoke men to fight, as most men would rather risk their lives than not to be revenged, we may set down this command:

**Eighth law of nature:** No man should - by deed, word, facial expression or gesture - express hatred or contempt of someone else.

The breach of this law is commonly called 'contumely' [= 'gratuitous insult'].

The question of who is the better man has no place in the raw condition of nature, where (as I have shown) all men are equal. The inequalities that now obtain between men have been introduced by the civil laws. I know that Aristotle in the first book of his *Politics* bases his doctrine on the thesis that some men are by nature •more worthy to command, others •more worthy to serve. He took the former to be •the wiser sort (and thought his philosophy showed

him to be one of them); the latter were •those who had strong bodies, but were not philosophers as he was. He was implying that the line between master and servant (or slave) is drawn not by the consent of men but by differences of intellect - which is not only against reason but also against experience. For very few men are so foolish that they wouldn't rather govern themselves than be governed by others; and when those who fancy themselves as very intelligent contend by force against people who distrust their own intellects, they don't always - they don't *often*, they almost *never* - get the victory. So if nature has made men equal, that equality should be acknowledged; and if nature has made men unequal, it remains the case that men who *think* themselves equal will refuse to make peace treaties except on equal terms, and so their ·believed-in· equality must be admitted. And so I offer this:

**Ninth law of nature:** Every man should acknowledge ·every· other as his equal by nature. The breach of this command is *pride*.

From this law there follows another:

**Tenth law of nature:** At the entrance into conditions of peace, no man should insist that *he* retain some right which he is not content to be retained by everyone else.

As it is necessary for all men who seek peace to •lay down certain rights of nature, that is to say, not to have liberty to do whatever they like, so it is also necessary for man's life to •retain some rights - the right to take care of their own bodies, to enjoy air, water, motion, ways to go from place to place, and everything else that a man needs if he is to live, or to live well. [Curley reports that the Latin version ends '... needs if he is to live', with no mention of living well.] This being the case, if at the making of peace someone requires for himself something that he is not willing to have granted to others, he infringes the ninth law, which commands the acknowledgment of natural equality, and so he also infringes the ·first or basic· law of nature. Those who observe this ·tenth· law are called 'modest', and the breakers of it 'arrogant' . . . .

Here is a further precept of the law of nature:

**Eleventh law of nature:** If a man is trusted to judge between man and man, he should deal equally between them.

For without that, the controversies of men cannot be settled except by war. So someone who is biased in his judgments is doing his best to deter men from the use of judges and arbitrators, and so he is - against the basic law of nature - a cause of war. The observance of this law involves the equal distribution to each man of what in reason belongs to him, which is why it is called EQUITY, and (as I have said before) 'distributive justice'; the violation of it is called 'acceptation of persons' [= 'favouritism'].

From this law there follows another:

**Twelfth law of nature:** Anything that can't be divided should be enjoyed in common, if that is possible; and it should be enjoyed without limit if possible; and if there isn't enough of it for that, those who have a right to it should have equal shares of it.

If this law is not followed, the distribution is unequal, and ·therefore· contrary to equity.

But some things cannot be either divided or enjoyed in common. In that case, the law of nature prescribing equity leads to this:

**Thirteenth law of nature:** If a thing that cannot be divided or enjoyed in common, a *lottery* should be set up to determine who is to have the entire right to the thing or (for an alternating use of it) who is to have it first.

For the law of nature demands equal distribution, and we can't imagine any other way - ·in the case in question· - of doing that.

There are two sorts of lottery - arbitrary and natural. •An arbitrary lottery is one agreed on by the competitors; a natural lottery is based either on •who was born first or on •who first took possession. So:

**Fourteenth law of nature:** Things that can't be enjoyed in common or divided ought to be judged to have been acquired *through a lottery* to the first possessor, or in some cases to the first-born.

Here is another law:

**Fifteenth law of nature:** All men who mediate peace should be allowed safe conduct.

For the law that commands peace as an end commands intercession [= 'pleading on someone else's behalf'] as the means, and the means to intercession is safe conduct.

However willing men may be to observe these laws, questions may still arise concerning a man's action: •Did he do it? •If he did it, was it against the law ·of nature·? (The former is called a 'question of fact', the latter 'a question of right'.) ·When this happens·, men are as far from peace as ever unless they covenant to abide by the judgment of some third party - known as an ARBITRATOR. And therefore:

**Sixteenth law of nature:** When men have a controversy, they should submit their right to the judgment of an arbitrator.

And seeing every man is presumed to do everything with a view to his own benefit,

**Seventeenth law of nature:** No man is a fit arbitrator in his own cause.

Even if a man were an entirely suitable arbitrator in his own cause, the demand of equity that each party receive equal benefit implies that if •one is allowed to be a judge •the other should be allowed also; and if that happens the controversy - that is, the cause of war - still stands, which is against the law of nature.

For the same reason,

**Eighteenth law of nature:** No man ought to be accepted as an arbitrator in any case where it seems that he will get greater profit or honour or pleasure from the victory of one party than from the victory of the other.

That is because he has taken a bribe - an unavoidable one, but still a *bribe* - and no man can be obliged to trust him. So here again, ·if such an arbitrator is appointed·, the controversy remains, and thus the condition of war remains, contrary to the law of nature.

·The seventeenth and eighteenth laws are relevant to controversies of both kinds - of fact and of right. One final law concerns only the former·:

**Nineteenth law of nature:** In a controversy of fact, the judge should not give more credence to one party than to the other; and so if there is no other evidence he must give credence to a third ·person as witness·, or to a third and fourth, or more;

For otherwise the question is undecided, and left to be settled by force, which is contrary to the ·first· law of nature.

Those are the laws of nature, which dictate peace as the means to the preservation of men in multitudes. Their only concern is with the doctrine of •civil society. There are other things tending to the destruction of •particular men - for example drunkenness, and all other kinds of intemperance - which could be counted among the things the law of nature has forbidden; but they are not relevant to my present concerns.

This ·chapter· may seem too subtle a deduction of the laws of nature to be attended to by all men, most of whom are too busy getting food to understand it, and the rest are too careless to do

so. However, these laws of nature have been contracted into one easy sum that can be grasped even by the poorest intelligence, namely:

**Don't do to someone else anything that you wouldn't want done to you.**

That shows a man that in learning the laws of nature all he has to do is this:

When weighing the actions of other men against his own, if they seem too heavy then he should put them into the other pan of the balance, and his own into their pan, to ensure that his own passions and self-love are not adding anything to the weight.

If he does that, all of these laws of nature that will appear to him very reasonable. Because this procedure is available, he cannot excuse himself for not knowing the laws of nature on the ground that they are too complicated and difficult.

[In the next paragraph Hobbes uses the Latin phrases *in foro interno* (= 'in the inner court') and *in foro externo* (= 'in the outer court'). Traditionally, a judgment *in foro interno* has been understood to be the voice of the person's own conscience, while a judgment *in foro externo* is a public one - by other people or of a court of law. Hobbes's adapts these terms for his own slightly different purposes.]

The laws of nature oblige one *in foro interno*, that is to say, they require one to *want* certain things to occur; but *in foro externo* - that is, in respect of *acting* on them - they are not always binding. For someone who is modest and pliable and faithful to his promises, at a time and place where nobody else would be like that, merely makes himself a prey to others, and procures his own certain ruin; this is contrary to the basis of all the laws of nature, which tend towards his nature's preservation. But this holds only in situations where nobody else would conform to the laws. Someone who has good enough evidence that others *will* observe those laws with respect to him, yet doesn't observe them himself, is not seeking peace but war, which amounts to seeking the destruction of his nature by violence.

A law that binds *in foro interno* may be broken not only by an action that is contrary to the law but also by an act that conforms to the law if the person acting *thinks* it is contrary to the law. For though his *action* in this case accords with the law, his *purpose* is against it, and for an obligation *in foro interno* that is a breach.

The laws of nature are immutable and eternal, for injustice, ingratitude, arrogance, pride, iniquity, acception of persons, and the rest can never be made lawful. For it can never be that war will preserve life and peace destroy it.

These laws of nature are easy to obey, because they require only a certain desire and an endeavour - I mean an unfeigned and constant endeavour - to act in certain ways. Because they require nothing but endeavour, he who *tries to* fulfil them *does* fulfil them, and he who fulfils the law is just.

And the science of them [= 'the rigorously organized theoretical truth about them'] is the true and only moral philosophy. For moral philosophy is simply the science of what is good and bad in the conversation and society of mankind. 'Good' and 'evil' or 'bad' are names that signify our desires and aversions, which are different in men who differ in their characters, customs, and beliefs. And men can differ not only in their judgments of the senses - concerning what is pleasant or unpleasant to the taste, smell, hearing, touch, and sight - but also judgments concerning what conforms to or disagrees with reason in the actions of common life. Indeed, one man at different times differs from himself, at one time praising (calling 'good') something that at another time he dispraises (calling it 'bad'), from which arise disputes, controversies, and at last war. And therefore a man is in the condition of mere nature (which is a condition of war) for as long as private appetite is the measure of good and bad; and consequently all men agree

that peace is good and that the means to peace - justice, gratitude, modesty, equity, mercy, and the rest of the laws of nature - are good also; which is to say that moral virtues are good and their contrary vices bad.

Now the science of virtue and vice is moral philosophy, and therefore the true doctrine of the laws of nature is the true moral philosophy. But the writers of moral philosophy, though they acknowledge the same virtues, don't see what makes them good - don't see that they are praised as the means to peaceable, sociable, and comfortable living - and regard them as only middle-strength passions . . . .

Men customarily call these dictates of reason 'laws'; but improperly, for they are really just conclusions or theorems about what conduces to men's survival and defence of themselves, whereas a 'law' properly so-called is the word of someone who by right has command over others. Still, if we consider these same theorems as delivered in the word of God, who by right commands all things, *then* they are properly called 'laws'.

## Chapter 16. Persons, authors, and things personated

A person is

someone whose words or actions are considered either as his own or as representing the words or actions of another man or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether truly or by fiction.

When they are considered as his own, he is called a 'natural' person; and when they are considered as representing the words and actions of another, he is called a 'feigned' or 'artificial' person.

The word 'person' is Latin . . . . In Latin *persona* signifies the disguise or outward appearance of a man, counterfeited on the stage, and sometimes more particularly the part of it that disguises the face (such as a mask or visor); and the word has been transferred from the stage to any representer of speech and action, in tribunals as well as in theatres. So that a *person* is the same as an *actor*, both on the stage and in common conversation; so for someone to *personate* is for him to act *·for·* or represent himself or someone else; and he who acts *·for·* someone else is said to 'bear his person' or 'act in his name' and in different contexts is variously called a 'representer', a 'representative', a 'lieutenant', a 'vicar', an 'attorney', a 'deputy', a 'procurator', an 'actor', and the like. (Cicero uses *persona* in this bearing-someone's-person sense when he writes *Unus sustineo tres personas: mei, adversarii, et judicis* - 'I bear three persons: my own, my adversary's, and the judge's'.)

Sometimes the words and deeds of those who represent someone are acknowledged as their own by those whom they represent; and in such a case the one who represents is called the 'actor' and the one who is represented is called the AUTHOR, as the one by whose *authority* the actor acts. For what we call an 'owner' (Latin *dominus*) when *goods and possessions* are the topic is called an 'author' when the topic is *actions*; so that being the author of an action is strictly analogous to being the owner of a house. And as the right of possession is called 'dominion', so the right of performing some action is called AUTHORITY. Thus, *authority* is always understood as a right of performing some act; and *done by authority* means done by commission or licence from him whose right it is.

It follows from this that when the actor makes a covenant by authority, the covenant binds the author - and subjects him to all its consequences - just as much as if he had made it himself. So everything I said in chapter 14 about the nature of covenants between man and man in their

natural capacity is true also when the covenants are made by their actors, representers, or procurators, that have authority from them - up to the limits of the commission they have been given, but no further.

So someone who makes a covenant with an actor or representer without knowing what authority he has (·what the limits of his commission are·) does so at his own peril. For no man is obliged by a covenant of which he is not author, or, therefore, by a covenant that goes against or departs from the authority he gave.

When the actor does something against the law of nature by command of the author, if he is obliged by a former covenant to obey the author then it is not he but the author who breaks the law of nature; for though the action is against the law of nature, yet it is not the actor's action but the author's; because the actor would have violated the law if he had *not* done it, since he had covenanted to do it.

If someone makes a covenant with an author through the mediation of an actor, not *knowing* what authority the actor has but only taking his word, then if he demands that the extent of the authority be made clear to him, and it isn't, he is no longer obliged; for the covenant he made with the author is not valid without the author's reciprocal assurance. But if he who covenants in this way knew beforehand that he was to expect no assurance except the actor's word, then the covenant is valid, because in this case the actor makes himself the author. So: when the authority is evident, the covenant obliges the author, not the actor; when the authority is feigned, it obliges the actor alone, because there is no author but himself.

Most things can be represented by a fiction. Inanimate things, such as a church, a hospital, a bridge, can be personated by a rector, master, or overseer. But inanimate things can't be authors, or give authority to their actors; but the actors may have authority to arrange for the maintenance of the hospital, bridge, etc., given to them by those who own or govern those things. So such ·inanimate· things cannot be personated until there is some state of civil government, ·because ownership and control are possible only under such a government·.

Likewise children, fools, and madmen who have no use of reason may be personated by guardians, or curators, but can't be authors of any action done by them (during that time ·of their incapacity·) unless and until they recover the use of reason and judge the action to be reasonable. During their time of folly, he who has the right of governing them may give authority to a guardian. But this again has no place except in a civil state, because before such a state exists there is no dominion of persons - ·that is, no right of governing persons·.

An idol, or mere figment of the brain, can be personated, as were the gods of the heathen. They were personated by officers appointed to this by the state, and ·through these officers· held possessions and other goods and rights which men from time to time dedicated and consecrated to them. But idols can't be authors, for an idol is nothing. The authority came from the state; and therefore before introduction of civil government, the gods of the heathen could not be personated.

The true God can be personated. As he was, first, •by Moses, who governed the Israelites, (that were not his people but God's) not in his own name ('Thus says Moses') but in God's name ('Thus says the Lord'). Secondly, •by the Son of man, his own Son, our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, who came to restore the Jews and induce all nations into the kingdom of his father, coming not as of himself but as sent from his father. And thirdly •by the Holy Ghost, or Comforter, speaking and working in the Apostles. This Holy Ghost was a Comforter who did not come of his own accord, but was sent, and came from both the Father and the Son.

A multitude of men are made to be one person when they are represented by one man or one person, this representation having the consent of every individual in that multitude. What makes the person *one* is the unity of the representer, not the unity of the represented. It is the representer who bears the person - only one person - and this is the only way to make sense of *unity* as applied to a multitude.

Because the multitude naturally is not *one* but *many*, they can't be understood as one author; rather, they are many authors of everything their representative says or does in their name. Every individual man gives *his* authority to their common representer, and either •owns all the representer's actions (if they have given him unrestricted authority) or •owns such of the representer's actions as they gave him commission to perform (if the authority they have given him is limited).

If the representative consists of many men, the voice of the majority must be considered as the voice of them all. For if a minority pronounce (for example) in the affirmative, and the majority in the negative, there will be more than enough negatives to cancel the affirmatives, and then the extra negatives, standing uncontradicted, are the only voice the representative has.

When a representative consists in an even number of men, especially when the number is not great, it often happens that the contradictory voices are equal, so that the representative is mute and incapable of action. In some cases, however, contradictory voices equal in number *can* settle a question: for example, in a question of condemning or absolving someone, equality of votes has the effect of absolving (because it doesn't condemn), and does *not* have the effect of condemning-because-it-doesn't-absolve. For when a cause is heard, *not condemning* is *absolving*; and to say that on the contrary *not absolving* is *condemning* is wrong. Similarly in a deliberation about whether to do something now or defer it until a later time: for when the voices are equal there is no decree to do it now, and that *is* a decree to delay.

If the number is odd . . . and the arrangement is that any *one* man can by a negative voice to take away the effect of all the affirmative voices of the rest, this group of people is no representative; because it will often - and in cases of the greatest importance - become a *mute person*, because of the diversity of opinions and interests of the men composing it. That will make it incompetent to do many things, one of them being the government of a multitude, especially in time of war. . . .

\* \* \* \*

## Part II. COMMONWEALTH

### Chapter 17. The causes, creation, and definition of a commonwealth

Men naturally love liberty, and dominion over others; so what is the final cause or end or design they have in mind when they introduce the *restraint upon themselves* under which we see them live in commonwealths? It is the prospect of their own preservation and, through, that of a more contented life; that is to say, of getting themselves out of the miserable condition of war which (as I have shown) necessarily flows from the natural passions of men when there is no visible power to keep them in awe and tie them by fear of punishment to keep their covenants and to obey the laws of nature set down in my chapters 14 and 15.

For the laws of nature - enjoining justice, fairness, modesty, mercy, and (in short) treating others as we want them to treat us - are in themselves contrary to our natural passions, unless some power frightens us into observing them. In the absence of such a power, our natural passions carry us to partiality, pride, revenge, and the like. And covenants without the sword are merely words, with no strength to secure a man at all. Every man has obeyed the laws of nature when he has wanted to, which is when he could do it safely; but if there is no power set up, or none that is strong enough for our security, no-one can safely abide by the laws; and in that case every man will and *lawfully may* rely on his own strength and skill to protect himself against all other men. In all places where men have lived in small families with no larger organized groupings, the trade of *robber* was so far from being regarded as against the law of nature that it was outright honoured; and the greater spoils someone gained by robbery, the greater was his honour. The only constraints on robbery came from the laws of honour, which enjoined robbers to abstain from cruelty and to let their victims keep their lives and their farm implements.

These days cities and kingdoms (which are only greater families) do what small families used to do back then: for their own security they enlarge their dominions, on the basis of claims that they are in danger and in fear of invasion, or that assistance might be given to invaders by the country they are attacking. They try as hard as they can to subdue or weaken their neighbours, by open force and secret manoeuvres; and if they have no other means for their own security, they do this *justly*, and are honoured for it in later years.



Nor can the joining together of a small number of men give them this security that everyone seeks; because when the numbers are small, a small addition on the one side or the other makes the advantage of strength so great that it suffices to carry the victory, and so it gives encouragement for an invasion. How many must we be, to be secure? That depends not on any particular number, but on comparison with the enemy we fear. We have enough if the enemy doesn't outnumber us by so much that that would settle the outcome of a war between us, which would encourage the enemy to start one.

And however great the number, if their actions are directed according to their individual wants and beliefs, they can't expect their actions to defend or protect them against a common enemy or against injuries from one another. For being drawn in different directions by their differing opinions concerning how best to use their strength, they hinder rather than helping one another, and by quarrelling among themselves reduce their strength to nothing. When that happens they are easily subdued by a very few men who agree together; and when there is no common enemy they make war on each other for their particular interests. For if we could suppose a great multitude of men to agree in the observation of justice and other laws of nature, without a common power to keep them all in awe, we might as well suppose all mankind to do the same; and then there would not be - and would not *need* to be - any civil government or commonwealth at all, because there would be peace without subjection.

For the security that men desire to last throughout their lifetimes, it is not enough that they be governed and directed by one judgment for a limited time - e.g. for one battle, or one war. For in that case, even if they obtain a victory through their unanimous efforts against a foreign enemy, yet afterwards - when they have no common enemy, or when some of them regard as an enemy someone whom the others regard as a friend - the difference of their interests makes it certain that they will fall apart and once more come to be at war amongst themselves.

It is true that certain living creatures, such as bees and ants, live sociably with one another (which is why Aristotle counts them among the 'political' creatures [Greek *politike* = 'social']), although each of them is steered only by its particular judgments and appetites, and they don't have speech through which one might indicate to another what it thinks expedient for the common benefit. You may want to know why mankind can't do the same. My answer to that has six parts:

First, men continually compete with one another for honour and dignity, which ants and bees do not; and that leads men, but not those other animals, to envy and hatred and finally war.

Secondly, among those lower creatures, the *common* good of all is the same as the *private* good of each; and being naturally inclined to their private benefit, in procuring that they also procure the common benefit. But a man's biggest pleasure in his own goods comes from their being greater than those of others!

Thirdly, bees and ants etc. don't have the use of reason (as man does), and so they don't see - and don't *think* they see - any fault in how their common business is organized; whereas very many men think themselves wiser than the rest, and better equipped to govern the public. These men struggle to reform and innovate, one in this way and another in that, thereby bringing the commonwealth into distraction and civil war.

Fourthly, these creatures, though they have some use of voice in making known to one another their desires and other affections, don't have that skill with words through which some men represent good things to others in the guise of evil, and evil in the guise of good, and

- misrepresent how great various goods and evils are. These activities enable their practitioners to make men discontented, and to disturb their peace, whenever they feel like doing so.

Fifthly, creatures that lack reason don't have the notion of being *insulted or wronged* as distinct from being *physically damaged*; so as long as they are at ease *·physically·* they are not offended with their fellows; whereas man is most troublesome when he is most at ease, for that is when he loves to show his wisdom and to control the actions of those who govern the commonwealth.

Lastly, the agreement of these creatures is *natural*, whereas men's agreement is by covenant only, which is *artificial*; so it is no wonder if something besides the covenant is needed to make their agreement constant and lasting, namely a common power to keep them in awe and direct their actions to the common benefit.

The *•only* way to establish a common power that can defend them from the invasion of foreigners and the injuries of one another, and thereby make them secure enough to be able to nourish themselves and live contentedly through their own labours and the fruits of the earth, is *•to confer all their power and strength on one man, or one assembly of men, so as to turn all their wills by a majority vote into a single will. That is to say: •to appoint one man or assembly of men to bear their person; and everyone •to own and acknowledge himself to be the author of every act that he who bears their person performs or causes to be performed in matters concerning the common peace and safety, and all of them •to submit their wills to his will, and their judgments to his judgment. [Hobbes explains the key concepts of that sentence early in Chapter 16.] This is more than ·mere· agreement or harmony; it is a real unity of them all. They are unified in that they constitute one single person, created through a covenant of every man with every ·other· man, as though each man were to say to each of the others:*

I authorize and give up my right of governing myself to this man, or to this assembly of men, on condition that you surrender to him your right of governing yourself, and authorize all his actions in the same way.

[Rather than 'you' and 'your', Hobbes here uses 'thou' and 'thy' - the second-person *singular*, rare in *Leviathan* - emphasizing the one-on-one nature of the covenant.] When this is done, the multitude so united in one person is called a COMMONWEALTH, in Latin CIVITAS. This is the method of creation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that *mortal god* to which we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence. For by this authority that has been given to him by every individual man in the commonwealth, he has conferred on him the use of so much power and strength that people's fear of it enables him to harmonize and control the wills of them all, to the end of peace at home and mutual aid against their enemies abroad. He is the essence of the commonwealth, which can be defined thus:

A commonwealth is one person of whose acts a great multitude of people have made themselves the authors (*each* of them an author), doing this by mutual covenants with one another, so that he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think appropriate, for their peace and common defence.

He who carries this person is called SOVEREIGN, and said to have 'sovereign power', and all the others are his SUBJECTS.

Sovereign power can be attained in two ways. One is by natural force, as when a man *•makes his children submit themselves and their children to his government, by being able to destroy them if they refuse, or •subdues his enemies to his will by war, sparing their lives on condition that they submit their wills to his government. The other is when men agree amongst*

themselves to submit to some one man or assembly of men, doing this voluntarily in the confidence that he will protect them against all others. This latter, may be called a political commonwealth, or commonwealth by *institution*, and the former a commonwealth by *acquisition*. I shall speak first of a commonwealth by institution, turning to commonwealth by acquisition in chapter 20.

## Chapter 18. The rights of sovereigns by institution

A commonwealth is said to be 'instituted' when a multitude of men agree and covenant - each one with each other - that

When some man or assembly of men is chosen by majority vote to present the person of them all (that is, to be their representative), each of them will authorize all the actions and judgments of that man or assembly of men as though they were his own, doing this to the end of living peacefully among themselves and being protected against other men. This binds those who did not vote for this representative, as well as those who did. For unless the votes are all understood to be included in the majority of votes, they have come together in vain, and contrary to the end that each proposed for himself, namely the peace and protection of them all.

From the form of the institution are derived all the power and all the rights of the one having supreme power, as well as the duties of all the citizens. I shall discuss these rights, powers, and duties under *twelve* headings:

**First**, because the people make a covenant, it is to be understood they aren't obliged by any previous covenant to do anything conflicting with this new one. Consequently those who have already instituted a commonwealth, being thereby bound by a covenant to own the actions and judgments of one sovereign, cannot lawfully get together to make a new covenant to be obedient to someone else, in anything whatever, without their sovereign's permission. So those who are subjects to a monarch can't without his leave •throw off monarchy and return to the confusion of a disunited multitude, or •transfer their person from him who now bears it to some other man or other assembly of men; for •they are bound, each of them to each of the others, to own and be the proclaimed author of everything that their existing sovereign does and judges fit to be done; so that any one man dissenting, all the rest should break their covenant made to that man, which is injustice [those 21 words are Hobbes's]. And •they have also - every man of them - given the sovereignty to him who bears their person; so if they depose him they take from him something that is his, and that again is injustice. Furthermore, if he who attempts to depose his sovereign is killed or punished for this by the sovereign, he is an author of his own punishment, because the covenant makes him an author of everything his sovereign does; and since it is injustice for a man to do anything for which he may be punished by his own authority, his attempt to depose his sovereign is unjust for that reason also.

Some men have claimed to base their disobedience to their sovereign on a *new* covenant that they have made not with men but with God; and this also is unjust, for there is no covenant with God except through the mediation of somebody who represents God's person, and the only one who does that is God's lieutenant, who has the sovereignty under God. But this claim of a covenant with God is so obviously a lie, even in the claimant's own consciences, that it is the act of a disposition that is not only unjust but also vile and unmanly.

**Secondly**, what gives the sovereign a right to bear the person of all his subjects is •a covenant that they make with one another, and not •a covenant between him and any of them;

there can't be a breach of covenant on *his* part; and consequently none of his subjects can be freed from subjection by a claim that the sovereign has forfeited his right to govern by breaking his covenant with his subject(s). It is obvious that the sovereign makes no covenant with his subjects on the way to becoming sovereign, for suppose the contrary. Then he must either •make a covenant with the whole multitude as the other party, or •make a separate covenant with each man. But it can't be •with the whole as one party, because at this point they are not one person; and if he •makes as many separate covenants as there are men, those covenants become void after he becomes sovereign, because any act of the sovereign's that one of them can claim to be a breach of *his* covenant with the sovereign is an act both of himself and of all the others, because it was done by the sovereign, and thus was done in the person, and by the right, of every individual one of them.

Besides, if one or more of the subjects claims a breach of the covenant made by the sovereign in his becoming sovereign, and one or more other subjects contend that there was no such breach (or indeed if only the sovereign himself contends this), there is no judge to decide the controversy, so it returns to the sword again, and every man regains the right of protecting himself by his own strength, contrary to the design they had in the institution of the commonwealth. . . .

The opinion that any monarch receives his power by covenant - that is to say, on some *condition* - comes from a failure to grasp this easy truth:

Because covenants are merely words and breath, they have no force to oblige, contain, constrain, or protect any man, except whatever force comes from the public sword - that is, from the untied hands of that man or assembly of men that has the sovereignty, whose actions all the subjects take responsibility for, and are performed by the strength of them all, united in their sovereign.

When *an assembly* of men is made sovereign, nobody imagines this to have happened through any such covenant; for no man is so stupid as to say, for example, that the people of Rome made a covenant with the Romans to hold the sovereignty on such and such conditions, the non-performance of which would entitle the Romans to depose the Roman people! Why don't men see that the basic principles of a monarchy are the same as those of a popular government? They are led away from seeing this by the ambition of people who are kinder to the •government of an assembly than to •that of a monarchy, because they •can hope to participate in the former, but •despair of enjoying the latter.

**Thirdly**, because the majority have by consenting voices declared a sovereign, someone who dissented must now go along with the others, that is, be contented to accept all the actions the sovereign shall do; and if he doesn't he may justly be destroyed by the others. For if he voluntarily entered into the congregation of those who came together to consider instituting a sovereign, he thereby sufficiently declared his willingness to accept what the majority should decide on (and therefore tacitly covenanted to do so); so if he then refuses to accept it, or protests against any of their decrees, he is acting contrary to his tacit covenant, and therefore unjustly. Furthermore: whether or not he enters into the congregation, and whether or not his consent is asked, he must either •submit to the majority's decrees or •be left in the condition of war he was in before, in which he can without injustice be destroyed by any man at all.

**Fourthly**, because every subject is by this institution of the commonwealth the author of all the actions and judgments of the sovereign, it follows that nothing the sovereign does can *wrong* any of his subjects, nor ought any of them to accuse him of injustice. For someone who

acts by the authority of someone else can't in acting wrong the person by whose authority he acts; but according to this institution of a commonwealth, every individual man is an author of everything the sovereign does; so someone who complains of being wronged by *his sovereign* complains about something of which *he himself* is an author; so he oughtn't to accuse anyone but himself - and indeed he oughtn't even to accuse himself of wronging himself, because to wrong one's self is impossible. [Throughout this paragraph up to this point, 'wrong' replaces Hobbes's 'injury'.] It is true that those who have sovereign power may commit iniquity [= 'do wicked things'], but not injustice or injury in the proper meaning of that term.

**Fifthly**, following from the preceding point: no man who has sovereign power can justly be put to death or punished in any other way by his subjects. For seeing that every subject is an author of the actions of his sovereign, 'if he punishes the sovereign' he punishes someone else for actions committed by himself.

And because the goal of this institution is the peace and defence of them all, and whoever has a right to the goal has a right to the means to it, the man or assembly that has the sovereignty has the *right* to be judge both of the means to peace and defence, and also of the hindrances and disturbances of peace and defence; and to do whatever he thinks is needed, both beforehand •for preserving of peace and security by prevention of discord at home and hostility from abroad, and •for the recovery of peace and security after they have been lost. And therefore,

**Sixthly**, it is for the sovereignty [= 'the man or assembly of men to whom the sovereignty has been given'] to be the judge

- of what opinions and doctrines are threats to peace and what ones tend to support it;

and consequently

- of which men are to be trusted to speak to multitudes of people, on what occasions, and how far they should be allowed to go;

and

- of who shall examine the doctrines of all books before they are published.

For the actions of men come from their opinions, and the way to govern men's actions in the interests of peace and harmony is to govern their opinions. When we are considering doctrines, nothing ought to be taken account of but *truth*; but this doesn't conflict with regulating doctrines on grounds having to do with *peace*. For a doctrine that is harmful to peace can't be true, any more than peace and harmony can be against the law of nature. It is true that in a commonwealth where the negligence or incompetence of governors and teachers has allowed false doctrines to become generally believed, the contrary *truths* may be generally found to be offensive. But even the most sudden and rough bustling in of a new truth never *breaks the peace*, but only sometimes *awakens the war*. 'I said 'awakens' the war, not 'starts' it'. For men who are so slackly governed that they dare take up arms to defend or introduce an opinion are at war already; their state is not one of peace, but only a cessation of arms for fear of one another, and they live continually on the fringe of a battlefield, so to speak. So it is for him who has the sovereign power to be the judge - or to establish others as judges - of opinions and doctrines, this being necessary for peace and the avoidance of discord and civil war.

**Seventhly**, the sovereignty has the whole power of prescribing the rules that let every man know what goods he may enjoy, and what actions he may perform, without being troubled by any of his fellow-subjects; and this is what men call 'property' [Hobbes writes 'propriety']. Before the establishment of sovereign power (as I have already shown), all men had a right to all things, a state of affairs which necessarily causes war; and therefore this 'system of' *property*, being

necessary for peace and dependent on sovereign power, is one of the things done by sovereign power in the interests of public peace. These rules of property (or *meum* and *tuum* [Latin for ‘mine’ and ‘yours’]) and of good, bad, lawful, and unlawful in the actions of subjects, are the *civil laws*, that is to say, the laws of each individual commonwealth . . . .

**Eighthly**, the sovereignty alone has the right of *judging*, that is to say, of hearing and deciding any controversies that may arise concerning law (civil or natural) or concerning fact. For if controversies are not decided, •one subject has no protection against being wronged by another, •the laws concerning *meum* and *tuum* have no effect, and •every man retains - because of the natural and inevitable desire for his own preservation - the right to protect himself by his own private strength, which is the condition of war, and is contrary to the purpose for which every commonwealth is instituted.

**Ninthly**, the sovereignty alone has the right to make war and peace with other nations, and commonwealths, that is to say, the right •to judge when war is for the public good, •to decide what size of military forces are to be assembled for that purpose and armed and paid for, and •to tax the subjects to get money to defray the expenses of those forces. For the power by which the people are to be defended consists in their armies, and the strength of an army consists in the union of the soldiers’ strengths under one command; and it is the instituted sovereign who *has* that command. Indeed, having command of the military is enough to make someone sovereign, without his being instituted as such in any other way. So whoever is appointed as *general* of an army, it is always the sovereign power who is its *supreme commander*.

**Tenthly**, it is for the sovereignty to choose all counsellors, ministers, magistrates, and officers, in both peace and war. For seeing that the sovereign is charged with achieving the goal of the common peace and defence, he is understood to have the power to use whatever means he thinks most fit for this purpose.

**Eleventhly**, to the sovereign is committed the power of rewarding with riches or honour, and of punishing with corporal punishment or fines or public disgrace, every subject •according to the law the sovereign has already made; or if no relevant law has been made, •according to his (the sovereign’s) judgment about what will conduce most to encouraging men to serve the commonwealth, or to deterring them from doing disservice to it.

**Lastly**, because of how highly men are naturally apt to value themselves, what respect they want from others, and how little they value other men - all of which continually gives rise to resentful envy, quarrels, side-taking, and eventually war, in which they destroy one another and lessen their strength against a common enemy - it is necessary •to have *laws of honour*, and a public rate [= ‘price-list’] stating the values of men who have deserved well of the commonwealth or may yet do so, and •to put into *someone’s* hands the power to put those laws in execution. But I have already shown that not only the whole military power of the commonwealth, but also the judging of all controversies, is assigned to the sovereignty. So it is *the sovereign* whose role it is to give titles of honour, and to appoint what order of place and dignity each man shall hold, and what signs of respect they shall give to one another in public or private meetings.

These are the rights that make the essence of sovereignty, and are the marks by which one can tell what man or assembly of men has the sovereign power. For these rights and powers cannot be shared and cannot be separated from one another. The sovereign may transfer to someone else the power to coin money, to dispose of the estate and persons of infant heirs, to have certain advantages in markets, or any other prerogative that is governed by particular laws, while still retaining the power to protect his subjects. But •if he transfers the military it is no use

his retaining the power of judging, because he will have no way of enforcing the laws; or •if he gives away the power of raising money, the military is useless; •or if he gives away the control of doctrines, men will be frightened into rebellion by the fear of spirits. So if we consider any *one* of the rights I have discussed, we shall immediately see that •it is necessary, because• the holding of *all the others* •without that one• will have no effect on the conservation of peace and justice, the purpose for which all commonwealths are instituted. This division •of powers that ought not to be divided• was the topic when it was said that *a kingdom divided in itself cannot stand* (Mark 3:24); for a division into opposite armies can never happen unless this division •of powers• happens first. If a majority of people in England hadn't come to think that these powers were divided between the king, the Lords, and the House of Commons, the people would never have been divided and fallen into this civil war - first over disagreements in politics, and then over disagreements about freedom of religion - a war that has so instructed men in this matter of sovereign rights that most people in England do now see that these rights are inseparable. This will be generally acknowledged when peace next returns, and it will continue to be acknowledged for as long as people remember their miseries •in the war• (though it won't continue beyond that unless the common people come to be better taught than they have been until now!).

And because these rights are essential and inseparable, it necessarily follows that in whatever words any of them *seem* to be granted to someone other than the sovereign, *the grant is void* unless the sovereign power itself is explicitly renounced •at the same time•, and the title 'sovereign' is no longer given by the grantees to him who grants the rights in question; for when he has granted as much as he can, if we grant back •or he retains• the sovereignty •itself•, all the rights he has supposedly granted to someone else are restored to him, because they are inseparably attached to the sovereignty.

This great authority being indivisible, and inseparably assigned to the sovereignty, there is little basis for the opinion of those who say of sovereign kings that though they have •greater power than *every one of their subjects*, they have •less power than *all their subjects together*. For if by 'all together' they don't mean the collective body as one person, then 'all together' and 'every one' mean the same, and what these people say is absurd. But if by 'all together' they understand them as one person (which person the sovereign bears), then the power of 'all together' is the same as the sovereign's power, and so again what they say is absurd. They could see its absurdity well enough when the sovereign is an assembly of •all• the people, but they don't see it when the sovereign is a monarch; yet *the power of sovereignty* is the same, whoever has it.

Just as the •power of the sovereign ought to be greater than that of any or all the subjects, so should the sovereign's •honour. For the sovereignty is the fountain of honour. The dignities of lord, earl, duke, and prince are created by him. Just as servants in the presence of their master are equal, and without any honour at all, so are subjects in the presence of their sovereign. When they are out of his sight some may shine more than others, but in his presence they shine no more than do the stars in the presence of the sun.

But someone may object here that subjects are in a miserable situation because they are at the mercy of the lusts and other irregular passions of him who has (or of them who have) such unlimited power. Commonly those who live under a monarch think their troubles are the fault of monarchy, and those who live under the government of democracy or some other kind of sovereign assembly attribute all the inconvenience to *that* form of commonwealth (when really the sovereign power is the same in every form of commonwealth, as long as it is complete enough to protect the subjects). These complainers don't bear in mind •that the human condition can never

be without some inconvenience or other, or •that the greatest trouble that can possibly come to the populace in any form of government is almost nothing when compared with the miseries and horrible calamities that accompany a civil war, or with the dissolute condition of ungoverned men who are not subject to laws and to a coercive power to hold them back from robbery and revenge. Nor do they bear in mind •that the greatest burdens laid on subjects by sovereign governors does *not* come from •any pleasure or profit they can expect from damaging or weakening their subjects (in whose vigour consists *their own* strength and glory), but from •the stubbornness of the subjects themselves, who are unwilling to contribute to their own defence, and so make it necessary for their governors to get what they can from them ·in taxes· in time of peace, so that they may have the means to resist their enemies, or to get an advantage over them, if an occasion for this should suddenly present itself. For all men are provided by nature with notable •microscopes (that is their passions and self-love) through which every little payment appears as a great grievance, but don't have the •telescopes (namely moral and political science) that would enable them to see far off the miseries that hang over them, which can't be avoided without such payments.

## **Chapter 19. Kinds of commonwealth by institution, and succession to the sovereign power**

Differences amongst commonwealths come from differences in the sovereign, or the person who represents every one of the multitude. The sovereignty resides either in •one man, or in •an assembly of more than one; and ·when it is an assembly· either •every man has right to enter the assembly or •not everyone but only certain men distinguished from the rest. So, clearly, there can be only three kinds of commonwealth. For the representative must be one man or more than one; and if more than one, then it is either the assembly of all ·the multitude· or an assembling containing only some of them. When •the representative is one man, the commonwealth is a MONARCHY; when it •is an assembly of only some of the multitude then it is called an ARISTOCRACY; when •it is an assembly of all that are willing come together, it is a DEMOCRACY or popular commonwealth. There can't be any other kind of commonwealth, because the sovereign power (which I have shown to be indivisible) must be possessed •by one, •by more than one ·but less than all·, or •by all.

Books of history and political theory contain other names for governments, such as 'tyranny' and 'oligarchy'. But they are not the names of other forms of government; they are names of the same forms, given by people who dislike them. For those who are discontented under monarchy call it 'tyranny', and those who are displeased with aristocracy call it 'oligarchy'; so also those who find themselves aggrieved under a democracy call it 'anarchy', which means lack of any government, but I don't think anyone believes that lack of government is any new kind of government! Nor (to continue the line of thought) ought they to believe that the government is of one kind when they like it and of another when they dislike it or are oppressed by the governors.

Obviously, men who are in absolute liberty may if they please give authority to one man to represent them all, or give such authority to any assembly of men whatever; so they are free to subject themselves to a monarch as absolutely as to any other representative, if they think fit to do so. Therefore, where a sovereign power has already been established, there can be no other representative of the same people (except for certain particular purposes that are circumscribed by the sovereign). ·If there were two unrestricted representatives·, that would be to establish two



sovereigns, and every man would have his person represented by two actors; if these opposed one another, that would divide the power that has to be *indivisible* if men are to live in peace, and would thereby pull the multitude down into the condition of war, contrary to the purpose for which all sovereignty is instituted.

And therefore it would be absurd for a monarch, having invited the people of his dominion to send him their deputies with power to make known to him their advice or desires, to think that these deputies, rather than himself, were the absolute representative of the people. (The absurdity is even more obvious if this idea is applied not to a monarch but to a sovereign *assembly*.) I don't know how this obvious truth came to be so disregarded in England in recent years. In this country we had a monarchy in which he who had the sovereignty - in a line of descent 600 years long - was alone called 'sovereign', had the title 'Majesty' from every one of his subjects, and was unquestionably accepted by them as their king. Yet he was never considered as their *representative*, that name being given - with no sense that this was a contradiction - to the men who at his command were sent to him by the people to bring their petitions and give him (if he permitted it) their advice. This may serve as a warning for those who are the true and absolute representatives of a people, that if they want to fulfil the trust that has been committed to them they had better •instruct men in the nature of the office of sovereign; and •be careful how they permit any other general representation on any occasion whatsoever.

The differences among these three kinds of commonwealth don't consist in differences in the amount of power, but in differences in how serviceable they are, how apt to produce the peace and security of the people - the purpose for which they were instituted. I now want to compare monarchy with the other two, making six points about this comparison.

**First**, we may observe that anyone who bears the person of the people or belongs to the assembly that bears it, also bears his own *natural* person [= 'bears himself considered just as one human being']. And though he is careful in his *official* person to procure the common interest, he is at least as careful to procure the private good of himself, his family, relatives, and friends; and when the public interest happens to conflict with the private, he usually prefers the private, because men's passions are commonly more powerful than their reason. It follows from this that the public interest is most advanced when it coincides with the private interest of the sovereign. Now in monarchy the private interest is the same as the public. The riches, power, and honour of a monarch arise purely from the riches, strength and reputation of his subjects; for no king can be rich or glorious or secure if his subjects are poor or wretched, or so much weakened by poverty or dissension that they can't maintain a war against their enemies. In a democracy or an aristocracy, on the other hand, public prosperity often does less for the private fortune of someone who is corrupt or ambitious than does lying advice, treacherous action, or civil war.

**Secondly**, a monarch decides who will advise him, and when and where; so he can hear the opinions of men who are knowledgeable about the matter in question - men of any rank or status - and as long in advance of the action and with as much secrecy as he likes. But when a sovereign assembly needs advice, it can't have advisers from outside its own body; and of those who are in the assembly few are skilled in civic matters - the majority of them being orators, who give their opinions in speeches that are full either of pretence or of inept learning, and either disrupt the commonwealth or do it no good. For the flame of the passions *dazzles* the understanding, but never *enlightens* it. And there is no place or time at which an assembly can receive advice in secret; there are too many of them for that.

**Thirdly**, the resolutions of a monarch are not subject to any inconstancy except that of human nature; but in assemblies, besides the inconstancy of *nature* there is an inconstancy of *numbers*. Something that the assembly decided yesterday may be undone today because a few members who wanted it reversed showed up, while those who would have wanted yesterday's resolution to hold firm have stayed away because they were too confident, or negligent, or for personal reasons.

**Fourthly**, a monarch cannot disagree with himself out of envy or self-interest, but an assembly can, and the disagreement may be so strenuous as to lead to a civil war.

**Fifthly**, in monarchy there is this disadvantage: any subject may be deprived of all he possesses by the power of one man (·the sovereign·), so as to enrich a favourite or flatterer. [The Latin version adds: 'Nevertheless, we do not read that this has ever been done.'] I admit that this is a great and inevitable disadvantage. But the same thing can just as well happen where the sovereign power is in an assembly; for their power is the same, and they are as likely to be seduced into accepting bad advice from orators as a monarch is from flatterers; and they can become one another's flatterers, taking turns in serving one another's greed and ambition. Also, a monarch has only a few favourites, and the only others they may want to advance are their own relatives; whereas the favourites of an assembly are many, and the relatives of the members of an assembly are much more numerous than those of any monarch. Besides, any favourite of a monarch can help his friends as well as hurt his enemies; but orators - that is to say, favourites of sovereign assemblies - have great power to hurt but little to help. For, such is man's nature, accusing requires less eloquence than does excusing; also, condemning *looks* more like justice than pardoning does.

**Sixthly**, in a monarchy the sovereignty may descend to an infant, or to one who can't tell good from bad; which has the ·alleged· drawback that then •the use of the sovereign's power must be in the hands of another man, or of some assembly of men, who are to govern by his right and in his name, as guardians and protectors of his person and his authority. But to say there is a drawback in •putting the use of the sovereign power into the hands of a man or an assembly of men is to say that •all government is less satisfactory than confusion and civil war - ·which is absurd·. So the only danger that can be claimed to arise ·from a situation where the monarchy has been inherited by someone who is not yet fit to exercise its powers· has to do with the struggles among those who become competitors for an office bringing so much honour and profit.

This disadvantage does *not* come from the form of government we call 'monarchy'. To see this, consider •the case where the previous monarch has appointed those who are to have the care of his infant successor - doing this either by an explicit statement or ·implicitly· by not interfering with the customarily accepted procedure for such appointments. In that case, if the 'competition' disadvantage arises, it should be attributed not to the monarchy but to the ambition and injustice of the subjects; and *those* ·vices· are the same in all kinds of government where the people are not well instructed in their duty and in the rights of sovereignty. For •the case where the previous monarch has made no provision at all for such care ·of his infant successor·, the law of nature has provided this sufficient rule, that the infant sovereign shall be cared for by the man who has by nature •the most to gain from the preservation of the infant's authority and •the least to gain from the child's dying or losing authority. For since every man by nature seeks his own benefit and promotion, to put an infant under the control of people who can promote themselves through his destruction or damage is not guardianship but treachery. So once sufficient provision has been made against any *proper* dispute about the government under a child, if any contest does start up

and disturb the public peace, it should be attributed not to the form of monarchy but to the subjects' ambition and ignorance of their duty.

On the other side, every great commonwealth whose sovereignty is in a great assembly is, so far as concerns consultations about peace and war and the making of laws, in the same condition as if the power of government were theoretically in a child. For just as a child lacks the judgment to disagree with advice that is given him, and so has to accept the advice of them (or him) to whose care he is committed, so also an assembly lacks the freedom to disagree with the advice of the majority, whether it is good or bad. And just as a child needs a guardian or protector to preserve his person and his authority, so also in great commonwealths the sovereign assembly, in all times of great danger and trouble, need *custodes libertatis* [Latin, 'guardians of liberty']. That is, they need dictators or protectors of their authority, who amount to being temporary monarchs, to whom they can *for a time* commit the exercise of all their power; and it has more often happened that at the end of that time the assembly were permanently deprived of their power by the dictator than it has happened that infant kings were deprived of their power by their protectors, regents, or any other guardians.

I have shown that there are only three kinds of sovereignty:

- monarchy, where one man has the sovereignty,
- democracy, where the general assembly of all the subjects has it, and
- aristocracy, where it is in an assembly of certain persons picked out in some way from the rest.

Still, someone who surveys the particular commonwealths that did or do exist in the world will perhaps find it hard to get them into three groups, and this may incline him to think there are other forms, arising from mixtures of these three. For example, elective kingdoms, where kings have the sovereign power put into their hands *for a time*, or kingdoms in which the king has *limited* power, though most writers apply the label 'monarchy' to these governments. Likewise if a democratic (or aristocratic) commonwealth subdues an enemy's country and governs it through an appointed governor, executive officer, or other legal authority, this may perhaps seem at first sight to be a democratic (or aristocratic) government. But this is all wrong. For elective kings are not sovereigns but ministers of the sovereign; limited kings are not sovereigns but ministers of those who have the sovereign power; and provinces that are in subjection to a democracy (or aristocracy) of another commonwealth are themselves governed not democratically (or aristocratically) but monarchically. I shall discuss these three cases at more length, giving them a paragraph each.

First, concerning an elective king whose power is limited to his life as it is in many parts of Christendom at this day, or to certain years or months like the dictator's power among the Romans: if he has the right to appoint his successor, he is no longer an elective king but an hereditary one. But if he has no power to designate his successor, then either some other known man or assembly can designate a successor after his death or the commonwealth dies and dissolves with him and returns to the condition of war. If it is known what people have the power to award the sovereignty after his death, it is also known that *the sovereignty was in them while he was alive*; for nobody has the right to give something that he doesn't have the right to possess and to keep to himself if he sees fit. But if there is no-one who can give the sovereignty after the decease of him who was first elected, then that king has the power - indeed, he is *obliged by the law of nature* - to establish his own successor, so as to keep those who had trusted him

with the government from relapsing into the miserable condition of civil war. So he was, as soon as he was elected, an absolute sovereign.

Secondly, the king whose power is limited is not superior to whoever has the power to limit it, and he who is not *superior* to someone is not *supreme*, which is to say that he is not *sovereign*. So the sovereignty always was in the assembly that had the right to limit him, which implies that the government is not monarchy but either democracy or aristocracy; as in ancient Sparta, where the kings had the privilege of leading their armies but the sovereignty was possessed by the Ephori [= 'magistrates with authority over the king's conduct'].

Thirdly, although *the Roman people* governed the land of Judea (for example) through a governor, that didn't make Judea a democracy, because they weren't governed by any assembly into which each of them had a right to enter; nor was it an aristocracy, because they weren't governed by any assembly that a man could be *selected* to belong to. Rather, it was a monarchy. They were governed by *one person*: in relation to the people of Rome this 'one person' was an assembly of all the people, i.e. a democracy, but in relation to the people of Judea, who had no right at to participate in the government, it was a monarch. Where the people are governed by an assembly chosen by themselves out of their own number, the government is called a democracy or an aristocracy; but when they are governed by an assembly that is not of their own choosing it is a monarchy - not of one man over another man, but of one people over another people.

The *matter* of all these *forms* of government consists in monarchs and assemblies; these die, so the matter is mortal. It is therefore necessary for the preservation of peace of men that steps should be taken not only for the creation of an artificial man but also for that 'man' to have an artificial eternity of life. Without that, men who are governed by an assembly would return into the condition of war in every generation, and those who are governed by one man would return to it as soon as their governor dies. This artificial eternity is what men call 'the right of succession'.

In any perfect form of government it is the present sovereign who has the right to decide how the succession will go. For if the right were possessed by any other particular man or non-sovereign assembly, it would be in a *subject* person; so the sovereign could take it to himself at his pleasure, which means that the right belonged to him all along. And if this right belonged to no particular man, and was left to a new choice after the death of the present sovereign, then the commonwealth would be dissolved, and the right to decide the succession would belong to whoever could get it, which is contrary to the intention of those who instituted the commonwealth in the first place, which they did for their *perpetual* and not just their *temporary* security.

In a democracy, the whole assembly cannot die unless the multitude that are to be governed die. So in that form of government questions about the right of deciding the succession don't arise.

In an aristocracy, when any member of the assembly dies the choice of someone else to take his place is for the assembly to make, because it is the sovereign to whom belongs the right of choosing of *all* counsellors and officers. For what the representative does as actor is done by every one of the subjects as author. The sovereign assembly may give power to others to choose new members to make up their numbers, but it is still by *their* authority that the choice is made, and by their authority that the choice may be cancelled if the public good requires it.

The greatest difficulty about the right of succession occurs in monarchy. The difficulty arises from the fact that it is not immediately obvious who is to appoint the successor to a king

who has died, and when it is clear that it is for the king to do this, it is often not obvious whom he has appointed. For both these cases require thinking that is more precise than men in general are accustomed to. As to the question of who shall appoint the successor of a monarch, the central point is this: either he who now possesses the sovereign power has the right to decide the succession or else that right reverts to the dissolved multitude which is thereby threatened with sliding into war. (I am saying this about a monarch who *possesses* sovereign authority, so that the right of succession is the right of inheritance; not about for *elective* kings and princes, who don't *own* the sovereign power but merely *have the use of it*). For the death of him who possesses the sovereign power leaves the multitude without any sovereign at all, that is, without any representative in whom they can be united and be capable of acting; and so they are incapable of acting in any way at all, which implies that they are incapable of electing any new monarch. In this state of affairs, every man has an equal right to submit himself to whomever he thinks best able to protect him, or (if he can) to protect himself by his own sword; which is a return to confusion and to the condition of a war of every man against every man, contrary to the purpose for which monarchy was first instituted. Therefore it is obvious that the institution of monarchy always leaves the choice of the successor to the judgment and will of the present possessor of sovereignty.

Sometimes a question arises about whom it is that the monarch has designated to the succession and inheritance of his power; it is to be answered on the basis of his explicit words and testament, or by other sufficient wordless signs.

By explicit words or testament when it is declared by him in his lifetime, orally or in writing, as the first emperors of Rome declared who were to be their *heirs*. (That is an appropriate word, for 'heir' is not restricted to the children or nearest relatives of a man; it applies to anyone at all whom he says - somehow - he wants to succeed him in his estate.) So if a monarch explicitly declares that such-and-such a man is to be his heir, doing this either orally or in writing, then that man acquires the right of being monarch immediately after the decease of his predecessor.

But in the absence of testament and explicit words, other natural signs of the sovereign's wishes should be followed. One of these is *custom*. Where it is customary for the monarch to be succeeded by his next of kin, with no conditions on that, the next of kin *does* have the right to the succession, for if the previous monarch had wanted something different he could easily have declared this in his lifetime. Likewise, where the custom is that the succession goes to the male who is next of the kin, the right of succession in that case does go to the male next of kin, for the same reason. Similarly if the custom were to advance the female next of kin. For if a man could by a word modify an existing custom, yet doesn't do so, that is a natural sign that he wants the custom to stand unchanged.

What if neither custom nor the monarch's testament has been provided? Then it should be understood first that the monarch wanted the government to remain monarchical, because he approved that government in himself. Secondly that he wanted a child of his own - male or female - to be preferred before any other; because men are presumed to be naturally more inclined to advance their own children than those of other men (and of their own, a male rather than a female, because men, are naturally fitter than women for actions of labour and danger). Thirdly, if he has no descendants, that he wanted to be succeeded by a brother rather than a stranger - and, generalizing from that - to have a successor close to him in blood rather than one who is more remote; because it is always presumed that closeness of kinship goes with closeness of

affection, and it is evident that the greatness of a man's *nearest* kindred reflect the *most* honour on him.

But if it is lawful for a monarch to settle the succession on someone by words of contract or testament, men may perhaps object that there is a great disadvantage in this: for he may sell or give his right of governing to a foreigner; and this may lead to the oppression of his subjects, because people who are foreigners to one another (that is, men who don't customarily live under the same government or speak the same language) commonly undervalue one another. This is indeed a great disadvantage; but if there is oppression in such a case, it may come not from the mere fact that the government is foreign but rather from the unskilfulness of the governors, their ignorance of the true rules of politics. That is why the Romans, when they had subdued many nations and wanted to make their government of them digestible, usually removed that grievance (of oppression entirely by foreigners) as much as they thought it necessary to do so, by giving sometimes to whole nations and sometimes to principal men of conquered nations not only the privileges of Romans but also the title 'Roman', and admitted many of them to the senate and to official positions, even in the Roman city. That is what our most wise King James aimed at in trying to unite his two realms of England and Scotland. Had he succeeded in this, it would probably have prevented the civil wars that make both those kingdoms miserable now. So it is not an offence against the people for a monarch to make a foreigner his successor, though disadvantages sometimes come from that, through the fault either of the rulers or of their citizens. Here is a further argument for *lawfulness* of his so doing: whatever bad results can come from *giving a kingdom to* a foreigner could also come from a monarch's *marrying* a foreigner, as the right of succession might then be passed to the foreigner; yet everyone regards this as lawful.

## Chapter 20. Paternal dominion and despotic dominion

A *commonwealth by acquisition* is one where the sovereign power is acquired by force; and it is *acquired by force* when men (either singly or jointly by majority of voices) are led by their fear of death or imprisonment to authorize all the actions of the man or assembly that has their lives and liberty in his power.

This kind of dominion or sovereignty differs from sovereignty by institution only in this: men who choose their sovereign do it for fear of one another, not fear of the man whom they institute; but in this case of dominion by acquisition they are afraid of the very person whom they institute as sovereign. In both cases they act out of fear - a fact that should be noted by those who hold that any covenant is void if it comes from fear of death or violence. If they were right, no man in any kind of commonwealth could be obliged to obedience! It is true that when a commonwealth has been instituted or acquired, promises coming from fear of death or violence are not covenants, and don't oblige, if the thing promised is contrary to the laws; but that is not because the promise is made out of fear, but because he who promises has no right to do the thing he has promised to do. . . .

But the rights and consequences of sovereignty are the same in both instituted and acquired sovereignty:

The monarch's power cannot without his consent be transferred to someone else; he cannot forfeit it; he cannot be accused by any of his subjects of having wronged them; he cannot be punished by them; he is the judge of what is necessary for peace, and the judge of what doctrines maybe published; he is the sole legislator, supreme arbitrator of controversies, and supreme judge of the times and occasions for war and peace; it is for

him to choose magistrates, counsellors, commanders, and all other officers and ministers, and to determine all rewards and punishments, honours, and rankings.

The reasons for this ·in sovereignty by acquisition· are the ones I adduced in chapter 18 for the same rights and consequences of sovereignty by institution.

Dominion is acquired two ways, by *generation* and by *conquest*. [Hobbes has previously used ‘generation’ to mean ‘bringing into being’; and this text has replaced this by ‘creation’ - e.g. in ‘creation of a commonwealth’. In the present context ‘generation’ means, more narrowly, ‘animal reproduction’ - begetting and giving birth to.] The right of dominion by generation is what the parent has over his children, and is called PATERNAL. It doesn’t come from •the ·mere fact of· generation, as though the parent had dominion over his child simply because he begot him. Rather, it comes from •the child’s consent, either explicitly stated or indicated by other sufficient signs. As for ·the idea that· generation alone is enough for dominion: God has given to man a ·woman, as· helper, and there are always two who are equally parents; so the dominion over the child, ·if it came from generation alone·, would belong equally to both ·parents·, and the child would subject to both equally, which is impossible, for no man can obey two masters. And whereas some - ·such as Aristotle and Aquinas· - have ascribed the dominion to the man only, because the male sex is the more excellent one, they have miscalculated. For there is not always enough difference of strength or prudence between men and women for the right to be determined without war. In commonwealths this controversy is decided by the civil law; and usually though not always the judgment goes in favour of the father, because most commonwealths have been set up by the fathers of families, not the mothers. But the present question concerns the state of mere nature, where we can’t assume laws of matrimony or laws for the upbringing of children, but only the law of nature and the natural fondness of the sexes for one another and for their children. In this raw condition of nature, either the parents settle the dominion over the child jointly, by contract, or they don’t settle it at all. If they do, the right goes where the contract says it goes. We find in history that the Amazons contracted with the men of the neighbouring countries - to whom they went to have children - that the male children should be sent back ·to their fathers·, but the female ones would remain with themselves; so that ·in their case· the dominion of the females was in the mother.

If there is no contract, the mother has dominion. For in the condition of mere nature where there are no matrimonial laws it can’t be known who *is* the father, unless the mother tells; so the right of dominion over the child depends on her will - ·that is, on her choice not to say who the father is· - and consequently it is hers. Also, the infant is at first in the power of the mother, so that she can either nourish it or expose it [= leave it out in the open, to die unless rescued by strangers]. If she nourishes it, it owes its life to the mother and is therefore obliged to obey her rather than anyone else, and consequently the dominion over it is hers. But if she exposes the child and someone else finds and nourishes it, the dominion is in that person. For the child *ought* to obey the man who has preserved it, because preservation of life is the purpose for which one human becomes subject to another, so that every man is supposed to promise obedience to him who has it in his power to save him or destroy him.

If the mother is a *subject* of the father, the child is in the father’s power; and if the father is a subject of the mother (as when a sovereign queen marries one of her subjects), the child is subject to the mother, because the father also is her subject. [Curley points out that Hobbes lived under three Stuart kings descended from the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to one of her subjects.]

If a man and a woman who are monarchs of two different kingdoms have a child, and make a contract concerning who shall have dominion of him, the right of dominion goes where the

contract ordains. If they don't make a contract, the dominion follows the dominion of the place of the child's residence. For the sovereign of each country has dominion over all that live in it.

He who has dominion over a child has dominion also over the child's children and over their children's children. For he that has dominion over the person of a man has dominion over all that is his; without that, dominion would be just a title with no effect.

The right of succession to paternal dominion, proceeds in the same way as the right of succession to monarchy, about which I have already said enough in chapter 19.

Dominion acquired by conquest, or victory in war, is what some writers call DESPOTIC - from *despotes* [Greek], meaning 'lord' or 'master' - and is the dominion of a master over his servant. This dominion is acquired by the victor when the vanquished, seeking to avoid being killed on the spot, covenants either in explicit words or by other sufficient signs of his will that as long as •his life and •the liberty of his body are allowed to him, the victor will have the use of •them at his pleasure. *After* such a covenant is made, the vanquished person is a SERVANT - not *before*. The word 'servant'. . . does not mean 'captive', a status that has nothing covenantal about it. A *captive* is someone who is kept in prison or in fetters until the owner of the man who captured him, or who bought him from someone who captured him, has decided what to do with him. Such men (commonly called 'slaves') have no obligation at all, but may justly break their bonds or smash the prison, and kill their master or carry him away as a captive. A servant's situation is nothing like this. A servant is someone who, having been captured, has bodily liberty allowed to him and is trusted by his master on the strength of his promise not to run away or do violence to his master.

So it is not the victory that gives the victor a right of dominion over the vanquished, but the covenant between them. What puts the vanquished man under an obligation is not •his being conquered - that is, defeated and either captured or put to flight - but •his coming in and submitting to the victor and making with him the covenant I have described. And the mere fact that the vanquished man surrenders (without being promised his life) does not oblige the victor to spare him: when the vanquished man yields himself to the victor's *discretion*, that obliges the victor for only as long as he in his own *discretion* thinks fit. [In this context, 'discretion' = 'freedom to act or decide as one thinks fit'.]

What men do in asking for *quarter* (as it is now called; the Greeks called it *zogria* [= 'taking alive']) is to evade the present fury of the victor by submission, and to offer ransom or service in exchange for their life. So someone who receives quarter hasn't been given his life; the status of his life is merely deferred until further deliberation by the victor; for in asking for quarter he wasn't •yielding on condition of being allowed his life, but merely •yielding to the victor's discretion. When the victor has entrusted him with his bodily liberty, *then* his life is something he keeps on certain conditions and his service is something he owes; then, but not before. For slaves who work in prisons or in chains don't *owe* their service; they serve not out of duty but to avoid the cruelty of their task-masters.

The master of the servant is master also of everything the servant has, and may demand the use of it - that is, the use of the servant's goods, of his labour, of *his* servants, and of his children - as often as he thinks fit. For what enables the servant to stay alive rather than being killed by his master is the covenant of obedience through which he owns and authorizes everything the master does. [Hobbes expresses this by saying of the servant that 'he holdeth his life of his master, by the covenant of obedience . . .'] And if he refuses to serve, and his master kills or imprisons or otherwise punishes



him for his disobedience, the servant is himself the author of this action, and cannot accuse his master of wronging him.

Summing up: the rights and consequences of both paternal and despotic dominion are the very same as those of a sovereign by institution, and for the same reasons - which I have set out in chapter 18. Suppose then that a man is monarch of two nations, having sovereignty •in one by institution of the assembled people, and •in the other by conquest - that is, by the submission of each individual person, to avoid death or imprisonment. To demand more from the conquered nation than from the one with a commonwealth by institution, simply because the former was conquered, is an act of ignorance of the rights of sovereignty. For the sovereign is absolute over both nations alike; or else there is no sovereignty at all and every man may lawfully protect himself, if he can, with his own sword - which is the condition of war.

From this it appears that a great family, if it isn't part of some commonwealth, is in itself a little monarchy in which there are rights of sovereignty, the sovereign being the master or father. This holds, whether the family consist of a man and his children, of a man and his servants, or of a man and his children and servants together. [In Hobbes's time, 'family' could mean something broader, like 'household'.] But a family is not properly a commonwealth unless it has enough power - through its numbers or situation - to avoid being subdued without the risk of starting a war. For when a number of men are plainly too weak to mount a united defence by themselves, each of them may, in time of danger, use his own reason to save his life either by flight or by submission to the enemy, as he shall think best; just as a squad of soldiers, when a whole army takes them by surprise, may throw down their arms and ask for quarter or run away rather than being put to the sword.

That brings me to the end of what I have to say about sovereign rights, on the basis of theorizing and deduction concerning the nature, needs, and designs of men when they establish commonwealths and put themselves under monarchs or assemblies which they entrust with enough power for their protection.

Let us now consider what the scripture teaches in the same point. [What follows is about two pages of argument aiming to show that Hobbes's view of sovereignty is supported by the Bible. The present text omits that material.]

So that it appears plainly to my understanding, both from reason and scripture, that the sovereign power is as great as men can possibly be imagined to make it - whether it is placed in one man (as in monarchy) or in one assembly of men (as in democratic and aristocratic commonwealths). And though men may fancy many evil consequences from such unlimited power, the consequences of *not* having it - namely, perpetual war of every man against his neighbour - are much worse. The condition of men in this life will never be without disadvantages, but the only great disadvantages that occur in any commonwealth come from the subject's disobedience and breaking of the covenants from which the commonwealth gets its existence. Anyway, someone who thinks that sovereign power is too great and seeks to lessen it will have to subject himself to a power that can limit it - that is, to a still greater power!

The greatest objection is an argument from practice [= 'people's actual behaviour']. It is asked: where and when have subjects actually acknowledged such power? But I ask in turn: where and when has there been a commonwealth where the power was not absolute and yet there was no sedition and civil war? In nations whose commonwealths have been long-lived, and not destroyed except by foreign war, the subjects never did dispute over the sovereign power. But anyway an argument from the practice of men who •haven't sifted to the bottom and with exact reason

weighed the causes and nature of commonwealths, and who •suffer daily the miseries that come from ignorance of these matters, is invalid. Even if throughout the world men laid the foundations of their houses on sand, it wouldn't follow that that's what they ought to do. The making and maintaining of commonwealths is not a mere matter of practice [= 'practical know-how'], like tennis; it is a science, with definite and infallible rules, like arithmetic and geometry; poor men don't have the leisure to discover these rules, and men who *have* had the leisure have up until now not had the curiosity to search for them or the method to discover them.

## Chapter 21. The liberty of subjects

The equivalent terms LIBERTY and FREEDOM, properly understood, signify *the absence of opposition*, that is, absence of external impediments to motion. These terms may be applied to unthinking and inanimate creatures just as much as to thinking ones. For when something - anything - is tied down or hemmed in so that it can move only within a certain space, this space being determined by the opposition of some external body, we say it doesn't have 'liberty' to go further. So when •any living creature is imprisoned or restrained by walls or chains, or when •water that would otherwise spread itself into a larger space is held back by banks or containers, we are accustomed to say that it is 'not at liberty' to move in the way that it would without those external impediments. But when the impediment to motion lies in the constitution of the thing itself - as when a stone lies still, or a man is held to his bed by sickness - what we say it lacks is not the 'liberty' to move but rather the 'power' to move.

And according to this proper and generally accepted meaning of the word 'free', a FREEMAN is someone who is not hindered from doing anything he wants to do that he has the strength and wit for. But when the words 'free' and 'liberty' are applied to anything other than bodies they are misused; for if something is not the sort of thing that can *move*, it is not the sort of thing that can be *impeded*. I shall give four examples of such misuses. •When it is said that 'the path is free', liberty is attributed not to the path but to those who walk along it. •When we say 'the gift is free', we don't mean to attribute liberty to *the gift*; we are attributing it to *the giver*, who was not bound by any law or covenant to give it. •When we say that people 'speak freely', we are attributing liberty not to the voice or pronunciation but to the man, who was not obliged by any law to speak otherwise than he did. •The use of the phrase 'free will' attributes liberty not to a man's will, desire, or inclination, but to the man himself, whose liberty consists in his meeting no obstacle to his doing what he has the will, desire, or inclination to do.

•Liberty is consistent with •fear: when a man throws his goods into the sea for fear the ship should sink, he does it very willingly, and can refuse to do it if he so desires; so it is the action of someone who is free. Sometimes a man pays a debt only out of fear of imprisonment; but because nobody *prevented* him from keeping the money, paying it was the action of a man at liberty. Quite generally, all the things that men do in commonwealths out of fear of the law are actions which the doers were free to omit and so they were actions freely performed.

•Liberty is consistent with •necessity: water has not only the liberty but the necessity of flowing down the channel. The same holds for the actions that men voluntarily do: because they come from their will, they come from liberty, and yet they also come from necessity, because every act of man's will and every desire and inclination comes from some cause, which comes from another cause, and so on backwards in a continual chain whose first link is in the hand of God, the first of all causes.

So that to someone who could see the connection of ·all· those causes, the necessity of all men's voluntary actions would seem obvious. And therefore God, who sees and arranges everything, sees that a man's liberty in doing what *he* wills is accompanied by the necessity of doing ·exactly· what *God* wills - no more and no less. For though men may do many things contrary to the divine laws, i.e. many things of which God is not the author, nevertheless they have no passion, will, or appetite whose first and full cause is not from God's will. If God's will did not assure the necessity of man's will and (therefore) of everything that depends on man's will, the liberty of men would conflict with and impede the omnipotence and liberty of God.

And that is enough for present purposes about natural liberty, which is the only liberty properly so-called.

But just as men have pursued peace and their own survival by making an •artificial man, which we call a commonwealth, so also they have made •artificial chains, called civil laws, which they have by mutual covenants fastened at one end to the lips of the man or assembly to whom they have given the sovereign power, and at the other end to their own ears. These bonds are in themselves weak, but they can be made to hold not by the *difficulty* but by the *danger* of breaking them.

The liberty of subjects - my next topic - is to be understood purely in relation to these bonds. In no commonwealth in the world are there stated rules that regulate *all* the actions and words of men; it is indeed impossible for there to be such rules. From this it follows necessarily that in all kinds of actions on which the laws are silent men have the liberty of doing what their own reasons suggest as most profitable to themselves. For •if we take 'liberty' in its proper sense of 'bodily liberty' - that is to say, freedom from chains and prison - it would be very absurd for men to clamour, as they do, for the liberty that they so obviously enjoy. And •if we take 'liberty' to be exemption from ·all· laws, it is no less absurd for a man to demand liberty, as some do, when *that* liberty would ·involve the absence of all laws, and would thus· enable all other men to be masters of his life. Yet this absurdity is what some people demand, not realizing that the laws have no power to protect them unless a sword in the hands of some man or ·assembly of· men causes the laws to be obeyed. So the liberty of a subject lies only in the things that the sovereign passes over in regulating their conduct: such as the liberty •to buy and sell and otherwise contract with one another, •to choose their own home and diet and trade, •to educate their children as they think fit, and the like.

Nevertheless we are not to infer that the subjects' having such liberty abolishes or limits the sovereign power over life and death. For I have already shown ·in chapter 18· that he who has the supreme power, i.e. the commonwealth, cannot wrong his citizens, even though he can by his wickedness do wrong to God.

So it can and often *does* happen in commonwealths that a subject is put to death by the command of the sovereign power, without either of them having wronged the other, as when Jephtha caused his daughter to be sacrificed. [As a way of thanking God for his victory over the Ammonites, Jephtha vowed that 'whoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to greet me . . . I will offer up for a burnt offering. . . And behold his daughter came out to greet him . . . Her father did with her according to his vow.' *Judges* 11: 31, 34, 39.] In cases like this, the person who dies was free to perform the action for which he ·or she· is nevertheless put to death - without being wronged. And the same holds true when a sovereign prince puts to death an innocent subject as David did to Uriah. For although the action is against the law of nature, as being contrary to equity, it was not a wronging of Uriah but of God. Not •of Uriah, because Uriah himself had ·in covenanting to be a subject· given David the

right to do what he pleased; but •of God, because David was God’s subject, and was prohibited from all wickedness by the law of nature. David himself evidently confirmed this distinction, when he repented of his action and said to God ‘To thee only have I sinned’ [2 *Samuel* 11, *Psalms* 4:51].

Similarly, when the Athenian people sent a citizen into exile by ostracism, it did not accuse him of a crime, but exiled whomever a majority of citizens wished to exile - not because he had violated the laws but because he seemed so powerful that he *could* violate them and get away with it. Therefore, they banished from the commonwealth Aristedes, to whom they had previously given the name ‘the Just’. They likewise banished Hyperbolus, a scurrilous jester whom nobody feared, because they wanted to; perhaps they did it as a joke, but this wasn’t unjust, because they banished him by the right of the commonwealth.

The liberty that is so frequently mentioned and honoured in the histories and philosophy of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and in the writings and discourse of those who have taken from that source all they know about politics, is the liberty not of particular men but of the commonwealth. If each individual man had *that* liberty, there would be no civil laws and no commonwealth at all; and the effects would be the same ‘for individuals as it is for ‘states’. Among •masterless men there is perpetual war of every man against his neighbour -

no inheritance to transmit to the son or to expect from the father,  
no ownership of goods or lands,  
no security

- just a full and absolute liberty for every individual man. Similarly with •states and commonwealths that don’t depend on one another: every commonwealth (not every man) has an absolute liberty to do what it judges to be most conducive to its benefit (that is, what is so judged by the man or assembly that represents it). But along with their freedom they live in a condition of perpetual war, and at the edges of battlegrounds, with their frontiers armed and cannons planted against their surrounding neighbours. The Athenians and Romans were free, that is, they were *free commonwealths*. It wasn’t that individual men had the liberty to resist their own representative, but that their representative had the liberty to resist or invade other people. The word LIBERTAS is written in large letters on the turrets of the city of Lucca at this day, but this doesn’t imply that individual men there have more liberty, or more immunity from service to the commonwealth, than men do in Constantinople. Whether a commonwealth is monarchic or democratic, the freedom is still the same.

But it is easy for men to be deceived by the glittering word ‘liberty’ and (lacking skill in making distinctions) to think they have as a private inheritance and birthright something that is really the right only of the public, ‘the commonwealth’. And when the same mistake is supported by the authority of men who are renowned for their writings on this subject, it is no wonder that it leads to sedition and change of government. In these western parts of the world we are made to receive our opinions about the institution and rights of commonwealths from Aristotle, Cicero, and other Greeks and Romans. These writers didn’t derive the rights of commonwealths from the principles of nature; instead, they wrote them into their books out of the practice of their own commonwealths, which were democratic, as grammarians describe the rules of language out of the practice of the time, or the rules of poetry out of the poems of Homer and Virgil. The Athenians were taught (to keep them from wanting to change their government) that they were freemen, and that all who lived under a monarchy were slaves; so that’s what Aristotle says in his *Politics* (6:2): ‘In a democracy, liberty is to be supposed; for it is commonly held that no man is free in any other ‘form of government.’ Similarly, Cicero, and other writers have based their

theory of civil government on the opinions of the Romans, who were taught to hate monarchy - first by •those who, having deposed their sovereign, shared amongst them the sovereignty of Rome, and afterwards by •their successors. And from reading these Greek and Latin authors, men from their childhood have acquired a habit (under the false slogan of ‘liberty’) of

favouring uproars,

lawlessly controlling the actions of their sovereigns, and then

controlling those controllers;

with so much blood being spilt that I think I can truly say that the price these western lands have paid for learning the Greek and Latin tongues is the highest that anyone has ever paid for anything.

We come now to details concerning the true liberty of a subject, that is to say, what the things are that a subject may without injustice refuse to do when commanded to do them by the sovereign. To grasp the answer to this, we must consider •what rights we relinquish when we make a commonwealth, or (the same thing) •what liberty we deny ourselves by owning all the actions - all without exception - of the man or assembly we make our sovereign. For our •*obligation* ‘to obey’ and our •*liberty* ‘not to obey’ both reside in our act of *submission*; so the extent of •each must be inferred from the act of submission, because no man has any obligation that doesn’t arise from some act of his own, for all men are by nature free. Such inferences must rely either on •the explicit words ‘I authorize all his actions’ or on •his intention in submitting himself to the sovereign’s power (which intention is to be understood from the purpose for which he submits). So the obligation and the liberty of the subject are to be derived either from •those words or others equivalent to them, or else from •the purpose of the institution of sovereignty, which is the peace of the subjects among themselves and their defence against a common enemy.

First therefore, seeing that sovereignty by institution is by covenant of everyone to everyone, and that sovereignty by acquisition is by covenants of the vanquished to the victor or of the child to the parent, it is obvious that every subject has liberty in respect of anything the right to which *cannot* be transferred by covenant. I showed in chapter 14 that covenants not to defend one’s own body are void. Therefore,

If the sovereign commands a man to kill, wound, or maim himself, or not to resist those who assault him, or to abstain from the use of food, air, medicine, or anything else that he needs in order to live, that man has the liberty to disobey, even if he has been justly condemned ‘to death’.

If a man is interrogated by the sovereign, or by someone acting on his behalf, concerning a crime the man has committed, he is not bound (unless promised a pardon) to confess it, because as I showed in chapter 14 no man can be obliged by covenant to accuse himself.

Again, the subject’s consent to sovereign power is contained in the words ‘I authorize or take upon me all his actions’, and these contain no restriction at all of his own former natural liberty. For by allowing him to kill me I am not bound to kill myself when he orders me to do so. It is one thing to say ‘Kill me, or my fellow, if you please’ and another thing to say ‘I will kill myself, or my fellow’. So it follows that

No man is bound •by the words themselves to kill either himself or any other man; so the obligation that a man may sometimes have to do something dangerous or dishonourable when ordered to by the sovereign, depends not on •the words of our submission but on •the intention ‘with which we submit’, and that is to be inferred from the purpose of the submission. Therefore:

when our refusal to obey frustrates the purpose for which the sovereignty was ordained, then there is no liberty to refuse; otherwise there is.

Upon this ground, a man who is commanded as a soldier to fight against the enemy - even if his sovereign has the right to punish his refusal with death - may in many cases refuse without injustice. An example is when he substitutes a sufficient soldier in his place; for in this case he doesn't desert the service of the commonwealth. And allowance should be made for natural timidity not only of women (from whom no such dangerous duty is expected) but also of men of feminine courage. When armies fight, there is a running away on one side or on both; but when they run not out of treachery but out of fear, they are thought to act dishonourably but not unjustly. By the same reasoning, avoiding battle is cowardice but not injustice. But someone who enrolls himself as a soldier, or accepts an advance on his pay, can no longer plead the excuse of a timorous nature; he is obliged not only to go into battle but also not to run from it without his captain's permission. And when the defence of the commonwealth requires the simultaneous help of all citizens, each person who can either bear arms or contribute something, however little, to victory, is obliged to undertake military service; because otherwise it was pointless for them to institute commonwealth - one that they haven't the purpose or courage to preserve.

No man has liberty to resist the sword of the commonwealth in defence of another man, whether he is guilty or innocent, because such a liberty would detract from the sovereign's means for protecting us, and would therefore be destructive of the very essence of government. But if a great many men have all together already unjustly resisted the sovereign power or committed some capital crime for which each expects death, do they have the liberty to join together and assist and defend one another? Certainly they have; for they are only defending their lives, which the guilty man is as entitled to do as the innocent. There was indeed injustice in their first breach of duty; but their bearing of arms subsequent to it, although it is to maintain what they have unjustly done, is not a *further* unjust act. And if it is only to defend their own persons it is not unjust at all. But an offer of pardon takes the plea of self-defence away from those to whom it is made, and renders unlawful their perseverance in helping or defending one another.

All other liberties depend on the silence of the law. For actions regarding which the sovereign has prescribed no rule, the subject has the liberty to do or not-do as he pleases, This kind of liberty, therefore, is greater at some places or times than at others, depending on what the sovereign at each time and place thinks most appropriate. For example, there was a time when in England a man might *by force* go onto his own land and dispossess anyone who had wrongfully taken it over; but in later years that liberty of forcible entry was taken away by a law made (by the king) in parliament. Another example: in some places in the world men are free to have many wives; in other places they have no such liberty.

If a subject has a controversy with his sovereign concerning

debt, or

right of possession of lands or goods, or

any service required from the subject, or

any penalty, whether corporal or monetary,

*on the basis of an already existing law*, he has the same liberty to sue the sovereign for his right that he would to sue another subject, doing this before judges who are appointed by the sovereign. For the sovereign bases his demands on the force of an existing law and not on his power as sovereign, and so he implicitly declares that he is demanding only what that law says to be required from the subject. So the suit is not contrary to the will of the sovereign, and

consequently the subject is free to demand that his case be heard and judgment given according to that law. But if the sovereign demands or takes anything •on the basis of his claim to power, there is no basis for legal action; for in such a case what the sovereign does by virtue of his power is done by the authority of every subject; so someone who brought a legal action against the sovereign would be bringing it against himself.

If a monarch or sovereign assembly grants a liberty to some or all of his subjects, where the result of this would be that he is no longer able to provide for their safety, the grant is *void* unless he explicitly renounces the sovereignty or transfers it to someone else. •An *explicit* renunciation or transfer is required, because• if he wanted to renounce or transfer he could easily have done so in plain language; so if he did not, it is to be understood that that is not what he wanted, and that the grant •of liberty• came from •his• ignorance of how that liberty would conflict with the sovereign power. In such a case, therefore, •the grant of liberty is void, and• the sovereignty is still retained, and consequently so are all the powers that are necessary for the exercise of sovereignty - the power of war and peace, of judicature, of appointing officers and councillors, of raising money, and all the rest listed in chapter 18.

The obligation of subjects to the sovereign is understood to last as long as he has the power to protect them, and no longer. For the right that men have by nature to protect themselves when no-one else can protect them can't be relinquished by any covenant. The sovereignty is the soul of the commonwealth, and once it has departed from the body the limbs no longer get their motion from it. The purpose of *obedience* is *protection*; and wherever a man sees •the prospect of• protection, whether in his own sword or someone else's, nature directs his obedience to it and his endeavour to maintain it. In the intention of those who make it, sovereignty is immortal; but in its own nature it is not only •subject to violent death by foreign war, but also •contains within it from the moment of its birth many seeds of a natural mortality, through internal discord arising from the ignorance and passions of men.

If a subject is taken prisoner in war, or his person or his means of life come under the control of the enemy, and if he has his life and bodily liberty given to him on condition that he becomes a subject of the victor, he has liberty to accept this condition; and then he is the subject of the victor, because he had no other way to preserve himself. . . . But if a man is held in prison or chains, or is •somehow• not trusted with the liberty of his body, he can't be understood to be bound by covenant to submit; and so he may escape by any means whatsoever, if he can.

If a monarch relinquishes the sovereignty, both for himself and for his heirs, his subjects return to the unconditional liberty of nature. That is because, although *nature* declares who are his sons and who are his next of kin, it is (as I said in chapter 19) for *him* to decide who shall be his heir. So if he decides not to have an heir, there is no sovereignty and no subjection. The case is the same if he dies without known relatives and without declaring who is to be his heir. For in that case no heir can be known, and so no subjection is due.

If the sovereign banishes a subject, he is *not* a subject during the banishment. Someone who is sent on a message or given leave to travel *is* still a subject, but what makes him so is a contract between sovereigns, not his covenant of subjection. For whoever enters into someone else's dominion is subject to all its laws, unless he has a privilege •of exemption from them• through friendly agreements between the sovereigns, or by special licence.

If a monarch who is subdued by war makes himself subject to the victor, *his* subjects are released from their former obligation •to him• and become obliged •instead• to the victor. But if he is held prisoner, or •in some other way• doesn't have the liberty of his own body, he is not

understood to have given away the right of sovereignty, and therefore his subjects are obliged to obey the magistrates whom he previously appointed, governing not in *their* name but in *his*. For since his right remains, the question is only about his administration, that is to say, about which magistrates and officers are to act for him in his absence; and if he doesn't have a way of naming them he is assumed to approve the ones he himself had previously appointed.

## Chapter 22. Systems - subject, political, and private

Having spoken of the creation, form, and power of a commonwealth, I now reach the topic of a commonwealth's parts. I start with systems, which resemble the homogeneous parts of a natural body, its muscles. By 'SYSTEM' I mean any number of men joined in one interest or one business. Some systems are regular, some irregular. The *regular* ones are those where one man or assembly of men is constituted as representative of the whole number. All the others are *irregular*.

Some regular systems are *absolute and independent*, subject to nobody but their own representative; they are all *commonwealths*, which I have already dealt with in chapters 17-21. All the other regular systems are *dependent* or subordinate, that is to say, subordinate to some sovereign power to which every one is subject as is also their representative.

Of systems that are subordinate or dependent some are *political* and some *private*.  
 •Political systems - otherwise called 'bodies politic' and 'persons in law' - are ones that are made by authority from the sovereign power of the commonwealth. •Private systems are ones that are constituted by subjects amongst themselves (or by authority from a foreigner; for an authority derived from power within one commonwealth is, within the dominion of another commonwealth, not public but private).

Some private systems are lawful, some unlawful. Lawful systems are those that are allowed by the commonwealth; all other are unlawful. Irregular systems - those that consist only in the concourse of people, with no representative - are lawful if they are not forbidden by the commonwealth or made with an evil purpose. (Examples would be the gathering of people at markets or shows, or for any other harmless purpose.) But when the intention is •evil, or (if the number of people is large) •unknown, they are unlawful. [The word 'concourse' occurs several times in this chapter. A 'concourse of people' can be just a crowd, a coming together of many people; but Hobbes here uses it to mean 'many people acting in the same way or towards the same end'.]

In bodies politic the power of the representative is always limited, and what prescribes its limits is the sovereign power. For unlimited power is absolute sovereignty. And in every commonwealth the sovereign is the absolute representative of all the subjects, so no-one else can represent any part of them except within whatever limits the sovereign sets. 'He had better set *some* limits!' To permit a body politic of subjects to have an absolute - i.e. unlimited - representative would be, to all intents and purposes, to abandon the government of that part of the commonwealth and to divide the dominion; and this would be contrary to their peace and defence. The sovereign can't be understood to do that by any grant he makes that doesn't plainly and explicitly free them from their subjection. 'It must be done *explicitly* to be effective'; for *consequences* of his words are not signs of his will when other consequences are signs of the contrary. Rather they are signs of error and miscalculation, to which all mankind is too prone.

*How* the power that is given to the representative of a body politic is limited can be learned from two things. One is their writ or letters from the sovereign; the other is the law of the commonwealth.



When a •commonwealth is first established, nothing needs to be written down, because in that case the power of the representative has no bounds except what are laid down by the unwritten law of nature. But in •subordinate bodies so many different limitations are needed - concerning their businesses, times, and places - that they can't be remembered unless they are written down, and can't be observed unless their written versions are *letters patent* [= 'an open document issued by a monarch or government to authorize an action or confer a right'] that can be read to the people, and that are attested to by carrying the seal of the sovereign or some other permanent sign of his authority.

Such limitations are not always easy to describe in writing, perhaps sometimes not even possible, so the ordinary laws of the commonwealth as a whole must settle what the representative may lawfully do in all cases where the official letters are silent. And therefore

In a body politic whose representative is one man, if he does something in his official capacity that isn't warranted in his letters 'patent' or by the laws, it is his own act and not the act of the body or of any member of it except himself; because outside the limits set by his letters or the laws he represents no man's person except his own. But what he does in accordance with his letters patent and the laws is the act of everyone; for everyone is an author of the sovereign's act, because he is unrestrictedly their representative, and the act of someone who conforms to the letters of the sovereign is itself an act of the sovereign, and therefore every member of the body is an author of it.

But if the representative is an assembly, anything that the assembly does that isn't warranted by their letters patent or by the laws is an act of the assembly, or of the body politic 'which it represents'; and it is the act of everyone by whose vote the decree was made, but not the act of any man who voted against it or of any man who was absent (unless he voted for it by proxy). It is an act of the assembly because it was voted for by a majority, and if it is a crime the assembly may be punished so far as it *can* be punished: •by dissolution, or forfeiture of their letters (which is for such artificial and fictitious bodies is tantamount to capital punishment), or •by a monetary fine (if the assembly has property in which none of the innocent members has shares). For nature has exempted all bodies politic from bodily penalties ('you can't flog or imprison a body politic'). But those who didn't give their vote are innocent because the assembly cannot represent any man in things unwarranted by their letters, and consequently 'the innocent minority' are not involved in their [the majority's] votes.

[There follows a page discussing rights and entitlements when a one-man representative of a body politic borrows money, or is fined. That material is omitted from the present text.]

The variety of bodies politic is almost infinite; for they are distinguished not only by •the different concerns for which they are constituted (an indescribable variety of them), but also •differences in their scope, coming from differences in times, places, and numbers of members. As to their concerns: some are ordained for government. First on the list, as involving the largest political entity smaller than a commonwealth, is the government of a *province*, which may be committed to an assembly of men, with all its resolutions being decided by majority vote; and then this assembly is a body politic, and their power is limited by commission [= 'by the terms in which their governing role was committed to them']. The word 'province' signifies a state of affairs in which someone who has some responsibility, some business, puts it in the charge of someone else to manage it for him and under his authority. So when in one commonwealth •there are different regions that have different laws or are far distant in place, and •the administration of the

government of those regions is committed to different people, the regions in question - where the sovereign is not resident but governs by commission - are called 'provinces'.

But there are few examples of a province being governed by an assembly residing in the province itself. The Romans had the sovereignty of many provinces, but governed them always through presidents and magistrates, and not as they governed the city of Rome and adjacent territories, namely through assemblies. Similarly, when people were sent from England to establish colonies in Virginia and Sommer-islands, though the government of them *here* was committed to assemblies in London, those assemblies never committed the government of them *there* to any assembly of people living there, but rather sent one governor to each colony. For although every man naturally wants to take part in government if he can be present where the procedures of government are going on, when men *can't* be present they are inclined, also naturally, to commit the government of their common interest to a monarchic rather than a democratic form of government. We see this in the behaviour of men with private estates who, when they are unwilling to take the trouble of administering their own affairs, choose to trust one servant rather than an assembly either of their friends or of their servants.

But whatever happens *in fact*, we can entertain the *idea* of the government of a province or colony being committed to an assembly. The point I want to make is that if this did happen, •whatever debt was contracted by that assembly, or •whatever unlawful act was decreed, it would be the act only of those who assented, and not of any that dissented or were absent for the reasons described above. And another point: An assembly residing outside the colony that it governs can't exercise any power over the persons or the possessions of any member of the colony, or seize on them for debt or other duty, in any place outside the colony itself, because it has no jurisdiction or authority anywhere but in the colony. . . . And though the assembly have a right to impose a fine on any of their members who break laws that they make, they have no right to enforce such fines outside the colony. And what I have said here about the rights of an assembly for the government of a province or a colony applies also to an assembly for the government of a town, a university, a college, a church, and to any other government over the persons of men.

If any particular member of a body politic thinks he has been wronged by the body itself, the right of dealing with his case belongs to the sovereign and to those whom the sovereign has appointed to be judges in such cases or has appointed for this case in particular. It doesn't belong to the body itself, for in this situation the whole body is his fellow subject; it would not be like that in a sovereign assembly, where there can be no judge at all if it is not sovereign, even if that involves his being judge in his own cause.

In a body politic whose function is to control foreign trade, the most appropriate representative is an assembly of all the members, so that anyone who has risked his money on a trading venture can if he wishes be present at all the body's deliberations and resolutions. To see the case for this, consider *why* men who are merchants, and can buy and sell, export and import, their merchandise according to their own discretions, nevertheless bind themselves together to form one corporation.

This is not the question of why they enter into joint trading ventures - a question that has a straightforward answer. Few merchants are in a position to buy enough at home to fill a ship for export, or to buy enough abroad to fill a ship and bring it home; so merchants generally need to join together in one society, where every man can either •share in the profits in proportion to his risk, or •go it alone and sell what he exports or imports at

whatever prices he thinks fit. But this is not a body politic, because there is no common representative to oblige them to any laws other than the ones that also oblige all other subjects; so it is *not* what I was asking about.

When merchants form a *corporation*, i.e. a body politic of the kind I have been writing about, their purpose in incorporating is to increase their profits in either or two ways: by sole buying at home, and by sole selling abroad. So that to allow a number of merchants to be a corporation or body politic is to give them a double monopoly, as sole buyers, and as sole sellers. For when a company is incorporated for any particular foreign country, they alone export the commodities that can be sold in that country, which means that they are sole buyers at home and sole sellers abroad. . . . This is profitable to the merchants because •it enables them to buy at home at lower rates, and sell abroad at higher rates; and in the other direction, •there is only one buyer of foreign goods and only one seller of them at home, both which are again profitable to the merchants.

One part of this double monopoly is disadvantageous to the people at home, the other to foreigners. For at home they can, as the only exporters, •set what price they please on the produce and manufactured products of the people; and as the sole importers they can •set what price they please on all foreign goods that the people have need of, and both of these are bad from the people's point of view. In the reverse direction, as the sole sellers of the home-land's goods abroad, and sole buyers of foreign goods over there, they raise the price of the former and lower the price of the latter, both to the disadvantage of the foreigner . . . . Such corporations are therefore nothing but monopolies, though they would be very profitable for a commonwealth if they were cut in half, so to speak; that is, if •they were bound up into one body in foreign markets where as a monopoly they could sell dear and buy cheap, and •did not exist as a monopoly at home, where every man was at liberty to buy and sell at what price he could.

The purpose of such a monopolistic body politic is *not* to bring profit to the body as a whole; indeed, the body as such has no wealth except what is deducted from the individual trading ventures to pay for building, buying, equipping and manning the ships. Rather, the purpose is the profit of each individual trader. And that is why each of them should be acquainted with how his own possessions are being used; that is, that each should belong to the assembly that has the power to order such uses, and should be acquainted with their accounts. So the representative of such a body must be an assembly, where every member of the body can if he wishes be present at the consultations.

[There follows a half-page concerning rights and obligations when a 'body politic of merchants' is somehow involved in debts, fines, or crimes. That material is omitted here.]

These bodies made for governing men or trade are either •perpetual or •set up for a limited time that is set down in writing. But there are some bodies •whose times are limited not by any written rules, but by the nature of their business. Here would be an example of that. A sovereign monarch (or sovereign assembly) commands the towns and other parts of his territory to send to him their deputies, to inform him about the condition and needs of his subjects, or to advise him regarding the making of good laws, or for any other purpose. These deputies have a place and time of meeting assigned to them; they come together as ordered, and are at that time a body politic representing every subject of that dominion . . . . But this body politic exists only for such matters as are put to them by the man or assembly by whose sovereign authority they were sent for; and when it is declared that there are no more matters for them to consider or debate, the body is dissolved. . . .

Regular and lawful *private* bodies are ones that are constituted without letters patent or any other written authority apart from the laws that are common to all other subjects. And because they are united in one representative person, they are classified as 'regular'. They include all households in which the father or master orders the whole household, for he creates obligations for his children and his servants, as far as the law permits. That far but no further, because none of them are bound to obey him by performing actions that the law has forbidden. In all other actions, during the time they are under domestic government, they are subject to their fathers and masters who are their immediate sovereigns, as it were. Before the institution of commonwealth, the father and master is absolute sovereign in his own household; the only authority he loses through the institution is what is taken from him by the law of the commonwealth.

Regular but *unlawful* private bodies are those that unite themselves into one representative person without any public authority at all. Examples are •the corporations of beggars, thieves and gypsies, formed so as to succeed better in their trade of begging and stealing, and •the corporations of men who unite themselves for the easier propagation of doctrines, and for making a party against the power of the commonwealth, doing this by authority from some foreign person.

*Irregular* systems, which are in their nature merely *leagues*, become lawful or unlawful according to the lawfulness or unlawfulness of each particular man's purpose in belonging to the league; and his purpose is to be understood from the intersection of his private interests with what the business of the league is. Sometimes an irregular system is not even a league, but merely a concourse of people whose working together to a common end is based not on any obligation they have to one another but only on their having similar wants and inclinations.

A commonwealth is just a league of all the subjects together. Leagues of subjects *within* a commonwealth are commonly made for mutual defence, so they are for the most part unnecessary, and savour of unlawful design; and for that reason they are unlawful, and are commonly labelled as 'factions' or 'conspiracies'. Leagues of commonwealths are different. A league is a connection of men by covenants; if (as in the raw condition of nature) no power is given to any one man or assembly to compel the members to keep their covenant, the league is valid only as long as there arises no good reason for distrust; and therefore •leagues between commonwealths, over which there is no human power established to keep them all in awe, are not only lawful but also profitable for as long as they last. But •leagues between the subjects of a single commonwealth, where everyone *could* obtain his right by means of the sovereign power, are unnecessary for the maintenance of peace and justice; and if their purpose is evil, or unknown to the commonwealth, they are also unlawful. For it is wrong for private men to unite their strength for an evil purpose; and if a league's purpose is unknown, this concealment is wrong and the league is dangerous to the public.

If the sovereign power belongs to a large assembly, and *some* members of the assembly come together without authority to discuss things on their own and to try to guide the other members, this is a faction or unlawful conspiracy, because it is a fraudulent seducing of the assembly for the faction's particular purposes. But if someone (not belonging to the assembly) whose private interest is to be debated and judged in the assembly makes as many friends as he can among the members of the assembly, there is nothing wrong with that, because he is not part of the assembly. Even if he hires such friends with money, that is all right unless some law

explicitly forbids it; for, given how men behave, justice sometimes cannot be had without money, and everyone is entitled to think his own cause to be just, until it has been heard and judged.

In all commonwealths, if a private man maintains more servants than are needed for managing his estate and any other lawful employment he has for them, this is *faction* and is unlawful. For having the protection of the commonwealth he does not need the defence of private force. In some nations that are not thoroughly civilized, many families have lived in continual hostility, and have invaded one another with private force; but it is clear enough that either they have been wrong to do this or else they had no commonwealth.

Not only •factions for kindred, but also •factions for the government of religion (such as Papists, Protestants, etc.) and •factions of state (such as patricians and plebeians in ancient Rome, and aristocrats and democrats in ancient Greece), are wrong, because they are contrary to the peace and safety of the people, and because they take the sword out of the hand of the sovereign.

A concourse of people is an irregular system whose lawfulness or unlawfulness depends on its purpose, and on how many people it contains. If the purpose is lawful, and obvious, the concourse is lawful - e.g. an ordinary meeting of men at church or at a public show. But only if they are there in usual numbers; for if their number is extraordinarily great, their purpose in coming together is not evident, and consequently someone who can't give a detailed and good account of why he is there should be judged to be aware that they have an unlawful and tumultuous purpose [ = 'a seditious purpose' or 'a purpose tending to lead to tumult or uproar' ]. It may be lawful for a thousand men to join in a petition to be delivered to a judge or magistrate, but if a thousand men come to present it, it is a tumultuous assembly, because only one or two are needed for that purpose. But in such cases as these, there is no set number such that the assembly is unlawful if its membership reaches that number; what makes it unlawful is its having too many members for the available officers to be able to suppress it and bring it to justice.

When an unusually large number of men assemble against a man whom they accuse, the assembly is an unlawful tumult because their accusation could have been delivered to the magistrate by a few men, or by just one. Such was the case of St. Paul at Ephesus . . . . [Hobbes develops this example in detail, following *Acts* 19:38-40.]

That completes what I shall say concerning systems, and assemblies of people. They can, as I have already said, be compared to the homogeneous parts of man's body: the lawful being comparable to the muscles; the unlawful ones to warts, boils, and abscesses, caused by the unnatural flowing together of bad bodily fluids.

### **Chapter 23. The public ministers of sovereign power**

In chapter 22 I have spoken of the parts of a commonwealth that are homogeneous, ·in that what they consist of - their *stuff*, their 'matter' - is *men* all through·. In this chapter I shall speak of parts that are organic, ·in that they have special roles in the workings of the commonwealth·. These are public ministers.

A PUBLIC MINISTER is someone whom the sovereign (whether a monarch or an assembly) employs in any affairs, with authority to represent in that employment the person of the commonwealth. ·This is different from a personal servant of the sovereign, as I now explain·. Every sovereign (whether man or assembly) represents two persons, or (in more ordinary parlance) has two capacities, •one natural and •the other political. A monarch has the person not only of •the commonwealth but also of •a man, and a sovereign assembly has the person not only of •the commonwealth but also of •the individual members of the assembly. Those who serve

them in their natural capacity are not *public ministers*, a label reserved for those who serve them in the administration of public business. So public ministers do not include (in an aristocracy or democracy) the ushers, sergeants, and other officers that serve the assembly purely for the convenience of the assembled men, or (in a monarchy) the stewards, chamberlains, treasurers, or other officers of the royal household.

Some public ministers have committed to them the charge of a general administration, either of the whole dominion or of a part of it. •Of the whole: the predecessor of an infant king may commit the whole administration of his kingdom to someone to serve as a protector or regent until the new king comes to be of age. In such a case, every subject is obliged to obey the regent's ordinances and commands so long as he gives these in the king's name and they are not inconsistent with his sovereign power. •Of a part or province: a monarch or sovereign assembly may put a province under the general charge of a governor, lieutenant, prefect or viceroy. And here again everyone in that province is bound by everything the governor does in the name of the sovereign that is not incompatible with the sovereign's right. For such protectors, viceroys, and governors have no other right but what depends on the sovereign's will, and no commission they are given should be interpreted as a declaration of the sovereign's will to *transfer* the sovereignty unless it contains clear explicit words to that effect. This kind of public minister resembles the **nerves and tendons** that move the various limbs of a natural body.

Other public ministers have *special* administration, that is to say, they are in charge of some special business either at home or abroad. I shall characterize *five* kinds of ministry at home. •First, for the economy of a commonwealth there can be public ministers who have authority concerning the commonwealth's treasury, dealing with tributes, impositions, rents, fines, or any other public revenue - collecting, receiving, issuing, keeping accounts. These people are *ministers*, because they serve the representative person and can do nothing against his command or without his authority; and their ministry is *public* because they serve him in his political capacity.

•Secondly, there can be public ministers who have authority concerning the armed forces of the commonwealth: to have the custody of arms, forts, and ports; to recruit, pay, or transport soldiers; or to provide for anything needed for the conduct of war, by land or by sea. . . .

•Thirdly, there can be public ministers who have authority to teach or (enable others to teach) the people their duty to the sovereign power, and to instruct them in the knowledge of what is just and unjust, thereby making them more apt to live in godliness and in peace among themselves, and to resist the public enemy. These are *ministers* because they do this not by their own authority but by someone else's, and their ministry is *public* because they do it (or should do it) only by the authority of the sovereign. Only the monarch or the sovereign assembly has immediate authority from God to teach and instruct the people; and no-one other than the sovereign receives his power *Dei gratia* simply, i.e. from the favour of God *and him alone*. All others receive their authority to teach from the favour and providence of God *and their sovereigns*. . . .

•Fourthly, those to whom judicial authority is given are public ministers. For in their seats of justice they represent the person of the sovereign, and their sentence is his sentence. This is because (as I said in chapter 18) all judicature is essentially tied to the sovereignty, and therefore all judges other than the sovereign are merely his (or their) ministers. And as controversies are of two sorts (of fact and of law), so also judgments are of two sorts (of fact and of law), and in a single legal case, therefore, there can be two judges, one of fact and the other of law.

A disagreement - either of fact or of law - might arise between the party judged and the judge; and because they are both subjects to the sovereign, such a disagreement ought in fairness to be judged by men agreed on by both, for no man can be judge in his own cause. But they have already both agreed on the sovereign as judge; so he should either hear the disagreement and settle it himself or appoint to judge it someone whom they both agree on. [Hobbes goes on to describe three ways in which a defendant can indicate his agreement about who is to judge the disagreement. That is followed by a long paragraph - an admitted aside - in which Hobbes describes and praises the English jury system. The paragraph ends thus:] These public persons who have authority from the sovereign power either to instruct or to judge the people are members of the commonwealth who can appropriately be compared to the **vocal organs** in a natural body.

•Fifthly, public ministers are also all those who have authority from the sovereign to see to it that judgments that are given are carried out: to make the sovereign's commands public, to suppress tumults, to arrest and imprison criminals, and to do other things tending to the conservation of the peace. Every act they do by such authority is the act of the commonwealth; and their service is comparable with that of the **hands** in a natural body.

Public ministers *abroad* are those who represent the person of their own sovereign to foreign states. Such are ambassadors, messengers, agents, and heralds, sent by public authority on public business.

Ones who are sent only by the authority of some private party of a troubled state, even if they are received 'at a foreign court', are neither public nor private ministers of the commonwealth, because none of their actions have the commonwealth for author. An ambassador sent from a prince to congratulate, condole, or to be present at a ceremony, is a private person 'and not a minister'. Although his authority is public, the business is private, and belongs to him in his capacity as a natural man. Also if a man is sent into another country to explore their plans and their strength *secretly*, although both his authority and his business are public, he is only a private minister, because 'as he goes about his secret work' no-one sees him as bearing any person except his own. Yet he is a minister of the commonwealth, and can be compared to an **eye** in the natural body. Those who are appointed to receive the petitions or other information from the people, and are as it were the public **ear**, are public ministers and represent their sovereign in doing that work.

If we think of a •councillor or a •council of state as having no authority to judge or command, and having *only* the role of giving advice to the sovereign when he asks for it or of offering it to him when he doesn't ask, •neither is a public person. For the advice is addressed only to the sovereign, and *his* person cannot in his own presence be represented to him by someone else! But a body of councillors are 'in fact' never without some other authority of judicature or of immediate administration. •In a monarchy they represent the monarch when they deliver his commands to the public ministers; •in a democracy the council or senate is *only* a council when it announces to the people the result of its deliberations; but when it appoints judges, or hears legal cases, or gives audience to ambassadors, it does so in its role as a minister of the people; and •in an aristocracy the council of state is the sovereign assembly itself, and gives advice only to itself.

## Chapter 24. The nutrition and procreation of a commonwealth

[In the title and themes of this chapter, Hobbes continues to liken commonwealths to natural animal bodies.]

The **nutrition** of a commonwealth consists in the abundance and the distribution of materials that support life, in **digesting** it (preparing it), and in then conveying it along suitable channels to the public use.

The abundance of matter is limited by nature to what comes from the land and the sea (the two **breasts** of our common mother). Usually God either just gives us these goods or makes us work for them.

This food for the commonwealth is made up of animals, vegetables, and minerals; and God has freely laid these before us, on or near to the face of the earth, so that the only work we need to put in is in taking them - killing and butchering them, cultivating and harvesting them, digging them up. So having plenty of this 'food' depends firstly on God's favour and secondly on nothing but the labour and industry of men.

This matter or 'food' (commonly called 'commodities') is partly domestic and partly foreign. Domestic, what can be found within the territory of the commonwealth; foreign, what is imported from other countries. No territory under the dominion of one commonwealth (except a very vast one) produces everything needed to keep the whole body of the commonwealth alive and functioning; and there are few that don't produce more than they need of something. So the superfluous commodities to be had within a dominion stop being superfluous, and serve to meet home needs through the importation of commodities that can be got from other countries - either by exchange, or by just war, or by labour. For a man's labour is also a commodity that can be exchanged for some benefit, just as any other thing can. Indeed, there have been commonwealths that had no more territory than they needed to live on, but nevertheless maintained and even increased their power, partly by the labour of trading from one place to another, and partly by selling manufactured goods the raw materials for which were brought in from other places.

The distribution of the materials that nourish the commonwealth is managed through the system of *mine* and *thine* and *his* - in a word, *property* - and in all kinds of commonwealth this is in the hands of the sovereign power. For where there is no commonwealth, there is (I repeat) a perpetual war of every man against his neighbour, and therefore everyone *has* what he *gets and keeps by force*; and that is neither property nor community, but uncertainty! This is so obvious that even Cicero, a passionate defender of liberty, in a public pleading attributes all ownership to the civil law: 'If the civil law is abandoned, or retained but negligently guarded, there is nothing that any man can be sure to receive from his parent or leave to his children.' And again: 'Take away the civil law and no man knows what is his own, and what another man's.' Because the introduction of property is an effect of the commonwealth, which can do nothing except through the person who represents it, it is the act of the sovereign alone, and consists in the *laws*, which can't be made by anyone who doesn't have the sovereign power. They knew this well in ancient times: their word for what we call 'law' was the Greek word *nomos* (meaning 'distribution'), and they defined *justice* as *distributing to every man his own*.

In this distribution, the first law concerns the division of the land itself. This is done by the sovereign, who assigns to each man a portion of land, according to what is judged to be fair and conducive to the common good - judged by the sovereign, that is, not by any subject or any number of subjects. [There follows an illustration of this, drawn from the old testament.] And though a people coming into possession of a land by war don't always exterminate the previous



inhabitants (as the Jews did), but allow many or most or all of them to retain their estates, it is obvious that from then onwards they hold their estates as assigned to them by the victors, as the people of England held all theirs as assigned by William the Conqueror.

From this we can infer that a subject's *ownership* of his lands consists in a right to exclude •all other subjects from the use of them, and *not* •a right to exclude •his sovereign, whether that is an assembly or a monarch. For seeing that the sovereign - that is to say, the commonwealth whose person he represents - is understood always to act only for common peace and security, this distribution of lands is to be understood as done for the same purpose; and consequently, any distribution he makes that endangers peace and security is •contrary to the will of every subject who committed his peace and safety to the sovereign's discretion and conscience, and so it is to be regarded as •void by the will of every one of the subjects. It is true that a sovereign monarch, or a majority of a sovereign assembly, may order things to be done in pursuit of their passions and contrary to their own consciences; that would be a breach of trust and of the law of nature, but this fact is not enough to authorize any subject •to oppose his sovereign - to make war on him, to accuse him of injustice, or in any way to speak evil of him - because the subjects have authorized *all* his actions, and in giving him the sovereign power they have made his actions their own. I shall discuss later the question of when the commands of sovereigns are contrary to fairness and to the law of nature.

Here is a conceivable state of affairs:

In the distribution of land the commonwealth itself takes a portion, which it owns and improves through its representative; and this portion is made sufficient to sustain the whole expense of what is required for the common peace and defence.

This could very well happen, if there could be any representative who was free from human passions and infirmities. But given what human nature is like, it is pointless to set aside public land, or any certain revenue, for the commonwealth. Doing this tends to the dissolution of government, and to the condition of mere nature and war, as soon as the sovereign power falls into the hands of a monarch or of an assembly that are either too careless about money or too risk-taking in committing the public wealth to a long or costly war. •And in any case, there is no way of predicting what a commonwealth's needs will be. Commonwealths cannot go on a diet! Their expenses are not limited by their own appetite, but by external events and the appetites of their neighbours; so what demands there will be on the public riches depends on casual and unexpected events. [There follows a passage about what William the Conqueror was up to in his distribution of lands. Omitted from the Latin version, perhaps because not interesting to foreigners.] It is therefore pointless to assign a portion to the commonwealth, which can sell it or give it away - and *does* sell it or give it away when this is done by the commonwealth's representative.

It is for the sovereign not only to distribute lands at home, but also to determine what commodities the subjects can trade to what foreign countries. If private persons could use their own discretion to make decisions about this, some of them would •do bad things, for profit; they would provide the enemy with means to hurt the commonwealth, and they would hurt themselves by importing things that please men's appetites but are nevertheless harmful to them or at least do them no good. . . .

For the upkeep of a commonwealth it is not enough for every man to own a portion of land or some few commodities, or to have natural 'ownership' of some useful practical skill. Every such skill is (•or has products that are•) necessary for the survival or for the well-being of almost

every individual man; so it necessary that men distribute what they can spare, and transfer their ownerships by exchange and mutual contract. It is for the commonwealth (i.e. the sovereign) to settle how all kinds of contract between subjects are to be made, and what words and signs are to be taken as validating them. This applies to buying, selling, exchanging, borrowing, lending, renting, hiring, and so on.

As regards the *matter* with which the commonwealth is nourished, and how it is distributed to the commonwealth's various limbs and organs, what I have said is sufficient, given the plan for this book as a whole.

By 'digestion' I mean the process of taking all commodities that have not been consumed and are being kept for nourishment at some future time, and turning them into something that is of equal value and is also *portable*; this is to make it possible for men to move from place to place, and to have in any particular place such nourishment as it can offer. This 'portable equivalent to commodities' is simply •gold and silver, and •money. For •gold and silver happen to be highly valued in almost all countries of the world, which makes them a convenient measure of the value of everything else *between nations*. And •money is a sufficient measure of the value of everything else *between the subjects* of the commonwealth whose sovereign coined the money (it doesn't matter what the coins are made of). By the means of these measures - 'gold and silver and money' - all commodities, even ones that are 'physically' immovable, can •accompany a man wherever he goes in the town where he lives and elsewhere, and can •pass from man to man within the commonwealth. Thus money *circulates*, nourishing every part of the commonwealth as it passes; so that this process of *digestion* ('as I have called it') can be said to *put blood into* the commonwealth; for natural blood is similarly made of the fruits of the earth, and when it circulates it nourishes every part of the human body that it passes through.

Silver and gold have their value from the stuff itself, 'rather than having a value assigned by a sovereign'. That gives them two privileges. First, •their value can't be altered by the power of one or just a few commonwealths, because they are a common measure of the commodities of *all* places. But •base money - 'that is, coins whose value is greater than that of the metal they are made of' - can easily have its value lowered or raised. Secondly, •gold and silver have the privilege of making commonwealths **move and stretch out their arms** into foreign countries, and to supply provisions not only for private subjects who travel but also for whole armies. Not so with •coins whose value comes not from the value of the matter they are composed of but from the stamp of the place [i.e. from their being officially approved money in their own commonwealth]. *They* 'don't travel well, because they' can't stand a change of air! They have their effect at home only, where they are vulnerable to changes in the law, and thus liable to have their value diminished, often to the detriment of people who have them.

The channels and paths along which money is conveyed to public use are of two sorts: •one that conveys it to the public coffers, •the other that sends it out again for public payments. •The first sort include collectors, receivers, and treasurers; •the second include treasurers (again) and officers appointed for payment of various public or private ministers. Here again the artificial man ('the commonwealth') maintains his resemblance to the natural man. In the natural man the veins receive the blood from various parts of the body, and carry it to **the heart** where it is made vital; and the heart then sends it out again along the arteries, to enliven the man and enable the parts of his body to move.

The offspring or **children** of a commonwealth are what we call 'colonies', which are numbers of men sent out from the commonwealth, under a leader or governor, to inhabit a foreign

country - either one that has no inhabitants, or one that is emptied of its inhabitants by war when the colony is established. And when a colony is settled, 'one of two things happens'. •The colony becomes a commonwealth on its own, with the colonists being cleared of their subjection to the sovereign who sent them (as has been done by many commonwealths in ancient times), in which case the commonwealth from which they went is called their 'metropolis' [from Greek words meaning 'mother' and 'city'] or their 'mother', and it requires of them no more than fathers require of children whom they emancipate and free from their domestic government - namely, honour and friendship. Or •the colonists remain united to their metropolis, as were 'members of' the colonies of the people of Rome; so that the colony is not itself a commonwealth but a province - a part of the commonwealth that sent the colonists out there. So that what is right or wrong for colonies depends •almost wholly on the licence or letters patent through which their sovereign authorized them to settle there (the •exception being their duty to honour and remain in league with their metropolis, 'a duty that they have whether or not it was explicitly specified').

## Chapter 25. Advice

How fallacious it is to judge of the nature of things by the ordinary unstable use of words appears in nothing more than in the confusion between *advice* and *commands*. [In this text, 'advice' sometimes replaces Hobbes's word 'counsel'. The confusion arises from the fact that the imperative mood is used in expressing both, and for many other purposes as well. For the words 'Do this' are the words not only of someone who •commands but also of someone who •advises and of someone who •exhorts [= 'earnestly tries to persuade']; yet nearly everyone sees that these are very different things, and can distinguish between them when he sees who is speaking, to whom he is speaking, and what the circumstances are. But finding those phrases in men's writings, and being unable or unwilling to think about the circumstances, people sometimes mistake the injunctions of advisers for the injunctions of those who command, and sometimes 'on' the contrary 'take commands to be advice', depending on what fits best with the conclusions they are trying to draw or the actions they approve. To avoid such mistakes and give to those terms 'command', 'advise', and 'exhort' their proper and distinct meanings, I define them thus.

COMMAND is where a man says 'Do this' or 'Do not do this', relying on nothing but his own will. From this it follows obviously that someone who commands is claiming to benefit from the command, because the reason for his command is simply his own will, and the proper object of every man's will is some good to himself.

ADVICE is where a man says 'Do this' or 'Do not do this' and bases his reasons for this on benefit that will come to the person to whom he says it. This makes it obvious that someone who gives advice is claiming (whatever he actually *intends*) to bring good to the person to whom he gives it.

So •one big difference between advice and command is that command is directed to one's own benefit, and advice to the benefit of someone else. From this arises •another difference: a man may be obliged to do what he is commanded, for example when he has covenanted to obey; but he can't be obliged to follow *advice*, because the hurt of not following it will be his own. What if he has covenanted to follow it? Then it is no longer advice, and comes to have the nature of a command. •A third difference between them is that no man can claim to have a right to be another man's adviser, because he mustn't claim that *he* will benefit by the advice he gives. If you demand a right to advise someone, that is evidence that you want to know his designs, or to gain some other good to yourself - which (I repeat) is the exclusive object of every man's will.

Another feature of advice is that no-one can fairly be accused or punished for the advice he gives, whatever it may be. For to ask for someone's advice is to permit him to give what advice he thinks best, and consequently he who gives advice to his sovereign (whether a monarch or an assembly) when asked for it cannot fairly be punished for it. This holds whether or not the advice fits with the opinion of the majority, as long as it is relevant to the proposition under debate. For if the sense of the assembly can make itself felt before the debate is ended, they shouldn't seek or take any further advice, for the sense of the assembly is the resolution of the debate and end of all deliberation. And generally he who asks for advice is an author of it, and therefore cannot punish it; and what the sovereign can't do no-one else can do. But if one subject advises another to do something contrary to the laws, that advice is punishable by the commonwealth, whether it came from an evil intention or merely from ignorance; because ignorance of the law is not a good excuse, where every man is bound to take notice of the laws to which he is subject.

EXHORTATION is *advice accompanied by signs in the person that gives it of his passionate desire to have it followed*, or to say it more briefly, *advice that is energetically pressed*. Someone who exhorts doesn't spell out the consequences of the action he is advising the person to perform, so he doesn't tie himself to the rigour of true reasoning; he merely *encourages* the advisee to act in a certain way. So those who exhort, in giving their reasons, have an eye on the common passions and opinions of men; and they make use of comparisons, metaphors, examples, and other tools of oratory to persuade their hearers of the utility, honour, or justice of following their advice.

From this it can be inferred, •first, that exhortation is directed to the good of the person who gives the advice, not of the person who asks for it; which is contrary to the duty of an adviser, who (by the definition of 'advice') ought to be guided not by his own benefit but by the benefit of the person whom he is advising. That the exhorter *does* direct his advice to his own benefit is clear enough from his long and passionate urging, or from his elaborately artful way of giving his advice; because this was not required of him, so it reflects *his* purposes and consequently is directed principally to his own benefit - tending to the good of the advisee only accidentally, if at all.

•We can infer •secondly, that exhortation is effective only where a man speaks to a multitude; because when the speech is addressed to one person, he can interrupt the speaker and examine his reasons more rigorously than can be done in a crowd, which is too numerous to enter into dispute and dialogue with someone who is speaking to all of them equally.

•Thirdly, •it follows that those who *exhort* where they have been required to *advise* are corrupt advisers, having been bribed (so to speak) by their own interests. However good the advice that is given •in an exhortation, he who gives it is no more a good adviser than someone who gives a just sentence in return for a bribe is a just judge. Where a man can lawfully *command*, as a father in his family or a leader in an army, his exhortations are not only lawful but also necessary and praiseworthy; but then they are no longer advice but commands. When a command is given for the carrying out of nasty work, it should be sweetened in the delivery by encouragement, and in the tone and phrasing of *advice* rather than in the harsher language of *command*. Sometimes necessity requires this, and humanity always does.

Examples of the difference between command and advice can be found in the forms of speech that express them in Holy Scripture.

Have no other Gods but me

Make for yourself no graven image

Take not God's name in vain  
 Sanctify the sabbath  
 Honour your parents  
 Do not kill  
 Do not steal,

and so on are •commands, because the reason for which we are to obey them comes from the will of God, our king whom we are obliged to obey. But these words: 'Sell everything you have, give it to the poor, and follow me' are •advice, because the reason for our doing so is drawn from our own benefit, namely that 'if we comply' we shall have treasure in Heaven. These words: 'Go into the village over there, and you will find a tethered ass and her colt; untie her and bring her to me' are a command; because the reason for complying with it is drawn from the will of their master; but these words: 'Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus' are advice, because the reason why we should so do tends not to any benefit for God Almighty, who will still be king however we rebel, but to benefit for ourselves, who have no other means of avoiding the punishment hanging over us for our sins.

I have derived the difference between advice and command from the nature of advice, which consists in a laying out of the benefit or harm that may or must come to the advisee if he acts as he is advised to do. The differences between apt and inept advisers can be derived from the same source. Experience is just the memory of the consequences of similar actions formerly observed, and advice is just speech through which that experience is made known to someone else; so the virtues and defects of advice are the same as the virtues and defects of intellect; and for the person of a commonwealth, advisers serve in place of **memory** and thinking things through. But along with this resemblance of the commonwealth to a natural man there is one very important dissimilarity. A natural man receives his experience from the natural objects of sense, which work on him without passion or interest of their own, whereas those who advise the representative person of a commonwealth may have (and often do have) their individual purposes and passions, which make their advice always suspect and often treacherous. So we can set down as the •first requirement for a good adviser that his purposes and interests must not be inconsistent with those of the person he is advising.

When an action is being deliberated, the role of an adviser is to make its consequences plain, so that the advisee is truly and clearly informed. So, •secondly, an adviser ought to present his advice in such a way as to make the truth appear most clearly, that is to say, to present it with reasoning that is as firm, in language that is as meaningful and proper, and as briefly, as the evidence will permit. The role of adviser, therefore, does not permit

rash and unevident inferences

(such as are fetched only from examples or from books taken as authoritative - none of which are evidence as to what is good or bad, but only witnesses of fact or of opinion),

obscure, confused, and ambiguous expressions, or

metaphorical speeches, tending to the stirring up of passions.

That is because such reasoning and such expressions serve only to deceive the advisee, or to lead him towards other ends than his own.

The ability to advise well comes from experience and long study, and no man is presumed to have experience in *all* the things that have to be known for the administration of a great commonwealth. Therefore, •thirdly, no man is presumed to be a good adviser except on matters which he has not only had great experience of but also thought about long and hard. This,

properly understood, is a very demanding requirement. For seeing that the business of a commonwealth is to preserve the people in peace at home and to defend them against foreign invasion, we shall find that it requires knowledge that cannot be had without study:

great knowledge of human nature, of the rights of government, and of the nature of equity, law, justice, and honour.

And that it requires knowledge that cannot be had without much experience:

knowledge of the military strength, the economy, and the geography both of our own country and of our neighbours, and also of the inclinations and designs of all the nations that might in any way give us trouble.

Knowledge of these things cannot be had without the observations of many men together. Finally, even when all these things are known, they are useless unless right reasoning is employed. For nothing is useful to someone who doesn't know how to use it properly.

•Fourthly, for someone to advise the commonwealth in matters of the greatest importance, he must have seen the archives of the commonwealth, the records of treaties with neighbouring commonwealths, and the letters of ministers sent to neighbouring commonwealths to explore their plans. No-one is permitted to see these things except those whom the sovereign wants to be permitted. So someone who is not customarily called on for advice cannot give satisfactory advice, even if he is wise.

•Fifthly, when a man has several advisers, he will get better advice by hearing them one at a time than that by listening to them in an assembly. There are many reasons for this, of which I shall present four. •First, in hearing them singly you get the advice of every man, but in an assembly many of them give their 'advice' only with 'Aye!' or 'No!', or with their hands or feet, not moved by their own thoughts but by the eloquence of others, or by fear of displeasing some who have spoken (or displeasing the whole assembly) by contradicting them, or for fear of appearing duller in uptake than those who have applauded the contrary opinion. •Secondly, most of them set their own advantage ahead of the public good. If they give their opinions separately, in private, this is less harmful. For the passions of individual men are more moderate taken separately than in an assembly, where they sometimes inflame one another by the hot air of their rhetoric till they set the commonwealth afire (as lighted brands when separated give off less heat than when they are joined together). •Thirdly, in hearing each man separately one can when necessary examine the truth or probability of his reasons for the advice he gives, doing this by frequent interruptions and objections. That cannot be done in an assembly, where (in every difficult question) a man is dazed and dazzled by the variety of things that are said, rather than informed about what he ought to do. Besides, when a large assembly is called together to give advice, there are bound to be some who have an ambition to be thought eloquent and also to be knowledgeable about policy; and they will give their advice with a care not for the business under consideration but rather for the applause they can get for their motley orations, made of the variously coloured threads or scraps of authors. ['Motley' can mean merely 'a cloth of mixed colours', but Hobbes may intend its stronger meaning, 'the multicoloured costume of a professional fool or jester'.] This is at best an irrelevance, which takes away time from serious consultation, and it is easily avoided by taking advice in private. •Fourthly, in deliberations that ought to be kept secret (and there are many of those in public business), it is dangerous to take advice from many people, especially in assemblies; and therefore large assemblies are forced to put such affairs into the hands of a smaller number, choosing the people who are the most experienced and in whose trustworthiness they have most confidence.

Summing up: who would so greatly approve the taking of advice from a large assembly that he would wish for such help when there is a question of getting his children married, disposing of his lands, governing his household, or managing his private estate? Especially, who would want or accept this if some people in the assembly didn't wish him to prosper? A man who does his business with the help of many prudent advisers, consulting with each of them separately, in private, does it *best*; like someone who in playing tennis uses able seconds, placed in their proper stations. [This refers to 'real tennis' - a precursor of today's game - in some early forms of which a player could have assistants or 'seconds'.] He who uses only his own judgment does *next best*, like someone who plays tennis with no seconds at all. The one who does *worst of all* is the person who is carried up and down to his business in a •framed advice [= 'advice viewed as a constructed vehicle'] that can move only by majority vote, which is often not forthcoming because of people who dissent out of envy or self-interest. He is like someone who, though he has good players as seconds, is carried •by them• to the ball in a wheel-barrow or other •frame [= 'structure'] which is heavy in itself and also held back by the disagreeing judgments and endeavours of those who are pushing it; and the similarity is greater in proportion to how many people set their hands to the wheel-barrow, and it is greatest when one or more of them wants him to lose!

And though it is true that many eyes see more than one, but this doesn't imply an advantage in having many advisers, except when their advice is finally brought together by one man. •In every other case the 'many eyes' are a drawback; here is why•. Many eyes see the same thing from different angles, and are apt to look obliquely towards their own private benefit; so those who don't want to miss their mark, though they •look about with two eyes, always •aim only with one; •which means that they come to focus directly on their own purposes, with *one* eye on *them* and *no* eye on *the public good*•. That is why no large democratic commonwealth has ever been kept up by the open consultations of the assembly. The maintenance of such commonwealths has always come from •a foreign enemy that united them, or •the reputation of some one eminent man among them, or •the secret planning of a few, or •their fear of splitting up into equal •and thus uncontrollable• factions. As for very small commonwealths, whether democratic or monarchical: once their strong neighbours become envious of them, no human wisdom can save them!

## Chapter 26. Civil laws

By CIVIL LAWS I understand the laws that men are bound to observe because they are members of some commonwealth, not because they belong to this or that commonwealth in particular. Just as the laws of nature are those we are bound to obey because we are men, so civil laws are those we are bound to obey because we are citizens. The knowledge of particular laws •of particular commonwealths• belongs to those who profess the study of the laws of their various countries, but the knowledge of civil law in general belongs to any man. The ancient law of Rome was called their civil law, from the word *civitas*, which signifies a commonwealth; and countries that came under the Roman empire and were governed by that law still retain as much of it as they think fit, and call *that* 'the civil law', to distinguish it from the rest of their own civil laws. But that is not that I want to talk about here. My purpose is not to show *what is law in this country and in that*, but *what is law*. That is what Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and various others have done, without taking up the profession of the study of the law.

The first point is that, obviously, law in general is not *advice* but *command*. It is not the case that any command by one man to another is a law; to count as law a command must be addressed to someone who is already obliged to obey the commander. And as for ‘civil law’, that phrase adds only the name of the person commanding, who is *persona civitatis*, the person of the commonwealth.

With that in mind, I define ‘civil law’ as follows. CIVIL LAW is to every subject the rules that the commonwealth has commanded him (by word, writing, or other sufficient sign of its will) to use to distinguish right from wrong, this being equivalent to distinguishing what is in accordance with the rules from what is contrary to them.

Every part of this definition is evident at first sight. Regarding the implication that something is a law *to* or *for* some person or group: anyone can see that some laws are addressed to all the subjects in general, some to particular provinces, some to particular vocations, and some to particular men, so that they are laws *to* everyone to whom the command is directed, and not *to* anyone else. It is also obvious that laws are the rules determining what is just or unjust (right or wrong), for nothing is counted as unjust unless it is contrary to some law. Likewise, that only the commonwealth can make laws, because it is the only thing we are subject to; and that commands must be signified by sufficient signs, because otherwise a man doesn’t know how to obey them. So anything that can be rigorously deduced from this definition ought to be acknowledged as true. Here are the eight things that I deduce from it.

1. The only legislator in any commonwealth is the sovereign, whether that is one man (in a monarchy) or one assembly of men (in a democracy or aristocracy). For the legislator is he who makes the law. And only the commonwealth prescribes and commands that the rules we call ‘law’ be obeyed. Therefore the commonwealth is the legislator. But the commonwealth is not a person, and can’t do anything except through its representative - the sovereign - and therefore the sovereign is the only legislator. For the same reason, only the sovereign can repeal a law that has been made, because the only way to repeal a law is to make a second law forbidding the enforcement of the first.

2. The sovereign of a commonwealth, whether an assembly or one man, is not subject to the civil laws. Suppose that he *were* subject to them. Having the power to make and repeal laws, he could free himself from subjection to them whenever he pleased, by repealing the laws that troubled him and making new ones. So he was free from subjection to them all along; for someone who can be free whenever he likes *is* free. No person can be bound to himself; because he who can bind can also release, and therefore someone who is bound only to himself is not bound at all.

3. When long usage comes to have the authority of a law, what makes the authority is not the length of time but the will of the sovereign as signified by his silence (for silence is sometimes evidence of consent); and as soon as the sovereign speaks up against it, it is no longer law. And therefore if the sovereign is involved in a legal issue based not on his present will but upon the laws that have already been made, the length of time that some legal state of affairs has been allowed to stand should not affect the outcome, which should be reached on the basis of equity - defined in chapter 15, third and eleventh laws of nature, as distributing to each man what is rightly his. For many unjust actions and unjust judicial sentences go uncorrected for longer than any man can remember. And our lawyers count as laws only such of our customs as are reasonable, and they maintain that bad customs should be abolished; but the judgment of what is



reasonable and of what ought to be abolished belongs to him who makes the law, namely the sovereign assembly or the monarch.

4. The *law of nature* and the *civil law* contain each other, and are of equal extent. For the laws of nature, which consist in equity, justice, gratitude, and other moral virtues depending on these, are in the raw condition of nature not properly laws but rather qualities that dispose men to peace and to obedience. (I made this point at the end of chapter 15.) They become *laws* when a commonwealth is established, and not before; and then the commonwealth commands them, and so they become civil laws, for it is the sovereign power that obliges men to obey them. For when private men have disagreements, the ordinances of sovereign power are needed to lay down what is equitable, what is just, and what is morally virtuous, and to make the ordinances binding; and to ordain punishments for those who break them, those ordinances therefore also being part of the civil law. So the law of nature is a part of the civil law in all commonwealths of the world.

Conversely, the civil law is a part of the dictates of nature. For justice - that is to say, performing covenants and giving to every man his own - is a dictate of the law of nature. But every subject in a commonwealth has •covenanted to obey the civil law, and therefore obedience to the civil law is part also of the law of nature. (The •covenant in question is either one they make with one another, as when they assemble to make a common representative, or •a covenant that each makes separately with the representative when, subdued by the sword, they promise obedience in return for staying alive.)

Civil law and natural law are not different *kinds* of law but different *parts* of law: the written part is called 'civil', the unwritten part 'natural'. But the civil law can abridge and restrain the right of nature, that is, the natural liberty of man; indeed, the whole purpose of making 'civil' laws is to create such restraints, without which there can't possibly be any peace. And law was brought into the world solely in order to limit the natural liberty of particular men, in such a way that they don't *hurt* but rather *assist* one another and join together against a common enemy.

5. If the sovereign of one commonwealth subdues a people who have lived under other written laws, and afterwards governs them by the same laws as they were governed by before, those laws then become the civil laws of the victor and not of the vanquished commonwealth. For the legislator is not the person by whose authority the laws •were first made, but the one by whose authority they •now continue to be laws. So where the dominion of a commonwealth includes different provinces with different laws, commonly called the 'customs' of each province, we should not think that such 'customs' have their force •as laws• purely from the length of time they have been in existence. The right way to view them is this: They are laws that were written or otherwise made known long ago, under the decrees and statutes of their •sovereigns •at that time•, and they are now laws not because they have been validated by time but rather by virtue of the decrees of •their present sovereign. But if an unwritten law is generally observed throughout all the provinces of a dominion, and there appears to be nothing bad in this, that law has to be a law of nature, and equally binding on all mankind.

6. Given that all laws, written and unwritten, have their authority and force from the will of the commonwealth - that is to say, from the will of the representative (the monarch or the sovereign assembly) - you may well wonder what the source is of opinions that are found in books by eminent lawyers in several commonwealths, which say outright or imply that the legislative power depends on private men or subordinate judges. I shall give two examples of such opinions. Some have written •that the only controller of the common law is the parliament, which is true only where a parliament has the sovereign power and can't be assembled or dissolved except by

their own discretion. (For if anyone else has a right to dissolve them, he also has a right to control them, and consequently to control their controllings.) And if there is no such right for them to dissolve themselves, then the controller of laws is not *parliamentum* but *rex in parlamento* [= 'not parliament, but the king in parliament']. And where a parliament is sovereign, it can't give legislative power to some other assembly. Even if for some purpose it brings together from the countries subject to it ever so many men who are ever so wise, nobody will believe that such an assembly has thereby acquired a legislative power. My second example: some have written that the two arms of a commonwealth are *force* and *justice*, the former belonging to the king and the latter placed in the hands of the parliament. As if a commonwealth could hold together when its *force* was in hands which *justice* didn't have the authority to command and govern!

7. Our legal writers agree that law can never be against reason, and that *the law* should be identified not with 'the letter of the law' (that is, with every construction that can be put upon it), but with what accords with the intention of the legislator. This is true; but there is a question about whose reason it is that shall be accepted as law. They don't mean that any private person's reason generates law, for then there would be as much contradiction in the laws as there is in the schools! Sir Edward Coke ties law to an acquired perfection of reason, achieved (as his was) by long study, observation, and experience. But this is wrong; for long study might increase and confirm erroneous judgments; and when men build on false grounds, the more they build the greater is the ruin. Also, even when men have studied and observed for equal amounts of time, and with equal diligence, they are certain to end up with reasons and resolutions that conflict. What makes the law, therefore, is not that *juris prudentia* or wisdom of subordinate judges, but rather the reason and command of this artificial man of ours, the commonwealth; and because the commonwealth is just one person, the representative, there can't easily arise any contradiction in the laws; and when one does occur, that same reason can remove it by interpretation or alteration. In all courts of justice, the sovereign - which is the person of the commonwealth - is the one who judges; any subordinate judge ought to have regard to the reason that moved his sovereign to make such a law, so that his judgment can be according to that reason. If it *is*, then it is his sovereign's judgment; and if it *isn't*, then the judgment is his own, and is unjust.

8. The command of the commonwealth is *law* only to those who are equipped to take it in. That is because the law is a command, and a command is a declaration, or expression of the commander's will, by voice, writing, or some other sufficient evidence of his will. There is no law over mentally deficient people, children, or madmen, any more than there is over brute beasts. None of those can deserve the label 'just' or 'unjust', because they have never had power to make any covenant, or to understand the consequences of one, and consequently they have never undertaken to authorize the actions of any sovereign - which is what must be done by those who make a commonwealth for themselves. Just as those who have been deprived by nature or accident of the ability to take in any laws are excused for not obeying the laws, so also someone who has been deprived by some accident that was not his fault of the means to take in some particular law is excused for not obeying it. Strictly speaking, to him it is *not* a law. So we must consider now what evidence and signs are sufficient for knowing what the law is, that is to say, knowing what is the will of the monarch or sovereign assembly.

First, if it is a law that binds all the subjects without exception, and is not written or otherwise published in places where they can see it, it is a law of nature. For something that men are to recognize as a law, not on the strength of other men's words but each on the basis of his own reason, must be agreeable to the reason of all men; and the only law that can be *that* is the

law of nature. So the laws of nature needn't be published or proclaimed, because they are all contained in this one sentence that is approved by all the world: *Do not do to anyone else something that you think it would be unreasonable for someone to do to you.*

•Secondly, if it is a law that binds only some *kind* of men, or only one particular man, and is not written or published in verbal form, then it too is a law of nature; and the evidence and signs that make it known are the very ones that mark out, among men in general, the person or kind of person whom this law binds. For any law that is not written or somehow published by the legislator can only be known by the reason of him who is to obey it, and so it is a natural law as well as a civil one. For example, if the sovereign employs a public minister without instructing him in writing what to do, the minister is obliged to take the dictates of reason as instructions; if the sovereign makes someone a judge, the judge should realize that his judgments ought to be according to the reason of his sovereign, and since that is always understood to be equity, he is bound to it by the law of nature; or if the sovereign appoints an ambassador, the ambassador is (in everything not covered by his written instructions) to regard as *instruction* anything that reason tells him is the most conducing to his sovereign's interests; and similarly with all other ministers of the sovereignty, public and private. All these instructions of natural reason can be brought under one name 'fidelity', which is a branch of natural justice.

It belongs to the essence of all laws (except the law of nature) to be made known to everyone who will be obliged to obey them, by speech or writing or some other act that is known to come from the sovereign authority. For the will of someone else can't be understood except through his own word or act, or by conjectures based on 'what one knows about' his scope and purpose; and when it's the person of the commonwealth, the purpose should be supposed always to conform to equity and reason. In ancient time, before writing was in common use, the laws were often put into verse so that uneducated people, taking pleasure in singing or reciting them, might the more easily remember them. [The paragraph concludes with two examples of this, drawn from the old testament.]

It is not enough that the law be written and published; there must also be clear signs that it comes from the will of the sovereign. For private men, when they have (or think they have) enough force to secure their unjust plans and carry them safely through to their ambitious goals, may without legislative authority publish as 'laws' anything they like. So there needs to be not only a declaration of the law but also sufficient signs of who the author is and of his authority. In every commonwealth it is supposed to be obvious who the author (the legislator) is, because he is the sovereign, who is supposed to be sufficiently known by everyone, as he was made to be sovereign by the consent of everyone. No excuse 'for law-breaking' can be based on ignorance of where the sovereignty is placed. It is true that most men, when their memory of the first constitution of their commonwealth has faded away, are sufficiently ignorant and complacent not to give a thought to the question of •whose power defends them against their enemies, and protects the fruits of their labour, and sets things to rights when they have been wronged; still, anyone who *does* give it a thought must realize •who it is.

Furthermore, it is a dictate of natural reason, and consequently an evident law of nature, that no man ought to weaken the power whose protection against others he has himself demanded or knowingly accepted. Therefore, whatever bad men may suggest 'to the contrary', no man can be in any doubt about who is sovereign - or if he is, it is by his own fault. Any such doubt concerns the evidence of the authority derived from the sovereign, and that can be removed by knowledge of the public registers, public counsels, public ministers, and public seals, by which all

laws are sufficiently verified. I say *verified*, not *authorized*; for the things I have listed are merely the testimony and record of the law, not its authority, which consists purely in the command of the sovereign.

So if a man has a question about whether a certain action wrongs someone, where this depends on •the law of nature, i.e. on common equity, the judgment of the judge who has been given authority to hear such cases is a sufficient verification of the law of nature in that individual case. For though the advice of a legal scholar may be useful for avoiding contention, it is still only *advice*; it is for the judge to hear the controversy and *tell* men what the law is.

But when the question is about whether a certain action would under •a written law wrong someone or constitute a crime, every man *can* if he wants to, before committing the proposed action, consult the law-books or have someone consult them for him in order to learn whether the action would be a crime or a wrongdoing. Indeed he *ought* to do so; for when a man is unsure whether the act he is planning is just or unjust, and can inform himself if he wants to, the action is unlawful ·if he goes ahead and performs it without further enquiry·. For every man is obliged to do his best to inform himself of all written laws that may concern his own future actions.

Similarly with someone who thinks he has been wronged in a case that falls under the written law which he *could* look up for himself or have someone look up for him: if he complains before consulting the law, he acts unjustly and reveals a disposition to make trouble for others rather than to demand his own right.

If there is a question about obedience to a public officer, his authority is sufficiently verified by seeing his commission (with the public seal) and hearing it read, or by having the means to be informed of it if you want to.

With the legislator known, and the laws sufficiently published either in writing or by the light of nature, there is one further very important requirement for them to be obligatory. For the nature of the law consists not in the letter of the law but in the meaning, the authentic interpretation of the law, which is the sense of the legislator. So the interpretation of all laws depends on the sovereign authority, and interpreters must be appointed by the sovereign, to whom alone the subject owes obedience. Otherwise, an ingenious interpreter could make the law bear a sense contrary to that of the sovereign, by which means the interpreter would become the legislator.

All laws, written, and unwritten, need interpretation. The unwritten law of nature is easy to understand for those who impartially and coolly make use of their natural reason; so violators of it have no excuse. And yet, because most if not all people are sometimes blinded by self-love or some other passion, the law of nature has become the most obscure of all laws, and has consequently the greatest need for able interpreters.

*Short* written laws are easily misinterpreted because of the different meanings of a word or two; *long* ones are ·even· more obscure because of the different meanings of many words. So that no written law, whether expressed in few words or in many, can be well understood without a perfect understanding of the ends [= ‘purposes’] for which the law was made, and the knowledge of those ends lies with the legislator. [In the next sentence, Hobbes uses the word ‘ends’ in a pun, referring to the ends of a cord.] For him, therefore, any knot in the law can be dealt with: either by finding out the ends ·of the cord· and untying it, or by using his legislative power to make new ends of his own choice, as Alexander did with his sword when he sliced through the Gordian knot.

The interpretation of the laws of nature in a commonwealth doesn’t depend on books of moral philosophy. If a writer doesn’t have the authority of the commonwealth, whatever authority

he does have is not enough to make his opinions *law*, however true they may be. What I have written in this book concerning the moral virtues and how they are needed for procuring and maintaining peace is clearly true; but its truth makes it *law* only because in all commonwealths in the world it is part of the civil law. For although it is naturally reasonable, it is the sovereign power that makes it law. Otherwise - that is, if the natural law were to be definitively found in books - it would be a great error to call the laws of nature 'unwritten law', when we see so many volumes about it published, and in them so many contradictions of one another and of themselves.

The interpretation of the law of nature is the judgment of the judge who has been assigned by the sovereign authority to hear and determine any controversies that depend on the law of nature; and it consists in the application of the law to the present case. For in the act of judging, all the judge does is to consider whether the demand of the party is consistent with natural reason and equity, so his judgment is the interpretation of the law of nature. This interpretation is authentic not because it is his private judgment but because he gives it by authority of the sovereign, which turns it into the sovereign's judgment, which for that time is the law. . . .

But any judge, whether subordinate or sovereign, can err in a judgment of equity - that is, in a judgment about the •law of nature•. If a judge does err, and then in a similar later case he finds it more consistent with equity to give a contrary judgment, he is obliged to do that. No man's error becomes his own law, nor obliges him to persist in it. Nor (for the same reason) does an error concerning the law of nature become a law to other judges, even if they are sworn to follow it. If a wrong judgment is given by authority of the sovereign in connection with mutable law (that is, •civil law•), and if the sovereign knows about this and allows it, this creates *a new law* covering all cases where every little circumstance is the same as in the case where the error occurred; but errors in connection with immutable laws such as the laws of nature are not laws - to the judge who made the error or to other judges - in similar cases for ever after. Princes succeed one another, one judge goes and another comes, indeed heaven and earth may pass away, but not the least fragment of the law of nature shall pass, for it is the eternal law of God. Therefore all the judgments that previous judges have ever made cannot unite to make a law that is contrary to natural equity; nor can any examples of former judges warrant an unreasonable sentence, or spare the present judge the trouble of studying what is equitable (in the case before him) from the principles of his own natural reason.

For example, it is against the law of nature to punish the innocent, and an innocent person is one who stands trial and is acknowledged as innocent by the judge. Now consider this case:

A man is accused of a capital crime; and, seeing the power and malice of some enemy and the frequent corruption and partiality of judges, he runs away because he is afraid of the outcome. Eventually he is arrested and brought to a legal trial, where he makes it clear enough that he was not guilty of the crime of which he had been accused. Although he is acquitted of that, he is nevertheless condemned to lose his goods.

This is plainly a case of condemning the innocent. I say therefore that this can't be an interpretation of a law of nature anywhere in the world, and can't be made a law by the judgments of previous judges who had done the same. Whoever judged it first judged unjustly; and no injustice can serve as a pattern of judgment for succeeding judges. A written law may forbid innocent men to flee, and they may be punished for fleeing; but that fleeing because one is afraid of being wronged should be taken as a 'presumption' of guilt after a man has been judicially

cleared of the crime is contrary to the nature of a presumption. Once judgment has been given, there is no further room for *presumptions*.

Yet this is said by a great lawyer for the common law of England [Sir Edward Coke, *Institutes of Law*; Coke was a high court judge under Elizabeth and James I.] . He writes:

Suppose an innocent man is accused of felony, and runs away out of fear of the consequences of the accusation, and eventually is judicially acquitted of the felony. If it is found that he fled because of the accusation of felony; he shall, despite his innocence, forfeit all his goods, chattels, debts, and duties. For the law will not allow any evidence opposing the forfeiture to outweigh the presumption in law based on his flight. [‘Evidence’ here and below replaces ‘proof’ in the originals.]

Here you see an innocent man being condemned, *after having been judicially acquitted*, to lose all the goods he has. No written law forbade him to flee, but the forfeiture of his goods is based on ‘a presumption in law’! •If the law takes his flight to be a basis for a presumption of the fact - that is, a presumption that he was guilty of the act which was charged-, which was a capital offence - the sentence ought to have been not mere forfeiture of goods but death. And •if it wasn’t a presumption of the fact, why ought he to lose his goods? So this is no law of England; and the basis for the condemnation is not a presumption of law but a presumption of the judges! Furthermore, it is against law to say that no evidence shall be admitted against a presumption of law. For all judges, sovereign and subordinate, if they refuse to *hear evidence* refuse to *do justice*; for even if the final judgment is just, judges that condemn without hearing the evidence that is offered are unjust judges; and their ‘presumption’ is mere prejudice. No man should bring *that* with him to the seat of justice, whatever previous judgments or examples he claims to be following.

There are other things like this, where men’s judgments have been perverted by trusting to precedents; but this one is enough to show that although the judgment of the judge is a law to •the party pleading, it is not law to •any judge that follows him in that office.

Similarly, when there is a question about the meaning of written laws, the man who writes a commentary on them is not their *interpreter*. For commentaries are often open to even more questions and difficulties than the text is; so they need commentaries in their turn, and there will be no end of such ‘interpretations’. And therefore, unless the sovereign authorizes an interpreter whose interpretations the subordinate judges are to accept, the interpreter will have to be the ordinary judges (just as they are for cases of the unwritten law). . . .

In written laws men distinguish •the letter of the law from the •sentence [here = ‘intended meaning’] of the law; and when ‘the letter’ means ‘whatever can be learned from the bare words’ it is a good distinction. For most words are either ambiguous in themselves or have metaphorical as well as literal uses; . . . . but the law has only one sense. But if ‘the letter’ means ‘the literal sense’, then the letter of the law is identical with the sentence (or intention) of the law. For the literal sense is what the legislator intended should be meant by the letter of the law. Now the intention of the legislator is always supposed to be equity: for a judge to think otherwise of the sovereign would be a great insult. Therefore, if the word of the law doesn’t fully authorize a reasonable judgment, the judge ought to fill the gap with the law of nature, or in a difficult case to postpone judgment until he gets more ample authority. For example, a written law ordains that someone who is •thrust out of his house by force shall be restored by force; it happens that a man by negligence leaves his house empty, and upon returning to it is •kept out by force - a situation that is not addressed by any special law. It is evident that this case falls under the same law, •so

that force can be used to give him occupancy of his house again; for otherwise there is no legal remedy for him at all, which we can suppose is against the intention of the legislator.

Another example: the word of the law commands the judge to judge according to the evidence; now, suppose a man is falsely accused of an act which the judge himself saw done by someone else, and not by the man who is accused; and suppose also that there are witnesses whose testimony constitutes *some* evidence that the accused man is guilty. In this case it would not be right for the judge to follow the letter of the law and condemn an innocent man, or to flout the letter of the law by delivering an acquittal against the evidence of the witnesses. What he should do, rather, is to arrange for the sovereign to appoint someone else as judge in this case, and present himself as a witness. So that a disadvantage created by the bare words of a written law may lead him to a better interpretation of what the law means; but no disadvantage can warrant a judgment that goes against the law, for a judge of right and wrong is not judge of what is advantageous or disadvantageous to the commonwealth.

The abilities required in a good interpreter of the law - that is, in a good judge - are not the same as those of a lawyer, namely book-learning about the laws. A judge ought to base his views about the *facts* purely on what the witnesses say, and to base his views about the *law* purely on the statutes and constitutions of the sovereign - not as learned about from law books, but as formally presented to him by parties to the court case or declared to him by people who are available to him during the court case, and who have authority from the sovereign power to declare them. He need not be concerned in advance about what he shall judge; for he will learn from witnesses what he is to say about the facts, and what he is to say regarding the law he will learn from those who present points of law in their pleadings, and from those who by authority interpret the law for him on the spot (not in advance). The Lords of Parliament in England were judges, and most difficult cases have been heard and settled by them; yet few of them had done much study of the laws, and fewer still were lawyers by profession; and though they consulted with lawyers who were appointed to be in attendance for that purpose, they - the Lords - alone had authority to pass judgment.

Similarly, in ordinary trials of legal matters twelve men of the common people are the judges, and pass judgments not only on the facts but also on the law, simply giving a verdict *for the complainant* or *for the defendant*. And in criminal cases these twelve men determine not only whether or not the alleged act was done, but also whether it is *murder, homicide, felony, assault*, and the like, which are judgments of law. Because they are not supposed to know the law of themselves, there is someone who has authority to inform them about it as it applies to the particular case that is before them. But if they don't judge according to what he tells them, that does not make them liable to any penalty, unless it is shown that they did it against their consciences or had been corrupted by bribes.

The things that make a good judge, or good interpreter of the laws, are the following. •First, a right understanding of that principal law of nature called *equity*. Such an understanding comes not from reading other men's writings but from the goodness of a man's own natural reason and meditation; so it is presumed to be greatest in those who have had most leisure in which to think about equity, and the most inclination to do so. •Secondly, a disregard for unnecessary riches and ranks. •Thirdly, the ability when judging to set aside all fear, anger, hatred, love, and compassion. •Fourthly and lastly, patience in listening, diligent attention to what one hears, and memory to retain, digest and apply what one has heard.

Laws have been distinguished and classified in various different ways. There is nothing wrong with that; for the classification of laws depends not on nature but on the purpose of the writer. [Hobbes now lists the ‘seven sorts of civil laws’ distinguished by Justinian; not included in the present text.]

Another division of laws is into *natural* and *positive*. •Natural laws are the ones that have been laws from all eternity. As well as ‘natural’, they are also called ‘moral’; they underlie the moral virtues such as justice and equity and all habits of the mind that are conducive to peace and charity, of which I have spoken in chapters 14 and 15.

•Positive laws are the ones that have not held from eternity, but have been made laws by the will of those who had sovereign power over others. They are either written or made known to men by some other evidence of the will of their legislator.

Positive laws divide into *human* and *divine*, and human positive laws can be further divided into *distributive* and *penal*. Distributive laws are the ones that determine the rights of the subjects, telling every man what it is that enables him to acquire and keep ownership of land or goods, and gives him a right or liberty of action; and these laws speak to all the subjects. Penal laws are the ones that declare what penalty is to be inflicted on those who violate the law; they speak to the ministers and officers appointed to enforce penalties. Everyone ought to be informed about the punishments that have been set in advance for his transgression, but the law is a *command*, and the command is addressed not to the delinquent (who can’t be expected to dutifully punish himself!) but to public ministers appointed to see that the penalty is enforced. . . .

Natural laws are eternal and universal, so they are all divine; and the distinction between *human* and *divine* applies only to positive laws. Divine positive laws are commandments of God - not from all eternity and addressed not to all men but only to a certain people or to certain individuals - which are declared to be such by those whom God has authorized to declare them. How can we know that a given man has authority to declare what are these positive laws of God? God can command a man in a supernatural way to pass on laws to other men. But it is of the essence of law that someone who is to be bound by a law shall be assured of the authority of the person who declares it, and we have no *natural* way of seeing that the authority comes from God. So

- how can a man without supernatural revelation be assured that what the declarer of the law has received *was* a revelation? and

- how can he be bound to obey them [= these supposed divine positive laws]?

As to the first question, how a man can *be assured* that someone else had a revelation other than through a revelation of his own, it is obvious that he cannot. We may be induced to *believe* that someone had such a revelation, from •the miracles we see him do, or from seeing •the extraordinary sanctity of his life, or from seeing the extraordinary wisdom or •extraordinary fortunateness of his actions, all of which are marks of God’s extraordinary favour. But they are not assured evidences [= ‘proof positive’] of special revelation. •Miracles are marvellous works, but what is marvellous to one person may not be marvellous to another; •sanctity can be feigned; and •the visible fortunatenesses of this world are usually produced by God through natural and ordinary causes rather than through supernatural revelation. So no man can *infallibly know* through natural reason that another man has had a supernatural revelation of God’s will. All we can have is a *belief*, more or less strong depending on the strength of the evidence.

But for the second question - how can he be bound to obey them? - it is not so hard. It is obvious why we ought to obey those who proclaim things as divine and supernatural - why we



ought to obey, that is, sometimes and in some places, namely where the commonwealth has commanded that the things those people proclaim be regarded as laws. For by natural law, which is also divine, we are to *obey* the commonwealth in everything it commands, though we are not commanded by natural law to *believe*. No-one can be bound or obliged to believe anything, for men's beliefs and inner thoughts are not subject to commands, but only to the operation of God, whether ordinary or extraordinary. When we have faith that something is a supernatural law, we are not *obeying* that law but only *assenting* to it; and this assent is not a duty that we perform for God but a gift which he freely makes to whomever he pleases, just as *unbelief* is not a breach of any of his laws, but rather a rejection all of them except the natural laws.

What I am saying here will be made clearer by the examples and testimonies concerning this point in holy Scripture. The covenant that God made with Abraham (in a supernatural manner) was this: 'This is the covenant which thou shalt observe between me and thee and thy descendants after thee' (*Genesis* 17:10). Abraham's descendants didn't have this revelation; indeed, they didn't yet exist; yet they are a party to the covenant and are bound to obey what Abraham would declare to them as God's law; and this couldn't be so except in virtue of the obedience they owed to their parents. . . . [A similar second example, from *Genesis* 18:18-19, is omitted from the present text.]

At Mount Sinai, Moses went alone up to God, the people having been threatened with death if they came near; yet they were bound to obey everything that Moses declared to them as God's law. The only basis there can be for this is their own act of submission: 'Speak thou to us, and we will hear thee; but let not God speak to us, lest we die' [*Exodus* 20:19].

These two examples show clearly enough that in a commonwealth a subject who has not received *for himself in particular* a certain and assured revelation concerning the will of God should obey the commands of the commonwealth as though *they* were based on such a revelation. And he should not regard anything else as a divine revelation. For if men were at liberty to take their own dreams and fancies to be God's commandments, or the dreams and fancies of other private men, there would hardly be any two men who agreed on what *is* God's commandment, and yet because of these views of theirs they would all despise the commandments of the commonwealth.

I conclude, therefore, that in everything that is not contrary to the moral law (that is to say, contrary to the law of nature) all subjects are bound to obey as divine law whatever the laws of the commonwealth say is divine law. You can see that this is obviously right by thinking about it: whatever is not against the law of nature can be made law in the name of those who have the sovereign power, and there is no reason why men should be *less* obliged by it when it is presented in the name of God! Besides, in no country in the world are men permitted to claim as commandments of God anything that hasn't been declared as such by the commonwealth. Christian states punish those who revolt from Christian religion, and all other states punish those who that set up any religion the state has forbidden. Why would a state *forbid* a particular religion? Because the alternative would be unacceptable religious freedom: in whatever is not regulated by the commonwealth every man can equally enjoy his liberty - that is a matter of equity, which is the law of nature, and therefore an eternal law of God.

Laws are also divided into *fundamental* and *not fundamental*, though I have never found in any author a coherent account of what 'fundamental law' means. Still, we can very reasonably distinguish laws in that manner - or, more accurately, under that terminology.

For in any commonwealth a fundamental law is one the removal of which would lead to that commonwealth's failing, being utterly demolished like a building whose foundation is destroyed. Thus, a •fundamental law is one which binds subjects to uphold every power that is given to the sovereign (whether a monarch or a sovereign assembly) and is needed for the commonwealth to survive - such as the power of ·making· war and peace, of judicature, of election of officers, and of doing whatever the sovereign thinks necessary for the public good. •Not fundamental is any law which could be repealed without that leading to the collapse of the commonwealth - such as the laws concerning controversies between subject and subject. That completes what I have to say about the classification of laws.

[The chapter ends with two paragraphs in which Hobbes complains of widespread sloppiness in the use of some legal terms: people don't distinguish 'civil right' from 'civil law', he says, or 'law' from 'charter'. This material is not included here.]

## Chapter 27. Crimes, excuses, and extenuations

Not only is every breach of a law a *sin*, but so also is any contempt of the legislator [= 'any disregard for the legislator, treating him as negligible']. For such contempt is a breach of all his laws at once. So it may consist not only in doing or saying something that the laws forbid, or not doing what the law commands, but also in intending or having the purpose to break a law. For intending to break the law is some degree of contempt of the person whose role it is to ensure that the law is obeyed. ·That is a point about *intending*, not about *imagining*·. The law that says *Thou shalt not covet* is not broken when you take delight in merely *imagining* owning another man's goods, servants, or wife, without intending to take them from him by force or fraud. Again, suppose there is someone from whose life you expect nothing but damage and displeasure: for you to take pleasure in *imagining or dreaming* of his death is not a sin, though it would be sinful for you to *decide to do* something that would be likely to bring about his death. Enjoying the mere thought of something that you would enjoy if it were real - that is a passion so bound up with the nature of man and of every other living creature that if *it* were a sin then *being a man* would be a sin! This line of thought has led me to think that some moralists have been too severe, both to themselves and others, in maintaining that the first motions of the mind (though restrained by the fear of God) can be sins. But I admit it is safer to err in that way than in the opposite direction.

A CRIME is a sin that consists in doing or saying something that the law forbids, or not doing something that the law has commanded. Thus, every crime is a sin, but not every sin is a crime. To intend to steal or kill is a sin, even if it never shows up in words or deeds, for God, who sees the thoughts of a man, can charge him with having such an intention; but until it appears in something done or said, providing evidence of intention that could be put before a human judge, it is not called a crime. . . .

From this relation of sin to the law, and of crime to the civil law, ·three things· can be inferred. First, that •where law ceases, sin ceases. But the law of nature ·cannot cease, because it is eternal; so violation of covenants, ingratitude, arrogance, and all acts contrary to any moral virtue can never cease to be sin. Secondly, that •where civil law ceases, crimes cease. This is because ·in the absence of civil law· the only law remaining is the law of nature, so there is no place for accusation, every man being his own judge, accused only by his own conscience and cleared ·only· by the uprightness of his own intention. When his intention is right, his act ·in having it· is no sin; if his intention is wrong, his having it is sin but not crime. Thirdly, •when the sovereign power ceases crime also ceases; for where there is no such power there is no protection

to be had from the law, and therefore everyone may protect himself by his own power . . . . But this is to be understood only of those who haven't themselves contributed to the taking away of the ·sovereign· power that protected them; for that was a crime from the beginning.

The source of every crime is some •defect of the understanding, or some •error in reasoning, or some •sudden force of the passions. ·I shall discuss these in turn·.

•Defect in the understanding is ignorance, which is of three sorts: of the law, of the sovereign, and of the penalty. Ignorance of the law of nature excuses no man, because every man that has arrived at the use of reason is supposed to know that

he ought not to do to anyone else something that he would not be willing to have done to himself.

Therefore, wherever a man comes from, if he does anything contrary to *that* law it is a crime. If a man comes here from India and persuades men here to accept a new religion, or teaches them anything that is likely to get them to disobey the laws of this country, however sure he is of the truth of what he teaches he commits a crime and can justly be punished for it; not only because his doctrine is false, but also because he is doing something that he would not agree to in someone else - someone, that is, who came from *here* to his country and tried to alter the religion *there*. But ignorance of the civil law excuses a man in a foreign country until the law has been declared to him, because no civil law is binding on a man until it has been declared to him.

Similarly, if the civil law of a man's own country has not been declared well enough to enable him to know it if he wants to, ignorance ·of the civil law· is a good excuse for an action which breaks that law but not the law of nature; otherwise ignorance of the civil law is not an effective excuse.

Ignorance of the sovereign power in the country where a man ordinarily lives is not an excuse, because he ought to be aware of the power by which he has been protected there.

When the law has been declared, ignorance of the penalty excuses no man; ·here is why·. If a law were not accompanied by fear of a penalty for breaking it, it wouldn't *be* a law, but mere pointless words. ·So when a man breaks the law·, he accepts the penalty, even though he doesn't know what it is; because anyone who voluntarily performs an action accepts all the known consequences of it, and in every commonwealth punishment is a known consequence of the violation of the laws. If the punishment is already determined by the law, the law-breaker is subject to that; if it is not, then is he subject to arbitrary punishment [= 'punishment that is *chosen in this case*' by the relevant authority]. For it is reasonable that someone who does wrong with no other curb than whatever is set by *his own will* should suffer punishment with no other curb than whatever is set by *the will of the sovereign*, that is, him whose law he has violated.

But when a penalty has been assigned to the crime in the law itself, or has usually been inflicted in similar cases, then the delinquent is excused from a greater penalty. For if the foreknown punishment wasn't severe enough to *deter men from* the action, it was an *encouragement to perform* it; because when men compare the benefit ·to them· of their injustice with the harm ·to them· of their punishment, they choose what appears best for themselves - making this choice by the necessity of nature. So when they are punished more than the law had formerly determined, or more than others had been punished for the same crime, it is the law that tempted them and - ·it now turns out· - deceived them.

No law that was made after an action was performed can make it a crime; because a *positive law* can't be attended to before it is made, and so it can't be obligatory before it is made. (If the action was a breach of the *law of nature*, the law *was* in force before the action was

performed!) But when someone breaks a law that has already been declared, he is liable to the penalty that is ordained *later*, as long as no lesser penalty has been made known earlier, by writing or by example. The reason for this is the same as for what I said in the preceding paragraph.

•Error in reasoning is erroneous opinion. This makes men prone to violate the laws in three ways. **First**, by presumption of false principles. For example, men observe:

how in all countries and at all times, unjust actions have been authorized by the force and the victories of those who have committed them; that powerful men have broken through the cobweb laws of their country; and that the only ones regarded as criminals have been men of the weaker sort and ones who have failed in their enterprises;

and are led by these observations to accept as principles, and as premises for their reasoning, that: justice is only an empty word,

whatever a man can get by his own labour and risk-taking is his own,  
something that all nations do cannot be unjust,

examples from earlier times are good arguments for doing the same again,

and many more of that kind. If these are accepted, no act can be a crime in itself; for an act to be a crime it would have to be *made* to be one, not by the law but by the outcome of it for those who commit it; and the same act would be virtuous or vicious as fortune pleases, so that what Marius makes a crime Sylla will make meritorious and Caesar will turn back into a crime again, with the law remaining unchanged throughout all this; which would lead to perpetual disturbance of the peace of the commonwealth.

**Secondly**, by false teachers who either misinterpret the law of nature in a way that makes it conflict with the civil law, or present doctrines of their own or traditions of earlier times that are inconsistent with the duty of a subject, and teach them as *laws*.

**Thirdly**, by erroneous inferences from true principles. This commonly happens to men who hastily rush to conclusions and decisions about what to do, such as people who have a high opinion of their own understanding, and believe that things of this nature - 'practical decisions in concrete situations' - don't demand time and study, but require only common experience and a good natural intelligence, which everyone thinks he has. (In contrast with that, the 'theoretical-knowledge of right and wrong is no more difficult than practical knowledge of what to do in concrete situations', yet no man will claim to have *it* without great and long study!) None of those defects in reasoning can *excuse* (though some may *extenuate*) a crime by any man who claims to be managing his own affairs, much less by one who undertakes a public charge; because 'in claiming to *manage* something' they claim to have reason, and cannot base an excuse on their 'supposed' lack of it.

[The Latin version, in place of the preceding paragraph, has the following very different one:

**Thirdly**, crimes are born from bad reason (though from *true* principles) when those who think *rightly* about the doctrines of the faith use violence against those who think differently, on the pretext that they - the latter - are in error, calling their own violence 'zeal for God'. I would like to challenge one of these men as follows:

'They err, granted. But what is that to you?'

'They corrupt the people.'

'What is that to you? The well-being of the people is committed not to you but to the king.'

'But it concerns me as a subject of the king.'

'Teach, then.'

‘I do teach, but with no result.’

‘Then you have done your duty; stop teaching and make an accusation, for whatever further violence you do is a crime.’

The English version now resumes.]

•One of the passions that most frequently cause crime is vainglory, a foolish overrating of one’s own worth; as though *worth* were an effect of intelligence or wealth or lineage or some other natural quality not depending on the will of those who have the sovereign authority! From vainglory comes a presumption that the punishments set by the laws and extended generally to all subjects ought not to be inflicted on them - ‘the vainglorious ones’ - as rigorously as they are on poor, obscure, and simple men.

And so it comes about, often, that people who value themselves on the basis of how wealthy they are embark on crimes, hoping to escape punishment by corrupting public justice or obtaining pardon by money or other rewards.

And those who have many powerful relatives, and popular men who have gained a reputation amongst the multitude, are encouraged to violate the laws by their hope of overcoming, by sheer weight of numbers, the power whose job it is to enforce them.

And those who have a great (and false!) opinion of their own wisdom take it upon themselves to criticize actions and question the authority of those who govern; they make speeches which unsettle the laws to the point where nothing is to count as a crime unless *their* purposes require it to be so. These same men are apt to commit any crime that involves skill and the deception of their neighbours, because they think their schemes are too subtle to be detected. These (I repeat) are effects of a false presumption of one’s own wisdom. But of those who *start* the disturbance of commonwealth (which can never happen without a civil war) very few are left alive long enough to see their new plans established; so that the ‘benefit’ of their crimes comes to posterity, and to those who would least have wanted it; which shows that they - ‘the instigators of the disturbance’ - were not as wise as they thought they were. As for those who ‘try to’ deceive others in the hope of not being observed: they often deceive ‘only’ themselves (the darkness in which they believe they lie hidden being nothing but their own blindness), and are no wiser than children who think they can hide everything by closing their own eyes.

Vainglorious men (unless they are also timid) are all subject to anger, because they are more likely than other people are to interpret ordinary conversational freedom as disrespect; and there are few crimes that can’t be produced by anger.

As for the passions of •hate, •lust, •ambition and covetousness, what crimes they are apt to produce is so obvious to every man’s experience and understanding that I needn’t say anything about them, except this: Those passions are infirmities that are so firmly tied to the nature of man and of all other living creatures that their ‘criminal’ effects can’t be hindered except by an extraordinary use of reason or constant severity in punishing them. For in the things that men •hate, they find a continual and unavoidable annoyance, so that a man’s only alternative to everlasting patience is the removal of the power of whatever it is that annoys him. The former is difficult, and the latter is often impossible without violating some law. •Ambition and covetousness are passions that are also constantly present and pressing, whereas reason is not constantly present to resist them; so they have their effects ‘in possibly criminal behaviour’ as soon as there is some hope of getting away with it. As for •lust: what it lacks in durability it makes up for in violent strength, which suffices to outweigh any fear of punishment, when the punishment is mild or is not certain to come.

The passion that *least* inclines men to break the laws is *fear*. Indeed, fear is the only thing that *deters* men from breaking the laws when it seems that there is profit or pleasure to be got from breaking them. Some men are exceptions to this - ones with noble natures.

·Although fear often deters from crime·, in many cases it can lead to crime. ·That would not be so if fear were always a justifying excuse, so that an action committed out of fear never counted as a crime; but that is not how things stand·. For not every fear justifies the action it produces. The only kind that does is what we call ‘bodily fear’ - fear of bodily hurt from which a man can’t see how to escape except by the action ·whose criminal status is in question·. A man is assaulted, fears •immediate death, and can’t see how to escape except by wounding the man who is assaulting him; if he wounds him fatally, this is no crime, because no man is supposed (at the making of a commonwealth) to have abandoned the defence of his life or limbs in situations where the law can’t arrive in time to help him. But to kill a man because from his actions or his threatenings I have evidence that •he will kill me when he can *is* a crime, because in this case I have time and means to ask for protection from the sovereign power.

One citizen hears from another words full of insult, which nevertheless are not punishable by any law; and, fearing that unless he avenges himself by arms he will be considered timid, he provokes his enemy to combat and kills him. This is a crime, and is not excused by fear of this kind. Why? Because the commonwealth wills that public words, i.e. laws, count for more with citizens than the words of a private citizen, to whose words it has therefore made no effort to attach a penalty. It holds that those who cannot even tolerate *words* are the most cowardly of all men.

A man may who is afraid of spirits, either through his own superstition or through giving too much credit to other men who tell him of ·their· strange dreams and visions, may be made to believe that spirits will hurt him for doing or omitting various things that the laws says are not to be done or not to be omitted; and such an action or omission is a crime, and is not to be excused by his fear of spirits. For (as I showed in chapter 2) dreams are naturally just the fancies that remain in sleep from the impressions that our senses had taken in when we were awake. ·And some ‘visions’ are really only dreams·: a man may for some reason not be sure that he has been asleep, so he has had what seem ·to him· to be real visions. So someone who presumes to break the law on the strength of his own or someone else’s dream or purported vision, or of any idea of the power of invisible spirits other than ideas permitted by the commonwealth, departs from the law of nature, which is certainly an offence; and he follows the imagery of his own or some other private man’s brain, of which he can never know whether it signifies something or nothing, nor whether the other person who reported his own dream was telling the truth or not. By the law of nature, if *any* private man were permitted to do this then *everyone* should be permitted; but in that case no law could be made to hold, and so the commonwealth would be completely dissolved.

From these different sources of crimes it is already clear that the ancient Stoics were wrong in saying that all crimes are of the same alloy [= ‘are fundamentally the same’]. As well as EXCUSES, by which what seemed to be a crime is proved not to be one after all, there is EXTENUATION, by which what seemed to be a great crime is made to be a lesser one. All crimes equally deserve the name of ‘injustice’, just as all deviation from a straight line is equally crookedness, as the Stoics rightly observed; but it doesn’t follow that all crimes are *equally* unjust, any more than that all crooked lines are equally crooked! The Stoics, not seeing this, held it to be as great a crime to kill a hen against the law as to kill one’s father.

What totally excuses an action and takes away from it the nature of a crime has to be something that at the same time takes away the obligation of the law. For an act that is performed against the law, if the agent is obliged by the law, just *is* a crime.

The lack of means to know the law totally excuses, because a law that a man has no way of learning about is not binding on him. But lack of diligence in enquiring into •the civil law• does not count as a lack of means. As for •the laws of nature•: no man who claims to have reason enough to manage his own affairs can be supposed to lack means to know the laws of nature, because they are known by the reason he claims to have; only children and madmen are excused from offences against the natural law.

Where a man through no fault of his own is a captive of an enemy (or when his means of living is in the power of the enemy), the •civil• law no longer binds him. He must obey his enemy, or die; and consequently such obedience is not a crime, for no man is forbidden (when the protection of the law fails) to protect himself as best he can.

If the terror of immediate death forces a man to do something against the law, he is totally excused, because no law can oblige a man to abandon his own preservation. Even if such a law were binding, the man could reason thus: 'If I don't do it I shall die right now; if I do it, I shall die later through being put to death for this crime'; so by doing it I gain some lengthening of my life'; and nature therefore insists that he act.

When a man lacks food or some other necessity of life, and can't preserve himself in any way except by some illegal act - for example, in a great famine he takes by force or stealth the food that he can't buy and no-one will give him, or in defence of his life he snatches away another man's sword - he is totally excused, for the reason given in the preceding paragraph.

[One paragraph omitted, concerning acts performed by authority of the sovereign, and ones performed by authority of someone who does not have sovereign power.]

Suppose that the man or assembly that has the sovereign power disclaims some right that is essential to the sovereignty, thereby giving to the subject some liberty inconsistent with the sovereign power, that is to say, inconsistent with the very being of a commonwealth. If the subject exercises such a liberty he •sins, and acts contrary to the duty of a subject. For all subjects ought to know what is and what is not consistent with the right of the commonwealth (because the commonwealth was instituted by the individual subjects, for their own well-being and by the consent of each one); and he ought also to know that this •newly given• liberty, insofar as it is inconsistent with the sovereignty, was granted only because the one who gave it was ignorant, and didn't see what dangers it posed to the commonwealth. But if the subject, as he proceeds to use that liberty, resists a public minister, that is •not just a sin but• a •crime. . . .

Degrees of criminality are measured on different scales: •first by the wickedness of •the frame of mind that was• the source or cause of the act; •secondly by the how likely it is to set a bad example; •thirdly by how bad its consequences were; and •fourthly by various facts about times, places, and persons that are somehow involved in the crime.

•First•: The same illegal act is a greater crime if it comes from the criminal's thinking his strength, riches, or friends are strong enough to resist the officers of the law than if it comes from a •mere• hope of not being discovered or of escaping by flight. For the presumption of *impunity through force* is a root from which grows - at all times and with all temptations - a disregard for all laws, whereas in the latter case the apprehension of danger that makes a man flee also makes him more obedient in the future.

An action that the person knows to be a crime is a greater crime than the same act coming from a false conviction that it is lawful; for he who commits it against his own conscience is relying on his force, or some other power, which encourages him to commit the same crime again; but he who commits it in error will, once the error has been shown to him, be obedient to the law.

Someone whose error comes from the authority of a publicly authorized teacher or interpreter of the law is not as much at fault as someone whose error comes from an obstinate pursuit of *his own* principles and reasoning. For ·on one hand· anything taught by a publicly authorized teacher is ·really· taught by the commonwealth itself, and is something like a law until the same authority finds fault with it; and any crime that doesn't contain within it a denial of the sovereign power, and isn't against an evident law, is totally excused by coming from such a source. Whereas ·on the other hand· someone who bases his actions on his own private judgment ought to stand or fall according to whether the actions are right or wrong.

An act of a kind that has been constantly punished in other men is a greater crime than it would be if many previous offenders had escaped punishment. For those examples are hopes of impunity that the sovereign himself has given; and because he who encourages a man to offend by giving him a hope and a presumption of mercy has a part in the offence himself, so he can't reasonably charge the offender with the whole of it.

A crime arising from a sudden passion is not so great as when it arises from long meditation; for in the former case the common infirmity of human nature provides a basis for extenuation; whereas someone who acts with premeditation has been circumspect - he has looked at

the law,  
the punishment, and  
the consequences for human society of his crime

- and in going ahead with it he has belittled *all this* and made it secondary to his own appetite. Still, no suddenness of passion suffices for a total excuse; for all the time between the man's first learning the law and his commission of the crime should be regarded as time for deliberation, because he ought to be continually engaged in correcting the lawlessness of his passions through meditation on the law

Where the law is publicly and assiduously read and interpreted to all the people, an act that breaks it is a greater crime than it would be if men were left without such instruction and had to take time out from their ordinary lives to *investigate* the law, putting in hard work with uncertain results, and getting their information about the law from people with no official standing; for in this latter case part of the fault can be attributed to ordinary human limits, but in the former case there is evident negligence, which involves a disrespectful attitude to the sovereign power.

Acts that •the law explicitly condemns but the lawmaker tacitly approves (as shown by other clear signs of his will) are lesser crimes than those same acts would be if they were •condemned by both the law and lawmaker. For the will of the law-maker is itself a law, so in this case two contradictory laws have shown up; and that would *totally* excuse the act if men were obliged to attend to the sovereign's approvals as shown by evidence other than his explicit commands. ·All they are *obliged* to attend to, however, are the explicit commands, so they are not totally excusable if they flout a command and instead follow the sovereign's will as shown in some other way·. But because punishments can flow not only from breaking this sovereign's law but also - ·as I shall show in a moment· - from observing it, *he* is a partial cause of the crime and therefore cannot reasonably blame the whole crime on the criminal. For example, •the law



condemns duels, and makes duelling an offence punishable by death; on the other hand, someone who refuses a duel to which he has been challenged is exposed to contempt and scorn for which he has no legal remedy, and in some cases will be thought by the sovereign himself to be unworthy to have any command or promotion in war. Now, all men lawfully try to obtain the good opinion of those who have the sovereign power; so if someone accepts the challenge to a duel, it is not reasonable that he should be rigorously punished, seeing that part of the fault can be laid at the door of the punisher. I say this not because I support liberty of private revenges or any other kind of disobedience, but to urge governors not to allow in an indirect way anything that they directly forbid. The examples that princes set, for those who see them, do and always did have more power to govern people's actions than the laws themselves. And although it is our duty to *do what they say, not what they do*, that duty won't ever be performed until it pleases God to enable men to follow that precept through extraordinary and supernatural grace.

The third of the four bases I mentioned for measuring the severity of a crime involved comparing crimes by the amount of harm they cause. A criminal act that does damage to many people is a worse crime than it would have been if it had hurt only a few. And one aspect of this brings in the second of the four bases, because one way of doing harm is by setting a bad example. Thus, if an action does harm not only in the present but also (by the example it sets) in the future, it is a greater crime than it would have been if it had done harm only in the present. That is because the former, is a *fertile* crime, and multiplies to bring hurt to many, whereas the latter is *barren*.

To maintain doctrines contrary to the religion established in the commonwealth is a greater fault in an authorized preacher than it is in a private person; and the same applies to living profanely or licentiously, or performing any irreligious act. Likewise, maintaining an opinion or performing an act that tends to weaken the sovereign power is a greater crime in a professional lawyer than in another man. Also, an act against the law is a greater crime in a man who has such a reputation for wisdom that his advice is taken or his actions imitated by many people than it would be in anyone else. For the former not only commits crime but teaches it as law to everyone else. And generally all crimes are made greater by the scandal they give, that is to say, by becoming stumbling-blocks to weaker people who attend less to the path they are walking along than to the light that other men carry before them.

Also acts of hostility against the present state of the commonwealth are greater crimes than the same acts performed against private men, because in the former case the damage spreads to everyone. Examples would be betraying the strengths or revealing of the secrets of the commonwealth to an enemy, also all attempts [here = 'attacks'] on the representative of the commonwealth (whether it be a monarch or an assembly), and all attempts by word or deed to lessen the authority of the sovereign (whether the present sovereign or his successors). . . .

Similarly, crimes that subvert legal judgments are greater crimes than wrongs done to one or a few persons. (For example, taking a bribe in return for giving a false judgment or false testimony is a greater crime than getting that much money (or even more) from someone through ordinary deception.) This is because the bribe-taker not only wrongs the person against whom the corrupt judgment is given, but also potentially makes all judgments useless and opens the door to coercion and private revenges.

Also robbery and embezzlement of the public treasure or revenues is a greater crime than robbing or defrauding a private citizen, because to rob the public is to rob many people at once.

Impersonating a public official or counterfeiting public seals or public coins is a worse crime than impersonating a private individual or counterfeiting his seal, because ·in the former case· the fraud reaches out and does harm to many people.

Of acts against the law done to private men, the crime is greater when the damage it does is greater according to the common opinion of men. And therefore:

To kill against the law is a greater crime than any other injury in which life not taken.

To kill while inflicting pain is greater than simply to kill.

Mutilation of a limb is greater than robbing a man of his goods.

Robbing a man of his goods by terror of death or wounds is greater than by clandestine theft.

Clandestine theft is greater than theft through consent that was fraudulently obtained.

The violation of chastity by force is greater than violation by flattery.

Violation of a married woman is greater than that of a woman not married.

For all these things are commonly valued in that way. Men will vary in the strength of their feelings about any given offence; but the law attends to the general inclination of mankind and ignores individual variations.

That is why the laws of the Greeks and Romans, and of other ancient and modern commonwealths, have paid no attention to the offence that men take from being insulted (in words or gestures), when they do no harm beyond the present grief [= ‘anger’, ‘unhappiness’ or the like] of the person who is insulted. It has been supposed that the true cause of such grief consists not in •the insult (which gets no grip on men who are conscious of their own virtue) but in •the small-mindedness of the person who is offended by it.

•Fourthly·, a crime against a private man can be made much worse by the person, time, and place. To kill one’s parent is a greater crime than to kill someone else; for the parent ought to have the honour of a sovereign (though he has surrendered his power to the civil law), because he originally had sovereign power by nature. And to rob a poor man is a greater crime than to rob a rich one, because the poor man suffers more from the loss.

And a crime committed at a time or in a place set aside for devotion is greater than if committed at another time or place; for it proceeds from a greater disregard for the law and for divine worship.

Many other bases for aggravation and extenuation could be added, but the ones I have set down suffice to make it obvious to everyone ·how· to estimate the depth of any other proposed crime.

A final point: in most crimes, some private men are wronged and so also is the commonwealth. A single crime may be called ‘a public crime’ when the accusation is in the name of the commonwealth, and ‘a private crime’ when the accusation is in the name of a private man. . . .

## Chapter 28. Punishments and rewards

A PUNISHMENT is an evil inflicted by public authority on someone who has done something that the public authority judges to be a breach of the law, inflicted for the purpose of making the will of men more disposed to obedience.

Before I infer anything from this definition, a very important question has to be answered: Through what door did the right or authority to *punish* come in? From what I have said, no man is supposed to be bound by covenant not to resist violence; so no-one can be taken to have given anyone else the right to lay violent hands on his person. In the making of a commonwealth, every

man gives away the right to defend *others* but not the right to defend *himself*. Also each man obliges himself to help the sovereign to punish others but not to punish himself. But •to covenant to help the sovereign to hurt someone else is not •to *give him a right* to punish, unless the person who makes the covenants has, himself, a right to hurt others. So it is plain that the right that the commonwealth has to punish is not grounded on any concession or gift of the subjects.

But I showed in chapter 14 that before the commonwealth is established every man has a right to everything, and to do whatever he thinks necessary for his own preservation - subduing, hurting, or killing any man for that purpose. And *this* is the foundation of the right of punishing that is exercised in every commonwealth. For the subjects didn't •give the sovereign that right; all they did in laying down their right to hurt others was to •strengthen the sovereign to use his own right - the right that he had *already* - in ways that he thinks fit for the preservation of them all. So the right to punish was not *given* to him; he (and he alone) was *left* with it. And, except for the limits set by natural law, he has retained it in its entirety, just as he had it in the raw condition of nature and of war of everyone against his neighbour. That completes my answer to the important preliminary question.

From the definition of *punishment* I infer **first** that neither private revenges nor harms done by private men can properly be called 'punishment', because they don't come from public authority.

**Secondly**, that being neglected and given no kind of preference by the public authorities is not a punishment, because it merely leaves a man in the state he was in before - it doesn't inflict any new evil upon him.

**Thirdly**, that if the public authority inflicts an evil on a man without a prior public condemnation, that is not to be called 'punishment'. It is merely a *hostile act*, because the action for which a man is *punished* ought first to be judged by the public authority to be a breach of the law.

**Fourthly**, that when evil is inflicted on someone by usurped power and by judges who have no authority from the sovereign, that is not punishment, but an act of hostility; because the acts of usurped power do not have the condemned person as an author, so they are not acts of the public authority.

**Fifthly**, that evil inflicted on someone without an intention or a possibility of making him or (through this example) other men more inclined to obey the laws is not punishment but an act of hostility; because the term 'punishment' applies only to hurt done with that purpose.

**Sixthly**, some 'bad' actions are naturally followed by various consequences that are hurtful to the person himself, as when a man is killed or wounded in the course of assaulting someone else, or when he falls ill through the performance of some unlawful act. These hurts can be said to be divine punishment, because they are inflicted by God, the author of nature; but they don't fall under the scope of 'punishment', understood as a human procedure, because it is not inflicted by the authority of man.

**Seventhly**, if the harm inflicted is less than the benefit or contentment that naturally follows for the criminal from the crime committed, that harm does not fall within the definition of 'punishment', and is rather the price or the *fee* for committing the crime. That is because it is of the nature of punishment to have the purpose of disposing of men to obey the law; and if the 'punishment' is outweighed by the benefit of the crime, that purpose is not achieved - quite the contrary, indeed.

**Eighthly**, if a punishment is settled and prescribed in the law itself, and after a crime is committed a greater punishment is inflicted, the extra part is not punishment but an act of hostility. For seeing that the purpose of punishment is not revenge but ·deterrent· terror, and the terror of a great unknown punishment is taken away by the declaration of a lesser one, the unexpected extra is not part of the punishment. But when no punishment at all has been settled by the law, whatever is inflicted *does* have the nature of punishment. For someone who sets out to break a law for which no penalty has been set expects ·that if he is caught he will receive· an indeterminate punishment, that is to say, a punishment devised for his particular case.

**Ninthly**, harm inflicted for an act performed before there was a law forbidding it is not punishment but an act of hostility; for punishment presupposes an act that is judged to have been a breach of the law, and there cannot be a breach of a law that doesn't yet exist.

**Tenthly**, hurt inflicted on the representative of the commonwealth is not punishment but an act of hostility; because it is of the nature of punishment to be inflicted by public authority, which is the authority of the representative itself.

**Finally**, harm inflicted on declared enemies ·of the commonwealth· is not describable as ‘punishment’. Either •they were never subject to the law, and therefore cannot break it, or •they have been subject to it but claim to be so no more, and therefore deny that they can break it; so all the harms that can be done to them must be taken as acts of hostility. But when hostility has been declared, all infliction of evil is lawful. So if a subject by actions or words knowingly and deliberately denies the authority of the representative of the commonwealth he may lawfully be made to suffer whatever the representative chooses to inflict, whatever penalty has been officially set for treason. For in denying that he is a subject he ·implicitly· denies ·that he is liable for· the punishment ordained by the law, and therefore he suffers as an enemy of the commonwealth, that is, he suffers whatever the representative chooses that he suffer. For the punishments set down in the law are for *subjects*, not for *enemies* such as those who, having become subjects by their own act, then deliberately revolted and denied the sovereign power.

The first and most general division of punishments is into *divine* and *human*. It will be more convenient to discuss the former later on [in chapter 31 and two later chapters that are not included in the present text].

Human punishments are those that are inflicted at the command of man, and are either *corporal*, or *pecuniary*, or *disgrace*, or *imprisonment*, or *exile*, or a mixture of these.

*Corporal* punishment is the kind ·of harm· that is, and is intended to be, inflicted on the body directly - for example stripes ·left by a lash·, or wounds, or deprivation of such pleasures of the body as had previously been lawfully enjoyed.

Some corporal punishments are capital, some less than capital. *Capital* punishment is the infliction of death - either done simply or accompanied by pain. *Less than capital* punishment includes stripes, wounds, chains, and any other corporal pain that is not in its own nature fatal. ·I say ‘not *in its own nature* fatal’ because· if a punishment causes the man's death but this was not intended by the inflicter, the punishment doesn't count as ‘capital’; though the harm turned out to be fatal, but that was by an unforeseen accident. In such a case, death is not *inflicted* but *hastened*.

Pecuniary punishment may consist in depriving a man of •a sum of money, but the deprivation may instead be of •land or any other goods that are usually bought and sold for money. If the law ordaining such a punishment was established *in order to* get money from those who break that law, it is not really a punishment, but rather the price of privilege and exemption

from the law. For the law doesn't absolutely forbid the act, but forbids it only to those who aren't able to pay the money. . . . Similarly, if the law requires that a sum of money be paid to someone who has been wronged, this is merely a satisfaction for the wrong that has been done to him; it extinguishes his complaint, but not the offender's crime.

Disgrace is the infliction of some evil that is made dishonourable by the commonwealth, or the deprivation of some good that is made honourable by it. Some things are •honourable by nature, such as the effects of courage, magnanimity, strength, wisdom, and other abilities of body and mind; others are •made honourable by the commonwealth, such as badges, titles, offices, or any other special mark of the sovereign's favour. Although •the former may fail by nature or by accident, they cannot be taken away by a law, so the loss of them is not punishment. But •the latter can be taken away by the public authority that *made* them honourable, and •losses of them are properly punishments; for example, stripping convicted men of their badges, titles, and offices, or declaring them ineligible for such honours in the future.

Imprisonment is when a man is deprived of liberty by the public authority, and it may happen for either of two different purposes: one is •to keep an accused man in custody, the other is •the infliction of pain on a condemned man. •The former is not punishment, because no man is supposed to be punished before being judicially heard and declared guilty. So any hurt that a man is made to suffer by bonds or restraint before his trial, over and above what is necessary to assure that he remains in custody, is against the law of nature. But •the latter *is* punishment, because it is an evil inflicted by the public authority for something that that same authority has judged to be a breach of the law. Under this word 'imprisonment' I bring all *restraint of motion caused by an external obstacle*. The obstacle might be a building (which is called by the general name 'prison'), or an island (to which men are said to be 'confined'), or a place where men are set to work (quarries in ancient times, galleys these days), or a chain, or any other such impediment.

Exile (banishment) is when a man, because of a crime he has committed, is condemned to leave the territory of the commonwealth, or to keep out of a certain part of it, and - for a fixed time or for ever - not to return to it. Considered just in itself, this seems not to be a punishment but rather an escape or a public command to avoid punishment by flight! Cicero says that such a punishment was never ordained in the city of Rome, and he calls it •not a punishment but• a refuge for men in danger. For if a banished man is permitted still to enjoy his goods and the income from his lands, the mere change of air is no punishment! Nor does it tend to the benefit of the commonwealth for which all punishments are ordained, namely, shaping men's wills to obedience to the law; indeed it often tends to *damage* the commonwealth •by adding to the number of its enemies•. For a banished man is a lawful enemy [Hobbes's phrase] of the commonwealth that banished him, being no longer a member of it. If along with banishment he is deprived of his lands or goods, •that is a real punishment, but• then the punishment lies not in the exile but •in the loss of material, and• should be counted as a pecuniary punishment.

All punishments of innocent subjects, great or small, are against the law of nature. For punishment is only for breaking the law, so there can be no punishment of the innocent. It is therefore a violation •of three laws of nature, all presented in chapter 15•. •First, the law of nature forbidding men, in their revenges, to look at anything but some future good; for no good can come to the commonwealth from punishing the innocent. •Secondly, the law forbidding ingratitude; for . . . the punishment of the innocent is repaying good with evil. •Thirdly, the law that commands equity, that is to say, an equal distribution of justice, which in punishing the innocent is not observed.

But the infliction of any evil whatsoever on an innocent man who is not a subject, if it is for the benefit of the commonwealth and doesn't violate any former covenant, is no breach of the law of nature. For all men who are not subjects either are enemies or else they have stopped being enemies through previous covenants. And against *enemies* who the commonwealth thinks could do harm to it, it is lawful by the basic right of nature to make war; and in war the sword makes no judgments, and the winner does not distinguish the guilty from the innocent (as regards the past) or consider mercy on any basis except what conduces to the good of his own people (·in the future·).

This is why vengeance is lawfully extended not only to subjects who deliberately deny the authority of the established commonwealth but also to their fathers and to their descendants to the third and fourth generation, even though these don't yet exist and are consequently innocent of the ·rebellious· act for which they are afflicted. It is because rebellion consists in the renouncing of the role of subject, which is a relapse into the condition of war; and those who offend in that way suffer not as subjects but as enemies. For rebellion is simply renewed war.

Rewards are ·of two kinds·: either of gift or by contract. Reward by contract is called 'salary' and 'wages', which is benefit due for services performed or promised. Reward of gift is benefit that comes from the grace of those who give it, to encourage or enable men to do them service. For although all subjects are obliged to quit their private business to serve the commonwealth, even without wages, if there is need, this is not ·an obligation imposed· by the law of nature or by the institution of the commonwealth, unless the commonwealth cannot be otherwise defended. For it is supposed that the sovereign can fairly use the resources of all subjects, and that from these resources those who defend the commonwealth, having set aside their own affairs, ought to be compensated, so that the lowest of soldiers can demand the wages of his service as a thing owed by right.

If a sovereign bestows benefits on a subject out of fear of his harming the commonwealth, these are not properly *rewards*; for they are not •salaries, because in this case no contract is involved, every man being obliged already not to harm the commonwealth; nor are they •graces, ·i.e. rewards of gift·, because they are extorted by fear; . . . rather they are •sacrifices, which the sovereign (considered in his natural person, and not in the person of the commonwealth) makes to appease the discontent of someone he thinks to be more powerful than himself. Such sacrifices don't encourage subjects to be obedient; on the contrary, they encourage the continuance and increasing of extortion.

[A paragraph about two different kinds of salary for public service is omitted from this text, except for its final sentence.] And that is all I need to say about the nature of punishment and reward, which are, as it were, the nerves and tendons that move the limbs and joints of a commonwealth.

Up to here I have set forth the nature of man, whose pride and other passions have compelled him to submit himself to government, together with the great power of his governor, whom I compared to *Leviathan*. I take that comparison from *Job* 41:33-4 where God, having described the great power of Leviathan, calls him King of the Proud. He says: 'There is nothing on earth to be compared with him. He is made so as not to be afraid. He sees every high thing below him, and is king of all the children of pride.' But because he is •mortal and subject to decay as all other earthly creatures are, and because •there is in heaven (though not on earth) someone he should stand in fear of and whose laws he ought to obey, I shall now speak of •Leviathan's diseases and the causes of his mortality (chapter 29), and of •what laws of nature he is bound to obey (chapter 30).

## Chapter 29. Things that weaken or tend to the dissolution of a commonwealth

Nothing made by mortals can be immortal. Still, if men had the use of reason that they claim to have, their commonwealths could at least be safe from perishing by internal diseases. For by the nature of how they are established they are *designed* to live as long as mankind, or as long as the laws of nature or as justice itself - which is what gives them life. So when they come to be dissolved, not by external violence but from internal disorder, the fault lies with men - not men as what the commonwealth is *made of* but rather men as *makers* of the commonwealth. What brings a commonwealth into existence is the state of affairs in which men at last become tired of unregulated pushing and shoving for priority, and of hacking at one another, and want with all their hearts to fit themselves together into one firm and lasting edifice. But they don't have the skill to make suitable laws by which to square their actions (as a carpenter has tools to square off the end of a plank), nor do they have the humility and patience to allow their own rough and protuberant knobs to be planed down; so that unless they have the help of a *very* able architect they can't build themselves into anything but a ramshackle building that will hardly last through their lifetimes and will assuredly collapse on the heads of their posterity.

Among the infirmities of a commonwealth, therefore, I count in the first place those that arise from imperfect construction at the outset, resembling the **congenital diseases** of a natural body.

Here is one. Sometimes a man wanting to obtain a kingdom settles for less power than is necessarily required for the peace and defence of the commonwealth. From this it comes about that when in the interests of public safety the sovereign takes up the exercise of the power that he previously forwent, this has the appearance of an unjust act, which disposes many men to rebel if they see an opportunity to do so . . . . When kings deny themselves some such necessary power, it is sometimes out of ignorance of what is necessary for the office they undertake. In other cases, though, the king is not ignorant about what he needs, but merely hopes to recover that power whenever he wants to. In this he is not thinking well, because those who will hold him to his promises - including promises about how much power he will hold and exercise - will be supported against him by foreign commonwealths, which for the good of *their* subjects take every opportunity to weaken the condition of their neighbours.

[Hobbes devotes half a page to historical examples: Thomas Becket against King Henry II of England; various rebellions against the democracy of ancient Rome, ending with Julius Caesar's rebellion that finally killed the republic; and an obscure example from ancient Athens. This passage, omitted from the present text, ends thus:] These are kinds of damage that commonwealths can suffer, and of stratagems they can be forced to use, if their power has been limited by even a tiny amount.

In the second place, I observe the diseases of a commonwealth that come from the poison of seditious doctrines. One of them is this: *Every private man is a judge of good and evil actions*. This is true in the raw condition of nature where there are no civil laws, and also under civil government in cases that are not covered by the law. But apart from those exceptions it is obvious that the measure of good and evil actions is the civil law, and that the judge who applies that measure is the legislator, who always represents the commonwealth. This false doctrine inclines men to call in question the commands of the commonwealth, trying to decide which of them to obey, and then to proceed either to obey or to disobey on the basis of what in their private judgments they think fit. This distracts and weakens the commonwealth.

A second doctrine that is hostile to civil society says that *Whatever a man does against his conscience is a sin*. This depends on the assumption that the man is to be the judge of good and evil. For a man's conscience *is* his judgment; so just as the judgment can be erroneous so also can the conscience. Therefore, although someone who is not subject to any civil law sins in everything he does against his conscience, because he has no other rule to follow but his own reason, it is not so with someone who lives in a commonwealth because for him the law is the public conscience, and he has already undertaken to be guided by it. . . .

Thirdly, it has also been commonly taught that *Faith and holiness are not to be attained by study and reason, but by supernatural inspiration or infusion*. If this were granted, I don't see why anyone should give a *reason* for his faith, or what is to stop every Christian from being a prophet, or why any man should govern his actions by the law of his country rather than his own inspiration. And thus we fall again into the fault of risking the dissolution of all civil government by taking it on ourselves to judge good and evil, or having them judged by private men who claim to be supernaturally inspired. Faith comes through hearing, and hearing comes through the events that guide us into the presence of those speak to us. These events are all contrived by God Almighty, but they are not supernatural. It's just that they are unobservable, because so many of them co-operate in producing each effect. Faith and holiness are indeed not very common, but they are not miracles; they come about through education, discipline, correction, and other natural ways by which God produces them in those he has chosen, at such times as he thinks fit.

And these three opinions, threats to peace and government, have in this part of the world come mainly from the tongues and pens of *unlearned* religious writers. They join passages from Holy Scripture together in unreasonable ways, trying to convince men that holiness and natural reason cannot stand together.

A fourth opinion that is hostile to the nature of a commonwealth is this: *He who has the sovereign power is subject to the civil laws*. It is true that sovereigns are all subject to the laws of nature, because those laws are divine and cannot be repealed by any man or any commonwealth. But the sovereign is not subject to laws that the commonwealth makes - that is, that *he* makes. For him to be subject to civil laws is for him to be subject to the commonwealth, that is to the sovereign representative, that is to *himself*; and being 'subject' to himself is not subjection to the laws but freedom from them! Because this error sets the laws above the sovereign, it also sets a judge above him, and a power to punish him; and that is to make a new sovereign, and again for the same reason a third, to punish the second, and so on continually without end, to the confusion and dissolution of the commonwealth.

A fifth doctrine that tends to the dissolution of a commonwealth is that *Every private man has absolute ownership of his goods, excluding the right of the sovereign*. Every man has indeed ownership that excludes the right of every other *subject*; and he gets it from the sovereign power, without the protection of which every other man would have an equal right to those goods. But if the right of the sovereign is also excluded, he can't perform the task they have given him - to defend them from foreign enemies and from one another - and consequently there is no longer a commonwealth. . . .

A sixth doctrine that is plainly and directly contrary to the essence of a commonwealth is this: *The sovereign power may be divided*. Dividing the power of a commonwealth is dissolving it, for divided powers mutually destroy each other.

These last three doctrines come chiefly from some of the professional writers on the law, who try to make the laws depend on their learning rather than on the legislative power.



Men become disposed to alter the settled form of government that they have, not only through false doctrine but also, often, by the example of a different form of government in a neighbouring nation. [Examples are given from the Old Testament and ancient Greece.] And I don't doubt that many men have been contented to see the recent troubles in England, taking what happened in the Netherlands as a reason for thinking that to grow rich all that is needed is to set aside the king, as the Dutch have done; for they attribute to the Dutch change of government the wealth that they really owe to their hard work. For it is in man's nature to want novelty; so when men are provoked to novelty by the nearness of others who seem to have been enriched by it, it is almost impossible for them not to give a good hearing to those who urge them to change, and to love the first beginnings of the change, though they are grieved by the continuance of disorder, like hot bloods [Hobbes's phrase] who scratch their itches until they can't bear the pain any more.

As for rebellion against monarchy in particular, one of the most frequent causes of it is the reading of the books on government and histories of the ancient Greeks and Romans by young men, and others who like them are not provided with the antidote of solid reason. These readers get a strong and delightful impression of the great exploits of war achieved by the generals of the Greek and Roman armies; and along with that they receive a pleasing idea of everything else that the ancients did, and imagine that their great prosperity came from the virtue of their democratic form of government (whereas really it came from the competitive energies of particular men). In this they overlook the frequent seditions and civil wars produced by the imperfection of the political system of Athens and republican Rome, which they admire so much. From reading such books men have undertaken to kill their kings, because the Greek and Latin writers in their books and discourses on government make it lawful and praiseworthy for any man to do so - provided that before he does it he calls the king a 'tyrant'! For they don't say that regicide (killing a king) is lawful, but that tyrannicide (killing a tyrant) is lawful. From the same books, those who live under a monarch get the idea that the subjects in a democratic commonwealth enjoy liberty, while in a monarchy they are all slaves. I say this about people living under a monarchy; those who live under a democratic government have no such opinion.

In brief, I can't imagine anything more prejudicial to a monarchy than officially allowing such books to be read, without having discreet masters who immediately apply correctives that can take away the books' poison. I don't hesitate to compare that poison with the biting of a mad dog, which is a disease the physicians call *hydrophobia*, or *fear of water*. Someone who has been bitten by a mad dog is constantly tormented by thirst, and yet hates water, and is in such a state that one might think the poison was trying to turn him into a dog; and similarly when a monarchy is bitten down into the flesh by those democratic writers who continually snarl at monarchy, all that is needed is a strong monarch; but when they have one they hate him, out of a certain *tyrannophobia* or *fear of being strongly governed*.

Some learned men have held that there are three souls in a man; and some hold that a commonwealth also has more than one soul, that is, more than one sovereign. They oppose

a supreme power against the sovereignty,  
canons of the church against civil laws, and  
a ghostly authority against the civil authority.

[Hobbes uses 'ghostly' as a sarcastic way of saying 'spiritual'.] In so doing, they work on men's minds with words and distinctions that don't in themselves mean anything, but by their obscurity convey

the idea that another kingdom which some think is invisible - a kingdom of fairies, so to speak - stalks through the darkness.

Now, it is obvious that the civil power is the same thing as the power of the commonwealth; and that supremacy, and the power of making canons and granting faculties, implies a commonwealth; so it follows that

where one is sovereign, another supreme,

where one can make laws, and another make canons,

there must be two commonwealths of a single group of subjects, which is a kingdom divided in itself, and cannot stand. The distinction between *temporal* and *ghostly* is almost meaningless, but they are nevertheless two kingdoms, bringing every subject under two masters. The ghostly power, in claiming the right to declare what is *sin*, implicitly claims the right to declare what is *law* (sin being nothing but the breaking of the law); but the civil power also claims the right to declare what is law; so every subject must obey two masters, both wanting their commands to be observed as law, which is impossible. . . .

So when these two powers oppose one another, the commonwealth is bound to be in great danger of civil war and dissolution. For the civil authority, being more visible than its rival and standing in the clearer light of natural reason, is sure always to draw to its side a very considerable part of the people; and the spiritual 'authority', though it stands in the darkness of school distinctions and hard words, will have enough adherents to trouble a commonwealth and sometimes to destroy it, because the fear of darkness and ghosts is greater than other fears. This is a disease of the commonwealth that can appropriately be compared to a disease of the natural body, namely epilepsy, or falling sickness, which the Jews took to be one kind of possession by spirits. Let us compare them. In epilepsy there is an unnatural spirit or wind in the head that obstructs the roots of the nerves, and by moving them violently takes away the motion they would naturally have from the power of the soul in the brain, and thereby causes violent and irregular motions ('convulsions') in the rest of the body, so that the victim of the disease falls down sometimes into water and sometimes into fire, like a man deprived of his senses. With the disease of the body politic, when the spiritual power moves the members of a commonwealth by the fear of punishments and hope of rewards (which are the nerves of it) otherwise than they would be moved by the civil power (which is the soul of the commonwealth), and by strange and hard words suffocates their understanding, it is certain to distract the people and either drown the commonwealth in oppression or cast it into the fire of a civil war.

Sometimes there is more than one soul within the purely civil government, as when the power of taxation (which is the nutritive faculty) has depended on a general assembly, the power of conduct and command (which is the faculty of movement) on one man, and the power of making laws (which is the rational faculty) on the consent - when it can be obtained - not only of those two authorities but also of a third. This endangers the commonwealth, sometimes through lack of consent to good laws but most often through lack of enough nourishment to sustain life and motion. For although few people see that such 'government' is not *government* but rather a division of the commonwealth into three factions . . . the truth is that it is not one independent commonwealth but three independent factions, and not one representative person but three. In the kingdom of *God* there can be three independent persons without breach of unity in *God* who reigns, but where *men* reign - men with all their diversity of opinions - it cannot be so. If the king bears the person of the people, and the general assembly also bears the person of the people, and

another assembly bears the person of a part of the people, they are not one person and one sovereign, but three persons and three sovereigns.

I don't know what disease of the natural body of man is comparable with this disorder in a commonwealth. But I have seen a man that had another man growing out of his side, with his own head, arms, chest, and stomach; if he had another man growing out of his other side, the comparison might then have been exact.

So far I have discussed the diseases of a commonwealth that constitute the greatest and most immediate danger. There are others that are not so great but are still worth noticing. I shall describe five of them and then briefly list five more:

- First, there is difficulty in raising money for the necessary uses of the commonwealth, especially when war is approaching. This difficulty arises from the belief that each subject *owns* his lands and goods in a way that excludes the sovereign's having any right to the use of them. This leads to situations of the following kind:

The sovereign power foresees the necessities and dangers of the commonwealth, but finds that the flow of money into the public treasury is blocked by the tenacity of the people; so instead of *extending* itself so as to meet and prevent such dangers in their beginnings, it *contracts* itself for as long as it can. When it can no longer do this, it struggles with the people to get small sums from them by stratagems of law; these sums are not sufficient, so the sovereign power is forced to use violence to open the channels for the supply of money; and being often forced to such extreme measures it eventually brings the people into the state of mind you would expect, 'given such treatment'. If not - that is, without the resort to violence - the commonwealth must perish.

We can aptly compare this disease 'of the commonwealth' to an *ague* [= 'fever'], the course of which runs as follows:

The fleshy parts of the body become congealed, or obstructed by poisonous matter, so that the veins - which naturally empty themselves into the heart - are not re-filled from the arteries as they ought to be. This is followed by a cold *contraction* and trembling of the limbs; and the heart provides small re-invigorations of things that can be cooled down for a time. After that it makes a hot and strong attempt to force a passage for the blood; until at last it breaks down the resistance of the obstructed parts, and dissipates the poison into sweat. That is what happens if the body's nature is strong enough; if it is not, the patient dies.

- Secondly, a commonwealth sometimes contracts a disease resembling pleurisy. That is when the treasure of the commonwealth flows out of its proper channels and is accumulated in too much abundance in the hands of one or more private men, through monopolies, or through tax-gathering contracts with the sovereign. In the same way in pleurisy, blood gets into the membrane of the chest and creates an inflammation there, accompanied by fever and stabbing pains.

- Thirdly, the popularity of a powerful subject is - unless the commonwealth is well assured of his loyalty - a dangerous disease, because the people, who ought to steer by the authority of the sovereign, are drawn away from their obedience to the laws by the ambitious man's flattery and by his reputation, following him without knowing anything about his character or his plans. This is commonly a bigger danger in a democratic government than in a monarchy, because *an army* is so powerful and so numerous that it is easy to pretend that they are *the people*. So it was with Julius Caesar: having won for himself the affections of his army, he had himself set up by the people

against the senate, thus making himself master of both. This proceeding of popular and ambitious men is plain rebellion, and can be compared to the effects of witchcraft.

A •fourth• infirmity of a commonwealth is its containing a town that is so immoderately great that it can from its own resources provide the men and the money for a great army; or its containing many of incorporated towns - ones that exist as legally separate entities - which are as it were lesser commonwealths in the bowels of a greater one, like worms in the entrails of a natural man.

To which may be added, •fifthly•, the freedom to argue back against absolute power, by people who claim to have political insights. They mostly come from the dregs of society, but, driven by false doctrines, they perpetually trouble the commonwealth by meddling with its fundamental laws, like the little •intestinal• worms that physicians call *ascarides*.

We may further add a commonwealth's *bulimia* or insatiable appetite for enlarging its domain, with the incurable *wounds* that this often leads to its receiving from the enemy; and the *warts* of scattered conquests, which are often a burden, bringing more new dangers than they remove old ones; also the *lethargy* of •immoderate• ease; and the *wasting disease* of riot and vain expense.

A final point: when in a war the enemies (foreign or internal) get a final victory, so that the forces of the commonwealth leave the field and its subjects can no longer get protection from their loyalty, the commonwealth is DISSOLVED, and every man is free to protect himself by any means that his own discretion suggests to him. For the sovereign is the public soul, giving life and motion to the commonwealth, and when that soul dies the limbs and organs •of the commonwealth• are no more governed by it than the carcass of a man is governed by his departed (though immortal) soul. For although *the right of a sovereign monarch* can't be extinguished by the act of someone else, *the obligation of the members* can. Someone in need of protection may seek it anywhere, and when he has it he is obliged to *protect his protection* for as long as he is able, without fraudulently claiming •that he is free to desert it, because• he submitted himself to it out of fear. But once the power of an assembly has been suppressed, its right perishes utterly, because the assembly itself is dead and so there is no possibility for sovereignty to re-enter.

### Chapter 30. The office of the sovereign representative

The office [= 'the role', 'the job'] of the sovereign, whether a monarch or an assembly, consists in the purpose for which he was entrusted with the sovereign power, namely to procure *the safety of the people*. He is obliged to do this by the law of nature, and to render an account •of his exercise of sovereignty• to God, the author of that law, and to no-one else. By 'safety' here I don't mean mere preservation, but also all the contentments of life that each man acquires for himself by lawful work and without danger or damage to the commonwealth.

And it is to be understood that this should be done by a *general* oversight, contained in public instruction through teaching and example, and in the making and applying of good laws, which individual persons can apply to their own situations. The sovereign is not obliged to care for *individuals* except when they formally request protection from harm.

If the essential rights of sovereignty (specified in chapter 18) are taken away, the commonwealth is thereby dissolved and every man returns to the calamitous condition of war with every other man, which is the greatest evil that can happen in this life. Therefore, it is the office of the sovereign to keep all those rights himself; so it is against his duty •to transfer to someone else, or

to lay aside, any of them. For if a sovereign agrees to be subject to the civil laws, and renounces any of these powers:

supreme judicature,

making war or peace by his own authority,

judging what the commonwealth needs,

levying taxes and conscripting soldiers when and as much as in his own conscience he judges necessary,

making officers and ministers both of war and peace,

appointing teachers, and examining what doctrines are and what are not consistent with the defence, peace, and good of the people,

he deserts the means to procuring the safety of the people, and he who deserts the means deserts the ends.

It is also against his duty •to let the people be ignorant or misinformed concerning the grounds and reasons for his having those essential rights, because it is easy for ignorant or misinformed men to be seduced and drawn to resist him at times when the commonwealth requires service from them.

What makes it especially important to teach the grounds of these rights is their being a matter of natural right, not civil right, and a breach of them is not to be •punished as a violation of civil laws but •avenged as a hostile act. For •such breaches• involve rebellion, i.e. breaking (or rather repudiating) all the civil laws at once, and for that reason it would be pointless for the civil law to prohibit them.

•In chapter 27• I reported and refuted •an opinion that I have heard expressed, namely that justice is merely a word, without substance, and that whatever a man can acquire for himself by force or skill (not only in the condition of war, but also in a commonwealth) is his own. Here is •another opinion that some people have:

There are no grounds and no principles of reason to sustain the essential rights which make sovereignty absolute. If there were, they would have been discovered *somewhere*, whereas in fact we find that there has never yet been any commonwealth where those rights have been acknowledged or proclaimed.

This is as bad an argument as the savage people of America would be employing if they denied that there are any grounds or principles of reason for building a house that would last as long as the materials of which it is made, because they never yet saw a house as well built as that. Time and hard work produce new knowledge every day. The art of building well is derived from •principles of reason established by industrious men who had long studied the nature of materials, and the various effects of figure and proportion, long after mankind's first poor attempts at building. Similarly, long after men began to construct commonwealths - imperfect ones, liable to collapse into disorder - there may be •principles of reason waiting to be discovered by hard thought, principles that will make commonwealths everlasting (unless destroyed by external violence). Such principles are what I have presented in this book. Whether or not they will be seen by people who have the power to make use of them, and whether or not they will be neglected by such people •if they *do* see them•, is not something I care about much at the present time. But even if these ones of mine are not such principles of reason, I am sure they are backed by the authority of Scripture, as I shall show when I shall come to speak of the kingdom of God (administered by Moses) over the Jews, God's special people by covenant [chapter 40, not included here].

But opponents reply that even if the principles are right, common people aren't intelligent enough to be able to understand them. I would be glad if the rich and powerful subjects of a kingdom, or the ones regarded as the most learned, were as intelligent as the common people! But everyone knows that the obstacles to ·learning· this kind of doctrine have less to do with the difficulty of the material than with the wants and needs of the learner. •Powerful men can digest hardly anything that threatens to curb their desires, and •learned men anything that reveals their errors and thus lessens their authority; whereas the common people's minds, unless they are •tainted by dependence on the powerful, or •scribbled over with the opinions of their learned teachers, are like clean paper - fit to receive whatever is imprinted on them by public authority. Whole nations have been brought to accept the great mysteries of Christian religion, which are *above* reason; and millions of men have been made believe that one body can be in countless places at the same time, which is *against* reason; so can it really be the case that men can't, through legally protected teaching and preaching, get the populace to accept something that is so *agreeable* to reason that any unprejudiced man will learn it as soon as he hears it? I conclude therefore that the instruction of the people concerning the essential rights . . . of sovereignty need not involve any difficulty as long as a sovereign keeps his power intact. If difficulties do arise, that will be the sovereign's fault, or the fault of those whom he trusts in the administration of the commonwealth. So he has a duty to cause the people to be instructed about this; and as well as being his duty it is also for his benefit, giving him security against the danger to himself - in his natural person - from rebellion.

Coming now to details: the people are to be taught, •first, that they ought not to be in love with any form of government they see in neighbouring nations more than with their own, or to want to change, whatever present prosperity they see in nations that are governed differently from how theirs is. For the prosperity of a people ruled by an aristocratic or democratic assembly comes not from aristocracy or democracy, but from the obedience and harmony of the subjects; and when the people flourish in a monarchy, it is not because one man has the right to rule them but because they obey him. In any kind of state, if you take away the obedience (and consequently the harmony) of the people, not only will they not flourish but in a short time ·their commonwealth will· be dissolved. Those who disobey the commonwealth in an attempt merely to reform it will find that they are destroying it. . . . This desire for change is like the breach of the first of God's commandments [*Exodus* 20:3], where God says . . . 'Thou shalt not have the Gods of other nations', and in another place says of kings that they are Gods. [Curley reports that 'in Hobbes's day it was common to assume that God was speaking to kings when he said "Ye are gods" [*Psalms* 82:6].]

•Secondly, they are to be taught that they ought not to be led by their admiration for the virtue of any of their fellow subjects, however high he stands and however conspicuously he shines in the commonwealth, nor to be thus led by any assembly except the sovereign assembly. The 'being led' I am talking about involves offering ·to other subjects· obedience or honour that is appropriate to the sovereign alone, or being influenced in any way that doesn't come from the sovereign authority *through* these people or assemblies. For any conceivable sovereign who loves his people as he ought to will be jealous regarding them, and won't allow them to be seduced from their loyalty ·to him· by the flattery of popular men. They often *have* been ·thus seduced·, not only secretly but openly, proclaiming marriage with them in the presence of the Church, by preachers and by announcing their allegiance in the open streets - which can fairly be compared to

the violation of the second of the ten commandments [‘Thou shalt not make thee any graven image . . .’ (Deuteronomy 5:8)].

- Thirdly, in consequence of this, the people ought to be told how great a fault it is to speak ill of the sovereign representative (whether one man or an assembly), to challenge or dispute his power, or in any way to use his name irreverently. Any behaviour of these kinds can lead to the sovereign’s being disregarded by his people, and to a slackening of their obedience, which is essential to the safety of the commonwealth. This doctrine resembles the third commandment [‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain . . .’ (5:11)].

- Fourthly, times must be set apart from people’s ordinary work for them to listen to those who have been appointed to instruct them in all this. Without such special teaching sessions, people cannot be taught this, nor when it is taught can they remember it, and indeed the next generation won’t even know who has the sovereign power. So it is necessary that some such times be fixed, in which the people can come together and (after prayers and praises have been given to God, the sovereign of sovereigns) hear their duties told to them, and hear someone read and expound the positive laws that generally concern them all, and be put in mind of the authority that makes them laws. For this purpose the Jews set aside every seventh day as a sabbath, in which the law was read and expounded, and in the solemnity of which they were reminded that their king was God . . . . So that the first tablet of the commandments is entirely spent on setting down the sum of God’s absolute power, not only as God but also as king through a special pact with the Jews; and can therefore give light to those who have sovereign power conferred on them by the consent of men, helping them to see what doctrines they ought to teach their subjects.

- Fifthly, because the first instruction of children depends on the care of their parents, it is necessary that they should be obedient to their parents while they are under their tuition, and that afterwards (as gratitude requires) they should acknowledge the benefit of their upbringing by external signs of honour. To this end they are to be taught that each man’s father was originally also his sovereign lord, with power of life and death over him; and that when the fathers of families instituted a commonwealth and thereby resigned that absolute power, they never meant to lose the honour due to them for their bringing up of their children. The institution of sovereign power didn’t require them to relinquish this right; and there would be no reason why any man should want to have children, or take the care to nourish and instruct them, if he was afterwards to have no more benefit from them than from other men. And this accords with the fifth commandment [‘Honour thy father and thy mother . . .’ (5:16)].

- Sixthly, every sovereign ought to cause *justice* to be taught, . . . . that is, to cause men to be taught not to deprive their neighbours through violence or fraud of anything which by the sovereign authority is theirs. Of the things that a man owns, those that are dearest to him are his own life and limbs, and next (in most men) things that concern conjugal affection, and after them riches and means of living. So the people are to be taught to abstain from violence to one another’s person by private revenges, from violation of conjugal honour, and from forcible robbery and fraudulent underhanded theft of one another’s goods. For this purpose they must also be shown the evil bad results of false judgment in the courts of law through corruption of judges or witnesses; for this takes away the distinction between *owned* and *not owned*, and justice becomes of no effect. All of these things are intimated in the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments [‘Thou shalt not kill, . . . commit adultery, . . . steal, . . . bear false witness against thy neighbour’ (5:17-20)].

•Seventhly and· lastly, the people are to be taught that not only unjust *acts* but also *plans and intentions to perform such acts* are unjust, even if for some reason the plans don't succeed; for injustice consists in the wickedness of the will as well as in the lawlessness of the act. This is the meaning of the tenth commandment [‘Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour’s wife . . .’ (5:21)]. It rounds out the second tablet, which comes down to this one commandment of mutual charity: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, as the content of the first tablet comes down to *the love of God*, whom the Jews had recently accepted as their king.

As for the means and channels through which the people may receive this instruction: we should look into *how* so many opinions that are contrary to the peace of mankind, and ·based· on weak and false principles, have nevertheless sunk their roots so deeply into the people. I mean the opinions that I specified in chapter 29, such as that men shall judge concerning what is lawful or unlawful not by the law itself but by their own consciences (that is to say, by their own private judgments); that a subject sins if he obeys the commands of the commonwealth without first judging them to be lawful; that they own their wealth in such a way that the commonwealth has no claim on it; that it is lawful for subjects to kill people that they call ‘tyrants’; that the sovereign power can be divided; and the like. These come to be instilled into the people by means that I now describe. The greatest part of mankind fall into two groups, each of which is side-tracked from the deep meditation that is needed for learning the truth, not only in matters of natural justice but also of all other sciences. They are •people who are kept constantly at work by necessity or greed, and •ones who are devoted to sensual pleasures by their excessive wealth or by their laziness. Members of these groups, ·since they don’t think for themselves about these matters·, get their notions of their duty chiefly from preachers in the pulpit, and partly from such of their neighbours or acquaintances as are smooth talkers and seem wiser and better educated in cases of law and conscience than they themselves are. And these preachers and others who make show of learning derive their knowledge from the universities and schools of law, or from published books written by men eminent in those schools and universities. So it is clear that the instruction of the people depends wholly on the correct teaching of youth in the universities.

But (you may say) •aren’t the universities of England learned enough already to do that? •or do you take it upon yourself to teach the universities? Hard questions! •Yet as to the first, I don’t hesitate to answer ·that they are *not*; and· that till near the end of Henry VIII’s reign, the power of the Pope was always upheld against the power of the commonwealth, principally *by the universities*; and that the doctrines ·in favour of Papal power and· against the sovereign power of the king, maintained by so many preachers and so many lawyers and others who had been educated *in the universities*, is evidence enough that the universities, though not authors of those false doctrines, didn’t know how to plant true ones ·in their place·. For in such a contradiction of opinions it is most certain that they haven’t been sufficiently instructed, and it is no wonder if they still have a tang of that subtle sauce with which they were first seasoned against the civil authority.

•As for the second question, it is not appropriate for me to answer Yes or No; and I don’t *need* to answer, for anyone who sees what I am doing can easily see what I think!

It is moreover the duty of the sovereign to provide that punishments which the laws establish for all citizens who have broken them shall be applied equally to all. Crimes against the sovereign, of course, can be pardoned by him without unfairness; for pardoning is a matter for him who has been wronged. But a wrong against a citizen cannot be pardoned by anyone else



without that citizen's consent or fair compensation. If someone offers impunity to the murderer of my father or my son, won't he be called in some way a murderer also?

It is the duty of the sovereign also to see that ordinary citizens are not oppressed by the great, and even more that he himself doesn't oppress them on the advice of the great. . . . For the common people are the strongest element of the commonwealth. It is also the sovereign's duty to take care that the great don't by insults provoke those of modest means to hostile action. The sovereign can, of course, rightly reproach a citizen for his baseness, but to reproach someone for having a humble station in life is unfair and also dangerous to the commonwealth. If great people demand to be honoured for being great and powerful, why aren't the common people to be honoured for being numerous and much more powerful? . . . .

Equal justice includes the equal imposition of taxes. The equality of taxes doesn't depend on equality of wealth, but on the equality of the debt that every man owes to the commonwealth for his defence. It is not enough for a man to work for the maintenance of his life; he must also fight (if need be) to make his ability to work secure. He can do this either as the Jews did in rebuilding the temple after their return from captivity, •building with one hand and holding the sword in the other, or by •hiring others to fight for him. For the taxes that are imposed on the people by the sovereign power are nothing but the wages that are due to those who hold the public sword to defend private men in their exercise of various trades and professions. So the benefit that everyone receives from taxes is the enjoyment of life, which is equally valuable to poor and rich; so the debt that a poor man owes those who defend his life is the same as what a rich man owes for the defence of *his* life; except that a rich man who has poor men in his service may be a debtor for them as well as for himself. In the light of this, we can see that the equality of imposition consists in the equality of what is consumed rather than of the riches of the persons who do the consuming. Rich people may often be more heavily taxed than poor ones for the reason I have just given, namely that they have the poor in their service and must stand in for them when taxes are calculated. Nobody should pay more taxes *just* because he is rich. Compare •someone who is rich because he works hard and lives frugally with •someone who hasn't much money because he lives idly, earns little, and spends whatever he earns: why should •the former be charged with more taxes than •the latter, when he gets no more protection from the commonwealth than the other does? But when taxes are laid upon things that men consume, every man pays equally for what he uses, and the commonwealth is not defrauded by the luxurious waste of private men.

[The next paragraph is given in both the English and Latin versions, the latter adapted from Curley's translation. The contrast is too interesting to pass up.]

<p>And whereas many men through unavoidable bad luck become unable to maintain themselves by their labour, they ought not to be left to the charity of private persons, but should be provided for (as far as the necessities of nature require) by the laws of the commonwealth. For just as it is uncharitable for any <i>man</i> to neglect the helpless, so it is also for <i>the sovereign of</i></p>	<p>And since there are some who through no fault of their own but because of events they couldn't have foreseen fall into misfortunes so that they can't by their own labour provide for their own maintenance, it is the sovereign's duty to see that they don't lack the necessities of life. For since the right of nature permits those who are in extreme necessity to steal the goods of others, or even to take them by force, they ought to be maintained by the commonwealth and not left to</p>
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<i>a commonwealth</i> to expose them to the chances of such uncertain charity.	the uncertain charity of private citizens lest they be troublesome to the common-wealth.
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But for those who have strong bodies, the case is otherwise. They should be forced to work; and to avoid their having the excuse of not finding employment, there ought to be laws encouraging all kinds of trades - such as navigation, agriculture, and fishing - and all kinds of manufacturing that requires labour. If the number of people who are poor but strong continues to grow, they should be transplanted into countries that are not sufficiently inhabited. But they are not to exterminate the people they find there. Rather, they should force them to live closer together, thus making room for them (the colonists); and they should each work to get enough food in the appropriate season, by skillfully tending a small plot of ground - not ranging far and wide and snatching what food they can find. And when the whole world is overpopulated the last remedy of all is war - which provides for every man, giving him victory or death.

The making of good laws is in the care of the sovereign. But what is a good law? By a 'good law' I don't mean a just law, for no law can be unjust. The law is made by the sovereign power, and everything done by such power is authorized and owned by every one of the people, and no-one can call *unjust* something that every man wants. The laws of a commonwealth are like the laws of gambling, in that whatever the gamblers agree on is not unjust to any of them. So much for what I *don't* mean by good law'. A good law is one that is needed for the good of the people, and is also clear.

For the use of laws (which are simply authorized rules) is not to hold people back from all voluntary actions, but to steer them and keep them moving in such a way as not to hurt themselves by their own impetuous desires, rashness, or indiscretion. (Similarly, hedges are planted along country roads not to stop travellers but to keep them on the road.) So a law that isn't needed is not good because it doesn't have the right purpose for a law. One might think that a law might be good if it was for the benefit of the sovereign, even if it wasn't necessary for the people; but that is not so. For the good of the sovereign can't be separated from that of the people. It is a weak sovereign that has weak subjects, and it is a weak people whose sovereign lacks the power to rule them at his will. Unnecessary laws are not good laws, but traps for money - extra money coming to the commonwealth through fines imposed for breaking the laws. When the right of sovereign power is acknowledged, such traps are not needed; and when it *isn't* acknowledged, they are inadequate to defend the people.

A law's clarity consists not so much in the words of the law itself as in a declaration of the reasons and motives for which it was made. That is what shows us what the legislator intends, and when that intention is known the law is more easily understood by a few words than by many. For all words are liable to ambiguity, so to multiply words in the body of the law is to multiply ambiguities; besides, a long-winded law seems to imply (by the care with which it picks its words) that whoever can evade the *words* can escape the *law*. This is a cause of many unnecessary legal-proceedings. For when I consider how short the laws were in ancient times, and how they have gradually grown longer, I think I see a struggle between the penners and the pleaders of the law - that is, between legislators and practising lawyers - with the legislators trying to hem the lawyers in, and the lawyers trying not to be hemmed in; and I think I also see that the lawyers have won. So it is part of the office of a legislator . . . to make clear *why* the law was made, and to make the body of the law itself as short, but also as properly worded, as it can be.

It belongs also to the office of the sovereign to apply punishments and rewards properly. Since the purpose of punishment is not revenge or the expression of anger, but rather correction - either of the offender or of others by his example - the severest punishments should be inflicted for the crimes that are of most danger to the public. Examples are •those that proceed from malice towards the established government, •those that spring from disregard for justice, •those that provoke indignation in the masses, and •those which if they went unpunished would seem to be authorized, for example ones committed by sons, servants, or favourites of men in authority. For ·in such a case· indignation carries men not only against those who *act* unjustly but also against all power that is likely to *protect* them - as in the case of Tarquin, who was driven out of Rome because of an insolent act by one of his sons, and the monarchy itself dissolved.

But crimes of infirmity - such as ones that stem from great provocation, great fear, great need, or ignorance - are often fit subjects for leniency, without risk to the commonwealth, whether or not the act is a great crime. And when there is a place for leniency, it is required by the law of nature. When a riotous insurrection occurs, the commonwealth can profit from the example of the punishment of its leaders and teachers, but not of the punishment of the poor seduced people. To be severe to the people is to punish their ignorance, which may be largely laid at the door of the sovereign, whose fault it is that they hadn't been better instructed.

Similarly, it is part of the office and duty of the sovereign always to apply his rewards in such a way as to benefit the commonwealth. That is what they are for; and it is achieved when those who have served the commonwealth well are recompensed with •as little expense as possible from the common treasury, but •well enough for others to be encouraged to serve the commonwealth as faithfully as they can, and to get the skills that will enable them to serve even better.

To give money or promotion to buy off a popular ambitious subject, getting him to be quiet and to desist from giving the people bad impressions ·of the sovereign·, is not at all a *reward*, for rewards are given for past service and not for ·threats of future· disservice. Nor is it a sign of *gratitude*, but only of fear; and it is likely not to benefit but rather to harm the public. It is a struggle with ambition, like that of Hercules with the monster Hydra, which grew three new heads for every one that Hercules chopped off. For when the stubbornness of one popular man is overcome with a 'reward', that sets an example which leads to many more people setting about the same sort of mischief in the hope of a similar benefit; for malice, like everything else made by men, increases when there is a market for it. And though sometimes a civil war may be delayed in that way, the danger grows ·during the period of the delay·, and the public ruin becomes more assured. So it is against the duty of the sovereign, to whom the public safety has been committed, to reward people who aspire to greatness by disturbing the peace of their country; the sovereign should run a small risk in opposing such men from the outset rather than running a larger risk in confronting them later on.

[In the next paragraph, for the only time in this text, Hobbes's 'counsel' and its cognates are allowed to stand; earlier they have been replaced by 'advise' and its cognates. Two other points: The Latin word *considium* means 'together in session'; and Hobbes is in fact wrong in thinking that *consilium*, the Latin word for 'counsel', comes from *considium*.]

Another business of the sovereign is to choose good counsellors, I mean ones whose advice he is to take in governing the commonwealth. For this word 'counsel', *consilium*, corrupted from *considium*, has a broad meaning, and covers all assemblies of men that sit together not only to deliberate what is to be done in the *future* but also to judge concerning facts about the *past* and

laws for the *present*. I take it here only in the first, ·or future-pointing·, sense; and in this sense there is no question of a democracy or an aristocracy choosing counsellors, because ·if they did· the persons counselling would be members of the person counselled. The choosing of counsellors therefore is proper ·only· to monarchy. And if the sovereign performs his duties as he ought to do, he will try to choose those who are the most suitable. They are the ones who have •the least hope of benefiting from giving bad advice, and •the most knowledge of the things that conduce to the peace and defence of the commonwealth.

It is hard to know •who expects benefit from public troubles; but a ·good· sign that can easily be observed by anyone to whom it matters occurs when men whose incomes are not sufficient to cover their accustomed expenses support the people in unreasonable or irremediable grievances.

It is still harder to know •who has most knowledge of the public affairs; and someone who knows who those people are has so much the less need for them. For *knowing who knows the rules* of almost of any skill is largely a matter of *knowing ·the rules of· that skill* oneself; because no man can be sure of the truth of someone else's rules without first being taught to understand them himself. But the best way of judging someone's knowledge of a skill is by having long conversations with him about it, and observing the effects of ·his advice concerning· it. Good advice doesn't come through chance or through inheritance, and so there is no more reason to expect the rich or noble to give good advice in matters of state than to expect it from them in planning the dimensions of a fortress. Unless we think that state policy, unlike the geometry ·needed in planning a fortress·, does not need methodical study, and can be mastered simply by watching what happens. But that is not so. For politics is harder than geometry. . . .

However suitable the advisers in some matter are, the benefit of their counsel is greater when each of them gives his advice and the reasons for it in private than when he does this in an assembly, by way of orations. It is also better when he has thought the matter out in advance than when he speaks spontaneously - because •he has more time, to survey the consequences of ·the· action ·he is recommending·, and because •he will be less subject to being swept along into contradiction by envy, emulation, or other passions arising from the difference of opinion.

The best advice in matters that don't concern other nations, but only the ease and benefit the subjects may enjoy through laws that look only inward, comes from the general reports and complaints of the people of each province. They know their own wants best, and therefore ought to be carefully listened to when their demands don't threaten the essential rights of sovereignty. . .

If a commander-in-chief of an army is not popular, he won't be loved or feared by his army as he ought to be, and so he won't be able to command with good success. So a commander needs to be hard-working, brave, amiable, generous, and lucky, so that he may get a reputation for competence and for loving his soldiers. This is *popularity*: it breeds in the soldiers both a desire to recommend themselves to their general's favour and the courage to do so; and it enables the general to be severe, when he needs to be, in punishing mutinous or negligent soldiers. But unless the commander's fidelity is watched carefully, this love of soldiers is a danger to sovereign power, especially when that is in the hands of an assembly that isn't democratic. For the safety of the people, therefore, the sovereign should commit his armies to commanders who are not only good leaders but also faithful subjects.

But when the sovereign himself is popular - that is, revered and beloved by his people - the popularity of a subject poses no threat. For soldiers are never so generally wrong-minded as to

side with the commander whom they love against their sovereign, when they love not only the sovereign personally but also his cause. That explains why those who have violently suppressed the power of their lawful sovereign have always, before they could settle themselves into his place, had to devise *entitlements* for themselves, so that the people won't be ashamed of accepting them as sovereigns. To have a 'known' *right* to sovereign power is such a popular quality that someone who has it needs only two more things to turn the hearts of his potential subjects to him: on his side, that the people see that he is able absolutely to govern his own household; on his enemies' side, that their armies disband. For the majority of the most active people have never been well contented with the present.

Concerning the duties of one sovereign to another, which are covered by the so-called 'law of nations', I needn't say anything here, because the law of *nations* and the law of *nature* are the same thing. Every sovereign has the same right in procuring the safety of his people as any individual man can have in procuring the safety of his own body. And the same law that dictates to *men who have no civil government* what they ought to do and what to avoid in regard of one another dictates the same to *commonwealths*. That is, dictates it to the consciences of sovereign princes and sovereign assemblies; for there is no court of natural justice except the conscience, where not man but God reigns . . . .

### Chapter 31. The kingdom of God by nature

I have sufficiently proved in what I have already written that the raw condition of nature - that is to say, of the absolute liberty that people have who are neither sovereigns nor subjects - is *anarchy* and *the condition of war*; that the precepts by which men are guided to avoid that condition are the laws of nature; that a commonwealth without sovereign power cannot survive, and is a 'commonwealth' only in name; that subjects owe to sovereigns simple obedience except when that would conflict with the laws of God. For a complete knowledge of civil duty, all that remains is to know what those laws of God are. For without that, a man who is commanded by the civil power to do something doesn't know whether it would be contrary to the law of God or not; and so either by too much civil obedience he offends the Divine Majesty, or through fear of offending God he disobeys commandments of the commonwealth that he ought to obey. To avoid both these rocks, he needs to know what the divine laws are. And seeing that any knowledge of law depends on knowledge about the sovereign power, I shall say something in this chapter about the KINGDOM OF GOD.

'God is king, let the earth rejoice', says the psalmist [*Psalms* 97:1]. And again, 'God is king though the nations be angry; and he sits between the cherubims, though the earth be moved' [*Psalms* 99:1]. Whether men want it or not, they must be subject always to the divine power. (By denying the existence or providence of God, men don't shake off their yoke; if they shake anything off, it is their ease!) But it is a merely metaphorical use of the word 'kingdom' to apply it to this power of God, which extends itself not only to man, but also to beasts, and plants, and inanimate bodies. For someone is not properly said to *reign* unless he governs his subjects by his word, promising rewards to those who obey it and threatening with punishment those who do not. So inanimate bodies and unthinking creatures are not subjects in the kingdom of God, because they don't understand anything as an order from him; nor are atheists, or those who don't believe that God has any care for the actions of mankind, because they don't acknowledge any message as his, and have neither hope of his rewards nor fear from his threats. So God's subjects are

those who believe there is a God who governs the world and has given precepts and propounded rewards and punishments to mankind; all the rest are to be understood as ·his· •enemies.

To rule by words requires that those words be made plainly known, for otherwise they are not laws; because it is of the nature of laws that they are adequately and clearly promulgated, so as to take away the excuse of ignorance. The laws of men can be promulgated in only one way, namely by *proclamation*, i.e. by the voice of man. But God declares his laws in three ways: by •the dictates of natural reason, by •revelation, and by •the voice of some man whom God makes credible to the rest by the operation of miracles. And so there is a •triple word of God -

rational, sensible, and prophetic  
- corresponding to •a triple ‘hearing’ -  
right reason, supernatural sensing, and faith.

As for supernatural sensing, which consists in revelation or inspiration, no universal laws have been given in this way, because God speaks in that manner ·not to all mankind· but to individual persons, and says different things to different men.

The difference between the other two kinds of God’s word - rational and prophetic - is the basis for attributing to God a twofold kingdom - natural and prophetic. In his •natural kingdom God governs as many of mankind as acknowledge his providence, doing this by the natural dictates of right reason; and in his •prophetic kingdom, having chosen one special nation (the Jews) as his subjects, he governs them and them alone not only by natural reason but also by positive laws which he gave to them through the mouths of his holy prophets. I intend to speak in this chapter of the •natural kingdom of God.

The right of nature whereby God reigns over men and punishes those who break his laws doesn’t come from •his creating them (as though he required them to be obedient in gratitude for the benefit he gave them ·in bringing them into existence·). It comes rather from •his irresistible power. I showed earlier how the sovereign right arises from a pact; to show how the same right can arise from nature, all I need is to show what is needed for it to be sempiternal - ·that is, never extinguished·. Seeing that all men had by nature a right to all things, each of them had a right to reign over all the rest. But because this right couldn’t be implemented by force, the safety of everyone required setting aside that right and by common consent setting up men with sovereign authority to rule and defend them. If one man had irresistible power, however, there would have been no reason why he should not by that power have ruled and defended both himself and everyone else, as he saw fit. Anyone whose power is irresistible, therefore, *naturally* has dominion over all men just because of his excelling in power. So it is because of that power that God’s kingdom over men, and his right of afflicting men as he wishes, belongs naturally to him - not as gracious creator, but as *omnipotent*. And though *punishment* is always on account of sin, because ‘punishment’ means ‘affliction for sin’, the right of *afflicting* ·men· does not come from men’s sin, but from God’s power.

The question ‘Why do evil men often prosper and good men suffer adversity?’ was much disputed by the ancients, and is the same as the question we ask now, ‘On what basis does God decide how to distribute prosperities and adversities in this life?’. This is so hard to answer that it has shaken the faith not only of the common people but of philosophers and even of the Saints, concerning divine providence. ‘How good’, says David, ‘is the God of Israel to those who are upright in heart, and yet my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped for I was grieved at the wicked when I saw the ungodly in such prosperity’ (*Psalms* 73:1-3). And remember how earnestly *Job* complains to God for the many afflictions he suffered despite his righteousness.

In the case of Job, God himself answers the question, basing what he has done not on Job's sin but on his own power. Job's friends explained his afflictions by his sins, and he defended himself through his awareness of his innocence. But God himself takes up the matter, and justifies the affliction of Job by arguments drawn from his power, such as: *Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?* (Job 38:4) and the like; and goes on to approve Job's innocence and criticise the erroneous doctrine of his friends. This doctrine fits with something our Saviour said regarding the man who was born blind: 'Neither this man nor his parents have sinned; but he is blind so that the works of God might be made manifest in him' (John 9:3). And though it is said in the Bible that 'Death entered into the world by sin' (Romans 5:12) - which means that if Adam had never sinned he would never have died, that is, never had his soul separated from his body - it doesn't follow that God could not justly have afflicted Adam even if he not sinned, as he afflicts other living creatures that cannot sin.

Having spoken of God's right to sovereignty as grounded only on nature, the next topic is: the content of the divine laws or dictates of natural reason, laws concerning either •the natural duties of one man to another or •the honour naturally due from us to our divine Sovereign. •The first are the laws of nature of which I have spoken in chapters 14 and 15 - namely, equity, justice, mercy, humility, and the rest of the moral virtues. So it remains for us only to consider •what commands are given to men by their natural reason only, without any other word of God, concerning the honour and worship of the divine majesty.

Honour consists in the inward thought and opinion of the power and goodness of someone else; to honour God, therefore, is to think as highly as is possible of his power and goodness. The external signs of that opinion, in words and actions, are called *worship*, which is one part of what that the Latins understand by the word *cultus*. For *cultus* [= 'cultivation'] properly signifies the work that a man puts into something so as to get benefit from it. Now, the things from which we get benefit are either •subject to us, and the profit they yield is a natural effect of the work we do on them, or they are •not subject to us and repay our work or not according to their own wills. In •the former sense, work on the earth is called 'agri-culture', and the education of children is the culture of their minds. In •the second sense, where men's wills are to be brought around to our purposes not by our force but by their willingness to please, *cultus* means about the same as 'courting', that is, winning the favour of someone whom we hope for some benefit, by praising him, acknowledging his power, and doing whatever is pleasing to him. That is what *worship* is, properly understood. . . .

From internal honour, consisting in the belief that someone is powerful and good, there arise three passions:

- love, which relates to goodness, and •hope and •fear, which relate to power;

and three parts of external worship:

- praising the object's goodness, and •magnifying and •blessing the object's power and the happiness it gives him.

Praise and magnifying can be expressed by words or by actions: by words when we say that a man is good, or great; by actions when we thank him for his generosity and obey his power. The opinion that someone else is happy can be expressed only by words.

Some attributes and some actions are •naturally signs of honour: *attributes* such as goodness, justice, generosity, and the like; and *actions* such as prayers, thanks, and obedience. Others signs of honour are so •by convention, or custom of men: a single kind of action can express honour at some times and places, dishonour at others, and neither honour nor dishonour

at others again. Examples are the gestures of greeting, prayer, and thanksgiving, which are differently used at different times and places. The former of these is •natural worship, while the latter is •arbitrary [here = ‘conventional’] worship.

Arbitrary worship can be divided into two, in two different ways. •First, there is *commanded* worship and *voluntary* or free worship: commanded when it is required by him who is worshipped; voluntary or free when it is such as the worshipper thinks fit. When it is commanded, what constitutes the worship is not the words or gesture, but the obedience. But when it is free, the worship consists in the opinion of the spectators; for if the words or actions by which we intend honour seem *to them* to be ridiculous or disrespectful, they are not worship because are not signs of honour. Why not? Because a sign is not a sign to him *who gives it* but to him *to whom it is given*, that is, to the spectator.

•Secondly, there is *public* worship and *private* worship. Public is the worship that a commonwealth performs, as one person. . . .

The end [here = ‘aim, purpose’ or the like] of worship amongst men is *power*. For when a man sees another man worshipped, he takes him to be powerful and is the readier to obey him, which makes his power greater still. But God has no ends; the worship we do him comes from our duty and is conducted, according to our abilities, by the same rules that reason dictates for the honouring by weak men of more powerful ones, in the •hope of benefit, out of •fear of damage, or in •thankfulness for good already received from them.

So that we can know what worship the light of nature teaches us concerning God, I will begin with his attributes. •First, it is obvious that we ought to attribute existence to him. For no man can be willing to honour something that he thinks doesn’t exist.

•Secondly, the philosophers who said that the world or the soul of the world is God spoke unworthily of him and denied his existence. For by ‘God’ is understood ‘the cause of the world’, and to say the world is God is to say there is no cause of it, i.e. no God.

•Thirdly, to say the world was not created but eternal is to deny there is a God, because something that is eternal has no cause .

•Fourthly, those who deny that God cares for mankind (thinking that this attributes greater *ease* to him) take his honour from him, for they take away men’s love and fear of him, which is the root of honour.

•Fifthly, to say that God is *finite* in any respect that signifies greatness and power is not to honour him; for it is not a sign of the wish to honour God to attribute to him less than we can, and finite is less than we can, because to *finite* we can easily add *more*. Therefore to attribute shape to him is not to honour him, for all shape is finite. Nor to say that we conceive, imagine, or have an idea of him in our mind; for whatever we conceive is finite. Nor to attribute to him parts, or totality, which are the attributes only of finite things. Nor to say that he is in this or that place; for whatever has a place is bounded and finite. Nor that he moves or remains still, for both these attributes ascribe place to him. Nor that there are more Gods than one, because that implies them all to be finite, for there cannot be more than one infinite.

Nor does it honour God to ascribe to him passions that involve grief (repentance, anger, mercy) or want (appetite, hope, desire), or any passive faculty; for passion is power limited by something else. (It is all right to speak of God *metaphorically* in such ways, attributing to him not the passion but some state that would be the effect of that passion in men.)

So when we ascribe to God a ‘will’, that is to be understood as referring not to a •rational appetite like the will of man, but rather to the •power by which God brings about everything.



The same holds for attributions to him of *sight* and other acts of the senses, or of *knowledge* and *understanding*; for these, in us, are nothing but a tumult created in the mind by external things pressing on the organs of a man's body; and there is no such thing in God, to whom nothing can be attributed that depends on natural causes.

If we want to attribute to God nothing but what is warranted by natural reason, we must use either such •negative attributes as 'infinite', 'eternal' and 'incomprehensible', or •superlatives such as 'most high' and 'most great', or •indefinite characterizations such as 'good', 'just', 'holy' and 'creator', meaning these not as statements about *what he is* (for that would be to confine him within the limits of our imagination) but as expressions of how much we admire him and how ready we would be to obey him, which is a sign of humility and of a will to honour him as much as we can. For there is only one name to signify our conception of his nature, and that is 'I AM'; and only one name of his relation to us, and that is 'God', in which is contained Father, King, and Lord.

Concerning the actions of divine worship, it is a most general command of reason that they be signs of the intention to honour God. •First among these are *prayers*. For when people were thought to *make gods out of images*, it was not the carvers of the images but the people who prayed to them of whom this was thought.

•Secondly, *thanksgiving*, which differs from prayer in divine worship only in that prayers precede the benefit and thanks follow it; each having the same purpose, which is to acknowledge God as author of all benefits, past as well as future.

•Thirdly, *gifts* - that is to say, sacrifices and offerings - are signs of honour if they are of the best quality, for they are thanksgivings.

•Fourthly, not to swear by anyone but God is naturally a sign of honour; for it is an admission that only God knows the heart, and that no *man's* intelligence or strength can protect a man against God's vengeance on the perjured.

•Fifthly, it is a part of rational worship to be thoughtfully careful in how you speak of God, for that is evidence of a fear of him, and fear is an acknowledgment of his power. From this it follows that the name of God is not to be used rashly and to no purpose; and it *is* used to no purpose - or 'in vain' - when it is used in oaths other than as ordered by the common-wealth to make judgments certain, or between commonwealths to avoid war.

It also follows that *arguing* about God's nature is contrary to his honour, for that presupposes that in this natural kingdom of God's the only way to know anything is through natural reason - that is, the principles of natural science, which are so far from teaching us anything of God's nature that they can't even teach us *our own* nature, or that of the smallest living creature. So when men bring the principles of natural reason into a dispute about the attributes of God, they merely dishonour him; for when we make attributions to God, what we should have in mind is not expressing philosophical truth but rather expressing our pious intention to do him the greatest honour we are capable of. It is because men have lost sight of *that* that we have had volumes of disputation about the nature of God - volumes that tend to honour not God but the brilliance and learning of the writers, and are nothing but thoughtless and vain misuses of his sacred name.

•Sixthly, in prayers, thanksgivings, offerings and sacrifices, it is a dictate of natural reason that each of these should be the best and most honouring of its kind. For example, prayers and thanksgiving should be made in words and phrases that are not impromptu or casual or common, but beautiful and well composed. For otherwise we don't do God as much honour as we can. And

therefore the heathens, although it was absurd of them to worship images as gods, were reasonable to do it in verse, and with vocal and instrumental music. Also, it was according to reason, because it came from an intention to honour the god in question, that the beasts they offered in sacrifice, and the gifts they offered, and their actions in worshipping, were all full of submission and commemorative of benefits received.

- Seventhly, reason directs us to worship God not only in secret but also (and especially) in public and in the sight of other men; for without that we lose any chance of getting others to honour him - which is the most acceptable part of our own honouring of him.

- Lastly, the greatest worship of all is obedience to his laws, that is, to the laws of nature. For just as obedience is more acceptable to God than sacrifice, so also to disregard his commandments is the greatest of all insults. That completes my account of the laws of divine worship that natural reason dictates to private men.

But seeing that a commonwealth is just one person, it ought also to exhibit to God just one worship, which it does when it commands worship to be exhibited publicly by private men. That is *public worship*, which by definition has to be uniform; for actions that are performed differently by different men can't be said to be 'public worship'. Therefore, where many sorts of worship are allowed, coming from the different religions of private men, it can't be said that there is any public worship or that the commonwealth has any religion at all.

Because words have their meanings by agreement and convention among men (and that includes words that stand for the attributes of God) the attributions to God that honour him are the ones that men intend to do so; and whatever can be done by the wills of particular men where reason is the only law can be done by the will of the commonwealth through civil laws; so the commonwealth can intend that certain attributions to God shall honour him. But a commonwealth has no will and makes no laws except by the will of the man or assembly that has the sovereign power; from which it follows that the attributes that the sovereign ordains to be signs of honour in the worship of God ought to be understood and used as such by private men in their public worship.

Not all actions are signs by convention; some are *naturally* signs of honour, others of dishonour; and these latter - the actions that men are ashamed to perform in the sight of someone for whom they have respect - cannot be made by human power a part of divine worship; and the former - such as decent, modest, humble behaviour - cannot by human power be separated from it. But countless actions and gestures are naturally neither honouring or dishonouring, and such of *them* as the commonwealth ordains to be publicly and universally in use as signs of honour and part of God's worship are to be understood and used for such by the subjects. . . .

Having thus briefly spoken of the natural *kingdom* of God and of his natural *laws*, I will add to this chapter only a short account of his natural *punishments*. Every action of a man in this life starts a chain of consequences that is too long for any human foresight to have a high enough viewpoint to see clear down to the end. And in this chain pleasing events are linked together with unpleasing ones in such a way that anyone who does something for his pleasure must be prepared to put up with all the pains that come with it; and these pains are the natural punishments of actions that set in train more harm than good. That is how it comes about that intemperance is naturally punished with diseases, rashness with mischances, injustice with the violence of enemies, pride with ruin, cowardice with oppression and - a specially important pair - negligent government by princes with rebellion, and rebellion with slaughter. For seeing that punishments result from breaking laws, *natural* punishments must result *naturally* from breaking the laws of

*nature*, and so they follow such breaches as their natural effects, not ones that someone has *chosen* as punishments.

Concerning the constitution of the commonwealth, the right of the sovereign, and the duties of the citizens, which were to be deduced from the principles of natural reason, I have said all the things I had to say. It is solid and clear, and I think it will please those whose minds are free.

But when I consider •how different my doctrine is from the practice of most of the world, especially of our western parts that have received their moral learning from Rome and Athens, and •how much depth of moral philosophy is required in those who administer the sovereign power, I come near to thinking that this work of mine is as useless as the commonwealth of Plato. For he also holds that it is impossible for the disorders of state and change of governments by civil war ever to be taken away until sovereigns become philosophers.

But when I consider again •that the science of natural justice is the only science necessary for sovereigns and their principal ministers; •that they needn't be burdened (as they are by Plato) with the mathematical sciences except for establishing good laws to encourage men to study them; and •that neither Plato nor any other philosopher until now has put into order, and sufficiently or probably proved, all the theorems of moral doctrine from which men can learn how to govern and how to obey; I recover some hope that some day this writing of mine may fall into the hands of a sovereign who will think about it himself (for it is short, and I think clear) without the help of any prejudiced or envious interpreter, and employ his intact sovereignty in protecting the public teaching of it, thus converting this theoretical truth into something practically useful.

The footnotes are at the end of the Part, page 180.

First launched: August 2007

## Part III. A Christian Commonwealth

### Chapter 32. The sources of Christian politics

[Hobbes entitles this chapter ‘The principles of Christian politics’, using ‘principle’ to mean ‘source’ - that being one of the word’s two common meanings in the early modern period. In this chapter he doesn’t offer any ‘principles’ in the sense of fundamental doctrinal propositions, but he does arrive at ‘principles’ in the sense of sources or bases for judgments in Christian politics.]

Up to here I have derived the rights of sovereign power and the duty of subjects purely from the principles of nature that we have either (1) found to be true in our experience or (2) agreed to be true as a matter of word-use; that is, I have based my account on (1) the nature of men as we know it through experience and on (2) generally accepted definitions of words that are essential to all political reasoning. But my next topic is the nature and rights of a *Christian Commonwealth*; and in this topic a lot depends on supernatural revelations of what God wants; so what I have to say must be based not only on God’s natural word but also on his prophetic word - i.e. not only on nature but also on divine revelation.

But we shouldn’t renounce our senses and experience, or our natural reason, which is the undoubted word of God. For these faculties of ours are the coins that he has put into our hands to manage until our blessed Saviour comes again; so we shouldn’t tuck them away, folded up in the napkin of an unquestioning faith, but should ‘spend’ them in the purchase of justice, peace and true religion. There are many things in God’s word that are above reason - i.e. that can’t be either demonstrated or confuted through natural reason - but there’s nothing in it that is contrary to natural reason. When it seems that there is, that’s because we have either interpreted clumsily or reasoned incorrectly.

Therefore, when anything in the Bible is too hard for us to understand, we are told to put our understanding under the command of the words. Faced with a mystery that isn’t comprehensible and doesn’t fall under any rule of natural science, we shouldn’t try to sift a philosophical truth out of it by means of logic. The mysteries of our religion are like wholesome pills for the sick: swallowed whole, they have the power to cure; but chewed, they are mostly vomited up again without having any other effect.

When I speak of putting our understanding under the command of words, I’m not talking about making our intellectual faculty subservient to the opinions of any other *man*, but

about obediently submitting one's will to an authority to which obedience is *owed*. Let's be clear about what the scope of our will is. We can't voluntarily alter

what we sense,  
 what we remember,  
 whether and how we understand things,  
 how we reason, or  
 what we believe.

These are necessary upshots of the things we see, hear, and consider; they aren't effects of our will, though our use of our will is an effect of them. So what's involved in putting our understanding and reason under the command of the words is this: •not contradicting what is said, •speaking as we are commanded to by lawful authority, and •living accordingly. What all that adds up to is •having trust and faith in him who speaks, even though our minds are incapable of getting any *notions* from the words he utters.

When God speaks to man, he must do so •either immediately or •through the mediation of another man to whom God had formerly spoken immediately. *How* does God speak to a man immediately? Those to whom he *has* spoken understand this well enough, but for the rest of us it is hard, if not impossible, to know what is involved. If someone tells me that God has spoken to him supernaturally and immediately, and I am not convinced, I can't easily see what argument he can produce to oblige me to believe it. It's true that if he is my sovereign he may oblige me to obedience, so that I don't by act or word •declare that I don't believe him; but he can't oblige me to •believe him if my reason persuades me that what he says is false. And if someone who doesn't have such authority over me makes the same claim - i.e. that God has spoken immediately to him - I am free to disbelieve him and to say so.

Let me be clear about *what* it is that I disbelieve in such a case. The claim that 'God has spoken to me •immediately' isn't the same as

'God has spoken to me in the Holy Scripture',

which involves •mediation of the prophets or the apostles or the Church, which is how God speaks to all Christian men. Nor is it the same as

(1) 'God has spoken to me in a dream',

which means merely that the speaker dreamed that God spoke to him! That won't convince us that God really spoke to him - not if we know that •dreams are for the most part natural, and can arise from previous thoughts, and that •dreams of *that* sort come from self-conceit and foolish arrogance and the dreamer's false opinion that he is so godly or virtuous that he deserves the favour of extraordinary revelation. And if the truth of the matter is

(2) 'I saw a vision of God speaking to me', or

(3) 'I heard the voice of God speaking to me',

that means merely that he dreamed between sleeping and waking. People often take their dreams to be visions, because they haven't properly taken in that they were asleep. Then there is

(4) 'What I am saying comes from supernatural inspiration',

which means only that he finds himself intensely wanting to speak, or that he has some strong opinion about himself for which he can't offer any natural and sufficient reason. God almighty *can* speak to a man by •dreams, •visions, •voice, and •inspiration, but He doesn't require us to believe that He has so done to someone who claims that He has, because such a person, being a man, may err and indeed may lie.

Well, then, how can we - to whom God has never revealed His will immediately (except through natural reason) - know when we should obey His 'supposed' commands when they are delivered by someone who claims to be a prophet? Of four hundred 'prophets' whom the King of Israel asked to advise him concerning his war against Ramoth Gilead, Micaiah was the only true one.<sup>1</sup> The prophet who was sent to prophesy against the altar set up by Jeroboam<sup>2</sup> was a true prophet and seems (judging by the two miracles that were done in his presence) to have been sent by God; and yet he was deceived by another old prophet who persuaded him to 'eat and drink with him, telling him 'lyingly' that this was God's command. [The point is that the former prophet had been commanded by God not to do 'this.] If one prophet can deceive another, how are *we* to know what the will of God is, other than that through our reason? Going by Holy Scripture, I answer thus:

A true prophet can be known by **(1)** the doing of miracles **and** **(2)** his not teaching any religion other than the one that is already established.

Note that I say 'and'; for neither of these is sufficient on its own:

If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams rises amongst you, and prophesies some miracle that then does occur; if he then says 'Let us follow strange gods, ones that you have not known until now', *do not listen to him* etc. . . . That prophet and dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has told you to revolt from the Lord your God. [Adapted from Deuteronomy 13:1-5. The omission indicated by the ellipsis is Hobbes's.]

Two things should be noticed here. **(1)** God won't allow miracles alone to count as decisive evidence that a prophet is genuine; he may be using them merely as a test of how firmly we are devoted to Him, as it says in the third verse, 'For the Lord your God is testing you, to learn whether you love Him with all your heart and all your soul'. The works of the Egyptian sorcerers, though not as great as those of Moses, were nevertheless great miracles, 'but we'll agree that those sorcerers weren't true prophets who had been immediately spoken to by the true God'. **(2)** However great the miracle may be, if it tends to stir up revolt against the king or whoever governs by the king's authority, the miracle-worker is to be regarded merely as someone sent to make a trial of our allegiance. 'How did the *king* get into the story?' In this context, the words 'revolt from the Lord your God' are equivalent to 'revolt from your king'. That's because the Israelites had made God their king by a pact at the foot of Mount Sinai; and God ruled them solely through Moses, who was the only one who spoke with God, and from time to time declared God's commandments to the people. Similarly, after our saviour Christ had made his disciples acknowledge him as the Messiah (i.e. God's anointed, whom the Jewish nation daily expected to come as their king, though they refused him when he did come), he took care to warn them of the dangers of miracles:

There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and they will do great wonders and miracles, even to the extent of seducing (if it were possible) the very elect.<sup>3</sup>

['The elect' are those who have been elected or selected or chosen for salvation. The word will turn up several times more.] This shows that false prophets may have the power of miracles, but we aren't to accept their teachings as God's word. St. Paul told the Galatians that 'if anyone preaches to you a Gospel other than the one I have preached to you, let him be accursed - even if the person is myself or an angel from heaven.'<sup>4</sup> The Gospel in question said that Christ was King; so St Paul in these words is putting his curse on any preaching against the power of the king. For his speech is addressed to those who by his preaching had already accepted Jesus as the Christ, i.e. the King of the Jews.

And just as (1) miracles don't show that the miracle-worker has had an immediate revelation from God, if he doesn't preach the doctrine that God has established, so also (2) preaching that doctrine doesn't prove that the preacher has had an immediate revelation, if it isn't accompanied by miracles. For if a man who doesn't teach false doctrine but also doesn't produce any miracles claims to be a prophet, his claim should be disregarded. [He backs this up with a quotation from Deuteronomy 18:21,22, a mildly cloudy passage whose gist is this:

If you are wondering 'How can we know that the word of a "prophet" is not the word of the Lord?', the answer is this: If the prophet says in the name of the Lord that such-and-such will happen, and it doesn't, then he was speaking not on the basis of the word of the Lord but rather from the pride of his own heart, and you have nothing to fear from him.

Then Hobbes continues:] But someone may want to ask: 'When the "prophet" has foretold something, how are we to know whether or not it *will* happen?' Good question! For he may foretell it as something that will occur after a certain long time, longer than a human lifetime, or indefinitely that it will happen 'at some time'; and in either of those cases this test for whether someone is a genuine prophet is no use. So the miracles that oblige us to believe a prophet ought to be confirmed by an event that occurs right then or very soon thereafter. That's why we find that Scripture endorses only one mark of someone's being a true prophet, i.e. having received an immediate revelation, namely

his (2) the teaching of the religion that God has established, and (1) his producing a *present* miracle.

This is a single test for prophet-hood, with two essential parts; because neither of them is on its own sufficient to oblige anyone else to accept what the 'prophet' says.

In our day, miracles no longer occur; so we have no basis for accepting the claimed revelations or inspirations of any man - no obligation to listen to any doctrine that doesn't square with the Holy Scriptures. Ever since the time of the apostles, the Scriptures have filled the gap, making up for the lack of any other prophecy; and from them we can easily deduce all the rules and precepts we need for the knowledge of our duty to God and to man, doing this through wise and learned interpretation and careful thinking, with no need for supernatural inspiration or immediate input from God. This Scripture is where I shall find the sources for what I have to say concerning the rights of those who are the supreme governors on earth of Christian Commonwealths, and of the duty of Christian subjects towards their sovereigns. With that aim in view, I'll devote my next chapter to the books, writers, scope and authority of the Bible.

### **Chapter 33. The number, age, aim, authority, and interpreters of the Bible**

·NUMBER·

By 'the books of Holy Scripture' I mean the ones that ought to be the rules of Christian life. And because all the rules of life that men are in conscience bound to follow are *laws*, the question of the Scripture is the question of what is law - natural law and civil law - throughout Christendom [i.e. throughout all Christian commonwealths]. The Bible doesn't settle what laws every Christian king *shall* establish in his own dominions, but it does settle what laws he *shall not* establish. Now, I have proved that sovereigns are the sole legislators in their own dominions; so the only books of the Bible that are law in each nation are the ones established as such by the sovereign authority.

It's true that God is the sovereign of all sovereigns; so when he speaks to any subject, he ought to be obeyed, whatever any earthly ruler might command to the contrary. But the question is not 'Ought we to obey God?' but rather 'What has God commanded us to do, and when did he

command it?' And for today's Christians, who have no supernatural revelation, the answer has to come from the application of the natural reason that guided them - in the interests of peace and justice - to obey the authority of their various commonwealths, i.e. the authority of their lawful sovereigns. According to this obligation, the only books of the Old Testament that I accept as Holy Scripture are the ones whose acceptance has been commanded by the authority of the Church of England. What books these are is well enough known, so I don't need to list them. [Hobbes then sketches the different positions that different authorities in the early Church took about exactly which books belong in the Old Testament proper - i.e. which are parts of the 'canon' or official list - and which belong in the Apocrypha. Then:]

As for the books of the New Testament, they are equally accepted as canonical by all Christian churches, and by all sects of Christians that admit any books at all as canonical.

·AGE·

The historical records don't tell us who wrote the sacred books, so if we are to discover that, it will have to be by the light of the books themselves. This light may not show who wrote each book, but it does show roughly when each was written; and we'll see that this often provides evidence about who *didn't* write this or that book. [In the ensuing discussion, Hobbes will mention by name every Book of the Old Testament.]

Let us start with the Pentateuch, i.e. the first five books of the Old Testament. They are called 'the five Books of Moses', but that doesn't mean that he wrote them. The Old Testament contains books with the titles 'the Book of Joshua', 'the Book of Judges', 'the Book of Ruth', and 'the Books of the Kings', but we don't regard those titles as proving that the books in question were written by Joshua, the Judges, Ruth, and the Kings respectively. A book-title is as likely to name the book's subject as to name its author: 'The History of Livy' names the •writer, but 'The History of Alexander' names the •subject. And there is pretty good evidence that Moses *didn't* write all of the Pentateuch. We read in the last chapter of Deuteronomy, concerning Moses' tomb, 'that no man knows of his tomb to this day',<sup>5</sup> where 'this day' refers to the time at which those words were written. That makes it clear that the words were written after Moses' funeral . . . . It might be claimed that the last chapter was written by someone else, while the rest of the Pentateuch was written by Moses. Well, consider this from the first book of the Pentateuch: 'And Abraham passed through the land to the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh, and the Canaanite was then in the land.'<sup>6</sup> This couldn't have been written by Moses, . . . . who died before the Canaanite came there. [Hobbes gives one more example, this time from the book of Numbers. Then:] So it is clear enough that the five 'Books of Moses' were written after his time, though it's not so clear *how* long after.

Still, although Moses didn't compile those books entirely, and in the form in which we have them, he *did* write everything in them that the books themselves say that he wrote - for example, the volume of the law, which seems to be contained in Deuteronomy 11-27 and was also commanded to be written on stone tablets when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan. Moses wrote this himself, and delivered it to the priests and elders of Israel, to be read every seventh year to all Israel at their gathering for the feast of tabernacles. And this is the law which, transcribed by the priests and Levites, God commanded to be read by the kings of the future people of Israel.

The Book of Joshua was also written long after the time of Joshua; this can be inferred from many passages in the book itself. Joshua had set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, to mark the people's passing there, and the writer says of the stones 'They are there unto this day'<sup>7</sup> - where the phrase 'unto this day' signifies a time so long past as to be beyond the memory of man.



[Hobbes presents two more passages in the Book of Joshua, in each of which the phrase ‘unto this day’ indicates that the passages were written long after the time of Joshua,<sup>8</sup> and says that many others of the same sort are scattered throughout that book.]

[Similar arguments can be constructed, Hobbes says, for the Books of Judges, of Ruth, of Samuel, of the Kings, of the Chronicles, of Ezra, of Nehemia, and of Esther, for most of which he gives specific references. Most of them are to passages in which events chronicled in the Book in question are written about in a way indicating that for the writer the events were in the distant past. Then:]

The Book of Job contains no indication of when it was written. There is good enough evidence that Job was not a fictional character,<sup>9</sup> but the book seems not to be a history, but rather a treatise about a question that was much disputed in ancient times, namely ‘Why is it that wicked men have so often prospered in this world, and that good men have been afflicted?’ This is confirmed by something that St Jerome reports concerning the form of his book in the Hebrew language, namely that it starts and ends in prose, while all the rest of it - starting with Job’s complaint (Job 3:3 to 42:11) - is in verse with six beats to a line. Thus the dispute is all in verse, with a prose preface and epilogue. Verse was often used in ancient times in philosophy, especially moral philosophy; but it’s an unlikely form for •complaints about one’s own suffering or for •words of comfort to a suffering friend.

The Psalms were written mostly by David, for the use of the choir. To these have been added some songs of Moses and other holy men, some of them (such as 126 and 137) after the return from the captivity; which shows that the Psalms were compiled, and put into the form they now have, after the return of the Jews from ·captivity in· Babylon.

[The Proverbs, Hobbes says, are ‘a collection of wise and godly sayings’ that were written by Solomon and two people who came after him, and] the collection of them into this one book was the work of some other godly man that lived after all three of them.

The Books of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are entirely Solomon’s work, except perhaps for the opening verse of each: ‘The words of the preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem’ and ‘The song of songs, which is Solomon’s’. These seem to have been added later, when the books of Scripture were gathered into one body of the law, so as to preserve not only the doctrine of the two Books but also the fact about their authorship.

Of the ·seventeen· prophets, the most ancient are Zephaniah, Jonas, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micaiah, who lived in the time of Amaziah and Azariah, Kings of Judah. But the Book of Jonah isn’t really a statement of his prophecy, for all there is to *that* is these few words, ‘Forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed’. What it *is* is a history or narration of Jonas’s unruly disobedience and his disputing God’s commandments; so he isn’t likely to have been the author of the book! But the Book of Amos is his prophecy.

Jeremiah, Obadiah, Nahum and Habakkuk prophesied in the time of Josiah.

Ezekiel, Daniel, Haggai and Zechariah prophesied during the captivity.

The Books of Joel and Malachi don’t make clear when they prophesied. But the inscriptions or titles of their books, ·added to all the other evidence I have mentioned·, make it clear enough that the whole Old Testament was put together in the form in which we now have it, •after the Jews returned from their captivity in Babylon and •before the time of ·the Greek king of Egypt· Ptolemaeus Philadelphus [282-246 BCE], who had it translated into Greek by seventy men sent to him from Judea for that purpose. [Hobbes adds that there is confirmation of this in the apocryphal Book of Esdras. He remarks that the Books in the Apocrypha have been recommended to us by

the Church as instructive, although they are not allowed into the canon of the Old Testament. Then:] That's all I have to say about the dating of the books of the Old Testament.

All the writers of the New Testament lived at most a few decades after Christ's ascent into heaven, and all of them had seen our Saviour or even been his disciples, except for St. Paul and St. Luke. So everything that they wrote is as ancient as the time of the apostles. But the time when the books of the New Testament were accepted, and acknowledged by the Church as being written by those people, is not so ancient. Just as the books of the Old Testament come to us from a time no earlier than that of Esdras, who was directed by God's spirit to retrieve them when they were lost, so also the books of the New Testament can't be derived from any time earlier than when the governors of the Church collected, approved, and recommended them to us as the writings of the apostles and disciples whose names they bear. (It needs to be borne in mind that there weren't many copies of these books, and that it wouldn't be easy for any one individual to own a complete set of them.) The first listing of all the books of the Old and New Testaments is in the 'Canons of the Apostles' that are supposed to have been collected by Clement, the first Bishop of Rome after St Peter. But that is only *supposed*, and by many people it is questioned. So the first authority we *know* to have recommended the Bible . . . as containing the writings of the prophets and apostles is the Council of Laodicea, which was held in the 364 CE. By this time the great doctors of the Church, ambitious as they were, no longer looked up to Christian emperors as •shepherds of the people, and instead counted them among the sheep. (Non-Christian emperors - wolves!) And they tried to get their doctrines accepted not as

- advice and information, from preachers

but rather as

- laws, from absolute governors

- thinking that such frauds would tend to make the people more obediently pious. Furthermore, the only copies of the books of the New Testament were in the hands of the ecclesiastics. Despite all this, I am convinced that they didn't push their fraud so far as to falsify •the Bible, because if they had done so, they would surely have made •them more favourable to their power over Christian princes and civil governments than they are. So I don't see any reason to doubt that the Old and New Testaments, as we have them now, are true records of the things that were done and said by the prophets and the apostles. . . .

•AIM•

Although these books were written by a variety of men, it's obvious that they were all written in the same spirit: all the writers were working together for a single goal, namely the setting forth of the rights of the kingdom of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The book of Genesis traces

•the genealogy of God's people from the creation of the world to the going into Egypt; the other four 'Books of Moses' contain

•their election of God as their king, and the laws that he laid down to govern them; the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Samuel (up to 1 Samuel 9:2 when Saul makes his first appearance) describe

•the acts of God's people up to the time when they threw off God's yoke and demanded a king of the same •human• sort as the neighbouring nations had; and the rest of the history of the Old Testament traces

•the succession of the line of David up to the time of the captivity,  
- the line from which was to spring the restorer of the kingdom of God, our blessed Saviour, God the Son. The books of the prophets

- foretold his coming.

Then the Evangelists wrote about

- his life and actions, and his claim to the kingdom while he lived on earth;

and, lastly, the Books of the Acts and Letters of the apostles declare

- the coming of God, the Holy Ghost, and the authority He left with them and their successors for the direction of the Jews and for the invitation of the Gentiles.

So you can see that the histories and the prophecies of the Old Testament and the gospels and epistles of the New Testament have had one and the same aim, to convert men to obedience to God - (1) in Moses and the priests, (2) in the man Christ, and (3) in the apostles and the successors to apostolical power. At different times these three represented the person of God:

- Moses and his successors, the high priests and kings of Judah, in the Old Testament;
- Christ himself at the time when he lived on earth; and
- the Apostles and their successors from the day of Pentecost (when the Holy Ghost descended on them) to the present day.

·AUTHORITY·

The different Christian sects have disagreed strongly about the answer to the question

- (1) Where do the Scriptures get their authority from?

That question is also presented sometimes in other terms, such as

- (2) How do we know that the Scriptures are the word of God?
- (3) Why do we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God?

The main reason why it is so hard to get an agreement on the answer to this is that the question itself is defective. Everyone believes that the first and original author of the Bible is God; ·it's obvious that (1) that's where the authority comes from·; so *that's* not what the dispute is about. Nor does the argument concern how we *know* that they are God's word; all Christians *believe* that they are, but (2) no-one can *know* this unless God himself has revealed it to him supernaturally. As for (3) the question about reasons for belief: some people are led to believe for one reason, others for other reasons; there isn't any single general answer to that question. The right way to formulate the question is: By what authority are the Scriptures made law?

To the extent that they don't differ from the laws of nature, they are certainly the law of God, and carry their authority with them, legible to everyone who has the use of natural reason. This is the same authority that every other moral doctrine has that is consonant to reason; and laws of this kind are not *made* - they are *eternal*.

If they are *made* law by God himself, then they are of the same kind as written law; and in that case they are laws for - ·are binding on· - a person only if God has published them *to him* so thoroughly that he can't excuse himself by saying he didn't know they were God's. And that has to be someone to whom God has supernaturally revealed ·that the Scriptures are his laws, or ·that those who published them were sent by Him.

·What about the rest of us, to whom God hasn't supernaturally revealed *anything*·? If we are obliged to obey those laws, it must be by the authority of the person whose commands already have the force of law, i.e. the authority of the Commonwealth residing in the sovereign, who alone has the legislative power. If it isn't the legislative authority of the Commonwealth that gives them the force of law, it will have to be some other **public or private** authority derived from God. ·Let us look at those two options separately·. (1) If the authority is private, it obliges only the particular person whom God has been pleased to reveal it. For if every man were obliged to accept as God's law everything that particular men shove at him with a ·claim of private inspiration or revelation, no divine law could be acknowledged. (·It can easily happen that such a

•claim is false. Men do out of pride and ignorance take their own dreams, extravagant fancies, and fits of madness to be testimonies of God's spirit; or out of ambition claim to have received divine testimonies, knowing that they are lying.) (2) If the authority is public, it has to be the authority either of the Commonwealth or of the Church. [In what comes next, Hobbes is relying on the account he has given in chapter 16 of how an institution such as the Church can be 'a person'.] If it's the Church, then we need to think about what sort of entity the Church *is*. If it is one person, then

- the Church is a Commonwealth of Christians;

called a 'Commonwealth' because it consists of men united in one person, their sovereign; and called a 'Church' because it consists in Christian men united in one Christian sovereign. If the Church isn't one person, then it has no authority at all; it can't give any commands or perform any actions; it has no power over anything or right to have anything; it has no reason, or voice, or will; for all these qualities are *personal*. Now if the totality of Christians isn't contained in one Commonwealth, they are not one person; there's no universal Church that has any authority over them; and in that case Scriptures aren't made laws by the universal Church. And if on the other hand there is one Commonwealth containing all the Christians, then all Christian monarchs and states are reduced to the ranks of private persons, and can be judged, deposed and punished by a universal sovereign of all Christendom. Now consider these two alternatives regarding Christian kings and the sovereign assemblies in Christian Commonwealths -

- They are absolute in their own territories, immediately under God;

- They are subject to one Vicar of [= 'stand-in for'] Christ who is the established head of the universal Church; they can be judged, condemned, deposed, and put to death, as he shall think expedient or necessary for the common good.

The question about the authority of the Bible comes down to this: *Which of these two statements is correct?*

•INTERPRETERS•

That question can't be answered until we have thought hard and in detail about the kingdom of God; and that will also be our basis for judging who is *authorized* to interpret the Bible. For anyone who has a lawful power over any writing to make it law also has the power also to approve or disapprove any interpretation of that writing.

[The next two chapters - about 18 pages - are omitted:

Chapter 34: The meaning of 'spirit', 'angel', and 'inspiration' in the books of the Bible.

Chapter 35: The meaning in Scripture of 'kingdom of God', 'holy', 'sacred', and 'sacrament'.]

## **Chapter 36. The word of God and of the prophets**

When 'the word of God' or 'the word of man' is mentioned, it doesn't signify an isolated *word* that isn't accompanied by other words so that something is *said*. Rather, it signifies a complete act of speech or discourse, in which the speaker affirms, denies, commands, promises, threatens, wishes, or interrogates. . . .

Again, if we say 'the word of God' or 'the word of man', the word 'of' sometimes (1) links the words •to the speaker (meaning the words that God has spoken, or that a man has spoken), for example in the phrase 'the Gospel *of* St. Matthew'; and sometimes it (2) links them •to the subject of those words, as when we read in the Bible 'The words of the days of the kings of Israel', meaning the words *about* the acts that were performed in those days. [Hobbes continues with some densely referenced evidence that in the Bible 'the word of God' often means 'the truths

*about* God’, for example:] Acts 12:24 says ‘The word of God grew and multiplied’, which is easy to understand if it is talking about the evangelical doctrine, but hard and strange if it is referring to the voice or speech of God.

Considering these two meanings that ‘the word of God’ is given in Scripture, it’s clear that in sense (2), in which it refers to the doctrine of Christian religion, the whole of Scripture is ‘the word of God’; but in sense (1) much of Scripture is not ‘the word of God’. That is, the whole of Scripture is (2) *about* God, but a lot of it is not (1) *said by* God. For example, the words ‘I am the Lord thy God’ etc., down to the end of the Ten Commandments, were spoken by God to Moses; but the preface ‘God spoke these words and said’ is to be understood as said not by God but by the writer of the holy history.

And now we have a further distinction to attend to. Occurrences of ‘the word of God’ in which it refers to (2) what God has said, are to be understood sometimes literally and sometimes metaphorically. Literally when referring to the words God has spoken to His prophets; metaphorically when referring to God’s wisdom, power, and eternal decree in making the world. [We are about to meet the word ‘fiat’, used as an English noun. Its original sense is that of a Latin verb, meaning ‘Let there be...’ or ‘Let it be the case that . . .’.] God’s fiats ‘Let there be light’, ‘Let there be a firmament’, ‘Let us make man’ etc. are ‘the word of God’ in that metaphorical sense. It’s that same sense that is involved in . . . ‘He upholds all things by the word of His power’<sup>10</sup> and ‘The worlds were framed by the word of God’<sup>11</sup> . . .

That is one metaphorical sense of ‘the word of God’; there is also another. The phrase is sometimes used in Scripture to refer to the *effect* of God’s word - i.e. the thing that was affirmed, commanded, threatened, or promised by God’s word. . . . Elijah said to God ‘I have done all these thy words’<sup>12</sup> as a way of saying ‘I have done all these things at your word or commandment’. And ‘Where is the word of the Lord?’<sup>13</sup> is a way of asking ‘Where is the evil that He threatened?’ . . . And it’s in this sense that St. John the Evangelist (and no-one else, I think) calls our Saviour himself ‘the word’ of God: ‘And the word was made flesh’<sup>14</sup> - referring to the word or promise that Christ would come into the world. . . . Our Saviour is there called ‘the word’ not because he was •the promise but because he was •the thing that was promised. . . . So there’s nothing here about the incarnation [= ‘the becoming-flesh’] of a *word*; it’s all about the incarnation of God the son, who is called ‘the word’ because his incarnation was the performance of a promise - a *word*.

There are also places in Scripture where ‘the word of God’ is used to refer to words that are not necessarily spoken by prophet or a holy man but are just and reasonable. The Pharaoh Necho was an idolater; yet his words to the good King Josiah, advising him not to interfere Necho’s coming battle against Carchemish, are said to have come ‘from the mouth of God’ (Josiah ignored the advice and was killed in the battle)<sup>15</sup> . . .

So ‘the word of God’ is sometimes to be taken for the dictates of reason and justice, when this is said in the Bible to be written ‘in man’s heart’, as in Psalms 37:31, Jeremiah 31:33, and many other such places.

WHAT DOES ‘PROPHET’ MEAN?

Now for the title ‘prophet’ as it occurs in Scripture. It is used in three ways. A ‘prophet’ can be

- someone who speaks on God’s behalf to man, or on man’s behalf to God;
- someone who foretells things that are to come:
- someone who speaks incoherently, like a man who is distracted.

The usage in which a ‘prophet’ speaks on God’s behalf to the people is the most common one. Thus, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah and others were ‘prophets’ in this sense. And it’s in this sense that the high priest was a ‘prophet’, because he went alone into the most holy place to put a question to God, and was to declare God’s answer to the people. For example, when Caiaphas said that it was expedient that one man should die for the people, St. John says that ‘He spoke not this of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that one man should die for the nation.’<sup>16</sup> [That is: He wasn’t speaking for himself, but in his role as high priest he prophesied it, meaning that he said it on God’s behalf.] Those who taught the people in Christian congregations are said to have ‘prophesied’.<sup>17</sup> And a similar sense of ‘prophet’ is at work when . . . . God says to Moses: ‘See, I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.’<sup>18</sup>

As for ‘prophet’ meaning someone who speaks on man’s behalf to God:- That sense is at work when God calls Abraham a prophet, saying to Abimelech in a dream ‘Now therefore restore to the man his wife, for he is a prophet, and shall pray for thee’.<sup>19</sup> From this we gather that it’s not wrong to label as ‘prophets’ the members of Christian churches who are called to say public prayers on behalf of the congregation. [After giving two more biblical examples of this use of ‘prophet’, Hobbes moves to an even weaker sense of it, thus:] When St. Paul says ‘Every man that prays or prophesies with his head covered . . .’ and so on, and ‘every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered’,<sup>20</sup> he treat’s ‘prophesying’ as merely praising God in psalms and holy songs. (Women were allowed to do that in the church, but not to speak to the congregation.) . . . .

When ‘prophesy’ is used to mean *predict*, i.e. foretell future contingent events, the label ‘prophet’ was given not only to •men who were God’s spokesmen and foretold to others events that God had foretold to them, but also to •all the impostors who claimed to foretell future events, though they really did no such thing. . . . As I pointed out in chapter 12, there are many kinds of impostors whose reputations as prophets among the common people are •raised more by a single success (even when a stretch was needed to get the outcome to fit the prediction) than they are •lowered by countless failures! Prophecy isn’t an art; and prophecy understood as prediction isn’t a steady job but a special temporary employment by God, usually of good men but sometimes also of wicked ones. . . . Among the gentiles, incoherent speech was taken to be a kind of prophecy, because the ‘prophets’ of their oracles - intoxicated by a spirit or vapour from the cave of the Pythian Oracle at Delphi - said in their madness things that were so loose they could be made to fit any event . . . . In the Scripture too I find ‘prophecy’ being understood in that way, in these words: ‘And the evil spirit came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house.’<sup>21</sup>

Amidst all these different meanings that the Bible gives to the word ‘prophet’, the commonest is the one that understands a ‘prophet’ to be *someone to whom God speaks immediately, telling the prophet something that he is to pass on to others on God’s behalf.*

·HOW DOES GOD ‘SPEAK’?·

This brings us to the question: *How* does God speak to such a prophet? You may think that God can’t have a voice and a language because he doesn’t, strictly speaking, have a tongue or any other organs that men have. The prophet David argues thus: ‘Shall He that made the eye, not see? or He that made the ear, not hear?’<sup>22</sup> Understood literally and taken on the face of it, the argument seems to imply that because God made all the parts of a man’s body he has the same use of those parts as we have; but if you think about some of our parts you’ll realize that this would be an utterly unjustifiable insult against God. David may have been meaning not to argue for a

conclusion about God's nature but merely to signify an intention to honour Him; for seeing and hearing are honourable attributes, and may be attributed to God as a way of declaring (within the limits of our conceptions) His almighty power. So we should understand God's 'speaking' to men immediately to be the way, whatever it may be, in which God makes men understand His will. He has many ways of doing this, and we should look for them only in the Bible. Although the Bible often says that God spoke to this or that person, without saying how, there are also many passages that tell us what •the signs were by which the prophet was to recognize His presence and commandment; and we can understand •these as constituting *how* God 'spoke' on those occasions.

[What follows is a densely referenced and fairly uninteresting report on God's speaking to Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, and others right through to the end of the New Testament. Such episodes divide, Hobbes says, into •ones where the Bible doesn't say how God communicated and •ones that say that God spoke through a vision or in a dream. Then:]

Only to Moses did God speak in a more extraordinary manner, on Mount Sinai and elsewhere . . . . But Moses, and after him the high priests, were prophets who stood especially high in God's favour; and God himself said explicitly that whereas he had spoken to other prophets in dreams and visions, he would speak to His servant Moses in the way that a man speaks to his friend. The words are these:

If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house; with him I will speak mouth to mouth, not in dark speeches but quite openly, and he will behold the likeness of the Lord. (Numbers 12:6-8)

And again:

The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. (Exodus 33:11)

And yet these 'speeches' of God to Moses were really performed through the mediation of one or more •angels; we are explicitly told this in Acts 7:35,53 in and Galatians, 3:19. That means that these communications occurred in •visions - though clearer visions than the other prophets had. That fits with God's saying 'If there arise amongst you a prophet, or dreamer of dreams . . .',<sup>23</sup> in which 'dreamer of dreams' is offered as an interpretation of 'prophet'. Also: 'Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions'.<sup>24</sup> Here again the word 'prophesy' is explained in terms of dreams and visions. That's also how God spoke to Solomon when he promised him wisdom, riches, and honour; for the Bible says: 'And Solomon awoke, and behold it was a dream.'<sup>25</sup> In general, then, the extraordinary prophets in the Old Testament became informed about the word of God only through their dreams or visions, i.e. from the imaginings that they had in their sleep or in an ecstasy. In every true prophet these imaginings were supernatural, whereas in false prophets they were natural if they occurred at all. . . .

Of the men who were prophets by a perpetual calling in the Old Testament, some were •supreme and some •subordinate. The supreme ones included Moses, and after him the high priests, each for his own time, as long the priesthood had sovereign authority. [They also included certain kings, Hobbes says, and he discusses this at some length with many biblical references. Then:] Therefore Moses and the high priests and the pious kings . . . . were all sovereign prophets. But it's not clear how God spoke to them. Here are four ideas about that.

(1) When Moses went up to God on Mount Sinai it was a dream or vision, such as other prophets had.

This, however, is contrary to the distinction that God made between Moses and other prophets.<sup>26</sup>

(2) God spoke or appeared to Moses as He is in His own nature.

That denies God's infiniteness, invisibility, incomprehensibility.

(3) God spoke to Moses by inspiration, or by infusing him with the Holy Spirit.

·This won't do either·. The Holy Spirit is God; so if Moses was infused with the Holy Spirit he was on a par with Christ, who St Paul says is the only one who literally has God *in* him.<sup>27</sup> [Actually, Paul writes: 'For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily', not 'For *only* in him . . . '.]

(4) God spoke to Moses by the Holy Spirit.

This brings in only the graces or gifts of the Holy Spirit, which means that there was nothing supernatural about it. For God disposes men to piety, justice, mercy, truth, faith, and all kinds of moral and intellectual virtue by doctrine, example, and various natural and ordinary causes ·that can be regarded as graces or gifts of the Holy Spirit·.

None of these four is an acceptable account of how God spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, or of how he spoke to the high priests from the mercy-seat. So we just don't know how God spoke to those sovereign prophets of the Old Testament, whose role it was to put questions to Him. In the time of the New Testament the only sovereign prophet was our Saviour, who was both •God who spoke *and* •the prophet to whom He spoke.

As for subordinate prophets of perpetual calling [i.e. full-time tenured second-rank prophets], I find nothing in the Bible proving that God spoke to them supernaturally. His 'speaking' to them seems to have been done in the way in which God naturally inclines men to piety, to belief, to righteousness, and to other virtues. Men are naturally pushed and pulled towards Christian virtues by various factors, including •their temperament, •how they have been instructed, •how they were brought up, and so on. And ·although this process is entirely natural·, it's all right for us to attribute it to the operation of the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit (which we in our language call 'the Holy Ghost'), because every good inclination is ·ultimately· God's work. But God's activities aren't always supernatural. So when a prophet is said to speak 'in the spirit', or 'by the spirit of God', we should take that to mean no more than that he speaks according to God's will as declared by the supreme prophet. For the commonest meaning of the word 'spirit' is as referring to a man's intention, his mind, or his disposition.

In Moses' time there were seventy men besides himself who prophesied in the camp of the Israelites. In Numbers 11:25 we are told *how* God spoke to them:

The Lord came down in a cloud, and spoke unto Moses, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it to the seventy elders. And it came to pass, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

This shows clearly that their prophesying to the people was subservient and subordinate to the prophesying of Moses. God took some of Moses' spirit - ·i.e. his intentions, his state of mind, his disposition· - gave this to them, so that they prophesied as Moses wanted them to - otherwise they wouldn't have been allowed to prophesy at all. [Hobbes adds further evidence for this, from verse 27. Then:]

A second thing that the passage from Numbers shows is that •'the Spirit of God' in that context refers merely to •a willingness to obey and assist Moses in the administration of the government. . . . And it also appears that the seventy had been appointed by Moses himself, as elders and officers of the people [and Hobbes gives evidence for that].

On many occasions God spoke also through the outcome of a lottery that had been organized by someone He had put in authority over His people. There was the drawing of lots



that Saul organized to settle a question about wrongdoing by Jonathan,<sup>28</sup> and the ‘lots that Joshua cast before the Lord in Shiloh, to divide the land of Canaan amongst the Israelites<sup>29</sup>. . . .

And all these ways God has of ‘speaking’ turn up in the New Testament too. To the Virgin Mary, a vision of an angel; to Joseph in a dream; to Paul on the road Damascus, a vision of our Saviour; to Peter . . . in prison, a vision of an angel; and to all the Apostles and writers of the New Testament, by the graces of His spirit; and to the Apostles again, the choosing by lottery of Matthias to take the place of Judas Iscariot among the disciples.

So we have the result that all prophecy involves

- vision or dream (and when they are *natural* the vision *is* a dream), or

- some special gift of God, of so rare a kind that it astonishes everyone who encounters it;

and the further result that such gifts as the most extraordinary dreams and visions may come from God not only •immediately in a supernatural way but also •through intermediate causes in a manner that is natural. That’s why we need to use reason and judgment to distinguish natural from supernatural gifts, and natural from supernatural visions or dreams. We had better be very circumspect and cautious about obeying the voice of •a man who claims to be a prophet and demands that we obey God by doing the things that - according to •him, ‘speaking in God’s name’ - pave the way to happiness. For someone who claims to be teaching men the way to great happiness is offering to *govern* them, i.e. to rule and reign over them. This is something that all men naturally want, so anyone who lays claim to it should be suspected of being an ambitious cheat; and we shouldn’t obey him unless we have examined and tested him. The only exception is when the man in question is the civil sovereign, or someone authorized by him, in which case we have already given him our obedience by instituting a Commonwealth.

You might ask ‘Is every one of us *allowed* to examine the credentials of prophets and spirits?’ Well, if we weren’t, there’d be no point in displaying signs that would enable everyone to distinguish those whom they ought to follow from those whom they ought not to follow; and the facts about those signs *have* been displayed - both for prophets<sup>30</sup> and for spirits.<sup>31</sup> In the light of this, and of the fact that there is

- so much prophesying in the Old Testament, and

- so much preaching in the New Testament *against* prophets,

and the fact that there have been

- so many more false prophets than true ones,

everyone should be very wary about obeying the directions of any ‘prophet’. *Have* there been many more false prophets than true ones? Well, when Ahab consulted four hundred prophets, Micaiah was the only one of them who wasn’t a false impostor.<sup>32</sup> And a little before the time of the captivity, the prophets were generally liars. Speaking through Jeremiah, the Lord said:

The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, nor spoken unto them: they prophesy to you a false vision, a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart.<sup>33</sup>

God went so far as to *command* the people - speaking with the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah - *not* to obey them: ‘Thus says the Lord of Hosts, hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy to you. They make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.’<sup>34</sup>

In Old Testament times there were many quarrels among the visionary prophets, with one challenging another and asking ·with a sneer· ‘When did the spirit leave me and go over to you?’, as happened between Micaiah and the rest of the four hundred. They also called one another liars,

as in Jeremiah, 14:14. And there were great controversies about this among the New Testament prophets claiming to have the Holy Spirit. Because of all this, every man back then *was*, and every man now *is*, bound to use his natural reason to apply to all prophecy the rules God has given us to distinguish the true from the false.

The rules he gave in the Old Testament were: •preaching doctrine compatible with what Moses, the sovereign prophet, had taught them; and •having a miraculous power to foretell what God was going to bring about . . . . And in the New Testament there was just one sign of someone's being a genuine prophet, namely •his preaching the doctrine that Jesus is the Christ, i.e. the king of the Jews, who had been promised in the Old Testament. Anyone who •denied that article of the faith was a •false prophet, whatever miracles he might seem to perform; and anyone who •taught it was a •true prophet. [Hobbes adds some dispensable biblical details. The Latin version includes something notable:] The preacher of the gospel who confesses and preaches that Jesus is the Christ is a prophet of God, whether the preacher is a pious man or not. For a prophet does not become a prophet by his morals or his faith, but by legitimate authority.

So everyone should (1) consider who is the sovereign prophet, i.e. who is God's deputy on earth, having - next under God - the authority of governing Christian men. They should (2) observe for a rule any doctrine that he - the sovereign prophet, speaking in the name of God - has commanded to be taught; and on the basis of that should (3) examine and test the truth of the doctrines that self-described prophets advance, with or without miracles. And if they find such 'prophets' teaching doctrines contrary to that rule - i.e. contrary to the doctrines endorsed by the sovereign prophet - they should (4) refer these prophets to the sovereign, and (5) leave it to him to uphold these prophets or forbid them, as he sees fit. If he disavows them, everyone should (6) no more obey their voice; and if he approves them, everyone should (7) obey those prophets as men to whom God has given a part of the spirit of their sovereign. [Hobbes presents (4,5) through a comparison with what happened when some of the Israelites complained to Moses that they had doubts about the authority of some people who were prophesying in the camp.<sup>35</sup>]

When Christian men don't take their Christian sovereign to be God's prophet, they have only two options. (1) They can take their own dreams to be the prophecy they mean to be governed by, and the swelling of their own hearts to be the spirit of God; or (2) they can allow themselves to be led by some foreign prince, or by some of their fellow subjects who can bewitch them by slandering the government and launching a rebellion, with no miracles to confirm their genuineness except, with some of them, the 'miracle' of extraordinary success in carrying out *and getting away with* their plans, thus destroying all laws, both divine and human, and dragging all order, government, and society back to the primitive chaos of violence and civil war.

### Chapter 37. Miracles and their use

By 'miracles' I mean the astonishing works of God - so they're also called 'wonders'. They are also called 'signs', because their main function is to *signify* what God commands in situations where men's individual natural reason leaves them unsure about what God has and what he hasn't commanded . . . .

If we are to understand what miracles there are, therefore, we must first understand what the works are that men wonder at and call astonishing. There are just two features of an event that make men wonder at it: •its being *strange*, i.e. of a kind that has seldom if ever occurred; and •its being of such a kind that they can't imagine its having occurred from natural causes and think must have come from the immediate hand of God. For something to count as a miracle, it must

have *both* these features. We don't regard an event as miraculous if we see some possible natural cause of it, however unusual events of that kind are; and if an event is of a kind that has often occurred, we don't call it a miracle even if we are quite unable to imagine a natural way for it to come about.

[Hobbes provides examples. If a horse were to speak, that would be both strange and hard to think of as naturally caused. When a horse begets a foal, we have no idea what the mechanism was, but it's a familiar kind of event and therefore not miraculous. The first rainbow ever seen was a miracle, and was indeed a sign from God that there would be no more universal floods. But rainbows are now common, so they aren't miracles either to those who know how they are caused or to those who don't. Then:] There are many rare and in that sense *strange* works produced by the art of man which we don't count as miraculous, because we know that they were produced not by the immediate hand of God but by mediation of human activity.

People vary in how much knowledge and experience they have, so they vary in what they are wonder-struck by; from which it follows that something may be a miracle to one person yet not to another. That's how it comes about that ignorant and superstitious men make great 'wonders' of things that other men don't wonder at all because they know that those things come from nature (which isn't the same as coming from the *immediate* hand of God.) Solar and lunar eclipses are examples of this. . . . Another example: a cunning and unscrupulous man x takes advantage of an ignorant and unwary man y as follows: x secretly gets information about private actions of y's, then tells y what he (y) did on some previous occasion; this knowledge of x's strikes y as a miraculous thing; but amongst wise and cautious men such 'miracles' are hard to perform [meaning that they are hard get away with]!

It's part of the nature of a miracle that it is performed so as to get us to believe God's messengers, servants, and prophets - believe that those men are called, sent, and employed by God - which will make us more disposed to obey them. Consider •the creation of the world, and •the destruction of all living creatures in the universal flood - these were astonishing works, but they aren't usually called 'miracles' because they weren't performed to procure credit for any prophet or other servant of God. However wonderful a work may be, what astonishes us is not •that it could be done (because we believe that God can do anything) but •that He did it at the prayer or word of a man. But the works of God in Egypt, done by the hand of Moses, were 'miracles' properly so-called. because they were done in order to make the people of Israel believe that Moses had been . . . sent to them by God. After God had commanded him to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage, Moses said 'They will not believe me, but will say the Lord has not appeared unto me,'<sup>36</sup> and God gave him power to turn the rod he had in his hand into a serpent, and again to turn it back into a rod . . . to make the Israelites 'believe that the Lord God of their fathers had appeared before them.'<sup>37</sup> And when he had done these miracles [i.e. the rod miracle and two others omitted here] before the people, it is said that 'they *believed* him.'<sup>38</sup> But they still didn't dare to *obey* him, because they were afraid of Pharaoh. So the other things that were done to plague Pharaoh and the Egyptians, all of them tending to make the Israelites believe in Moses, were 'miracles' strictly so-called. And if you look into all the miracles done by the hand of Moses and all the other prophets up to the time of the captivity, and those of our Saviour and his apostles afterwards, you'll find that their purpose was always to create or strengthen people's belief that they - those miracles - were sent by God.

The aim of miracles in Scripture was to create belief not in *all* men . . . but only in the *elect*, i.e. only in those who God had decided should become His subjects. For example, the

miraculous plagues of Egypt weren't aimed at converting Pharaoh. God had told Moses in advance that He would harden Pharaoh's heart so that he wouldn't let the people go; and when at last he did let them go, he hadn't been persuaded to this by miracles, but forced to it by plagues.

The evangelist Matthew tells us that He didn't perform many miracles in His own region, because of the unbelief of people there;<sup>39</sup> And Mark says not that He •didn't perform many but rather than he •couldn't perform any.<sup>40</sup> It wasn't that

- he lacked the power

(it would be blasphemy to say that he did); nor was it that

- miracles aren't intended to convert incredulous men to Christ

(all the miracles of Moses, of the prophets, of our Saviour and of his apostles were aimed at adding men to the Church). The point was, rather, that

- the end of miracles was to add to the Church not •all men but only •men whom God had elected for salvation.

Because our Saviour was sent from his Father, he couldn't use his power to convert people whom his Father had rejected. [Hobbes next comments adversely on those who try to reconcile the two statements by mistranslating the one by Mark. Then:]

What I have said here about the nature and use of miracles enables us to define 'miracle' thus:- A miracle is something that God does - but not through 'the laws of' nature that he established in the Creation - to show His elect that someone has been sent as a special minister to help them towards salvation.

This definition implies that what happens in any miracle isn't the effect of any power in the prophet, because it's an immediate effect of the hand of God; which means that God did it without using the prophet as a subordinate cause.

Something else that follows from the definition:- No devil, angel, or other created spirit can perform a miracle. When a created spirit makes something happen, either (1) it happens through natural causes, so that the event doesn't come from 'the immediate hand of God' and is therefore not a miracle; or (2) it happens in some other way - through an incantation, i.e. through *words* - which means that the miracle-worker has some power of his own that doesn't come from God; and everybody rejects *that*.

Some biblical texts seem to attribute the power of working wonders, equal to some of the immediate miracles that God Himself performs, to certain arts of magic and incantation. [He cites passages in Exodus 7 and 8 reporting three miracles by Moses that were duplicated by 'the magicians of Egypt'. Then:] Won't this incline us to attribute miracles to enchantments - i.e. to the causal power of the sound of words - and to think that this is well proved in those passages and others? But Scripture never tells us what an enchantment *is*. Many people think it's the production of strange effects by spells and words; but if they are wrong, and

- 'enchantment' is merely imposture and delusion, brought about by ordinary means, and so far from being supernatural that all it depends on . . . is the ordinary ignorance, stupidity, and superstition of mankind,

then the biblical texts that seem to endorse the power of magic, witchcraft, and enchantment *must* have a different meaning from the one they seem at first sight to have.

For it's obvious that words have no effect except on those who understand them, and their effect on *them* is only to signify the intentions or feelings of the speaker and thereby produce hope, fear, or other emotions or thoughts in the hearer. Therefore when 'as in Exodus 7 and 8' a rod seems to be a serpent or waters seem to be blood, or any other miracle seems to be done by

enchantment, if it isn't done for the instruction of God's people then the only thing that is enchanted (i.e. affected by the words) is not the rod, or the water, or anything else *except the spectator!* So the 'miracle' consists simply in someone's deceiving someone else, and that's no miracle - indeed it is very easy to do.

That's because men in general are ignorant and prone to error - especially men who know little about natural causes or about the aspects of human nature that make men so easy to deceive by countless easy tricks. (1) Before there was knowledge of the movements of the planets, what a reputation for miraculous power a man could get by telling people that at such and such a day and time the sun would be darkened! (2) If juggling hadn't become a quite ordinary activity, a juggler could handle his goblets and other trinkets in such a way as to make people think that to perform these wonders he must have at least the power of the Devil. (3) A man that has acquired the skill of speaking by breathing *in*, . . . so that the weakness of his voice seems to result not from voice's being weakly produced but from its coming from far away, can make many people believe that it's a voice from heaven - or whatever he chooses to tell them. (4) And for a crafty man who has enquired into the secrets of another man, and learned about his actions and adventures in the confiding sort of conversation that men have with one another, will have no trouble telling these things back to the man he first got them from; yet many have, by doing just that, acquired the reputation of being magicians. . . . And if we look at cases where two or more impostors are working together, there's nothing - however impossible - that people can't be led to believe. (5) Two conspirators - one seeming lame, the other seeming to cure him with a charm - will deceive many people. (6) But many more will be deceived if there is a group of conspirators - one to seem lame, another to 'cure' him, and all the rest to bear witness!

As I said in chapter 36, the best precaution against this general tendency to rush into accepting supposed miracles is the prescription that God gave through Moses,<sup>41</sup> namely that we shouldn't take anyone to be a prophet

(1) if he teaches any religion other than the one established by God's lieutenant, or

(2) if, although he teaches the same religion, the events that he predicts don't happen.

God's lieutenant was Moses; so it follows that •at that time he was to be consulted concerning what doctrine he had established, before the people could rightly give credit to a supposed miracle or prophet. Aaron and his successors were to be consulted to determine what doctrines were established •at their times. And •at any time, the question of what doctrines are then established is to be answered by the sovereign governor of God's people next under God Himself, i.e. by the head of the Church at that time. And if after due consultation we find that the supposed miracle satisfies condition (1), we should still withhold our acceptance of it until we have checked it out against condition (2). For that we must see the miracle being done, using all possible means to check on whether it is really done; and - if it *is* really done - whether it's something that a man couldn't do by his natural power, so that it requires the immediate hand of God. And we must appeal to God's lieutenant for an answer to *this* question - i.e. to the person or governmental entity to whom we have submitted our private judgments in all doubtful cases. For example, suppose this were to happen:

Someone claims that after certain words have been spoken over a piece of bread, God immediately turns it from being *bread* to being *a god* or *a man*, or *both*; yet it still looks still as much like bread as ever it did.

There's no reason for any of us to think that this change has really happened, or to base our fear of God on its having happened, until we consult God - by consulting his stand-in or lieutenant -

about whether it has happened or not. If he says that it hasn't, then we needn't pay any attention to this purported prophet or miracle-worker - 'He has spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not fear him', as Moses says. If God's lieutenant says that the change from bread to god or man *did* take place, we mustn't contradict him. Another kind of example:- If we are *told about* a miracle but don't ourselves *see* it, we should consult the lawful Church by consulting its lawful head - about how far we should go in the direction of believing these reports or miracles. That is the usual situation these days of people who live under Christian sovereigns. In our time we never see any such wondrous work, performed by a charm or a word or a prayer, that would lead a quite stupid person to think it was supernatural. So for us now the question concerns the status not of a supposed miracle that we have seen, but of a supposed miracle that we have heard or read about - we want to know whether a *reported* miracle really was one. . . . To put it bluntly, we want to know whether the report is true or a lie. And this is not to be judged by each person's •private thinking or private conscience; it's a matter for •public thinking, i.e. the reasoning of God's supreme lieutenant. And indeed we have already made him a judge, by giving him a sovereign power to do everything necessary for our peace and defence.

There are no constraints on *thought*; so a private man is always free to *believe* anything he likes concerning acts that have been announced as miracles . . . . But when it comes to *expressing* one's belief, private reason must submit to public reason, i.e. to God's lieutenant. Who *is* this lieutenant of God, this head of the Church? I shall consider that question when its time comes.

### **Chapter 38. The biblical meanings of 'eternal life', 'hell', 'salvation', 'the world to come' and 'redemption'**

Civil society can't survive without justice. And justice requires that those who have the sovereignty of the Commonwealth shall have the power of life and death and of other less extreme rewards and punishments. A Commonwealth couldn't possibly survive if someone other than the sovereign had the power to give greater rewards than life and to inflict greater punishments than death. Well now, •eternal life ·in a state of bliss· is a greater reward than •present life, and •eternal torment is a greater punishment than •ordinary physical death; so the questions arise:

- What does Holy Scripture mean by 'eternal life' and 'eternal torment'?
- For what offences (and offences against whom) are men to be eternally tormented?
- For what actions are men to be rewarded by eternal life?

Anyone who wants by obeying authority to avoid the calamities of confusion and civil war has reason to look for answers to those questions. (I offer my interpretations of biblical passages in a spirit of submission to the interpretation of the Bible authorized by the Commonwealth whose subject I am.)

#### ·ETERNAL LIFE: HOW ACQUIRED AND WHERE SPENT·

The first thing we find is this: Adam was created in such a condition of life that he would have enjoyed life in the Paradise of Eden for ever, if he hadn't broken God's commandment. In Eden there was the •tree of life, whose fruit he was allowed to eat so long as he refrained from eating fruit from the •tree of knowledge of good and evil, which he was forbidden to do. When he ate fruit from the forbidden tree, God thrust him out of Paradise, 'lest he should put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and live forever'.<sup>42</sup> This seems to say that if Adam hadn't sinned, he would have had an eternal life on earth; and that it was his first sin that made him and his posterity *mortal*. . . . When God said 'On the day when you eat that fruit, you will surely die',<sup>43</sup>

he must have meant that what would immediately ensue was not •Adam's actual death but •his becoming mortal and sure to die.

. . . . Jesus Christ has satisfied for [Hobbes's phrase] the sins of all that believe in him, thereby recovering for all believers the **eternal life** that was lost by the sin of Adam. That is the comparison that St Paul is making here: 'As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.'<sup>44</sup> And more clearly here: 'For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'<sup>45</sup>

*Where* are men to enjoy the eternal life that Christ has obtained for them? The passages just quoted seem to answer 'On earth'. If St Paul's comparison is proper, what was lost through Adam - namely eternal life *on earth* - is what is regained through Christ. [Hobbes cites a passage in Psalm 133 and two from Revelation 21 that seem to confirm that those who are saved will have eternal life on earth. Then:] And the very same thing is confirmed in the episode where the Apostles that were watching Christ ascending, and were addressed by two men in white clothing (i.e. two angels) who said: 'This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the way you have seen him go up into heaven.'<sup>46</sup> They seem to have meant that he would come down to govern them eternally *here*, and not take them up so that he could govern them *in heaven*. This fits with the restoration of 'the kingdom of God' that was instituted under Moses, and was a political government of the Jews on earth.

[Then a paragraph devoted to this rather strained argument:- Jesus said that resurrected people do not marry. That would be essential if eternal life were to be spent on earth; because the earth, if it were the scene of endless procreation and no death, 'in a small time would not have been able to provide them place to stand on'.]

There's another respect in which the eternal life that Adam lost is like the eternal life that our Saviour has recovered by his victory over death: namely, that just as Adam lost eternal life by his sin and yet lived on for a while, so the faithful Christian recovers eternal life through Christ's sacrifice and yet dies a natural death and remains dead for a while - specifically, until the resurrection. . . .

In what follows, I shall take it that 'heaven' refers to those parts of the world that are furthest from earth - where the stars are, or above the stars in another higher heaven (though that isn't mentioned in Scripture, and there's no reason to believe it). Now, I can't find any biblical text from which one can easily extract the meaning that the place where men are to live eternally after the resurrection is *the heavens*. The name 'the Kingdom of Heaven' refers to the kingdom of the king who dwells in heaven, and that kingdom was the 'earthly kingdom of the people of Israel. . . . And when Christ through the preaching of his ministers has persuaded the Jews to return, and called the gentiles into obedience to him, there will be a new kingdom - a kingdom of heaven - because God will then be our king. His throne is heaven, but the Scriptures don't say anything implying that man will *ascend* to his happiness any higher than God's footstool, the earth. [Two passages are quoted implying that certain good men who have died are not in heaven. Then:]

Someone might object that although their •bodies were not to ascend until the general day of judgment, their •souls were in heaven as soon as they left their bodies; and that might seem to be confirmed by something our Saviour said. In the course of using the words of Moses as evidence for the resurrection, he said: 'That the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the 'burning' bush, when he calls the Lord "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God

of Jacob”. ·That presupposes the resurrection of the dead·, for the Lord is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for they all live unto him.’<sup>47</sup>

But if these words refer only to the immortality of the soul, they don’t at all prove what our Saviour intended to prove, which was the resurrection of the body - i.e. the immortality of the *man*. [The next sentence seems not to follow from the preceding one; but its initial ‘Therefore’ is Hobbes’s.] Therefore our Saviour means that what made those patriarchs immortal was not •a property that follows from the essence and nature of mankind, but rather •the will of God, who chose to endow the faithful with eternal life, as a sheer gift. . . .

·There is widespread acceptance of the doctrine· that

•the soul of man is a living creature that doesn’t depend on the body, and is inherently eternal, so that men can have immortality that isn’t given to them on judgment day; but there is no scriptural basis for this (except for the immortality of Enoch<sup>48</sup> and Elijah<sup>49</sup>). Throughout Job 14, Job bewails this mortality of nature, but he doesn’t contradict the view that immortality will be given at the resurrection. [Hobbes quotes Job comparing the total death of a man with the way a drought-stricken tree may be revived by water,<sup>50</sup> and as saying two verses later that men won’t rise again until the heavens no longer exist; and he quotes 2 Peter 3:7,12 as equating ‘when the heavens no longer exist’ with ‘on the day of judgment’. Then:] Therefore when Job says ‘man rises not till the heavens be no more’, that’s the same as saying that immortal life (or ‘immortal soul’ - in biblical terms that’s the same thing) doesn’t begin in man until the resurrection and day of judgment; and is caused not by human nature as such but by the promise. For St. Peter does *not* say:

‘Because of our own inherent nature we look for new heavens and a new earth’,  
but rather

‘We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth.’

[Hobbes winds up this part of his argument by reverting to his thesis - defended in chapter 35 [omitted from this version] - that ‘the kingdom of God is a civil commonwealth where God Himself is sovereign’ and that its place will be *on earth*. He remarks that although he bases this on biblical passages that are ‘not few nor obscure’, it will surprise many people. In presenting it, he says, he is merely conducting one part of his project of stopping men from killing one another over theological points.]

·METAPHORS ABOUT HELL·

Just as the •kingdom of God and •eternal life seem from Scripture to be located on earth, so also do •God’s enemies and their •torments after ·the day of judgment. In Scripture the place where all men remain until the resurrection . . . . is usually referred to by terms that signify under ground . . . . But as for the place of the damned after the resurrection, nowhere in the Bible is there any indication of *where* it is - only of who will be there. [Hobbes goes through a number of biblical passages where damnation is spoken of, noting that no clear indication of place is found in any of them; though they do mention ‘in a deep pit’, ‘under the ground’ and ‘under the water’. He also quotes passages suggesting that the damned will be tied hand and foot, and will be in utter darkness. His last remark on this topic concerns the name ‘Hell’, thus:]

There was a place near Jerusalem called the Valley of the Children of Hinnon, in one part of which •the Jews had committed most grievous idolatry, sacrificing their children to the idol Moloch, •God had afflicted His enemies with most grievous punishments, and •Josiah had burned the priests of Moloch on their own altars (for all this see 2 Kings 23). That place was used afterwards to receive the filth and garbage that was carried to it out of the city, and occasionally



fires were lit to purify the air and take away the stink of carrion. Because of this abominable place, the Jews from then on used the name 'Gehenna', i.e. 'Valley of Hinnon', to name the place of the damned. And this 'Gehenna' is the word that is now usually translated as 'hell'; and the fires that sometimes burned there - i.e. in the real Valley of Hinnon - have generated the notion of everlasting and unquenchable fire in hell.

Nobody interprets Scripture as saying that after the day of judgment the wicked will all be eternally punished in the garbage dump in the Valley of Hinnon; or that they will come back to life so as to be underground or underwater forever after; or that after the resurrection they'll never again see one another or move from place to place. So we are compelled to take the things the Bible says about 'hell fire' as meant *metaphorically*; but all metaphors have some real basis that can be expressed literally; so we still have a question before us - namely what the literal underlay is of the Bible's metaphors about where hell is and about the nature of its torments and of those who administer them.

#### ·TORMENTERS AND TORMENTS·

We are told about the nature and properties of the tormenters by the names they are given:

Satan, the enemy,  
Diabolus (·or Devil·), the accuser,  
Abaddon, the destroyer.

The labels 'Satan', 'Devil', 'Abaddon', are not individual names with no conceptual significance; they refer not to their individual bearer(s) but only to an office [here = 'job or role'] or quality; so they are general terms, which oughtn't to be left untranslated, as they are in the Latin and modern Bibles. Left untranslated, they give the impression of being proper names of demons, making men that much easier to seduce into believing the doctrine of devils, which at that time was the religion of the gentiles and was contrary to that of Moses and of Christ.

As for location:- Because 'the Enemy' etc. refer to the enemy of those who will be in the kingdom of God, if God's kingdom after the resurrection will be on the earth, . . . the enemy and *his* kingdom must be on earth also. And that's how it was before the Jews deposed God: God's kingdom was in Palestine, and the surrounding nations were the kingdoms of the enemy; so 'Satan' means any earthly enemy of the Church.

The torments of hell are expressed sometimes by 'weeping, and gnashing of teeth',<sup>51</sup> sometimes by 'the worm of conscience',<sup>52</sup> sometimes by 'fire' as in 'where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched', sometimes by 'shame, and contempt', as in 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt'.<sup>53</sup> These are all metaphorical ways of signifying grief and discontent of mind arising from the sight of that eternal happiness of others which they themselves have lost because of their unbelief and disobedience. And because they - the damned - can't have any sense of the happiness of others except by comparison with their own actual miseries, it follows that they are to suffer bodily pains and calamities such as befall those who don't just live under evil and cruel governors but also have the eternal king of the saints, God almighty, as an enemy.

Among these bodily pains we have to include a 'second death' that is to come to every one of the wicked. That is mentioned explicitly only in the book of Revelation,<sup>54</sup> but it doesn't conflict with anything in the rest of the Bible; for although Bible is clear that everyone will be raised from the dead, it doesn't promise any of the wicked an eternal life. On the question of what bodies men will have when they are brought back to life, St. Paul writes that 'the body is sown in corruption and raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour and raised in glory; it is sown in

weakness and raised in power'.<sup>55</sup> The bodies of the wicked can't be described in terms of 'glory' and 'power', and 'on the other hand' a 'second death' can't describe anything that happens to those who die only once. . . .

The fire prepared for the wicked is an everlasting fire; that is, the condition of being physically and mentally tortured after the resurrection will last for ever; and in that sense the fire will be unquenchable and the torments everlasting. But it doesn't follow from this that someone who is cast into that fire, i.e. subjected to those tortures, will be eternally burned and tortured, and never be destroyed or die. There are many biblical passages that affirm everlasting fire and torments, into which men can be thrown one after another for ever, but I don't find any affirming that any individual person will have an eternal life throughout which he will be tormented. On the contrary, the Bible promises an everlasting *death*, which is the second death: 'For after death and the grave shall have delivered up the dead which were in them, and every man be judged according to his works; death and the grave shall also be cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.' Clearly, there is to be a second death of everyone who is condemned on the day judgment, after which he will die no more.

·SALVATION·

[Hobbes devotes four rather dull pages to biblical evidence regarding *where* the saved people are to enjoy their eternity of bliss. His view, of course, is that they will spend their happy eternity on this earth. Of more interest is a final page on the question of how redemption is/was brought about, i.e. *how* Jesus Christ's death on the cross brought it about that some people are saved. Thus:] The •salvation of a sinner requires a preceding •redemption. Once someone is guilty of a sin, he is liable for the penalty of it, and either he or someone else on his behalf must pay whatever ransom is demanded by whoever is offended by the sin and has the sinner in his power. The offended person is almighty God, who has everything in his power; so salvation can't be acquired without the prior payment of whatever ransom God has chosen to require.

This 'ransom' isn't taken to be a satisfaction for sin equivalent to the offence - i.e. something that *makes it all right again*, something that somehow cancels the sin - because no sinner can do *that*, and no righteous man can ever do it for him. When someone •harms another person, he may make amends for this by restitution or compensation, but •sin can't be taken away by compensation. If it were, the liberty to sin would be something that might be bought and sold. But sins may be *pardoned* if the sinner is repentant, and this pardon may be given either •gratis or •on the payment of whatever penalty God chooses to accept. In the Old Testament, what God usually accepted was some sacrifice or offering [Hobbes's word is 'oblation'].

There is nothing *wrong* about forgiving sin, although punishment has been threatened. Even amongst men, while anyone is bound by his •promise of something good, no-one is bound by his threats, i.e. his •promises of evil; still less do threats bind God, who is infinitely more merciful than men.

So our saviour Christ didn't redeem us by satisfying for the sins of men - i.e. clearing the account, making it as though the sins hadn't occurred - so that it would then be *unjust* for God to punish sinners with eternal death. What he did through his death was this: at his first coming 'into the world' he made a sacrifice and offering of himself, which God chose to require for the salvation, at his second coming, of anyone who in the meantime repented and believed in Him. This redemptive act isn't always in Scripture called a 'sacrifice' an 'offering', and is sometimes called a 'price', but we mustn't understand 'price' to imply •something whose value was such that

our saviour could *claim* that his offended Father pardon us, but only •something that God the Father chose in his mercy to demand.

[The remaining chapters of Part III are omitted. Here are their titles, and the length of each in Curley's edition (Hackett):

39: The biblical meaning of the word 'church' (2)

40: The rights of the kingdom of God in Abraham, Moses, the high priests, and the kings of Judah (10)

41: The office of our blessed Saviour (7)

42: Ecclesiastical power (65!)

43: What is necessary for a man's reception into the Kingdom of Heaven (13)

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 22.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 13.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 24:24.

<sup>4</sup> Galatians: 1:8.

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 34:6.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 12:6.

<sup>7</sup> Joshua 4:9.

<sup>8</sup> Joshua 5:9, 7:26.

<sup>9</sup> Ezekiel 14:14, James 5:11.

<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 1:3.

<sup>11</sup> Hebrews 11:3.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Kings 18:36.

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah 17:15.

<sup>14</sup> John 1:1.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Chronicles 35:21-3.

<sup>16</sup> John 11:51.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:3.

<sup>18</sup> Exodus 7:1.

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 20:7.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:4,5.

<sup>21</sup> 1 Samuel, 18:10.

<sup>22</sup> Psalm 94:9.

<sup>23</sup> Deuteronomy 13:1.

<sup>24</sup> Joel 2:28.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Kings 3:15.

<sup>26</sup> Numbers 12:6-8.

<sup>27</sup> Colossians, 2:9.

<sup>28</sup> 1 Samuel 14:42.

<sup>29</sup> Joshua 18:10.

<sup>30</sup> Deuteronomy 13:1-5.

<sup>31</sup> 1 John 4:1-3.

<sup>32</sup> 1 Kings 22.

<sup>33</sup> Jeremiah 14:14.

<sup>34</sup> Jeremiah 23:16.

- <sup>35</sup> Numbers 11:27.
- <sup>36</sup> Exodus 4:1.
- <sup>37</sup> Exodus 4:5.
- <sup>38</sup> Exodus 4:31.
- <sup>39</sup> Matthew 13:58.
- <sup>40</sup> Mark 6:5.
- <sup>41</sup> Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:20-22.
- <sup>42</sup> Genesis 3:22.
- <sup>43</sup> Genesis 2:17.
- <sup>44</sup> Romans 5:18-19.
- <sup>45</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.
- <sup>46</sup> Acts 1:11.
- <sup>47</sup> Luke 20:37-8.
- <sup>48</sup> Hebrews 11:5.
- <sup>49</sup> 2 Kings 2:11.
- <sup>50</sup> Job 14:7-10.
- <sup>51</sup> Matthew 8:12.
- <sup>52</sup> Isaiah 66:24, Mark, 9:44,46,48.
- <sup>53</sup> Daniel 12:2.
- <sup>54</sup> Revelation 2:11, 20:13-14, 21:8.
- <sup>55</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:42-3.

The whole of chapter 46 and some of 47 are given in both English and Latin versions. --Biblical references are given in end-notes.

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## Part IV. The kingdom of darkness

### Chapter 44. Spiritual darkness from misinterpretation of scripture

As well as the sovereign powers, divine and human, that I have been talking about, Scripture mentions another power, namely, that of ‘the rulers of the darkness of this world’,<sup>56</sup> ‘the kingdom of Satan’,<sup>57</sup> and ‘the reign of Beelzebub over demons’<sup>58</sup> - i.e. his rule over phantasms that appear in the air. It’s because that’s what demons are that Satan is called ‘the prince of the power of the air’;<sup>59</sup> and because he rules in the darkness of this world, . . . those who are under his dominion are called the ‘children of darkness’, in contrast to the faithful, who are the ‘children of the light’. For seeing that Beelzebub is prince of phantasms [here = ‘illusions’], the expressions

- ‘the inhabitants of his dominion of air and darkness’,
- ‘the children of darkness’, and
- ‘these demons, phantasms, spirits of illusion’,

all refer allegorically to the same thing. So the kingdom of darkness, as presented in these and other places in the Bible, is nothing but *a conspiracy of deceivers who want to get dominion over men in this present world, and to that end try by dark and erroneous doctrines to extinguish in them the light of nature and of the gospel, thus making them unfit for the kingdom of God to come.*

Men who were born blind have no idea at all of the light that the rest of us see through the bodily eye; more generally, no-one conceives in his imagination any greater light than he has ever perceived through his outer senses; and it’s like that also with the light of the gospel and the light of the understanding - no-one can conceive there being any degree of it greater than any that he has already achieved. That’s why our only way of acknowledging our own darkness is by reasoning from the unforeseen mischances that befall us along the way. The darkest part of the kingdom of Satan is the part that lies outside the Church of God, i.e. among those who don’t believe in Jesus Christ. But we can’t infer that the Church enjoys . . . all the light we need for the performance of the work God has told us to do. If we weren’t lost in the dark, or at least in a mist, how would it come about that in Christendom there has been, almost from the time of the apostles, so much jostling for position in foreign and civil wars? such stumbling at every little hardship someone suffers in his own fortune and every little success that he sees others have? such a variety of ways of running the race towards happiness? We *are* therefore still in the dark.

In the night of our natural ignorance, the enemy has come in and sown the weeds of spiritual errors, doing this in four distinct ways. (1) By misusing the Bible, putting out its light; for we go wrong when we don't know the Bible. (2) By introducing the demonology of the heathen poets, i.e. their fables about demons, which are really mere . . . phantasms of the brain, with no real nature of their own other than what human imagination gives them - I'm talking about dead men's ghosts, fairies, and other subjects of old wives' tales. (3) By mixing in with the Bible various left-overs from Greek religion and much of the Greeks' futile and erroneous philosophy, especially Aristotle's. (4) By adding to the mix false or uncertain traditions, and invented or uncertain history. And so we come to err, by taking seriously seducing spirits and the demonology of those who speak lies in hypocrisy . . . . In this present chapter I shall say a little about (1) the business of leading men astray by misusing Scripture. I shall discuss (2) in chapter 45 [not included in this version], and (3) and (4) in chapter 46.

·FIRST MISUNDERSTANDING: 'THE KINGDOM OF GOD'·

The greatest misuse of Scripture, and the main one - to which most the others are related, either as causes or effects - is the wrenching around of the Bible so as to make it say that the 'kingdom of God', mentioned so often in the Bible, is

- the present Church, or
- the multitude of Christian men now living, or
- the multitude of Christian men who have lived and will rise again on the last day.

In fact, the kingdom of God was first set up only over the Jews, by the ministry of Moses; which is why the Jews were called God's special people. Later on, this ceased with the choice of Saul ·as king of the Jews·, when the Jews had refused to be governed by God any more, and demanded a king of the sort that other nations had - to which God consented. (I have laid this out in more detail in chapter 35 [not included in this version].) From then on there was no 'kingdom of God' in the world except in the sense that He always was, is, and shall be king of all men and of all creatures, governing according to His will by His infinite power. But He did promise, through His prophets, to restore His government to them [i.e. the Jews] again, when the time He has secretly chosen for this arrives, and when they shall turn to Him by repenting and amending their lives. In addition to that, He invited the gentiles to come in and enjoy the happiness of His reign, on the same conditions of conversion and repentance ·as are set for the Jews·. And He promised also to send His son into the world, to expiate [= 'make amends for' or 'pay the penalty for'] the sins of them all, by his death, and to prepare them by his doctrine to receive him at his second coming. As the second coming hasn't yet happened, the kingdom of God hasn't yet come. The only kings that now rule over us by a pact ·or agreement· are our civil sovereigns - except for the fact that Christian men are already in the kingdom of grace, in that they have already been promised that they'll be received at the second coming. ·This error about what 'the kingdom of God' is or was leads to at least four very bad consequences, the first of which generates four all of its own. I shall now describe these·.

1. If the present Church were Christ's kingdom - which it isn't - there would be (i) some one man or assembly through whose mouth our Saviour, now in heaven, would speak, give law, and represent his person to all Christians; or (ii) several men or assemblies playing this ·mouthpiece· role in different parts of Christendom. (i) The Pope claims to have this 'royal power under Christ' in relation to the whole world; and (ii) in various particular commonwealths that power is claimed by assemblies of the pastors of the place (though the Bible gives it only to civil sovereigns). Disputes concerning this power are so passionate that they extinguish the light of

nature, causing such a deep darkness in men's understandings that they can't see who it is to whom they have promised their obedience.

**1a.** The Pope's claim to be Christ's deputy in the present world-wide Church . . . . generates •the doctrine that a Christian king must receive his crown through a bishop, as though that ceremony gave him the right to include 'by the grace of God' [Latin *deo gratia*] because he isn't a king by the favour of God unless he is crowned by the authority of God's deputy-king of the whole world.

**1b.** And it generates the further doctrine that every bishop, whoever his sovereign is, takes an oath of absolute obedience to the Pope when he is first made a bishop.

**1c.** The papal claim also generates •the doctrine of the fourth Lateran Council: 'If a king •doesn't purge his kingdom of heresies when told by the pope to do so, •is excommunicated because of this failure, and •doesn't make up for this within a year, then his subjects are released from the bond of their obedience to him.' (That is from chapter 3 of *Heretics*, by Pope Innocent III under whose auspices that Council was held. In this context, 'heresies' are all opinions that the Church of Rome has forbidden to be maintained.)

**1d.** It's because of this doctrine that, in any of the frequent clashes between the Pope's political plans and those of other Christian princes, there arises such a mist among their subjects that they can't distinguish •a stranger who has thrust himself into the space of their lawful prince from •the person whom they themselves had placed there; and in this mental darkness they fight against one another without distinguishing their enemies from their friends.- all this being staged by one man's ambition.

**2.** [In this paragraph Hobbes writes as though he were drawing on facts about the origins, the etymology, the deep latent meanings, of 'clergy' and 'laity'. If that's what he thought he was doing, he seems to have been in error.] The opinion that the present Church is the kingdom of God has affected how different people are labelled. Pastors, deacons, and all other ministers of the Church call themselves 'the clergy', labelling everyone else as 'the laity', i.e. simply *people*. 'There's an issue about money connected with this, as I'll now explain'. During His reign over the Israelites, God set aside a part of the revenue and assigned it to the tribe of Levi, to be their inheritance; 'that was fair because' they were to be His public ministers, and had no portion of land set aside for them to live on, as did their brethren. Now, the label 'clergy' today signifies those whose upkeep comes from that same set-aside-by-God part of the national revenue. So the Pope - claiming that the present Church is the kingdom of God, just as the kingdom of Israel once was - claims for himself and his subordinate ministers a similar revenue as an inheritance from God; and the name 'clergy' was suitable for that claim. And so we find that the tithes and other tributes paid to the Levites as God's right amongst the ancient Israelites have for many years been demanded and taken from Christians by ecclesiastics, 'who say that they do this' *jure divino*, i.e. by God's right. Because of this, the people everywhere were bound to pay a double tribute - one to the state, another to the clergy. And the one paid to the clergy 'is disgracefully large, namely' a the tenth of the lay-person's income. That's double what a certain king of Athens (one regarded as a tyrant) demanded from his subjects to pay all public expenses; he demanded a mere twentieth part 'of each person's income', which was plenty for the maintenance of the commonwealth. And in the kingdom of the Jews during God's priestly reign, the tithes and offerings were the whole public revenue, 'not a church-related payment on top of a government-related one'.

3. The wrong doctrine that the present Church is the kingdom of God has led to the distinction between

- civil laws, i.e. the acts of sovereigns in their own dominions, and
- canon law. i.e. the acts of the Pope in those same dominions.

These ‘canons’ started out by being nothing but *canons*, i.e. rules propounded and *voluntarily* accepted by Christian princes, and this was the case until Charlemagne became emperor; but from then on, as the Pope’s power increased, the canon law became rules that were *commanded*, and the emperors themselves were forced to let them count as laws, for fear of greater mischiefs that the people, blinded by the darkness of biblical error, might otherwise be led into.

That’s why it is that in every country where the Pope’s ecclesiastical power is entirely accepted, Jews and Turks and pagans are tolerantly allow to practice and profess their own religion as long as they don’t in any way offend against the civil power; whereas in those same countries a foreigner who comes in and is a Christian but not a Roman Catholic has committed a capital offence, because the Pope claims that all Christians are his subjects. If it weren’t for the mixing of canon ‘law’ with civil law, it would be •as much against the law of nations to persecute a Christian foreigner for professing the religion of his own country as to persecute an unbeliever - or rather •more, because those who are not against Christ are with him.

4. That same mistake regarding the kingdom of God brings it about that in every Christian state certain men are exempt, by ecclesiastical liberty, from the tributes and from the tribunals of the civil state. [‘Ecclesiastical liberty’ is the official name of the setup in which the clergy don’t have to pay civil taxes and aren’t answerable for crimes in the civil courts.] That’s the situation of all the Roman Catholic priests - not just the monks and friars but also the ordinary clergy who don’t belong to any special religious order. And there are ever so many of them: in some places they are such a big proportion of the total population that they could make up an army all by themselves, if the Church militant wanted to employ them against their own or other princes.

[After dealing with the second and third misunderstandings, Hobbes will return to this one, devoting four pages to detailed discussion - some of it very intricate - of biblical passages that might seem to support the view that the kingdom of God exists now, having begun with the resurrection of Jesus. •If that is right, Hobbes demands, then why do Christians *now* pray ‘(Let) thy kingdom come’? •Another of his points:- Some theologians have held that in Genesis 1:16 - ‘God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night’ - the greater light signifies the Pope and the lesser one the king. Hobbes remarks scornfully: ‘One might as well argue that in Genesis 1:1 ‘heaven’ refers to the Pope and ‘earth’ refers to the king.]

•SECOND MISUNDERSTANDING: ‘CONSECRATION’

A second general misuse of Scripture is interpreting ‘consecration’ as standing for something magical - i.e. conjuration or enchantment. In the Bible, to ‘consecrate’ something is to offer, give, or dedicate it . . . . to God, by separating it from common use; i.e. to sanctify it, to make it God’s, and to set it aside to be used only by those whom God has appointed to be His public ministers. (I have already shown this in chapter 35. The consecrated ‘thing’ may, of course, be a man.) This ceremony doesn’t change the thing that is consecrated; all it changes is how that thing is used, barring everyday non-religious use of it and reserving it for uses that are holy and are especially in the service of God. When it is claimed that such ‘ceremonial’ words change the nature or quality of the thing itself, that’s not consecration. It is either •an extraordinary work of God, or •a futile and impious bit of supposed magic. But it happens - or is alleged to happen - much too often to count as an extraordinary work; so it has to be a conjuration or incantation - a



bit of *magic*. They want us to believe that *this* can alter something's nature in a way that is contrary to fact and contrary to the testimony of our sight and of all the rest of our senses. There's an example of this in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The officiating priest ought to consecrate bread and wine to God's service in the sacrament, i.e. to separate it from its common use, taking it to signify - i.e. remind men of - their redemption by the passion of Christ, whose body was broken and blood shed on the cross for our transgressions. But he doesn't do that; or anyway that's not all that he does. He claims that by saying the words of our Saviour, 'This is my body' and 'This is my blood', he brings it about that what's there is no longer something with the nature of *bread* but rather the actual body of Christ; although there is no sensorily detectable change from what was there before the consecration. The Egyptian magicians who are said to have turned their rods into serpents, and water into blood, are thought to have merely deluded the senses of the spectators by a false show of things, and yet they are admired as enchanters. But what would we have thought of them if •their rods had looked nothing like serpents, and the 'enchanted' water didn't look like anything except water, and •they had coolly insisted to the king that these were serpents that looked like rods, and blood that seemed to be water? That would have been both enchantment and *lying*! And yet the priests in this daily act of theirs do just that, treating the holy words as though they were a charm that makes no difference to what we see or otherwise sense; and they coolly insist that their charm has turned the bread into a man - indeed, into a *God* - and require men to worship it as if it were our Saviour himself present, both God and Man. This is the most gross idolatry. If it could be excused from that by the plea that what is being worshipped in the sacrament 'is no longer bread, but God', then why shouldn't the same excuse serve the Egyptians, if they were willing to brazen it out and say that the leeks and onions that they worshipped weren't actual leeks and onions but rather a divinity that looked just like them? 'Properly understood', the words 'This is my body' are equivalent to 'This signifies or represents my body'; it's an ordinary figure of speech, and taking it literally is just misusing it. And even if we *do* take it literally, it can't apply to anything except the bread that Christ himself consecrated with his own hands. He didn't say that any bread whatsoever of which any priest whatsoever said 'This is my body' or 'This is Christ's body' would immediately be transubstantiated [that is, turned into the body of Christ. The thesis is that the *substance* of the bread is changed into the *substance* of Christ's body, though it still retains the *qualities* of bread. Hence the label 'transubstantiation' - the going across of a substance.] And the Church of Rome didn't establish this 'transubstantiation' until the time of Pope Innocent III, less than 500 years ago, when the power of Popes was at its highest and the darkness of the time at its deepest.

[Hobbes continues with criticisms of other examples of the mistake of taking a consecration of something to be the magical production of a change in it. He does this with a scornful elaboration of detail concerning •baptism, and then more briefly concerning •marriage, •extreme unction [the sacrament for the dying], •the consecration of churches, •exorcism, and others. In the Latin version he adds a fierce little paragraph about demons, thus:]

It should be noted that in the exorcisms that I have just mentioned, unclean spirits, i.e. demons, are called 'phantasms'; from which it follows that unclean spirits or demons are not regarded by the Roman church as *real beings*, as they say; and therefore they are not substances but only idols, i.e. *nothing*.

[With this, as with the first misunderstanding, Hobbes will return a bit later to discuss what the Bible says about consecration. Thus:] As for the rites of consecration, although they mainly depend on the discretion and judgment of the governors of the Church, and not on the Bible,

those governors are obliged to abide by any constraints that are imposed by the nature of the ·consecrating· action - e.g. that the ceremonies, words and gestures be both decent and significant, or at least appropriate to the action. When Moses consecrated the tabernacle, the altar, and the vessels belonging to them, he anointed them with the oil that God had commanded to be made for that purpose, and they were holy.<sup>60</sup> Nothing was exorcised so as to drive away phantasms. [Hobbes says similar things about Moses' consecration of Aaron and his sons, and about Solomon's consecration of the temple he had built,<sup>61</sup> noting that each man was at the relevant time 'the civil sovereign of Israel'. The Solomon passage includes this:] Here was no procession; the King stood still in his first place; no exorcised water; no calling of attention to himself; nothing but a decent and rational speech that was very suitable to the occasion of presenting to God his new-built house.

We don't read that John the Baptist exorcised the water of the river Jordan, or that Philip exorcised the water of the river in which he baptized the eunuch. Nor do we read that any pastor at the time of the apostles took his spittle and put it to the nose of the person to be baptized, saying 'for a sweet savour unto the Lord'. Such a ceremony of spittle couldn't be justified, because it is unsanitary; and such a use of that biblical passage can't be justified either, because it's frivolous. [The biblical passage Hobbes evidently has in mind here, and is implying shouldn't be accepted as literally true, is Mark 7:32-35, which reports Jesus as curing a man of deafness by spitting in his ears.]

·THIRD MISUNDERSTANDING: 'ETERNAL LIFE' ETC.·

Another general error comes from misinterpreting the words 'eternal life', 'everlasting death', and 'the second death'. Here is the account that we read plainly in Holy Scripture:

God created Adam as someone who was to live for ever *if* he didn't disobey God's command ·not to eat fruit from the •tree of the knowledge of good and evil·. Immortality wasn't essential to human nature; it was a consequence of the power of the •tree of life, from which Adam was allowed to eat as long as he hadn't sinned; and he was thrown out of Paradise after he had sinned ·by disobeying God's command·, so that he wouldn't eat fruit from the •tree of life and live for ever ·as a consequence·. Christ's Passion [i.e. his suffering and death] is a discharge of sin to all who believe in Him, and so it's a restitution of eternal life to all the faithful, but not to anyone else.

But what has been taught for centuries is not that, but this:

Every man has eternal life by nature, because his soul is immortal. So the flaming sword at the entrance of Paradise, while it stops a man from coming to the tree of life, doesn't have the role of preventing him from regaining an immortality that God stripped from him because of his sin, or of needing Christ's sacrifice as a way to regain his immortality. Thus, it's not only the faithful and righteous who will have eternal life; so also will the wicked and the heathen.

On this account, there isn't any death at all, let alone a second and everlasting death ·such as is spoken of in the Book of Revelation·.<sup>62</sup> To square the doctrine of natural immortality with the passages about 'the second death', they say that the Bible's 'second and everlasting death' really means a second and everlasting *life*, but in torment. If that's a genuine figure of speech - 'death' meaning 'life in torment' - this is the only instance of it!

This doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul isn't needed for the Christian faith. Suppose that when a man dies, nothing remains of him but his carcass; can't God, who raised dust

and clay into a living creature by His word, just as easily raise a dead carcass to life again, and either keep him alive for ever or make him die again by another word?

And the entire biblical basis for the doctrine consists in some of the obscurer passages in the New Testament - passages that can clearly be given a different sense if they are seen in the light of the Bible as a whole.

In Scripture, 'soul' always signifies either the life or the living creature, and 'body and soul' together signify the living body. [Hobbes proceeds to cite evidence for this, from Genesis 1 and 2 and from Deuteronomy 12. Then:]

What makes it the case that the souls of the faithful will remain in their bodies from the resurrection to all eternity is not •their own inherent nature, but rather •God's special grace. I think I have already sufficiently proved this on the basis of the Scriptures, in chapter 38 . . . .

This thesis that the soul is naturally immortal is a window through which some dark doctrines enter. They proceed in a kind of sequence, with each one encouraging one or more of those that follow it:

- eternal torments,
- purgatory, where these incorporeal substances - these immortal souls - are supposed to be cleansed by burning so that they'll be fit for heaven,
- the walking around - especially in places that are consecrated, solitary, or dark - of the ghosts of men who have died,
- the claims regarding the exorcism and conjuration of phantasms,
- the invocation of men who are dead,
- indulgences, i.e. reduction - perhaps to zero - of the time one has to spend in the fire of purgatory.

Here is how the doctrine of purgatory came into being: Before the time of our Saviour, men were generally infected by the contagion of the demonology of the Greeks, which led to their believing that the souls of men are substances distinct from (and separable from) their bodies; and therefore that when a man's body is dead - *any* man, whether godly or wicked - his soul must exist somewhere by virtue of its own nature, with no involvement of any supernatural gift on God's part. The great teachers of the Church wondered for a long time *where* these souls were to be until they are reunited with their bodies in the resurrection. For a while, they were supposed to lie under the altars in churches; but then the Church of Rome found it more profitable to build for them this place called 'Purgatory', though in more recent times some other Churches have demolished it.

[After revisiting the first two misunderstandings to see what biblical support there is for them [pages ?? and ?? above], Hobbes does the same for this third misunderstanding. Thus:]

As a reminder, here is the thesis I have been opposing:

The soul, separated from the body, lives eternally because this is something that follows naturally from the essence of mankind. So it doesn't apply only to •the souls of those who are chosen - a special grace which restores to us the eternal life that Adam lost through sin and our Saviour restored by the sacrifice of himself - but also to •the souls of reprobates.

Various biblical passages seem at first sight to support this; but when I compare them with the passage from Job 14 that I discussed earlier [page ??], I find it much easier to re-interpret these passages that seem to •support the thesis than it is to re-interpret the passage from Job that seems to •contradict it.

(1) There are the words of Solomon, ‘Then shall the dust return to dust as it was, and the spirit shall return to God that gave it.’<sup>63</sup> The bit about ‘the spirit shall return’ etc. could mean merely that only God knows, man doesn’t, what becomes of a man’s spirit when he dies. That is, we can interpret it in that way if there are no other passages that go directly against this interpretation. In fact, this same Solomon, in the same book, explicitly says the very thing that I have put into that interpretation: speaking of men and beasts, he says ‘All go to the same place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again; who knows that the spirit of man goes upward and that the spirit of the beast goes downward to the earth?’<sup>64</sup> That is, only God knows; there is nothing unusual about saying of things we don’t understand ‘God knows what,’ and ‘God knows where’.

(2) [Hobbes now presents a passage (Genesis 5:24) about Enoch being taken up to heaven without dying first. He questions whether it supports the disputed thesis, and then moves on to a different passage which he thinks clearly contradicts the thesis. Thus:]

How can we interpret in any way except literally these words of Solomon’s? ‘That which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts, even one thing befalls them; as the one dies, so does the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man has no pre-eminence above a beast, for all is vanity.’<sup>65</sup> Taken literally, this doesn’t imply natural immortality for the soul, or anything that conflicts with the eternal life that the elect will enjoy through God’s grace. . . .

(3) Another passage that seems to imply a natural immortality for the soul is the one where our Saviour says that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are living.<sup>66</sup> But this refers •to God’s promise, which made it certain that they would rise again, not •to a life that was then actual. It’s in that same sense that God said to Adam that if he ate the forbidden fruit then on that day he would certainly die; from the moment he ate the fruit, he was a dead man by •sentence but not by the •carrying out of the sentence almost a thousand years later. Similarly, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were alive by •promise at the time when Christ spoke, but aren’t •actually alive until the resurrection. . . .

(4) Other passages in the New Testament seem to attribute immortality directly to the wicked. It’s clear that they will all rise on judgment day; and in many passages it is said that they will go into ‘everlasting fire’, ‘everlasting torments’, ‘everlasting punishments’; and that ‘the worm of conscience never dies’; and all this is brought together in the phrase ‘everlasting death’, which is ordinarily interpreted as meaning ‘everlasting life in torment’. But I can’t find any support for that interpretation; i.e. I can’t find any passage saying that any man will live in torment everlastingly. Also, it seems hard to say that God,

- who is the father of mercies,
- who does whatever he wants to, in heaven and earth,
- who has the hearts of all men at his disposal,
- who is at work in men’s actions and intentions, and
- without whose free gift a man has no inclination to good or repentance of evil,

would punish men’s transgressions without any end in time, and with all the extremity of torture that men can imagine, and more. Let us, then, consider what *is* meant by such biblical phrases as ‘everlasting fire’.

I have already shown that •the kingdom of God by Christ begins on the day of judgment; that •on that day the faithful will rise from the dead, with glorious and spiritual bodies, and be God’s subjects in his kingdom which will be eternal; that •they will not marry or eat or drink as they did in their natural bodies, but will live for ever in their individual persons without the specific eternity of generation [= ‘those last six words seem to mean: I’m talking about real everlastingness

of *individuals*, not the everlastingness of their *species* through the constant begetting of new members of the species]; that •the reprobates will also rise again to receive punishments for their sins; and that •those of the elect who are still alive in their earthly bodies when judgment day comes will on that day have their bodies suddenly changed and made spiritual and immortal. Now for the thesis

that the bodies of the reprobate, who constitute the kingdom of Satan, will also be glorious or spiritual bodies; that they will be like the angels of God, not eating or drinking or procreating; that their life will be eternal in their individual persons, as the life of every faithful man is, or as the life of Adam would have been if he hadn't sinned.

No passage in Scripture supports this, except for the ones concerning 'eternal torments', which can be interpreted so that they don't support it either.

We can infer from this that just as the elect after the resurrection will be restored to the situation Adam was in •before he had sinned, so the reprobate will be in the situation Adam and his posterity were in •after he had sinned - but without God's promise of a redeemer . . . .

In the light of all this, the texts that mention 'eternal fire', 'eternal torments', or 'the worm that never dies' don't contradict the doctrine of a second and everlasting death, when 'death' is understood in its literal and natural sense. The fire or torments prepared for the wicked . . . . may continue forever; and there may always be wicked men to be tormented in them, without anyone's being in them eternally. . . . St. Paul, speaking of the 'resurrection', means by this only the resurrection to eternal life, not the resurrection to punishment.<sup>67</sup> Writing about the former - 'the resurrection of the saved people to eternal life' - he says that the body is 'sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonour, raised in honour; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.' Nothing like that can be said about the bodies of those who rise from the dead to be punished.

Similarly, when our Saviour speaks of the condition of man after the resurrection, he means the resurrection to life eternal, not the resurrection to punishment. This is a fertile text:

The children of •this world marry, and are given in marriage; but they that shall be counted worthy to obtain •that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.<sup>68</sup>

The children of this world, who are in the situation that Adam left them in, will marry and be given in marriage; that is, they will go through a series of births and deaths (which gives immortality to the human species but not to individual men). They aren't worthy to receive an absolute resurrection from the dead in the next world, but only a brief time in that world - so as to be punished with a severity that fits their obstinate disobedience. It is only the elect who

- are the children of the resurrection, i.e.
- are heirs of eternal life;
- can die no more,
- are equal to the angels, and
- are the children of God

- *only* the elect, and not the reprobate. What the reprobate will get after the resurrection is a second and eternal death, and the period between that resurrection and their second death they will incur punishment and torment. This torment will last - through a series of sinners - for as long as the human species survives by propagation, i.e. eternally.

[The chapter ends with five pages about the doctrine of purgatory. Hobbes contends that there is no clear biblical basis for this doctrine, and discusses at some length eight passages that

might seem to support it, weaving this in with arguments against Cardinal Bellarmine, who defended the doctrine on the basis of the Bible.]

Chapter 45 is omitted ('Demonology and other relics of the religion of the gentiles')

The English version of Chapter 46 is very different from the Latin version. Both will be given here, starting with the English version.

## **Chapter 46. Darkness from vain philosophy and fabulous traditions**

[In this chapter, the word 'philosophy' will be left untouched; but remember that in Hobbes's use it covers science as well as what we know as 'philosophy'.] Philosophy is understood to be

- knowledge acquired by reasoning so as to be able to produce - so far as the materials and our abilities are up to the task - such effects as human life requires. The reasoning in question is either
- from the way something comes into being to
- its properties, or
- from something's properties to
- some possible way of bringing it into being.

So the geometrician reasons his way to many properties of figures from how they are constructed, and from those properties he reasons his way to new ways of constructing the figures. What this is all *for* is measuring land and water, and countless other uses. And the astronomer reasons from

- the rising, setting, and moving of the sun and stars in various parts of the heavens to
- the causes of day and night, and of the different seasons of the year, this being knowledge that he uses in keeping an account of time. And similarly with other sciences.

This definition shows clearly that we aren't to include in 'philosophy' any part of that basic sort of knowledge called 'experience', which is the main ingredient in *prudence*. Why? Because it isn't reached by reasoning, and is just as much in brute beasts as in man; it is merely a memory of sequences of events in times past, in which the omission of any little detail ·in a cause· may alter the effect, frustrating the expectation of even the most prudent person. ·That means that such 'knowledge' is essentially fragile; whereas anything that is learned through sound reasoning is universally, eternally, and unchangeably true.

Nor should we label as 'philosophy' any false conclusions. Someone who reasons soundly in words that he understands can't ever reach a false conclusion.

Nor anything that someone knows by supernatural revelation; because that isn't acquired by reasoning.

Nor anything that is acquired by reasoning from the authority of books; because that isn't reasoning from cause to effect, or from effect to cause. What it yields is not knowledge but faith.

Because the faculty of reasoning results from the use of speech, it was inevitable that *some* general truths would be discovered through reasoning almost as far back in time as language itself. The savages of America have some good moral judgments; and they have a little arithmetic with which they add and divide fairly small numbers; but that doesn't make them philosophers. Just as

there were a few corn-plants and grape-vines scattered through the fields and woods before men

- knew what they were good for or
- used them for nourishment or
- planted them in separate fields and vineyards, during which time men ate acorns and drank water,

so also

there have been various true, general, and useful bits of theory from the beginning, these being the natural plants of human reason. But at first there were so few of them that men

lived on unrefined experience; there was no *method* - i.e. no sowing or planting of knowledge by itself, separated from the weeds and common plants of error and conjecture.

They couldn't do any better than that as long as procuring the necessities of life and defending themselves against their neighbours left them with no leisure to engage in speculation. What made a change possible was the establishment of great commonwealths. Leisure is the mother of philosophy; and commonwealth is the mother of peace and leisure. The first great and flourishing cities were the scenes of the first study of philosophy. The Gymnosophists of India, the Magi of Persia, and the Priests of Chaldaea and Egypt are regarded as the earliest philosophers, and those countries were the earliest kingdoms. There was no philosophy among the Greeks, or other people of the west, while their commonwealths (little states possibly no bigger than Lucca or Geneva) had no peace except when their fears of one another were evenly balanced, and no leisure to observe anything but one another. Eventually, when war had united many of the lesser Greek cities into fewer and greater political entities, seven men in different parts of Greece began to get a reputation for wisdom - some for their moral and political judgments, others for astronomy and geometry, which they learned from the Chaldaeans and Egyptians. There is still no mention of schools of philosophy.

·SCHOOLS (GREEK AND JEWISH) AND UNIVERSITIES·

Then the Athenians overthrew the Persian armies and came to have dominion of the sea, and thus to dominate all the islands and maritime cities - Asian and European - in the Greek archipelago. They became wealthy; and those who had no employment at home or abroad had little to pass their time with except •gossiping and •discussing philosophy publicly with the youth of the city. [Hobbes goes on with details about the places the philosophical 'masters' - Plato, Aristotle, etc. - chose for public philosophising. He mentions Carneades, who did the same thing in Rome, greatly alarming some who thought he was corrupting the young men who gathered around him. Then:]

The place where any of them taught and debated was called *schola*, which is Greek for 'leisure', and their debates were called *diatribae*, which is Greek for 'passing the time' . . . .

Men were so much taken with this practice that in time it spread itself over all of Europe and most of north Africa, until there were publicly established and supported schools, for lectures and debates, in almost every Commonwealth.

The Jews had schools too, both before and after the time of our Saviour, but they were schools of Jewish law. They were called 'synagogues', meaning in Greek 'congregations of the people'; but they weren't different (except in name) from public schools, because every Sabbath day the law was read, expounded, and debated in them. They existed not only in Jerusalem but in every Gentile city that had a population of Jews. [He names some of the places that had synagogues. Then:]

But what use were those Greek schools? What knowledge does anyone get today from their readings and debatings? Geometry is the mother of all natural science, and we aren't indebted to the schools for our geometrical knowledge. The best Greek philosopher, Plato, wouldn't admit into his school anyone who wasn't already something of a geometrician. Many people studied that science, to the great advantage of mankind; but •there is no mention of schools of geometry, •there was no sect of geometricians, and •the geometricians weren't labelled as 'philosophers'. The natural philosophy [here = 'philosophy and science'] of those schools was more a dream than a body of knowledge, and it was expressed in senseless and insignificant language that can't be avoided by anyone trying to teach philosophy without having learned a great deal of

geometry. Why is geometry so important to philosophy [= science]? Because nature works by *motion*, and the directions and speeds of motion can't be known without knowledge of the proportions and properties of lines and figures - which is geometry.

The moral philosophy of the ancient Greeks is merely a description of their own passions. They base their rules of good and bad conduct on their own likes and dislikes, and these vary so much that there is nothing generally agreed on. Everyone one does (as far as he dares) whatever seems good to him, a state of affairs that subverts political society. Contrast that with the truth about these matters:- The rule of conduct where there is no civil government is just •the law of nature; and where there *is* civil government it's •the civil law that settles what is honest or dishonest, just or unjust - quite generally what is good or evil.

The logic of the Greeks, which should be the method of reasoning, is nothing but verbal puzzles and tricks for dealing with them.

To conclude, there's nothing so absurd that it hasn't been maintained by some of the ancient philosophers. Cicero said so, and he was one of them! In my view, there is almost nothing •more absurdly said in natural philosophy than what is now called 'Aristotle's metaphysics', •more in conflict with government than much of his Politics, or •more ignorant than a great part of his Ethics.

The school of the Jews was originally a school of the law of Moses, who commanded that at the end of every seventh year, at the Feast of the Tabernacles, the law should be read to all the people so that they could hear and learn it (Deuteronomy 31:10). So the reading of the law . . . . every Sabbath day *ought* to have aimed only at acquainting the people with the commandments they were to obey, and expounding to them the writings of the prophets. But the many criticisms of them by our Saviour make it clear that they •corrupted the text of the law with their false commentaries and pointless traditions, and •had so little grasp of the prophets that they didn't acknowledge Christ or his works, which the prophets had prophesied. Thus, the lectures and debates in their synagogues had the effect of turning the theory of their law into a fantastical kind of philosophy about the incomprehensible nature of God and of spirits. They put this together out of three ingredients: •the pointless philosophy and theology of the Greeks, •their own fancies, based on obscure bits of the Bible that they could most easily force to serve their purposes, and •the traditional fables of their ancestors.

What we now call a 'university' is a joining together and incorporating under one government of many public schools in one and the same town. The principal schools or departments in universities were dedicated to the three professions,

- Roman religion,
- Roman law, and
- the art of medicine.

The only way philosophy gets a place in this scheme is as a handmaid to the Roman religion; and since the authority of Aristotle dominates there, what goes on . . . . isn't really philosophy but Aristotelity! What about geometry? Until very recently, it had no place at all in any university, because it is subservient to nothing but rigid truth. If anyone was able, through his own individual talent, to gain considerable geometrical knowledge, it was usually thought that he was a magician and that his art was diabolical.

#### ANCIENT GREEK METAPHYSICS

Now let us look into the particular tenets of pointless philosophy that the Church got from the universities, and that they got partly from Aristotle and partly from stupidity. I shall first consider their principles.



There is a certain *philosophia prima* [Latin = ‘primary philosophy’ or ‘first philosophy’] on which all other philosophy ought to depend. It mainly consists in correctly limiting the meanings of the most universal appellation or names, so as to avoid ambiguity and equivocation in reasoning. The usual label for a such a delimiting is ‘definition’ - examples are the definitions of ‘body’, ‘time’, ‘place’, ‘matter’, ‘form’, ‘essence’, ‘subject’, ‘substance’, ‘accident’, ‘power’, ‘act’, ‘finite’, ‘infinite’, ‘quantity’, ‘quality’, ‘motion’, ‘action’, ‘passion’, and various others that are also needed to express one’s ideas regarding the nature and generation of bodies. The explanation (i.e. the settling of the meaning) of terms like these is commonly called ‘metaphysics’ in the schools, because it is a part of the philosophy of Aristotle, which is called ‘metaphysics’. But it is in another sense - i.e. what we have here is an unintended pun. In the context of Aristotle, ‘metaphysics’ simple means ‘written or placed *after* his natural philosophy [= ‘his physics’]’: but the schools take those books to concern supernatural philosophy, i.e. topics that are *above* physics; and the word ‘metaphysics’ can carry either of those meanings. And in an unintended way the schools are right: most of what is written there as ‘metaphysics’ is so far from the possibility of being understood, and so much in conflict with natural reason, that anyone who thinks that it could mean something must think it is supernatural!

These metaphysics (which are mingled with the Bible to make school theology) tell us that the world contains certain essences separated from bodies; they are called ‘abstract essences’ and ‘substantial forms’; and if you are to understand this jargon you’ll have to attend especially carefully. I’ll be writing this for readers who are used to this kind of discourse; please pardon me if you are not one of them.

·AS BACKGROUND: HOBBS’S MATERIALISM·

The world - not this planet, but the entire universe - is corporeal, i.e. it is *body*; it has length, breadth, and depth; and every part of body is body too, and also has length, breadth and depth. So every part of the universe is body, and what isn’t body isn’t part of the universe: and because the universe is all there is, what isn’t a part of it is •nothing and consequently •nowhere. [Hobbes is about to mention ‘spirits’. This could mean ‘minds’; it could also refer to the super-fine gaseous matter that was thought to have a role in animal physiology. For Hobbes this wasn’t an ambiguity, because he held that minds *are* ‘spirits’ in the sense of super-fine matter.] This doesn’t imply that spirits are nothing. They have dimensions, and are therefore really bodies; though in common speech ‘body’ is usually applied only to bodies that can be seen or felt, i.e. that have some degree of opacity. But the schoolmen call spirits ‘incorporeal’ [= ‘not bodies’], a more honourable label and thus one that can with more piety be applied to God himself. In thinking this we aren’t thinking about what adjective best expresses God’s nature (which is incomprehensible) but only about what best expresses our desire to honour him.

·THE ERROR THAT LED TO ‘ABSTRACT ESSENCES’·

*Why* do they say that there are ‘abstract essences’ or ‘substantial forms’? Well, consider first what those words do properly signify. [In this context, ‘name of x’ means ‘word that can be applied to x’; a ‘name’ in this sense may be a general noun or an adjective.] The use of words is to •register to ourselves and •make manifest to others the thoughts and conceptions of our minds. (1) Some words are the names of the things conceived or perceived, such as the names of all sorts of bodies that affect our senses and leave an impression in the imagination. (2) Others are the names of the imaginings themselves, i.e. the ideas or mental images we have of the things we see or remember. (3) Others again are names of names, e.g.

•‘universal’, ‘plural’, ‘singular’,  
or of other parts of speech or forms of speech, e.g.

•‘definition’, ‘affirmation’, ‘negation’, ‘true’, ‘false’, ‘syllogism’, ‘interrogation’, ‘promise’, ‘covenant’.

(4) Yet others serve to show the logical relations between names, i.e. that one name implies or is inconsistent with another. If you say ‘A man is a body’, you mean that the name ‘body’ follows necessarily from the name ‘man’, because these are just two different names for the same thing, *man*; and this relation is signified by coupling them together with the word ‘is’. Corresponding to our use of the verb ‘is’, the Latins use ‘est’ and the Greeks ‘esti’. I don’t know whether all the nations of the world have something corresponding to ‘is’ in their various languages, but I am sure that they don’t *need* such a word. What gives words their force is *customary usage*; and the speakers of some language might have the *custom* of signifying that one word is implied by another just by placing the two in order, e.g. saying ‘men mortal’ instead of ‘men are mortal’ and so on; thus removing any need for ‘is’, ‘be’, ‘are’ and so on.

That would be a language that had no verb corresponding to ‘est’ or ‘is’ or ‘be’; yet the users of it would be every bit as capable of inferring, concluding, and of all kind of reasoning as were the Greeks and Latins. But then what would become of the terms ‘entity’, ‘essence’, ‘essential’, ‘essentiality’ that are derived from it - specifically, from the Greek verb ‘to be’ - and of many more that depend on these in their common use? So these words aren’t names of things; they are signs by which we show that we conceive of one name or attribute as following from another: when we say ‘a man is a living body’, we do *not* mean that the man is one thing, the living body another, and the ‘is’ or *being* is a third; but that the man is the same thing as the living body, because the conditional ‘If he is a man, he is a living body’ is a true consequence, signified by the word ‘is’. Therefore,

‘to be a body’, ‘to walk’, ‘to be speaking’, ‘to live’, ‘to see’

and other such infinitives, and also the abstract nouns

‘corporeity’, ‘walking’, ‘speaking’, ‘life’, ‘sight’

and so on - which signify just the same - are not names of anything, as I have explained in more detail earlier.

·AN ASIDE: WHY BOTHER?·

You may ask: ‘What’s the point of going into such subtleties in a work of this kind, in which you purport to treat of nothing but what is necessary to the doctrine of government and obedience?’ The point is to stop men from being abused by this doctrine of ‘separated essences’, built on the empty philosophy of Aristotle, which would scare them away from obeying the laws of their country, like a farmer scaring birds with an empty coat, a hat, and a crooked stick. This doctrine is at work when they say that (1) after a man has died and been buried, his soul - i.e. his life - can walk separated from his body, and is seen by night among the graves. It is also at work when they say that (2) the shape-and-colour-and-taste of a piece of bread has a being - i.e. *exists* - in a place where there is no bread; and when they say that (3) faith and wisdom and other virtues are sometimes *poured* into a man and sometimes *blown* into him, from heaven, as though virtues could exist apart from virtuous people. [Hobbes is mockingly relying on the fact that the Latin source of ‘infused’ means ‘poured’, and of ‘inspired’ means ‘breathed’. His main point is not that little joke, but the wrongness of treating ‘faith’ and ‘wisdom’ as names of transferable commodities; similarly with ‘life’ in (1) and ‘shape’ etc. in (2).] These absurdities and many others like them serve to make people less dependent on the sovereign power of their country. (3) Who is going to *try* to obey the laws if he expects obedience to be poured or blown into him? (2) If a priest can *make God* out of bread in the Eucharist, who won’t obey *him* rather than his sovereign - indeed, rather than obeying God

himself? (1) Of those who are afraid of ghosts, who won't have great respect for those who can make the holy water that drives ghosts away? These are enough examples of the errors that have entered the Church from the 'entities' and 'essences' of Aristotle. It may be that he knew this was false philosophy, and wrote it merely as something that supports their religion, fearing the fate of Socrates.

·ANCIENT GREEK METAPHYSICS: DETAILS·

Once they have fallen into this error of 'separated essences' or 'forms', they are inevitably involved in many other absurdities that follow from it. [The 'they' in question are any philosophers or theologians, ancient or modern, who follow Aristotle.] Because they insist that these 'forms' are real, they have to put them in some *place*. But because they regard them as incorporeal, without any length, breadth or depth, and everyone knows that any *place* has length, breadth and depth, and can't be filled by anything that isn't corporeal, they are forced to proposition up their story with a distinction: the 'forms or essences', they say, aren't indeed anywhere •'circumscriptive', but 'are somewhere' •'definitive'. These mere *words* don't mean anything in this context, and their emptiness is hidden only by their being put in Latin. [Hobbes's point is that these terms already *are* virtually in Latin.] •Circumscribing something is simply determining or •defining its place; so there is no difference between the two sides of the supposed distinction. In the particular case of the essence of a man: they say that this 'essence' is his soul, of which they affirm that

- all of it is in his little finger, and
- all of it is in each other part, however small, of his body; and yet
- there is no more soul in the whole body than in any one of those parts.

Can anyone think that God is served by such absurdities? Yet you have to believe all this if you believe there is an incorporeal soul distinct from the body.

When they come to explain how an incorporeal substance can suffer pain and be tormented in the fire of hell or purgatory, they have nothing at all to say - only that *it can't be known* how fire can burn souls.

Again, motion is change of place, and incorporeal substances can't be in any place, so these philosophers have a problem about making it seem possible for a soul to set off for heaven, hell, or purgatory without its body; and how the ghosts of men (not to mention the clothes the ghosts wear!) can walk by night in churches and cemeteries. I don't know what they can say about this, except perhaps that the ghosts 'walk definitive' but don't 'walk circumscriptive', or that they walk spiritually but not temporally: for such outrageous distinctions are equally applicable to any difficulty whatever.

[This paragraph is amplified and re-arranged in ways that the standard dots etc. can't indicate.] The philosophers and theologians I am attacking have many bold opinions about the incomprehensible nature of God, and are driven to absurdities in defence of them. For example, they hold that this:

When God knows that such-and-such will happen in the future, this knowledge comes from his having *earlier* decided to make it happen; his act of the will *causes* his foreknowledge

is *false*. They keep it at bay by saying that there is no 'earlier' and 'later' in the life of God, because God doesn't exist in time. That forces them to say that God's *eternal* existence is not his existing *through an infinite length of time*, and thus to give a different account of what eternity is. According to them, eternity is the standing still of the present time, a *nunc-stans* as the scholastics say; which no-one understands - even *they* don't understand it - any more than they would understand a *hic-stans* for an infinite greatness of place. [*nunc stans* is Latin for 'a standing now', and *hic stans* for 'a standing here'.]

[Then Hobbes accuses the target philosophers of holding that one body can be in two places at once, and that two bodies can be in one place at the same time, which he (wrongly) thinks is implied by the doctrine of transubstantiation in the Eucharist. ‘These are just a few of the incongruities they are forced into’, he says, because they have utterly misunderstood the nature and purpose of theological language. When we praise God, who is incomprehensible, what we are doing is signify our desire to honour him with the best words we can think of. But these philosophers think that our honorific labels are meant to signify *what God is*, and that launches them on philosophical debates when they should be engaged in worshipping God. He continues:] Those who venture to reason concerning God’s *nature* on the basis of these attributes of *honour* lose their understanding [Hobbes’s phrase] in the very first step they take, then fall from one difficulty into another, endlessly. They could be compared with a man who is ignorant of the ceremonies of court, and comes into the presence of a greater person than he is used to speak to; he stumbles at his entrance, to save himself from falling he lets slip his cloak, to recover his cloak he lets fall his hat, and with one clumsiness after another he reveals himself as a bewildered rustic.

·ANCIENT GREEK NATURAL SCIENCE·

Then for natural science [Hobbes’s word is ‘physics’, but it covers much more than ‘physics’ does for us], i.e. the knowledge of the natural causes of natural events, these ‘Aristotelian philosophers’ offer nothing but empty words. If you want to know why some kinds of bodies sink naturally down toward the earth while others naturally rise up from it, the Schools will follow Aristotle in telling you that the bodies that sink downwards are heavy, and that this heaviness is what causes them to descend. But if you ask what they mean by ‘heaviness’ they will define it as ‘an endeavour to go to the centre of the earth’; so the cause why things sink downward is an endeavour to be below, which amounts to saying that *bodies descend because they do*. (Or *ascend because they do*, because the Aristotelians tell the analogous story about things that naturally rise.) Or they’ll tell you that the centre of the earth is the place of rest and conservation for heavy things, which is why heavy things endeavour to be there; as if

- pebbles and coins wanted to be in a certain place and knew where it was, as man does;
- pebbles and coins loved being immobile, as man does not, or
- a piece of glass were less safe in the window than falling into the street.

[Then a somewhat obscure passage mocking the scholastic explanation for ‘why a single body can seem larger at one time than at another’. Then:]

What causes the soul of man? They answer *creatur infundendo* and *creando infunditur* - i.e. ‘It is created by pouring it in’ and ‘It is poured in by creation’.

What causes sensory intake? The fact that there are ‘species’ everywhere, they say. These ‘species’ are supposed to be the *shows* or *appearances* of objects - sights, hearings, tastes, smells, feelings, depending on which part of the body they appear to. [This use of ‘species’ is explained in a note on page 204.]

They call the act of will to do any particular action *volitio*, and call the general ability men have to will sometimes one thing and sometimes another *voluntas*. What causes any particular *volitio*, according to them, is *voluntas*; that is, the power or ability to perform the act is what causes the act. Compare: ‘The reason why this man performed that good (or bad) act was that he was able to perform it’!

And in many cases they announce as the cause of some natural event *their own ignorance*, except of course they use words that disguise what’s going on. For example: they say that ‘fortune’ is the cause of contingent events, where calling something ‘contingent’ is saying that one

doesn't know what caused it. Another example: they describe many things as •effects of 'occult [= 'hidden'] qualities', which means qualities they don't know, from which they infer that no-one else knows them either. Or as •effects of 'sympathy', 'antipathy', 'antiperistasis', 'specificial qualities' and other such terms, which don't tell us what the causally acting *thing* was or how it operated.

If such metaphysics and physics as this isn't pointless philosophy, there never was any, and St. Paul didn't need to warn us against it [presumably a reference to Colossians 2:8: 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. . .'.]

·ANCIENT GREEK ETHICS·

Their moral and political philosophy has the same absurdities, or greater ones. If a man performs an unjust act, i.e. an act contrary to the law, they say that God is

- the prime cause of the law,
- and also the prime cause of that and all other actions;

but that he is

*not* the cause of the injustice,

although that consists in the action's not fitting the law. This is pointless philosophy. It's no better than saying that one man drew two lines, one straight and one crooked, while another man made the lines different from one another. This 'absurdity' was invented in defence of the doctrine of free will, i.e. of a will of man that isn't subject to the will of God. It's a good example of the kind of philosophy that men get into when they decide on their conclusions before knowing what their premises will be - other examples 'are ones I have just described' - pretending to comprehend something that is incomprehensible, and treating attributes of honour as though they were soberly descriptive.

Aristotle and other heathen philosophers define *good* and *evil* in terms of the appetites [= 'desires'] of men. That's all right as long as we're considering men as each one governed by his own law; because when men have no law except their own appetites, there can't be any general rule laying down which actions are good and which evil. But in a commonwealth this account is false; for then the standard for what is good or evil is not the appetite of private men but *the law*, which is the will and appetite of the state. Yet this doctrine of Aristotle's is still 'accepted and acted on: men judge the goodness or wickedness of their own and of other men's actions, and the actions of the commonwealth itself, on the basis of their own passions. What anyone calls 'good' or 'evil' is just what is so in his own eyes, with no regard to the public laws; except for monks and friars, who have taken a vow that obliges them to *simple obedience to their superior* - just as every subject *ought* to think that the law of nature obliges him to simple obedience to the civil sovereign. This private standard of good - 'making every man his own judge' - is not only absurd philosophy but also pernicious to the public state.

It is also bad and false philosophy to •say that the work of marriage [Hobbes's phrase] is inconsistent with chastity and continence [= 'sexual restraint'], and on that basis to •make such actions moral vices. Does anyone say such things? Yes, those who claim to base their denial of marriage to the clergy on the claims of chastity and continence. . . . They make marriage a sin, or at least a thing so impure and unclean as to render a man unfit for the altar. The law about the celibacy of priests might be based not on the view that

- having relations with a wife is contrary to chastity,
- so that all marriage is vice, but rather on the view that
- having relations with a wife is too impure and unclean for a man consecrated to God;

but in that case other natural, necessary and daily works that all men do render them all unworthy to be priests, because they are even more unclean!

But the real basis for this prohibition of marriage for priests isn't likely to have been anything as flimsy as such errors in moral philosophy, or on the preference for single life over the estate of matrimony (which came from the wisdom of St. Paul, who saw that in those times of persecution when preachers of the gospel were forced to fly from one country to another, it would be very troublesome to be burdened with the care of wife and children). The real *secret* basis for the prohibition is probably the plan of the popes and priests of later times to make themselves - i.e. to make the clergy - the sole heirs to the kingdom of God in this world. To achieve this they had to forgo marriage, because our Saviour said that at the coming of his kingdom the children of God 'shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be as the angels in heaven' [Matthew 22:30]. Being 'as the angels in heaven' is being *spiritual*; and because that clergy had already given themselves the title 'spiritual', it would have been incongruous for them to allow themselves wives when there was no need to do so. [Perhaps Hobbes thinks of the label 'spiritual' as implied by the common use of 'Reverend' in the name of a priest.]

#### ·ANCIENT GREEK POLITICAL THEORY·

From Aristotle's civil [here = 'political'] philosophy, they have learned to describe as 'tyranny' every kind of commonwealth except the popular kind [here = 'democracy'] - that being what Athens had in Aristotle's time. They called all kings 'tyrants', and they labelled as 'the thirty tyrants' the aristocracy of the thirty governors that were set up in Athens by the Spartans who had beaten them in the Peloponnesian war. [Twenty-odd years earlier, Hobbes had published a translation of Thucydides' famous history of that war.] Their name for the condition of people in a democracy was 'liberty'. Originally 'tyrant' merely meant 'monarch'. But later, when that kind of government was abolished in most parts of Greece, the name began to signify not only what it did before but also the hatred that the democratic states had for it. In the same way the title 'king' became odious after the deposing of the kings in Rome; men find it natural, when they have applied some label to a hated enemy, to start thinking of that label as having something nasty embedded in its very meaning.

And when those same men become displeased with those who are administering the democracy, or the aristocracy, they don't have to look far for disgraceful names in which to express their anger: they glibly call one 'anarchy', and the other 'oligarchy' (which means 'the tyranny of a few'). And in such cases what offends the people is just the fact that the way they are governed is not what each of them would himself have chosen, but what has been chosen by the public representative, whether one man or an assembly of men. This leads them to give nasty names to their superiors, never knowing - except perhaps a little after a civil war - that without such a government driven by the governors' choices there will be perpetual civil war, and that the force and power of the laws comes from men and weapons, not words and promises.

That brings me to another error in Aristotle's politics, namely his thesis that a well-ordered commonwealth should have a government not of men but of laws. What man in his right mind, even if he can't write or read, doesn't find himself governed by those whom he fears and thinks can kill or hurt him if he disobeys? Or does believe that he can be hurt by the law, i.e. by words on paper, without hands and swords of men? This is one of the *pernicious* errors - the ones that induce men who dislike those who govern them to ally themselves with those who call the governors 'tyrants', and to think it lawful to raise war against them. Yet such people are often cherished from the pulpit by the clergy!

These philosophers have another error in their civil philosophy - one that they didn't learn from Aristotle or Cicero or any other of the heathens. It concerns *law*, which is really a rule for actions, but which *they* say can cover not only how men *act* but also what they *think*. That would make it legitimate to take someone whose speech and actions are lawful and inquire into his thoughts and his conscience. Such an inquisition [Hobbes's word] could lead to a man's being punished for truthfully declaring his thoughts, or constrained to lie about them for fear of punishment. It is true that someone being considered for the post of governmental minister in charge of teaching may be asked if he is content to preach such-and-such doctrines, and if he says No, it may be all right to deny him the post. But to force him to accuse himself of having this or that *opinion*, when his *actions* aren't forbidden by law, is against the law of nature - especially in those who teach that a man will be damned to eternal and extreme torments if he dies holding a false belief concerning some part of the Christian faith. If a man thinks he knows that an error can put him in such danger, his natural care of himself will compel him to hazard his soul on his own judgment rather than that of someone else who is not involved in his damnation.

The following can happen: A private man undertakes to interpret the divine law according to *his* way of thinking, without being authorised by the Commonwealth - i.e. without being permitted by its sovereign - to do this. That is another error in the politics, but it doesn't come from Aristotle or from any other of the heathen philosophers. For none of them deny that the power of making laws includes the power of explaining them when there is a need for that. And in every country where the Scriptures are law, they are made to be law by the authority of the Commonwealth, which means that they come to be part of the civil law.

Another error of the same kind is in play when anyone other than the sovereign restricts in other people a power that the Commonwealth hasn't restricted. An example is *confining the preaching of the gospel to one class of men*, where the laws have left it open to all. If the state gives me leave to preach or teach - i.e. if it doesn't forbid me - then no man can forbid me. If I find myself amongst the idolaters of America, shall I - a Christian, though not an ordained priest - think it a sin to preach Jesus Christ before receiving orders from Rome? Or when I have preached, shall I not answer their doubts and expound the Bible to them - i.e. shall I not teach? . . . . To deny these functions to those to whom the civil sovereign hasn't denied them is to take away a lawful liberty, which is contrary to the doctrine of civil government.

#### OTHER DEFECTS IN SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

Other examples of futile philosophy brought into religion by the professors of academic theology might be produced; but you can observe them for yourself without help from me. I shall add just this one point:- The writings of School theologians are mostly nothing but meaningless strings of strange and barbarous words, or of words used in senses other than they have in ordinary Latin - senses that would puzzle Cicero, Varro, and all the grammarians of ancient Rome. If you want proof of this, try to translate something written by any School theologian into any of the modern tongues - French, English, or any other well-endowed language. Something that can't be made intelligible in most of these languages isn't intelligible in Latin either. This use of senseless language doesn't count as false philosophy; but it is friendly to philosophical error because it is able not only to hide the truth but also to make men think they have it, which puts them off from searching further.

Then there are the errors brought in from false or suspect history, mere old wives' fables. That's how I would describe all the legends of fictitious miracles in the lives of the saints, all the stories of apparitions and ghosts told by the teachers in the Roman Church (to support their

doctrines of hell and purgatory, the power of exorcism, and other doctrines that aren't backed up by reason or by Scripture), and •all the traditions that they call the 'unwritten word of God'. Such stories appear from time to time in the writings of the Fathers of the early Church, but those Fathers were men who would be too prone to believe false reports. Sincere men who don't know much about natural causes, such as they were, are often the most likely to fall for fraud, because the best men are naturally the least suspicious of the motives of others. [The next sentence has the phrase 'examine spirits'. Hobbes attaches to it a footnote saying 'According to the counsel of St. John, 1 John 4:1'. That verse reads: 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.'] So *their* acceptance of these stories shouldn't carry much weight with those who examine spirits, any more than their acceptance of anything else that concerns the power of the Roman Church . . . .

We can bracket the •introduction of false philosophy with the •suppression of true philosophy by men who have neither the authority nor the knowledge to be competent judges of the truth. . . . Every day brings further evidence that years and days are determined by motions of the earth. And yet men who have in their writings merely supposed that the earth moves, not asserting it but setting it up for discussion pro and con, have been punished for this by ecclesiastical authority. [This refers to Galileo, who was punished by the Church of Rome, although his revolutionary work had been presented as a dialogue between supporters and opponents of the thesis that the earth moves, with neither side being openly declared the winner.] But what reason is there for this treatment? (1) Is it because such opinions are contrary to true religion? That can't be so, if they are true. So let the truth be first examined by competent judges, or confuted by those who claim to know the contrary. (2) Is it because they are contrary to the established religion? Then let them be silenced by the civil laws, to which the teachers of the opinions in question are subject. Disobedience may lawfully be punished in those who teach illegally, even if what they teach is true philosophy. (3) Is it because they are likely to produce disorder in government by countenancing rebellion or sedition? Then let them be silenced, and the teachers of them punished, by the power to which the care of the public quiet has been committed, namely the civil authority. Whenever ecclesiastics (in any place where they are subject to the state) lay claim to any power in their own right, even if they call it God's right, they are simply usurping the lawful power of the state.

What follows is the Latin version of chapter 46, based on Curley's translation of it.

### **Chapter 46. Darkness from vain philosophy**

Don't expect me to heap abuse on philosophy or philosophers. What should you expect? I distinguish •philosophers from •non-philosophers, and •true philosophy (the wisest guide of human life, the special mark of human nature) from •the painted, chattering whore that has for so long been regarded as philosophy. For philosophy (i.e. the study of wisdom) as far as it extends, is wisdom, i.e. the knowledge gained by correct reasoning of effects from their conceived causes or origins, and of possible origins from known effects. No-one rejects that kind of knowledge, and Scripture doesn't prohibit it.

This definition distinguishes philosophy (1) from experience and the kind of prudence that men share with other animals, which is acquired not by reason but by mere memory; and (2) from faith and supernatural revelation, which is not acquired by reason but handed over as a gift.

The first origin of philosophy goes back almost to the origin of speech. For both were present among the most primitive men of the earliest times, who wondered at God's works and were stimulated by their wonder to look for the causes of the things they wondered at. But what



most nourished and aided philosophy was leisure - the Greek word being *scholē* - and what gives birth to leisure is *peace*, which isn't usually found anywhere but in great cities. That is why the first professed students of wisdom were the Gymnosophists of India, the Magi of Persia, and the Priests of the Chaldeans and Egyptians, at a time when philosophy hadn't yet arisen among the Greeks and western peoples. But when the Athenian republic began to flourish after the defeat of the Persians, Athenians who had nothing else to do . . . began to gather in public places for conversation. As St. Luke says (Acts 17:21), they 'spent their time in nothing but telling or hearing some new thing'. [Hobbes refers to this also in the English version of the chapter. In neither version does he remark that the author of the Acts of the Apostles was talking about Athenian gossips about 500 years after Athens's victory over the Persians.] So those who seemed to have got somewhere in philosophy began to teach others, Plato in the Academy, Aristotle in the Lyceum, others in the Stoa; they called these places 'schools' [from *scholē*, leisure], and called their debates 'diatribes' [from a Greek word meaning 'passing the time in conversation']. And their followers were distinguished by labels based on those places - 'academics', 'peripatetics' [meaning 'people who walk up and down', as Aristotle was said to do while teaching in the Lyceum], 'stoics' and so on. These demarcating labels and their link to the corresponding doctrines remained until the time of our Saviour, became known throughout most of Europe and Asia, and were used also to distinguish the philosophers of those later times from one another.

There were public schools in Judea too; but they were in the synagogues, where the laws of the Jews were publicly explained and debated. Examples were the schools of the freedmen, the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians, and the Cilicians.

But what use were the Greek schools to the human race? Plato, indeed, was a philosopher and a noteworthy geometer, but he didn't owe that to any school. We owe our present good knowledge of physics and geometry to Archimedes - a man who didn't belong to any school. The 'peripatetic' school talked so much that the other schools fell silent; but what did it have to offer apart from rhetorical and dialectical tricks? For what natural phenomenon did it give a causal explanation other than ones that were obvious to everyone? But although the schools were useless, they were still harmless at this point. The sects might disagree among themselves till they came to blows, but philosophy itself was still free. Aristotle's doctrines were more widely received than those of the other sects, but no-one was forced to swear by them.

The schools of the Jews also did them no good. The law and the prophets were regularly explained in them, yet when the Messiah they were waiting for *came*, they hadn't learned to recognize him.

The Jews didn't look to the doctrines of the Greeks for help; they regarded the sacred scriptures of the Old Testament as the whole of philosophy.

But Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle's, was highly honoured at the time of the early church, when every day there were Greeks accepting the Christian faith in great number. Some of them were philosophers; but they embraced Christianity in a half-baked way, being reluctant to desert the teachings of their masters, and retaining as many of those 'Greek' teachings as they could somehow reconcile with Christian doctrine. This was the first origin of 'sects' (the Greek word is 'heresies') in the church of Christ. [Hobbes gives some details about how the different sects disagreed about 'the nature of Christ, whom the apostles had shown by miracles to be God': that the whole story was an allegory, that Christ was not a real man but 'a phantasm without a body', that Christ was not the whole but only a part of God. He continues:] The bishops and presbyters in their synods examined these new doctrines: the ones they condemned they called 'heresies'; those they accepted they called 'the Catholic faith'. That was when 'Catholics' were first

distinguished from 'heretics'. This is the context in which the heresy of Arius arose, denying that Christ was God; which was the reason for calling the Nicene Council.

But that synod condemned not only Arius but *all* the heresies that had arisen since the birth of Christ, and briefly summed up the orthodox faith in the so-called 'Nicene Creed'. This was taken from Scripture itself, with Greek philosophy stirred into the mix: Christ is

- true God,
- born the son of God, and
- of the same substance as God;

and the next three councils confirmed this faith, adding an article concerning faith in the Holy Ghost. They also condemned the heresy of the Africans which had arisen under Cyprian, concerning the rebaptism of those who had returned to paganism, and it added to the creed the article:

- 'I believe in one baptism for the remission of sins.'

These doctrines, acknowledged by the synod of Nicaea from sacred Scripture, and not yet supported by pagan philosophy, found favour and were confirmed. For at that time philosophers were not a majority of the church Fathers.

But less concern for the opinion of Scripture is shown in *explanations* of the Nicene creed - and there are a lot of those: judging by the writings that are still extant, almost every doctor of the church in the ensuing five hundred years published *some* explanation of that creed. The Athanasian creed says that

*God and man are one Christ, in the same way that the rational soul and the flesh are one man.*

Where in sacred Scripture (or in the Nicene creed itself) do we find *that*? A man's being constituted by flesh and soul was never regarded as a mystery; but Christ in the flesh is the greatest mystery. No-one says that a man *is his soul* or *is his body*, but it is rightly said of Christ that he *is man* and *is God*. Where do we read in Scripture that a Christian man is to be damned unless he accepts the comparison of the incarnation [= 'God's becoming flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ'] with the soul and flesh of a man? Where in sacred Scripture or in the Nicene Creed do we read that there are three 'hypostases', i.e. three substances, i.e. three Gods, or anything equivalent to this? . . .

Another example: the Athanasian creed says that 'the Son is from the Father alone', and the Nicene creed's version of that doesn't have the word 'alone'. Scripture is on the Nicene side in this matter; because Matthew 1:20 says that 'what *has been produced in the Virgin Mary* is from the Holy Spirit'. You may want to object: '•Eternal generation - which is what the Athanasian creed is talking about - is not the same as •the generation that is produced in the womb of a virgin.' But where does sacred Scripture or the synod make that distinction? [Hobbes goes on for a very learned half-page, chasing down and disposing of biblical passages that might seem to favour 'from the Father *alone*'. Then:]

In later times, men followed the Aristotelian philosophy somewhat more freely in their writings; some of them published Aristotelian treatises on logic and physics, this being an ambitious display of their Aristotelity! They liked Aristotle's doctrine about separated forms better than the philosophy of any of the other sects, because they - or most of them - already had fixed in their minds a demonology that was almost the same as what find in Homer and Hesiod.

In the meantime, the Roman empire having been torn apart (and already completely obliterated in Italy), the . . . royal power of Rome was committed to the bishop of Rome, i.e. the Pope. That made the papacy seem to be something worth fighting over, and fight over it they did! At the time when Charlemagne (king of France) conquered the Lombards (enemies of Rome),

Pope Leo III was driven out of Rome by a schism within the church. But Charlemagne brought him back and confirmed him in the papacy. In return for that, Leo made Charlemagne emperor of the western empire, publicly presenting him, in the name of God, with the imperial crown, while the people shouted *God has given it!* That's the ceremony that gave to the kings of France the permanent title 'By the grace of God, King of France'. It also made permanent the domination of kings by popes. . . .

In correspondence with Emperor Charlemagne a year or two later, Pope Leo urged him to establish universities throughout his dominions - ones where all letters and sciences would be taught. So Charlemagne established in Paris the first university; and later on other kings also set up universities, each in his own dominion. Once each university had been organized for study, which involved dividing it into distinct colleges, they were all to be governed by laws according to the discretion of the Pope. Finally, from masters such as Peter Lombard, Duns Scotus, and Thomas Aquinas, was born the theology that they call 'scholastic' - a mixture of Aristotle's philosophy and sacred Scripture. In the universities they teach Aristotle's logic, his physics, his metaphysics, his ethics, and his politics, as if Aristotle contained the whole of the sciences and were also the greatest father of the Church! The students were exercised in public debates and speeches through which to maintain and preach the dogmas of the Roman church. (This was done so as to establish among those adolescents a demeanour of deference.) So by the sermons of ecclesiastics sent from the universities into almost all the cities, towns and parishes of the Christian world, and by published writings, it was fixed indelibly in the minds of all Christians that

- there is no rule of just and unjust except the dictates of the Roman church,
- kings are to be obeyed only when the Roman church permits this, and
- kings themselves ought to obey the Roman Pope, like sheep.

And they accomplished what they set out to accomplish.

The universities also provided for the study of ancient Roman law, and of medicine; only the mathematical sciences were left out, not because they contained anything contrary to Christian doctrine, but because the knowledge and skills they would provide was utterly inconsistent with ignorance - the ignorance that was required for promotion within the church. Back in those days, someone's knowing the mathematical arts, or believing the earth to be round, or believing that there are people living in the parts of the earth we call 'antipodes', was enough to block him from achieving the honour of a bishopric.

You will ask: 'That Roman doctrine or scholastic philosophy that you are criticizing - what particular opinions of Aristotle's is it derived from? and how?' I shall tell you. The Greeks and the Latins and most Europeans make affirmations by linking two names by the verb 'is' or its equivalent; thus signifying that the two names are names of the same thing. So someone who says 'Man is an animal' wants to convey what would also be conveyed by 'If we rightly call someone a man, we also rightly call the same being an animal'. We also sometimes attach 'is' to a single term, as when someone says 'God is', wanting to convey that God is

something real, not a figment of the mind,  
a hypostasis, not a phantasm.

Those are the words that the Greeks use to distinguish true things from ones that are only apparent - as when they say that a man looking at himself in the mirror is a hypostasis = a *substance*, whereas the image of himself that he sees in the mirror is a phantasm. When 'is' is taken in the former way, i.e. when it joins two names, it is called a 'copula'; when it is taken in the latter way it is called a 'substantive verb'. The Hebrews also occasionally used a substantive verb (as when God says simply that his name is *I am* (Exodus 3:14); but they never used it as a copula. Instead of the copula, the Hebrews simply put the two names side by side, as when it is said in Genesis 1:2 'the earth a thing without form', which we have to express by saying 'the earth *was* without form'.

Aristotle attended more to words than to things. So when he had the thought of a thing's being brought under the two names 'man' and 'animal', he didn't leave it at that but dug down to learn what thing was to be conceived under the copula 'is' [*est*] or at least under the infinitive form of the verb 'to be' [*esse*]. For he was sure that the word *esse* was the name of some *thing*, meaning that there was some thing in nature whose name was 'being' or 'essence'. From this absurdity he tumbled down into a still worse one, namely asserting

- that certain essences are separated from the things whose essences they are,
- that these separated essences are present to the spheres of the heavens and drive them in a circular motion, and
- that the human soul, separated from the man, subsists by itself.

These doctrines may be consistent with Homeric theology, but not with sacred Scripture. [The claim that they are to be found in Aristotle's works is controversial.] For the term 'essence' is not to be found in Scripture, or in the liturgy, articles or canons of the Anglican church; nor is the 'corresponding' Greek term 'ousia' (except in a different sense that isn't relevant here); nor is 'essential', 'essentiality', 'entity', 'entitative' or any other term derived from the copula. No such term could occur in the language of the Hebrews, because it *doesn't have* the copula. Conclusion: an essence isn't a *thing*, whether created or untreated, but only a made-up name. Aristotle single-handedly gave birth to new, bastard and empty beings of this kind, the first principles of a philosophy that St. Paul calls 'empty deceit'. [Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.' Colossians 2:8]

•The demonology of the Greeks has (I repeat) been deposited in the church through this doctrine about 'essences' and separate 'substantial forms'; so also has •the superstition that the Greeks call 'deisidaimonia', i.e. fear of phantasms. That has led to •the use of exorcisms - with the sign of the cross, and holy water - to charm the demons or drive them away. Next comes •a view about incorporeal substances (i.e. substances having no size at all), including the thesis that God himself, the best and greatest substance, has no size (though Scripture says nothing about incorporeal substance or immaterial substance). Similarly, •the view that the soul is wholly in the whole body, and wholly in each part of it. This same source has produced •the whole doctrine about purgatory, •the belief in the nocturnal appearance of souls, •the legends of miracles, and •questions about the souls of the reprobate [= 'people who are rejected by God'] - such questions as 'Where are they punished?' and 'Given that souls can't be harmed, *how* are they punished?' - and •many other things that aren't to be found in Scripture.

Aristotle *didn't* think that one body can be in many places at the same time, or that many bodies can be in one place at the same time; nor did any philosopher; nor indeed did any sane man! But it was useful to them - the scholastics - to *say* this, in order to maintain their doctrine of the real presence of Christ's body in every piece of consecrated bread.

*The will* is the cause of *willing*, i.e. the power is a cause of the act - this 'absurd doctrine' is Aristotelian, and the Scholastics took it over, as a way of maintaining man's free will (though it takes away God's dominion over the human will).

·SCHOLASTIC PHYSICS·

Again, in physics they have offered absurd causes of things. For example, (1) heavy bodies are caused to fall by *gravity* [here = 'weight'], and the cause of gravity is the fact that heavy bodies try to reach the centre of the earth for the sake of their own conservation. (2) The same body, with nothing added or taken away, is sometimes greater and sometimes less, because of condensation or rarefaction. (3) The soul is created by being poured in, and is poured in by being created (though Scripture says that all things were created by the word of God). (4) They assign as causes

**occult qualities** such as 'sympathy', 'antipathy', 'antiperistasis', 'specific qualities', and **chance or fortune**;

which amounts to assigning their own ignorance as a source of causes, for if you take away ignorance there's no **fortune** and no qualities are **occult**. (5) They hold that all sensing and all thinking happens through a certain motion of 'species'. [The word 'species' in the sense that is relevant here is a scholastic technical term, belonging to a theory that Hobbes is about to discuss. A common version of it says that when you see a tree (for example), what happens is that something is given off by the tree and passes through the intervening space and enters your eyes, this 'something' being a *species* of the tree = (roughly) a *look* of the tree. The 'species' is a particular, but not a material thing; in some versions of the theory a species is an individual property or accident. (According to these philosophers, as well as

this tree, which is a •concrete •particular, and

greenness, which is an •abstract •universal property, which the tree shares with other things,

there is an individual accident or property -

•the greenness of this tree, which is an •abstract •particular that only this tree possesses.)

Although the basic meaning of the Latin word *species* involves *visual* appearance, the theory was extended to cover the other senses as well; and, according to Hobbes, it was further extended to say that when you *understand* an object, an 'intelligible species' of the object is somehow sent from it to your mind.] What is a species? Anyone who knows Latin knows that a species is what you can know about a thing from the look of it, i.e. its shape and colour . . . . They say either •that the species or features of things are sent into the eyes, and thus seen, or •that certain species or features of things are sent from the eyes to the object, and that the object is seen thus; the scholastics still don't have a consensus on which of these two is correct. They also say that hearing, smelling, tasting and understanding occur by species passing through the ears, nostrils, and organs of the intellect. (6) Further, they maintain that eternity is not serial time without beginning or end, but a 'standing now', so that something that is *now* for us was *now* for Adam, i.e. that there is no difference between *now* and *then*. . . .

(7) They say that if free will is denied, it follows that God is the author of sin and that therefore the sinner ought not to be punished; but they do accept that God is the first cause of things and events. 'This looks like trouble: if God is the first cause of *all* events, that includes acts of the human will, including the *free* ones, which by the scholastics' standards implies that no-one should be punished for anything he does, whether or not his will is free'. They try to escape this difficulty with help from Aristotle: they call sin *anomia* [Greek = 'lawlessness'], so that something's being a sin is its *not* fitting the law; and that is a mere •negation, and not any sort of •action. So they acknowledge that God is the cause of every act and of every law, while denying that he is the cause of the lack of fit between an act and the law. This is on a par with saying that when someone draws a straight line and a curve, he is the cause of the two lines but someone else is the cause of their not fitting one another! But when Aristotle spoke of a misfit [Latin *incongruitas*] he meant to be referring to 'something clearly positive' - a deed or resolution or plan that doesn't fit the law. The

scholastics wanted to come across as very subtle in this, and in fact showed their stupidity. If they had been subtle, they would easily have discovered the difference between the *cause* of a deed and its *author*. The author of a deed is he who commands that it be done; the cause is he through whose powers it is done. God doesn't command that anyone do (or try) anything contrary to the laws; but in everything we do we are using powers given us by God. You may want to ask: 'If God is involved in the cause, why are we condemned?' Well, tell me •why God has from eternity elected some and rejected others, and •how he condemned to eternal and most severe punishments people who *hadn't* yet done (or thought) anything evil, and who *couldn't* do or think evil unless God gave them the power to do so? Tell me also: isn't it lawful for the potter to decide what he wants to do with the vase he has made? [This echoes Romans 9:21.] And, lastly, show me where Scripture plainly says that all those who are excluded from the kingdom of God will live without a second death, to be tortured to eternity.

#### SCHOLASTIC ETHICS AND POLITICS ·

Let us come now to ethics and politics. Scripture teaches that Christian subjects ought to obey their kings and sovereigns (and their ministers), even if they are pagan; not only out of fear, but also because it's what God has commanded, for our own good. [This is based on Romans 13:1-7.] Now consider the civil wars concerning religion that have been fought in Germany, France, and England. They can't have originated in Christianity, so their source must be the ethical and political philosophy of Aristotle and of the Romans who followed his lead. In every commonwealth the genuine standard of good and evil is the law. Aristotle, however, defined virtue and vice in terms not of •laws but of •praise and blame among the citizens. He calls the rule of kings - *any* kings - 'tyranny', and says that only in democracy is there liberty. After him most Roman writers, because of their hatred of one king, Tarquin, take the vice of one •man and transfer it to his •form of rule - not by any *argument* but by a pernicious crowd-pleasing example. When our youth were taught these authors in the universities, for the sake of Greek and Latin philosophy and eloquence, they absorbed at the same time their poisonous doctrine, and took it on themselves to make their own individual decisions about good and evil, just and unjust, laws and religion. That was the start of our troubles. Preachers who felt themselves to have an excellent grasp of doctrine (as most of them *did*), along with others whose reading of Greek and Latin politics led them to see themselves as great political thinkers, ignited a civil war in which many thousands of citizens were killed and the king was condemned to a most unworthy death. They did this because things weren't going in a way that favoured their ambition, whether churchly or secular.

Such was the cost of learning Greek and Latin eloquence and philosophy! If there isn't a big improvement in how the preachers teach the people, and how our universities teach the preachers, perhaps *Great Achilles will again be sent to Troy*. [Footnote by Curley: 'An allusion to Virgil's fourth eclogue, implying that civil war will come again (and again) unless university education is improved.']

### **Chapter 47. The benefit that comes from such darkness, and who gets it**

People in this part of Christendom have for many years accepted these doctrines that are harmful to social peace. *Who did that to them?* That will be my question in this final chapter, and in tackling it I shall follow the clue of *Cui bono?* [That two-word Latin sentence, which still occurs in English sometimes, literally means 'For the benefit of whom?' - where the benefit may be known but the beneficiary is not. It is often wrongly taken to mean 'How will he/she/they benefit?' - where the beneficiary is known but the benefit is not. We'll see that Hobbes - though an accomplished Latinist - is guilty of that misuse.] Cicero praises a severe judge in ancient Rome for a custom he had in criminal causes: when the

testimony of the witnesses wasn't sufficient, he would ask the accusers *Cui bono?* - which asked what profit, honour, or other satisfaction the accused got or expected from the deed of which he was accused. For amongst presumptions, there is none that so strongly points to the author of an action as does the benefit of the action. [A 'presumption' that P is the case is a state of affairs in which it is reasonable to believe P unless strong evidence against it turns up.]

I start with the erroneous doctrine that the present Church, now militant on earth, is the kingdom of God. (I mean the kingdom of glory, or the •land of promise; not the kingdom of grace, which is merely a •promise of the land!) This doctrine brings worldly benefits to the pastors and teachers in the Church; it gives them a right as God's public ministers •to govern the Church; and therefore, because the Church and the Commonwealth are the same persons, •to be rectors and governors of the Commonwealth. [Hobbes is here using 'person' as a technical term of his, introduced and explained in chapter 16.] It was through this that the Pope got the subjects of all Christian princes •to believe that to disobey him was to disobey Christ himself, and •to take his side in any dispute between him and other princes . . . . He was claiming, in effect, a universal monarchy over all Christendom. At first the Popes were given the right to be supreme teachers of Christian doctrine - given it *by* Christian emperors, to be exercised *under* those emperors, within the limits of the Roman Empire. The Popes themselves acknowledged this by taking the •title [= 'label'] *Pontifex Maximus* [= 'chief priest'], making them officers who were subject to the civil state. But after the Empire was divided and dissolved, it wasn't hard to obtrude on the people who were already subject to them a further •title [= 'entitlement'], namely the right of St. Peter - not only to preserve all the power they had been claiming ·over Rome·, but to extend it over the Christian provinces that had been part of the Roman Empire but were so no longer. Considering how intensely men want to *rule*, this benefit of a universal monarchy is a sufficient presumption that the Popes who claimed it and for centuries enjoyed it were the authors of the doctrine by which it was obtained - namely that the Church now on earth is the kingdom of Christ. Once *that* is granted, we have to conclude that Christ has some lieutenant amongst us by who will tell us what he commands.

After certain Churches had renounced this universal power of the Pope, one might have expected the civil sovereigns of the relevant nations to reclaim all the power that they had possessed and been entitled to (and unwisely let go). In England that is pretty much what happened, except that those through whom the kings handled the government of religion maintained that their employment was in God's right. That *seemed* to claim that even if they weren't above the civil power, they weren't under it either; but they didn't really make that claim, because they acknowledged the king's right to deprive them of the positions in the church at his pleasure.

But in places where the leadership was in the hands of presbyteries [i.e. committees of priests and/or laymen], though they forbade the teaching of many other doctrines of the Church of Rome, they still held on to this one - namely that the kingdom of Christ has already come and that it began at the resurrection of our Saviour. But *cui bono?* What profit did they expect from it? The profit that the popes expected: to have a sovereign power over the people. When men excommunicate their lawful king, they are keeping him from all places of God's public service in his own kingdom, and will resist him with force when he tries through force to correct them. And when men excommunicate *any* person without authority from the civil sovereign, they are depriving him of his lawful liberty, i.e. usurping an unlawful power over their brethren. So the authors of this darkness in religion are the Roman and the Presbyterian clergy. [Recall that 'darkness' occurs in the title of this Part and of this chapter.]

This account applies also to all the doctrines and practices that help these people to *keep* this spiritual sovereignty once they have acquired it. I'll briefly deal with a dozen of these.

(1) 'The Pope in his public capacity cannot err.' Anyone who believes this will readily obey the Pope in whatever he commands.

(2) 'All the other bishops, in whatever Commonwealth, have their right not immediately from God or indirectly from their civil sovereigns, but from the Pope.' Through this doctrine every Christian commonwealth comes to have many powerful men (for bishops are indeed powerful) who depend on the Pope and owe obedience to him, although he is a foreign prince. That makes it possible for him to stir up a civil war against a state that doesn't submit to being governed according to his pleasure and interest - and he *has done* that many times.

(3) 'These bishops and all other priests, monks and friars are exempt from the power of the civil laws.' A result of this is that in every Commonwealth a large minority enjoy the benefit of the laws and are protected by the power of the civil state, but make no contribution to the expenses of the state and aren't subject to the same penalties for crimes as are the other subjects; so they aren't afraid of anyone except the Pope, and ally themselves with him and him alone, upholding his universal monarchy.

(4) The practice of calling their priests . . . 'sacerdotes', i.e. sacrificers, which is the title the Jews gave to the civil sovereign and his public ministers at the time when God was their king. Also, the practice of making the Lord's Supper a *sacrifice* gets the people to believe that the Pope has the same power over all Christians that Moses and Aaron had over the Jews - i.e. all power, both civil and ecclesiastical, as the high priest had *then*.

(5) 'Matrimony is a sacrament.' This lets the clergy judge of the lawfulness of marriages, and thus what children are legitimate, and consequently the right of succession to hereditary kingdoms.

(6) Refusing to allow priests to marry serves to assure this power of the Pope over kings. If a king is also a priest, he can't marry and transmit his kingdom to his posterity; if he isn't a priest, then the Pope claims to have ecclesiastical authority over him and his people.

(7) From the practice of private confessions they obtain better intelligence about the plans of princes and great persons in the civil state than these can have of the designs of the ecclesiastical state; and this helps to keep the Church's power secure.

(8) By the practice of canonising saints and declaring who are martyrs, they add to their power. How? By inducing in simple men an obstinacy against the laws and commands of their civil sovereigns, even if it costs them their lives, so as to avoid being excommunicated by the Pope and thus declared heretics or enemies to the Church . . .

(9) They add to their power by crediting every priest with the ability to make Christ, and by being able to ordain penances, and to forgive (or not forgive) sins. [The 'ability to make Christ' is a mocking reference to the doctrine that in the Eucharist the wine and bread, after being blessed by the priest, become the blood and body of Christ.]

(10) By the doctrines of purgatory, of justification by external works, and of indulgences the clergy is enriched.

(11) By their demonology, and the use of exorcism and all the trappings of that, they keep the people more in awe of their power - or anyway they think they do.

(12) The metaphysics, ethics and politics of Aristotle, and the frivolous distinctions, barbarous terms and obscure language of the Schoolmen, serve them by keeping these errors from being detected, and making men mistake the will-o'-the-wisp of vain philosophy for the light of



the Gospel. They operate by being taught in the universities, which have been all erected and regulated by the Pope's authority.

If these weren't enough, we could add other dark doctrines that they have, which bring profit for •the setting up of an unlawful power over the lawful sovereigns of Christian people; or for •the support of such a power after it has been set up, or for •the worldly riches, honour and authority of those who sustain it. So, by the rule of *cui bono?* we can fairly identify as the authors of all this spiritual darkness the Pope, the Roman clergy, and all the others who try to settle in the minds of men this erroneous doctrine that the Church now on earth is the 'kingdom of God' mentioned in the Old and New Testaments.

The emperors and other Christian sovereigns, under whose rule these errors . . . first crept in, disturbing their possessions and the tranquillity of their subjects, paid with their own suffering for their failure to see what the consequences would be, and their lack of insight into the designs of their 'ecclesiastical' teachers. They can be judged to be accessories to their own and the public damage. Without their authority there couldn't have been any seditious doctrine publicly preached in the first place. They could have blocked this at the outset; but once the people had been *possessed* by those spiritual men, no •human remedy was possible.

As for the •remedies supplied by God: he never fails to destroy all the machinations of men against the truth, at a time of his choosing. So we must wait for him to decide 'to bring us relief; and we know pretty well how he will do it'. He often allows the prosperity and the ambition of his enemies to grow to such a height that . . . they over-reach themselves, show too openly how violent they are, 'provoke the populace into rebellion', and lose everything - like Peter's net, which broke because it held too many fishes. Rulers who couldn't wait for such developments and tried to resist such encroachment 'by the church' before their subjects' eyes were opened, merely increased the power they resisted. So I don't blame the Emperor Frederick for holding the stirrup for our countryman Pope Adrian. The frame of mind of his subjects at that time was such that if he hadn't 'knuckled under to the Pope' he wasn't likely to succeed in the empire. But do I blame the rulers who, *in the beginning when their power was unbroken*, allowed such doctrines to be developed in the universities of their own dominions. Because of this initial failure, they have held the stirrup to all the succeeding popes, when the popes mounted into the thrones of all Christian sovereigns, to ride them and tire them out - both them and their people - at their pleasure. [Hobbes is here offering a mild punning joke - mounting the throne likened to mounting a horse.]

The unravelling of a human invention is the reverse of the process in which it was woven in the first place. The web 'that I am now discussing' begins with the first elements of power, which are wisdom, humility, sincerity, and other virtues of the apostles, whom the converts obeyed out of reverence, not by obligation. Their consciences were free, and their words and actions were subject to the civil power and no other. Later on, as the flocks of Christ increased, the presbyters [= 'church-governing committees'] assembled to consider what they should teach; in this way they obliged •themselves to teach nothing against the decrees of these assemblies; this was thought to imply that •the people were also obliged to follow their doctrine; and when anyone refused to do so, they refused to keep him company (or as they put it, they 'excommunicated' him), not as an unbeliever but as someone who had been *disobedient*. (1) This was the first knot upon their liberty. When the number of presbyters increased, the presbyters of a chief city or province helped themselves to authority over the presbyters of individual parishes, and called themselves 'bishops': and (2) this was a second knot on Christian liberty. Finally, the Bishop of Rome - i.e. the Bishop of the city that was the centre of the Empire - took upon himself an authority over all the other

bishops of the Empire, (3) which was the third and last knot, and the final step in the **synthesis**, the construction of papal power. (This third step - 'the aggrandisement of the Bishop of Rome' - was supported partly by the wills of the emperors themselves, partly by the title *Pontifex Maximus*, and partly - when the emperors had grown weak - by 'claiming' the privileges of St. Peter.)

And therefore the **analysis** or undoing of this power structure goes the same way in reverse. It starts with (3) the knot that was tied last, as can be seen in the dissolution of the praeterpolitical Church government in England. [That is, the undoing of Church power that lay outside the political power of the state.] The power of the popes 'in England' was totally dissolved by Queen Elizabeth; and the bishops, who had previously held their positions by the authority of the Pope, came to hold the same positions by the authority of the Queen and her successors (though by retaining the phrase *jure divino* - 'by divine right' - they gave the impression that they were claiming to have their status by immediate right from God). And so (3) the third knot was untied. Later on, the Presbyterians recently in England had the system of bishops abolished; which (2) untied the second knot. And at almost the same time, the power was also taken from the Presbyteries [i.e. the committees of 'elders' - not priests - who governed individual parishes]; this (1) 'untied the first knot' too, and brought us back to the independence of the first Christians - each of us free to follow Paul or Cephas or Apollos, every man as he likes best. If this state of affairs can be kept free of contention, and free of the fault for which Paul criticised the Corinthians, namely characterizing a person's Christianity in terms of his adherence to this or that Christian minister, it is perhaps the best 'state to be in', for two reasons. One is that there ought to be no power over the consciences of men except the word 'of God' itself, making faith grow in everyone, according to the purposes not of those who plant and water but of God himself, who creates the growth.

•The other reason: it is unreasonable for people who teach that there is such danger in every little error to require of a man who has his own faculty of reason to follow the reason of any other man, or of the majority of his community - which isn't much better than letting his salvation be settled by the flip of a coin. Those teachers *ought not* to be displeased about losing the authority that they used to have; for they should know as well as anyone does that power is preserved by the same virtues through which it is acquired, i.e. by

- wisdom, humility, clearness of doctrine, and sincerity of conversation,
- and not by
- suppression of the natural sciences, and of the morality of natural reason;
- or by
- obscure language, claiming more knowledge than they can show they have,
- or by
- pious frauds, or other such faults.

When these faults occur in Christian ministers, they are not merely faults but *scandals*, because they are apt to make men stumble . . . .

But after this doctrine - that the Church that is now in this world is the 'kingdom of God' spoken of in the Old and New Testaments - came to be generally accepted, the ambition and jockeying for positions in it (especially for the great role as Christ's lieutenant), and the extravagant showiness of those who had the best access to public money gradually became so obvious that ordinary folk lost the inward reverence owed to the pastoral function . . . .

Once the Bishop of Rome had come to be acknowledged as universal bishop, through his claim to be St. Peter's successor, the entire Roman Catholic hierarchy or kingdom of darkness was fairly comparable with the kingdom of *fairies* - i.e. with the old wives' fables in England

concerning ghosts and spirits, and the tricks they play in the night. If you think about how this great ecclesiastical power started, you'll easily see that the papacy is nothing but the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned on its grave . . . .

Think about the language they use, in the churches and in their public acts. It is Latin, which isn't in common use anywhere in the world. So isn't it just the ghost of the old Roman language?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fairies, in any nation that has stories about them, have only one universal king . . . .</li> <li>•Fairies are spirits and ghosts.</li> <li>•Fairies and ghosts inhabit darkness, solitudes, and graves.</li> <li>•Fairies have their enchanted castles, and certain gigantic ghosts, that dominate the regions round about them.</li> <li>•Fairies aren't arrested and made to answer for the harm they do.</li> <li>•Fairies are said to take children out of their cradles and change them into mischief-snaking natural fools, often called 'elves'.</li> <li>•The old wives haven't settled where - in what workshop or studio - the fairies make spells.</li> <li>•When the fairies are displeased with someone, they are said to send their elves to pinch him.</li>   <li>•The fables of fairies say that they enter dairies, and feast on the cream skimmed from the milk.</li> <li>•Fairies don't exist except in the imaginations of ignorant people, put there by traditions of old wives or old poets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ecclesiastics, in any nation that they are to be found in, acknowledge only one universal king, the Pope.</li> <li>•Ecclesiastics are spiritual men and ghostly fathers.</li> <li>•Ecclesiastics walk in the darkness of doctrine, in monasteries, churches, and churchyards.</li> <li>•Ecclesiastics have their cathedrals, any one of which has the power - through holy water and certain charms called 'exorcisms' - to turn the <i>town</i> it is in into a <i>city</i>, i.e. a seat of empire.</li> <li>•Ecclesiastics also vanish away from the tribunals of civil justice.</li> <li>•Ecclesiastics deprive young men of the use of reason, by certain charms compounded of metaphysics, miracles, traditions, and misused Scripture, after which they are no use for anything except to obey orders.</li> <li>•The workshops of the clergy are well enough known to be the universities, which are shaped and operated by papal authority.</li> <li>•When ecclesiastics are displeased with any civil state, they preach sedition so as to get their elves (their superstitious, enchanted subjects) to pinch their princes; or they enchant one prince with promises, getting him to pinch another.</li> <li>•The ecclesiastics take the cream of the land, through donations of ignorant men who are in awe of them, and through tithes.</li> <li>•The Pope's spiritual power (outside the borders of his own civil dominion [these days = the Vatican]) consists only in the fear of excommunication that seduced people are caused to have by false miracles, false traditions, and false interpretations of the Bible.</li> </ul>
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So it wasn't very difficult for Henry VIII to cast them out by his exorcism, or for Queen Elizabeth to do the same by hers. [Hobbes is jokingly comparing these two:

- an English monarch's •banning Roman Catholicism in England by •legislative action;
- a priest's •cleansing someone of devils by •a ceremony of exorcism.]

This spirit of Rome has now left us, and gone walking (by its missionaries) through dry places in China, Japan, and the Indies - places that yield the Roman Church little fruit. But we don't know that it won't return. Nor do we know that our clean-swept house won't be invaded by an assembly of spirits worse than the Roman Church, thus making us worse off than we were before Henry VIII. For the Roman clergy are not the only ones who claim that the kingdom of God is of this world, and on that basis claiming to have a power in the world distinct from that of the civil state.

That completes the things I planned to say about political theory. When I have checked it over, I shall willingly expose it to the censure of my country.

**What follows is the last part of the Latin version of chapter 47, presented in heavy reliance on the translation by Edwin Curley.**

When I looked back over this treatise on civil and ecclesiastical power, I found nothing in it that conflicts with the meaning of Scripture *or* with the civil or ecclesiastical laws of my country. How could I have, when the only purpose of the whole work was to demonstrate that nothing can excuse a violation of the laws? I admit that in many places I have departed from the opinions of individual theologians.

If I had written in uncorrupted hearts, as though on a blank page, I could have been briefer; for all I would have needed to say is this:

- Without law, men slaughter one another, because of the right all have over all things;
- Without punishments, laws are useless.
- Without a supreme power, punishments are useless.
- Without arms and wealth gathered in the hand of one person, power is useless - a mere *word* with no importance for peace or for the defence of the citizens.

And therefore

- All citizens, for their own good and not for their rulers', are obliged to protect and strengthen the *commonwealth* with *their* wealth, as far as they can, doing this by the decision of the one to whom they have given the supreme power.

Those are the main points of the Parts I and II. Next, since •eternal life and the salvation of each person are contained in Scripture (which our church has permitted and advised everyone to read); and since •everyone reads them and interprets them for himself, at the peril of his soul; and since •that makes it unfair to burden their consciences with more articles of faith than those that are necessary for salvation; I have explained in Part III what the needed articles are. Finally, in Part IV, lest the people be seduced by false teachers, I have exposed the ambitious and cunning plans of the opponents of the Anglican church.

As I said, that's all I would have needed to say to readers whose minds were unclouded. But since I knew that for some time now men's minds had been corrupted by contrary doctrines, I thought that all these things should be explained more fully, and I explained them as well as I could, in the English language. I did this at the time

- when the civil war that had started in Scotland over the issue of ecclesiastical discipline was raging in England and in Ireland,

- when not only the bishops but also the king, the law, religion and honesty had been abolished, and
- when treachery, murder, and all the foulest crimes dominated (though they were in disguise).

If someone had been brought here from a remote part of the world to witness the outrages perpetrated at that time, he would have been sure that there was absolutely no sense of divine justice here at that time.

So this teaching of mine was of little benefit at that time. Note that I say ‘little’, and not ‘*no* benefit’. And I hoped that it would be of more benefit after the war was over. The democrats won, and they established a democracy; but they paid for their great crimes by losing it in no time at all. A single tyrant, ‘Cromwell’, seized control of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and confounded their democratic prudence (both that of the laity and that of the ecclesiastics). The people, worn out by war, scorned him as much as they had previously admired him. When their legitimate king was finally restored, they asked for pardon (i.e. acknowledged their foolishness). Pardon was given . . . .

Who will believe that those seditious principles are not now completely destroyed, or that there is anyone (except the democrats) who would want to suppress a doctrine whose tendency toward peace is as great as that of my teaching? So that this would not happen, I wanted it to be available in Latin. For I see that men’s disagreements about opinions and intellectual excellence cannot be eliminated by arms. In whatever way evils of this kind arise, they must be destroyed in the same way. The citizens’ minds were gradually corrupted by writers of pagan politics and philosophy. So that democratic ink is to be washed away by preaching, writing, and disputing. I do not understand how that could happen otherwise than by the universities. Let them hereafter do as much to defend the royal power as formerly they did to defend the papal power. In the meantime, we should all take pains to see that by our internal disagreements we do not allow ourselves all to be oppressed by an external enemy. [That concludes the Latin version of chapter 47.]

## A Review and Conclusion

[Hobbes begins this with a reply to unnamed writers who have argued that the whole range of civil duties is so broad and various that no-one man can be in good shape to perform all of them. This is supposed to be based on oppositions such as those between •severity of punitive judgment and reasonableness of pardon, •solid reasoning and eloquence, •courage and fearfulness, •what it takes to be on good terms with some people and what it takes to be on good terms with others. Hobbes replies that] these are indeed great difficulties, but not impossibilities; for they can be, and sometimes are, reconciled through education and discipline. [He gives details. Then:] So there is no such inconsistency between human nature and civil duties, as some think. . . .

•ADDING A LAW OF NATURE (ch. 15)•

To the laws of nature listed in chapter 15, I want to add one:

Every man is bound by nature to do his very best to protect in wartime the authority by which he is himself protected in time of peace.

That is because someone who claims to have a natural right to preserve his own body can’t claim also to have a natural right to destroy him whose strength preserves him. To claim both rights would be a manifest contradiction. This law can be logically derived from some of the

laws that I listed in chapter 15, I here state it separately because current events demand that it be inculcated and remembered.

·INTRODUCING FURTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT CONQUEST (ch. 21)·

Various recently published English books show that the civil wars have not yet sufficiently taught men the truth about •*when* it is that a subject becomes obliged to the conqueror, or •*what* conquest is, or •*how* conquest obliges men to obey the conqueror's laws. To fill this gap, I say: the point of time at which a man becomes subject to a conqueror is the point at which, being free to submit to him, he consents to be his subject, either explicitly in words or by some other sufficient sign.

·WHEN A MAN IS FREE TO SUBMIT·

As I showed at the end of Chapter 21, a man is free to submit to an enemy when the means for his staying alive are under the enemy's control, because at that time he no longer has protection from his former sovereign and is protected by the opponent. (This concerns only someone who has no obligation to his former sovereign except that of an ordinary subject. I'll come to the obligations of a soldier shortly.) Everyone agrees that in such a case it is lawful for the man in question to pay the conqueror whatever taxes or other contributions he demands, although paying it is giving aid to an enemy; so it is also lawful to submit completely, although this is just another aid to the enemy. And indeed complete submission is a kind of hindrance to the enemy: it leads to the enemy's being enriched with some •part of the man's wealth, whereas if he refused to submit, the enemy would take •all of it.

A man who has not only the obligation of a subject but the further obligation of a soldier isn't free to submit to a new power as long as the old army still functions and provides him with the means of subsistence . . . . Such a soldier can't complain that he doesn't have protection and means to live *as a soldier*. But when even that fails, he too may seek protection wherever he has the best chance of getting it, and may lawfully submit himself to his new master. . . .

·WHAT A CONQUEST IS·

This enables us to understand •what it takes for a man to be rightly described as 'conquered', •what the nature of conquest is, and •what the right of a conqueror consists in - because all three of these are implied by the *submission* that I have been talking about. Conquest is not •the victory itself but •the acquisition through victory of a right over the persons of men. Thus, someone who is killed is overcome, but he isn't conquered; and the same is true for someone who is captured and put into prison or chains - he isn't conquered because he is still his captor's enemy, and may escape if he can. But someone who is allowed to retain his life and liberty in return for a promise of obedience *is* then conquered and a subject, but not until then. The Romans used to say •that a general had pacified such and such a province, i.e. (in English) that he had conquered it; and •that a territory was pacified by victory when its people had promised to do what the Roman people commanded them. This was being conquered.

This promise of obedience may be either explicit (by promise) or tacit (by other signs). Consider for example a man from whom an explicit promise of obedience hasn't been demanded, perhaps because his power isn't considerable; if he openly lives under the conqueror's protection, he is understood to submit himself to that government by tacit promise. If he lives there secretly, he is liable to anything that may be done to a spy and enemy of the state. I'm not saying that it is wrong for him to lie low in the territory the conqueror has taken over, because it wouldn't be wrong for him to engage in acts of open hostility. All I am saying is that he may be justly put to death. [The next sentence is very poignant, in the light of Hobbes's personal history. In 1640, when Charles I's army was defeated by the Scots, Hobbes fled

to Paris, where he remained for eleven years, through the English civil war, the execution of the king, and some years of the rule of Oliver Cromwell. While there he wrote *Leviathan*. The royalist exiles were upset by his views about submission to conquerors, and when Lord Clarendon reproached him for this he replied ‘The truth is I have a mind to go home’, which he did soon thereafter.] Similarly, if a man is out of his country at the time when it is conquered, he is not conquered, and is not a subject of the new régime; but if on his return he submits to the government, he is bound to obey it. So this is my definition: ‘conquest’ means ‘the acquiring of the right of sovereignty by victory’. This right is acquired through the people’s submission, in which they make a contract with the victor, promising obedience in return for life and liberty.

·TWO OTHER CAUSES OF THE DISSOLUTION OF COMMONWEALTHS (ch. 29)·

In Chapter 29 I have listed among the causes of the dissolutions of commonwealths their having set off on the wrong foot. A civil sovereign who doesn’t have absolute power to legislate just as he chooses is apt to handle the sword of justice unsteadily, as if it were too hot to hold. I omitted to mention in chapter 29 one reason for this unsteadiness, namely: a sovereign whose power is not absolute will try to *justify* the war through which he came to power, thinking that his *right* to rule depends on

- the rightness of his cause in making the war that gave him power to rule,

whereas really it depends on

- his having the *power* to rule.

According to this way of thinking, the right of the kings of England has depended on •the goodness of the cause of William the Conqueror, and •on their being more directly descended from him than anyone else. By that standard, there may be no present-day sovereign anywhere in the world who is entitled to his subjects’ obedience! [He adds, in a carelessly written sentence, that any sovereign who gets into this ‘justification for seizing power’ game opens the door to potential rebels to think they can justify seizing power from him. Then:]

So I count this as one of the most effective causes of the death of any state: that its founder requires that men not only •submit to him in their future actions but also •approve of his past actions.

Another cause of the downfall of commonwealths is their allowing people to express their hatred for tyranny. What’s wrong with that? Well, ‘tyranny’ means ‘sovereignty’ together with an expression of the speaker’s anger towards the sovereign(s) he is talking about; so that •hatred for tyranny is tantamount to •hatred for commonwealth in general - i.e. hatred for political organisation as such. To justify his own cause a conqueror usually needs to criticise the cause of the people he has conquered; but the reason why they are obliged to obey him has nothing to do with the merits of his cause or of theirs.

That completes what I have thought fit to say on looking back over Parts I and II of this book.

·THE APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIONERS (ch. 35)·

In Chapter 35 [not included in this version] I have used the Bible to make it clear enough that in the Jewish commonwealth God himself was made to be sovereign by pact with the people (which is why they have been called his ‘special people’). . . . and that in this kingdom Moses was God’s lieutenant on earth, who told them what laws God had laid down for them to be ruled by. I didn’t say who were appointed as officers to enforce the laws, because I didn’t think there was any need to go into that. But I have changed my mind: this topic *does* need to be discussed, especially in connection with capital punishment. It is well known that in ‘almost’ all commonwealths corporal punishments have been •carried out by the guards or other soldiers

of the sovereign power, or •assigned to people who wanted to do the job because in them the three relevant factors coincided: poverty, indifference to their moral reputation, and hardness of heart. But amongst the Israelites it was a law laid down by God their sovereign that anyone convicted of a capital crime should be stoned to death *by the people*, with the witnesses casting the first stones and then everyone else joining in. This law laid down who were to be the executioners, but it didn't say that anyone should throw a stone at someone who hadn't yet been convicted and sentenced by the entire congregation as judge. Before anyone was executed, witnesses against him had to be heard (unless the crime had been committed in the presence of the congregation itself, i.e. in sight of the lawful judges; for in that case the judges themselves were the witnesses). However, misunderstandings of this procedure have given rise to a dangerous opinion, namely:

•In some cases one man is entitled to kill another, by a right of *zeal*; as if the executions of offenders in the ancient kingdom of God were based not on the sovereign command but from the authority of private zeal. If we consider the texts that seem to favour this view, none of them support it. [Hobbes proceeds to brief discussions of seven biblical passages that might seem to involve the alleged 'right of zeal' entitling one private individual to kill another; he contends that in each case that's not what is going on. He concludes:] There is nothing in all this, or in any other part of the Bible, to countenance executions by private zeal. When such executions occur they are often nothing but a combination of ignorance and passion, and are inimical to both the •justice and the •peace of a commonwealth.

[Hobbes next has a short paragraph adding to what he said in chapter 36 on the topic of *how* God spoke supernaturally to Moses. After that, a closing set of reflections about the book as a whole:]

•WHY *LEVIATHAN* DESERVES TO SUCCEED•

As for the over-all doctrine that I have presented: so far as I can see, its premises are true and proper and the inferences from them are solid. I base the civil right of sovereigns, and the duty and liberty of subjects, on the natural inclinations that mankind are known to have, and on parts of the law of nature that ought to be known by anyone who claims to be intellectually competent to govern his personal family. As for the ecclesiastical power of those same sovereigns, I base that on biblical texts that are evident in themselves and in line with the general thrust of the Bible as a whole, which convinces me that anyone who reads 'those passages' in a spirit of wanting to be informed *will* be informed. It will be harder to satisfy those who have already committed themselves - through writings or public debates or their conspicuous actions - to contrary opinions. In those cases it is natural for a reader to proceed while at the same time letting his attention be distracted by the search for objections to what he has read earlier. And there are bound to be plenty of such objections at a time when the interests of men are changing, because much of the doctrine that serves to establish a new government must conflict with the doctrine that conduced to dissolving the old.

In Part III, discussing a Christian Commonwealth, there are some new doctrines which it might be wrong to make public without permission in a state where contrary doctrines had already been fully determined - wrong because that would be usurping the place of a teacher. But when I offer (to those who are still making up their minds) doctrines that I think are true, and that obviously tend to peace and loyalty, doing this at the present time when men are calling not only for peace but also for truth, I am merely offering new wine to be put into new casks, so that both may be preserved together. I'm



assuming that when there's something new that can't breed trouble or disorder in a state, men aren't *so* devoted to antiquity that they would prefer ancient errors to new and well-proved truth!

·WHY *LEVIATHAN* IS FREE OF ORNAMENTATION·

There is nothing I distrust more than my writing-style, but I am confident that my writing in this book hasn't been obscure (except through the odd typographical error). Unlike most writers these day, I have neglected the ornament of quoting ancient poets, orators, and philosophers. Whether this is good or bad, I have done it deliberately, for many reasons. (1) All truth of doctrine depends either on •reason or on •Scripture; both of these make many writers credible, but no writer ever made *them* credible! (2) The issues under discussion are not about matters of *fact* but questions of *right*, and there's no place for witnesses in such questions. (3) It's true of almost every one of those ancient writers that he sometimes contradicts both himself and others, which weakens any testimony he might give. (4) When a contemporary writer accepts something said by an ancient writer, he isn't really acting on an independent judgment that what the quoted writer says is true. All this quoting-from-the-ancients procedure is just passing words on from mouth to mouth - comparable to what happens when someone in a group yawns and this starts the others yawning. (5) It is often with a fraudulent design that men stick cloves of other men's wit into their corrupt doctrine. [This likens the use of decorative quotations to the practice of sticking cloves into bad meat to hide its smell.] (6) I haven't see the much-quoted ancient writers ornamenting *their* writings with quotations from still earlier writers. (7) Greek and Latin sentences are brought up again unchewed - i.e. quoted unchanged, ·verbatim· - which is evidence that they haven't been digested. (8) Though I reverence the men of ancient times that have written truth clearly or put us in a better position to discover it for ourselves, I don't pay any kind of homage to antiquity as such. If you revere the antiquity of a *time*, the present time is the oldest [he means that *the world* is older now than it was in so-called ancient times]; and if you revere writers who are themselves ancient, then I doubt if the ancient writers who are so much honoured were older when they wrote than I am now [Hobbes was about 62 when he wrote this]. But if you look into it carefully you'll see that the praise of ancient authors comes not from reverence for the dead but from the competitiveness and mutual envy of the living. [That sentence expresses a view that Hobbes makes clearer in Part I, chapter 11: 'Competition for praise tends to produce reverence for antiquity, for ·in this context· men are contending with the living, not with the dead: they are ascribing to the ancient dead more than their due, so that this will dim the glory of the others, ·i.e. their living competitors·.']

To conclude: as far as I can see, nothing in this whole book . . . is contrary to the word of God, to good morals, or to public tranquillity. So I think it would be a good thing if it were printed, and an even better thing if it were taught in the universities (as long as that is also the opinion of those who have to decide such matters). The universities are the fountains of civil and moral doctrine, from which the preachers and the gentry draw what water they can find, and sprinkle it on the people in general, in sermons and in conversation; and therefore *great care* should be taken to ensure that the water is pure, not contaminated by either the venom of heathen politicians or the incantation of deceiving spirits. That would create a state of affairs in which (1) most men would know their duties, making them •less likely to serve the ambition of a few discontented persons in their plans against the state, and •less aggrieved by the taxes that are necessary for their peace and defence; and (2) the governors themselves would have less reason to maintain, at the public expense, any army bigger than is needed to secure the public liberty against the invasions and encroachments of *foreign* enemies.

And thus I have brought to an end my work on civil and ecclesiastical government, prompted by the disorders of the present time. I have written this without bias, without fawning on anyone, and with no purpose except to set before men's eyes the two-way relation between protection and obedience. This is a relation that we are required to respect absolutely, this being required by the condition of human nature, and the divine laws - those legislated by God and those that are demands of nature. [The next sentence is a metaphor borrowed from astrology.] In the ups and downs of states there can't be any very good constellation for truths of this sort to be born under: those who are dissolving an old government scowl at them, and those who are setting up a new government turn their backs. And yet I can't think that the book will be condemned at this time, either by the public judge of doctrine or by anyone who wants the continuance of public peace. . . . [About fifteen years after this, four years after Hobbes's death, *Leviathan* and another work of his were condemned and burned in Oxford.]

<sup>56</sup> Ephesians 6:12.

<sup>57</sup> Matthew 12:26.

<sup>58</sup> Matthew 9:34.

<sup>59</sup> Ephesians 2:2

<sup>60</sup> Exodus 40.

<sup>61</sup> 1 Kings 8.

<sup>62</sup> Revelation 20:6,14 and 21:8.

<sup>63</sup> Ecclesiastes 12:7.

<sup>64</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:20-21.

<sup>65</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:19.

<sup>66</sup> Matthew 8:11 or Luke 13:28.

<sup>67</sup> 1 Corinthians 15.

<sup>68</sup> Luke 20:34-6.