



LEVIATHAN:
Or, The Matter, Form And Power of
a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and
Civil

By: Thomas Hobbes of
Malmesbury 1651

Modernization, additions, corrections, and
footnotes by Barry F. Vaughan¹

CHAPTER XIII

OF THE NATURAL CONDITION OF
MANKIND, AS CONCERNING THEIR FELICITY, AND MISERY

Nature has made [humans] so equal—in the faculties of body and mind—that though there [is] found one [person] sometimes [physically] stronger, or [another] quicker [of] mind, yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between [humans] is not so considerable that one can claim to himself any benefit, to which another may not pretend [just] as well. For as to [physical] strength, [even] the weakest [is strong] enough to kill the strongest, either by secret [plans], or by [conspiring together] with others [who] are in the same danger [as] himself.

And as [far as mental faculties go], (*setting aside the arts grounded upon [verbal ability], especially Science—th[e] skill of proceeding [from] general, and infallible rules [to particular conclusions]—which very few have; [these are] not a native faculties born with us, nor [are they easily] attained [through] common human experience*), I find [an even] greater equality among [people] than [physical] strength. For prudence is nothing but experience; which equal time equally bestows on all men, in those things they equally apply themselves to. That which may perhaps make such equality incredible is [nothing] but a vain conceit of one's own wisdom, which almost all men think they have in a greater degree than the vulgar; that is, than all men but themselves and a few others whom by fame or for concurring with themselves, they approve. For such is the nature of men, that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned; yet they will hardly believe there [are] many so wise as themselves: for they see their own wit at hand, and other men's at a distance. But this proves that men are in that point equal, than unequal. For there is not ordinarily a greater sign of the equal distribution of any thing, than that every man is contented with his share.

¹ This text is adapted from the Project Gutenberg's *Leviathan*, by Thomas Hobbes, www.gutenberg.org. For the full text visit the Project Gutenberg website. This edited version is intended for academic or personal use and may not be sold or used for profit. I have changed UK spellings to US spellings where appropriate, as well as made clarifications in translation (noted with brackets) and have added explanatory footnotes.

[Equality Causes Mistrust]

From this equality of ability arises equality of hope in attaining our ends. And therefore, if any two men desire the same thing, which they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end, (which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only) endeavor to destroy or subdue one another. And from hence it comes to pass that where an invader has no more to fear than another man's single power; if one plant[s], sow[s], build[s], or possess a convenient seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united, to dispossess, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labor, but also of his life, or liberty. And the invader again is in [similar] danger.

[Mistrust Causes War]

And from this [mistrust] of one another, there is no way for any man to secure himself so reasonable as anticipation; that is, by force or [strategy], to master the persons of all men he can, so long, [un]till he see no other power great enough to endanger him: and this is no more than his own conservation requires, and is generally allowed. Also, because there [are] some that taking pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires; if others, that otherwise would be glad to be at ease within modest bounds, should not by invasion increase their power, they would not be able, long time, by standing only on their defense, to subsist. And by consequence, such augmentation of dominion over men, being necessary to a man's conservation, it ought to be allowed him.

Again, men have no pleasure (but on the contrary a great deal of grief) in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all. For every man [expects] that his companion should value him at the same rate he sets upon himself: and upon all signs of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavors, as far as he dares (which amongst them that have no common power, to keep them in quiet, is far enough to make them destroy each other,) to extort a greater value from his condemners, by damage; and from others, by the example. So in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel: first, ***competition***; second, ***[mistrust]***; [and] third, ***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, to defend them, and the third for trifles as a word, a smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue, either direct in their persons, or by reflexing in their kindred, their friends, their nation, their profession, or their name.

[In The Absence of Society There Is Universal War]

Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in [submission], they are in that condition which is called **war**; and such a war, as is of *every man, against every man*. For **war** consists not in battle only—or the act of fighting—but in a [period] of time wherein *the will to contend by battle* is sufficiently known. And therefore, the notion of *time* is to be considered in the nature of war, [just] as it is in the nature of weather. For as the nature of foul weather lies not in a shower or two of rain but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so

the nature of war, consists not in actual fighting; but *in the known disposition thereto*, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is **peace**.

[The Cost of War]

Whatsoever, therefore, is consequent to a time of war—where every man is enemy to every man—the same is consequent to the time wherein men live with [no] other security than what their own strength and their own invention shall furnish them with. In such [a] condition there is no place for *industry*; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no *culture of the earth*; no *navigation*, nor use of the *commodities* that may be imported by sea; no *commodious building*; no *instruments of moving*, and removing such things as require much force; no *knowledge of the face of the earth*; no account of *time*; no *arts*; no *letters*; no *society*; and which is 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 [those who have] not [carefully considered] these things, that nature should thus dissociate and [make] men apt to invade and destroy one another. And he may, therefore, not trusting to this inference—made from the passions—desire perhaps to have the same confirmed by experience. Let him, therefore, consider with[in] himself: when taking a journey, he arms himself and seeks to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; when even in his [own] house he locks his chests; and [all] this when he knows there [are] laws, and public officers, armed, to revenge all injuries [that might] be done [to] him. What opinion [does] he [have] of his fellow subjects when he rides armed; [or] of his fellow citizens when he locks his doors; and of his children, and servants when he locks his chests? Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words? But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires, and other passions of man, are—in themselves—no sin. No[r] are the actions that proceed from those passions, [un]till they know a law that forbids them. [And un]till laws [are] made they cannot know, nor can any law be made, [un]till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it.²

It may be thought [that] there was never such a time nor condition of war [like] this; and I believe it was never generally so over all the world. But there are many places where [people] live so now. For the savage people in many places of America, except the government of small families, the concord whereof depends on natural lust, have no government at all, and live [now] in that brutish manner, as I said before. However, it may be [imagined] what manner of life [this] would be—where there were no common power to fear—by [examining] the manner of life which men that have formerly lived under a peaceful government, use to degenerate into, [that is], in a *civil war*. But [further suppose that] there had never been any time wherein particular men were in a condition of war one against another; yet in all times, kings and persons of sovereign authority—because of their independence—are in continual jealousies and in the state and posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing and their eyes fixed on one another. That is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms and continual spies upon their neighbors, *is* a posture of war. But because they uphold thereby, the industry of their subjects, there does not follow from it that misery which accompanies the liberty of particular men.

[In War, Nothing Is Unjust]

² Hobbes' point is that desires and actions, in themselves, are morally neutral. It is only in the presence of 'law' that an action or desire can be said to be 'good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong'.

To this war of every man against every man, this also is consequent: that *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, where [there is] no law, [there is] no injustice. *Force* and *fraud*, are in war the two *cardinal virtues*. Justice, and injustice are [neither] faculties of the body or mind. If they were, they might be in a man that was alone in the world, as well as his senses, and passions. They are qualities that relate to men in society, not in solitude. It is consequent also to the same condition that there [is] no [sense of] propriety, no dominion, no *mine* and *yours* distinct; but only that to be every man’s that he can get, and [only] for [as] long as he can keep it. And [this is all there is] for the ill condition which man—by mere nature—is actually placed in; though [there is] a possibility to come out of it consisting partly in the passions [and] partly in his reason.

The passions that incline men to peace are *fear of death*, desire of such things as are necessary to *commodious living*, and *a hope* by industry to obtain them. And *reason* suggests convenient articles of peace, upon which men may be drawn to agreement. These articles, are [those] which otherwise are called the *Laws of Nature* whereof I shall speak more particularly, in the two following chapters.

CHAPTER XIV

OF THE FIRST AND SECOND NATURAL LAWS, AND OF CONTRACTS

Right Of Nature

The **RIGHT OF NATURE**, which writers commonly call *Jus Naturale*, is the liberty each man has—to use his own power as he will himself—for the preservation of his own nature. [T]hat is to say, of his own life. [A]nd consequently, [he has the liberty] of doing anything which in his own judgment and reason he shall conceive to be the best means thereunto.

By **LIBERTY**, is understood—according to the proper signification of the word—*the absence of external impediments*: which impediments may oft[en] take away part of a man’s power to do what he would, but cannot hinder him from using the power left him, according as his judgment and reason shall dictate to him.

A LAW OF NATURE, (*Lex Naturalis*,) is a *precept*, or *general rule*, [discovered] by reason by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or takes away the means of preserving the same; and to omit that by which he thinks it may be best preserved. For though they that speak of this subject use[d] to confound *jus*, and *lex*—right and law; yet they ought to be distinguished. [This is] because **RIGHT** consists in [the] liberty to do or to forbear; whereas **LAW** determines and binds to one of them: so that law and right, differ as much as obligation and liberty; which in one and the same matter are inconsistent.

The First Law Of Nature

And because the [natural] condition of Man, (as has ben declared in the precedent chapter) is a condition of war of every one against every one in which everyone is governed by his own reason and there is nothing he can make use of—that may not be a help unto him—in preserving his life

against his enemies, it follows, that in such a condition, *every man has a right to every thing*—even to one another’s body. And therefore, as long as this Natural Right of every man to everything endures, there can be no security [for anyone], ([however] strong or wise he [is],) of living out the time which nature ordinarily allows men to live.

And consequently, it is a precept, or *general rule of reason* "that every man, ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it, that he may seek, and use all helps and advantages of war." The first branch of [this] rule contains the first and fundamental Law of Nature which is: "*seek peace, and follow it.*" The second [is] the sum of the **Right of Nature** which is, "*by all means we can, defend ourselves.*"

The Second Law Of Nature

From this fundamental Law of Nature, by which men are commanded to [seek] peace, is derived [the] **second law**: "*that a man be willing—when others are too—insofar [as possible] for peace and defense of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down [the] right to all things, and be contented with [as] much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself.*" For as long as every man holds this right, of doing anything he likes, all men [are] in the condition of war. But if other men will not lay down their right, as well as he, then there is no reason for anyone, to divest himself of his: for that [is] to expose himself [as] prey, (which no man is bound to) rather than to dispose himself to peace. This is that law of the Gospel; "Whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them." And that law of all men, "*Quod tibi feiri non vis, alteri ne feceris*".³

To lay down a man’s right to anything, is to divest himself of the liberty, of hindering another of the benefit of his own right to the same. For he that renounces—or passes away his right—gives not to any other man a right which he [did not have] before; because there is nothing to which every man had not [a] right [to] by nature: but only stands out of his way, that he may enjoy his own original right, without hindrance from him; not without hindrance from another. So that the effect which returns to one man, by another man’s defect of right, is but so much diminution of impediments to the use of his own [original] right.

Renouncing a Right

[A] right is laid aside, either by simply *renouncing* it, or by *transferring* it to [someone else]. By simply **RENOUNCING** when he [does not care] to whom the benefit [accrues]. By **TRANSFERRING**; when he *intends* the benefit to [go to] some certain person, or persons. And when a man has in either manner abandoned or granted away his right, he [is] said to be **OBLIGED**, or **BOUND**, not to hinder those, to whom such right is granted—or abandoned—from the benefit of it: and that he *ought*, and it his **DUTY**, not to make void that voluntary act of his own: and that such hindrance is **INJUSTICE**, and **INJURY**, as being *sine jure*;⁴ the right [formerly] being renounced, or transferred. So that injury, or injustice, in the controversies of the world, is somewhat like to that, which in the disputations of scholars is called ‘absurdity’. For as it is there called an absurdity to contradict what one maintained in the beginning: so in the world it is called ‘injustice’,

³ “do not do unto others what you do not want done to yourself”

⁴ Lt., “without a right.”

and ‘injury’, voluntarily to undo that which from the beginning he had voluntarily done. The way by which a man either simply renounces, or transfers his right, is a declaration, or signification, by some voluntary and sufficient sign, or signs, that he [does] so renounce, or transfer—or has so renounced—or transferred the same, to him that accepts it. And these signs are either words only, or actions only, or (as it happens most often) both words *and* actions. And the same are the **BONDS** by which men are bound and obliged: bonds, that have their strength—not from their own nature—(for nothing is more easily broken than a man’s word,) but from fear of some evil consequence upon the rupture.

Not All Rights Are Alienable

Whenever a man transfers his right, or renounces it, it is either in consideration of some right reciprocally transferred to himself, or for some other good he hopes [to get]. For it is a voluntary act. And of the voluntary acts of every man, *the object is some good to himself*. And, therefore, *there [are] some rights which no man can be understood by any words, or other signs, to have abandoned, or transferred*. [For example,] a man cannot lay down the right of resisting [those] that assault him by force to take away his life. [This is] because he cannot be understood to aim, thereby, at any good [for] himself. The same may be said of *wounds*, and *chains*, and *imprisonment*. Because there is no [consequent] benefit to such patience as there is to the patience of suffering another to be wounded, or imprisoned. [And] also because a man cannot tell, when he sees men proceed against him by violence whether they intend his death or not. And lastly, the motive and end for which this renouncing and transferring or right is introduced is nothing [other than] *the security of a man’s person*, in his life, and in the means of preserving life, as not to be weary of it. And therefore, if a man by words—or other signs—*seem* to deprive himself of the end for which those signs were intended he is not to be understood as if he meant it, or that it was his will. [Rather], he was ignorant of how such words and actions were to be interpreted.

The mutual transferring of [a] right, is that which men call [a] **CONTRACT**.

There is difference, between transferring of right to the thing, and transferring, or translation, that is, delivery of the thing itself. For the thing may be delivered together with the translation of the right; as in buying and selling with money, or exchange of goods, or lands: it may be delivered [at] some [later] time.

Again, one of the contractors, may deliver the thing contracted for on his part, and leave the other to perform his part at some determinate time after, and in the mean time be trusted; and then the contract on his part, is called **PACT**, or **COVENANT**: or both parts may contract now, to perform hereafter: in which cases, he that is to perform in time to come, being trusted, his performance is called keeping of promise, or faith; and the failing of performance (if it be voluntary) violation of faith.

When the transferring of right, is not mutual; but one of the parties transfers, in hope to gain thereby friendship, or service from another, or from his friends; or in hope to gain the reputation of charity, or magnanimity; or to deliver his mind from the pain of compassion; or in hope of reward in heaven; This is not contract, but **GIFT**, **FREE GIFT**, **GRACE**: which words signify one and the same thing.

Signs of contract are either *express*, or by *inference*. *Express*, are words spoken with understanding of what they signify; and such words are either of the time present, or past as: ‘I Give’, ‘I Grant’, ‘I Have Given’, ‘I Have Granted’, ‘I will That This Be Yours’: or of the future; as, ‘I will Give’, ‘I will Grant’; which words of the future, are called promise....

If a covenant [is] made, wherein neither of the parties perform presently, but trust one another; in the condition of mere nature, (which is a condition of war of every man against every man,) upon any reasonable suspicion, it is void; but if there [is] a common power set over them both, with right and force sufficient to compel performance; it is not void. For he that performs first, has no assurance the other will perform after; because the bonds of words are too weak to bridle men’s ambition, avarice, anger, and other passions, without the fear of some coercive power; which in the condition of mere nature, where all men are equal, and judges of the justness of their own fears cannot possibly be supposed. And therefore, he [that] performs first, [betrays] himself to his enemy [which is] contrary to the right (he can never abandon) of defending his life and means of living.

But in a *civil estate*, where there is a power set up to constrain those that would otherwise violate their faith, that fear is no more reasonable; and for that cause, he which by the covenant is to perform first, is obliged so to do.

The cause of fear, which makes such a covenant invalid, must be something arising after the covenant [was] made. [For example,] some new fact or other sign of the will not to perform; [otherwise] it cannot make the covenant void. For that which could not hinder a man from promising, ought not to be admitted as a hindrance *of* performing.

CHAPTER XV

OF OTHER LAWS OF NATURE

The Third Law Of Nature, Justice

From that Law of Nature, by which we are obliged to transfer to another, such rights, as being retained, hinder the peace of Mankind, there follows a third which is this: *that men perform their covenants made*. Without which, covenants are in vain, and [are] but empty words, and the right of all men to all things remaining, we are still in the condition of war.

And in this Law of Nature, consists the fountain and [origin] of **JUSTICE**. For where no covenant has preceded, there has no right ben transferred, and every man has right to every thing; and consequently, no action can be unjust. But when a covenant is made, then to break it is unjust: and the definition of **INJUSTICE** is no other than the *not performance of covenant*. And whatever is not *unjust*, is *just*.

But because covenants of mutual trust, where there is a fear of not performance on either part (as has ben said in the former chapter,) are invalid; though the [origin] of justice [is] the making of covenants; yet injustice actually there can be none, [un]till the cause of such fear [is] taken away; which while men are in the natural condition of war, cannot be done. Therefore, before the names of

‘just’, and ‘unjust’ can have place, there must be some *coercive power*, to compel men equally to the performance of their covenants, by the terror of some punishment greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their covenant; and to make good that propriety, which by mutual contract men acquire, in recompense [payment] of the universal right they abandon: and such power there is none before the erection of a Commonwealth. And this is also to be gathered out of the ordinary definition of justice in the schools: for they say, that "justice is the constant will of giving to every man his own." And therefore, where there is no own, that is, no propriety, there is no injustice; and where there is no *coercive power* erected, that is, where there is no Commonwealth, there is no propriety; all men having right to all things: therefore where there is no Commonwealth, there nothing is unjust. So that the nature of justice consists in keeping of valid covenants: but the *validity* of covenants begins not but with the constitution of a **Civil Power**, sufficient to compel men to keep them: and then it is also that propriety begins....

Whatsoever is done to a man, conformable to his own will signified to the doer, is no injury to him. For if he that doeth it, has not passed away his original right to do what he please, by some antecedent covenant, there is no breach of covenant; and therefore no Injury done him. And if he have; then his will to have it done being signified, is a release of that covenant; and so again there is no injury done him.

Justice Commutative, And Distributive

Justice of *actions*, is by writers divided into ***Commutative***, and ***Distributive***; and the former they say consists in proportion arithmetical; the later in proportion geometrical. ***Commutative*** therefore, they place in the equality of value of the things contracted for; and ***distributive***, in the distribution of equal benefit, to men of equal merit. As if it were injustice to sell dearer than we buy; or to give more to a man than he merits. The value of [the] things contracted for, is measured by the appetite of the contractors: and therefore, the just value is that which they [are] contented to give. And ***Merit*** (besides that which is by covenant, where the performance on one part, merits the performance of the other part, and falls under justice Commutative, not Distributive,) is not due by justice; but is rewarded of grace only. And therefore, this distinction, in the sense wherein it used to be expounded, is not right. To speak properly, ***commutative justice is the justice of a contractor; that is, a performance of covenant, in buying, and selling; hiring, and letting to hire; lending, and borrowing.***

And ***distributive justice, the justice of an arbitrator; that is to say, the act of defining what is just.*** Wherein, (being trusted by them that make him arbitrator,) if he perform his trust, he is said to distribute to every man his own: and his is indeed just distribution, and may be called (though improperly) distributive justice; but more properly equity—which also is a Law of Nature, as shall be shown in due place.

The Fourth Law Of Nature, Gratitude

As justice depends on antecedent covenant; so does gratitude depend on antecedent grace; that is to say, antecedent free-gift: and is the fourth Law of Nature; which may be conceived in this form, "*that a man which receives benefit from another of mere grace, endeavor that he which gives it, have no reasonable cause to repent him of his good will.*" For no man gives, but with intention of good to

himself; because gift is voluntary; and of all voluntary acts, the object is to every man his own good; of which if men see they shall be frustrated, there will be no beginning of benevolence, or trust; nor consequently of mutual help; nor of reconciliation of one man to another; and therefore they are to remain 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 law is called 'ingratitude' and has the same relation to grace that injustice has to obligation by covenant....

The Sixteenth, Of Submission To Arbitration

And because, [al]though men [are] never so willing to observe these laws, there may nevertheless arise questions concerning a man's action; *first*, whether it were done, or not done; *secondly* (if done) whether against the law, or not against the law; the former whereof, is called a *question of fact*; the later a question of right; therefore unless the parties to the question, covenant mutually to stand to the sentence of another, they are as far from peace as ever. This other, to whose sentence they submit, is called an **ARBITRATOR**. And therefore it is of the Law of Nature, "*that they that are at controversy, submit their right to the judgment of an arbitrator.*"

The Seventeenth, No Man Is His Own Judge

And seeing every man is presumed to do all things in order to his own benefit, no man is a fit arbitrator in his own cause: and if he were never so fit; yet equity allowing to each party equal benefit, if one [is] admitted to be [a] Judge, the other is to be admitted also; [and] so the controversy, that is the cause of war remains, against the Law of Nature.

The Eighteenth, No Man To Be Judge, That Has In Him A Natural Cause Of Partiality

For the same reason no man in any cause ought to be received for arbitrator, to whom greater profit, or honor, or pleasure apparently arises out of the victory of one party, than of the other: for he has taken (though an unavoidable bribe, yet) a bribe; and no man can be obliged to trust him. And thus also, the controversy and the condition of war remains contrary to the Law of Nature.

The Nineteenth, Of Witness

And in a controversy of Fact, the Judge being to give no more credit to one, than to the other, (if there [are] no other Arguments) must give credit to a third; or to a third and fourth; or more: for else the question is undecided, and left to force, contrary to the Law of Nature.

These are the laws of nature, dictating peace, for a means of the conservation of men in multitudes; and which only concern the doctrine of Civil Society. There [are] other things tending to the destruction of particular men; as drunkenness, and all other parts of intemperance; which may therefore also be reckoned amongst those things which the Law of Nature has forbidden; but are not necessary to be mentioned, nor are pertinent enough to this place.

And though this may seem too subtle a deduction of the Laws of Nature to be taken notice of by all men, whereof the most part are too busy in getting food, and the rest too negligent to understand; yet to leave all men inexcusable, they have ben contracted into one easy sum, intelligible even to the

meanest capacity; and that is, "Do not that to another, which thou would not have done to thy self;" which shows him, that he has no more to do in learning the laws of nature, but, when weighing the actions of other men with his own, they seem too heavy, to put them into the other part of the balance, and his own into their place, that his own passions, and self-love, may add nothing to the weight; and then there is none of these laws of nature that will not appear unto him very reasonable.

The Laws of Nature oblige *in foro interno* ["in the inner court", or "personal opinion"]; that is to say, they bind to a desire they should take place: but *in foro externo* ["in the outer court", or "public opinion"]; that is, to the putting them in act, not always. For he that should be modest, and tractable, and perform all he promises, in such time, and place, where no man else should do so, should but make himself a prey to others, and procure his own certain ruin, contrary to the ground of all laws of nature, which tend to natures preservation. And again, he that shall observe the same laws towards him, observes them not himself, seeks not peace, but war; [and] consequently the destruction of his nature by violence.

And whatsoever laws bind *in foro interno* ["in the inner court", or "personal opinion"], may be broken, not only by a fact contrary to the law but also by a fact according to it, in case a man thinks it contrary. For though his action in this case accord[s with] the law; which where the obligation is *in foro interno* ["in the inner court", or "personal opinion"], is a breach.

The Laws Of Nature Are Eternal

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

The same laws, because they oblige only to a desire, and endeavor, I mean an unfeigned and constant endeavor, are easy to be observed. For in that they require nothing but endeavor; he that endeavors their performance, fulfills them; and he that fulfills the law is just.

The science of these laws, is the true Moral Philosophy and the Science of them, is the true and only Moral Philosophy. For Moral Philosophy is nothing else but the Science of what is good, and evil, in the conversation, and Society of mankind. Good, and evil, are names that signify our appetites, and aversions; which in different tempers, customs, and doctrines of men, are different: and divers men, differ not only in their judgment, on the senses of what is pleasant, and unpleasant to the taste, smell, hearing, touch, and sight; but also of what is conformable, or disagreeable to reason, in the actions of common life. Nay, the same man, in divers times, differs from himself; and one time praises, that is, calls good, what another time he dispraises, and calls evil: from whence arise disputes, controversies, and at last war. And therefore, so long as man is in the condition of mere nature, (which is a condition of war,) as private appetite is the measure of good, and evil: and consequently all men agree on this, that peace is good, and therefore also the way, or means of peace, which (as I have shown before) are justice, gratitude, modesty, equity, mercy, [and] the rest of the Laws of Nature, are good; that is to say, Moral Virtues; and their contrary vices, evil. 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 and Vices; yet not seeing wherein consisted their goodness; nor that

they come to be praised, as the means of peaceable, sociable, and comfortable living; place them in a mediocrity of passions: as if not the cause, but the degree of daring, made fortitude; or not the cause, but the quantity of a gift, made liberality.

These dictates of reason men called by the name ‘laws’, but improperly: for they are but conclusions or theorems concerning what [conduces] to the conservation and defense of themselves; whereas law—properly [understood]—is the word of him that by right has command over others. But yet if we consider the same theorems as delivered in the word of God, that by right commands all things, then are they properly called *laws*.

CHAPTER XVII

OF THE CAUSES, GENERATION, AND DEFINITION OF A COMMONWEALTH

The final *cause, end, or design* of men, (who naturally love liberty, and Dominion over others,) in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, (in which we see them live in Commonwealths,) is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of war, which is necessarily consequent (as has ben shown) to the natural passions of men, when there is no visible power to keep them in awe, and tie them by fear of punishment to the performance of their covenants, and observation of these laws of nature set down in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters.

What Is Not To Be Had From The Law Of Nature

For the Laws of Nature (as justice, equity, modesty, mercy, and (in sum) *doing to others, as we would be done to,*) if themselves, without the terror of some power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions, that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge, and the like. And covenants, without the sword, are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all. Therefore, notwithstanding the Laws of Nature, (which every one has then kept, when he has the will to keep them, when he can do it safely,) if there [is] no power erected, or not great enough for our security; every man will and may lawfully rely on his own strength and art, for caution against all other men. and in all places, where men have lived by small families, to rob and spoil one another, has ben a trade, and so far from being reputed against the Law of Nature, that the greater spoils they gained, the greater was their honor; and men observed no other laws therein, but the laws of honor; that is, to abstain from cruelty, leaving to men their lives, and instruments of husbandry. And as small families did then; so now do cities and kingdoms which are but greater families (for their own security) enlarge their dominions, upon all pretenses of danger, and fear of invasion, or assistance that may be given to invaders, endeavor as much as they can, to subdue, or weaken their neighbors, by open force, and secret arts, for want of other caution, justly; and are remembered for it in after ages with honor....

It is true, that certain living creatures, as bees, and ants, live sociably one with another, (which are therefore by Aristotle numbered amongst *political creatures*;) and yet have no other direction, than their particular judgments and appetites; nor speech, whereby one of them can signify to another, what he thinks expedient for the common benefit: and therefore, some man may perhaps desire to know, why Mankind cannot do the same. To which I answer,

Firstly, that men are continually in competition for honor and dignity, which these creatures are not; and consequently amongst men there arises on that ground, envy and hatred, and finally war; but amongst these not so.

Secondly, that amongst these creatures, the *common good* differed not from the *private*; and being by nature inclined to their private, they procure thereby the common benefit. But man, whose joy consisted in comparing himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent.

Thirdly, that these creatures, having not (as man) the use of reason, do not see, nor think they see any fault, in the administration of their common business: whereas amongst men, there are very many, that think themselves wiser, and abler to govern the public, better than the rest; and these strive to reform and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring it into distraction and *civil war*.

Fourthly, that these creatures, though they have some use of voice, in making known to one another their desires, and other affections; yet they want that art of words, by which some men can represent to others, that which is good, in the likeness of evil; and evil, in the likeness of good; and augment, or diminish the apparent greatness of good and evil; discontenting men, and troubling their peace at their pleasure.

Fifthly, irrational creatures cannot distinguish between injury, and damage; and therefore as long as they [are] at ease, they are not offended with their fellows: whereas Man is then most troublesome, when he is most at ease: for then it is that he loves to show his wisdom, and control the actions of them that govern the Commonwealth.

Lastly, the agreement of these creatures is *natural*; that of men, is *by covenant only*, which is *artificial*: and therefore it is no wonder if there [is] some[thing] else required (besides covenant) to make their agreement constant and lasting; which is a common power to keep them in awe and to direct their actions to the common benefit.

The Generation Of A Commonwealth

The only way to erect such a Common Power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of Foreigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort, as that by their own industry, and by the fruits of the earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly; is, to confere all their power and strength upon *one man*, or upon one *assembly of men*, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will: which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or assembly of men, to bear their person; and every one to own, and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so bears their person, shall act, or cause to be acted, in those things which concern the common peace and safety; and therein to submit their wills, every one to his will, and their Judgments, to his judgment. This is more than *consent*, or *concord*; it is a real *unity* of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, "I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to *this man*, or to this *assembly of men*, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner." This done, the multitude so united in one person, is

called a **COMMONWEALTH**, in Latin *CIVITAS*. This is the generation of that great **LEVIATHAN**, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that *mortal* god, to which we owe under the immortal God, our peace and defense. For by this authority, given him by every particular man in the Commonwealth, he has the use of so much power and strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is enabled to form the wills of them all, to peace at home, and mutual aid against their enemies abroad.

The Definition Of A Commonwealth

And in him consists the essence of the Commonwealth; which (to define it,) is "*one person, of whose acts a great multitude, by mutual covenants one with another, have made themselves every one the author, to the end he may use the strength and means of them all, as he shall think expedient, for their peace and common defense.*"

Sovereign

And he that carries this person, as called **SOVEREIGN**, and said to have *sovereign power*; and every one besides, his **SUBJECT**.

The attaining to this *sovereign power*, is by two ways. One, by natural force; as when a man makes his children, to submit themselves, and their children to his government, as being able to destroy them if they refuse, or by war subdues his enemies to his will, giving them their lives on that condition. The other is when men agree amongst themselves, to submit to some *man*, or *assembly of men*, voluntarily, on confidence to be protected by him against all others. This later, may be called a *Political Commonwealth*, or *Commonwealth by Institution*; and the former, a *Commonwealth by Acquisition*...