

Leviathan

Part 1: Man

Thomas Hobbes

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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. Every four-point ellipsis indicates the omission of a brief passage that seems to present more difficulty than it is worth. Longer omissions are reports, in [brackets], in normal-sized type.

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.

First launched: July 2004

Last amended: July 2006

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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:

1.2.3 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' (**rhethoric**), reasoning (**logic**), and 'contracting' (**the science of just and unjust**).

[Curley calls attention to the notable 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 herdsmen.

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 badges to those who went off to war (as encouragement) and to those who returned from war (as reward). You could 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 without any 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 with a few 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 stray episodes to be omens—consist the **natural** seeds of religion. [The phrase 'second causes' was a theological technical term: ultimately God causes everything, but he does some or all of this through 'second causes' = 'secondary causes' = 'items that come between God's initial actions and their upshots in the world as we experience it'. The primary or ultimate cause of the forest fire was an action by God; a second(ary) cause of it was a flash of lightning.] 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, hardly anything that has a name 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 fauns 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, 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 Aeolus 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 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 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 promise of 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. That also holds for

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 credible; 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 to get 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; so it oughtn't 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 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.

There is no such power before the commonwealth is created.

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 *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 every-one 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 two paragraphs 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 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—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 inanimate things can’t 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. . . .