

ADAM CONTZEN

TEN BOOKS OF POLITICS

BOOK ONE

The Efficient Cause, Matter, Form, and Kinds of the Commonwealth

Including the translated preliminary matter

CONTENTS

Preliminary Matter	4
Chapter I. Reasons for Writing about the Commonwealth	29
Chapter II. The Necessity, Utility, and Dignity of Civil Doctrine	36
Chapter III. The Definition of the Commonwealth	40
Chapter IV. The Material Cause of the Commonwealth	43
Chapter V. That the Commonwealth Is Not From Fate, Chance, or Fortune, but From God	45
Chapter VI. That the Commonwealth Depends Upon God Is Proved by Testimonies of Sacred Scripture	49
Chapter VII. That Kingdoms Depend Upon God Is Proved From Daniel's Prophecy	57
Chapter VIII. That the Commonwealth Depends Upon God Is Shown by Testimonies of Christians	64
Chapter IX. That the Commonwealth Is From God and Depends Upon Him Is Known From Other Predictions	67
Chapter X. That Kingdoms Are Governed by God Is Shown From the Sayings of the Impious and Unbelievers	69
Chapter XI. It Is Taught by Reason That Divine Providence Governs All Things	72
Chapter XII. That the Commonwealth Is Ruled by God Is Shown by Examples	79
Chapter XIII. The Objections of Atheists Are Answered	81
Chapter XIV. The Form of the Commonwealth, and Its Various Kinds	93
Chapter XV. The First Species of Commonwealth Is Monarchy, and It Is Manifold	97
Chapter XVI. On the Corrupt Form of Monarchy Which Is Called Tyranny: Its Origin, Properties, and Condemnation	100
Chapter XVII. The Definition and Consideration of Aristocracy	106
Chapter XVIII. On Oligarchy, Which Arises from Corrupted Aristocracy	113
Chapter XIX. On Polity Strictly So Called, or the Popular Form of Commonwealth	115
Chapter XX. On Democracy, Which Is the Vice of Polity Strictly So Called	118
Chapter XXI. That the Best Form of Commonwealth Is Monarchy Tempered by Aristocracy and Polity	121

Chapter XXII. That the Arguments for Government by the Best Men and by the People Are Weak	131
Chapter XXIII. Machiavelli's Opinion concerning Monarchy, and Its Arguments Refuted	139
Chapter XXIV. That the Magistrate Is Obligated to His Fatherland	146
Chapter XXV. That It Is Better for a Prince to Be Hereditary than to Be Elected	152
Chapter XXVI. That the Governments of Women Are to Be Admitted, but Rarely	162
Chapter XXVII. That Majesty Shines Forth in All These Forms	167

PRELIMINARY MATTER

Title Page

TEN BOOKS OF POLITICS, in which THE FORM, VIRTUES, AND VICES OF THE PERFECT COMMONWEALTH, the education of citizens, laws, ecclesiastical and civil magistracy, and the power of the commonwealth; likewise sedition and war, are treated suitably for common use and life.

BY THE REVEREND FATHER ADAM CONTZEN OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, Doctor of Theology and Professor of Sacred Letters in the Archiepiscopal Academy of Mainz.

To the most invincible FERDINAND II, August Emperor.

With the permission of the superiors and the privilege of His Sacred Imperial Majesty.

SECOND, ENLARGED EDITION.

At the expense of JOHANN KINCKIUS, bookseller of Cologne, at the sign of the Unicorn. 1629.

Dedicatory Epistle to Ferdinand II -- Part I

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TO FERDINAND II, AUGUST EMPEROR, MOST POWERFUL, MOST INVINCIBLE, KING OF GERMANY, HUNGARY, BOHEMIA, DALMATIA, CROATIA, SLAVONIA, ETC.; ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA; DUKE OF BURGUNDY, STYRIA, CARINTHIA, CARNIOLA, AND WÜRTTEMBERG, ETC.; COUNT OF TYROL, ETC. ADAM CONTZEN OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

Of human works, August Emperor, the greatest and most necessary is government; for the human race cannot subsist without an order of commanding and obeying. Secondly, the prince is the most eminent image of GOD: by a certain intermediate majesty between God and men, he represents the immense majesty of the Divine Being. For this reason he is even called a god, because through the vicegerency of God he is exalted and sacrosanct. The force and dignity of princely government, however, must not be estimated by the display of wealth, the splendor of honors, the breadth of empire, or a retinue of attendants, but by the most profound providence of the wisdom of God and by the immutable decree by which He determined to govern this universe.

Indeed, no one can comprehend by thought and understanding how it happens that so many hundreds of thousands of men--among whom there are few good men, while many are estranged, proud, defiant, and obstinate--are obedient to the command of one man. Why do fortified cities, warlike nations, and the most extensive kingdoms not merely obey one man--even if he is sometimes wise and just, yet often either infirm through age or depraved in morals, and by the condition of nature liable to errors--but also expend, at the command of the ruler, their wealth, which avarice holds with the greatest tenacity,

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and life itself, which all are eager to retain? So steadfast a judgment concerning the common good by no means arises from the disposition congenitally and individually implanted in each person. For if we consult this disposition, we shall find each man so attached to himself that he places his own advantages and his own preservation before all things. Therefore, in addition to the appetites necessary for his own safety, the Supreme Divine Being has implanted in the mind of every man a will directed toward the common good and toward preserving human society. In all the best men this will is so firm that they consider obedience more important than life. We discern the efficacy of this principle even in the mute elements, and experience it much more clearly in the members of a single body. For, lest the

association and communication of worldly things be abolished when their bond has been dissolved and their mutual influence obstructed, and lest this most artfully constructed machine fail anywhere through a gap and a void, all things come to the rescue contrary to their own natural character and inclination: light things tend downward, heavy things upward, while individual members suffer themselves to be burned and cut for the safety of the head. Since, moreover, we see the agreement of all nations, even barbarous ones, and of all ages in honoring and protecting kings, we readily understand that so great a concurrence arises not from opinion, training, and instruction, but from divine ordination.

That consideration of the commonwealth offers us two lessons, which are the solid and necessary foundations of public peace and human society. The prince will rest upon one, and the subject upon the other. The prince understands that he is the bond of so many men and things, and that he possesses over everyone the power which a head possesses over the members. He understands that his safety and honor consist in the health, vigor, and strength of all the members. Just as it has never been heard said that the head hates some one member or oppresses it more than the others, so a prudent and good prince will never allow himself, as a respecter of persons, to permit some of his subjects to be oppressed and harassed by others. Rather, through the golden equality of justice he will render each person, according to his station, unharmed and secure.

The other lesson is prescribed to private persons: let each remember that he is not merely a man, but a member within the great body of the commonwealth and of human society, and that he is such not by laws proposed and enacted by man, but by the divine ordinance which cries into the ears of all: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power except from God; and those that exist have been ordained by God. Therefore, he who resists the power resists the ordinance of God. But those who resist acquire condemnation for themselves."

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It is a monstrosity if a member rebels against the head. Just as the involuntary movements of the frenzied and the epileptic strike horror into everyone, so in a commonwealth whatever is undertaken against the will of the prince carries danger together with deformity and is the work of a diseased part. Therefore, if anyone contrives to dissolve civil order and its bond by stirring up discord, secession, sedition, or civil war, he acts just as if he were to excite a tumult between the head and the members. He is no less insane than if he were to labor to interchange the positions and stations of the elements and to produce certain voids or intermundane spaces, so that they could not operate by mutual contact and influence. For the order of rulers and subjects in a commonwealth has been strengthened by the decree of the eternal Lawgiver just as firmly as the structure of the elemental world, which always coheres with itself and is nowhere interrupted. The omnipotent hand of the Creator could certainly have made the world in such a way that its individual parts would subsist in isolation, without the conjunction and fellowship of the others, and that within it every man would be sufficient unto himself. But it seemed good otherwise: He willed nothing to be solitary, nothing not to require others; He willed some things to depend upon other things, and all things upon Himself.

This most holy and supremely authentic constitution of the Supreme Divine Being, Most Invincible Emperor, compelled me, while teaching Sacred Letters in the Academy of Mainz, to break silence and write about the whole commonwealth. For after the first articles of faith, ignorance of which no excuse exonerates, it must be impressed upon all souls most forcefully and most frequently that every soul is subject to the higher powers. The present condition of Europe is also such that in no age and in no place has a solid and continual treatment of this doctrine been, or is, more necessary. Unless that doctrine prevails, the disturbances and confusions of political affairs will render the ordering even of other matters almost useless, since peace and concord are supremely consonant with Christian piety.

I am not unaware that the commonwealths of every nation have frequently been agitated by complaints, secessions, seditions, rebellions, and civil wars. For the causes of disturbances have always been avarice, ambition, lusts, and a most unhappy restlessness of the human race,

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while neither magistrates observe a limit in the exercise of authority nor citizens a limit in liberty; while excessive domination is sought on the one side and excessive license on the other. But this is an evil of every age. I complain of the singular unhappiness of our own age, and particularly of our Europe. For I deny that in any age or place there has been so great an obstinacy against obedience or so great a desire for license and anarchy as that which today disturbs and dashes together the nations of Europe. There were formerly more numerous and more savage seditions; but their causes, although neither just nor lawful, were nevertheless weighty and great, and made those seditions more excusable. For the commands of magistrates were generally harsh, avaricious, insulting, unjust, and cruel, and by them even a moderate people was provoked and inflamed to rebellion. The rebellions stirred up in our age have neither excuse nor pretext.

For the kingdoms of Europe are administered by the most moderate laws. By the oath of every prince, not merely is license restricted, so that a prince cannot do evil, but the liberty of many is also restrained, so that a prince cannot do that for which he was created. Hence all governments are mild and many are exceedingly mild. Yet amid so great a gentleness, equality, and servitude of rulers, the gravest rebellions are stirred up by the freest peoples and by nobles who are almost the masters of their own kings--not through any necessity or advantage, but solely through the intemperance of a liberty made wanton by excessive prosperity--with the ruin of nations and the danger of barbarous servitude, set before their eyes for their destruction. Free cities and magnates, injured by nothing, not even by a word, join in making the disturbances harsher and increasing their strength. They exhaust their citizens, plunder their treasuries, and assist the rebels with resources and counsel, solely from an inability to endure authority and peace. Europe's misery teaches this through many examples; I shall be content with the most recent, which Your Majesty is experiencing.

In the whole world there are no subjects freer than those who rejected and attacked your August House, Most Powerful Emperor, its gentle scepter, and the waters of Siloah that flow in silence. Let them publish the causes of such great evils, which first recoiled upon them. It was not a bitter exaction of tributes, not shameful lusts, not cruelty, nor any other evil, but suspicions invented and spread among the common people. From these there immediately followed the barbarous slaughter of magistrates, their cause unheard and their defense denied. Some put forward religion as a pretext for their crime; but no violence had been inflicted upon anyone's conscience, and no nation in Europe possessed greater religious liberty.

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Indeed, they themselves sufficiently demonstrated that they had by no means stirred up such great disturbances for the sake of religion. For in those provinces there were Catholics, defenders of the Augsburg Confession, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Arians, atheists, or Epicureans; nevertheless, they elected a Calvinist antiking, who at once, at the beginning, terrified everyone so greatly through iconoclasm that most of those who were not Calvinists despaired of the liberty of their own religion. And now many of their own accord sought to obtain the favor of others through a change and transfer of religion.

It is therefore established that at this time the minds of men are inclined to reject lawful governments, especially the minds of those who, although they desire to be exempt from royal jurisdiction, nevertheless treat their own subjects as chattels. With as much obstinacy as they resist their superiors, they dominate their inferiors just as unrestrainedly. Not a few of them, killed by their own farmers, have paid excessively heavy penalties for the crime of both offenses.

I find two springs and, as it were, sources of so great and dangerous an evil, which, unless it is checked, will someday issue in great disgraces: seditious doctrine and examples. Each evil has grown strong. Pseudo-theologians, under the false appearance of religion, and pseudo-politicians, under the pretext of the public good, go about overthrowing the commonwealth and attacking kings. Each group is assisted by the example of those whose rebellion is judged to have succeeded well.

The doctrine of the pseudo-theologians is the destruction and plague of the commonwealth and of peace. For many, after disturbing ecclesiastical monarchy, expelling archbishops and bishops, and instituting annual or monthly presidents, attempt to introduce the same democracy--or, as they themselves call it, parity--into the commonwealth, so that they themselves may rule in their kingdom like tribunes of the plebs. They are called Puritans, a race of men spread through every corner of Europe to the great destruction of nations. Concerning them there survives a brilliant testimony of the Most Serene King of Britain. Writing a testament for his son in his second book, he pronounces as follows:

“Here in Scotland certain men from the ministry--headlong, fiery, and bold--became so popular with the common people amid this confusion of human and divine affairs that,

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having tasted the sweetness of dominion, they began to dream of a democratic form of commonwealth for themselves. Elated first by the overthrow of my grandmother and then of my mother--and success certainly flattered them too greatly--and finally having long taken advantage of my years as a ward for the establishment of their democracy, they had already devoured in certain hope the power of tribunes, so that in a popular commonwealth, since they could readily lead the common people wherever they wished, they alone might direct the decisive moments of all affairs.

“Therefore, neither during my years as a ward nor afterward did any sedition occur without the seditious attempting to make these men patrons of their own fury and madness. Frequent calumnies against me were spread in their tribunician assemblies, not because I had committed some crime, but because I was king, which was regarded as worse than every crime. And because shame prevented them from openly professing this cause of their hatred, they carefully investigated my life and morals, magnifying even the smallest errors without limit and seizing even false rumors for calumny. Although they wished it to seem that they distinguished blame from office and vice from the man, the mask nevertheless sometimes fell from them unawares, and they betrayed by their own evidence the designs which they concealed with such great diligence: namely, that all kings and princes are enemies of the liberty of the Church and do not bear the yoke of Christ with equanimity. With the wholesomeness of this doctrine they fed their flocks.

“But because learned and upright men from the ministry, ashamed of this rashness and audacity, endeavored to recall the rash to prudence and the disorderly to moderation, and to correct the unsound in mind no less by example than by speech, the factious men then placed the one defense of their fury in parity. Relying upon it, wicked, audacious, and ignorant men might refute the pious, wise, and moderate. This parity is the mother of confusion and the enemy of unity, which is the parent of order. If an arrangement of this kind prevailed in the commonwealth just as it did in the Church, it would be more certain than certainty itself that all things must be thrown into confusion.

“If you love both, drive this plague from each--the Puritans, I mean--whom you can neither bind by benefits, make faithful by oath, nor constrain by promises; ambitious without measure, slanderous without cause, and breathing nothing except seditions and calumnies; men for whom there is one rule of conscience, not the authority of the divine word, but the vanity of their own inventions. I call that great

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God to witness--and it is not lawful for one composing a testament to lie--that greater ingratitude or treachery can never be found among our Highland or Border robbers than among these fanatical scoundrels. Nor, if you have determined to live in peace, permit them to enjoy the same country with you, unless perhaps for the sake of testing your patience, as Socrates lived with Xanthippe.”

Textual Corrections Applied

- Cur munitae urbe has been corrected to Cur munitae urbes, following scan as0003.
- pro pensionemque has been corrected to propensionemque, following scan as0004.

- *prostatu suo* has been corrected to *pro statu suo*, following scan as0004.

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Whatever the mind dares to say or suspect concerning the Puritans is less than what that Most Serene King publicly judged in the same kingdom while those very men were still alive. From British, French, Belgic, and German practice, under the shadow of an imaginary king, they contrived a true confusion of all things: headlong, audacious, fiery, popular with the common people, dreaming of dominion, leading the people about, patrons in every sedition, among whom it was regarded as worse than every crime for you to be a king. These things are of such a kind that they alone can persuade a people eager for changes that government by the people is better than monarchy.

The pseudo-politicians nevertheless join them, and add oil to the furnace; that is, they add the appearance of the public good to superstition. This is their opinion: that cities do not flourish under kings; that talents and virtues are not held in esteem; and that everything depends upon liberty. I dispute against them in the work itself; for now, I disclose the sources of the evil. Aided by seditious theologians, when these men have crept into the mastership of a tribe, a council, a syndicism, or some other office, they first court the favor of the people, bring the magistracy into hatred and contempt, and, if fortune accommodates itself to their undertakings, cast it down from its height. In the council and in the assembly they proclaim that crimes are advantageous--the very crimes which bloodthirsty theologians had taught in the churches to be religious. Thus, with two bellows, superstition and the hope of private advantage, they drive the people into crime; then, when the people have been imbued with the contagion of wickedness, they employ them for profit until they involve them in utter destruction. For the people spend more upon these men in one half-year than upon their lawful lords in an entire decade.

The other origin of the evil is the example of those who are considered fortunate as a result of rebellion. This is the greatest enticement: when theologians have suppressed conscience and the religious obligation of an oath, politicians display a little gain, if they can show that those who have deserted their own prince flourish and are powerful. Moreover, the successful outcome of one nation does more to inflame the minds of fools

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than the examples of ten nations which perished through rebellion avail to deter them. So much concerning doctrine that corrupts the commonwealth. It is permissible to speak freely and confidently about it, since the books stand publicly available. I shall speak more briefly about the other means by which monarchies are attacked--namely, the vaunting of aristocratic and democratic happiness--because the matter is so clear that whatever is said in words is more obscure than what shines forth in the facts.

The Most Serene King of England complains of both in his book *The True Law of Free Monarchies*. For he says that the error of the common people, proceeding from those who wished to be regarded as teachers of wisdom, brought destruction upon the most flourishing commonwealths and fear upon the others. He then says that rebellions have been established by example: "Impiety, caressed by fortune, which has not seldom granted a prosperous outcome to seditions stirred up against kings, has confirmed very many in this error."

Machiavelli asserts--and I dispute against him in the first book--that no commonwealths flourish except free ones and that monarchies are destructive to cities. Very many who followed in his footsteps so extol the resources and happiness of those who passed from royal government into another form of commonwealth that they invite everyone to imitate them. My concern is with their orators, historians, and writers; I neither assume judgment over the commonwealth itself nor make another's lawsuit my own.

The confederated Belgic provinces stand before us. Their advocates praise them in such a way that they attempt to entice kingdoms and nations into mutual alliances and into fellowship with what they present as a most powerful nation. They say that this small corner of Europe, contending with the Ocean, has grown through its assumption of liberty to such power that its strength must either be envied or feared by kings. They call its Estates most illustrious

and most powerful; they immeasurably exalt everything belonging to them and disparage that of others. Not only books and speeches serve as examples of this, but also the lofty airs of merchants and agents in public affairs, who admire their own things and despise those of others.

Philipp Clüver dedicates his *Ancient Germany* to the Estates. He enumerates the first and greatest reason in this way: “Because YOU ALONE NOW, together with your neighbors and confederates, preserve with the greatest praise and glory the renown of the German name--most celebrated in Roman as well as Greek monuments from the most ancient times because of its immeasurable zeal for ancestral liberty and its most courageous defense--by those same deeds by which your ancestors once preserved it diligently, with the highest praise and glory, throughout the whole world among all nations, peoples, and kings.” Behold how royally he speaks! He thinks that his own countrymen ALONE ARE NOW Germans, while the others are either shadows or barbarians.

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All their writers and merchants speak in accordance with that opinion, so that in many places the common people have now been thoroughly persuaded that their power is supreme, their resources infinite, and that alliance with them will render everyone invincible. Hence arise new hopes and new counsels, and in certain parts of Europe a desire to change the commonwealth that is as dreadful as it is calamitous. Hence we have seen civil wars raging with barbarous hatred, slaughters, and examples of bestial cruelty in many places, while through right and wrong men inflame themselves to obtain the power which they admire among their neighbors. In my treatise I shall teach, from the judgments of the most excellent men and from the custom and experience of every age, that very many are deceived by this doctrine and these examples.

As for the Batavian Estates, whose happiness appears to incite others to daring, the contrary judgments of two men make me doubtful: those of the Most Serene King of Great Britain and of Barnevelt--two men, I say, in one of whom there is royal authority, and in the other the fullest knowledge of that commonwealth. The king's judgment was delivered in a public speech in the year 1609 at the assembly of the kingdom, first to the minds of all and afterward to print. He addresses his Scots in this way:

“As for the confederated provinces, there, certainly, after the recent truce and our peace with the Spaniard, with all human and divine things confused together, the order of the commonwealth has almost passed into anarchy; nor has this occurred without the direction of heavenly Justice. For those who received our schismatics, men devoted to their own opinions and turned away from the unity of our Church, and who opened, as it were, an asylum to all the hydras of religions, have now, from so manifold a contagion, been brought to such a point that they can scarcely say what religion they themselves defend. Thus they have now become men of no party and enemies to one another, although previously they could easily have been held together with us in the same communion of sacred rites and peace.”

Anyone can readily understand Barnevelt's opinion from the *Apology* published by him. He complains that in 1586 he found the order inverted; that the governors of the cities were ill-disposed toward the Estates; that many preachers did not acknowledge the States; that the common people were alienated; that twelve per hundred was paid in interest and two coins to the brokers; that Leicester possessed greater authority than the States; that the burdens were greater than the revenues; that the people and the city magistrates desired peace; and that much money had been granted by the kings of France and Britain, yet matters had nevertheless come to such a point that

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the burdens of expenditure exceeded every kind of revenue and contribution, however greatly increased, by twenty-six million. Finally, everything had grown to such an extent that the treasurers reported that the expenses could not be sustained and that the country would be reduced to desperation; for this reason he had become an advocate of a truce. If that old man spoke these things among his own countrymen and among men acquainted with the facts as truthfully as he did confidently, he makes the happiness of that commonwealth highly suspect to me. Although neighboring kings had given it more than twenty-five million pounds, it had nevertheless burdened its citizens so greatly that

Holland and West Friesland, which at the beginning contributed scarcely 1,800,000 florins, were by the end compelled to pay 4,000,000 pounds and a further two million, and nevertheless to incur debt. For he himself professes all these things.

To maintain the commonwealth steadfastly against so many disadvantages and to bring back onto the path men drawn elsewhere either by superstition or by the hope of advantages is most difficult. This was what I proposed to do when I undertook the subject of politics. Many did this before me, and while I revere most of their splendid statements, I find three deviations and, as it were, rocks against which they strike in such a way that some injure the commonwealth through wickedness, others through excessive attachment, and still others through imprudence.

Those who through wickedness make the prince crafty, cunning, secretive, suspicious, and malevolent overthrow him. While ordering him to be cautious and afraid, they instruct him to confine his subjects like enclosed wild beasts. When subjects read such books, they become indignant; and when they endeavor to fortify themselves in opposition, rebellions are stirred up. Others contend so fiercely out of excessive attachment to their own form and the ideal which they have conceived that they despise all others. Someone born in a democracy thinks that the world will collapse unless the consuls come from the lowest common people. If his country is governed aristocratically, he scarcely regards those who lack a pedigree as human beings. I recently saw a British writer who attempted to prove that every nation not governed by royal command departs from natural law. Although the writings of these men commend one form of commonwealth, they are nevertheless destructive in other states.

Very many fall through imprudence. They labor at censuring the vices of princes and devote themselves wholly to prescribing laws, but do not instruct subjects to obey, although governing rightly matters little unless the man who commands right things is obeyed. Having therefore embraced all these matters briefly, Most Invincible

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Emperor, I address and dedicate them to Your Majesty, not so that they may benefit you, but so that, through the title of your August Majesty, they may be recommended to the noble youth, who must be imbued from their tender years with the best and most salutary precepts of politics, so that they may someday be able to govern the commonwealth in the part entrusted to them. No one doubts that a political work is owed to Your Majesty, who is placed upon the highest summit of the world, since we behold expressed in you the model of the best emperor.

There are two principal virtues in a king: Piety and Justice. Prosperity in affairs follows Piety; the love and fidelity of subjects follow Justice. Not only your subjects but even your enemies have very frequently praised your Piety. It joins kings to God, so that they depend upon God, refer everything to God, and make their majesty a servant for extending His worship. They owe God a twofold worship: first because they are Christians, and second because they are kings. They pursue good things and avoid evil things because they are Christians; they command good things and prohibit evil things because they are kings.

When you entered upon this royal path of reigning, God attended you with His aid and protection. For He deposited with you pledges of His benevolence so great that nowhere are their equals found, and so singular that very few similar ones are discovered. While you were still an archduke, powerful and wealthy enemies with a great army suddenly attacked you when you were unprepared, and stubbornly continued the war they had begun even at an unsuitable season of the year. In this unexpected circumstance you by no means lost heart. You entrusted your cause to the just and omnipotent right hand of the Divine Being and requested aid. He gave it; He did not delay when you had been placed in straits, nor did He merely extricate you from the war, but, while the threat of doom still stood and dangers sounded around you, He raised you, not yet secure at home, to the kingdom of Bohemia. This appeared all the more wonderful the more manifestly the conflict between your enemies and the divine counsel appeared.

They were endeavoring to crush your fortune so that you might never gain access to your hereditary kingdoms and provinces. But the Inhabitant of Heaven, your protector, exalted your head and moved the nobles of Bohemia to crown

you king while you were entangled in a serious war, amid the danger both of the war and of your rivals. This was an entirely new event, and scarcely is any such recorded in history: that those who could have delayed the business and remained spectators should wish to involve themselves in the contagion, expense, and danger of another's war. But God willed it to occur at a dangerous time, both to raise you by so immediate a benefit and to show your enemies that they were kicking against the goad. When the war had at last been quieted, the Hungarians sought the King of Bohemia

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as their king. That assembly was plainly agitated by great disturbances when, behold, amid the commotion of affairs, sorrowful news arrived from Bohemia: the nobles had cast off their fidelity, violated the magistracy, and were preparing arms with great determination. Secretly and openly, by deceit and by force, they were attempting to drive the Hungarians into fellowship with their most abominable crime. Certainly no one thought that the Hungarians would persevere in their design when they saw that, if they crowned as king one whom they knew would pursue his right by war, they would have to undertake war against their neighbors. Yet, moved not at all by the defection of others, they raised you through the very waves, while God held the helm, and placed you upon the high throne.

Nor was this the end of the dangers through which both the constancy of Your Majesty and the benevolence of the eternal Majesty toward you were to become renowned. Bohemia and its neighboring provinces had defected; Hungary was suddenly being inundated as if by a torrent; Austria was wavering; the hereditary dominions were being solicited; and the whole barbarian world was being stirred up against you. Yet the insolence and taunts of the enemy were more grievous than all these things. But God, the protector of kings and the vindicator of right and equity, reduced such turbulent counsels and so manifold a power to nothing and made your dangers glorious for you.

For while you were being pressed by war in Hungary and Bohemia, while threats were being cast from Batavia and Britain, and all Germany was held suspended in the greatest fear of the outcome, the Prince-Electors, following the direction of God and trusting in your virtue, by unanimous consent and every vote constituted you August Emperor and lord of affairs. When you had been adorned with the diadem and insignia of the Empire, they bound their fidelity by oath. They did this with as much resolution as if all those kingdoms and magnates had sought the imperial office for you through embassies. Not only did those whose judgment of your virtue was true and whose benevolence and respect were constant elect you by agreement, but even the man who accepted the election of the Bohemians was not permitted by God to deny you his vote--a wholly singular and distinguished proof of divine favor.

Nothing customarily appears more wonderful to me than that wretched vacillation of your enemies in their counsels. At the time when they could have harmed you very greatly with little or no labor, their mouths were constrained by bit and bridle, and they themselves were brought to do that which the divine hand had decreed should be done. When their strength had now been broken and yours made firmer, He permitted them freer reins, lest what they had intended should remain hidden. For what the Hungarians could have done while you were entangled in the Bohemian wars is evident from what they did afterward, when they set rivals against you and rebelled against you as though against a foreigner.

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How wonderful it is that the Hungarians and others changed neither their fidelity nor their votes at the report of the Bohemian defection! Yet that transition certainly offered a favorable opportunity for changing the state of affairs without danger. Indeed, it is also a distinguished proof of divine kindness that they could neither postpone nor obstruct the assembly of the Empire by evasion or tumult. Instead, forgetful of all their stratagems, they armed you with the supreme authority and power of the Empire, so that it might be evident to the whole world that they were waging not only unjust wars against an innocent man but also impious wars against their own lord and emperor. Finally, your Helper adorned all those events with the distinguished victory for which the whole world congratulates you, and

demonstrated that His gifts are without repentance. Behold for yourself the fruit of Piety, which possesses the fruit of the life which now is and of that which is to come.

The other imperial virtue is Justice, for the preservation of which the prince is appointed. The other virtues are personal; Justice belongs to others. Justice has been entrusted to the good faith of the prince; contempt for it is the plague of the state. This was the virtue that reconciled the minds of all to you. I am silent for now concerning the care for right and equity which you displayed in the causes of private persons--a care so great that no one complained against your tribunal, and that even those who did not love your Religion sought you as their prince and as the patron of Justice.

It is a distinguished trophy of Justice, and one pleasing to all Europe, that you preferred to submit the cause of your position and kingdoms to adjudication rather than to conduct it by war and shed blood. Therefore, we see that your cause has been approved not only by most of the princes of the Empire, but even by foreigners--the Frenchman, the Pole, the Dane, and the Swede--and indeed by the father-in-law of your enemy, who refused, by a destructive precedent dangerous even to himself, to raise his son-in-law into another man's kingdom.

Your faithful subjects have declared their love toward you sufficiently and more than sufficiently. Although deceived and oppressed by garrisons, as soon as they were able they surrendered themselves to your commanders. Indeed, the farmers, whose judgment concerning a just and equitable prince is more sincere and whose love is most uncorrupted, joined you as soon as they perceived the assistance of your armies. They killed many who were unfaithful to you and oppressive to themselves; they did not permit the opposing soldiers, whom the anger of the victor had spared, to depart unharmed. When victory had been won, adherents of the Augsburg Confession triumphed no less than Catholics, because they perceived that they too had been liberated from Calvinist tyranny.

[Scan as0016]

Therefore, with a great spirit protect and restore Justice. The greatest part of mankind is a friend to Justice; bound by love of you and by your benefaction, it will fortify your Empire under God. In this multitude I too pray for prosperity for you, and daily I pray: "O Lord, save the King." But you: "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O Most Powerful. You have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. For truth and meekness and justice, your right hand will lead you wonderfully." Proceed therefore prosperously and reign. This is my prayer and the prayer of all who love true peace and justice.

At Mainz, in the year 1620, on the seventeenth day of December, on which, amid public rejoicing over the recovery of Bohemia, the Most Reverend and Most Illustrious Johann Schweikhard, Archbishop of the Holy See of Mainz, your Archchancellor throughout Germany and Electoral Prince, gave thanks with his subjects to GOD MOST GOOD, MOST GREAT, congratulated Your Majesty, and pronounced new vows for your safety and that of the whole Empire.

Authorization of the Most Reverend Lord Stephan Weber

[Scan as0017]

AUTHORIZATION OF THE MOST REVEREND LORD, LORD STEPHAN WEBER, BISHOP OF MYSIA, SUFFRAGAN OF THE MOST REVEREND AND MOST ILLUSTRIOUS ARCHBISHOP OF MAINZ, DOCTOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY AND CENSOR OF BOOKS.

The ten books of the *Politics*, composed by the Reverend Father Adam Contzen, priest of the Society of JESUS and Doctor and Ordinary Professor in our fostering Academy of Mainz, and examined and approved by theologians of the same faculty and by others, have been presented to us. We therefore permit them to be committed to print for the common benefit. Since in these books the author discusses the constitution, causes, end, laws, magistrates, and power of the whole commonwealth, and even seditions and wars; and since he demonstrates the rule and method of administering the commonwealth successfully, both from Divine Letters, sacred Councils, the writings of the Fathers,

and the decrees of Theology and the Canons, and from natural reason, civil law, the ordinances and deeds of princes, the customs of kingdoms, and examples from ancient and recent history, we trust that they will be useful alike to private persons and to those placed in magistracy. At Mainz, in the year 1621, on the sixth day of May.

Stephan Weber, Bishop of Mysia and Suffragan of Mainz, named above, has signed in attestation.

Approval

I, JOHANN COPPERUS, Provincial of the Society of JESUS on the Rhine, by the authority granted to me by our Very Reverend Father MUTIO VITELLESCHI, Superior General of our Society, permit these ten books of the *Politics*, composed by Father ADAM CONTZEN, theologian of our Society, and read and approved by the theologians appointed for that purpose, to be committed to print. At Mainz, on the twenty-second day of April, in the year 1620.

Johann Copperus.

Imperial Privilege

Since, by a decree of His Sacred Imperial Majesty, all and singular printers and booksellers, and others engaged in any trade in books whatsoever, are seriously and firmly prohibited from daring or presuming, within the boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire and of the kingdoms and hereditary dominions of His Imperial Majesty, to reprint--whether in a similar or another kind of type or format, whether in whole or in part--any books hitherto published by our Fathers or to be published hereafter; to send them to another to be reprinted; or to import, sell, and distribute copies printed elsewhere, secretly or openly, without the judgment and attestation of the aforesaid Fathers: I, Johann Copperus, Provincial Superior of the Society of JESUS throughout the Province of the Rhine, by the authority granted to me for this purpose by our Very Reverend Father General Mutio Vitelleschi, grant to Johann Kinckius, citizen and bookseller of Cologne, authorization to print these ten books of the *Politics*, composed by Father Adam Contzen, theologian of our Society, and read and approved by the theologians appointed for that purpose. In attestation of these things, we have desired to give him this certificate, signed by our hand and fortified with our seal. At Mainz, on the twenty-second day of April, in the year 1620.

Johann Copperus.

Textual Corrections Applied

- The year 1620, absent from the HTML after the date of the Approval, has been restored from scan as0017.
- hereditiorum has been corrected to hereditariorum, following the clear sense and the printed reading in scan as0017.

A

- Abdias Babylonius.
- Adradius [reading uncertain: the print is faded].
- Aegidius Romanus.
- Aelianus.
- Aelius Lampridius.
- Aemilius Probus.
- Aeneas Silvius.

- Aeschines.
- Aeschylus.
- Agapetus.
- Agathias.
- Agellius.
- Albertus Krantzius.
- Alexander ab Alexandro.
- Alexander I, Pope.
- Alexander III, Pope.
- Alphonsus a Castro.
- Alphonsus Salmeron.
- Alvarus Pelagius.
- Ambrosius.
- Ammianus.
- Anacletus, Pope.
- Andreas Fornerus.
- Andreas Masius.
- Andreas Vega.
- Anicetus, Pope.
- Antigonus.
- Antiochenus.
- Antoninus.
- Antonius Guevara.
- Antonius Minander.
- Antonius Senensis.
- Apollonius.
- Appianus.
- Aquila.
- Aristeides.
- Aristophanes.
- Aristoteles.
- Arnobius.
- Arrianus.

- Athanasius.
- Athenaeus.
- Augustinus, Bishop of Orléans.
- Augustinus Triumphus.
- Avicenna.
- Ausonius.

B

- Bacchylides.
- Boetius.
- Barbatus.
- Bartholus.
- Basilius Magnus.
- Beatus Rhenanus.
- Bembus.
- Bernardus, Abbot of Clairvaux.
- Bernardinus Mendoza.
- Bias.
- Bodinus.
- Bonesius.
- Bonfinius.
- Bonifacius, Archbishop of Mainz.
- Bozius.
- Buccardus.
- Budaeus.

C

- Caelestinus.
- Caesar Baronius.
- Caietanus.
- Callistus, Pope.
- Canus.
- Cardanus.
- The Constitutions of Charlemagne.

- Carolus Sigonius.
- Casaubonus.
- Cassianus.
- Cassiodorus.
- Cato.
- Cedrenus.
- Chalcondylas.
- Chares of Mytilene.
- Choniates.
- Christianus Adrichomius.
- Chrysostomus.
- Cicarella.
- Claudianus.
- Clemens Alexandrinus.
- Clement I, Pope.
- Codinus.
- Caelius Rhodiginus.
- Columella.
- Conciliator.
- Council of Agde.
- Council of Ancyra.
- Council of Antioch.
- Council of Arles.
- Council of Aquileia.
- Council of Aachen under Stephen V.
- Council of Augsburg under Otto.
- Second and Third Councils of Orléans.
- Council of Basel.
- Council of Braga.
- Third and Fourth Councils of Carthage.
- Council of Chalcedon.
- Council of Clermont.
- First and Second Councils of Cologne.

- Council of Constance.
- Council of Constantinople.
- Council of Dillingen.
- Council of Mérida.
- Council of Epaon under Gelasius I.
- Council of Ephesus.
- Council of Florence.
- Council of Girona.
- Council of Granada.
- Council of Laodicea.
- First Lateran Council.
- Lateran Council under Leo X.
- Lateran Council under Innocent III.
- Lateran Council under Alexander III.
- Council of London.
- Council of Lyon under Gregory X.
- Council of Mâcon.
- First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Councils of Milan.
- Council of Meaux.
- Council of Mainz under Charlemagne.
- Council of Mainz under Rabanus.
- Council of Mainz under Richolphus.
- Council of Mainz under Sebastianus.
- Council of Nantes.
- First and Second Councils of Nicaea.
- Council of Oxford.
- Council of Paris.
- Council of Poitiers under Paschal.
- Council of Ravenna under Honorius IV.
- Council of Rome under Martin.
- Fourth Council of Rome under Symmachus.
- Council of Rome under Nicholas II.
- Council of Rome under Gelasius.

- Council of Salzburg under Gregory X.
- Provincial Council of Siena.
- Council of Sardica.
- Council of Tarragona.
- First, Third, and Fourth Councils of Toledo.
- Council of Trier under Ioannes.
- Council of Tribur.
- Council of Trent.
- Council in Trullo.
- Valentinian Council.
- Venetum Council under Leo I.
- Council of Vienne under Clement V.
- Constantius, presbyter.
- Cordubensis.
- Cornelius a Lapide.
- Cornelius Tacitus.
- Covarruvias.
- Crispus Sallustius.
- Cromerus.
- Ctesias.
- Cuiacius.
- Curopalata.
- Curtius.
- Cyprianus.
- Cyriacus, Pope.
- Cyrillus.

D

- Damasus, Pope.
- Delrio.
- Democritus.
- Demosthenes.
- Diodorus Siculus.

- Diogenes Laertius.
- Dio of Nicaea.
- Dion of Prusa, a Greek.
- Dioscorides.
- Dionysius the Areopagite.
- Dominicus Bannes.
- Dominicus Iacobatius.
- Dominicus Soto.
- Donatus.
- Driedo.
- Dubravius.

E

- Egnatius.
- Emmanuel Sa.
- Ennius.
- Epictetus.
- Epicurus.
- Epiphanius.
- Evagrius.
- Eunapius.
- Eurypides.
- Eusebius.
- Eustathius.
- Eutropius.

F

- Faber.
- Festus.
- Flavius Iosephus.
- Flavius Vopiscus.
- Florus.
- Forcatulus.
- Franciscus Soarez.

- Franciscus Turrianus.
- Frontinus.
- Fulgentius.
- Fulgosus.

G

- Gabriel.
- Gabriel Vasquez.
- Galenus.
- Gelasius, Pope.
- Gellius.
- Gerson.
- Gesnerus.
- Godescalcus.
- Stewegius.
- Gorionides.
- Gregoras.
- Gregorius de Valentia.
- Gregorius Magnus.
- Gregorius Nazianzenus.
- Gregorius Nyssenus.
- Gregory VII.
- Gregorius Tolosanus.
- Gregorius Turonensis.
- Guilhelmus Parisiensis.
- Guilhelmus Tyrius.

H

- Haimo.
- Halicarnassaeus.
- Hector Boethius.
- Hegesippus.
- Heliodorus.
- Henricus Henriquez.

- Henricus Kalteisen.
- Hermogenes.
- Herodianus.
- Herodotus.
- Hieronymus, Abbot.
- Hieronymus, Doctor of the Church.
- Hieronymus Manfredus.
- Higynus, Pope.
- Hilarius.
- Hincmarus.
- Hippocrates.
- Hippolytus.
- Hirtius.
- *History of Armenia*.
- Homerus.
- Horatius.
- Hormisda, Pope.
- Hostiensis.
- Hugo Victorinus.

I

- Iacobus Gaulterus.
- Iacobus Gretserus.
- Iacobus Pontanus.
- Ignatius the Martyr.
- Innocentius, Pope.
- Ioannes Cochleus.
- Ioannes de Salas, a Castilian.
- Ioanes Magnus.
- Ioannes III, Pope.
- Ioannes Polemar.
- Ioannes Roberti.
- Ioannes Socroboscus.

- Ioannes Turricremata.
- Iosephus Scaliger.
- Irenaeus.
- Isidorus.
- Isocrates.
- Iulianus, Bishop of Cos.
- Iulianus Capitolinus.
- Iulius Caesar.
- Iulius Clarus.
- Iulius Scaliger.
- Iustinianus.
- Iustinus the Martyr.
- Iustus Lipsius.
- Iuvenalis.

L

- Lactantius.
- Laertius.
- Laelius Bisciola.
- Laevinus Torrentius.
- Laurentius Surius.
- Leonardus Lessius.
- Leonicerus.
- Leo, Pope.
- Lindanus.
- Lorippus.
- Lucanus.
- Lucianus.
- Lucretius.
- Ludovicus Granatensis.
- Ludovicus Vives.

M

- Machiavellus.

- Macrobius.
- Mamertinus.
- Marcellinus.
- Marcellus, Pope.
- Marcianus Palladia.
- Marcus Tullius Cicero.
- Mariana.
- Martialis, Pope.
- Martianus.
- Martinus Becanus.
- Martinus Laudensis.
- Maximilianus Sandaeus.
- Medina.
- Menander.
- Minutius.
- Modestinus.
- Maecenas.
- Molina.
- Moschus.

N

- Naumachius.
- Neubrigensis.
- Nicephorus.
- Nicetas.
- Nicolaus Bellus.
- Nicholas I, Pope.
- Nicolaus Serarius.
- Nicolaus Trigautius.
- Nonius.

O

- Olaus Magnus.
- Onuphrius.

- Oppianus.
- Optatus Milevitanus.
- Origenes.
- Orosius.

P

- Pammelius.
- Panormitanus.
- Papinianus.
- Paulinus.
- Paulus Castrensis.
- Paulus Diaconus.
- Paulus of Aegina.
- Paulus Aemilianus.
- Pausanias.
- Persius.
- Petrus Chrysologus.
- Petrus Damiani.
- Petrus Iarricus.
- Petrus Rebuffus.
- Philastrius.
- Philemon the Comic Poet.
- Philippus Cominaeus.
- Philo.
- Philostratus.
- Phocylides.
- Pindarus.
- Pius I, Pope.
- Plato.
- Plautus.
- Plinius.
- Plutarchus.
- Polybius.

- Pollux.
- Polyaeus.
- Polydorus.
- Pomponius.
- Possidius.
- Prateolus.
- Priscus.
- Proclus.
- Procopius.
- Prosper.
- Prudentius.
- Publius Ovidius Naso.
- Publius Valerius Martialis.
- Publius Virgilius Maro.

Q

- Quinctilianus.

R

- Rabanus, Archbishop of Mainz.
- Radulphus Tuogrensis.
- Ranzovius.
- Rules of the Society of Jesus.
- Robertus Bellarminus.

S

- Sabellicus.
- Salvianus.
- Sanderus.
- Seneca.
- Severinus Binius.
- Sibrandus Lubbertus.
- Sigebertus.
- Silius.
- Simocatta.

- Sixtus I, Pope.
- Sixtus Senensis.
- Socrates the Philosopher.
- Socrates the Historian.
- Sozomenus.
- Spartianus.
- Statius.
- Strabo.
- Stobaeus.
- Suetonius.
- Suidas.
- Silvester.
- Silvester, Pope.
- Symmachus.
- Synesius.

T

- Telesphorus, Pope.
- Tertullianus.
- Theocritus.
- Theodoretus.
- Theodorus.
- Theodotion.
- Theognis.
- Theophilus.
- Theophrastus.
- Theophylactus.
- Theopompus.
- *Political Treasury concerning the Turkish Empire.*
- Theulphus.
- Thomas Aquinas.
- Thomas Sanchez.
- Thomas Waldensis.

- Thrithemius.
- Thucydides.
- Tibullus.
- Titus Livius.
- Trebellius Pollio.
- Trebonius.
- Turnebus.

V

- Valerius Maximus.
- Valerius Reginaldus.
- Varro.
- Vegetius.
- Vesalius.
- Victor.
- Vida.
- Villalpandus.
- Vincentius Beluacensis.
- Vincentius Lyrinensis.
- Vitruvius.
- Ulpianus.
- Volaterranus.
- Volcatius.
- Urbanus I, Pope.

X

- Xenophon.
- Xistus, Pope.

Z

- Zonaras.
- Zosimus.
- Zepherinus, Pope.

Textual Correction Applied

- Virtuvius has been corrected to Vitruvius as an unmistakable transposition in the name.

CHAPTER I

Reasons for Writing about the Commonwealth

The Efficient Cause, Matter, Form, and Kinds of the Commonwealth

[Printed page 1]

§ 1. As I undertake to set forth civil doctrine, I am not unaware that an accusation stands prepared against me, and that I must plead a case concerning the very title. For since the envy of the malevolent always opposes honorable endeavors, and in this age--exceedingly fruitful in vices no less than in virtues--no one can either teach rightly or act rightly without the disparagement of many, it ought to seem surprising to no one if, in these disputations, which are liable not only to the judgments, censures, cavillations, and reprehensions of readers and writers, but also, if an error has been committed, to the vengeance of those who reign, we experience harsh judgments and the hostile dispositions of many.

§ 2. There are, however, four things that are placed as obstacles at the very entrance and outset of the work. First, the profession of the religious order to which I have given my name appears altogether to forbid and prohibit the treatment and study of secular affairs. For why do you, to whom the world has been crucified--or ought to have been--set a worldly commonwealth in order? Why do you, who have been crucified to the world (unless you falsely profess religion), while hanging from your cross, fasten laws upon kings and kingdoms? What part can you have in the court, in the council chamber, in tribunals, or even in seditions and wars, when zeal for prayer and the study of the sacred Scriptures ought to have struck every recollection of these things from you?

Secondly, it is a work full of perilous hazard to prescribe not only laws but also counsels to rulers, for good counsels have cost many dearly. How readily offense arises in this matter, even when fault and error are absent, anyone who does not know is never fit to write on politics.

Thirdly, it appears an excessively proud--or, rather, insane--profession to wish to teach the senate, princes, kings, emperors, and pontiffs; for to obey them when they command, and not to write the laws of command, is the part of a good citizen.

Finally, he who has never taken part in any department of the commonwealth, but nevertheless writes counsels and laws concerning the administration of the commonwealth, will never be able to escape the ridicule directed at Phormio of Ephesus. Hannibal judged him the most foolish of all old men because, in the presence of a veteran and a commander of many triumphs, he declaimed about marking out a camp, drawing up a battle line, and engaging in battle. Surely it appears no less foolish if one who has not even been a praetor at Formiae or in the Alps forces upon the rulers of the world--whom education has formed for command, practice has exercised, variety of events has instructed, and age and prudence have confirmed--the method and manner of governing a commonwealth. For if in all arts the greatest distinction comes from practice or from practitioners, and if only by experience is it learned how arduous and how subject to fortune the burden of governing all things is, why do you not consider the persons of your hearers, lest you be laughed at before you are heard? Do you not fear that untimely wisdom may be wearisome to the powerful and a laughingstock to the wise? I, however, do not fear these things at all, nor indeed ought I to fear them. You, whoever you are who will read these things, weigh the reasons with me.

§ 3. In the first place, to treat of the reciprocal duties and obligations of kings, princes, and subjects, and of the government of the whole commonwealth, is not only not foreign to our Society, but is so proper and closely connected to it that it can neither avoid this office nor delegate it to another, provided that it wishes hereafter to persist in the standards of its constitutions and in the footsteps of the Fathers. We interpret Sacred Scripture and the whole of

Scholastic Theology both privately and publicly; but Sacred Scripture no less than Scholastic Theology carefully forms the commonwealth, and prescribes not only the duties of peace, but also the method of justly waging or refraining from war.

Nor do we concern ourselves with human judgments where a divine oracle goes before us, which sends kings to priests and theologians. Deuteronomy 17:18: “After he has sat upon the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself the Deuteronomy of this law in a volume, receiving a copy from the priests of the Levitical tribe; and he shall have it with him and shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and to keep his words and ceremonies, which have been commanded in the law. Nor shall his heart be lifted up in pride above his brethren, nor shall he turn aside to the right hand or to the left, that he himself and his sons may reign for a long time over Israel.”

Therefore, he who explains Scripture ought to institute a disputation concerning the just and unjust law of kingship, such as is set forth at 1 Kings 8:11; and whoever has undertaken the public office of teaching is a debtor not only to private and unwise persons, but also to magistrates and wise persons. But if kings are commanded to hear and to learn, it also belongs to theologians to teach. Concerning kings and their instruction, Wisdom itself pronounces thus, chapter 6:1: “Wisdom is better than strength, and a prudent man than a strong man. Hear therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you who hold multitudes under your sway and take pleasure in the crowds of nations; because--”

[Printed page 2]

--power has been given to you by the Lord, and might by the Most High, who will inquire into your works and search your thoughts; because, although you were ministers of his kingdom, you did not judge rightly, nor keep the law of justice, nor walk according to the will of God. Terribly and swiftly he will appear to you, because a most severe judgment will be made upon those who rule. For mercy is granted to the lowly, but the powerful shall powerfully suffer torments.”

Therefore, the magistrate must be instructed with great care from the divine writings, so that he may judge the people of God in justice, and God’s poor in judgment; so that he may hope in the Lord, and in the mercy of the Most High may not be moved.

§ 4. Hence it is that God always joined prophets and priests to kings as instructors, admonishers, praisers of deeds rightly done, but fearless censurers of crimes. Samuel was joined to Saul; Nathan to David; Shemaiah to Rehoboam; Ahijah to Jeroboam; Hanani to Baasha; Elijah to Ahab; Elisha to Jehoram; Isaiah to Hezekiah; Jeremiah to Hezekiah’s descendants; and others to others. They delivered precepts concerning the right government of the commonwealth; and although they discharged an extraordinary office of embassy, the diligence of ordinary teachers was not on that account without employment. For they too admonished the magistrate; and when they turned the duty of teaching and reproving into silence or flattery, they were accused and condemned as defendants upon a charge of injured eternal majesty, and heavenly justice required the blood of perishing souls from the hand of the shepherds.

Nor has the instruction of devout theologians ever been lacking to Christian kings. Examine both the writings and the deeds of Saints Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Leo, Gregory, Remigius, and others, and you will find that care of the commonwealth was always of chief importance to them. Nor was the mind of the Scholastic theologians different. Their works concerning the commonwealth--and, above all, the work of Saint Thomas Aquinas *On the Government of Princes* and the commentaries upon Aristotle’s *Politics*--are in men’s hands. And would that those sincere and Christian expositors, rather than new, detestable, atheistic, Epicurean ones, were offered to the courts of princes.

If, therefore, care for the commonwealth, love of country, and the instruction of princes and subjects are imputed to me as a fault, so many great and holy names must likewise be summoned with me to trial, and prophets, priests, and teachers must be entered among the accused. For it is not just that, in an equal cause, I should be condemned and others acquitted. Nor, when disputing about worldly empires and secular affairs, do I depart from spiritual care and

duty, since my purpose is so to order the temporal commonwealth that it may direct earthly good and happiness toward spiritual and heavenly good and happiness. For the aim and end of my undertaking is to show how all human things, private as well as public, are to be directed toward the highest good and ultimate end.

Therefore, just as the Apostle instructs us spiritually when he says (1 Timothy 2:1), “I beseech, first of all, that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high station, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all piety and chastity; for this is good and acceptable before God our Savior,” so also that doctrine must be judged spiritual by which kings and those invested with high station so restrain, instruct, and draw their subjects by arms, laws, and example that they may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all piety and chastity. And so I can not undeservedly hope that this labor of mine will be good and acceptable before God our Savior, and salutary to all who wish to use it.

§ 5. But if you wish to inspect and weigh the other functions of our Society, you yourself will admit that this study is most consonant with it. In schools, in churches, and in assemblies, almost all of us must treat daily of every kind of duty: all must be instructed, admonished, and strengthened toward virtue and a blessed life; subjects must be taught to obey the magistrate, to acknowledge the right of superiors and their own obligation to obey; magistrates must be admonished to use their right for the preservation of those who obey, not for their own advantages, lest power be a perpetrator of injuries, but rather their banisher and avenger, an armed guardian of what is equitable and honorable.

This care extends more widely than to private persons and embraces public affairs as well, for the household government and morals of private persons also depend upon the right constitution and government of the commonwealth. Certainly, we labor in vain to form tender youths within the walls of schools for prudence, modesty, and piety, if, after they have been released from tutelage, they are swept away into common evils by the violence of public vices. Few cultivate virtue amid public license; many, steadfast for a long time, at last admit its enticements, and finally even perpetrate crimes.

But there will be a proper place for speaking--or, rather, weeping--about this matter. For the present it is enough to understand that, without the best government of the city, without public discipline as the enemy and avenger of vices, the exhortations of religious men possess little strength. For if, in addition to allurements that by their own sweetness cling tenaciously as though with birdlime, there are added the examples of many, impunity, ancestral custom, and public authority that either approves, dissembles, or at least is unequal to the vices, who will deny that the case is lost?

• In § 3, the HTML transcription’s **datae est a Domino potestas** has been read as **data est a Domino potestas**, an evident error of agreement.

[Printed page 2 continued]

§ 6. If, however, Theology excludes me from civil disputations, I shall return by another road and, by counsels that take a middle course, put myself forward as a professor of History and Philosophy. For I have read histories and expounded them to my hearers so that young men might imbibe civil prudence with agreeable ease. Philosophy, moreover, the banisher of vices and commender of virtues, has a most excellent work: to establish laws, to constitute the order of the commonwealth, and to discover, for the peace, advantage, and happiness of both, an equality between rulers and subjects who are unequal. Which of the ancient philosophers did not discourse upon the commonwealth? Who did not establish laws? So that it may not be necessary to proceed through examples, consider Plato and Plato’s disciple Aristotle, who bestowed more labor upon illustrating moral philosophy than upon the subtleties of dialectic or the investigation of the secrets of nature.

What, then, did Aristotle do? He wrote ten books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, two books of the *Great Ethics*, seven books of the *Eudemian Ethics*, one book *On the Virtues*, eight books of the *Politics*, two books of *Economics*, and one book *On Nobility*. But perhaps these things are slight. What, however, is more wonderful than that which trustworthy authors relate? Diogenes Laertius, in his catalogue of Aristotle’s books, says: “Πολιτειῶν,” he says, “πόλεων δυοῖν

δεουσῶν ἑξήκοντα καὶ ἑκατόν· καὶ ἰδίᾳ δημοκρατικά, ὀλιγαρχικά, ἀριστοκρατικά, τυραννικά.” “Constitutions of one hundred and fifty-eight cities, and, separately, democratic, oligarchic, aristocratic, and tyrannical constitutions.” Ammonius, in his *Life of Aristotle*, says that he accompanied him as far as the Brahmins and there established two hundred and fifty-five constitutions. Indeed, Cicero too testifies in Book V of *On Ends* that he wrote a very great many works about these matters: “From Aristotle we have learned the customs, institutions, and disciplines of almost all cities, not only of Greece but also of the barbarian world; and from Theophrastus, their laws as well.” And Varro, in Book VI of *On the Latin Language*, cites Aristotle’s “Νόμια βαρβαρικά”--*Ordinances of the Barbarians*.

All those works have perished; nevertheless, books concerning some of the following are cited, namely, the commonwealths of the Athenians,

[Printed page 3]

the Aeginetans, Aetolians, Agrigentines, Ambraciots, Argives, Arcadians, Bottiaeans, Geloans, Delians, Euboeans, Epirotes, Thessalians, Ithacans, Himeraeans, Carians, Corcyraeans, Cians, Cyonians, Cymaeans, Cypriots, Lacedaemonians, Leucadians, Locrians, Massilians, Megarians, Methonaeans, Melians, Naxians, Opuntians, Orchomenians, Samians, the people of Samothrace, Sicyonians, Syracusans, Tarentines, Tegeans, Tenedians, Troezenians, Tyrrhenians, and Phocians. Although these are few, and some of them rather obscure, there is no doubt that he was more industrious concerning the famous and illustrious commonwealths. If, therefore, this was granted to Aristotle as a matter for praise, why should it be imputed to me as a fault?

But if I were even to prepare commentaries upon Aristotle’s *Politics* itself, young men--and perhaps statesmen--would owe me gratitude, and the examples of weighty authors would defend me: Thomas Aquinas, Jacques Lefèvre, Bernard of Siena, Antonio Montecatini, Ciriaco Strozzi, Denis Lambin, Donato Acciaoli, Guillaume Grégoire, Giovanni da Fabriano, and others. The sectarians too would plead my cause, for Camerarius, Melancthon, and many others also sweated in this arena. Let that field therefore be free to me as well, and let neither the malevolence of enemies cut off the Society’s opportunity to teach well nor the timidity of friends make it more difficult.

§ 7. But it is dangerous. As though our Society could discharge any office without danger, when it proceeds with perpetual constancy amid continual dangers--on one side surrounded by open enemies, on the other assailed by clandestine rivals, who display friendship in their words and countenance, but in deed and intention are more harmful than manifest enemies by as much as concealed hatreds are stronger than professed ones. Accordingly, no peculiar danger hangs over me in this cause. For there is no fear that my ship will be dashed against a rock if it holds to the course by which so many vessels have hitherto gone and returned unharmed. Nor do I see what I ought to fear, unless perhaps I diminish the power of princes or appear, on the contrary, to speak too harshly against the liberty of peoples. This I shall easily guard against if, walking upon the middle road, I set forth those things that are certain concerning the majesty of princes and the right of the people, and leave to the jurists those that are ambiguous and exposed to calumnies.

§ 8. Nor need I fear the suspicion of pride if I assume for myself the teaching of the commonwealth. For if it is not only permitted to me, but necessary by reason of my office, to speak about Sacred Scripture and heavenly things, why should it be a crime if I speak about earthly things? Kings, princes, and senators of commonwealths certainly need instruction, counsels, and, when they wish too much to be permitted to them, frequent and grave admonitions by which they may be brought back within bounds. The children of magnates are born under no different condition from the children of the poor: just as they are constrained by bodily weakness and mortality, so too are they constrained by ignorance and depraved passions. Look upon empires, and you will perceive the truth. Consider the errors of rulers; consult the deeds done from Julius himself down to Constantine, and from Constantine down to Charlemagne. You will see that some failed in fewer matters, others in more, and most in the most depraved and foulest matters, and that they administered dominion avariciously, cruelly, lustfully, and--what pertains to the present subject--with the greatest folly and without any principle of politics.

If, nevertheless, anyone is indignant that laws should in any manner be written for kings, let him receive these writings of mine as though they had been dictated to the children of princes, magnates, nobles, and senators, a distinguished number of whom our Society instructs in the studies of humane learning and wisdom. Let them read and learn, so that when they have been placed at the helm nothing may be lacking except experience. Although experience can accomplish much, it nevertheless does not suffice by itself, since accurate reasoning and manifold prudence are needed for judging the very things that occur in counsels and affairs to be conducted. Evil princes have experienced conspiracies by their own men and enormous hatreds, whose source and origin was cruelty; but they suspected every other thing, cast the causes upon others, intensified their cruelty as though by that remedy alone they could meet the machinations of their adversaries, and hastened their own destruction.

What, then? Do you dare to write about governing a city when you have never governed one? See how readily I answer the question that appears difficult. Young men sometimes hold the helm of the commonwealth, the unskilled do so on occasion, and all who have ever ruled were at one time inexperienced, because they had only begun their government. God alone has held an eternal dominion without a beginning. If, therefore, you admit an inexperienced man to kingship, why do you remove him from counsel? An unskilled hand certainly applies a remedy with greater danger than an inexperienced mind recommends one; for counsel can be disregarded or corrected, whereas a harmful drug is never administered without the destruction of the sick man.

Next, look around the Christian world and, from the many thousands who serve princes as counselors, count those who have governed a commonwealth or any part of one. When you have driven these men from all courts, you will also be able to deter me from writing. I know for certain that neither Plato, Aristotle, Lipsius, nor others governed a commonwealth. Yet if kings obeyed their counsels, assuredly many kings would consult more prudently for their own safety, longevity, and reputation, and--what is the principal matter--for the welfare of their peoples.

I confess that it is burdensome and almost proud to wish to teach the experienced, and perhaps also dangerous to teach princes; nevertheless, even the greatest pilots are accustomed to be admonished by passengers in great storms. [Cicero, *Philippic* VII.] That well-known saying is wise: “ἐρέτην χρῆναι πρῶτα γενέσθαι πρὶν πηδαλίοις ἐπιχειρεῖν”--one ought first to be an oarsman before holding the helm. [Aristophanes, *Knights*.] Yet we know celebrated admirals whose hands were not hardened by the oar. He who is ignorant of the arts does not readily judge concerning them, for while craftsmen labor, certain things spontaneously disclose themselves to them that lie hidden from others. Nevertheless, Fulgentius spoke truly: “An evil life plunges immature old men into Tartarus; a good life conducts mature young men to the kingdom.” [Epistle 2.] This is so not only with respect to the heavenly kingdom, but also to this earthly kingdom, which nevertheless is given both to the good and to the evil. Kingship, accordingly, belongs to young and old alike.

Experience is an excellent teacher, but right reason is a better one. He who has read, heard, and seen many things concerning the commonwealth often judges it better than one who has had experience of it. Isocrates spoke truly: “Πάντας ἀνθρώπους πλείους ἐπιστήμας ἔχειν διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς ἢ τῆς ὄψεως”--all men have imbibed more branches of knowledge by hearing than by seeing. [*Panathenaicus*.] Physicians embrace all diseases in their knowledge and cure them by art, although they have felt few diseases, or often none; but those who are tormented by diseases are ignorant of the method of healing. Therefore, one who has not struggled with those evils will also be able to preserve the health of the commonwealth--that is, peace and tranquility--and to allay and restrain its diseases--that is, seditions and wars--provided that he has learned suitable remedies from the sayings and deeds of the wise and has wisely applied them to the commonwealth.

I praise experience, but I prefer reading, history, and knowledge. For who can experience everything? A lifetime is spent in one kingdom, one town, one court, and frequently in one function. A man knows the character of his own prince, his own nation, and his own colleagues; if anyone thinks to transfer these things to others, he will act just as one who wished to practice horsemanship at Venice or seamanship at Nuremberg.

[Printed page 4]

As to Hannibal's judging Phormio mad because he discoursed about war in the presence of a commander, although he himself had never seen a camp and had never heard the sound of a trumpet except at spectacles: Hannibal went astray through self-confidence and Punic pride. Antiochus, who approved of Phormio, judged much better. For how many things could Phormio have taught Hannibal even about war? Namely, that he should not act treacherously; that he should not be cruel toward the conquered and those who had surrendered; that he should make use of victory; that he should not enervate his soldier with Campanian luxuries; that he should not fight Scipio without some advantage of his own; and that he should not cast everything upon the hazard of a single battle.

Finally, it was necessary for one who both wished and was able to conquer the Romans by means of Antiochus's forces to win the king's favor by courtesy, if he shunned flattery. But Hannibal, with barbarian arrogance, alienated from himself a king accustomed to the soft speeches of his own men, and by one witticism delivered the Romans from the greatest dangers. For when the king displayed to him an army splendid in costly clothing and gleaming weapons and asked Hannibal whether he thought these things would be enough for the Romans, he said, "Entirely enough, even if they are exceedingly avaricious." Since by this piece of wit he had mocked the royal equipment, all its commanders, and indeed Antiochus himself, he was held in contempt by those who were indignant; and thus by one witticism he benefited the Romans more than Scipio did with so many legions. But if he had approved those forces, exercised them gradually, and enrolled new soldiers, it would not have been difficult to overthrow the Roman Empire with such resources.

But reason often escapes great men in the greatest affairs, and the principle of true statecraft escapes the most practiced statesmen. This happened altogether to Hannibal, who was acquainted with a popular commonwealth but inexperienced in kingship. For while, as an exile, he dealt with the king with the same liberty as though, as a consul of Carthage, he were contending with a rival senator, he lost a most splendid opportunity to liberate both himself and his country. Nor am I moved by the bulla-wearing crowd who admire the cleverness of his answer and extol Hannibal's experience, when they admit that an experience confined within Carthage alone, as within a narrow lake, could not hold its course upon the ocean and amid the variety of commonwealths and nations. For whatever Hannibal did afterward, he was never able to obtain the power to conduct the war according to his own judgment.

Experience, accordingly, although praiseworthy, is nevertheless always incomplete. It is often found in a commonwealth in which no one is wise and in which, because of the stupidity of the nation, the senate has passed into a proverb. Some call political knowledge and prudence a practical discipline. Besold says that jurisprudence is subordinated to it. Different men have held different views.

And I judge these things sufficient for my defense. But if we weigh in our minds the necessity for these disputations, which the license of our times produces, we shall certainly all understand that I have undertaken this labor rightly, deservedly, and from plain necessity. For at the present time it is not one class of men that overturns commonwealths, but very many, who nevertheless demand to be regarded and called statesmen. Some, without learning and without experience, rely upon their own judgment and devise certain novel and astonishing things. They do less harm for the very reason that they generally collapse in the actual attempt and at its beginnings.

Some cling so closely to the institutions of the ancients that they approve nothing unless it is drawn from the Athenian, Spartan, or Roman commonwealth. They are involved in great errors. For, in the first place, they must necessarily judge all who were born after Augustus to be ignorant of ruling and counseling--and thus even Augustus himself, who changed almost all the ancient statutes, although he generally retained their names and appearance in order to deceive the people. For who does not know what a difference there is between a consul who is Caesar's follower and flatterer and a consul of unimpaired liberty? He, therefore, who directs his mind's eye toward the truth itself will find many things in the commonwealths of the ancients that are scarcely commendable, and very many better things in new kingdoms and cities.

Most men also frequently err in judgment and affection: now they praise this man, now that one, and take sides. Most defend the victors and, as is customary in human affairs, lean toward the fortunate wall. Many, in order to delight and to obtain admiration for their work, prefer to speak and write things that are specious rather than true.

But in the present age there has grown strong--and in many places has almost prevailed--a detestable class of pseudo-statesmen who, in place of a true and legitimate commonwealth, erect a “πονηρόπολιν,” that is, a city of impious, ruined, and utterly nefarious men. In the preceding century Niccolò Machiavelli carried the torch before them, with which he scorched many kingdoms. For when he teaches that religion is to be accommodated to dominion, that vices and errors are to be approved for the sake of the kingdom, that utility is to be placed before justice, that factions are to be admitted, and other things of which we shall treat in their proper places, what else does he do than make the prince unjust, impious, crafty, a dissembler, and a hypocrite?

In this matter, indeed, he departs from the ultimate end and therefore builds ruin; and since he is involved in continual error and deprived of divine wisdom, he does not even instruct the prince in human prudence. For he cannot perpetually conceal hypocrisy, since nothing feigned can be lasting; and perfidy and dissimulation, once disclosed, take away trust forever. But no one whom neither his subjects nor his neighbors trust can retain dominion for long.

Against these men, I have resolved to demonstrate the true and solid art and power of ruling: founded upon divine laws, constituted by natural reason, and armed with true prudence, religion, and virtue. Yet I shall do so not from my judgment alone, but from the divine writings, the teachings of the holy Fathers, the laws of legitimate princes, just custom, the order and manner of commonwealths, approved history, examples and reason, and the natural judgment of men. And thus I shall bring forward whatever I judge to pertain to the security and majesty of government, to the tranquility and advantages of subjects, and to the salvation and happiness of all, rulers as well as people.

- All six Greek passages omitted by the HTML have been restored from printed pages 2--4. Contzen's immediately following Latin renderings have been translated in full; no duplicate English renderings have been added.
- In the Diogenes Laertius quotation, the print reads **δεουσῶν**; the reading is preserved rather than normalized to the **δεούσαι** found in some modern editions.
- Contzen excerpts Isocrates with the infinitive **ἔχειν**; the continuous text of *Panathenaicus* §150 has the participle **ἔχοντας**. The wording printed by Contzen is retained.
- **πονηρόπολιν** is the accusative of a Greek compound meaning a wicked city; Contzen's own following Latin, rendered “that is, a city of impious, ruined, and utterly nefarious men,” supplies its translation.
- The HTML's editorial expansion **Rempublicarum [(perhaps: Rerum publicarum)] senatores** in § 8 has been rendered according to the evident sense, “senators of commonwealths.”

CHAPTER II

The Necessity, Utility, and Dignity of Civil Doctrine

§ 1. Certain matters are disputed not because they are doubtful, but for the sake of order. Of this kind is what I am about to say concerning the necessity, utility, and dignity of civil doctrine, which I judge especially necessary among all doctrines. For since human beings are borne by their nature toward society and mutual intercourse, and make use of the benevolence and assistance of other human beings--for God has not permitted the human race universally to live after the manner of the Scythians, the Wagon-Dwellers, or the *σποράδων* ("scattered") Arabs, although not even that savagery of the barbarians could have existed altogether without government--it was necessary that commonwealths be constituted. Human beings therefore entered into society with one another and established the commonwealth.

Within it, "τῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ ἀρχομένων"--the order and alternation of rulers and subjects--is necessary. This order is so necessary that God preferred to permit power to evil men rather than that human beings should be restrained by no power, and accordingly judged it better that many just men should be subject to one impious man than that they should be subject to no one. But if a polity is necessary, political science is also necessary. For how will either command or obedience be rightly exercised if they are destitute of the prudence required for governing and obeying?

[Printed page 5]

The ruin and happiness of kingdoms generally arise from the error or prudence of the ruler. As Augustine teaches [*City of God*, Book V, chapter 19], if those who are endowed with true piety and live well have pursued this knowledge of governing peoples, nothing is more fortunate for human affairs than that, through God's mercy, they should possess power.

The difficult dispositions of subjects declare this necessity still more fully, so much so that it is far easier to find a brave man who can conquer an enemy than a prudent man who can govern a citizen. "Δύσκολόν ἐστι τὸ θρέμμα ἄνθρωπος"--man is a difficult and troublesome animal. He can bear neither servitude nor liberty; under a mild government he grows wanton, under a harsh one he becomes exhausted, and under either he rises against his ruler. Or, if his attempt is restrained through fear of a more severe power, he avenges and consoles himself with complaints.

How great an art is therefore needed so that this animal--fierce, proud, changeable, unstable, presumptuous, and equitable toward no one less than toward him whom it is compelled to obey--may walk according to the standard of right; so that so many thousands of human beings may tend toward the same point and, indeed, may attain one and the same best end by such diverse roads? We entrust a field and a vineyard only to an experienced cultivator; no one entrusts himself to a shipmaster ignorant of the sea and its waves; we do not admit even an unskilled flute-player to our banquets. And shall we allow that great ship, carrying so many souls, to be endangered by the ignorance and indolence of one man?

Government, therefore, is necessary, as is knowledge of administering government. This knowledge is more difficult because it is compelled to prescribe the law and measure of life to both good and evil persons. Every good man is governed very easily, but an evil man with the greatest difficulty. Nevertheless, he must be governed, lest he harm the good man, and so that, although he does not cease to be evil, he may nevertheless be unable to do the evils he desires. Here perpetual vigilance is needed, so that the spring of vices may be stopped up and not pour itself forth into shameful deeds; and the matter must be handled with distinguished dexterity and knowledge, so that, if it pours out its poison, the poison may be diverted and flow away with the least possible injury to others.

§ 2. Great and plainly divine is the knowledge of physicians. They so care for the human body--a structure composed of so many and such various members, comprising organs assigned to such contrary functions, veins, arteries, internal organs, muscles, humors, and spirits--that they preserve the analogy, symmetry, and friendly concord of all its parts

with all the others. They thereby bring it about that the temperament and constitution of all the parts is agreeable and favorable to them all, and that every member is sustained by every other member.

But in a prince this knowledge is more laborious by as much as the body of the commonwealth is larger and more at variance with itself than the human body; and it is more sublime by as much as it is more worthy to take thought for all than for individuals. The great philosopher, the unhappy teacher of an unhappy Caesar, said prudently: “All this that you see is one; we are members of a great body.” It is your task, O prince, to preserve the concord, tranquility, unity, and love of a great body--a free body, of members separated from one another, of members mutually hostile, of members rebelling against their own head, that is, their ruler. How exquisite an art and how enlightened a prudence this requires is taught us by the small number of those who have been able to do it and the multitude of those who have not. If one wished to contend by examples, I should oppose hundreds to every single one. It is a great power of divine ordination that power should exist in the world and that power should be from God, even when it is conferred by good men upon evil men, or upon good men by better men; but it is great rashness to exercise power without the knowledge of governing.

§ 3. When the commonwealth is badly administered, all other things are deprived of their proper ends. For commerce will terminate in frauds and impostures; navigation in piracy; agriculture in disputes; judgments in robberies; military service in brigandage; the liberal arts in idleness; religion in superstition; and sacred rites in bare and empty ceremonies. For a public vice communicates its poison to all the actions of private persons, and the very ornaments of the city are turned toward its destruction. The necessity of this knowledge--and the utility contained within that necessity--has therefore been demonstrated. A few words must now be said concerning its dignity, for nothing sufficient can be said on behalf of that dignity.

§ 4. When we name the knowledge of commanding, we appear to have praised it sufficiently. It is the mistress of all arts, the moderator of all civil actions, the preserver of human society, and the greatest of all human branches of knowledge. Thus judges the most prudent of the philosophers, Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, chapter 1: “Since,” he says, “we see that every city is a certain society, and that every society has been joined together for the sake of some good--for all men do all things for the sake of that which appears good--it is manifest that all societies tend toward a good as toward some goal; *μάλιστα δὲ, καὶ τῷ κυριωτάτῳ πάντων, ἢ πασῶν κυριωτάτῃ, καὶ πάσας περιέχουσα τὰς ἄλλας. αὕτη δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ καλουμένη πόλις, καὶ ἡ κοινωνία πολιτική*”--“but that society which is the chief and mistress of all societies has proposed to itself that good which is most excellent of all; and this is the society that is called a city or commonwealth, or civil society.”

The knowledge of establishing and preserving human society must therefore be the most excellent, since it has the public good proposed to itself. Hence divine majesty has surrounded kingship with such splendor and attached so many ornaments to it, in order to show that governing the world is the greatest work. Hence it honors princes with the name of gods, because they are participants in divine power.

But I do not wish to linger longer upon this matter. The restless ambition of many is sufficient even if it is not inflamed by the praise of kingdoms. Would that it endeavored to acquire the knowledge and faculty of commanding before dominions themselves. But we experience that for the most part it happens otherwise. “*Τυραννὶς χρήμα σφαλερόν, πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῆς ἐρασταὶ εἰσιν*”--government is indeed a slippery thing, but it has many lovers. The bright splendor of kingship blinds the eyes with a false brilliance. The beginnings of honor are joyful, while a sick mind is tickled by public congratulation; care and the true heat of labors soon follow. But those who have been deceived praise majesty and government, for, as the disciple of Socrates rightly judged, they see “*τὸ μὲν πρόσωπον ἡδύ, τὰ δὲ ἐν δόμοισι λυπηρά*”--a flattering frontage and entrance, but miserable things within the house.

§ 5. Eternal majesty, which administers the world without anxiety, will compensate good princes for such immense care, labor, misery, and endurance with the appearance of worldly honor and the reality of supermundane glory. Evil rulers, however, gaping after empty things and content with vanity alone, undertake government--that is, the care of

another's welfare--often amid public hatred. It is indeed a miserable but customary thing to undertake so many evils with no fruit, and not even with the hope of any good.

I have also judged that the reader must be admonished of this: in political disputations there cannot and ought not to be that subtle, acute, demonstrative exactitude--*ἀκριβολογίαν*--which is customarily employed in physics or mathematics. For I have undertaken to instruct a prince not so that he may dispute in the schools, but so that he may govern peoples. Nor, in moral and human affairs, in which equitable moderation--*ἐπιείκεια*--indulgence, clemency, and often even severity and threats graver than the truth intervene, do the nature of the subject and the method of treatment permit apodictic demonstrations to be employed.

§ 6. Finally, I judge that this too must not be concealed. I do indeed seek the best commonwealth and seek to fortify it with religion, virtues, education, laws, ecclesiastical and civil magistrates, and civil and military power against the internal and external enemy;

[Printed page 6]

nevertheless, I do not seek to constitute a Platonic commonwealth. For Plato describes for us a city such as can be wished for, not one that can exist in this world--that is, in this heap of evils and province of wickedness. For I shall institute a discourse not about commonwealths that never have existed and never will exist, but about those that exist or can exist.

I indeed desire a commonwealth in which the best and wisest prince always commands the citizens with love and equity, as a father commands his children; in which good citizens, harmonious among themselves and obedient to the prince, all desire and pursue honorable things. But those commonwealths are in Utopia [printed: *Outopia*]; I have resolved to treat of our own. I have resolved to instruct commonwealths in which there are a few very good men, many of middling character who are free from vices rather than possessed of virtues, and not a few very bad men who are restrained by fear of the laws alone, so that they are not criminals in public. Neither the rising nor the setting sun has ever seen another and better commonwealth, although it has often seen many worse ones.

Why, therefore, should I indulge in ideals and superfluous speculations by which present goods can neither be defended nor advanced, remedies applied to evils already implanted, nor approaching evils met? Therefore, as Aristotle rightly admonishes in *Politics*, Book IV, chapter 1, let us consider *Τὸν δυνατόν*--that which is possible--as the condition of the commonwealth. And if we cannot make it the best, let us nevertheless draw it as far away as possible from the worst. Otherwise, if it were established that such a commonwealth had ever existed, it could also be hoped for now.

What Seneca says in Epistle 90 is not altogether empty: "A world not yet exhausted produced better things." And the poet, the hater and mocker of his own age, says:

Then, in a new world and beneath a fresh heaven,

human beings lived otherwise.

And perhaps Plato suspected that so holy a commonwealth had once existed. "οἱ παλαιοὶ," he says, "κρείττονες ἡμῶν, καὶ ἐγγυτέρω θεῶν οἰκοῦντες." (*Politics*, Book II.) "The ancients were better than we are and dwelt nearer to the gods." I shall concede this concerning many, but deny it concerning more. I remember that the inheritance of the world was too narrow for two brothers; that afterward arose the wars of the Giants; and that soon the entire human race, with eight souls left as seed, was swallowed by the waters--and that even among these there was Ham the mocker. I remember wars of kings before the very ark and the aged Noah; the fires of Sodom; and the destructions of the Canaanites and Horites. Therefore, vices existed then as well--very many and atrocious vices--and times more criminal than our own. While reading history, I perceive each man to be an accuser of his own times and a praiser of ancient ones. But the cause is surely that we experience our own evils with grief and fear, whereas we read of past evils in order to beguile time.

Shame, truth, and fidelity have fled;

into their place have succeeded frauds and deceits.

These three good things have fled, but from those places in which they once existed; for in many places neither shame, truth, nor fidelity ever existed except in very few persons. Therefore, in treating of the commonwealth, I shall so compose my arguments as to establish that many within it are evil; that all the good are in greater danger of becoming evil; that the evil have less hope of becoming good; and that the prince ought to take thought for both.

Some who have professed to transmit the secrets of dominions, under a flattering title, have brought forward nothing except the best-known matters, already long ago written down by Plato and Aristotle. There exists a treatise by Arnold Clapmar *On Secrets*, but secrets already made public in books and practice. If there is any secret, it is this: to conceal the art of governing. For no one desires to be deceived by artifice and governed in that way, but rather to be directed toward a good end by charity and prudence. The highest thing is piety, and authority is its effect--an authority that cannot be retained if God pours contempt upon the prince.

CHAPTER III

The Definition of the Commonwealth

§ 1. I take the name “commonwealth” in the broadest sense, so that it embraces monarchy, aristocracy, and *πολιτείαν* properly so called, or government by the people. Nor do I locate the distinction in breadth of command or in the narrow boundaries of kingdoms. For I do not hesitate both to call a small town a commonwealth and to call the ruler of a single city a king.

The Greek expression *πολιτεία* is not customarily understood in the same way. For it is sometimes used strictly for that form of commonwealth which is popular. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book IV, chapter 8, calls it “μίξιν ὀλιγαρχίας καὶ δημοκρατίας,” a mixture of oligarchy and democracy. And in *Politics*, Book I, chapter 1: “ὅσοι μὲν οὖν οἴονται πολιτικὸν καὶ βασιλικὸν καὶ οἰκονομικὸν καὶ δεσποτικὸν εἶναι τὸν αὐτὸν οὐ καλῶς λέγουσι.” Those who say that the political ruler, the kingly ruler, the household ruler, and the despotic ruler are the same do not speak rightly. For he judges that these differ not only in multitude and fewness, but also in kind. He calls “political” the one who rules and obeys by turns, and “kingly” the one who rules alone and does not obey; yet he says that there is another diversity in the actual government of the commonwealth, and in this way *πολιτεία* is used strictly.

In other places, however, Aristotle interprets “polity” as every commonwealth. For in *Politics*, Book III, chapter 14: “ἴσως δὴ καλῶς ἔχει μετὰ τοὺς εἰρημένους λόγους μεταβῆναι, καὶ σκέψασθαι περὶ βασιλείας, φάμεν γὰρ τῶν ὀρθῶν πολιτειῶν μίαν εἶναι ταύτην.” “It will perhaps be right after this discourse to pass to another subject and to treat of kingship. For we say that kingship is one of the well-constituted polities.” Indeed, he himself expressed the difference between the meanings in explicit words in *Ethics*, Book VIII, chapter 1: “Πολιτείας δὲ ἐστὶν εἶδη τρία, ἴσαι δὲ καὶ παρεκβάσεις, οἷον φθοραὶ τούτων· εἰσὶ δ’ αἱ μὲν πολιτεῖαι, βασιλεία τε καὶ ἀριστοκρατία. Τρίτη δὲ, ἡ ἀπὸ τιμημάτων, ἣν τιμοκρατικὴν λέγειν οἰκεῖον φαίνεται, πολιτείαν δὲ αὐτὴν εἰώθασιν οἱ πλεῖστοι καλεῖν.” “There are three kinds of polity, and the same number of deviations from them, or corruptions of good polity. The polities are kingship and government by the best; but the third is that which is based upon a property assessment, which it appears should properly be called *τιμοκρατικήν*; most men have customarily called this one a polity.”

There is therefore a twofold polity: the former, which contains three kinds, and the latter, which is the last of the three kinds. I had to give this warning lest a dispute about words be raised against us hereafter. Indeed, the Latins also use the name “state” in this way. Pliny, Book VII: “The Egyptians have a royal state, the Attic people a popular one,” and so forth. And Cicero, Book III of *On the Laws*: “But since the royal kind of state, approved at one time, was afterward rejected not so much because of the faults of kingship as because of those of the king, only the name of king will appear to have been changed; the thing itself will remain, if one man commands all the other magistrates.”

§ 2. Aristotle therefore defines *πολιτεία*, or the commonwealth, in *Politics*, Book III, chapter 6, in this manner: “ἔστι δὲ πολιτεία πόλεως τάξις τῶν τε ἄλλων ἀρχῶν καὶ μάλιστα τῆς κυρίας πάντων.” “A polity or commonwealth is the ordering of a city and of its magistracies, both the others and especially that one which is supreme over all.” Plutarch says: “The commonwealth is a certain body fitted together from members, which is animated by the benefit of a divine gift, is moved at the command of the highest equity, and is governed by a certain light of reason.”

Scipio in Cicero, as reported by Saint Augustine in *City of God*, Book II, chapter 21, said that the commonwealth was the property of the people. He determines, however, that a people is not every assemblage of a multitude, but an assemblage united by agreement concerning law and by community of advantage. From this he gathers that there is then a commonwealth--that is, the property of a people--when it is conducted well and justly, whether by one king, by a few of the best men,

or by the entire people. The people, however, contains all who are in the commonwealth; for when “the people” is said without qualification, even the king and the senate are reckoned among the people.

This definition is obscure. For a field, walls, a treasury, porticoes, and other things are the property of the people, yet these do not constitute the commonwealth, but are ornaments or aids of the commonwealth. Indeed, debt and similar losses are also things belonging to the people. Next, the people itself is a material part of the commonwealth, since it is called an assemblage; yet the people will not rightly be called the property of the people. But if you prefer to define in the abstract, as they say, the people will be still less a part of the commonwealth.

Justus Lipsius, Book II, chapter 1, defines civil life as “that which we, mingled together, lead in a society of human beings for mutual advantages or use.” He names prudence and virtue as its guides--rightly, indeed, lest advantages and use be referred solely to utility and pleasure, but principally to moral goodness. I therefore judge that these definitions differ more in words than in meaning. But because I write not for Stoics or Spartans, but for statesmen and the people, it has seemed good to me to give a definition that contains all the causes, and to give it in the concrete so that it may be readily perceived. A commonwealth, therefore, is an assemblage of human beings, associated by the guidance of nature through agreement concerning law and community of advantage, for the purpose of living well and happily.

§ 3. The efficient cause is a certain guidance and impulse of nature implanted by God; therefore God too is a cause, for the things that are from nature and in nature are referred to God. Hence Aristotle rightly concluded: “διὸ πᾶσα πόλις φύσει ἐστὶ.” “Therefore every city exists by nature.” And in *Politics*, Book I, chapter 2: “From these things, therefore, it is evident that the city must be numbered among those things which exist by nature; that man is by nature a civil animal; and that one who is without a city by the impulse of nature, not by a fault of fortune, is either a wicked man or better than man, like the one against whom this reproach was cast by Homer:

Ἀφρήτωρ, ἀθέμιστος, ἀνέστιος.

>

Without council, without law, without hearth.”

Those, therefore, who were *μισάνθρωποι*, haters of human beings, overwhelmed natural *στοργήν*, or affection, and its effect by the magnitude of their vices. Such was that petty Greek Timon, and such were tyrants who wished that the whole people had a single neck; who called themselves the scourge of God; and who thought that a slain enemy smelled good, but a slain citizen better. The material cause is an assemblage of human beings: common people, senators, nobles, princes, and kings. I exclude slaves, however, for they are not a part of the commonwealth, but organs and certain animate instruments. Yet because they too are human beings, and often human beings more excellent than their masters, the commonwealth shall also undertake their care and protect them against cruel and injurious masters.

§ 4. The form is the principle of law to which the people has consented--that is, the ordering, through command, of rulers and subjects. From this form arises the threefold commonwealth. From this point it is also apparent that, when that consent is absent, there is no commonwealth, but some other assemblage, such as one of slaves living under the power of some master.

Accordingly, the emperor of the Turks does not possess a commonwealth properly so called. For since he has an absolute right of life and death over his subjects, and even over the supreme commanders of war; since all publicly declare that all their possessions and they themselves have been delivered into the great emperor's ownership as chattels; and since that right is greater and more unrestrained than that of masters over slaves formerly was, there is here no government other than *δεσποτικόν*, and in no way a civil one. For although he possesses cities, he nevertheless does not rule them by the law of citizens, but by the absolute discretion of domination. Those great cities, therefore, are nothing other than certain more capacious workhouses for slaves; and the great pashas and beylerbeys are like certain household-steward slaves, destined to die at the nod of their master without any protection of law or right.

§ 5. The end is to live well and happily. Aristotle explained this as follows: “The perfect society composed of several villages is a city, which possesses the limit of all *αὐταρκείας*--that is, which is altogether and perfectly sufficient to itself. It arises, indeed, for the sake of living, but exists and endures for the sake of living well.” The end of all things, however, is happiness. When happiness is located in virtue, it produces a good commonwealth; when it is sought in pleasure, riches, and honors, there will indeed be a commonwealth, but one that is vicious, restless, and short-lived, and while it pursues false happiness it will entangle itself in true calamities. It is helpful in this matter to hear a wise slave:

What of that town which you saw--did it seem fortified to you by a wall?

>

P. If its inhabitants are well mannered, I judge it splendidly fortified;

if treachery, embezzlement, and avarice are exiles from the city;

envy is the fourth, ambition the fifth, disparagement the sixth,

perjury the seventh--

>

S. Excellent!

>

P. negligence the eighth,

injury the ninth, and crime the tenth, the worst thing to encounter.

Unless these are absent from it, a hundredfold wall is too little to preserve its affairs.

I shall seal this with a judgment of Plato: “ἔστιν ἄρα ταὐτό, ὡς ἔοικε, βασιλεὺς, τύραννος, πολιτικός, οἰκονόμος, δεσπότης, σὺφρων, δίκαιος· καὶ μία τέχνη ἐστί, βασιλική, τυραννική, πολιτική, δεσποτική, δικαιοσύνη, οἰκονομική, σωφροσύνη.” “The king, tyrant, statesman, household manager, master, temperate man, and just man therefore appear to be the same; and there is one art: kingly, tyrannical, political, masterly, domestic, justice, and temperance.” In a word: he administers a commonwealth with great art who lives and commands temperately and justly.

- All eight Greek passages omitted from the HTML transcription have been restored from the scans of printed pages 6--7. Because Contzen supplies a complete Latin rendering after each passage, no redundant translation directly from the Greek has been added; his Latin renderings remain translated in full.

- The Greek terms retained by the HTML in Beta Code or transliteration have been restored in Greek script as *πολιτείαν, πολιτεία, τιμοκρατικήν, μισάνθρωποι, στοργήν, δεσποτικόν, and αὐταρκείας*.

- The Aristotle quotation from *Politics* I.1 ends with the printed *λέγουσι*, rather than the received *λέγουσιν*; the printed reading is retained.

- The Homeric quotation is printed without the received closing *έστιν*; Contzen’s following Latin likewise renders only the three adjectives, so the shorter printed form is retained.

- In the final quotation (Plato, *Rival Lovers* 138c), the print has *ταὐτό* rather than received *ταὐτόν* and places *δικαιοσύνη* before *οἰκονομική*, although the following Latin rendering reverses the latter order. Contzen’s printed Greek and his Latin order are preserved in their respective places.

CHAPTER IV

The Material Cause of the Commonwealth

§ 1. A commonwealth is composed of villages or hamlets, villages of households, and a household of spouses: thus nature and experience teach us.

Three classes of human beings are necessary to a commonwealth: farmers, craftsmen, and soldiers. Socrates requires farmers, magistrates, and soldiers. But there can be a commonwealth in which the magistrate is drawn from the farmers. For Cincinnatus was summoned from the plow to the dictatorship, and after his victory the triumphing farmer worked his own land; and when Regulus was conducting affairs exceedingly well in Africa, he obtained from the Roman people a cultivator for his little field, lest he be summoned away from the midst of his victories to his meager little farm. Farmers can therefore hold magistracy, and the same men can be craftsmen and soldiers.

Nevertheless, the principle is different. There is need of few magistrates, for it is enough if every hundredth man presides; but an abundance of craftsmen and soldiers is necessary. It is therefore generally necessary for these to be distinct from farmers, since soldiers must frequently remain far from home and the critical moments of circumstances--at which an enemy must be repelled or attacked--are uncertain.

§ 2. This distinction is required not only in constituted commonwealths but also among barbarians. For both the Garamantes, who lived without a magistrate, and now the Brazilians and inhabitants of Florida divide duties between soldiers and farmers; but because they are naked and armed with clubs and bows, they scarcely need craftsmen.

The ancients did not rightly judge that a commonwealth coalesces from similar persons. For the greater the variety of offices, labors, arts, and conditions, the more abundant and well-equipped the commonwealth is. Aristotle weighed this accurately, as he did other matters, in *Politics*, Book II, chapter 2, when he said:

A city not only consists of several human beings, but of those differing in kind; for it cannot consist of similar persons.

[Printed page 8]

For a city is one thing, a *συνμαχία*, or military alliance, another; since the auxiliaries of several cities form one army from the same class of human beings. But I shall speak of the variety of human beings within a city in its proper place.

§ 3. Since Aristotle defines the city as a composition from villages so populous and well equipped that it possesses *πέρας αὐταρκείας*, the summit of abundance and, as it were, a horn of plenty by which it is sufficient to itself from itself, prudent men not undeservedly ask concerning what *αὐταρκεία*, or sufficiency, he appears to be understood.

For if he speaks of the things necessary for food, clothing, defense, and attack, such a commonwealth will be shown nowhere. For, to preserve human society, God willed that some human beings should need the aid of others. Some kingdoms may have been sufficient to themselves in that respect, such as Egypt and Italy; cities were by no means so--not even Sparta, the cultivator of harsh sobriety. For it was necessary for Sparta to seek rowers, money, and engines elsewhere. But in the present time we see that the most powerful and celebrated cities especially need foreign defenses.

Nor will anyone have explained the matter sufficiently if he calls that a city which either possesses sufficiency from itself or possesses suitable strength and means for acquiring it. For wealthy households can do this, and villages much more so. Therefore another sufficiency must be sought by which a city or commonwealth is constituted. For commonwealths are not distinguished from villages by resources, multitude of human beings, or walls, since Sparta was celebrated for poverty, counted no more than two thousand citizens, and did not fortify itself with walls; yet for

many years it commanded many very wealthy cities, indeed all Greece, and even Athens itself, “μεγαπόλεσιν Ἀθήναις,” the great city.

I therefore define “Ἀυτάρκειαν,” or sufficiency coalesced from the conjunction of villages, as existing when some nation or assemblage of a people is so associated that, free from every external dominion, it employs an absolute and complete sovereignty and, dependent upon no one, can freely determine concerning itself. For if it is subject to another sovereignty, it will not itself be an integral commonwealth, but a part and accession of another commonwealth, from which it borrows magistrates and laws.

That Aristotle thought and taught thus is evident from *Politics*, Book III, chapter 1. After he taught that the city is one of the *τῶν συγκειμένων*, composite things, he says that it must be asked who is a citizen. “For a city,” he says, “is a multitude of citizens.” He then defines a citizen not by resources or residence, but by “τῷ μετέχειν κρίσεως καὶ ἀρχῆς”--by the fact that he possesses a share in judging and commanding. Finally he decides the entire matter in these words: “ὃ ἐξουσία κοινωνεῖν ἀρχῆς βουλευτικῆς, ἢ κριτικῆς, πολίτην ἤδη λέγομεν εἶναι· πόλιν δὲ τὸ τῶν τοιούτων πλῆθος ἰκανὸν πρὸς αὐτάρκειαν ζῶης.” “One upon whom the power has been conferred to share in a magistracy concerned with deliberating and judging, we call a citizen of that city; and a city is a multitude of such citizens that possesses the things sufficient for life.” For political life, namely, which is discerned in sovereignty over the greatest matter and in liberty dependent upon no one.

A city must therefore be constituted from these persons, and it is called a free commonwealth--whether it is a kingdom, an aristocracy, or a polity strictly so called--if it is endowed from itself and within itself with the power of supreme magistracies and judgments. This is one body moving and nourishing itself, not a part of another body. In this commonwealth, greatness or smallness makes no distinction. For just as the compact and industrious little body of an ant is no less complete in all its parts than the vast bulk of an elephant, so also a small commonwealth can obtain its own perfection and need not yield to immense monarchies in the just ordering and administration of laws and magistrates, if regard is had for the advantage of each and all of the citizens.

For that commonwealth is most flourishing in which individuals flourish. Just as a body is healthy, strong, and beautiful if there is a proper temperament of all the humors, a measure of the members, a symmetry and joining together consonant with nature, and a pleasantness of color, so in a commonwealth the fitting connection of all its parts with one another, and a certain life belonging to law and an integrity of administration, render all persons flourishing, wealthy, peaceful, and happy.

- The HTML’s *vteres* in §2 has been read as the evident *veteres* (“the ancients”).
- All four Greek passages omitted from the HTML transcription have been restored from the scan of printed page 8. Because Contzen supplies a Latin rendering or explanation for each, no redundant translation directly from the Greek has been added; his Latin remains translated in full.
- Greek retained by the HTML in Beta Code or transliteration has been checked against the scan and restored in Greek script as *συμμαχία*, *πέρας αὐταρκείας*, *αὐταρκεία*, and *τῶν συγκειμένων*.
- The print reads *μεγαπόλεσιν Ἀθήναις* and gives the gloss “the great city Athens”; the Greek dative plural agrees with the grammatically plural place-name.
- The final Aristotle excerpt is shorter than the commonly received text: the printed Greek omits the words corresponding to “of that city,” although Contzen’s following Latin rendering includes them. Both the printed Greek and the fuller Latin rendering are retained.

CHAPTER V

That the Commonwealth Is Not From Fate, Chance, or Fortune, but From God

§ 1. By “fate” I mean not divine ordination, foreknowledge, and permission, but that which men wish to depend upon a necessary connection of things, upon the world, and upon the position of the stars, concerning which the eloquent but impious poet exclaims:

Alas, that the gods have contended as inferiors to the fates.

If some good and orthodox authors use the name of fate while thinking rightly about divine providence and freedom of the will, I do not reprehend their opinion. Nevertheless, I prefer to correct their manner of speaking rather than dispute dangerously on account of the weakness of many. Let them hear the counsel of Augustine, *City of God*, Book V, chapter 8:

But as for those who apply the name “fate” not to the constitution of the stars as it exists when each thing is conceived, born, or begun, but to the entire connection and sequence of causes by which everything that happens is brought about, it is not necessary to labor and contend greatly with them in a controversy over a word. For they attribute the very order and a certain connection of causes to the will and power of the supreme God, who is most rightly and truthfully believed both to know all things before they occur and to leave nothing unordered--from whom are all powers, although the wills of all are not from him.

That they call principally the very will of the supreme God--whose power extends invincibly through all things--“fate” is proved thus. These verses, unless I am mistaken, belong to Annaeus Seneca:

Lead me, highest Father and ruler of lofty heaven,
whithersoever it shall please you; there is no delay in obeying.
I am present, energetic. Make me unwilling: I shall accompany you groaning;
as an evil man I suffer what it was permitted me as a good man to do.
The fates lead the willing and drag the unwilling.

§ 2. We detest the fate of the astrologers, enclosed within the insuperable force of the stars, and the fate of the Priscillianists, Bardesanists, and others, which is more powerful than almighty God himself. We acknowledge the gentle providence of God, which through intermediate causes orders and permits events according to their capacity and does not wrest their decisions from free wills. Accordingly, we reject these statements which are uttered by the impious with a profane meaning, such as:

The fates rule the world; all things stand by a fixed law.

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From the origin of the world this day remains fixed
for war, and the peoples were born for battles.

>

Does anyone seem to himself to have so much power
that he might even overcome the fates?

Unless these statements are softened by a benign interpretation, they cannot be tolerated. The importunity of atheists compels me to dispute at greater length about this matter. For while they revive those fates, long since buried, and lead them out of darkness, they not only entangle kings and commonwealths in the worst arts, but also make them subject to soothsayers, astrologers, and magicians, so that they commit themselves and the commonwealth to the most criminal and ruined of human beings.

Behold a man whom you would deservedly deny to be a Christian and by trusting whom you would lose your kingdom sooner than learn true things. In Book II, chapter 28 of *Discourses on Livy*, he speaks thus:

If we contemplate the vicissitude of affairs, we shall discover that many things occur through fate pressing in such a way that no one can go to meet them, although remedies may have been at hand. [Machiavelli devises an impious fate.] And if certain things of this kind happened to the Roman people, among whom virtues of every kind shone forth and the study of religion and especially of military affairs flourished, to whom ought it to appear wonderful if they also befall other commonwealths and provinces in which none of these virtues shine so brightly? Account must therefore be taken especially of those things which appear to occur by fate itself, or the influence of the stars, and which fortune does not permit us to resist. The most evident example of them is that which the Roman people received in the Gallic disaster.

[Printed page 9]

§ 3. He therefore calls the influence of the stars “fate,” and a fate from the stars that is inevitable. “I shall pronounce only this,” he says, “concerning the powers of fortune and the necessity of fate, which will readily appear to one who runs through histories of every kind: human beings cannot avoid the necessity of fate, but they can produce and advance an easier outcome for the things that hang over them from it, and so weave the webs of the Parcae, but not unweave or break them.” And in chapter 25 of his *Prince*:

It is not obscure to me that there are, and formerly have been, very many of the opinion that the administration of human affairs is so completely held by fortune and by God himself that it cannot be corrected in any way by human prudence--indeed, that no remedy can be applied. On that account it could be thought that one should not labor much in these matters, but should permit oneself to be borne wherever fortune drives. This opinion has been received with greater conviction in our times because of the manifold transformation of affairs, since changes have always been seen, and are seen daily, beyond every human conjecture that could be formed. When I had sometimes considered this in my mind, I inclined in some part toward that opinion. But lest our free choice be extinguished, I follow this opinion: that one half of our affairs is administered at the discretion of fortune, while the other, or a little less, is left to us to administer. For I am accustomed to compare fortune to a mountain river that lays all things low. When it is borne headlong, it pours into the fields, lays trees low, and tears up houses; carrying away much earth from here, it deposits that same earth elsewhere. It drives all things before it; all things flee from its sight; all things yield to its fury, every means by which it could be restrained having been removed.

Behold, he compares fortune to a mountain river which can be resisted by no force, art, or reason.

My prince, senate, city, and army shall entrust themselves to the one, true, good, and just God. They shall certainly persuade themselves that the wanderings of the stars, or their fixed periods and circuits commanded by God, pertain in no way to them and possess no jurisdiction or efficacy over their own freedom or that of others. Thus they shall neither be cast down in spirit amid evils, mindful that it is God who appoints an end to sorrowful affairs, nor be elated amid prosperity, ignorant of the hidden counsel by which pride is suddenly punished. In this way, by a great and hidden but never unjust efficacy, in a moment that which had long been a forest becomes ashes; at the sound of a trumpet, that which had been a camp becomes a heap of corpses.

Truth compels Machiavelli himself to acknowledge this, either unwillingly or unknowingly. For what does he mean when he says that we can weave the webs of the Parcae? They therefore do not carry things along by the inevitable necessity of the heavens and configurations of the stars, but each man is the craftsman of his own fortune, as the

proverb says. For if that necessity has as its causes the positions, aspects, elevations, retrogradations, houses, inclinations, and triangles of the stars, their ἐπισκιάσεις, or overshadowings, their obscurations, obliquities, and the συζυγίας, or conjunctions, that are as vain as they are innumerable and are, as it were, their marriages, it is no more within the power of human beings to weave their own fates than to restrain the most rapid courses of the stars, since the fates fixed to the heavens are drawn along by an immutable and insuperable connection and by adamantine bonds.

Next, how can a human being who is wholly driven by fate produce and advance an easier outcome for those things that hang over him from it? I shall use Machiavelli's examples. He attributes to the inexpugnable necessity of the fates the battle of the three Fabii--who had been sent as legates to compose peace between the people of Clusium and the Gauls--by which they incited the Gauls against the Romans. He imputes Camillus's exile to the same fate, so that the Gauls could not be resisted by so distinguished a commander. Indeed, the stars also brought it about that they did not name a dictator; that the tribunes did not fortify the camp; that they were not mindful of the gods; that they did not draw up the battle line after taking the auspices and obtaining favorable omens; that they did not close Rome; that they did not permit the unarmed multitude to flee; and that they did not destroy Rome. As he thinks, the stars carried these things along by absolute necessity.

In these matters I ask first how either Camillus or Manlius could have produced a better outcome from these fates. For either that better outcome, which he locates in human prudence and caution, was outside the force of fate and the conspiracy of the stars, or it too stood bound by the same chain of necessity beneath the blow of fate and the engine of fortune. If the better outcome was from fate, then the fidelity and industry of Camillus could no more produce and advance it than they could those things which had already happened by fate. If the better outcome was within Camillus's discretion, outside the right and dominion of fate and fortune, why does he not place the remaining things in the same category? For if he liberates some things from fate, by what right does he deliver the others over to the fates?

It belongs to a man of little consideration to ascribe calamities to fate and a better outcome to ourselves. For if calamities occur by an unforeseen and inflexible necessity, we cannot turn them aside in any other direction. For it is as much in the fates that I receive upon my bare breast a blow balanced with a heavy weight as it is in the fates that I be wounded. For if the fates bring disaster, they also keep under number its measured magnitude, manner, and all the critical details of its circumstances. If they strike, they strike by determination; and nothing is now ours except to suffer--although, if he philosophizes consistently with his beginnings, he will assign to the fates even how much and how greatly it hurts. For if the heavens fated a bloody death for Julius Caesar, they also decreed twenty-three wounds: the first from Casca beneath the throat, the second and only fatal one beneath the breast, and the remaining ones lighter. What Machiavelli asserts concerning fate is therefore empty and contrary to his own opinion.

This, as I have shown, belongs to an imprudent man. But his judgment that they were forbidden by fate to be mindful of the gods and to draw up their line after taking the auspices and obtaining favorable omens possesses an impiety peculiar to itself together with its folly. For if he speaks as a defender of fate and an astrologer, what protection could there have been in the gods, since they are inferior in contending with the fates, and since Jupiter himself subjects the prayers and unjust anger of Juno to the fates?

The fates will find a way,

he says.

The auspices, inspections of entrails, disembowelments of wretched cattle, a cleft liver, discolored entrails of victims, birds on the left, and every observation of chance utterances cannot bend the violence of the fates. If, therefore, it was in the fates that the Romans be conquered, no birds and no hecatombs could avert the evil.

If he is a Christian, how does he judge that it came from fate that the battle line was not drawn up after taking the auspices and obtaining favorable omens? If the fates forbade magical consultations, the *tripudium solistimum*, and the

rebounding of food cast from the chicken's greedy mouth, he now ascribes something good to the fates, because it was not glorious to conquer even by such deceptions. But what is his meaning, what is his religion, when he judges the prevention of so many crimes--the chief of which were magic and idolatry--to have been the cause of the disasters and the loss of the city?

[Printed page 10]

You are a Christian, and yet among the causes of the commonwealth's affliction and reduction to extreme straits you also relate this: that they did not seek counsels from a demon, did not offer it nefarious sacrifices, and did not obtain favorable omens? So many armies that despised the gods attained victory while fighting without taking the auspices or obtaining favorable omens. Why, therefore, is this reprehended in the Romans?

But let us dispute that controversy more widely, for it is necessary to ascribe the safety of all kingdoms to God: all things are from God. "All things that are not from God are perverse." Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women*. "For God has as his witnesses this whole thing which we are and in which we are." The same Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, Book I: "He disposes all things that exist by word and reason, and completes them by power." "The safety of human beings is in God's guardianship," said even that man who doubted concerning God, in Book III of *On Ends*.

Let no king swell with pride. We are all servants, for we have God as Lord. God is the Lord of so many cities and so many kingdoms in which you are worshiped more laboriously than God; he leaves to you their usufruct and their use for an uncertain time. So many peoples serve you; you serve the one God who subjected them to you. There is no more pernicious plague of the commonwealth, no disaster that has more greatly oppressed its vital parts, than when the authority of the magistrate and the majesty of government are broken. Yet the calamity is greater when the prince or commonwealth stands accused of injury to the supreme majesty.

CHAPTER VI

That the Commonwealth Depends Upon God Is Proved by Testimonies of Sacred Scripture

§ 1. This disputation of mine is against atheists, blasphemous deniers of divine providence and benevolence, who judge it harmful to the commonwealth not to have sacrificed to demons. I am not unaware that one ought to fight against them with reason and secular literature rather than with the divine Scriptures. Nevertheless, I have judged that these weapons too must not be omitted; even if they do not wound an enemy who flees them, they will nevertheless weary and terrify him.

My reason is fourfold. First, the consideration will be useful and agreeable to orthodox princes and counselors, and exceedingly efficacious for detesting Machiavellianism. Secondly, it will benefit many whom an ambiguous *ἐποχή*, or suspension and hesitation, holds between piety and dissimulation. For it is necessary that a Scripture so ancient, so venerable, commended by so many thousands of years, should possess some authority even among unbelievers. Thirdly, there is hidden within the words of God a certain power and efficacy more penetrating than any two-edged sword, which often works conversion even in the hearts of the impious. I judge this to be the reason why the holy Fathers, when disputing against the gentiles, frequently opposed the oracles of the divine writings to their fables. Finally, sacred history, if you join to it the oracles of the prophets, convinces not only the faithful but also the gentiles and atheists that God exists and that all the kingdoms of the earth are in his hand.

I shall therefore use the sacred writings here as well. For whom shall I believe concerning God more than God? [Ambrose, *Against Symmachus*.] I shall cast the testimonies into three classes. For sometimes God himself is said to govern all things; at other times he is said to give, take away, and transfer kingdoms; and finally, he long ago predicted every change of kingdoms. If, therefore, God takes part in--and indeed presides over--all administrations of all kingdoms; if he declares that he gives and transfers kingdoms; and if he announced the destructions of cities and changes of monarchies long before they occurred, how do not all things depend upon him who created all things, foreknew all things, and was even concerned to disclose all things to his friends the prophets?

§ 2. The whole of Sacred Scripture is occupied in demonstrating that all things depend upon God and that all things are governed at his discretion. What else does the production of things and construction of the world proclaim than an author? The sacrifices of the two brothers teach that he attended to individual things, some of which he regarded and some neglected. He then submerged the crimes of the primeval world beneath avenging waters together with the whole race of human beings, but did not involve the just Noah and his household in the same punishment. How great were the losses the same God inflicted upon the Egyptians? He not only led out and led back the waters of the Red Sea, but afflicted them with frogs, flies, and darkness. No less an artificer in small things than in great ones, he therefore chastised and subdued the pride of an impious nation with the vilest little animals. Consider the slaughter of one night and the one hundred and eighty-five thousand deaths in the Assyrian camp during Hezekiah's reign, and deny that God was then propitious to Israel and hostile to the Assyrians. Let us therefore believe God; he is the best witness concerning his own kingdom.

§ 3. Exodus 15:18: "The Lord shall reign for eternity and beyond."

Deuteronomy 17:20: "Nor shall his heart be lifted up in pride above his brethren, nor shall he turn aside to the right hand or to the left, that he himself and his son may reign for a long time over Israel."

1 Kings 8:7: "But the Lord said to Samuel: Hear the voice of the people in all the things they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but me, that I should not reign over them."

1 Kings 12:12: “But when you saw that Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, had come against you, you said to me: By no means; rather, a king shall command us--although the Lord your God was reigning among you.”

1 Chronicles 29:11: “Yours, O Lord, is magnificence and power and glory and victory, and to you belongs praise; for all things in heaven and on earth are yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom, and you are above all princes. Yours are riches, and yours is glory; you rule over all; in your hand are the greatness and dominion of all.”

Job 34:18: “Who says to a king, ‘Apostate,’ and who calls leaders impious.”

Job 34:24: “He shall break many and innumerable men and make others stand in their place.”

Luke 1:33: “And he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Isaiah 24:23: “And the moon shall blush and the sun be confounded when the Lord of hosts shall reign upon Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and shall have been glorified in the sight of his elders.”

Ezekiel 20:33: “As I live, says the Lord God, in a strong hand and an outstretched arm and poured-out fury I shall reign over you. And I shall lead you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands in which you have been dispersed; in a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and poured-out fury I shall reign over you.”

Jeremiah 23:5: “Behold, the days come, says the Lord, and I shall raise up for David a just shoot; and a king shall reign, he shall be wise, and he shall execute judgment and justice upon the earth.”

Daniel 4:31: “Therefore, after the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding was restored to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and glorified him who lives forever, because his power is an everlasting power and his kingdom is unto generation and generation.”

Daniel 4:14: “By the sentence of the watchers the decree was made, and the word and demand of the holy ones, until the living know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of human beings, and shall give it to whomsoever he wills and shall appoint the lowest man over it.”

Psalms 47:9: “Because God is king of all the earth; the Lord shall reign over the nations.”

Psalms 93:1: “The Lord has reigned; he is clothed with beauty.”

[Printed page 11]

Psalms 97:1: “The Lord has reigned; let the earth rejoice.”

Psalms: “The Lord has reigned; let the peoples be angry.”

§ 4. If, therefore, the kingdom is the Lord’s; if it is he who gives power over the nations so that he may rule them with an iron rod [Revelation 2:27 and 19:15]; if weakness does not befall God, he himself is both protector of the kingdom and, when offended, its destroyer. An enemy need not be feared by a prince whose calculations depend upon God, for earthly power is no more capable of casting down than divine guardianship is of raising up. “No human force resists divine forces.” [Cyprian, Book II, Epistle 6.] And Philo truly says well: “Whoever has a covenant with God holds the summit of happiness.”

Let princes therefore hold this: God is the supreme governor. Just as, when God is offended, there is nothing that can support them, so, when God is propitious, no adversity will harm them. For those whom almighty guardianship undertakes to defend cannot be conquered even if they are assailed by the forces of the whole world, because God--with whom they are, and with whom they reign--is unconquered.

§ 5. The same God testifies that he not only reigns and governs dominions, but gives, takes away, increases, and diminishes them.

1 Kings 15:28: “And Samuel said to him: The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has delivered it to your neighbor, who is better than you.”

Wisdom 10:10: “But she led the just man, who was a fugitive from his brother’s wrath, along right ways; and showed him the kingdom of God; and gave him knowledge of holy things; honored him in his labors and completed his labors.”

Wisdom 10:14: “And she did not abandon him in chains until she brought him the scepter of a kingdom and power against those who oppressed him; and she showed those who stained him to be liars and gave him everlasting glory.”

Isaiah 10:10: “As my hand found the kingdoms of the idol, so also their images from Jerusalem and Samaria.”

Isaiah 13:19: “And Babylon, that glorious city among kingdoms, renowned in the pride of the Chaldeans, shall be as when the Lord overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”

Isaiah 14:16: “Those who see you shall bend toward you and gaze upon you: Is this the man who troubled the earth, who shook kingdoms, who made the world a desert and destroyed its cities, who did not open the prison to his prisoners?”

Isaiah 60:12: “For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish, and the nations shall be devastated with desolation.”

Isaiah 62:3: “And you shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a diadem of the kingdom in the hand of your God.”

Ezekiel 32:1: “And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first of the month, that the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Son of man, take up a lamentation over Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and you shall say to him: You have been likened to the lion of the nations and to the dragon that is in the sea; and you tossed your horn in your rivers, troubled the waters with your feet, and trampled their streams. Therefore thus says the Lord God: I shall spread my net over you amid the multitude of many peoples, and I shall draw you out in my dragnet. And I shall cast you upon the earth; I shall throw you upon the face of the field, and shall cause all the birds of heaven to dwell upon you, and shall satisfy the beasts of the whole earth from you. And I shall place your flesh upon the mountains and fill your hills with your corruption. And I shall water the earth with the stench of your blood upon the mountains, and the valleys shall be filled from you. And when you have been extinguished, I shall cover the heavens and cause their stars to grow dark; I shall cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. I shall cause all the lights of heaven to mourn over you, and shall place darkness over your land, says the Lord God. And I shall provoke the heart of many peoples when I have brought your destruction among the nations upon lands that you do not know. And I shall cause many peoples to be astonished over you, and their kings shall fear for you with immense horror when my sword begins to fly before their faces; and on the day of your ruin individuals shall suddenly be astounded for their own life. For thus says the Lord God: The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you; by the swords of the mighty I shall cast down your multitude--all these nations are unconquerable--and they shall devastate the pride of Egypt, and its multitude shall be scattered. And I shall destroy all its beasts of burden that were upon the many waters; the foot of man shall trouble them no more, nor shall the hoof of beasts of burden trouble them.”

Daniel 2:21: “And he changes times and ages; he transfers and establishes kingdoms; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who understand discipline.”

Daniel 5:18: “O king, the Most High God gave kingdom and magnificence, glory and honor, to Nebuchadnezzar your father. And because of the magnificence which he had given him, all peoples, tribes, and tongues trembled and feared him. Whom he willed, he killed; whom he willed, he struck; whom he willed, he exalted; and whom he willed, he humbled. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit hardened unto pride, he was deposed from the throne of his kingdom and his glory was taken away.”

Daniel 5:28: "PHARES: your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

Daniel 7:14: "And he gave him power and honor and a kingdom, and all peoples, tribes, and tongues shall serve him. His power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away, and his kingdom one that shall not be corrupted."

§ 6. The third argument is taken from predictions. Long beforehand, all the things that were to come were disclosed to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the other patriarchs for their descendants; all future things were laid open to the leaders Moses and Joshua and to the other prophets. By the providence of God, therefore, kingdoms stand and fall.

See Numbers 24:7: "Water shall flow from his bucket, and his seed shall be in many waters. His king shall be taken away because of Agag, and his kingdom shall be removed."

Deuteronomy 3:21: "I also commanded Joshua at that time, saying: Your eyes have seen what the Lord your God did to these two kings; so shall he do to all the kingdoms through which you are about to pass. Do not fear them, for the Lord our God shall fight for you."

2 Kings 11:11: "And so the Lord said to Solomon: Because you have had this within you and have not kept my covenant and the precepts that I commanded you, by rending I shall rend your kingdom and give it to your servant. Nevertheless, I shall not do it in your days, on account of David your father; I shall rend it from the hand of your son. Nor shall I take away the whole kingdom, but I shall give one tribe to your son on account of David my servant and Jerusalem, which I chose."

2 Kings 3:10: "Thus shall I deal with him: the kingdom shall be transferred from the house of Saul, and David's throne shall be raised over Israel and over Judah, from Dan as far as Beersheba."

Daniel 2:39: "And after you shall arise another kingdom, inferior to you, of silver; and another third kingdom, of bronze, which shall command the whole earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be like iron: just as iron breaks and subdues all things, so it shall break and shatter all these things."

Presentiment and prediction of future things is therefore an efficacious antidote against the atheism of statesmen. For if the eternal God announced to his servants--and through them to the impious world--the destruction of kingdoms and the crimes of kings that were to be punished so long beforehand, no one can doubt that the world is administered by a most watchful providence and immutable justice.

§ 7. The books of many authors and the opinions of the most ancient men reported by later ones teach that certain elaborate arguments of the ancient philosophers for the existence of divination had been collected. Indeed, there was agreement in establishing divination among all who said that gods existed, except Xenophanes of Colophon and Epicurus, as Cicero is the authority in Book II of *On Divination*.

[Printed page 12]

I mean all who conceded that something could be known. For how could the Academics, who contended that nothing could be known--so far that they professed not even to know this, that they knew nothing--being doubtful of everything and always *ἐπέχοντες*, suspending judgment, prove divination, when they did not know that they themselves existed? The reasoning of the others who believed that gods existed was this: if divination exists, gods exist; and if gods exist, divination exists. For these reciprocate with one another. Those ancients were criticized by the men who followed them most nearly. For the latter thought that future things could be signified by nature without God and that there could be gods who bestowed no divination upon the human race.

But both the former and the latter, ignorant of the truth, bound themselves by various fraud and superstition. They brought the matter to such a point that both those who thought that the gods and religion were defended by them and those who boasted that they abolished superstition equally weakened every power and faculty of divining, or brought it into ill repute by great crimes. For by what futile reasoning do Chrysippus, Diogenes, and Antipater fight for knowledge of future affairs? They say in Cicero, *On Divination*, Book II:

If gods exist and do not declare to human beings beforehand the things that are to be, then either they do not love human beings, or they are ignorant of what will happen, or they judge that it is of no concern for a human being to know what is to come, or they do not judge it to belong to their majesty to signify beforehand to human beings the things that are to be, or not even the gods themselves can signify them. But they do not fail to love us, for they are beneficent and friends of the human race. Nor are they ignorant of the things constituted and designed by themselves. Nor is it of no concern to us to know the things that are to be, for we shall be more cautious if we know them. Nor do they regard this as foreign to their majesty, for nothing is more excellent than beneficence. Nor are they unable to foreknow future things. Therefore, gods do not exist and do not signify future things to us; but gods do exist; therefore, they signify them.

There are indeed certain true things in this reasoning if they are referred to the one true God, who is most beneficent toward us, who first loved us, so that for the reconciliation of the whole world he gave his only-begotten Son, and who foreknew the outcomes of all things, however secret and hidden--both those which occur by his will and those which do not lack his permission. Nevertheless, gentility cannot prove its own predictions from this, since he willed that very many things should lie hidden even from the best and his closest friends.

Then, by bringing forward examples of their soothsayers that were partly manifestly false and partly ambiguous and pliant in speech, they made a matter doubtful among themselves and exposed it to the mockery of atheists, when they announce certainty of outcomes from entrails, birds, omens, lightning, dreams, and finally frenzies. What is easier than to refute the fables about Tages the plowed-up seer, the snakes of Gracchus, the sparrows of Calchas, Aius Locutius, the razor of Tarquinius, the *tripudium solistimum*, Epimenides the Cretan, the Babylonian observations of four hundred and seventy thousand years, and the rest, since they were generally accustomed to be mocked by the gentiles themselves? Vain, therefore, superstitious, and often frenzied are the approvers and defenders of gentile divinations.

§ 8. Yet, on the contrary, the reasoning of those who abolished all presentiment and prediction of future affairs was not probable. For in taking from God his right and foreknowledge they were sacrilegious, and their arguments have no weight in a matter of the greatest gravity. For what they attempt to prove by an enumeration of all things--that prophecy or any foreknowledge of fortuitous events cannot exist--they get wrong in each individual case.

The argument of all atheists is found in Cicero, *On Divination*, Book I: things perceived by the senses are handled by art; things in philosophy are established concerning duties; things are transmitted in physics, dialectic, and medicine; these do not belong to soothsayers or prophets; therefore, there is no divination. Reason, however, will show that true predictions exist in all these things; and although no reasons appear why these things rather than those should occur, nevertheless by divine disclosure a prophet knows what could not be known in itself. And the dullness of men otherwise acute when assailing foreknowledge of future things is astonishing. For since it is within a man's power to predict the future things that he himself has resolved to do, why can he who is the almighty author not be the revealer of his own counsels? There can therefore be divination concerning all those things, because they all depend upon a certain outcome.

Others deny divination and foreknowledge because they execrate Stoic fate. For they think that foreknowledge, prediction, and fate are joined by an indissoluble bond and so bound together that either fate must be conceded or the other two denied. Cicero argues thus in his books written *On Divination*, as Saint Augustine noted in *City of God*, Book V, chapter 9:

Cicero attempts so to refute them that he does not think he can prevail at all against them unless he abolishes divination. He attempts to abolish it by denying that there is knowledge of future things; with all his strength he contends that it is altogether nonexistent, either in God or in man, and that there is no prediction of affairs. Thus he also denies God's foreknowledge and attempts by empty arguments to overthrow every prophecy, which is clearer than daylight, setting against himself certain oracles that can readily be refuted--although not even he himself refutes them. But his discourse reigns supreme in refuting these conjectures of the astrologers, because they truly are such as to destroy and refute themselves.

Yet those who constitute either the stars or the fates are much more tolerable than he who abolishes foreknowledge of future things. For both to confess that God exists and to deny that he foreknows future things is the most manifest insanity. When Cicero himself saw this, he also attempted to assert that which is written, “The fool has said in his heart: There is no God”--but not in his own person. For he saw how odious and troublesome it was, and therefore, in his books *On the Nature of the Gods*, he made Cotta dispute about this matter against the Stoics; and although he assigned the defense of the Stoics’ side to Lucilius Balbus, he preferred to cast his vote for Cotta, who contends that no divine nature exists. But in the books *On Divination*, arguments from Cicero himself most openly attack foreknowledge of future things.

He appears to do all this so that he need not assent that fate exists and thereby destroy free will. For he thinks that, once knowledge of future things is conceded, fate follows so necessarily that it cannot be denied at all. But it is so clear and manifest that some prophecy of future and hidden things exists that whatever is assumed to prove it appears less clear. For every history, sacred and profane, is full of many predictions, and not all are invented or fallacious--those made with the aid of demons are true, but made deceitfully. For though very many are empty and invented, most of the things customarily related certainly do not exceed the faculty of those spirits. Lest I draw the matter out any farther, I shall bring forward what Augustine recounts concerning Albicerius in Book I of *Against the Academics*.

[Printed page 13]

§ 9. Here Licentius, whom after that definition I had long thought would ask what he should say, immediately added: “Why, therefore, do we not call that infamous man wise whom we ourselves know well to be accustomed to dissolve himself among innumerable harlots? I mean that Albicerius who, at Carthage, for many years gave marvelous and certain answers to those who consulted him. I could recall innumerable things, were I not speaking among men who have experienced them and were a few things not now sufficient for what I intend. When a spoon could not be found in the house, did he not, when questioned at your command”--he was speaking to me--“answer most swiftly and truthfully not only what was being sought, but also specifically whose thing it was and where it lay hidden?

“Likewise, when I was present--I omit the fact that he was not mistaken at all concerning the thing about which he was asked--when the boy who was carrying the coins had stolen a certain portion of them while we were proceeding to him, Albicerius ordered all of them to be counted out to himself and compelled the boy, before our eyes, to return those he had taken away, before Albicerius himself had seen those same coins at all or had heard from us how much had been brought to him.

“What of the fact that we have learned from you that the most learned and illustrious Flaccianus was accustomed to marvel at him? When Flaccianus had spoken about buying an estate, he brought the matter to that diviner so that, if he could, he might declare what Flaccianus had done. And the diviner immediately pronounced not only the kind of transaction but also the very name of the estate--at which Flaccianus cried out vehemently in astonishment--although it was so absurd a name that Flaccianus himself scarcely remembered it.

“Now I cannot tell without amazement of mind what happened when our friend, your disciple, wishing to mock him, insolently demanded that he say what he himself was silently turning over in his mind. Albicerius answered that he was thinking of a verse of Virgil. When the man, dumbfounded, could not deny it, he went on to ask which verse it was. Nor did Albicerius--who had perhaps scarcely seen the outside of a grammarian’s school--hesitate confidently and volubly to recite the very verse. Therefore, either the things about which he was consulted were not human affairs, or without knowledge of divine things he gave such certain and true answers to those who consulted him. But either is absurd. For human affairs are nothing other than the affairs of human beings, such as silver, coins, an estate, and finally even thought itself; and who would not rightly judge those things to be divine through which divination itself comes to a human being? Albicerius was therefore wise, if by that definition we concede wisdom to be knowledge of human and divine things.”

Then the other said: "First, I do not call that 'knowledge' in which the man who professes it is sometimes mistaken. For knowledge consists not only of things comprehended, but of things so comprehended that no one can err in it or be shaken when driven by any adversaries whatsoever. Hence certain philosophers say most truly that it can be found in no one except a wise man, who must not only have grasped that which he maintains and follows, but must also hold it unshaken. But we know that the man you recalled often said many false things, which I discovered not only when others reported them to me, but sometimes perceived myself while present. I would therefore by no means call him knowledgeable when he often said false things--nor would I call him so if he consistently said true things.

"Judge that I have said this concerning soothsayers, augurs, all those who consult the stars, and interpreters of dreams. Or produce, if you can, anyone from this class of human beings who, when consulted, never doubted his answers and, finally, never answered falsely. For concerning prophets I think I need not labor, since they speak with another mind.

"Next, although I concede that human affairs are the affairs of human beings, do you think anything that chance can either give us or take from us is ours? Or, when knowledge of human affairs is spoken of, is that said to be the knowledge by which someone knows either how many or what kind of estates we possess, how much gold, how much silver, or finally what verses belonging to others we are thinking about? That is knowledge of human affairs which knows the light of prudence, the grace of temperance, the strength of fortitude, and the sanctity of justice. For these are the things which, fearing no fortune, we dare to call truly ours. If that Albicerius had learned them, believe me, he would never have lived so luxuriously and disgracefully.

"As for his saying what verse the man who consulted him was turning over in his mind, I do not think this should be numbered among our affairs. I do not deny that the most honorable disciplines pertain to a certain possession of our mind; but because even the most unskilled man is permitted to recite and pronounce a verse belonging to another, when such things have entered our memory it is not marvelous if they can be perceived by certain very vile creatures of this air whom men call demons. I concede that we can be surpassed by them in acuteness and subtlety of the senses, but I deny that we can be surpassed in reason; and it happens in some manner unknown to me, most secret and remote from our senses. For if we marvel that a little bee, by I know not what sagacity in which it surpasses a human being, flies from wherever it is to honey that has been set out, we ought not therefore to prefer it to ourselves or even compare it with us.

"Accordingly, I would have preferred that this Albicerius, when questioned by one who desired to learn, had taught the meters themselves, or, when compelled by one of those consulting him, had sung verses of his own concerning a subject immediately proposed to him. You are accustomed to recall that the same Flaccianus often said this when, with great elevation of mind, he mocked and despised that kind of divination and attributed it to I know not what most abject little soul--for thus he spoke--by which Albicerius, as though moved or instigated by a spirit, was accustomed to give these answers. For that most learned man asked those who admired such things whether Albicerius could teach grammar, music, or geometry. But who knew him and did not confess him to be most unskilled in all these things? Therefore, he finally exhorted those who had learned such things to prefer their own minds without hesitation to that divination, and to labor to instruct and support their minds by these disciplines, through which it might fall to them to pass beyond and fly above that true nature of invisible living beings.

"Now, since divine things are, with everyone conceding it, much better and far more august than human things, how could he attain them when he did not know what he himself was? Unless perhaps you think that the stars, which we contemplate daily, are some great thing in comparison with the truest and most secret God, whom perhaps the intellect rarely reaches and no sense reaches at all, whereas the stars are present to our eyes. Therefore, these are not those divine things which wisdom professes that it alone knows. But the remaining things which those men--I know not who--who divine abuse either for empty boasting or for profit are surely viler than the stars. Albicerius therefore did not participate in knowledge of human and divine affairs, and our definition has been tested by you in that manner in vain."

Finally, since we ought to judge whatever is outside human and divine affairs to be most vile and altogether to despise it, I ask: in what affairs does that wise man of yours seek truth? “In divine affairs,” he said, “for virtue even in a human being is without doubt divine.” Did Albicerius, then, already know those things which your wise man will always seek? Therefore, leaving these things aside, let us treat of true divination.

§ 10. Next, we see how great is the sagacity in physicians, philosophers, and others, and how great a prediction arises in the minds of prudent men from a small circumstance. What cause, therefore, shall we say there is why that creative mind, passing through the secrets of all causes and governing their outcomes, cannot know them thoroughly? If it knows them, why can it not communicate them? Can God not signify to a human being what a friend can relate to a companion?

§ 11. Thirdly, the authority of the Scriptures can remove absolutely every doubt, even among the gentiles. For no one is so inexperienced in human affairs, no one so obstinate, that he either calls into doubt or despises the whole history of the human race. But when those transformations of commonwealths which the world experienced with great rending of itself had been predicted so eloquently and distinctly--when, as fires raged in different directions, it was harassed on both sides; when the Chaldeans succeeded the Assyrians, the Medes and Persians the Chaldeans; when the Macedonian, accustomed to make funeral offerings to his flatterers with the deaths of nations, enveloped the Persians together with Asia, as though in one common ruin;

[Printed page 14]

when, I say, those things had been predicted so eloquently and distinctly, Cyrus himself named and Alexander and his princes described--the prophecy cannot remain concealed when it has been written by the repeated convulsion of the world and in the blood of many nations. Saint Augustine once used that argument and taught that the remaining things would come to pass because the greater part had already occurred.

Since these things, therefore, were predicted, we learn that those affairs whose many fulfillments we behold are governed by God, so that with right piety we may trust that the remaining things will occur.

CHAPTER VII

That Kingdoms Depend Upon God Is Proved From Daniel's Prophecy

§ 1. I now judge that I have demonstrated sufficiently from the Scriptures that earthly kingdoms are begun, increased, preserved, and cast down not by fortune or chance or fate, but by the will of God. Yet my mind is resolved to linger here and to bring forward this providence in a clear matter and most familiar history, as though for an example of the others. The words of Daniel, chapter 8, are as follows:

In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared to me. I, Daniel, after that which I had seen at the beginning, saw in my vision, when I was in the fortress of Susa, which is in the region of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was above the gate of Ulai. And I lifted up my eyes and saw; and behold, one ram stood before the marsh, having lofty horns, and one higher than the other and growing upward. Afterward I saw the ram brandishing its horns against the west, against the north, and against the south; and all the beasts could not resist it or be delivered from its hand. And it did according to its will and was magnified.

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And I understood; but behold, a he-goat of the goats came from the west over the face of the whole earth and did not touch the ground. Moreover, the he-goat had a distinguished horn between its eyes. And it came as far as that horned ram which I had seen standing before the gate and ran at it in the impetus of its strength. And when it had approached near the ram, it was enraged against it and struck the ram and broke its two horns; and the ram could not resist it. And when it had cast the ram to the ground, it trampled it, and no one was able to deliver the ram from its hand.

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But the he-goat of the goats became exceedingly great; and when it had grown, the great horn was broken, and four horns arose beneath it toward the four winds of heaven. But from one of them came forth one little horn, and it became great against the south, against the east, and against the host. And it was magnified even unto the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars and trampled them. And it was magnified even unto the prince of the host; and it took away from him the continual sacrifice and cast down the place of his sanctuary.

§ 2. And at verse 19 and those following:

And he said to me: I shall show you the things that are to be in the last time of the curse, because the appointed time has its end. The ram which you saw having horns is the king of the Medes and Persians. But the he-goat of the goats is the king of the Greeks, and the great horn which is between its eyes is the first king. But because, when it was broken, four arose in its place, four kings shall arise from his nation, but not in his strength.

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And after their reign, when iniquities have increased, there shall arise a king shameless of face and understanding propositions; and his strength shall be reinforced, but not by his own forces. And beyond what can be believed, he shall lay waste all things, prosper, and act. And he shall kill the mighty and the people of the saints according to his will, and deceit shall be directed in his hand. And he shall magnify his heart, and through the abundance of all things shall kill very many. And he shall rise against the prince of princes and shall be broken without a hand. And the vision of evening and morning which was spoken is true. Therefore seal the vision, because it shall be after many days. And I, Daniel, languished and was sick for days; and when I had risen, I performed the king's works, and I was astounded at the vision, and there was no one who could interpret it.

Weigh these things and reckon within yourself how accurately Darius and Alexander are described, along with their deeds and the transfer of the monarchy to an ignoble corner of Greece. The ram is Darius, who stands before the marsh or before the river--in Hebrew, *liphne haubal*, “in the sight of the Ubal.” For even after the remainder of Asia was lost, Darius placed his hope in the rivers and standing marshes of water from the Euphrates and Tigris, since he held Media, Persia, the Assyrians, and the whole barbarian region together with Bactria. Here, therefore, the ram stands confidently.

The lofty horns are the kingdoms of Media and Persia. For although very many kingdoms obeyed Darius, the Medes and Persians nevertheless ruled. The higher horn, however, was the Persian kingdom, which had been far inferior to the Median, but grew powerful after Cyrus and was more excellent than the kingdom of the Medes. It is therefore said to grow upward, or to ascend at the end. Since Cyrus, himself a Persian, possessed the Persian dominion by inheritance but the Median as a dowry, he preferred the Persians to the Medes. Hence the monarchy is customarily called Persian, not Median, by authors.

That ram brandishes with its horns--*menagag*, that is, it attacks with the horn, *κερατίζει*--as is said in Exodus 21:28 and verses 31 and 32 concerning kings who violently oppress a province, and in Deuteronomy 33:17, “The horns of the rhinoceros are his horns.”

Against the west--in Hebrew, *iamma*, πρὸς θάλασσαν, toward the sea, namely the Mediterranean. The Jews were accustomed thus to call the west because the sea enclosed the western side of Palestine. But the Persian dominion was scarcely bounded by the sea. To the west of Persia were the Babylonians, Syrians, part of Armenia, and the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. In the south they conquered Arabia, Egypt, part of Libya, the Ammonians, and the southern Indians. In the north they conquered part of Armenia, Pontus, and Colchis. Herodotus, Book I; Xenophon’s *Education of Cyrus* and ἀναβάσει (*Anabasis*); the Halicarnassian, Book I; Curtius; Ctesias in his *Persian History*; and innumerable others expound these matters.

No one could resist it--no one, that is, among the Asiatic nations; for the Greeks and Scythians resisted, although afflicted with the greatest disasters.

Daniel was not ignorant that a king or kingdom was signified, yet he could not yet know who it was. But behold, there comes the he-goat of the goats, the king of Greece, *Melech Iavan*. The king of Javan, or king of the Ionians--for among the Greeks, ἰών, and among the Hebrews, יון, because Hellas does not recognize consonantal *yod*; hence Ionia among the celebrated cities of the Greeks. Moreover, Javan was a son of Japheth and a brother of Madai.

The Persian is a ram because, as Theodoret says, the dominion, now heavy with resources, fatness, and luxury, and scarcely master of itself, was assuredly being conquered by the Greeks through those things in which it most abounded, such as money, because the soldiers were neglected through the avarice of the governors. Accordingly, at this time it was like a golden animal which by its golden fleece generally profited others, the strength of the bear having long since failed. For they either hired the generals of the Greeks with money or corrupted them, so that the ram now bore its fleeces not for itself but for others.

The king of the Greeks is the he-goat of the goats. “He-goat--he-goat” is said in Hebrew, yet with two words: *vehazaphir veschaghir*, both “he-goat”

[Printed page 15]

and “male goat.” The Seventy, however, call it τὸν τράγον τῶν αἰγῶν. Others read “hairy he-goat”; our interpreter and the Seventy read an addition at the end in this manner: *hazephir haschehiroth*, “he-goat of the goats.” Thus most interpret it, and it is called the same in verse 5: *zephir hahazim*, “he-goat of the goats,” just as though it said one from a herd of goats or the offspring of a she-goat. Thus in Leviticus 4:28 it is said, “a female kid or she-goat of the goats.”

Some think that the maternal origin is indicated by this addition. For after Philip died, only his mother Olympias survived. Alexander was dearer to her than to his father, so far that he is thought to have been aware of his father’s

murder. Certainly Olympias could not conceal the joy she had conceived at her husband's death, so far that at night she placed a crown upon Pausanias the parricide as he hung upon the cross. She would not have dared so infamous a crime unless she thought it would please her son, who at last even denied that Philip was his father and killed those who praised Philip. But I prefer that he should be named "he-goat of the goats" by a Hebrew expression rather than that I should follow an uncertain exposition.

He is a he-goat who, by a swift leap as though he did not touch the earth, flew, as it were, across great kingdoms. Darius did not boast emptily that so much land still belonged to him that even to traverse it--not merely to conquer it--would be laborious. "A man would grow old," he says in Curtius, "merely by traveling over so much land, even without battle." But Alexander, as roe deer are accustomed to do, poises himself from cliff to cliff without traversing the valley, and thus subdued so great a monarchy in six years.

In the first year he restrained many rebellious nations and extinguished seditions. Then, setting out at a rapid pace, he was appointed commander of Greece while he prepared the Persian war. In the very midst of the undertaking, it was announced that the Athenians, Thebans, and Lacedaemonians had defected to the Persians and would draw the whole of Greece with them by their authority and power. At the same time war had to be waged against the barbarians at the Ister. Intending to meet these disturbances, he overwhelmed Greece with such speed, with his army equipped and prepared, that those who had not perceived him coming could scarcely believe they saw him.

§ 3. Next, upon the Adrasteian plains, or at the Granicus, he put six hundred thousand Persians to flight and killed one hundred and twenty thousand cavalymen, although nine infantrymen and one hundred and twenty cavalymen from his own army were killed. He waged several wars against Darius's governors, whom he conquered by terror of his name; he wore them down in three battles after the battle of Issus. When crossing Mount Taurus he covered five hundred stadia--that is, fifteen German miles--at a run. Tyre delayed his impetus a little, for it presented more difficulty than the entire Persian kingdom. But when it was captured, Egypt, Cilicia, and Rhodes came under his dominion without a contest. Meanwhile, as though at leisure, he saluted Jupiter Ammon, founded Alexandria, and finally defeated and buried Darius at Gaugamela. For this reason he is called the exceedingly swift he-goat who did not touch the earth.

He is also called a he-goat because he was harsh, inhuman, lustful, and had not only a bloody court but even bloody banquets, infamous for the killings and perils of his closest friends. Curtius, Book VI, says that when freed from cares he admitted pleasures, games, and herds of concubines. What kind of man he was in the storming of cities is taught by Eleadas, a captive after Thebes had been conquered: "Now there remains a crowd of old men and women, weak indeed but also harmless; and this very crowd has been harassed by rapes and insults so that they have never suffered anything more bitter." Nor were the Greek kings who followed dissimilar to Alexander: distinguished for lusts, pride, and cruelty, they afflicted the world and were hostile to one another in perpetual wars. For Daniel speaks about kings in such a way that he embraces the whole body of the kingdom.

§ 4. The he-goat, however, came to the horned ram--*bahalkar anaim*, "lord of the horns"--in the impetus of his strength: ἐν ὀρμῇ, says the Greek, which the Hebrew calls *bacchamath cocho*, "in the fervor or blazing anger of his strength."

But when it had drawn near the ram, it was enraged against it--ἐξηγριώθη. Although it had formerly been a domestic and tame animal, it is now changed into a fierce and savage beast. The Hebrew has *vaithmarmar*: it made itself savage and gathered all its anger against one. Who would not think that Daniel, when writing these things, had been present at the deeds? They had indeed long contended in courtesies and humanity while the war continued, but when it came to the actual matter, he was driven by the Furies. "Alexander," says Justin, "undertook all the most dangerous things; and wherever he saw the densest enemy forces fighting most fiercely, he always plunged himself into that place and willed the dangers to be his own, not his soldiers'."

He drew near: he destroyed three armies of the commanders and then put Darius himself to flight. In the second battle each king was wounded; in the third Darius perished. But concerning Alexander's enraged disposition toward Darius, let us hear Curtius, Book IV. "For you undertake impious wars"--the Macedonian reproaches Darius's legates in this way--"and, although you possess arms, you bid for the heads of your enemies, just as you lately, king of so great an army, wished to purchase my assassin for a thousand talents. I therefore repel war; I do not inflict it." And because Darius had omitted Alexander's title of king, he added: "Hereafter, when you write to me, remember that you are writing not only to a king, but also to your own king."

But nothing enraged him more than the letters of which Curtius speaks in chapter 4. Letters of Darius were then intercepted, by which the Greek soldiers were solicited to kill or betray the king. Therefore Alexander said in his response to the legates: "But if he sought peace at least in good faith, I might perhaps deliberate whether I should grant it. In truth, since he solicits now my soldiers by letters to betray me, now my friends to destroy me, he must be pursued by me to extermination, not as a just enemy, but as an assassin and poisoner."

§ 5. Behold for yourself the enraged he-goat rushing with a violent impetus against the ram without regard for its own safety. Could not God, who predicted these things so long beforehand and foresaw them from eternity, have fortified the ram and turned away the he-goat?

It truly broke its two horns. "By this battle," says Justin, "he seized the whole of Asia in the fifth year after receiving the kingdom. His success was so great that after this no one dared to rebel, and the Persians patiently received the yoke of servitude after so many years of dominion." After Persepolis had been destroyed, even the Medes did not attempt to resist.

All the beasts could not resist it or be delivered from its hand. The reason was that the ram had now been abandoned by God; accordingly, it did not conquer even once in so many battles. For the iniquities of the Persians and Medes had now grown great and were no longer tolerable to the world. Nor was Alexander ignorant of this. In Justin, Book II, the matter is narrated thus: "Before any ship departed from shore, he sacrificed victims, seeking victory in the war in which he had been chosen as avenger of Greece, so often attacked by the Persians; they had possessed dominion long enough and to maturity, and the time had come for successors who would act better to take their turn." Thus it could not happen that the Persian should resist or at least conduct the war; but, destitute of assistance and wisdom, he delivered all things into the victor's hands.

When it had cast him to the ground, it trampled him. Alexander had pursued him as an assassin and poisoner. When Darius saw his men being conquered, he himself wished to die, but was compelled by those closest to him to flee, as Justin relates. He was therefore cast down to the ground while Hyrcania, Bactria,

[Printed page 16]

and half the kingdom still remained. He was bound with golden chains by his own governors Nabarzanes and Bessus and cast into a wagon covered with hides. Finally, when ordered to mount a horse, he refused to accompany the parricides. "Then indeed," says Curtius, Book V, "inflamed also with anger, they cast weapons at the king and left him pierced through with many wounds. They also wounded the beasts of burden so that they could not proceed farther, after killing the two servants who accompanied the king."

All these things are attributed to the he-goat of the goats because he was the cause of all of them and, pressing upon the fugitive, used to say: "Our victory is placed within that body." But Curtius, Book V, points him out to us lying upon the ground, as though reciting Daniel's very words: "When Darius was about to see Artabazus for the last time, he embraced him; and, drenched with many tears, ordered him, though clinging to him, to be pulled away. Then, having covered his head so that he might not gaze amid his groans upon the man departing as though from a funeral pyre, HE CAST HIMSELF FACE DOWN UPON THE GROUND." Thus cast down and trampled, he most miserably lost his life.

Then Persepolis was trampled, burned in mockery at the nod of a petty courtesan; and captives whose price had rendered them pitiable were killed, for the wealthy victors preferred to kill the most worthless of the captives rather than sell them.

The distinguished horn, ἐπίσημον, between the eyes is Alexander--not the first king of Macedonia, but the first commander of all Greece and monarch of Asia. He is more powerful than his successors, projecting upon the forehead between the eyes--that is, among his father's most clear-sighted generals; for no one readily led the ranks unless he was sixty years old. Therefore the he-goat is both the king himself and the kingdom of Greece.

But the great horn was broken--either struck down by drunkenness or by Babylonian poison--when it had stood for twelve years.

§ 6. When it was broken, four kings arose. The Hebrew calls them four *Malchivoth*, kingdoms. Our interpreter read *niem* in place of *uth*, namely, *melachim*. No judgment concerning the true ancient reading can be established from the word, for it is *iaghamodenna*, whose beginning possesses the mark of the masculine, but whose ending is feminine; I find nothing similar to it. Accordingly, either there is an error in the Hebrew, or it is an indication that the discourse concerns kings and kingdoms--that is, persons and things.

There were more kings and kingdoms, but the principal ones with which the passage deals were only four: Macedonia, Egypt, Asia, and Syria. The principal kings were Philip, or Arrhidaeus; Antigonus; Ptolemy; and Seleucus. From these things I conclude that there is a providence directing all things; all things are subject to it; at God's discretion all things stand and all things fall--they are not only foreseen and predicted.

The things said in chapter 11 must be considered no less. It says that three kings were to stand in Persia--Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius, for it omits Smerdis as a tyrant of a few months--and that the fourth, namely the great Xerxes, was to be enriched with the greatest resources and, when he had grown powerful, was to rouse everyone by means of his riches to war against Greece. Then Alexander, a strong king, shall arise and rule with great power from Macedonia as far as the Ammonians and India. But once the kingdom has been acquired, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds, into four principal kingdoms and many other smaller ones, but not among his descendants. For all his posterity was extinguished within the twelfth year, nor did it pass according to his power, for no one among his successors obtained even a tenth part of his power.

The happiness of Alexander was miserable. When he was about to go against the Persians, he had polluted himself with kindred blood. After his death Olympias, besieged by Cassander and judged an enemy by the Macedonians, was ordered by a public judgment to die. Barsane and Roxane were killed with their children. A certain part and the name of the kingdom were granted to his brother Arrhidaeus, but he too was soon extinguished.

§ 7. The kingdom was torn even among outsiders--those, namely, who were not from the nobles of the Macedonians. Torn among members of the household, torn among outsiders. Livy, Book XLV: "The greatest kingdom and name of the Macedonians upon earth, pulled apart into many kingdoms at the death of Alexander while each man seized its resources for himself, with its strength torn apart, stood for one hundred and fifty years from the highest summit of fortune to its final end." Does he not appear to be writing a commentary upon Daniel? O depth of the wisdom of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and untraceable his ways!

After Alexander's death, his commanders placed diadems upon themselves, and evils were multiplied upon the earth. His mother, brother, wives, and children, almost all his commanders and princes, and the Silver Shields, enriched with the spoils of the world, paid for the success of that one robber: within sixteen years they were cut down and consumed by wounds mutually inflicted. Olympias killed Arrhidaeus; Cassander killed Olympias and two daughters-in-law with two grandchildren; Demetrius extinguished Cassander and his whole house, as though making a funeral offering to Alexander's family; Perdiccas killed Meleager; Ptolemy, Cleomenes and Perdiccas and others; Philotas, Python;

Antigonus, Eumenes and the Silver Shields. After thirty-four commanders, Alexander's fellow soldiers, had now been extinguished, the last ones, Seleucus and Lysimachus, came together in battle.

"It was a spectacle of the foulest kind," says Orosius, "that two kings--of whom Lysimachus was seventy-four years old and Seleucus seventy-seven--should meet to seize one another's kingdoms, stand in a battle line, and bear arms. This was indeed the last war of Alexander's fellow soldiers, but one that had been preserved as an example of the greatest misery. For although, after thirty-four commanders of Alexander had now been extinguished, they alone possessed the world, they did not regard the exceedingly narrow bounds of their old age and life, but judged the bounds of their dominion over the whole world too narrow. In that war, after he had previously lost fifteen children through various misfortunes, Lysimachus, dying not without spirit, was added as the final heap upon the ruin of his house.

"Seleucus, rejoicing in so great a victory and because--which he judged greater than victory--he alone had remained from the companies of Alexander the Great and had proved the conqueror of conquerors, boasted that it was not a human work but a divine one. He was altogether ignorant that not long afterward he himself would become an example of human frailty. For after only seven months, he was surrounded by an ambush and killed by Ptolemy, whose sister Lysimachus had had in marriage; and together with his life he likewise lost the kingdom of Macedonia which he had taken from Lysimachus." Thus those who had defiled the whole world with killings, ambition, and debaucheries perished by this end, through the fire of divine vengeance bursting forth from the throne. These things, indeed, occurred among members of the household.

But what of the outsiders? As soon as they heard of Alexander's death, the Indians, after killing his governors, vindicated themselves into liberty; and the Seleucids did not long command beyond Persia and Media. Justin, Book XLI, relates that Arsaces the Parthian revolted; Theodorus says that a thousand cities of the Bactrians did so at the same time, and that the peoples of the whole east followed their example, as did, by an equal principle, the Pontic and Scythian nations, whence new kingdoms and commonwealths afterward emerged.

And the king of the south shall be strengthened: Ptolemy the son of Lagus, who obtained Egypt, the southern part of the Macedonian kingdom, was a most prudent man, as the historian says. "But Ptolemy in Egypt prepared great resources by skillful industry; for he had both won over the Egyptians to his favor by distinguished moderation and bound neighboring kings to himself by benefits and services. He had also enlarged the boundaries of his dominion by acquiring the city of Cyrene and had already become so great that he did not so much fear his enemies as

[Printed page 17]

was himself to be feared by them." Let what Pausanias says about him in the *Attica* be consulted. Amid the other commanders contending with one another, he had an opportunity to grow, since he possessed a stable kingdom not exposed to any incursions. He was called Soter by the Rhodians because he assisted them against Demetrius. After taking Jerusalem he captured one hundred and twelve thousand Jews, but treated them most humanely, so that many went voluntarily from Judea into Egypt. He entrusted fortresses and cities to them because, from the response of Jaddua to Alexander, he knew that they were the most steadfast keepers of an oath.

He is one of Alexander's commanders. Ptolemy Philadelphus was the killer of brothers who plotted against him. He possessed one hundred thousand infantry, two thousand chariots, four hundred elephants, one hundred and fifty warships, a thousand cargo ships, an annual revenue of fourteen thousand eight hundred talents of silver, and finally one million five hundred thousand artabas of grain. An artaba contains three modii and one third.

But at the end of the years, after many troublesome contests between the kings of Asia and Egypt, the daughter of the king of the south--Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt--shall come to the king of the north, Antiochus Θεὸν, to establish friendship, with a great dowry, so that she even acquired the name φερνοφόρος, "dowry-bringer." But she shall not retain the strength of the arm, nor shall she be a bond between the two kingdoms.

For Laodice, the former wife of Antiochus, shall kill her husband with poison, appoint Seleucus Callinicus king, and deliver Berenice with her son to the princes at Antioch to be killed. Indeed, those who brought her there and were sponsors of the marriage shall likewise be killed.

But one shall stand from the shoot of her roots, namely Ptolemy Euergetes, Berenice's brother, who occupied almost the entire kingdom of Seleucus. Justin narrates the history in Book XXVII: "When Antiochus, king of Syria--the God, namely--had died and Seleucus had succeeded in his place, at the urging of his mother Laodice, who ought to have restrained him, he began the auspices of his reign with parricide. For he killed Berenice, his stepmother, the sister of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, together with his little brother born from her. By perpetrating this crime, he both incurred the stain of infamy and involved himself in a war with Ptolemy.

"Moreover, when Berenice learned that men had been sent to kill her, she shut herself within Daphne. When it was reported to the cities of Asia that she was being besieged there with her little son, remembering the dignity of her father and her ancestors and pitying the misfortune of so undeserved a fate, they all sent her assistance. Her brother Ptolemy too, roused by his sister's peril, left his kingdom and flew to her with all his forces. But before the arrival of assistance, Berenice--since she could not be conquered by force--was surrounded by deceit and slaughtered. The matter appeared undeserved to all; and so, when all the cities that had revolted had prepared an immense fleet, terrified by this sudden example of cruelty and at the same time intending to avenge the woman whom they had been about to defend, they delivered themselves to Ptolemy. If he had not been recalled to his kingdom by a domestic sedition, he would have occupied the whole kingdom of Seleucus."

Accordingly, it is apparent why Daniel says: "Moreover, he shall lead captive into Egypt their gods and carved images, and likewise precious vessels of silver and gold." Historians say that he brought back those things which Cambyses had formerly carried away. Recalled by domestic sedition, he carried away with him four thousand talents of gold and two thousand five hundred gods; but he occupied all things as far as the Euphrates.

§ 8. I refrain from expounding the remainder. If you add the names of the kings to those passages, you will compose a complete history from the prophecy. You, reader, consider God's foreknowledge, which most accurately sees through all deeds and all the minds of all persons; revere the divinity conscious of every outcome. And you will discover that all things are from God and are preserved by God; that without God human counsels fall into futility and are turned into the greatest calamities. Those powerful marriages first dashed kings, queens, and children against one another, and then the kingdoms themselves, in a war of mutual extermination.

Foreknowledge of future things is therefore the surest and never-fallacious sign of the divinity that governs all dominions. Thus Isaiah 41: "Announce to us the things that shall come in the future, and we shall know that you are gods."

Among these I also count that most manifest prophecy concerning Cyrus, which was shown to him after two hundred years, when he had obtained the kingdom, as Josephus narrates in *Antiquities*, Book II, chapter 1.

CHAPTER VIII

That the Commonwealth Depends Upon God Is Shown by Testimonies of Christians

§ 1. This could appear superfluous, since many of the Fathers have written entire treatises on this matter; nevertheless, to taste a few things from them for the disputation undertaken will not have been useless.

Tertullian, *Apology Against the Gentiles*, chapter 17: “That which we worship is one God, who by the word with which he commanded, the reason by which he disposed, and the power by which he was able brought forth from nothing this entire mass, together with all its equipment of elements, bodies, and spirits, as an ornament of his majesty.” And chapter 18: “See, therefore, whether he dispenses kingdoms, to whom belong both the world that is ruled and the human being himself who rules; whether he arranged the vicissitudes of dominions at their appointed times in the world, who existed before all time and made the age of bodies into time; whether he raises or casts down cities, under whom the human race once existed without cities.”

Saint Basil, *Hexaemeron*, Homily 7: “No man endowed with knowledge of the stars, no Chaldean conjecturing from the rising of the constellations the tumult of a tempest in the air, taught the hedgehog; but the ruler of seas and winds imprinted upon this little animal too an evident and open trace of his immense wisdom. There is absolutely nothing that does not fall beneath God’s providence. There is altogether nothing neglected by God. That ever-watchful eye searches all things and beholds all things; it is present to all and provides to each the means of safety. If God does not exclude the hedgehog from his providence, does he not search out the things that pertain to you? Does he not behold them?”

And upon these words of Psalm 32, “A king is not saved by great strength”: “No military army, no fortification however great, no walls of cities, no phalanx of infantry, no troop of cavalry, no preparation of naval defense produces safety for a king. Κύριος καθιστ�, καὶ μεθιστ� βασιλεῖς--the Lord establishes and removes kings. A king is therefore preserved not through great strength, but through divine grace.”

Athanasius, *Oration Against the Gentiles*: “Thus also in the order and harmony of this universe, it is necessary that we observe that God is the ruler of all these things, and that he is one and not several. For that order of disposition and concordant harmony of all things declares that it has not many but one leader and ruler, namely the Word of God.”

Then, in the same oration: “The almighty, altogether complete, holy Word and Reason of God himself, lying upon all things and everywhere unfolding his powers, illuminating all things--both those that appear to the eyes and those that escape the eyes--contains and binds together all things within himself. He leaves nothing deserted by his power, but in all things vivifies and preserves all things, individual things individually and the whole publicly: the beginnings and elements of every sensible substance.”

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III, chapter 41: “God has providence over all things; for this reason he also gives counsel. But in giving counsel he is present to those who possess providence over conduct. It is therefore necessary that the things which are foreseen and governed should know their ruler;

[Printed page 18]

for they are not irrational or empty, but possess a sensibility that perceives the providence of God. And for this reason some of the gentiles, who served enticements and pleasures less and were not led away so far by the superstition of idols, moved by his providence, although only slightly, were nevertheless converted, so that they said that the maker of this universe was the Father who provides for all and disposes the world for us.”

Augustine, *City of God*, Book V, chapter 10: “For we do not place either the life of God or the foreknowledge of God beneath necessity if we say that it is necessary for God always to live and to foreknow all things, just as his power is

not diminished when it is said that he cannot die or be deceived. For he is unable to do this in such a manner that, if he were able, he would assuredly be of lesser power. He is rightly called omnipotent, although he cannot die or be deceived. For he is called omnipotent by doing what he wills, not by suffering what he does not will. If that happened to him, he would by no means be omnipotent.”

Augustine, *City of God*, Book IV, chapter 28: “Just as the Romans were able to possess golden money although they did not worship the god Aurinus, so too they could have possessed silver and bronze money even if they worshiped neither Argentinus nor his father Aesculanus; and so with all the things that it is wearisome to unravel. Thus, therefore, they could in no way possess a kingdom against the will of the true God. But if those false and many gods were unknown or despised, and that one God were known and worshiped with sincere faith and morals, they would both possess a better kingdom here, however much they possessed, and afterward receive an everlasting one, whether they possessed one here or did not.”

Augustine, *City of God*, Book V, chapter 1: “Let us now consider in sequence for what cause God--who can also give those goods which even men who are not good, and therefore not happy, can possess--willed the Roman Empire to be so great and so long-lasting. For that multitude of false gods which they worshiped did not bring this about; we have already said many things, and shall speak whenever it seems opportune. The cause of the greatness of the Roman Empire was therefore neither fortuitous nor fatal, according to the judgment or opinion of those who call things fortuitous which either have no causes or do not come from some rational cause, and call things fatal which occur by the necessity of some order apart from the will of God and human beings. Human kingdoms are constituted entirely by divine providence.”

Peter Chrysologus: “The power of the Lord is no greater in confirming the most powerful kingdom than in overturning the poor man’s hut. For who in Greece was more powerful than Alexander? Yet it is read that not his own son, but the son of a dancing woman succeeded him.”

§ 2. Therefore Augustine truly says, *City of God*, Book V, chapter 11:

Accordingly the supreme and true God, with his Word and Holy Spirit--which three are one--one omnipotent God, creator and maker of every soul and every body, by participation in whom all who are happy in truth, not in vanity, are happy; who made the human being a rational animal from soul and body; who neither permitted him when he sinned to be unpunished nor abandoned him without mercy; who gave to good and evil alike existence together with stones, seminal life together with trees, sentient life together with cattle, and intellectual life with angels alone; from whom is every measure, every form, every order; from whom are measure, number, and weight; from whom is whatever exists naturally, of whatever kind it is and of whatever estimation; from whom are the seeds of forms, the forms of seeds, and the movements of seeds and forms.

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He also gave to flesh its origin, beauty, health, fecundity of propagation, disposition of members, soundness, and concord; and to the irrational soul he gave memory, sensation, and appetite, but to the rational soul, in addition, mind, understanding, and will. He left not only heaven and earth, not only angel and human being, but neither the inward parts of a small and contemptible animal, nor a bird’s little feather, nor a little flower of grass, nor a leaf of a tree, without agreement among their parts and a certain peace, as it were. He must in no way be believed to have willed that the kingdoms of human beings and their dominions and servitudes should be foreign to the laws of his providence.

Assuredly, he to whom such small things are a care will never neglect things so great. He numbered our hairs--indeed, as Tertullian observes, the bristles of pigs. Did he not number the provinces of kings and the cities of the earth?

Saint Augustine, *City of God*, Book V, chapter 19, most beautifully describes the same thing and shows that even evil men do not reign without providence:

But he who despises the judgments of those who praise him also despises the rashness of those who suspect him. Yet, if he is truly good, he does not despise their salvation, because he who has virtues from the Spirit of God is of such great justice that he loves even his enemies. He loves them in such a way that he wishes whisperers or detractors, when corrected, to have as his fellow citizens not the earthly fatherland but the heavenly one. But amid his own praises, although he regards lightly the fact that men praise him, he does not regard lightly the fact that they love him; nor does he wish to deceive those who praise him, lest he deceive those who love him. And therefore he earnestly insists that the one from whom a human being has whatever is rightly praised in him should rather be praised.

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But he who despises glory and is greedy for dominion surpasses beasts either in the vices of cruelty or in luxury. Certain Romans were such men. For when they had lost concern for reputation, they did not lack desire for dominion. History reveals that there were many. But Nero Caesar was the first to obtain the summit and, as it were, a certain citadel of this vice. His luxury was so great that nothing manly was thought to be feared from him; his cruelty was so great that he would have been believed to possess nothing soft, had it not been known. Yet even to such men the power of ruling is not given except by the supreme providence of God, when he judges human affairs worthy of such masters. The divine declaration concerning this matter is open, when the Wisdom of God speaks: "Through me kings reign, and through me tyrants hold the earth."

Saint Augustine therefore concludes, *City of God*, Book V, chapter 21:

Since these things are so, let us not attribute the power of giving kingship and dominion to anyone except the true God, who gives happiness in the kingdom of heaven to the pious alone, but an earthly kingdom to both the pious and the impious, as it pleases him to whom nothing unjust is pleasing.

CHAPTER IX

That the Commonwealth Is From God and Depends Upon Him Is Known From Other Predictions

§ 1. Among sincere and orthodox judges this argument is less firm than that which we drew from the sacred writings. Among pseudo-statesmen, however, who do not believe Sacred Scripture but do not dare altogether to deny the history of the human race, it must necessarily possess great weight. For if there is divination, then there is also the providence of some divine power; if there is providence, then the administration of affairs belongs to the divine power; human affairs are therefore governed not by chance or by human reason alone.

That prediction of future affairs exists is shown not only by the things we have discussed from the sacred writings, but also by many things which have happened in common life and still occur, which confirm it in such a way that no one can deny them unless he is altogether averse to every knowledge of humane learning and history.

[Printed page 19]

§ 2. True prophecy and oracles, among whomsoever they are found, disclose contingently future things or manifest hidden things only when God speaks--things which no one except God alone could disclose. For unless a more excellent and divine light shines forth, we altogether remove natural prognostications--προγνώσεις--and the skill of conjecturing which we concede to statesmen, physicians, and philosophers from the predictions of which we are treating.

We detest as impious and frequently deceitful those who, with the aid of demons, abuse knowledge of hidden things or presentiment of certain future things. But we judge that those who thought--as found in Cicero, *On Divination*, Book II--that the minds of prophets were roused and enlivened for the presentiment of future affairs by some exhalation of the earth, although Plutarch too holds this in the book in which he asks for the causes why the oracles ceased, depart very far from true reason and almost rave. For what affinity, analogy, or relation of cause can the foul moisture of the earth or the stench of caves possess with those affairs which depend upon the will of God and the free choice of a human being?

I therefore exclude these things and that whole class of oracles which once afflicted the entire world. Yet from that very class we also infer divine providence. For if demons often possess true prophecies because they behold things separated by a great distance or know the hidden counsels of human beings and the certain causes of events, we also learn from this that the world is governed by providence. For since they are evil and maleficent spirits, yet provident, crafty, and strong, it is necessary that their force and wickedness should be restrained by a greater force and fear. This can be done by no human being but by God, since even one demon, with such agility, strength, knowledge of all natural things, and especially because it cannot be seen or wounded, could destroy all human beings. The superstitions of the gentiles generally depended upon the imposture of these spirits. But afterward their prophets, when their frauds became manifest, lost their authority and the prices paid for their lies; finally, the demons themselves were also made speechless.

§ 3. The Sibylline books possessed the chief authority; a more prudent and cultivated age rejected almost all the others. Suetonius, in *Augustus*: "Whatever prophetic books of Greek and Latin origin were commonly circulated under no authors or insufficiently suitable ones--more than two thousand gathered from every side--he burned. He retained only the Sibylline books, these too after holding a selection, and stored them in two gilded cases beneath the base of the Palatine Apollo." Augustine mentions those same books in *City of God*, Book XVIII, chapter 22, when he proves that the Erythraean Sibyl also predicted many things concerning Christ the Lord.

God willed to admonish not only holy and pious persons concerning future things. Since they were few and among many peoples scarcely any, he used the voice of the impious, as that of Balaam in Numbers 22 and 23. Hence also

among the gentiles there are innumerable true portents and indications concerning commonwealths and kingdoms, either to be newly established or to be changed. Examples occur in Lipsius's *Monita* and in all writers, especially those of the later age, and above all in the various predictions of various events in the Constantinopolitan Empire.

The histories of the martyrs and holy Fathers, moreover, relate very many things. Although the profaneness of pseudo-statesmen is accustomed to laugh at them, nevertheless no one who prudently and without prejudice weighs the deeds and teaching of those men can suspect anything fraudulent or imposturous. Dominions and the victories by which they obtained them were certainly predicted to very many. It was said to Constantine the Great, "In this sign you shall conquer"; different things were predicted to others, and not without fulfillment.

An eagle, the emblem of dominion, overshadows Marcian while he sleeps; the thing happens again in Africa, so that the barbarians marvel and voluntarily grant the captive his liberty. Then, after Theodosius dies, he is soon adorned with an empress as wife and with the imperial power.

Admirable is what Lipsius, in Book I of the *Monita*, recounts after others. Compare with these what happened in the age of our fathers to LOUIS, king of Hungary. Suleiman, prince of the Turks, was preparing war against him, and he likewise was arming himself. He was dining in the citadel of Buda, the doors of the palace then being closed according to custom. At the gate stood someone with a human appearance, but lame, distorted, and foul in his remaining clothing and cultivation. With a sharp and shrill voice he cried out and demanded a conversation with the king. He was neglected, and they thought him a beggarly fellow. When he cried out more and more that it was necessary to meet the king and no other, the matter was reported to the king. The king sent one of the more splendid courtiers, who had been commanded to present the king's name and person and draw out whatever this might be.

He came and addressed the lame man privately. After looking at him, the lame man denied that this was the king. "And since," he said, "the king disdains to hear me, go and announce that he shall perish shortly and certainly." With the words he vanished from the eyes of those standing there. The threat was all too true. The king, near the town of Mohács, was defeated in a great battle and, while fleeing, fell into marshes. As he struggled out, his horse collapsed upon him, and he was crushed or suffocated. He was in his twenty-first year.

- The Greek term omitted from the HTML in §2 has been restored from printed page 19 as *προγνώσεις*. Because Contzen supplies no separate Latin rendering of the noun, its literal sense "prognostications" has been included directly in the English sentence.

CHAPTER X

That Kingdoms Are Governed by God Is Shown From the Sayings of the Impious and Unbelievers

§ 1. Although the wise man of this age, whose teaching in many matters approached very near to the truth, rightly said that “the human race has always deserved badly of God,” he himself thought badly and foolishly concerning God. Nevertheless, there are implanted in minds ἀντλήψεις, preconceptions, and certain sparks of that great light which shone in the purity of primeval grace, flashing among clouds of the thickest darkness. These direct the mind besieged by its own darkness, and often enamored of its own ignorance, toward its end, or at least do not permit it to sleep idly and securely upon its vices and grow torpid in a heavy lethargy.

In these matters the world of the impious generally agrees with the best men, although afterward there is a great difference of judging and acting in the choice made. Sudden and great dangers strike religion into the faithful and turn them toward piety, prayer, and detestation of sins; they inflame superstition in the impious and drive them to atrocious crimes. The Ninevites and Bethulians fast and pray when destruction is before their eyes. But the king of the Moabites sacrifices his firstborn upon the walls and is delivered more miserably than he would have been conquered. Curtius casts himself down for the danger of the legions. The Romans bury a Greek man and Greek woman, a Gallic man and Gallic woman. The Carthaginians burn patrician boys of select beauty and character as a whole burnt offering to Satan.

All naturally perceive that some divine power--ἀποτρόπαιον--is fit and beneficent for averting calamities and diminishing evils; all trust that, by propitiating it, they shall possess it as an ally; all acknowledge that they and their affairs depend upon another. They err only in identifying it. “If the Tiber rises to the walls, if the Nile does not rise over the fields,

[Printed page 20]

if the sky stands still, if the earth moves, if there is famine, if pestilence--the cry immediately is: ‘The Christians to the lion!’” Tertullian, *Apology*, chapter 40. Thus the most guilty cried out for innocent blood, either because they thought or pretended that Christians were the causes of every public disaster and every popular misfortune.

This, therefore, ought especially to strike our age’s secret apostates and perfidious dissemblers: among the impieties of the gentiles, their atheism was exceedingly rare. I am not unaware that very many things are excellently said by them, yet true things are mingled with errors and falsehoods, as in Plato, *Laws*, Book IV: “Ὡς θεὸς μὲν πάντα, καὶ μετὰ θεὸν τύχη, καὶ καιρὸς τ’ ἀνθρώπινα διακυβερνῶσι ξύμπαντα.” “God, and with God fortune and occasion, govern all things.”

Why does he thrust upon God fortune--which is nothing, or, if it is anything, is rash, blind, and subject to God--συμβασιλεύουσιν, and add it, as it were? Why does he thrust upon him καιρόν, occasion, as a partner in his kingdom, when every opportunity is from God? Nevertheless, even the authority of those who err ought to prevail against our pseudo-statesmen when they speak true things, because their understanding is not so far removed from the truth that all but the very few wandered into such great impiety.

Tertullian certainly teaches in the *Apology* that the Platonists located God within the world and seated him within that which he governs after the example of a shipmaster. Nor did the great admirer of Plato--who is as a certain god to Cicero--himself depart from Plato. For thus he speaks in Book I of *On the Nature of the Gods*: “There is some God within the world who governs it.” The same man, in *On the Laws*: “There is no nation so savage or so iron-hearted that, even if it is ignorant what sort of God it ought to have, it nevertheless does not know that it ought to have one.” And in Book II he demonstrates “that the world and all its parts were constituted by the providence of God from the beginning, are administered at every time, and that provision is made by God for individual things.”

§ 2. He received these things from Plato, *Laws*, Book I, where Plato asserts that a commonwealth cannot be governed without the assistance of the divine power. For just as beasts and living creatures devoid of reason cannot take care of themselves or govern themselves by themselves, but require the command of a human being to govern them, so human beings cannot be led to happiness unless God himself governs and leads them by the hand. It is assuredly so, for our acts of providence are timid and uncertain.

§ 3. Aristotle himself, *Metaphysics*, Book XI, chapter 10, teaches that there is one God, the administrator of all things. And in *On the World*: “What a pilot is in a ship, a driver in a chariot, a precentor in a chorus, a law in a city, and finally a commander in an army--this God is in the world.” Altogether true: “Ἐστὶν γὰρ ἡ πρόνοια ἰδίᾳ καὶ δημοσίᾳ, καὶ πανταχῇ.” Divine providence is discerned in private and public affairs, everywhere among the nations.

Philo appears to have borrowed this from Aristotle: “It must be believed that, just as a charioteer stands over a chariot or a pilot over a ship, so in all affairs there stands over them the one who presides over bodies, souls, living creatures, minds, angels, and all natures contained by earth, air, or heaven, both visible and invisible. For he governs the whole world as it depends upon himself.”

Seneca says most rightly in *On Providence*, chapter 1: “For who would believe that so great a work stands without a guardian, and that this course and recourse of the stars are chance impulses?” Indeed, even those who perish are a care to him: “μέλει μοι ὀλλόμενοι περ--they are a care to God, although they perish.” Plato in the *Epinomis* asserts that the gods care for great and small things, and that things which happen suddenly are not unforeseen by them. For an eclipse is produced by a sudden obscuration of the light and yet many centuries beforehand is marked out for a certain hour and moment of the hour.

§ 4. Beautiful and plainly royal is the speech which Cambyses delivered to his son when he was about to depart among the Medes: “I commend this one thing above all, and I desire it to be stored in your memory as a precious treasure given by your father. Be a friend to God and pious toward him, and undertake nothing unless the divine power has been invoked. For the nature of mortals is weak and dull; but nothing escapes the wisdom of God, and all things fall according to the desire of those to whom it is present.”

He himself, unmoved and always like himself, moves all these things, and principally moves them through his deputies. Lipsius excellently expounded this in the preface to his book *On the Roman Military*: “Just as in the world above there is one God who governs and regulates this entire structure, so upon earth he has appointed certain men as his administrators and deputies, to guard and administer it in its parts. He has willed that certain of these grow into great resources, forces, and works. What else does he do but show in an image that heavenly power, without end and measure, which he himself possesses and channels through those streams and conduits? Therefore, just as when we gaze upon the heaven and those flashing stars we are led from them to a certain pure, first, and inaccessible light, so from this human greatness we are led to its author and fountain, God.”

And Seneca: “God is near; he is with you; he is within you. Thus I say, Lucilius: a sacred Spirit sits within us, observer and guardian of our good and evil deeds.”

§ 5. Distinguished indeed is the preamble of the Locrian laws enacted by Zaleucus--if only it spoke about one God--which Stobaeus reports in Discourse 42: “All who inhabit the world or a region ought to be persuaded that gods exist, because this becomes manifest from an inspection of heaven and the entire world and from the most beautiful disposition and order of the things within them.” “For providence is the maker and governor of all matter,” says Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, Book III--“of all things, for not only of great things but also of the smallest.”

§ 6. Epictetus transmitted to us the distinction among human beings emerging from error and darkness toward the light of truth: “As regards the gods, there are those who deny that any divine power exists. There are those who grant that one exists but say that it is inactive, careless, and provides for nothing. There are third men who say that it both exists and provides, but only for great and heavenly things and for none of the earthly. Fourth men say that it provides for

both heavenly and earthly things, but only universally, not for individuals and each one separately. But the fifth, in whose party are Ulysses and Socrates, assert and establish this: ‘O God, I DO NOT LIE HIDDEN FROM OR DECEIVE YOU EVEN IN MY SMALLEST MOVEMENT.’”

Accordingly, Cicero in Book IV of the *Academica* neither justly nor truly blames the Stoics because they bring down God’s majesty to the perfection of bees and ants. For God does not make these things while solicitous, anxious, and busied, or drawn away from greater affairs, but without labor or care and, as Clement of Alexandria says, “οὐ μεριζόμενος, οὐκ ἀποτεμνόμενος, οὐ μεταβαίνων ἐκ τόπου εἰς τόπον, πάντῃ δὲ ὄν πάντοτε, καὶ μηδαμῇ περιεχόμενος, ὅλος νοῦς, ὅλος φῶς, ὅλος ὀφθαλμός, πάντα ὁρῶν, πάντα ἀκούων, πάντα εἰδώς”--“not divided, not cut apart, not passing from place to place, but existing everywhere always and circumscribed nowhere; wholly mind, wholly light, wholly eye; seeing all things, hearing all things, knowing all things.”

He who acknowledges him and conducts all things in his sight can readily give good counsels and expect that the great παντοκράτωρ, the “Almighty,” will confirm them and grant success.

[Printed page 21]

CHAPTER XI

It Is Taught by Reason That Divine Providence Governs All Things

§ 1. Until now I have brought forward the testimonies of others. I shall now confront atheists, Epicureans, and followers of Diagoras in their own home and pursue their conscience until I extort either a confession of truth or assent.

I prefer to introduce the first argument in the words of an excellent philosopher rather than my own. Seneca, *On Providence*:

It is superfluous at present to show that so great a work does not stand without some guardian; that this fixed coursing of the stars is not the product of chance impulses; that things which chance sets in motion are often disturbed and quickly collide, whereas this unobstructed velocity proceeds at the command of an eternal law, carrying so many things by land and sea and so many exceedingly bright lights shining according to their appointed arrangement; that this order does not belong to wandering matter; and that things which came together rashly would not hang with such great art that the earth's exceedingly heavy weight should sit unmoved and watch the flight of the heaven hastening around it; that the seas poured into the valleys should soften the lands and perceive no increase from the rivers; and that immense things should be born from the smallest seeds.

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Not even those things which appear confused and uncertain--I mean rains and clouds, the blows of crashing thunderbolts, fires poured out when the summits of mountains are broken, tremors of the quaking ground, and the other things which the tumultuous part of nature sets in motion around the earth--occur without reason, although they are sudden. They too possess their own causes no less than things which, seen in foreign places, are marvels, such as warm waters amid the waves and new expanses of islands springing up in the vast sea.

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Now, if anyone observes shores laid bare when the sea withdraws into itself and covered again within a short time, he will believe that by some blind rolling the waves are now contracted and driven inward, now break forth and return to their station at a great course; although meanwhile they increase by portions and approach greater or smaller at their appointed hour and day, according as the lunar star has drawn them forth, at whose discretion the ocean overflows.

What cause shall we assign to all changes unless they begin from some one thing and tend altogether toward one end? The stars and their spheres are swept along at a most rapid speed which we can attain by no understanding; yet by that motion they receive no good proper to themselves, but minister to the lower world and to human beings--not by their own will or knowledge, but by the force and decree of a certain supreme intelligence and power.

§ 2. The metaphysicians and theologians explain another argument to us. For the whole universe and the aggregate of all the things within it cannot be from itself, nor did individual things create themselves by their own power; rather, they began to exist from another, and therefore are preserved and directed toward their end by another. The actions and concurrence of so many causes are needed for the particular production, preservation, and increase of things. How, therefore, could they exist from themselves? Or how could they fail if they exist from themselves--that is, through their own essence? That which is from itself does not need another's assistance in order to continue to exist. If, therefore, all things have their origins from another--that is, from God--it is necessary that they exist, be preserved, ruled, and governed by God. No one can deny this right to a δημιουργῶ--to a craftsman--over his own works. That things are not from chance I have already taught by the first argument.

§ 3. If kingdoms are not administered by divine power and providence, they cannot even be ruled in this way. For if God exists, he necessarily exists, and the stability and vicissitude of all human affairs depend upon his nod. If God does not exist, he necessarily does not exist; for God's coming into being belongs among those things which cannot occur.

Since, therefore, nature has given a certain general conception of God, implanted in everyone--for every soul is naturally Christian and, when adversities press or dangers threaten, invokes God and expects help from God--that sense born within every soul and implanted by nature is not so deceived that it pursues ἀδύνατα, things which cannot exist in the nature of things. For if God does not exist, nothing so foreign to reason, so absurd to thought, and so contradictory can be imagined as that God exists. But an opinion that so entangles and overturns itself cannot be natural to everyone.

The most wicked human beings furnish proof. When they see Nemesis and the approaching company of deserved punishments, they understand that such great evils are being prepared for them by God. See the noble Antiochus, now too late displaying a shadow of piety through servile fear. Hear the tyrant of the Romans complaining that he is daily destroyed by the gods, even worse than he feels. See another fleeing every peal of thunder and terrified at every flash of lightning, badly sheltering himself beneath underground vaults and a sealskin.

Why, therefore, can there not be some mind, mistress of all things, uncreated and creative, when the mind of the impious disputes so acutely against its own maker? From where do you possess that force by which you comprehend hidden things, store them in memory, and gather one thing after another by reasoning? No one will pronounce that a mind so capacious, so noble, penetrating all things by understanding, desiring some things and most freely rejecting others, has its origin from anything other than a certain most excellent mind and intelligence. For how will a brutish thing devoid of reason be able to produce and order such great skill in understanding and perceiving and such swift movements of desire?

§ 4. Our most learned Lessius, in *On Providence*, argument 12, teaches that very many absurdities follow if we deny that God exists. These are his words:

If there is no divine power and no providence by which human affairs are governed, many absurdities assuredly follow, foreign to every reason and sound judgment, which clearly prove that this can in no way be established.

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For first it follows that the first and supreme truth concerning divine power and providence opens the door to mortals for every impurity of life, every iniquity and injustice, every pride, arrogance, and tyranny, and finally for perfidy, perjuries, sacrileges, and every class of crimes. For nothing is so monstrous, unjust, or impious that, when fear of the divine power has been removed, the human mind will not dare to undertake and accomplish it, according to that saying of the Psalmist: "The fool has said in his heart: There is no God. They are corrupted and have become abominable in their iniquities," and so forth. Behold the fruit of that teaching and persuasion: the foulness and abominable enormity of every crime.

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That this follows is manifest. For just as, if there is some divine power, the first and supreme truth is that there is a God who governs the world, so, if there is no divine power, the first and supreme truth will be that there is no God who governs the world. For it will be the truth concerning that which is apprehended by all as the supreme and first principle of all things. But this truth will extinguish in human minds every fear and reverence of the divine power; and when fear has been removed, the way lies open to every crime. But what more absurd thing can be said or thought than that the first and highest truth and the greatest secret of divinity, when known or apprehended by human beings, should open the way to every wickedness and shameful deed and make them the most criminal and impure?

[Printed page 22]

Secondly, it follows that that which is false and impossible and a mere chimera is the cause of all religion, piety, justice, temperance, modesty, benevolence, patience, and finally of every virtue and moral goodness--as well as of peace and tranquility in the commonwealth and every good in the human race. For persuasion concerning the divine power, and love and fear of it, produce all these goods; and the greater and more vehement these have been, the greater the goods that arise from them in human minds and in the political condition. Hence there has never existed a well-constituted commonwealth in which religion and persuasion concerning the providence of the divine power did not flourish; and privately, the more reverent and religious each person was toward the divine power, the more distinguished he was in probity and innocence of life. On the contrary, the less anyone esteemed the divine power, the more criminal he was, as is evident from both profane and sacred history.

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But to what madness does it belong to believe that a false and impossible fiction possesses such great force toward every virtue, while solid truth possesses such great enticement toward every shameful deed and destruction?

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Thirdly, it follows that true and highest wisdom extinguishes every virtue and makes human beings the worst, whereas the highest error and madness arouses them toward every virtue and makes them the best. For if there is no divine power, it is the highest error and madness to believe certainly that there is a divine power and providence, while it is the highest wisdom to believe that these are nothing except human fictions and chimeras. Likewise it follows that truth and wisdom are exceedingly pernicious to a human being and the commonwealth, but error exceedingly salutary; that truth and wisdom must be concealed as much as possible, as the poison of minds and every commonwealth, but error promoted by every means, as the fountain of every good; that the highest light of the intellect brings the greatest darkness upon minds, and the greatest intellectual darkness produces the light and beauty of minds. All these things are full of frenzy and madness.

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Fourthly, it follows that all those who were ever most distinguished for wisdom, holiness of life, miracles, and the prophetic spirit were deceived in the greatest matter and were unable to attain the truth concerning the nature of the divine power. For all these men acknowledged and supremely venerated divinity and providence. But those who were infamous for impiety, foulness of life, and every enormity of crimes alone grasped this secret, for all who despised the divine power were such men. The worst of all mortals, therefore, were the wisest, but the best of all were the most foolish and enveloped in the greatest darkness of ignorance and errors.

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Fifthly, it follows that to love God, fear vengeance, offer sacrifices, pray to the divine power, celebrate it with hymns and praises, and keep an oath are not good things, but empty, foolish, impious things contrary to right reason, no differently than loving, fearing, worshiping, and praising a chimera or another fiction of the human mind. For if divinity is a fiction like a chimera, it is manifest that no more should be rendered to it than to a chimera.

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Sixthly, it follows that to be impious, sacrilegious, blasphemous, and a despiser of the divine power is not evil or contrary to right reason, but that these things are good and worthy of praise, since they are consonant with true teaching about the divine power. For if there is no divine power, all those acts by which it is despised and afflicted with ignominy are good: both because they are certain declarations of a secret truth and because they are effective for removing from human beings a false persuasion concerning providence and the divine power--just as insults against the idols of the gentiles are praiseworthy because by them we testify that no divinity inheres in the idols. Nothing is more contemptible than that which neither exists nor can exist.

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Seventhly, it follows that the world is like a ship tossed upon the sea, destitute of helm and helmsman; likewise, like the greatest commonwealth composed of every class of human beings, in which there are no laws, no judge, no ruler, and no guardian of tranquility and the public good. If it is so, how can the world continue to exist, especially since it consists of things so unlike, contrary, and contending? For just as a ship without a pilot is tossed here and there by chance impulses until it is dashed upon rocks, strikes shoals, or is swallowed by the waves, and as a commonwealth without a ruler consumes itself with slaughters and seditions, so the world will necessarily be borne along in the most disordered manner and dissolved by the conflict of contraries if there is no ruler who directs it and causes contending things to conspire in concord.

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Eighthly, it follows that this universe and the formation and arrangement of its parts arose by chance and coalesced into this form and appearance. For if there is no mind that formed its individual parts and arranged and composed them into this structure which we see, it must necessarily be confessed that the whole happened by chance, according to the opinion of Democritus, who established that all things were formed from the chance impulse and concurrence of atoms. But what else is this than sheer folly and want of reason? Someone sees a most splendid palace perfected with the highest art, whose structure all architects marvel at. He asks what craftsman constructed it. He is answered that it was constructed by no craftsman, but that once a mountain planted with trees existed in the same place; when it collapsed through an earthquake, its parts leapt apart, and by this fall and collision the individual parts were so formed that they suddenly coalesced, in place of a shapeless heap, into this appearance of a substructure and the form of a palace. Who will be so witless as to believe this?

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These and many other things manifestly follow when that principle has been established. Everyone sees how foreign all of them are to every appearance of truth, how opposed to the light of reason, and how horrible to utter. Therefore that principle too, which is the fountain of such streams, must be most foreign to truth.

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Someone will say that false persuasion in religions often possesses the greatest force for deterring human minds from crimes and impelling them toward probity and justice. For the gentiles, who established several gods according to the multitude and diversity of human affairs and thought that human affairs were conducted by their providence and that rewards or punishments were decreed for mortals according to their merits--although all these things were false and impossible--nevertheless, from this conception of mind, abstained from many injuries and crimes by which they believed those divine powers were offended, lest they incur their wrath and pay penalties either in this life or in the future. Accordingly, the argument which we brought forward above in the second place, number 141, could appear to someone by no means firm.

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I answer: the persuasion of the gentiles was indeed false in particular--insofar as they thought that these or those beings were divine powers and cared for human affairs--but not in general, insofar as they thought that there was some divine power to which human affairs were a care and which required an account of deeds. Hence, when either through fear of offending the divine power or through desire to please it they abstained from evil or did some good, they were impelled not by the force of the persuasion insofar as it was false concerning such a particular divine power, but insofar as it was true in general. For they erred only in the subject to which they attributed the nature of divinity and providence, attributing it to those to whom it ought by no means to have been attributed and venerating it in them. Accordingly, they did not abolish the very formal nature of divinity and providence, but established it; and therefore they retained in some manner the true foundation of political justice.

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But if there is no divine power and no providence, the very foundation in general is altogether false and fictitious, and therefore it cannot happen that it should possess any force toward probity of life. Or if it possesses any force--as experience establishes that it possesses the greatest--it is evident that it is not a fictitious but a true thing.

I wished to report these things in the words of the supreme theologian because I judge that they can be stated neither more briefly, nor more vigorously and clearly.

§ 5. These things are so self-consistent that everyone renders testimony to God in the tribunal of his own mind. "I summon a new testimony," says Tertullian in his book *On the Testimony of the Soul*,

[Printed page 23]

indeed, one better known than all literature, more debated than every doctrine, more commonly published than every publication, greater than the whole human being--that is, the whole of that which belongs to the human being.

What, therefore, does he demand from the soul?

If we do not please you when we proclaim the Lord--under this single name, the one from whom are all things and under whom is the universe--speak your testimony, if you know it thus. For we hear you too, openly and with a complete liberty that is not permitted to us, pronounce thus at home and abroad: "What God shall have given"; and "If God shall will." By that expression you both signify that some one exists and confess all power to him whose will you look toward. At the same time you deny that the others are gods when you call them by their proper names--Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Minerva. For you confirm that he alone is God whom you name only "God," so that even when you sometimes call those others gods, you appear to use a name belonging to another and, as it were, on loan.

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Nor are you ignorant of the nature of God which we proclaim. "God is good"; "God does good": these are your expressions.

And afterward:

Hence, O soul, from consciousness you have it ready at home and abroad, with no one mocking or forbidding you, to proclaim: "God sees all things"; "I commend it to God"; "God will repay"; and "God will judge between us." From where is this in you, O soul that is not Christian?

Tertullian marvels that even in the temples of demons they implore God as judge, and therefore exclaims: "O testimony of truth, which among the demons themselves makes a witness of the Christians!"

These testimonies of the soul are as simple as they are true; as ordinary as they are simple; as common as they are ordinary; as natural as they are common; as divine as they are natural. I do not think they can appear frivolous and cold to anyone if he considers the majesty of nature, from which the authority of the soul is assessed. As much as you grant to the teacher, so much will you adjudge to the pupil: nature is the teacher, the soul the pupil. Whatever the former taught or the latter learned was delivered by God, the teacher, namely, of the teacher herself.

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It is for you to judge what the soul can presume concerning her principal instructor from her who is within you. Perceive her who causes you to perceive. Consider her as a prophet in presentiments, an augur in all things, and one who foresees among events. Is it marvelous if, given by God to the human being, she knows how to divine? It is equally marvelous if she knows him by whom she was given. Even when circumvented by the adversary, she remembers her author, his goodness, his decree, her own end, and the adversary himself. Is it thus marvelous if, given by God, she proclaims those same things which God gave his own people to know?

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But he who has not judged outbursts of this kind from the soul to be the teaching of nature and the tacit trusts of an inborn and innate consciousness will say rather that the habit of speaking in this manner has been strengthened from opinions circulated among the people and from the use of published writings, as though into a fault.

Finally:

“Human being” is one name belonging to all nations, and there is one soul; the voice varies, but there is one spirit; the sound varies; each nation has its own language, but the subject matter of language is common. God is everywhere, and God’s goodness everywhere; the demon is everywhere, and the curse of the demon everywhere; the invocation of divine judgment everywhere; death everywhere and consciousness of death everywhere; and testimony everywhere. Every soul by its own right proclaims things concerning which we are not permitted even to mutter. Therefore every soul is deservedly both accused and a witness: as much accused of error as it is a witness of truth. And it shall stand before the courts of God on the day of judgment, having nothing to say. You used to proclaim God and did not seek him; you abominated demons and adored them.

§ 6. Finally, all things tending in a most orderly manner toward their ends show that God is the maker and ruler of all dominions, and therefore of the whole world. For what art, what intelligence, can order actions, instruments, times, place, circumstances, and connected things so fittingly and without error? Yet the things themselves recognize none of these; they are produced and produce through a certain instinct and impulse of nature, ignorant of their own undertaking.

Consider a grain of mustard. It is small among seeds, and yet its smallest portion is alive and, by a rich and oily moisture, is to emerge into a tree. But within the smallest particle of the smallest seed there is the greatest variety of parts. One part is strengthened into the trunk and, as it were, wood; another softens into pith; another is stretched into bark; another unfolds itself into a leaf; another into a flower; another lowers itself downward into the earth to draw up juices. Nor is it divided only into these parts, but also into particles of the parts; for trunk, bark, leaves, and flowers possess their own flesh, bones, veins, and coverings, so far that there is no tree which you could not readily divide into hundreds of heterogeneous parts.

How, therefore, is there so great a power in so slight a little body, parts so distinct, and such marvelous efficacy in them that they distribute the raw humors of the earth, toward such various ends, into things so diverse? For one part they thicken and harden into wood, another into bark, another into flower, another into leaves. What works these things except distinguished wisdom, the architect of all things? And it directs all these things toward one end, namely the utility of human beings.

For whose sake, therefore, will anyone say the world was made? For the sake, namely, of those living beings that employ reason: these are gods and human beings, than whom assuredly nothing is better. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, Book II; and Lactantius, *On the Anger of God*, chapter 13. True is the opinion of the Stoics, who say that the world was constructed for our sake. For all things of which it consists and which the world generates from itself have been accommodated to the utility of the human being. Seneca says exceedingly well in *On Benefits*, Book VI, chapter 23, if only he acknowledged one GOD:

Add now that external things do not compel the gods, but their own eternal will is a law to them. They established things which they would not change. Accordingly, they cannot appear about to do something although unwilling, because they willed to persevere in whatever cannot cease; nor do the gods ever repent of their first counsel. Without doubt, it is not permitted for them to stop and depart in the contrary direction. But they remain in their purpose not because their own force holds them there through weakness, but because it is not permitted to depart from the best things, and it was thus decreed to proceed.

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In that first constitution, when they disposed all things, they also saw our affairs and took account of the human being. Accordingly, they cannot appear to run their course and unfold their work for their own sake alone, because

we too are a part of the work. We therefore owe a benefit both to the sun and moon and to the other heavenly bodies, because although the things for which they arise are more important than they are, they nevertheless assist us, who are going toward greater things.

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Add that they assist by design, and we are therefore placed under obligation: we did not fall ignorantly into their benefit, but they knew that we would receive these things which we receive. And although a greater thing was proposed to them, and the fruit of their activity was greater than the preservation of mortal beings, nevertheless their mind was also directed toward our advantages from the beginning of things, and that order was given to the world so that it may appear that care of us was not held among the last things.

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We owe dutiful affection to our parents, and many did not come together in order to beget us. The gods cannot appear not to have known what they were about to produce, since they immediately provided nourishment and assistance for all; nor did they beget through negligence those for whom they had generated so many things. For nature considered us before it made us, nor are we so slight a work that we could have fallen from its attention.

Would he not appear altogether Christian if he attributed these things to the one true God?

If, therefore, so great a mass turns for our sake; if things so small are composed with such great artistry and providence that within almost a single grain there is no less material for wonder than within the most immense spheres of the heavens, certainly the same God governs the society of human beings, the alternating turns of commanding and obeying, and all rewards and punishments.

How could he neglect the government of the most excellent creature, when he equipped the commonwealth of vegetables, so to speak, with laws so harmonious and so full for being born, growing, flowering, bearing fruit, and producing seed,

[Printed page 24]

and did so for this end, that they should serve the human being? If, therefore, he judged brute servants, estates, and beasts of burden worthy of such care, who would marvel that he judged us worthy to be ruled, he who governs all our possessions? For he does not imitate foolish parents who prepare fields, money, houses, and a household for their children, but neglect the children themselves.

CHAPTER XII

That the Commonwealth Is Ruled by God Is Shown by Examples

§ 1. There will be a place more proper to this disputation in Book II. For I shall show that the wicked are punished and good princes favored and defended.

Divine vengeance proceeds with a slow but weighty step, although punishment is sometimes made present swiftly. Indeed, this most especially demonstrates the active force of divine judgment against transgressors. Although no one among sinners escapes, but is either soon led to punishment or is deferred--unless through repentance and good deeds he anticipates the avenging hand of the divine power--the greatest part of punishments is preserved for the future. Yet in the meantime so many temporal evils precede those everlasting evils that no one can doubt that God exists, who rules and judges mortal affairs, rewards the good, and avenges himself upon the impious. He judges the world in equity and the peoples in his truth.

What some interpret as the necessity of fate, and others as a fortuitous event, is the judgment of God. Hence come the marvelous and unexpected revolutions of affairs. There is no year that is not marked by some distinguished fall or death of powerful persons--indeed, no day that does not see certain men lying low in the evening whom it had seen proud in the morning. This is not done by

a star and the wondrous power of hidden fate,

but by God--God, I say, because he calls the stars and they say, "We are present"; he who made those lights not for their own service, but for the utility of human beings.

§ 2. Struck by that judgment, the first fratricide, wandering and trembling with perpetual dread, carried the marks of his crime around the world. By that judgment the flood inundated the lands, heavenly flame burned the Sodomites, the Red Sea overwhelmed the Egyptians, and Israel destroyed the Canaanites. By this judgment Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and many thousands fell in the desert. For many years Israel was oppressed by the tyranny of neighboring kings; afterward it was afflicted under its own kings and condemned to seventy years of servitude.

But let us consider greater examples. God permitted the avarice of the Assyrians to exhaust all Asia; he despoiled them through the Chaldeans; and the luxury of the Chaldeans through the Medes and Persians, who ruled most widely and, raised even to the highest summit and openly displaying vices greater than their dominion, were compelled through the Macedonians, the most contemptible nation of Greece, to accept the yoke of servitude. But he cast the Macedonians, who had collided among themselves, before the Romans to be defeated, crushed, and stripped to the bone.

Then, when the sins of the Romans exceeded their measure, so that they could neither be tolerated any longer nor bear a remedy, he first wore the Romans down by mutual slaughter and then divided them among the Cimbri, Heruli, Goths, Vandals, Lombards, and other barbarians. Now all Asia, the more excellent portion of Africa, and noble Greece pay the penalties of despised religion beneath the bitter and harsh dominion of the Ottomans.

All disasters that have afflicted either the whole world or its parts in turn are executions of divine judgments. "We read," says Tertullian in the *Apology*, chapter 40, "that Hierapolis and the islands of Delos, Rhodes, and Cos perished together with many thousands of human beings. Plato also records that a land greater than Asia and Africa was taken away by the Atlantic Sea. The earthquake also drank up the Corinthian Sea. And the force of the waves severed Lucania from Italy and banished it into the name of Sicily." The punishments were exceedingly ancient, but the crimes which drew punishment as their companion were still more ancient.

The ancients relate that during the reign of the impious Phaethon, Greece and Ethiopia were devastated by fires and the king himself destroyed by a thunderbolt. In vengeance for adultery, the kingdom of Priam and barbarian opulence passed into funeral pyres. Sardanapalus the Assyrian, together with a herd of shameful men and women, brought his immense luxury to an end in his burning palace. A most just thunderbolt crushed Tullus Hostilius, king of the Romans. We read of the fires of Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Sidon, Tyre, Thebes, Persepolis, Saguntum, Corinth, Carthage, Numantia, Byzantium, Nicomedia, Aquileia, Padua, Antioch, Basel, Venice, and other cities, and that they were frequently repeated. I pass over earthquakes and other misfortunes.

I would show the great rewards given to the piety of kings and peoples, so that by this part too I might establish God's rule, but I prefer to defer them to that part in which I shall treat of piety. For no thing demonstrates divine sovereignty within the commonwealth more clearly than the rewards of virtue.

CHAPTER XIII

The Objections of Atheists Are Answered

§ 1. There are many things which atheists seriously, and the weak and inexperienced for the sake of learning, are accustomed to object against providence and the government of God. For since the world is, as Eusebius defines it in book [reading uncertain], “Σύστημα δὲ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἀέρος, καὶ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης, καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις φύσεων,” a system or structure composed of heaven, air, earth, water, and the natures which are in these; since it is the common city of human beings and angels, so that one commonwealth is formed from the whole world--so much so that the Stoics say that heaven is properly a city, while they affirm that those which we inhabit are indeed called cities but are not cities--if, therefore, this commonwealth is governed by the best, most provident, and wisest prince, God, it is necessary that it also be ruled in the best and most tranquil manner, and that it be well with the good and ill with the wicked. Rewards should have been established for the well-deserving, punishments for the impious.

But in that commonwealth of the world, they say, in that vast city, the felicity of the wicked is often greater; and that weapon not only strikes lowly souls ignorant of heavenly things, but is also fixed in strong and fortified breasts. Why, therefore, do adverse things happen to good men and prosperous things to the wicked? This man plundered a province, drinks into the daylight, and, as the poet says, enjoys himself while the gods are angry.

Licinus lies in a marble tomb, but Cato in a small one,

Pompey in none: do we believe that there are gods?

Thus in David, Psalm 72:9: “They have set their mouth against heaven, and their tongue has passed through the earth. And they said: How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these themselves are sinners, and, abounding in the world, they have obtained riches. And I said: Therefore I have justified my heart without cause, and I have washed my hands among the innocent. I thought that I might know this: it is labor before me, until I enter into the sanctuary of God and understand concerning their last things.”

This, then, is an ancient complaint:

Τολμῶ κατειπεῖν, μήποτ' οὐκ εἰσὶν θεοί·

Κακοὶ γὰρ εὐτυχοῦντες ἐκπλήσσουσί με.

I dare to say: are there gods?

For prosperous wicked men render me astonished.

The second argument is that results generally correspond to industry, labor, counsels, cunning, and human providence; therefore human minds ought not to be turned toward other things, but each man ought to trust in his own ability

[Printed page 25]

and providence. Hence the Spartans warned that fortune must be invoked with the hand set to work, and the Attic people said, “Σὺν Ἀθηνᾶ καὶ χεῖρα κίνει,” “With Pallas, move your hand as well.” These do not yet wander far astray; worse is this saying:

Divine power is not yet absent, if prudence is present.

For it sets human--that is, most wretched--prudence in the place of divine power. And others say: Why was God so inequitable in the distribution of fate that he prescribed poverty, wounds, and bitter funerals for good men? And so, if God does not bring it about, error, imprudence, or sloth brings it about. The Romans subdued the world, but by labor,

boldness, endurance, the appearance of justice, and prudence. The Laconians held the sovereignty of Greece, but by their own industry. If in every matter you employ stratagem, there is no reason for you to seek another God.

Hence come words impious and hostile to God. “That wise man, full of joy, cheerful and calm, unshaken, lives with the gods on equal terms,” says Seneca, Epistle 59. And not merely on equal terms, but not needing God: the same author, Epistle 31, says, “This is the supreme good; if you attain it, you begin to be an associate of the gods, not a suppliant.” But, that you may behold the highest summit of madness, hear Sextius in Seneca, Epistle 73: “Sextius used to say that Jupiter can do no more than a good man. Jupiter has more things which he may bestow upon human beings; but between two good men the richer is not the better, any more than, between two men who possess equal skill in directing a helm, you would call him the better whose ship is larger and more splendid.” And Seneca in that place: “In what does Jupiter surpass a good man? He is good for a longer time.” These are their words, and they exclaim:

By this way one goes to the stars.

Here they make human beings equal to God not only in wisdom but also in felicity, so much so that someone spoke less wickedly when he said:

My right hand is a god to me, and the missile weapon which I brandish.

The third argument: it is unworthy of divine majesty to summon it down to all things, even the vilest--to the offspring of worms and ants, and to the works of human beings, very many of which either are vicious or are joined with vices.

The fourth argument is this: Nature performs all things by the same course; the circuits of the heavens are fixed; the changes of the lower world are likewise, in their own fashion, not very different; the perpetual alternations in the birth and death of animals and plants, and also infancy, adolescence, manhood, and old age succeeding in the same manner in all human beings, show that nature suffices for itself and that all these things occur by a certain natural law and necessity, and not by some other mind which exercises dominion over nature itself.

The fifth argument: Monsters are born; therefore that most wise mind errs and fails in its work. Hence come two-headed, three-bodied, hundred-handed, and six-fingered creatures; and, by an opposite error, one-eyed and one-handed creatures; indeed, by an unsociable conjunction of natures, men who are half oxen or oxen that are half human, fetuses with a dog’s face, an ape’s hand, or goats’ feet. Error occurs in other ways too: by distortion of limbs and by the magnitude of certain limbs or of the whole body. And so the weary or exuberant workwoman often produces Longhands, giants, and dwarfs. To what end are there so many poisons of serpents and plants, so many terrors of wild beasts, and so many annoyances of insects, if provision has been made for us by God? Hence also arise the very many complaints of very many men against the works of God.

Hence it is that Cotta the Academic, in the third book *On the Nature of the Gods*, denies everything to God or attributes all evils to him, even crimes themselves. “For if,” he says, “the gods gave reason to human beings, they also gave malice. For malice is a crafty and deceitful method of doing harm.” From these things they conclude that fortune, prudence, cunning, successful crimes, human life, and all affairs rule events, and that no account is to be taken of a more divine providence.

§ 2. These are ancient objections proposed not by one man alone; nevertheless, a true and solid answer has customarily been given not only by the holy prophets and Fathers, but also by the most excellent of the philosophers.

§ 3. The first argument has always moved very many. The philosophers themselves in Cicero, and Cicero himself in the fifth book *On the Nature of the Gods*, can scarcely defend the gods. I shall set forth the complaints in Cicero’s words and shall answer them.

“Telamon,” he says, “indeed concludes the whole question in one verse: whether the gods neglect human beings.

For if they cared, it would be well with the good and ill with the wicked;

which is now far from the case.

They certainly ought to have made all men good, if indeed they took counsel for the human race. But if that was too little, they ought at least to have taken counsel for the good. Why, therefore, did the Carthaginian crush the two Scipios, most valiant and excellent men, in Spain? Why did Maximus carry out the funeral of his consular son? Why did Hannibal kill Marcellus? Why did Cannae take Paulus away? Why was the body of Regulus handed over to the cruelty of the Carthaginians? Why did the walls of his own home not protect Africanus? But these things are ancient, as are very many others. Let us see things nearer to us. Why is my maternal uncle, the most innocent and likewise most learned P. Rutilius, in exile? Why was my companion Drusus killed in his own home? Why was Q. Scaevola, high priest, a model of moderation and prudence, slaughtered before the image of Vesta? Why also were so many leading men of the state killed by Cinna? Why could Gaius Marius, the most faithless of all men, order Q. Catulus, a man of the most eminent dignity, to die?

“The day would fail me if I wished to enumerate the good to whom things turned out badly; and no less if I were to commemorate the wicked for whom they turned out excellently. For why did Marius, after becoming consul for the seventh time, die so prosperously as an old man in his own home? Why did Cinna, the most cruel of all men, reign for so long? But he paid the penalty. It would have been better for him to have been restrained and prevented from killing so many eminent men than for him to pay the penalty himself at some later time. Q. Varius, a most savage man, perished with the greatest torment and punishment; but because he had taken away Drusus by the sword and Metellus by poison, it would have been better for them to be preserved than for Varius to pay the penalties of his crime.

“Dionysius was tyrant of a most opulent and most prosperous city for thirty-eight years. How many punishments before him did Pisistratus, Phalaris, and Apollodorus endure in the very flower of Greece, although they first tortured and killed many! And many robbers often pay the penalty; nevertheless, we cannot say that more captives have not been cruelly killed than robbers. We have learned that Anaxarchus, the Democritean, was tortured to death by the Cypriot tyrant, and Zeno of Elea killed under torture. What shall I say of Socrates? I am accustomed to shed tears at his death when reading Plato. Do you see, therefore, that in the judgment of the gods--if they see human affairs--the distinction has been removed? Diogenes the Cynic indeed used to say that Harpalus, who in those times was regarded as a prosperous robber, bore testimony against the gods, because he lived so long amid that fortune.

“Dionysius, of whom I spoke before, after he had pillaged the sanctuary of Proserpina at Locri, was sailing to Syracuse. And when he was holding a most favorable course, he said, ‘Do you see, friends, what good navigation is given by the immortal gods to sacrilegious men?’ And the clever man, when he had perceived it clearly and well, persisted in the same opinion. When he had brought his fleet to the Peloponnese and entered the sanctuary of Olympian Jupiter, he stripped from him a golden cloak of great weight, with which Gelo the tyrant had adorned Jupiter from the spoils of the Carthaginians. And in this too he jested that a golden cloak was burdensome in summer and cold in winter; and he threw a woollen mantle over him, saying that it was suitable for every season of the year.

“The same man ordered the golden beard of Aesculapius at Epidaurus to be removed [the transcription is defective here], for it was not fitting, he said, for the son to be bearded when the father was beardless in all his sanctuaries. He then ordered the silver tables to be removed from all the shrines

[Printed page 26]

on which, according to the custom of ancient Greece, the words ‘Of the Good Gods’ were inscribed, saying that he wished to make use of their goodness. The same man without hesitation took away the little golden Victories, bowls, and crowns which were supported by the outstretched hands of the images; and he said that he was receiving, not removing, them, for it was folly to be unwilling to take from those from whom we prayed for good things when they were offering and giving them.

“They say that this same man carried the things which, as I have said, had been taken from the sanctuaries into the forum and sold them through a herald; and, when the money had been exacted, he decreed that whatever each man possessed from the sacred things should be returned by each man to its own sanctuary before a fixed day. Thus he joined injury toward human beings to impiety toward the gods. Therefore neither did Olympian Jupiter strike him with a thunderbolt, nor did Aesculapius destroy him by making him waste away with a wretched and lingering disease. He died in his own bed and was carried to the pyre of Tympanis; and the power which he himself had obtained through crime he handed down to his son in place of an inheritance, as if it were just and legitimate.”

He concludes at last in this fashion: “Therefore the prosperities and favorable affairs of wicked men refute--as Diogenes used to say--the force and power of all the gods.”

§ 4. First, indeed, I answer that human judgment is deceived in the case of many human beings. For it is evident that those whom Cicero calls the best and holiest were entangled in many crimes and deserved to undergo punishments. Scaevola, Catulus, Drusus, Metellus, and the others whom he deploras as most holy men slaughtered with torment by the most savage men seem to me not to have been much better than their enemies--nor indeed Socrates, the most shameful teacher of crimes and every outrage. Who, however, will call the Romans innocent if he considers that, as they sat daily at the spectacles of the arena, they ordered the deaths of guilty and innocent alike? “Burn, scourge, cut, kill!” These were the customary words of the entire amphitheater. What greater thing did Phalaris do? Or Pisistratus? They killed fewer for their own protection than those most excellent Roman men killed for pleasure.

Second: human goods are not of such a kind as to contribute any weight toward felicity, nor are human evils such as can make men wretched. For how are poverty and exile burdensome except by estimation alone? Was Fabricius wretched when, beside the hearth, he dined upon the very roots which, as an old triumphator, he had pulled up while clearing his field? Or, to come to our own people, was the patriarch Jacob wretched when by night he placed a stone under his head? Or Paul and Antony, eating bread beside a spring? It is an error to judge that men are not happy unless they heap into their belly fish from a distant shore and fowl from beyond the seas, unless with exotic seasonings they rouse the sluggishness of a nauseated stomach, so that by a novel pleasure they may pile up dishes that will do them harm.

A good man is not rich; a wicked man abounds. What follows? The former will live frugally, the latter disgracefully. Tiberius Caesar sold a mullet of four and a half pounds; Apicius and P. Octavius bid for it. Octavius bought it for five thousand sesterces, that is, one hundred and twenty-five Philippics. Seneca, *Epistle 95*. Were those gluttons who bought the delicacy which Caesar sold happy? Or was the good man wretched if he could not buy what Caesar did not desire?

Caligula dined for ten million sesterces, and the ingenuity of all men was required so that the revenue of a middling province might become the cost of one dinner. Its price in our coinage is two hundred and fifty thousand Philippics. Let us hear even the pagans themselves, and rich men. Seneca, *Consolation to Helvia*: “Why do you seek so many things? Evidently our ancestors, whose virtue even now sustains our vices, were unhappy: they prepared food for themselves with their own hand; the earth was their bed; their roofs did not yet gleam with gold; their temples did not yet shine with gems. And so at that time oaths were sworn religiously by gods of earthenware. Those who had invoked them returned to die before the enemy lest they deceive them.

“Evidently our dictator lived less happily: while he heard the ambassadors of the Samnites, he himself turned the cheapest food on the hearth with his own hand--that hand with which he had already often struck the enemy and had deposited his laurel in the lap of Capitoline Jupiter--than Apicius lived within our memory. In that city from which philosophers had once been ordered to depart as corrupters of the young, he professed the science of the cookshop and infected the age with his discipline. It is worthwhile to know his end. When he had poured one hundred million sesterces into his kitchen, when he had swallowed up so many imperial gifts and the enormous revenue of the Capitol in individual revels, burdened by debt he was then compelled for the first time to inspect his accounts. He calculated

that ten million sesterces would remain to him; and, as if he would live in the extremity of famine if he lived on ten million sesterces, he ended his life with poison. How great was the luxury for which ten million sesterces was poverty! Go now, and suppose that the measure of money pertains to the matter, not the mind. Someone feared ten million sesterces and fled by poison from that for which others pray in their vows.”

God’s judgment, therefore, must not be censured in these matters, since that man is happy who desires less, and that man is unhappy whose appetite is immeasurable and incomprehensible, whose desire finds nothing sufficient.

§ 5. But many of the good pass their life amid hunger, thirst, prison, slavery, and torments, while in the meantime the wicked overflow with every pleasure. Their condition is harsher, I confess; nevertheless, this too confirms divine providence for us more than it overthrows it. Even for the public there is great utility in such examples. Reason taught unbelievers what faith taught Christians: we call them trials, they exercises. A wise man regards all adversities as exercises. Virtue withers without an adversary; endurance shows what it can do.

Seneca, *On Providence*, chapter 2: “Do you not see how differently fathers and mothers show indulgence? Fathers order their children to be roused early to undertake their studies; they do not permit them to be idle even on holidays, and they draw sweat from them, and sometimes tears. But mothers wish to cherish them in their bosom and keep them in the shade: they wish them never to weep, never to be sad, never to labor. God has a father’s disposition toward good men, and loves them stoutly. ‘Let them,’ he says, ‘be agitated by works, pains, and losses, that they may gather true strength.’ Things fattened through inactivity languish; they fail not only through labor, but through bulk and their very burden. Untouched felicity does not endure any blow; but when it has had a continual struggle with its own inconveniences, it acquires a callus through injuries and yields to no evil; but even if it has fallen, it fights from its knee.” These are the words of the Roman wise man.

§ 6. Next, adversities are medicines and means of calling men away from vices; they benefit those very men who suffer them. Hear Jerome on Ezekiel: “What is thought to be punishment is medicine.” But because my business is with atheists, let them hear those whom reason led to the point from which they, falling away from faith, have fallen headlong.

Seneca says in *On Providence*, chapter 3: “Is it for their benefit to be cast into exile, to be led into poverty, to carry out the funerals of children and wife, to be affected by disgrace, to be disabled? If you marvel that this is for someone’s benefit, you will marvel that some are cured by iron and fire, and no less by hunger and thirst. But if you consider within yourself that, for the sake of a remedy, some men have their bones scraped and picked out, their veins extracted, and certain limbs amputated which could not remain attached without the destruction of the whole body, you will allow this too to be proved to you: certain inconveniences are for the benefit of those to whom they happen, just as, by Hercules, certain things which are praised and sought are against those whom they have delighted--things very similar to indigestion, drunkenness, and the rest which kill through pleasure.”

And a little later: “Let us come to Regulus. How did fortune

[Printed page 27]

harm him by making him an example of fidelity, an example of endurance? Nails pierce him, and wherever he has rested his exhausted body he lies upon a wound, and his eyes are suspended in perpetual wakefulness. The more torment, the more glory there will be. Do you wish to know how little he repents of valuing virtue at this price? Restore him and send him into the senate: he will express the same opinion.

“Do you therefore think Maecenas happier? Anxious because of his amours, and weeping over the daily repudiations of his peevish wife, he seeks sleep through the music of harmonies sounding softly from afar. Though he drug himself with unmixed wine, divert himself with the noise of waters, and beguile his anxious mind with a thousand pleasures, he will be as wakeful upon feathers as the other man upon the cross.

“Calamity is the opportunity of virtue. And so God tests, hardens, recognizes, and exercises those whom he loves. Those toward whom he seems indulgent, whom he seems to spare, he preserves soft for evils to come. For you err if you judge anyone exempt: his portion will come to the man who has long been prosperous. Whoever seems to have been dismissed has been deferred. Why does God afflict every excellent man either with ill health or with other inconveniences? Why also are dangerous tasks commanded to the bravest men in camps? A commander sends the choicest men to attack enemies in ambushes by night, or to explore a route, or to drive a garrison from a position. No one of those who go out says, ‘The commander has deserved ill of me,’ but, ‘He has judged well.’ Let all who are commanded to suffer things lamentable to the fearful and slothful say the same. We have seemed worthy to God that he should test in us how much human nature could endure.

“Flee pleasures; flee enervated felicity, through which minds grow sodden and, unless something intervenes to remind them of the human lot, are stupefied as if by perpetual drunkenness. A man whom windowpanes have always protected from a draft, whose feet have grown warm among fomentations repeatedly changed, whose dining rooms have been tempered by heat introduced beneath and poured around their walls--a light breeze will not chill this man without danger. Since all things which have exceeded measure do harm, the intemperance of felicity is most dangerous. It disturbs the brain, summons the mind into empty images, and pours a great quantity of intervening darkness between falsehood and truth. Why should it not be better to sustain perpetual unhappiness, which summons one to virtue, than to burst under infinite and immoderate goods? Death is lighter for the fasting; men burst from indigestion.

“And so the gods follow this method with good men which teachers follow with their pupils: they demand more labor from those in whom there is more certain hope. Surely you do not believe that the Spartans hate their own children, whose character they test publicly by applying blows? The fathers themselves exhort them to endure bravely the strokes of the lash and, when they are lacerated and half-dead, ask them to persevere in offering wounds to wounds. What wonder is it if God harshly tests generous spirits? An example of virtue is never soft. Does fortune scourge and lacerate us? Let us endure it. It is not cruelty; it is a contest. The more often we enter it, the stronger we shall be. The most solid part of the body is that which frequent use has exercised. We must offer ourselves to fortune so that by fortune itself we may be hardened against it. Gradually it will make us equal to itself; frequency of undergoing danger will give contempt of dangers.

“Thus the bodies of sailors are hardened by enduring the sea; the hands of farmers are calloused; soldiers’ arms have strength for hurling missiles; the limbs of runners are nimble. In each person that which he has exercised is most solid. Through endurance the mind arrives at contempt for the power of evils. You will know what endurance can accomplish in us if you consider how much labor supplies to peoples who are unclothed and stronger through poverty.

“Why, however, does God allow any evil to happen to good men?” Seneca, *On Providence*, chapter 6. “In truth, he does not allow it. He has removed all evils from them: crimes and shameful deeds, wicked thoughts, greedy counsels, blind lust, and avarice threatening the possessions of another. He protects and vindicates the men themselves. Does someone also demand this of God, that he preserve even the baggage of good men? They themselves release God from this care: they despise external things. Democritus threw away his riches, judging them a burden upon a good mind. Why, therefore, do you marvel if God allows to happen to a good man what a good man sometimes wishes to happen to himself? Good men lose their sons: why should they not, when sometimes they themselves kill them? They are sent into exile: why should they not, when sometimes they themselves abandon their country, never to return to it? They are killed: why should they not, when sometimes they lay hands upon themselves? Why do they suffer certain harsh things? That they may teach others also to suffer: they were born as an example.”

§ 7. But are the wicked happy? See the same wise man: “Those whom you regard as happy, if you see them not where they meet your view but where they lie hidden, are wretched, filthy, and shameful, ornamented on the outside after the likeness of their walls. That is not solid and genuine felicity; it is a crust, and indeed a thin one. And so, while they are permitted to stand and be displayed according to their will, they shine and deceive; when something occurs which disturbs and uncovers them, then it appears how much deep and true foulness another’s splendor has concealed.”

If you are pleased to hear pious and sound teachers, they will teach us the rationale of providence more rightly and clearly. Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, book 11: “Why also does God permit this--to be tempted? Is it because virtue is proved and exercised, and the palm is more glorious for one who, though tempted, has not consented than for one who could not be tempted? Since even those who, after deserting the Creator, go after the tempter, increasingly tempt those who remain in the word of God, furnish them an example for avoiding desire, and strike a pious fear into them against pride? Hence the Apostle says: ‘Considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.’

“For it is remarkable how greatly that humility by which we are subjected to the Creator--lest, as if not needing his aid, we presume upon our own powers--is commended to everyone throughout all the divine Scriptures with continual care. Since, therefore, the just make progress even through the unjust, and the pious through the impious, it is said in vain: ‘God should not have created those whom he foreknew would become wicked.’ For why should he not create those whom he foreknew would profit the good, so that they might both be born useful for exercising and admonishing their wills and be justly punished for their own will?”

§ 8. Do you envy the prosperity of the wicked, or even shed tears over it? What is the cause of such great disturbances? Are not gladiators also distended with fattening so that they may perish more splendidly? Do not those condemned to fight wild beasts eat a final public meal? David resolves the question, but in the sanctuary of God and in their last things. For when the wicked are deferred here, they are reserved for punishments without end; and when the good labor here, they are exercised so that at the end they may obtain the inheritance.

The majesty of so great a reward is so arduous, its sweetness so pure and honorable, its eternity so secure and unchanging, that one must strive toward it through the most freely undertaken labors of doing and suffering, not through pleasures and earthly rewards. This whole thing which is called the human race, this whole mass of mortality, will come to examination, will come to the scales; all the works of human beings will be weighed there. For the present a cloud enfoldes them, but the merits of each are known to God.

God did not wish to reward justice with gold. For what sort of justice is that which is maintained for the sake of gold? As though gold were more precious than justice itself, or, when someone denies another man his possessions, the man to whom he denies them suffers a greater loss than the man who denies them: the one loses his garment, the other his fidelity.

§ 9. It pertains especially to providence that God should leave the causes which he created with their own properties and powers, and that he should permit freedom in acting to those which he made free. Hence each person ought to impute his own failure to himself, not to God. For there is no praise of virtue unless labor is undertaken voluntarily and for an honorable end, nor any glory in avoiding a crime

[Printed page 28]

unless its enticements have been voluntarily despised. He who is innocent through fear is not innocent; much less does one who is wicked or good by necessity merit praise for virtue or vice.

§ 10. Nevertheless, the sole cause of this blasphemy--why they say that God turns his eyes away from the works of the faithful but attends the wicked with benevolence--is that they judge that all things are ended by death and that no life of the soul survives after death, either for the rewards of merits or for the punishments of transgressions. But this is itself a principal judgment in favor of eternity: by it we recognize that all the deeds of human beings, which here are assessed with such unequal punishment and reward, are at last made equal. You marvel that Nero is not killed immediately, that the Sicilian tyrant rages for forty years. Judge him most wretched for whom so many years have turned into greater torments.

Slow vengeance takes away excuse from the impious and gives the penitent time to amend. You would wish punishment to be made present as soon as someone has committed a crime; therefore, lest only a few live for a long time, fear that swift vengeance ought also to have taken you away.

§ 11. Finally, God wished certain evils to be common and certain favorable things to be available to all. Tertullian, in the *Apology*, chapter 41: “For he who once appointed eternal judgment after the end of the age does not hasten the separation--which is the condition of judgment--before the end of the age. Meanwhile he is equal over the whole human race, both indulging and rebuking. He wished both benefits to be common to the profane and inconveniences to his own, so that by equal participation we might all experience both his gentleness and his severity. We who have learned equity in his presence love his gentleness and fear his severity; you, on the contrary, despise both. And it follows that all the blows of the age, if perhaps they come from God for our admonition, come for your chastisement.

“Yet we are harmed in no way: first, because nothing concerns us in this age except how quickly we may depart from it; next, because if anything adverse is inflicted, it is assigned to your merits. But even if some things strike us too because we adhere to you, we rejoice rather at the recognition of divine predictions, which plainly strengthens the confidence and faith of our hope. But if all evils come to you from those whom you worship because of us, why do you persist in worshiping those so ungrateful and unjust, who ought rather to have assisted and vindicated you in the distress of the Christians--whom they ought to separate from the merits of the Christians?”

§ 12. It very often seems marvelous to me that the wicked, who will pay such great penalties, generally live anxiously even in this age, struggle with the most grievous calamities, and indeed obtain horrible ends. Yet even in this respect the severity of divine justice shines forth. For it will not permit sinners to pass their lives secure in present goods, since fear of future things would restrain many too little, and certain impunity would furnish the greatest enticement to crime.

§ 13. The second argument, in which the subtlety of human prudence marvelously pleases itself, was drawn from the result of industry. For good counsels ordinarily have fortunate outcomes, but foolish counsels calamitous ones; therefore there is no other providence which governs or corrects human counsels. But this reasoning also deceives by the appearance of truth. For not all things well deliberated have fallen out fortunately, so that a man deservedly lacks success if he judges that the soundness of counsels ought to be estimated from the outcome.

Nevertheless, even if everything which is conducted by counsel and reason in administering the commonwealth were prudently instituted and were always led to the desired ends, and no rash undertakings ever turned to good, God's part in the government of the city would not on that account have to be taken away from him. Experience of each is manifest, as is the reason. The smallest thing often disturbs counsels that have been most excellently instituted and renders them not only useless but even destructive. First Corinthians 1:19: “For it is written: I will destroy wisdom, and I will reject the prudence of the prudent. Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the investigator of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of this world?”

Egypt possessed a great reputation for wisdom. Instructed by Joseph, it cultivated Greece--for which of the wise did not deal with the Egyptians? Yet what did God say? Isaiah 8:10: “Enter upon a counsel, and it shall be dissipated.” And 19:11: “The wise counselors of Pharaoh have given foolish counsel. How do you say to Pharaoh, ‘I am a son of the wise, a son of ancient kings’? Where are your wise men now? Let them announce to you and indicate what the Lord of hosts has thought concerning Egypt.” Why, indeed, was it foolish? Because, as he says in verse three, “I will cast down its counsel.”

But because atheists have no faith in the sacred writings, they must be refuted by their own wisdom. With how great wisdom did many lawgivers found and adorn a commonwealth, and yet in those very laws how wretchedly did they compel the city to labor and the citizens to collide with one another? Indeed, these instances are so numerous that the patriarch of false politicians, in book 2, discourse 29, says that Fortune casts darkness before the minds of human beings lest they break the force of her onset. He speaks impiously, indeed, since he ascribes to fortune the divine vengeance by which God denies them wisdom; yet he speaks suitably for the purpose, so that we may recognize that the outcomes of human counsels are never not in doubt.

For many things intervene which cut through anxious cares and deceitful hopes. The fraud of Mettius was cunning, but Tullus made it ineffectual with a single word, when he falsely declared that it had been done by his command. A wolf reduced Dionysius from the scepter to the schoolmaster's rod, for it intercepted the letters, together with flesh, from the bag of the sleeping letter-carrier. A soldier dragged Claudius forth and by chance made him emperor. The death of Commodus was hastened because Philocommodus childishly carried out the paper on which the names of those marked for death had been written. How many battles, how many armies, has one utterance ruined and reduced all counsels to nothing?

§ 14. The cause of the blasphemous error is that we see the beginnings, transformations, and destructions of empires occur through intermediate causes highly suited to those ends. Hence they attribute the entire event to the causes which appear and do not know the eternal cause which governs even the intermediate causes. When the vast bodies of kingdoms tend toward their setting and, as it were, their death, many signs and criteria appear beforehand to prudent men, by which they prophesy the future ruin with certain foreknowledge.

When the Persian empire was already standing on a slippery place, monstrous luxury, sloth, the abandonment of military discipline, commanders inexperienced and slothful in war--with no one whom one could trust unless he came from Greece--avarice, outrages against subjects, ambition, and consequently discord among counsels and the alienation of peoples hastened every evil. Divine justice withdrew the gifts of courage and prudence from men so criminal and so arrogant.

§ 15. What was advanced in the third place--that infinite majesty ought not to be present to the smallest things--can move no one who has learned that the divine power is a mind of infinite efficacy, which has all the sands of the sea and all the particles of the universe numbered; that God is one who does nothing anxiously, nothing while distracted; who is not called away from the protection of individual things by the knowledge and government of all things;

[Printed page 29]

to whom all the hairs of our head are numbered; from whose care nothing can be exempted, just as it cannot exist without him. There were not lacking among the ancients those who considered care of the smallest things foreign to God. Pliny, book 2, chapter 7: "It is ridiculous that that supreme being, whatever it is, should exercise care over human affairs. Are we to believe, or doubt, that it is not polluted by so manifold a ministry?" Far better is Epictetus: "You, God, I do not deceive even in the smallest thing."

The reasoning is firm. For if God administers the greater things, his power must also be in the minute things, and therefore his providence too; for the greatest things consist of those minute things. God could not create the world such as we see it unless he had first known it completely. He could not know the whole unless he examined the individual parts. For how could he create an animal if he did not hold its veins, arteries, fibers, pores, and the instruments of all its actions perceived and comprehended in his mind?

It would therefore be unworthy of that majesty to be ignorant of even the smallest thing, not always to behold the smallest thing in the clearest light, or for anything to escape his awareness and knowledge even for a moment. For if we establish that some things can lie hidden from God, and lie hidden for a brief time, there is no reason why we should not say that very many things lie hidden for the longest time--indeed, that all things always lie hidden. For why should he know those things but not know these?

I shall state the most impious doctrine of all which follows from this reasoning: namely, if God is ignorant of certain things and is deceived, since he is immutable, he cannot ever learn those things either. And therefore that God from whose majesty they consider the care of small things foreign is not even God, but a block of wood which is ignorant of all things. You say that the majesty of God is polluted by contact with filthy things, yet you cannot deny that the rays of the sun shine upon every sewer and pestilential pool without contaminating themselves. Saint Augustine excellently

says in book 9 of *The City of God*: “God, who is assuredly incapable of contamination--far be it that he should fear contamination from the man whom he put on, or from the human beings among whom he lived in a man.”

§ 16. The fourth argument most strongly asserts the government of God. For the fixed order of all motions, the conflicts of the elements, and a certain equality among them are not preserved except by incredible wisdom. For how, by fortune or chance, are the same things always born or destroyed according to the same plan? And why do those who gather from the features of bodies that the soul is mortal not rather conclude, from the soul’s perspicacity, agility, and marvelous nature of thinking and reasoning, that so spiritual and divine a power is not corporeal and cannot be corrupted by the death of the body?

§ 17. The fifth argument concerned the errors of nature, or monsters; for these appear unable to exist if this universe is administered by God, since it is necessary that he be free of every error.

I answer that the wandering of nature in its parts does nothing against the common providence of God. “It is God,” says Saint Augustine, book 16 of *The City of God*, chapter 8, “who himself knows where and when anything ought, or ought to have been, created.” He intimates the cause: “Knowing the beauty of the universe, by either the similarity or the diversity of which parts he should weave it together. But he who cannot behold the whole is offended as if by the deformity of a part, because he does not know with what it agrees and to what it is referred.”

God therefore has his own reason why he permits these defects in created things; for all those things which occur from the hidden causes of the world have been placed beneath that providence. Fabulous histories of monstrous human beings relate that some are one-eyed; others have feet turned backward behind their legs; others are Sciopods, Pygmies, Astomi, Onophthalmi, Cynocephali, and others marvelous by their very rarity. I am not led to believe that these exist or have existed. Rather, those historians, glorying in their curiosity, seem to have lied with unpunished vanity. If, nevertheless, such things existed, and if they were human beings, the judgment of Saint Augustine concerning them in book 16 of *The City of God*, chapter 8, pleases me: “But if they are human beings, concerning whom those marvels have been written, what if God wished to create certain nations thus for this reason: lest, in the case of those monsters which are known among us to be born from human beings, we should think that his wisdom, which fashions human nature, had erred, as though it were the art of some less perfect craftsman? Accordingly, it ought not to seem absurd to us that, just as there are certain monstrous human beings in individual nations, so in the whole human race there are certain monstrous nations.”

Nor did Aristotle think otherwise: “ἔστι γὰρ τὸ τέρας παρὰ φύσιν τι, παρὰ φύσιν δ’ οὐ πᾶσαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ὥς ἐπὶ πολὺ· παρὰ γὰρ τὴν αἰεὶ καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὐδὲν γίνεται παρὰ φύσιν. A monster is something contrary to nature, but not to every nature; rather, to that nature which is customary for the most part. For nothing ever occurs contrary to the nature which is eternal and which exists by necessity.” Accordingly, when something monstrous is born, God himself does not err; rather, secondary causes, because of a defect, excess, or intemperance of matter and the violence of surrounding impediments, produce something new or rare which adorns the variety of the universe, although it possesses deformity within its own kind.

The works of God should no more be blamed on account of these than on account of the magnitude, smallness, and form of bodies which is found among all human beings. For whom has he fashioned so exactly proportioned in every limb that he does not possess something which is more becoming in another? Therefore, just as amid so great a dissimilarity of faces we admire divine workmanship, so we by no means say that his industry has failed when he willed certain persons to be deformed. He directed natural causes in such a manner that, according to the powers implanted within them, they should effect that which God wills.

Small things teach how great the workmanship is. Shave an eyebrow: how much beauty is taken away from the body! Turn an eye aside a little: the most beautiful face will be deformed. These things, therefore, just as they occur from the hidden causes of those who generate, are likewise governed by hidden divine providence.

Saint Augustine speaks most excellently in book 11 of *The City of God*, chapter 22: “Nevertheless, this cause--that is, the goodness of God for creating good things--this cause, I say, so just and suitable, when diligently considered and piously pondered, terminates all the controversies of those who inquire into the origin of the world. Certain heretics did not see it, because many things which do not agree with this needy and fragile mortality of the flesh, now coming from a just punishment, offend it: such as fire, cold, a wild beast, or something of this kind. Nor do they attend to how those things thrive in their own places and natures, and are disposed in beautiful order; how much beauty they contribute, according to their portions, to the universe of things as if to a commonwealth; or how much convenience they furnish to us ourselves, if we use them fittingly and knowingly.

“Thus even poisons which through unsuitability are destructive are, when suitably applied, turned into salutary medicines; and, on the contrary, even these things in which men delight, such as food, drink, and this light, are perceived as harmful through immoderate and untimely use. Hence divine providence admonishes us not to censure things foolishly, but diligently to inquire into the utility of things; and where our ability or weakness fails, to believe that utility to be hidden, just as certain things were hidden which we have scarcely been able to discover. For even the concealment of utility is either an exercise of humility or a wearing down of pride, since no nature at all is evil, and this name signifies nothing except the privation of good. But from earthly things all the way to heavenly things, and from visible things all the way to invisible things, some goods are better than other goods; yet they are unequal so that all things may exist.

[Printed page 30]

“God, however, is so great a craftsman in great things that he is not lesser in small things. Those small things must not be measured by their own greatness--for they have none--but by the wisdom of the craftsman. Thus, in the visible form of a human being, if one eyebrow is shaved away, how nearly nothing is taken from the body, and yet how much is taken from its beauty, because beauty consists not in bulk but in the equality and proportion of the members.”

§ 18. I shall conclude this disputation concerning God as governor of the commonwealth with a distinguished discourse of Saint Augustine. Although this matter has also been treated above, it nevertheless seems to me to be expounded more vigorously by that most ingenious of all men.

In *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, book 5, chapter 22, he argues thus: “And surely, if those who deny this and do not acquiesce in sacred utterances of such great authority saw in this part of the world--which they suppose to be disturbed by fortuitous motions rather than ruled by the wisdom of the divine supremacy, and, as if to prove this, misuse a twofold argument, either the one recalled above concerning the inconstancy of weather or the one concerning the felicities and infelicities of human beings, because these do not occur in accordance with the merits of their lives--if they saw as great an order as appears in the members of the flesh of any living creature, I do not say to physicians, who because of the necessity of their art have diligently laid open, counted, and investigated these things, but to any human being of moderate sense and consideration, would they not cry out that God, from whom comes every measure of dimensions, every equality of numbers, and every order of weights, does not cease from its government even for a point of time?

“What, therefore, can be thought more absurd or more foolish than that the whole should be empty of the direction and rule of providence when you see its outermost and smallest parts formed with so great an arrangement that, when considered somewhat more attentively, they strike one with an ineffable awe of admiration? And since the nature of the soul excels the nature of the body, what is more demented than to think that there is no judgment of divine providence concerning the morals of human beings, when in their flesh such great indications of its skill shine and are demonstrated?

“But because these smallest things are at hand for our senses and we easily investigate them, the order of things shines forth in them. But those who think that nothing exists except what they can see--or, if they think that something else

exists, think it to be such a thing as they are accustomed to see--judge those things whose order they cannot see to be disordered.

“We, however, whose steps the same divine providence directs through Holy Scripture lest we fall into that perversity, let us attempt, with its assistance, to investigate from the works of God themselves where he created these things simultaneously, when he rested from his completed works, the forms of which he works through the order of times even until now. Let us therefore consider the beauty of any tree in its trunk, branches, leaves, and fruits. This form did not spring forth suddenly, so great and such as it is, but in an order which we also know. For it rose from the root which the shoot first fixed in the earth, and from there all those things, formed and distinguished, grew. Furthermore, that shoot came from the seed. Therefore all those things were originally in the seed, not in the bulk of corporeal magnitude, but in causal force and power. For that magnitude was gathered from the abundance of the earth’s moisture. But in that tiny grain there is a more marvelous and excellent force, by which the adjacent moisture, mixed with the earth as though it were material, had power to be turned into the quality of that wood, into the spreading of its branches, into the greenness and form of its leaves, into the forms and abundance of its fruits, and into the most orderly distinction of all its parts. For what rises or hangs from that tree which has not been drawn and brought forth from a certain hidden treasury of that seed?

“But that seed comes from a tree, although not that tree but another, and that tree in turn from another seed. Sometimes, however, a tree also comes from a tree, when a shoot is removed and planted. Therefore seed comes from tree, tree from seed, and tree from tree. But seed in no way comes from seed unless a tree first intervenes. A tree, however, comes from a tree even if seed does not intervene. Thus, in alternate successions, the one comes from the other, but each comes from the earth, and the earth from neither of them. Therefore the earth is their prior parent. So also with animals, it can be uncertain whether seeds come from them or they from seeds. Whichever of these is prior, it is nevertheless most certain that it came from the earth.

“But just as in the grain itself all the things which would rise into the tree through the course of time were invisibly present together, so also the world itself must be conceived, when God created all things simultaneously, to have possessed together all the things which were made in it and with it when the day was made: not only heaven with the sun, moon, and stars, whose form remains in revolving motion, and the earth and the abyss, which undergo movements that are, as it were, inconstant and, joined beneath, supply the other part to the world; but also those things which water and earth produced potentially and causally before, through the delays of time, they arose in the manner now known to us among those works which God performs even until now.”

CHAPTER XIV

The Form of the Commonwealth, and Its Various Kinds

§ 1. Unless I am mistaken, enough has now been said about the parts and members which constitute the commonwealth, and about its author, God, and its nature. We must now treat of its form itself and of the divisions which arise from it.

Form--or, as Aristotle and Plato call it, “τὸ εἶδος,” species, or “τὸ εἶναι” itself, that is, essence--is that which constitutes from human beings the assembly which is called a commonwealth. It is the order of those who command and those who obey, a certain harmony and soul, embracing, binding together, and giving life to diverse dispositions and functions. When this form perseveres one and the same, the species of the commonwealth is said to remain the same. If this is changed, although the buildings, walls, suburbs, and even the human beings remain the same, nevertheless the same commonwealth cannot remain. One commonwealth was established at Rome when, after Tarquin had been expelled, sovereignty was in the hands of the consuls; another when by the royal law power again devolved upon one man.

§ 2. It is customary for all authors to make the form of the commonwealth threefold. For there is monarchy, aristocracy, and polity, or government of the people. This is taken from Plato: “Εἴτ’ οὐκ οἶσθ’, ὅτι τῶν πόλεων αἱ μὲν τυραννοῦνται, αἱ δὲ δημοκρατοῦνται, αἱ δὲ ἀριστοκρατοῦνται;” If it is not evident to you, some cities are administered by one man, some by the people, and some by the best men. Aristotle, imitating his teacher, says in book 3 of the *Politics*, chapter 7: “It is necessary that either one, or a few, or many command.” This is the most widely accepted division.

Yet one may observe in it that it is not a “τῶν ἀμέσων” division, that is, one whose members differ with equal breadth. Plato, therefore, sometimes establishes two species. For either one man or several govern the commonwealth. If one, it is called a kingdom or monarchy; if several, they are either a few or the whole people. From this arise two species of “ἀρχῆς τῶν πλείονων,” rule by several: government by the best and government by the people.

But let us hear Plato, book 3 of the *Laws*: “There are, as it were, two mothers of constitutions, from which one would speak rightly if one said that all the others had been born. The one is rightly called monarchy, the other democracy, or government of the people; and the Persian nation holds the extreme of the former, while we hold that of the latter.” And in book 5: “Εστὸν γὰρ δύο πολιτείας εἶδη. Let there therefore be two species of constitution.”

The same author in the *Statesman* establishes seven forms of administration: royal, tyrannical, government by the best, government by a few, popular government according to laws, and popular government contrary to laws. Those are six species, three legitimate and three by no means legitimate. The best is separated from these,

[Printed page 31]

namely monarchy, or the principate of one man bound by good writings, that is, by laws. It was necessary to give this warning so that the nature of the commonwealth and all its parts might be examined thoroughly. Nevertheless, since it has thus been accepted, let it stand that there are three legitimate forms of the commonwealth and three departures of those forms from good government. We shall speak of each of them in turn.

§ 3. We now establish that at this time those three species of commonwealth have generally been so tempered that nowhere is a pure monarchy, aristocracy, or polity found. For all emperors, kings, and princes--I do not speak of the Turk and the Muscovite--and any who have a similar form possess a power circumscribed by definite laws; they have bound themselves to their commonwealth by many oaths. This is far more true of those who undertake magistracies

among the best men or from the people. Accordingly, almost all the kingdoms of Christians are aristocratic and political monarchies.

The Roman Empire itself possesses a marvelous mixture of the three forms of commonwealth. Its supreme head is the august Emperor, who possesses jurisdiction over all but must judge according to the laws. The best men are the seven electors and the other princes; nor is the nobility without its distinctions and its liberty confirmed by many privileges of the emperors. The people are not excluded either. Free cities possess their own governments; their votes are heard in public assemblies; access to certain highest magistracies lies open to very many. The emperor cannot oppress the princes, nor can they oppress the nobility, since many princes from the nobility are patrons of their own nation. But neither, while the Emperor's authority remains, do the cities fear the power of neighboring princes.

The Swiss imitate democracy, and formerly either expelled the nobility or reduced it into the ranks; nevertheless, the best men administer affairs. The Venetians indeed possess one duke, but the whole power is in the hands of the best men, or the nobility, which is said to be threefold: old, middle, and new. Nevertheless, a way to the lesser dignities lies open to many citizens, but all things are carried out by the vote and decree of the nobles.

§ 4. I judge this to be the sole cause why the forms of Christian commonwealths are now changed more rarely, whereas we see that formerly at Rome, Athens, and Carthage men for the most part continually pursued revolutions: error arose from the excess of one part. Just as sick bodies are engaged in continual tossing and seek relief from pain by a change of place--because they cannot shake out the evil clinging to their entrails, they embrace variety in their suffering--so is the health of a commonwealth disposed. For when one of its parts, either the prince himself, the best men, or the lowest common people, grows contrary to the laws and with damage and oppression to the other members, the whole body is shaken and torn apart, and it seeks change.

For if a prince employs his power contrary to right, the best men, detesting not so much the prince as the conduct of the prince, prefer governments of the best. But when they see that, after power has been conferred upon a few men, new petty tyrants daily succeed one tyrant, they demand again either a king or government of the people. But when they experience still more inconveniences in the latter, they hate the tribunes and endure much more bitterly a liberty oppressed under the name of liberty.

Yet in this they perpetually err: when they wish to correct the whole commonwealth, they do not act so that, with laws made equal, they may coalesce into one concord and friendship. Rather, they agitate beyond measure that part which seemed to oppress the others and attempt utterly to subdue and destroy it. They then transfer its strength to another part, which they render more insolent than the former. For their intention is not to make the balance equal or moderate the city, but to depress and conquer the other part. Nor do I remember any commonwealth being corrected in which these things were not done.

§ 5. It remains for me to explain what form of commonwealth agrees with diverse nations. For, when the nature and disposition of human beings have been understood, the lawgiver will easily determine the form of the commonwealth, and the magistrate will govern without danger.

Aristotle, book 6 of the *Politics*, chapter 7, judges that an aristocracy should be established in a place where there is need of heavy-armed soldiers and cavalry. For to support horses for war and maintain heavy armor belongs not to men of small means, but to the rich. If, therefore, the rich are compelled to sustain dangers, take the expense of war upon themselves, and defend the fatherland, it is also just that they obtain the first parts in attaining honors and magistracies, so that benefits and dangers may reside in the same men.

Conversely, where there is need of light-armed soldiers and frequent sorties, government of the people is more suitable. For this must be considered: that those who are exercised in arms should obtain dignity in the commonwealth. Armed men are not accustomed to obey the unarmed for long, nor to lay down their arms except when it has seemed good to them, for they cannot be compelled. He who denies just things to a man holding weapons gives him all things.

§ 6. The inclinations and customs of minds must be considered. For some prefer a king, as did the Persians after the slaughter of the Magi and the Israelites in the time of Samuel. Others abominate the royal condition and even its name, as did the Romans after the Tarquins had been driven from the city. When liberty was restored to Greece through Quinctius, Greece cast birds stunned from the sky by its applause and shouting and threw heaps of flowers upon the proconsul. But the Parthians and several other nations requested a king from the same people.

§ 7. Nor indeed is it expedient for all peoples to be free. And so Augustus deprived many cities of liberty because they did not use it rightly. The Roman people itself, already unlike itself, when vices had grown within it so that they could no longer be sustained by the virtue of their ancestors, could not be the arbiter of its own liberty, since it now distributed honors according to price and partisan zeal, not equitably:

The yearly contests return for sale upon the Field,

their own senator reproaches them.

Saint Augustine perceived this in book 1 of *On Free Choice*: “Can it ever be unjust that the wicked should be wretched but the good happy? Or that a modest and serious people should itself create magistrates for itself, but a dissolute and worthless people should lack that license? I see that this is an eternal and immutable law. At the same time, I judge that you too see that in that temporal law nothing is just and legitimate which human beings have not derived for themselves from this eternal law. For if that people at one time justly gave honors and at another time justly did not give them, this temporal alternation, in order that it might be just, was drawn from that eternity according to which it is always just for a serious people to give honors and for a frivolous one not to give them.” By this, as though by a balance, we shall weigh which form of commonwealth and which arrangement of magistrates are suitable for each nation.

§ 8. I shall set down examples concerning distant or ancient peoples, lest I touch upon our own vices. These are so peculiar to individual nations that, although they are reproached for them by all other peoples, they nevertheless cherish them at home and do not recognize them.

Those who inhabit the regions within or nearest the tropics are cowardly by nature, headlong through fear, rash, and cruel when they rule. Almost all are of a servile disposition, especially those who,

[Printed page 32]

on account of the heat, are dark in body. For by excessive heat the heat implanted within them is called forth; the vital spirits and those which they call animal spirits are attenuated and weakened, so that neither their passions remain sound nor their reason remains steady. Accordingly, those who inhabit the region around the Cape of Good Hope, the Brazilians, and other peoples, if they were compared with Europeans, could be judged brute beasts rather than human beings. God could give them no better or more desirable gift than a good and merciful king, or absolute monarchy, for they themselves were born to obey; many of them are not only savage but also eaters of human beings.

But those whom the penetrating cold of Boreas burns are strong in boldness, but it is an unreflecting boldness. Therefore they too are less suitable for aristocracy unless they are mingled with foreigners or carefully instructed. Just as temperate regions produce healthier bodies, so they produce better and more moderate dispositions, and therefore dispositions more suited either to rule or to be ruled in a civil manner. Certainly, if we recall ancient things, the Germans, Franks, and before them the Cimbri, Heruli, Goths, and Vandals, and after them the Northmen, Huns, and Danes, proceeding from the north in very great numbers, possessed incredible boldness and savagery; afterward they established the commonwealth with great prudence and moderation.

§ 9. What, then, concerning those cities which are opulent through manifold commerce? They will embrace either the principate of one or government of the people. For if they are within a vast kingdom, they will easily distribute their commerce and will have secure trade. Experience has taught that autonomous and opulent cities which have powerful

neighboring princes are often endangered. Accordingly, even cities flourishing and free under the shadow of the Empire formerly selected princes as patrons and protectors for themselves.

Great commercial cities scarcely endure government by the best, the reason for which is this: very many from the lowest common people are most swiftly raised to great riches and to the authority which accompanies riches. The best men and nobles have annual revenues which in no way attain the profits of commerce. It is therefore necessary that one of two inconveniences occur. Either the nobles, imitating the most sumptuous merchants, contract debt, diminish their patrimonies, and, being needy yet retaining their dignity, turn themselves toward evil arts, embezzlement, extortion, and calumnies; or, if they make expenditures equal to their means, they are surpassed by very many of their subjects in liberality, splendor, household, and power, and are therefore despised. But overthrow of the constitution follows contempt. Authority is nevertheless preserved if they obey one man, as occurs in the German Empire, where the Emperor protects the authority of the magistrate.

I understand this to apply where the government of subject provinces is not annexed to the city, as it is among the Venetians. For where they also rule abroad, they have quite enough to support their power and authority.

The Republic of Venice also employs another method. For at one time it enrolled three hundred wealthy citizens at once into the body of the nobility with equal right. By this act it both assisted the treasury and cut off the causes of seditions, by admitting the more powerful citizens into its own party and casting before others the hope of equal dignity.

CHAPTER XV

The First Species of Commonwealth Is Monarchy, and It Is Manifold

§ 1. Monarchy is the principate of one man, whom all the rest obey. Aristotle divides it into two kinds in book 3 of the *Politics*, chapter 7: into “βασιλείαν,” or kingdom, and “τυραννίδα,” tyranny. He defines “Βασιλείαν” as “τὴν μοναρχίαν τὴν πρὸς κοινὸν ἀποβλέπουσαν,” that which regards the common utility. Lipsius defines it as: “The rule of one man, conferred, accepted, and conducted by custom or laws for the good of those who obey.” But he says that tyranny is “μοναρχίαν πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον τοῦ μοναρχοῦντος,” a monarchy which regards the utility of the monarch.

This, therefore, is the general distinction between a legitimate kingdom and a tyrannical one: a king regards the good of his subjects, a tyrant his private good. For either the lust for dominion, by which the human race is crushed, or other things which appear good fascinate the tyrant; the safety of his subjects rouses the king. Nevertheless, that safety also requires him sometimes to assume dominion. For this reason, as Tranquillus is our authority, Augustus deprived certain federated cities, which through license were rushing headlong toward destruction, of their liberty. He acted rightly and prudently if he did so not in order that he himself might rule, but lest they perish.

A strict law has indeed been imposed upon every magistrate: amid so great an abundance, amid so unrestrained a power, amid so great an importunity from friends seeking their own things, to keep watch over the advantages of strangers--often ungrateful men, and sometimes enemies. But the useful is what Plato has defined for us: “Δίκαιον τὸ τῆς καθεστηκυίας ἀρχῆς συμφέρον,” “The just is the utility of the established government.” This is also what Antigonus admonished his son when he was exulting in a youthful manner: “Know, my son, that our kingdom is a splendid servitude.” Excellently said, if his deeds had corresponded to his words; for a servant regards the utility of his master, not his own.

§ 2. The kinds of kingdom are exceedingly various, differing not so much in power and breadth of sovereignty as in custom, law, and usage. For some devolve by hereditary right upon sons and male-line relatives, as do the kingdoms of the Spains, Gaul, and Britain, and many principalities of Europe. Others are given by election, as are the empire of the Romans, the kingdom of the Poles, and ecclesiastical principalities.

Some kingdoms are free, so that absolute power over all things is in the hands of one king: war, peace, sacrifices, and the pronouncement of law. This kingdom is called “παμβασιλεία” and exists without any law. The other kingdoms are constituted by laws.

§ 3. Aristotle defines “Παμβασιλείαν” as “ὅταν ἡ πάντων κύριος εἴς ὧν”: when one man, existing alone, is lord of all things, or when a king commands everyone according to his own will. He himself compares this kingdom with household government. For just as a household is an economic kingdom, so a city is a political kingdom. Such a kingdom is described in Daniel 5:19: “Whom he wished, he killed; and whom he wished, he struck; and whom he wished, he exalted; and whom he wished, he humbled.” Thus did that Chaldean, whether by right or by injury.

The Persian kingdom at one time did not differ greatly from it. Although founded upon laws, it nevertheless sometimes crushed the laws by violent power. When Xerxes summoned the princes of Asia to deliberate about bringing war upon the Greeks, he showed himself the sole monarch. He affirmed that he had summoned them lest he use his counsel alone; but they should know that it belonged to them to obey him rather than to advise him.

Nor indeed is the rule of the Turks very different; to its subjects it is savage and burdensome, if ever any rule was. For that tyrant pronounces himself the absolute lord of life, death, and all fortunes. The Muscovite also governs his people altogether despotically, as if they were slaves. That saying of Mahomet Vesitus is known: the Muscovite and the Turk alone are lords of their kingdoms. The tyranny of the Inga in Brazil was formerly not dissimilar. There no one

possessed property of his own, but held it by the benefit of the Inga, nor did that property pass to heirs. Nevertheless, certain laws have been given to the Muscovite prince, as also to the Turk,

[Printed page 33]

but where there is so great a power, lawless license generally reigns.

Nevertheless, in the heroic ages rules of this sort were formerly legitimate and just. For if someone had transmitted an art to a multitude, freed them from servitude, gathered together those who were scattered, or affected them with some distinguished benefit, kings were created by willing people; and because they were regarded as rare examples of good and just men, the people freely entrusted themselves to their prudence and virtue without agreements and laws. For they did not prepare the protections of right and laws where they suspected no outrage and no injury.

A prince will not readily exercise absolute power even in a just cause--for example, by killing an accused man unheard, although he himself knows that the man is guilty.

An anonymous book *On the Right of Free Monarchy* has been published which approves the tyrannies of barbarian kings and pretends that 1 Kings, chapter 8, supports such great evils. But even authors who are not pious refute those impious things: Lorchius, *Commonplaces*, "On the Institution of the Prince," title "On the Power of Princes"; Buchanan, *On the Law of the Scottish Kingdom*; Haffenreffer on the passage in Deuteronomy, chapter 17; Althusius, *Politics*, chapter 19; Gentilis, *Royal Disputation*; Hunnius; Keckermann; and very many others. Indeed, there are among them those who judge that proceedings can be taken against such rulers by public authority: Lansius, discourse *On the Royal Law*, theses 94 and 101; Johann Gerhard, *One Hundred Political Questions*, final decade. But more concerning these matters elsewhere.

Nor was a reason lacking by which those men might defend their kings, namely: "τὸ καθόλου μόνον λέγειν τὸν νόμον, ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς τὰ προσπίπτοντα ἐπιτάττειν." A law speaks only universally and does not adapt itself to those things which happen; and thus in every art it is foolish to judge according to written prescriptions. But I shall speak of this matter in its own place. Let us now proceed in explaining the divisions of kingdoms.

§ 4. There both formerly were, and now are seen, various forms of kingdoms which prescribe definite laws to the supreme power. There are four principal forms. For sometimes the prince possessed the right of declaring and conducting war, pronouncing law, and performing sacrifices. The same man was commander, judge, ruler, and pontiff. In certain places he pronounced law and commanded the citizens, but did not possess the right of conducting war. In some places he bore only the care of sacrifices.

There were many kings who performed all those functions, but according to the prescription of laws. For Romulus and his successors administered the commonwealth according to laws. Then the kings and leaders of the Jews who flourished after the Babylonian captivity were commanders, judges, rulers, and pontiffs. This is generally the arrangement of all sovereignties which exist today, except that they abstain from the priesthood. Yet there is also great variety among them, according as it has seemed good to each commonwealth to guard itself against the license of those who reign.

§ 5. Kingdoms which endured only in war were very few and rare. At Rome in the greatest dangers a consul named a dictator, who, when the war had been conducted, abdicated his magistracy. His command was plainly royal and almost without laws, but nevertheless depended upon the people who moderated it; for at one time they made the master of the horse equal to the dictator.

Among the Spartans there was a perpetual dictatorship so far as the direction of wars was concerned. For at home the supreme power was in the hands of the ephors, not the king. The king possessed no right of life and death over citizens except in the camp; a Roman dictator was permitted to kill a citizen even without his cause having been pleaded. Plato in his letters vehemently commends a power tempered by so gentle an equality, being, of course, a lover of the people and of liberty according to the institution of the Greeks. Otherwise, that order impeded the greatest affairs and was a

cause of disasters to the Spartans. Aristotle, book 3 of the *Politics*, chapter 14, calls it military command: “αὕτη οὖν ἡ βασιλεία, οἷον στρατηγία τις αὐτοκρατόρων, καὶ αἰδιός ἐστι. This kingdom, therefore, is, as it were, a certain military prefecture of commanders, and it is perpetual.”

Under the name of so mild a command, lest he be hateful to the free cities of Greece because of the royal title, Philip of Macedon attempted to establish his tyranny. For in the council of Greece he brought it about that he was decreed leader of the war, as if he were about only to undertake dangers against the Persians and by no means to violate the liberty of Greece.

In former times Agamemnon possessed a similar power, when Europe and Asia collided in a prolonged duel. For in assemblies and in the gathering of kings he endured curses and abuse; even Thersites and every most foul man called the king “Δημοβόρον βασιλέα,” “devourer of the people.” But outside the assembly, in battle and on expeditions, he possessed “καὶ κτεῖναι κύριος ἦν,” the right of killing. He himself professes this in *Iliad* 2:

Ὅν δέ κ' ἐγὼν ἀπάνευθε μάχης -- -- οὐ οἱ
 Ἄρκιον ἔσσειται φυγέειν κύνας, ἦδ' οἰωνούς·
 Πάρ γάρ ἐμοὶ θάνατος.

>

But whomever I shall discover to have withdrawn from the battle,
 it will not be easy for him to escape the dogs and birds,
 for the power of death is in my hands.

Homer himself sufficiently indicates that this kind of command is useful neither in time of war nor in time of peace, since by disputes in the assembly they take authority away from the commander and fight only according to their own judgment. Hence the anger of Achilles brought it about that nearly all Greece perished, and yet Agamemnon could not compel him to battle.

§ 6. Another kind of kings is recalled by Aristotle, whom in book 3 of the *Politics*, chapter 14, he calls “αἰσυμνήτας.” They were often employed by the ancient Greeks. Princes evidently chose certain persons by their vote either to preside throughout their whole life and always, or for a definite time, or for definite affairs, as when the Mytilenaeans chose Pittacus against the exiles. “αἰσυμνητεία” seems to have arisen from almost the same causes as the dictatorship, so that constitutions otherwise free and popular might more easily be composed by the rule of one man.

§ 7. We rarely read that kings were created solely for the sake of sacrifices, nor are they judged worthy of the name of kings. At Rome a King of Sacred Rites was created. Livy, book 2, and Dionysius, book 5, give the cause. Livy's words are: “After the kings had been expelled and liberty obtained, care was then taken for divine matters; and because certain public rites had habitually been performed by the kings themselves, lest there should be any longing for kings, they created a king of sacrifices. They subjected that priesthood to the pontiff, lest the honor added to the name should obstruct liberty, which at that time was their first care.”

Dionysius says that he was designated by the pontiffs and augurs; Aulus Gellius, book 15, chapter 27, that he was created in the centuriate assembly. He possessed not only no political or royal dignity, but was not even permitted to hold a magistracy; indeed, he was not permitted even to address the people. Moreover, after the sacrifice had been made before the assembly, he hurried away in flight. He was therefore a mockery of the expelled kings rather than a king.

CHAPTER XVI

On the Corrupt Form of Monarchy Which Is Called Tyranny: Its Origin, Properties, and Condemnation

§ 1. All kinds of government, when they decline from their end and, through the fault either of those who rule or of those who obey, depart from justice, disturb the commonwealth

[Printed page 34]

marvelously and generally drive it to utter destruction. Just as there are three legitimate forms of commonwealth, so there are likewise the same number of deviations from them. The abuse of royal power is tyranny; that of aristocracy, oligarchy; that of polity, democracy. No general name has been established for these three vices. It could be called “κακοπολιτεία,” the bad or corrupt administration of the commonwealth. Its definition is: “Ἀρχὴ πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον τῶν ἀρχόντων,” government which regards the utility of those who govern.

By the name “those who govern” I also understand those who are joined to the rulers. For many act tyrannically more for the sake of their relatives, sons, or a definite party within the commonwealth than for their own sake. Someone, therefore, will offer a fuller definition if he says: it is government which regards the utility of those who govern or of some party within the commonwealth. Sulla attempted to establish the resources of the nobility, Marius to protect the power of the common people, and Caesar his own good; no one regarded the good of the whole commonwealth. Nor was the disposition of the others who belonged to the parties any better. In secret they pursued plunder, proscriptions, the auction spear, and the destruction of their enemies; they pretended to seek the good of the commonwealth.

§ 2. Therefore, when the end of monarchy has been changed, tyranny is introduced in place of kingship. For it is “Τυραννὶς μοναρχία πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον τῷ μοναρχοῦντι,” monarchy directed toward the utility of the monarch. Aristotle makes three kinds of it in book 4 of the *Politics*, chapter 10: that of barbarians, that of the Aesymnetes, and the third, which is tyranny most of all, “ἀντίστροφος τῇ βασιλείᾳ,” that which is opposed to kingship. He rightly calls this tyranny most of all. For the other forms of command can be just, although rarely, because there have been very few holy kings who, governing all things according to their own judgment without law, did injury to no one.

§ 3. But the third kind of tyranny is the most grievous evil, a violent and widely extending evil. Its origin is manifold, but it can be referred to one of three kinds. For legitimate princes, having changed their conduct, often change into tyrants. Next, the powerful friends of princes rise against their own lords and seize the kingdom. Third, within a polity demagogues and fickle leaders of the people usurp tyranny over those whom they have deceived.

§ 4. The first and most ancient origin of tyranny, therefore, is the change of kings for the worse. Ambition, avarice, and lust are the companions and plagues of power. For just as there is scarcely any prince who at the beginning does not display mildness, clemency, and liberality, so, when their sovereignty has been established, very many put off the simulation of virtue, and many put off virtue itself. This change is familiar to human weakness, and power drives minds inclined toward worse things onward with great force.

If they do not know crimes,

a kingdom will teach them.

Thus speaks Atreus while making his sons partners in his crimes. Hence it happens that, just as

The gentlest lot among kingdoms

is under a new king,

so the saddest is under a tyrant who fears nothing and has been brutalized by flatteries. The force toward vices is great in a kingdom because license is great, truth is insolent, and evil is approved. Saul was called king by divine testimony and vote, and nevertheless power changed him and handed him over to Satan. Royal license finally destroyed the wisdom of Solomon after it had flourished for a long time. Asa, Amaziah, Joash, and others, driven sideways by fortune and felicity, did many things tyrannically, although their beginnings had been most illustrious.

Let us see foreign examples. Romulus, agreeable at the beginning, finally advanced to such insolence and cruelty that he was torn apart by the hands of the fathers. The Roman fathers themselves acted moderately as long as they restrained their desires through fear of the Tarquins; once the Tarquins had been removed, they began to oppress their own citizens. The decemvirs for writing the laws were able to simulate virtue for only one year.

Tiberius, the most profound master of simulation and dissimulation, for a long time refused to accept the sovereignty which he nevertheless exercised. He called it a great beast, a wretched and burdensome servitude. Nonetheless, having assumed the persona of a citizen, he conducted himself as though he were a private person. But with how great a savagery he afterward reigned is unknown to no one, so that this was deservedly proclaimed concerning him:

He has reigned with much blood,

whoever came from exile to sovereignty.

For after mild beginnings, when his frenzy for slandering and accusing had blazed forth, his rule was nothing but a slaughterhouse of nobles, so that the event confirmed the foreboding of Augustus. Augustus pitied the Roman people, which would come under jaws that chewed so slowly. Suetonius, Tacitus, and others in their accounts of Tiberius.

Gaius was received with great joy; by every kind of popularity he conciliated the affections of human beings toward himself. He acquitted the condemned, restored exiles, and pardoned the accused. But a little later he migrated into his own character and showed how much the greatest vices could accomplish amid the greatest fortune.

Claudius, otherwise foolish and a block of wood, within a short time conciliated so much affection toward himself by affability and beneficence that, when he had set out for Ostia and it was announced that he had perished, the people did not cease to attack the soldiers as traitors and the senate as parricides with dreadful curses. But within a short time the most obtuse prince, and the most cruel through fear, paid the interest on that joy with great calamities.

The senate judged with the best right that Nero's first words and deeds ought to be engraved upon columns of gold and silver, and not many princes attained the standard of his first five years. The vices of scarcely anyone surpassed the remainder of his life. Neither Galba nor Vitellius nor even Domitian had harsh beginnings. Diocletian, Maximian, and even Julian himself had bloodless beginnings to their reigns.

The dispositions of princes are therefore changed, and they involve first the commonwealth and then themselves in great disasters. Nor is it marvelous that they are changed, since everyone invites them to joyful and pleasant things, and few to honorable and harsh things. Yet leading men and the people are frequently at fault when by biting sayings, seditions, and conspiracies they exasperate princes and compel them to become estranged and then, under the pretext of guarding themselves, cruel. Many peoples would enjoy the kingdoms of benevolent princes if they could bear civilly, or overlook, their moderate vices which do not burst forth into the destruction of their subjects or public disgrace. While they censure and expose those vices in an importunate manner, they do not amend them but, like wounds that have been irritated, make them worse and estrange the prince from themselves.

§ 5. The second origin of tyrants comes from the sloth or indulgence of princes, when they place certain friends in charge of affairs, from which those friends arrive at such increases of power that they are now equal to princes, or even superior, and certainly stand upon a position too firm to be cast down. One may well marvel at the custom of kings and princes in fostering the excessive power of friends whom, after they have raised them almost to an equal summit, they begin to fear or envy and often even to hate.

Examples exist under almost all princes: Sejanus, Germanicus, Felix, Plautianus; but, to pursue better-known examples, Rufinus, Eutropius, Stilicho, Alaric, Aetius, Narses, Belisarius, and Aristonicus,

[Printed page 35]

who, although they were powerful, offended the emperors and perished wretchedly or without glory. But if we look at tyrants, we shall learn that a great part of them arose from this source. Galba, Vitellius, Vespasian, Severus, Macrinus, Philip, Gaius, Diocletian, Julian, and more than a hundred tyrants who raged during their reigns began their tyranny from the power which they had received from the emperors, and they turned benefits toward overthrowing their benefactors.

Great danger always threatens princes from great men. Accordingly, the power of the prince, which in him is single and united, is soon divided by the prince among many equals. But if one man is second or third to the prince in dignity, his power must nevertheless be so moderated that he obtains from it more honor than strength. But if all things are conferred upon one man, justice is disturbed; people attribute to the prince the evils which that one man perpetrates; no one speaks his opinion freely. Since that one man is hated by many and is not ignorant of it, he attempts to overthrow many, to despoil the prince of friends, and to cast him into difficulties, so that he may now hold him bound and dependent. But how the prince should guard against this I shall say in its own place. For now the source and origin of tyrants is being shown.

Hence, therefore, many tyrannies have arisen, but peoples have nevertheless imposed more of them upon themselves. This was exceedingly customary in ancient times, as Aristotle teaches in book 5 of the *Politics*, chapter 10: "But the tyrant is taken from the people and multitude against noble and illustrious men, lest the people receive any injury from them." This may be understood from events. For nearly all tyrants were made from fickle guardians and leaders of the people--if it is permissible to say it--having obtained trust among the people by falsely accusing and slandering distinguished and illustrious men.

In no other manner did Manlius and the Gracchi seek tyranny, and Marius and Caesar obtain it. And so it was in smaller sovereignties: Panaetius at Leontini, Cypselus at Corinth, Pisistratus at Athens, Dionysius at Syracuse, and, in later ages, many in the cities of Italy--Florence, Siena, Genoa, Milan, Pisa, and very many other cities--which were administered with much variation and lived under the most cruel demagogues until they were recalled to moderate and legitimate governments. For the most part, the people entangle themselves in their own evils. For when the people exalt citizens beyond what is just, after those men have obtained dominion, they oppress the same people contrary to right.

There are many signs by which we may distinguish a tyrannical principate from a legitimate one.

§ 6. The first is a simulation of virtues, especially justice and clemency. For although every tyranny is burdensome and hateful, one tyrant is nevertheless more humane than another; yet all display virtues which they do not possess, at least at some time. For men extremely wicked, like Nero, who boasted that no prince had known what was permitted to him, are rare. Therefore, whoever teaches a prince to simulate virtues and embrace vices is a detestable instructor of tyranny.

You will detect the simulation if tyrants display clemency and justice toward certain persons but employ cruelty and violence toward others. Andronicus Comnenus condemned those convicted of guilt without any distinction of dignities. His justice could have been praised if he had not himself inflicted the greatest injuries in the greatest matters. Alexander was sometimes merciful, but nevertheless killed a great part of his friends. How merciful did Caesar appear to Cicero? And yet he slaughtered one million one hundred thousand persons in a war which was not always necessary, but which he waged because he had been enticed by ambition and avarice.

The clemency of Octavian is praised because he pardoned Corocotta, a famous robber; but the proscription, which he exercised more bitterly than his colleagues, shows that he was cruel. So do the many knights sacrificed at the Julian

altar, and that savage utterance with which alone he met those who begged him: “You must die.” Nero, when he was asked to sign the condemnation of two soldiers, said, “How I wish I did not know letters.” Shall we for this reason count among the merciful, on account of those years, this enormous and monstrous creature, mud kneaded with blood? If, therefore, we consider these things, we shall not readily believe those virtues to be genuine upon which fear, hope, and ambition sometimes impress their traces. For vices often produce imitations of virtues.

§ 7. The second sign of tyranny, as Aristotle says in book 5 of the *Politics*, chapter 11, is “Τὸ τοὺς ὑπερέχοντας κολοῦειν, καὶ τοὺς φρονηματίας ἀναρπεῖν”: to diminish eminent men and remove from the midst prudent men of great spirit. Thus Periander advised Thrasybulus when he cut off the taller ears of grain, and Tarquin advised his son by cutting off the poppy heads.

For magnates and tyrants possess a perpetual cause of contention. They exercise rivalry with one another as though they belonged to the same craft: tyrants [wish] to command by supreme right; the best men are unwilling to obey except in a civil manner. Accordingly, it is proper to tyranny to hate virtue, slaughter the brave, and envy everyone. The nobility experiences the cruelty of tyrants most of all. For cruelty consumed the Roman senate and the knights under nearly all the Roman emperors who reigned with much blood. Nor did counsels ever fail men so remarkably wicked. The varied deaths ordered for Regulus piecemeal seemed too laborious; he therefore advised Nero that the entire senate could be destroyed by a single word.

§ 8. The third indication of tyranny is to make subjects “μικροψύχους,” human beings of pusillanimous, servile, and abject spirit, lest anyone think about vindicating liberty. Hence so many deaths were ordered in the Roman commonwealth if anyone as a private person seemed to pursue greater things.

There are at this time two powerful monarchs, the king of the Spains and the emperor of the Turks. The diverse pursuits of each show the latter to be a tyrant and the former a legitimate king. The Spaniard, at very great expense, exercises his subjects in academies, commerce, the art of war, and navigation; he rouses them to great things and expends such great resources to nourish and strengthen their spirits, upon the dignity of princes and the splendor of the nobility. The Ottoman, however, oppresses so many peoples with ignorance, poverty, and servitude. He fattens the Timariots and Janissaries, as though they were his attendants, upon the spoils of provinces; nevertheless, he raises them toward nothing greater than the hope of daily plunder and pleasure, and holds them by this enticement of impunity, which is the enlistment-bounty of every most foul man. Accordingly, although he has many bold and rash soldiers, he nevertheless possesses no provident and brave commanders--indeed, not even soldiers, but slaves prodigal of their lives.

Nor do the princes of the Muscovites protect their sovereignty and authority in another manner. In order that their people may admire the prince alone, they permit no one to visit foreign regions, lest they return home more prudent and instructed than is expedient for so despotic a sovereignty. They admit no schools except those in which people learn to read and write; nor is it free from danger to have shown a desire to advance in letters. This is so that no one may be wiser than the prince or equal to him. Accordingly, when inquiry is made concerning a great and hidden matter, they say proverbially: “God knows this, and the Grand Duke.” It is therefore tyrannical for a ruler to claim for himself alone whatever a subject possesses that is ample, excellent, or beautiful, whether in movable things or even in talent and gifts of mind. Seneca

[Printed page 36]

was in extreme danger because he seemed eloquent to Gaius. Another man was killed because he had turned eyes upon himself with more conspicuous clothing, another with the arrangement of his curls.

§ 9. The fourth sign of tyranny is what Aristotle calls “ἀδυναμία τῶν πραγμάτων,” the removal of the power to conduct affairs. For in this manner the tyrant judges himself secure: if no one is able to do anything, how will he overthrow the tyranny if he possesses no power in the commonwealth? Accordingly, a tyrant does not trust friends. He knows that

although everyone wishes to extinguish tyranny, almost only friends are able to do it. Hence tyrants variously change, persecute, and kill them.

§ 10. The fifth sign is if they set subjects, friends, and princes against one another and render them mutually suspect. Aristotle, book 5 of the *Politics*, chapter 11, judges this useful to a tyrant: namely, if they agree badly among themselves, slander one another, if discords exist among friends, and citizens are alienated from the nobility. For since every tyranny is weak of itself--for tyranny is the vice and error of kingship--it is brief by its own nature. Consequently, it is supported and endures more by the dissensions and weakness of others than by its own strength. I shall show in its own place that this counsel is destructive. For now I present only the signs by which tyranny may be recognized.

§ 11. The sixth indication of tyranny is to raise ambitious, avaricious, and cruel human beings to honors and dignities, and then to strip those same persons of their goods and life. Tyrants employ wicked human beings like sponges: dry and thirsty, they immerse them in the resources and blood of the provinces; when full, they squeeze them and plunder under another's name. Dionysius hung up full wineskins and threw away empty ones. What is more atrocious than the utterance of that beast who scarcely ever entrusted a magistracy to anyone without adding: "You know what we need," and, "Let us bring it about that no one possesses anything"?

That tyranny extends widely throughout Turkey. For scarcely anyone is found richer than the pashas and beys; and nevertheless their goods pass to an heir only rarely, but generally return to the fisc. There are other things which good kings sometimes do rightly and which are not proper criteria of tyrants: for example, supporting foreign soldiers, being feared, employing scouts and Corycaean informers, exacting great taxes, and severely punishing transgressors. I shall treat of these in their own place.

§ 12. Would that, would that all men avoided tyranny and the tyrant as earnestly as they condemn them. If any thing is destructive to the world and burdensome to itself, it is tyranny. The condition of tyrants is laborious; their joy is rare, their rise unhappy, their end most wretched. For how few among them have completed life by their natural fate? Juvenal speaks truly in Satire 10:

To the son-in-law of Ceres without slaughter and a wound

few kings descend, and tyrants by a bloodless death.

§ 13. The causes by which tyrants are removed through death are injustice, fear, and outrage, which Aristotle enumerates in book 5 of the *Politics*, chapter 5.

Turn your eyes around the whole world. Consider not those petty tyrants of towns--Alexander of Pherae, Dionysius of Syracuse, Phalaris of Agrag, Hanno the Carthaginian, Clearchus of Heraclea, Nabis the Chalcidonian, Hipparchus of Athens, the Pisistratids, and the Perianders--nor the poetic tyrants Diomedes the Thracian, Phineus, Eryx, Antaeus, Mezentius, and the Cyclopes. Rather, consider the great tyrants bearing the name of kings: the Antigonids, Seleucids, Antiochids, Perdiccas, Lysimachus, Gaius, Nero, Vitellius, Galba, Otho, Domitian, Commodus, Maximian, Michael, Phocas, Maurice, and Aristonici. You will find that all continually passed their lives in fear; all feared those whom they terrified; fear returned upon its authors; and very many, although they lived fortified by swords and employed armies and citadels for their protection, perished by the sword or by a fouler death.

I have seen bloodstained leaders shut in prison,

and the back of a powerless tyrant torn

by a plebeian hand.

For just as a tyrant takes liberty and quiet away from everyone, so he takes security especially from himself. For how can he live peacefully, securely, and quietly when no one is secure because of his cunning, violence, and injustice, and everyone trembles beneath his blow? How fearful was Constantius Augustus after he had turned his paternal kingdom

into a tyranny! Whatever made a noise, he judged to be directed toward the destruction of his safety. Marcellinus, book 14.

They themselves sometimes recognize their deserts. Thus Adonibezek, Judges 1:7: “Seventy kings, the extremities of their hands and feet having been cut off, gathered the remnants of food under my table. As I have done, so God has repaid me.” And Mauritius at Constantinople: “You are just, O Lord.”

This too is added to the wretchedness of tyrants: in whatever manner they are killed, even through fraud and injury, those who dared to do it nevertheless possess great praise among the wicked, even if they accomplished the deed through crime and contrary to the sanctity of an oath. This certainly pertains to the accumulation of their wretchedness: although their killing is unjust, it is nevertheless pleasing to many.

The prince of philosophers gives the cause in book 2 of the *Politics*, chapter 7: “Indeed, human beings inflict the greatest injuries because of immoderate desires, and not because of necessary things. For example, they seize tyranny and oppress the people with impious dominion, not so that they may avoid growing cold, but that they may fulfill their lusts with impunity. Therefore great rewards are proposed not for the man who kills a thief, but for the man who kills a tyrant.”

Nor is the sentiment of the nefarious attendants and ministers of a tyrant different. Dio narrates a bold deed of a senator concerning Caligula. After Gaius had been killed, the Praetorian soldiers, disturbed and running together, asked who had killed him. Valerius Asiaticus, a man of consular rank, calmed them contrary to expectation. For he ascended a high and elevated place and cried from it: “Would that I had killed him!” Stupefied by these words, they ceased to riot. The Praetorian soldiers--Gaius’s Praetorians, partners and instruments of all his crimes and participants in his lusts and plunder--moved by one utterance abandoned vengeance and showed by their action that he seemed to them to have been killed justly.

Therefore, since tyrants live, like lions, tigers, bears, and eagles, by mangling and plunder, and consequently know that they are exposed to the hatred of everyone and sought by the plots of everyone, after the likeness of wild beasts which love precipitous places and caves, they prepare citadels, camps, and arms by which they may be protected and conceal themselves as much as they can. They are equally hateful to God and human beings. Therefore even the man who kills them through crime is often pleasing to those who suffered injury.

CHAPTER XVII

The Definition and Consideration of Aristocracy

§ 1. The second species of commonwealth exists when several persons command. It is divided into two: either a few and the best men, or the whole people, participate in sovereignty.

[Printed page 37]

In agreement with what has been said, “Ἀριστοκρατίαν” may be defined as “Τὴν ἀρχὴν τῶν ἀρίστων πρὸς τὸ τῶν ἀρχομένων συμφέρον,” government by the best which regards the utility of those who obey. Aristotle, book 4 of the *Politics*, chapter 7, requires in this government men who are best without qualification: “Ἀριστοκρατίαν μὲν οὖν καλῶς ἔχει καλεῖν, περὶ ἧς διήλθομεν ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις λόγοις, τὴν γὰρ οὖσαν τῶν ἀρίστων ἀπλῶς, κατ’ ἀρετὴν πολιτείαν, καὶ μὴ πρὸς ὑπόθεσιν τινὰ ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν, μόνην δίκαιον προσαγορεύειν ἀριστοκρατίαν· ἐν μόνῃ γὰρ ἀπλῶς ὁ αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ πολίτης ἀγαθός ἐστιν. We may therefore call that constitution an aristocracy--as we treated it before--which is composed of men who are best without qualification and according to virtue, not those who are good according to a hypothesis or for some definite end. For in this commonwealth alone the man who is good without qualification and the good citizen are the same.”

It will indeed be difficult not to explain its definition but to put it into use, if we consider human affairs. For who will recognize only the best men? Who will raise them to magistracies? Cato suffered an electoral rejection. Aristides was driven out by ostracism. Therefore no rather than many such “ἄριστοι,” or best men, command. Yet the Philosopher responds in book 3, chapter 7, that “Ἀριστοκρατίαν” is said to be “διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἀρίστους ἄρχειν, ἢ διὰ τὸ πρὸς τὸ ἄριστον τῇ πόλει, καὶ τοῖς κοινωνοῦσιν αὐτῇς.” A government may be called an aristocracy, or government of the best, either because the best men command or because they refer all things to that which is best for the city and its citizens. Yet this can also agree with other forms, for the best is sought in kingship and popular government. And a man who is not the best, yet is not unjust, can have this proposed to himself.

§ 2. We shall therefore call those men the best who, in comparison with others, are less wicked, or in whom more proofs of virtues are found than among the common people. But since the selection of men who are best without qualification is difficult--for every most worthless man very easily creeps toward the helm by simulating probity, and, once in power, reveals poorly concealed vices to the destruction of the commonwealth--an administration is not to be censured as corrupt if nobles and rich men frequently undertake a magistracy while better and more prudent men from the common people are passed over. For so long as an account of the common good is maintained, the form of the commonwealth remains legitimate.

Account must indeed be taken of nobles and rich men. For they prevail in birth, education, natural disposition, and power. They therefore possess a greater spirit for repelling enemies and a sharper stimulus for defending the fatherland, in which they possess fortunes and honors. In a public danger they fear that they will privately lose more; for when their fatherland has been oppressed or destroyed, they cannot be so honored elsewhere. The reasoning concerning the poor is different. For those who sustain life by their labor and industry do not judge themselves to owe much to the fatherland and easily find another fatherland where nourishment is supplied to their labor and art. Since, therefore, nobles are more loving toward their fatherland, braver, and more faithful, and it is in their interest that the condition of the commonwealth remain, those who excel in these things are generally deservedly judged the best men.

§ 3. Aristocratic commonwealths have been few and not long-lasting. The Spartan commonwealth belonged to the best men, but it was so intermingled with royal and popular government that it was by no means a pure aristocracy. The Carthaginian commonwealth joined longevity and power--a rare work, which none except the Venetian has thus far been able to imitate. Yet not even the latter is purely aristocratic, but rather a harmony composed of all forms. The

power of the principate is in one duke, the chief of the senate. The Great Council, or senate, consists of the nobility; all nobles are admitted to it when they reach their twenty-fifth year. Nevertheless, commoners too are assumed into various courts and offices.

I omit the free cities of Germany--Nuremberg, Ulm, and Frankfurt--which are governed by the patrician nobility, because they are not absolute commonwealths but parts of the Roman Empire and obey the Emperor.

The Roman aristocracy endured for a brief time, from the expulsion of the Tarquins until their death. For when fear of the kings had been removed, it degenerated into an oligarchy. Then the common people, inflamed by the injuries of the fathers, extorted tribunes, magistracies, and sovereignty through various seditions.

Many things are necessary for defending an aristocracy because there are very many causes why it perishes. For that reason it is not readily long-lasting.

§ 4. First, therefore, the best men must strive and exert themselves with the greatest force actually and truly to be “ὑπὸιστοι,” the best. For the eternal divine power favors virtue and advances it, and human beings do not disdain to be ruled by better men. This is the foundation without which all the other arts of politicians construct nothing but ruin. Therefore let them employ right, equity, clemency, affability, and liberality toward the citizens; among themselves, with harmonious opinions, let them regard the public good.

Nevertheless, because there are always many wicked, ambitious, and restless men in a commonwealth, and all are inclined to disparage those who command, virtue also employs political counsels and a stratagem that is not dishonorable; it removes inexperienced and destructive rulers from the helm. Yet I advise that this be done in such a way that the first account is taken of virtue, and every simulation is removed as a stain and plague.

Many of those who strive to establish a commonwealth of the best go astray not only because they attribute too much to the wealthy, but also by oppressing and harassing the common people. In the course of time, however, it is necessary that a true evil arise from false goods. For the resources and prerogatives of the rich dissolve the commonwealth more readily than those of the common people, as Aristotle truly warns in book 1 of the *Politics*, chapter 12. Good counsels for preserving aristocracy therefore proceed from virtue and tend toward the common good.

§ 5. The second measure is that some share of magistracies, offices, and honorable functions should be entrusted to many from the people. Yet these should be of such a kind that they either burden those who sustain them with expense--which rich men, enticed by the sweetness of honor, nevertheless readily bear--or possess something of envy; and then they should conciliate no power or favor among the people. There are also many functions whose administration possesses no dignity but profit. It is fitting that these be entrusted to industrious citizens who are under obligation to the rulers. For nothing is more dangerous than for a few men to draw all things to themselves.

The admonition of the philosopher-politician in book 3 of the *Politics*, chapter 11, is excellent: “To entrust no magistracies to them, however, and for them to participate in none is horrible and fearful. For when many are without honor and poor, it is necessary that the city be full of enemies. It remains, therefore, that they should participate in deliberating and judging. For this reason Solon and certain other lawgivers place them in charge of the assemblies for creating magistrates and of demanding accounts from those who have held magistracies; but they do not permit them to hold a magistracy by themselves and alone. For when they have all been collected and gathered together they possess sufficient understanding, and, mixed with better men, they benefit cities, just as impure nourishment joined with pure nourishment makes the whole more useful than a small quantity of the pure. For each man separately is imperfect and maimed in judging.”

Hence these advantages follow. First, the people do not judge the government to be an aristocracy but a popular commonwealth, when they see their fellow tribesmen taking part in public affairs. Next,

many, enticed by hope, favor the best men and are faithful to them, since they themselves also expect equal things from them. Of this kind are the care of provisions, wine, grain, shops, roads, courts, and private lawsuits, in which they can be colleagues of the best men.

An example may be seen in the Republic of Venice. For although the whole authority and power--that is, the right of judging and commanding--is in the hands of the senate, that is, approximately two thousand five hundred nobles, they nevertheless admit commoners too to many functions and honors, such as the prefectures of certain arts and the offices of scribes and secretaries. Yet the nature of these offices is such that through them the commoners are bound more and more to the nobility and are, as it were, made its slaves.

Nor is this institution of the Venetians new. The Romans and Carthaginians formerly employed it, and those free cities which protect a domestic aristocracy under the eagle of the Empire also employ it now.

§ 6. The third measure is that provision should be made for the grain supply. For this is the tightest bond by which the multitude is held. I do not approve Roman customs, for by supplying bread to the multitude from the public resources they exhausted the treasury and nourished a useless and most vicious crowd; but I recommend moderate care.

The Venetian senate expends a great sum of money every year so that the things necessary for sustenance are both imported abundantly and procured at a low price. Scarcely any other thing establishes government more firmly. For when the people, who are generally led by advantages, observe that those men take counsel for the city so paternally, they honor and love them in the manner of sons. Indeed, this is also most agreeable to justice. For since the best men are raised to the highest honors and possess the greatest emoluments from magistracies, it is equitable that some things from the public goods should also be directed toward citizens of small means and the people, who have no share in the highest honor.

§ 7. The ingrained evil of nobility, pride, must be guarded against. For nothing exasperates more among equals or those who are almost equals. It must be guarded against in sons and little grandsons too, lest they become accustomed to despise companions and citizens.

At Rome the laughter of a little woman struck the consulship from the nobility. There were two sisters, one married to a patrician and the other to a plebeian. The latter had visited the former. But while the husband, a consul, was returning home and the lictor, according to custom, struck the door with the fasces, the woman who was in the plebeian marriage became frightened at the unfamiliar noise and was laughed at by her sister with a reproach concerning her ignoble marriage. Without delay the wife impelled her husband to hope for and seek magistracies; he impelled his fellow citizens, and thus the aristocracy, already declining, was converted into democracy.

Unless this is guarded against, there arises a city of slaves and masters, not of free persons, and of human beings who partly envy and partly despise one another. These are very far removed from friendship, society, and civil communion. For society is a communion pertaining to friendship. Indeed, we do not wish to enter into the fellowship of a journey with enemies.

§ 8. Liberality, which belongs to private persons, also possesses very great importance: that they should concede to citizens of smaller means the use of their possessions. It is indeed excellent also to imitate the counsels of the Tarentines. For by sharing with the needy the use of their beasts of burden and possessions, they procured for themselves the benevolence of the multitude. Therefore the nobles will employ the labor of the more industrious citizens in caring for villas, fields, and other things, will attend them with a liberal and honorable wage, and will admit them to their table. If individual best men employ this method, they will hold a great part of the city bound to themselves by sharing their household property.

§ 9. If the commonwealth is powerful, wages war, and commands various provinces, there is a great opportunity to benefit others in great fortune; for they will be able to enrich very many. Aristotle, book 6 of the *Politics*, chapter 5, testifies that the Carthaginians did this. His words are: "Administering the commonwealth in a certain such manner,

the Carthaginians gathered the goodwill of the people toward themselves. For whenever they send some from the common people to the surrounding cities, they enrich them. This too belongs to the humanity of cultivated, refined, and prudent nobles: after distributing the needy among themselves, to supply them with assistance for making a livelihood and to exhort and rouse them to perform work.”

Nor was the judgment of the Romans different, who drained the refuse of the city and the army into colonies.

§ 10. The Philosopher proposes another counsel to us as though it were cunning. Namely, if the tribes are diverse and some persons from them possess the right to pronounce an opinion in the council, equality should exist in appearance in this manner: the nobles and rich should be compelled to attend, or a pledge should be seized; an excuse should not be accepted; and then, when asked, they should be required to explain their opinion and the judgments of their mind. The others should neither be compelled to assemble nor, if present, to express an opinion; neither an excuse nor a fine should be exacted from them.

By that stratagem they bring it about that the citizens judge themselves to be in a better condition than the nobles, because they possess an equal right of coming and deciding but by no means possess an obligation to come. Accordingly, they can attend to their own affairs according to their judgment; and if they please to come, they are free to remain silent in an invidious or hateful matter and to express an opinion in other matters. In appearance, therefore, the poor seem to be relieved and the rich burdened by that law. But in reality the matter is conducted by artifice. For this is what is sought: that the nobles should assemble in great numbers and be exercised in public affairs, while the common people are excluded through the appearance of privilege.

They are accustomed to summon the senate very frequently, draw out time by speaking, and deliberate about the smallest matters until the citizens, through weariness and contempt, cease to present themselves; then, when the opportunity arises, they treat of the highest affairs of the commonwealth. If they do this to defraud the commonwealth, they must now be called not the best men but oligarchs and tyrants within their own polity. If those counsels are directed toward preventing inexperienced, turbulent, and wicked human beings from violating the laws with their vote and bringing the commonwealth into danger, they are established without injury. For the right of that law is this: that a wise and upright senator should be commanded to assist the fatherland with counsel, while the inexperienced and wicked man should be freed by law from judging.

The other provisions tend toward the same thing:

Let not a noble or rich man refuse a magistracy, or let him pay a great fine; let it be free for a plebeian to renounce every magistracy.

Let nobles be compelled to judge causes; let citizens be assumed only if willing and pleased.

Let nobles bear arms, let them be exercised in them, and let them go first against the enemy; let the other citizens possess the care of their own home.

These provisions are not inequitable if they possess a legitimate end. For the poor are freed from labor, burden, and envy, yet are not barred from magistracy, judgments, or military service.

§ 11. A similar stratagem is that, where the common people plot against an aristocracy and desire that some of their own be inserted into the nobility, the best men should arrange that all the best and most pleasing men from the nobility should be competitors, while the candidates from the common people should be the more contemptible. For thus the people will reverence the dignity of the magnates, despise the worthlessness of the others by comparison,

[Printed page 39]

and in addition envy their equals.

This was done at Rome. Military tribunes with consular power were created, and access to that magistracy lay open to plebeians as well as patricians. In order to strike reverence into the common people, the patricians produced the foremost and most eminent of the fathers as candidates. Thus they often prevailed so that no plebeian was designated by the common people.

But this is not firm. For the dignity of the best men often excites hatred and envy, striking malignant eyes by its light alone. At Rome, although at first the common people created patricians as magistrates, content that account had been taken of their own people, they nevertheless gradually became bolder and mingled some from their own body with them; at times they chose all from their own order; and frequently they also assisted by their vote bold and cunning human beings whom they hoped would oppose the patricians most strongly. Nevertheless, it possesses great force for the security and authority of the best men if it is evident that others are not more suitable, and that other human beings would exist, but not other conduct.

What Livy narrates in decade 3, book 3, concerning Pacuvius Calavius is distinguished. Since he happened to be in the highest magistracy in the year when the affair at Lake Trasimene was conducted badly, and since the common people had long been hostile to the senate, he judged that on the occasion of revolution they would dare a great crime: if Hannibal should come to those places with his victorious army, they would slaughter the senate and hand Capua over to the Carthaginians. He was a wicked man, but not utterly ruined. Since he preferred to rule in a commonwealth that was intact rather than overthrown, and believed that no city deprived of public counsel could be intact, he entered upon a plan by which he might both preserve the senate and render it subject to himself and the common people.

After summoning the senate, he prefaced that the counsel of defecting from the Romans would in no way please him unless it had been necessary, since he had children by the daughter of Appius Claudius and had given his daughter in marriage at Rome to Livius. But he said that a greater and far more fearful danger threatened. For now the common people, through defection, intended to remove the senate from the city and, by slaughtering the senate, wished to hand the commonwealth, emptied of it, over to Hannibal and the Carthaginians. He could free them from that danger if they entrusted themselves to him and, forgetting their contests within the commonwealth, trusted him.

When all, overcome by fear, entrusted themselves to him, he said: "I shall shut you in the senate house and, as if I myself were a participant in the contemplated crime, by approving counsels which I would oppose in vain I shall find a way to your safety. For this accept whatever pledge you yourselves wish." Once the pledge had been given, he went out, ordered the senate house to be closed, and left a guard in the vestibule, lest anyone approach the senate house without his order or be able to depart from it.

Then, after summoning the people to an assembly, he said: "What you have often wished, Campanians--the power to exact punishment from a wicked and detestable senate--you now possess, not by storming the houses of individuals in a tumult, which they protect with guards of clients and servants, with the greatest danger to yourselves, but safely and freely. Receive them all, shut in the senate house, alone and unarmed. Do nothing in haste or perhaps rashly. I shall give you the right to pronounce judgment concerning the life of each, so that each may pay the penalties which he has merited. But above all you ought to indulge your anger in such a way that you hold your safety and utility preferable to anger.

"For you hate these senators, as I judge. But you do not wish to possess no senate at all, since you must have either a king--which is to be abominated--or a senate, which is the sole council of a free city. Therefore you must do two things simultaneously: remove the old senate and enroll a new one. I shall order the senators to be called individually and shall consult you concerning their lives; what you determine concerning each shall be done. But before punishment is exacted from the guilty man, you shall enroll in his place a brave and energetic man as a new senator."

He then sat down and, after the names had been cast into an urn, ordered the man whose name first came out by lot to be summoned and brought out of the senate house. When the name was heard, every man shouted that he was wicked

and worthless and worthy of punishment. Then Pacuvius said: "I see what judgment has been given concerning this man. He is cast out as wicked and worthless; choose a good and just senator."

At first there was silence because of the lack of a better man to submit. Then, when someone had put aside shame and named someone, a much greater clamor immediately arose: some denied knowing him; others cast against him now reproaches, now his low condition and sordid poverty, or his shameful kind of trade or gain. This happened much more in the case of the second and third senator, so that it became apparent that the human beings regretted the former senator; but someone to substitute in his place was lacking. For it was not worthwhile that the same men be named again: they had been named for nothing other than hearing reproaches, and the remaining men were far lower and more obscure than those who first came to mind. Thus the human beings dispersed, saying that every most familiar evil was especially tolerable and ordering the senate to be released from custody.

Pacuvius, a man otherwise wicked, certainly acted wisely. For very many men reduced a magistracy into order; very few amended the commonwealth. This man made the senate acceptable to the citizens and made it more moderate.

§ 12. The seventh measure consists of the mutual rights of patrons and clients, and so great a bond that, during a space of six hundred years, dissensions between the patricians and the common people scarcely descended to blood. But after those bonds too had been removed and fraud joined to the client, the commonwealth perished by mutual slaughters and was handed over to one tyrant. That custom has not yet died out among the Venetians. The name of protectors and the ancient right which existed among the ancients also remain in Germany, by which many provinces were said to be in the clientship of powerful families.

§ 13. It is prudent to establish various orders and distinctions among citizens, yet with such moderation that injury is inflicted upon no one. Thus was

Martial Rome threefold in cavalry, common people, and senate.

That multitude and diversity brings it about that they do not readily conspire, and this is so in every form of commonwealth, but especially in an aristocracy. For the middle order, or that of the knights, vehemently desires that the authority of the senate be preserved safe and sound. If the common people remove the senate from the midst or undertake to diminish its right, the entire dignity of the equestrian order will also be destroyed. Nor will the common people rise so readily against the senate, from which it stands at a long interval and which it sees surrounded by squadrons of knights.

But neither ought the best men to fear the equestrian order. For if it attempts anything, it will not be difficult to restrain it by summoning the common people to their aid. I confess, nevertheless, that this diversity of orders is a nursery of many lawsuits and seditions. But this arises from the errors of those who govern, when law is pronounced unequally, one order is suppressed, and the other exalted to the detriment of the others.

These measures are generally observed in an aristocracy. In it this must especially be observed: that the few should command in such a manner that the many do not hate and abominate the constitution of the city. For a power which violently holds many unwilling persons is brief. Every aristocracy is therefore brief; nevertheless, where it exists, it is better that there be two other orders than one alone.

§ 14. It has been asked whether there was a monarchy when the Triumvirs oppressed Rome, when the two Antonines reigned, and when Maximian and Diocletian reigned with equal right. Bodin denies it in book 2, chapter 2 of *Six Books of the Commonwealth*; others affirm it. If you consider the words, it should be called a dyarchy or triarchy. If you consider the thing, it is a monarchy; for one of them always possesses primary authority and selects the other. But if their power is altogether equal, they nevertheless administer as though they were one; the whole government is as though that of one and will return to one. For when kings adopt their sons as partners in the kingdom, they are not judged to change the form of the kingdom but to establish the monarchy.

These things must therefore be estimated morally, not metaphysically. By the same reasoning, when daughters who are heirs of kingdoms marry foreign husbands and administer with equal right--as Ferdinand and Isabella administered Spain, and Albert and Eugenia Belgium--there is nevertheless no new form of commonwealth.

Those who deny that a head exists in an aristocracy, and therefore reject that kind of government, emphatically deny that they are political thinkers. For the greater part of the senate agreeing in one opinion is the head, since its counsel is united. Nor is the condition of a metaphorical and a physical head the same. Therefore neither the individual leading men nor senators are heads or possess sovereignty; rather, the entire senate together, or its greater part, does.

CHAPTER XVIII

On Oligarchy, Which Arises from Corrupted Aristocracy

§ 1. “Oligarchy” is sometimes employed for aristocracy, but properly and precisely it is defined by Aristotle as “Ἀρχὴ πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον τῶν εὐπόρων,” government instituted for the utility of the rich. Book 3, chapters 7 and 8: “ὅταν κύριοι ᾧσι τῆς πολιτείας οἱ τὰς οὐσίας ἔχοντες,” when those who possess property are dominant in the commonwealth. It would perhaps be called more rightly “εὐποραρχία” or “πλουσιαρχία” when counsel is taken for the advantages of the rich and not of the whole commonwealth.

It can certainly happen that within some commonwealth there are more rich men than men of moderate or small means, as Aristotle testifies was the case at Colophon before the war of the Lydians. Therefore, if elsewhere there are more rich than poor, it will nevertheless be called an oligarchy, the dominion of a few. For although it is not then that of a few, when it was established it first belonged to a few; and even now in every commonwealth the number of the rich is small, while that of men of moderate and small means is very great.

§ 2. When magistrates are created on account of bodily height or beauty, as formerly among the Ethiopians, it is not an oligarchy, because those gifts can belong to men of moderate and small means as well as to the rich. Nevertheless, the name agrees with it, for it is necessary that the power belong to a few; very few excel in bodily dignity. If these men regard the common good, it will be called an aristocracy; if the good of only one party, an oligarchy.

Therefore, although, if only the rich command, it must be called “ἀρχὴ τῶν εὐπόρων,” government of the rich, it can nevertheless also be “ἀριστοκρατία,” aristocracy, if they do not command for the utility of the rich but of everyone. Plato observed this most prudently: “ὅταν ἄρα οἱ πλούσιοι ταύτην μιμῶνται, τότε ἀριστοκρατίαν καλοῦμεν τὴν τοιαύτην πολιτείαν, ὅταν δὲ τῶν νόμων μὴ φροντίζωσι, ὀλιγαρχίαν. When, therefore, the rich imitate that form, we then call that commonwealth ‘ἀριστοκρατίαν’--‘aristocracy’; but when the laws are neglected, we call it an oligarchy.” The laws are neglected when the rich refer all things to their own advantages and desires.

The dominion of a few and of the rich is therefore not unjust if it keeps its aim, which is the safety of all. For it is equitable that the man who expends ten thousand gold pieces for the commonwealth should be preferred to another who contributes only ten to the common fund. Yet the man who furnishes so much to his fatherland ought not to obstruct the advantages of a citizen of smaller means.

§ 3. Aristotle recognizes four kinds of oligarchy in book 4 of the *Politics*, chapter 5. The first exists when a magistrate is selected according to the census, so that the poor are excluded. At Rome the senate was selected according to a census qualification of eight hundred thousand sesterces. Thus indeed the prices of life perished; nevertheless, they judged that the splendor of the most august order must also be increased by domestic means. Accordingly, when his census was diminished, both senator and knight lost his dignity.

The second kind exists when certain men are chosen according to the census, but those men select others for themselves, whether from those qualified by the census, from the best men, or from everyone.

The third exists when a son succeeds his father, as generally occurs among the Venetians, where all nobles who are twenty-five years old possess the right to enter the senate. Nevertheless, there is no corrupt oligarchy in these arrangements if the public good is regarded, but either aristocracy or polity. For just as in a kingdom one man can succeed one man without thereby incurring the mark of tyranny, so in an aristocracy several can succeed several while the integrity of the best government is preserved.

The fourth kind, therefore, is a corrupt oligarchy, when affairs are conducted not by law but by the decisions of those who govern, and all things are administered for the advantages of the powerful. This kind of government is most

destructive because in place of one tyrant it possesses several petty tyrants, and those cruel and needy. Just as this government is wicked, so it can by no means be long-lasting, since the greatest part of the commonwealth hates the smallest and desires it to perish.

Not only injury but even the suspicion of injury must be avoided. Otherwise anyone at all, however weak, can be a leader against them; nor in their overthrow is anything more difficult than the first utterance. At the beginning of the preceding century, many cities of the Empire rose against their own magistracy, and slaughters and plundering occurred. It makes no difference whether they suspect the senate truly or falsely.

The memory of the disturbance at Frankfurt is recent. Its leaders were human beings of the lowest condition but exceedingly powerful through the favor of the people, because government by the best was hateful. They could have done more harm if they had begun the sedition more moderately. Formerly at Massilia and Heraclea the rich rioted against the few and changed the form of the commonwealth. Aristotle, book 5 of the *Politics*, chapter 6.

§ 4. A tyranny of several is therefore overthrown with the easiest effort, but never more easily than when dissensions arise among them, or when one of them reveals secrets or makes himself popular. They do this either when they have suffered injury and seek power, or when they have broken and squandered their own resources and strive to conceal private disgraces with public evil. The more savage and importunate they are, the briefer their government is.

Those whose conspiracy is most inequitable have perished through foul examples. Aristotle recalls in book 5 of the *Politics*, chapter 9, that there was one of this kind: “For now in certain oligarchies they swear thus: ‘I shall be ill-disposed toward the people, and I shall devise against the people whatever evil I can.’” But it is necessary for them both to think and to display and simulate the opposite, signifying in the prescribed words of the oath that they will inflict no injury upon the people.

They swear, therefore, that they will be enemies of the people, and perjure themselves that they will be friends.

CHAPTER XIX

On Polity Strictly So Called, or the Popular Form of Commonwealth

§ 1. Aristotle and others sometimes call “Πολιτείαν” (polity) “δημοκρατίαν” (democracy). But because we are now distinguishing the parts, each must be treated properly and precisely. Thus Aristotle too, in book 3, chapter 7 of the *Politics*:

[Printed page 41]

“ὅταν δὲ τὸ πλῆθος πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν πολιτεύηται συμφέρον, καλεῖται κοινὸν ὄνομα πασῶν πολιτειῶν, πολιτεία. But when the multitude administers the city for the public good, that form of commonwealth is called by the name common to all constitutions, polity.” Polity must therefore be defined as “ἀρχὴ τοῦ πλῆθους πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν συμφέρον,” government by the multitude which regards the common utility.

§ 2. The foundation and aim of this administration are liberty, and then equality. The people readily obtains liberty, but equality with the greatest difficulty. For although they are equal in this, that all command and obey in turn, nevertheless turns of commanding come to very few. Liberty, however, consists not in living according to one’s own judgment and being altogether under one’s own power, but in living according to the laws, subject to one’s own magistrate, and under this condition: that the power of commanding should also belong to oneself. For thus the right and honor of the city is equal for all.

§ 3. There are various degrees and forms of polity. That one is most perfect when, without distinction of birth or wealth, all dignities and magistracies can be entrusted to everyone. This, I say, is most perfect within its own kind, evidently the most exact preserver of liberty and equality. It is nevertheless weak, tumultuous, and a promoter of the most foul human beings.

§ 4. Other forms are more tempered. For since there are various kinds of human beings within a commonwealth--craftsmen of necessary and useful things; craftsmen of things serving pleasure and display; farmers; herdsman; merchants; soldiers; rich men and nobles living from their revenues; learned men; priests--and since there is also great diversity among magistracies and civil functions--for some magistracies are primary, others secondary; certain functions honored but expensive, others difficult but profitable--from this arises a great variety in constituting polities.

For they do not entrust all functions to everyone, but different functions to different persons with discrimination: honored and expensive functions to nobles and the wealthy; laborious functions to the industrious; judicial functions to equitable, experienced, and prudent men. From this distribution arise great varieties of government, for nothing prevents magistracies from being in the hands of one group and judgments in those of a different group. For certain peoples it is sufficient to possess the power of choosing magistrates from the best men; some are content if an account of the honors administered is rendered to them.

§ 5. In preserving the popular form, very great labor is expended lest one man institute a tyranny or a few men an oligarchy. Consequently, the administration is generally accustomed to fall back into the vice called democracy.

The first measure is that men generally of the middle condition should be brought to the helm of the commonwealth. For they do not possess such power that one man can seize tyranny, and they are too numerous for the establishment of an oligarchy; nor are they turbulent because of poverty and domestic difficulties. Aristotle warned of this in book 4 of the *Politics*, chapter 12: “Moreover, the lawgiver must always assume the middle classes in the administration of the commonwealth. For whether he establishes laws suitable for oligarchy, he ought to direct the laws toward the middle classes, or whether laws agreeable to democracy, these men must be joined to the laws. But wherever the multitude of

those in the middle exceeds either both extremes or only one of them, there it can happen that the form of administering the commonwealth is firm and stable. For it is not to be feared that the rich and poor will ever agree and conspire against these men, since neither will ever wish to serve the other.”

For that moderation of the middle classes possesses something good, and those who are in the middle are judged good citizens. Therefore Phocylides too, in the Philosopher’s judgment, spoke wisely:

Πολλὰ μέσοισιν ἄριστα, μέσος θέλω ἐν πόλει εἶναι.

Many things are best for those in the middle; I wish to live as one in the middle within the city.

§ 6. The second measure is that within the polity and power of the people itself it should be arranged that a ready road to honors not lie open to every worst and most audacious man, but that great account should be taken of the best part among the people. For just as in an aristocracy the form of government is changed within a short time unless every best man obtains a magistracy, so also the best and most upright part must be sought from the people. “Βέλτιστος δὲ ὁ δῆμος, ὁ γεωργικὸς ἐστὶ. The best people,” says the Philosopher, “is that which practices agriculture.”

No one doubts that the matter formerly stood thus. Hence the rural tribes were honored in the city, while the urban tribes were not free from contempt and stigma; for the dregs of the people and those who lingered beneath the rostra were cast into those tribes. Aristotle supplies the reason why the urban common people were more corrupt: because, accustomed to leisure and assemblies, they become cunning, fraudulent, desirous of revolutions, and ambitious; but the rural people, occupied by agriculture or pasturing livestock, rarely attend assemblies and rarely approach seditious gatherings.

There was formerly also another cause: the idle little common people, accustomed to assemblies, theaters, and spectacles and conquered by pleasures, scarcely raised their thoughts to the consideration of what is honorable and equitable. But now in well-ordered cities the reasoning is different. For citizens are less infected by tribunician assemblies, detestable spectacles, and public corruptions of morals; next, in schools and churches they are instructed toward virtue and piety. The rural common people are less cultivated and frequently less religious. Accordingly, with the times changed, the urban common people must be regarded as better.

The most flourishing cities of Europe teach that I judge thus. In their tribes, which consist of merchants and craftsmen, the greatest account is taken of justice, public honor, and piety. From these men, especially in free cities, serious, prudent, and moderate men are annually chosen to govern the commonwealth, for they are far removed from the causes of ancient corruptions. For how many thousands are there among them who, instructed from childhood by sacred sermons, pious readings, and the institutions of the Christian faith, have not even once drunk in through their eyes or ears the foulness of the theater, the cruelty of the arena, or turbulent declamations? Indeed, they do not admit criminals and infamous persons; they expel those who have been admitted.

Therefore the warning which the Philosopher gives in book 6, chapter 3--that the urban multitude should never be summoned without the rural--has no place here. I shall concede it concerning those ancient buffoons who regarded nothing except bread and circuses, who judged that money from the treasury by which the fleet should have been supported ought to be expended upon payments for the theater, who deprived poets of payment because they had abstained from obscene words, and who crowded around every wicked and seditious man. The urban common people admit such men to no share in public affairs; they do not even possess a place in the tribes.

§ 7. The third measure is that the election of magistrates should not occur in an assembly of everyone according to the Roman custom. For crowds, fights, ambitions, and corruptions cannot be avoided there. Rather, let the ancient arrangement of the Mantineans be approved. Among them certain persons--“αἱρετοὶ κατὰ μέρος”--chosen according to a division of the people entrusted the magistracies.

I saw in Münster of Westphalia, a distinguished and cultivated city, certain persons first chosen by the whole people who would designate others, by whom the senate is chosen annually.

[Printed page 42]

That arrangement is thoroughly popular, for those electors are established by the consent and vote of everyone. The election is then conducted with such care that no one can know who the final selectors are. They are enclosed after the manner of cardinals, decide concerning the whole senate, and elect it before night. There can be no corruption by gifts here, no solicitation for honor. Those electors judge it to pertain to their own reputation that they should mingle no man with their city's council unless he possesses proven virtue and prudence. But if favor or kinship should induce one or another to nominate someone, the others would nevertheless resist and would not wish to bargain away their own reputation for another man's honor. This arrangement certainly surpasses the Roman assemblies in many respects.

§ 8. The fourth measure is that they should establish, with no less care than the magistrates themselves, many serious men who demand from the magistrates an account of their administration of the commonwealth and present it to the tribes. “Τὸ γὰρ ἀπ’ ἄλλων κρέμασθαι, καὶ μὴ πᾶν ἐξεῖναι ποιεῖν, ὅπερ ἂν δόξη, συμφέρον ἐστίν. For to depend upon another's judgment, and not to be permitted to do everything one pleases, is useful.” Indeed, there is no greater enticement to sin than impunity for sin.

This matter possesses such great importance that I judge the safety of the Republic of Venice to depend upon it for the greatest part. For the prefects of all the cities so conduct their government that they know certainly that an account must be rendered by them. Inquiry is made into their private life, their public acts, and their judgments.

This is easier and more effective in a polity than in the aristocracy of the Venetians. For in a popular form those who transgress in a magistracy can readily be punished because they are men of middle condition, not eminent in resources, clients, or power, so that they might evade or break the laws. In an aristocracy something is conceded to nobility, affinity, ancestors, and the hope of equal impunity.

§ 9. The fifth measure is that they should not offend or irritate the best men and the nobility, but should hold them in honor and esteem and revere them. They should entrust very many and the most honored magistracies to them; and when they have given commoners as colleagues to them, they should nevertheless grant the first place to the patricians. For thus the patricians will be most favorably disposed toward the common people and will strive to approve themselves to them.

Nor do I judge that any polity has thus far perished unless, first changed into a democracy, it vexed the best men and the rich with injuries and outrages. For from this certain men of the nobility have received an occasion to vindicate themselves. Men of great spirit and impatient of outrages, when they have despaired concerning their own affairs, readily overthrow the whole commonwealth. And just as, when kings degenerate into tyrants, there are many who seek the praise of a slain tyrant even at the danger of their life and are not deterred by the punishments of others, so, when a polity departs from law and seeks not the common utility but that of men of small means, and begins to oppress and despoil the nobles and best men through servitude, many avengers arise. For that commonwealth is a tyranny with many heads; just as it cannot be dispatched by a single blow, so it can be torn into parts and divided.

Read the Greek and Latin histories and, after the Empire ceased or declined, the Italian histories. You will find that the greatest calamities were introduced by exiles. Exiles, however, arose from the conflicts of citizens raging mutually against one another, and the struggles arose from the corrupt administration of the commonwealth.

To embrace the matter in one statement: the best form of popular commonwealth is that in which the supreme power is in the hands of the people, the highest honor in the hands of the best men, and those of small means are assisted with the greatest care; in which the dignity of the best men depends upon the votes of the people; and in which honor is conferred upon the best men by the willing people. For where that moderation is employed, no part of the city will wish the form of the commonwealth to be changed, and therefore they will defend the present condition by consent.

CHAPTER XX

On Democracy, Which Is the Vice of Polity Strictly So Called

§ 1. Democracy is “ἀρχὴ πρὸς τὸ τῶν ἀπόρων συμφέρον,” government which regards the utility of the poor or those of small means. The end of this government is diametrically opposed to oligarchy. For the latter pleads the cause of the rich; the former, that of those who are poor or of small means; neither pleads that of the whole commonwealth.

No democracy has ever been long-lasting; or, if any endured for some time, it was agitated by perpetual dissensions and ended either in the tyranny of one or in oligarchy. It has ended more often in tyranny, because the dregs of the people, when divided within itself and unable to prevail, entrusts itself to one man from whom it expects rewards for the power it has given; but it is afterward oppressed by him.

The reason why that administration cannot be long-lasting is that, when the advantages of citizens of small means are provided for through injuries to the more honorable, it is necessary that the principal part of the city--without which the other part cannot exist--suffer distress. For if the nobility is harassed with outrages, or the condition of the city is so tossed about in the hands of the poorer men that the rich are uncertain about their property, who can doubt that the latter will either finally draw power to themselves or desert a commonwealth in which they are the mockery and prey of every most sordid man? Nor will they remain inactive for long in that danger when they possess a great faculty of taking vengeance.

§ 2. Democracy can exist even where the number of the poor is smaller than that of the rich, if the helm of administration is turned according to the judgment and advantages of the poor. Nevertheless, the portion of those of small means and of those who either possess no property or possess little is generally greater.

Formerly, however, in military cities the supreme power often resided among the lowest persons. To this form must be assigned those periods of the Roman commonwealth when the common people beneath the rostra enacted laws; when votes returned for sale annually upon the Field; and when the Praetorian soldiers, or a few legions, despising the authority of the senate and people and bargaining for gifts, plunder, and license, raised monsters of human beings to the august summit and soon killed those same men by a nefarious crime.

§ 3. Tyranny is most easily born from this form of commonwealth. Plato speaks excellently: “ἡ γὰρ ἄγαν ἐλευθερία ἔοικεν, οὐκ εἰς ἄλλο τι, ἢ εἰς ἄγαν δουλείαν μεταβάλλειν καὶ ἰδιώτη καὶ πόλει. εἰκὸς γάρ, εἰκότως τοίνυν, εἶπον, οὐκ ἐξ ἄλλης πολιτείας τυραννὶς καθίσταται, ἢ ἐκ δημοκρατίας. ἐξ (οἶμαι) τῆς ἀκροτάτης ἐλευθερίας, δουλεία πλείστη τε καὶ ἀγριωτάτη. For excessive liberty is accustomed to be changed into the most grievous servitude, among private persons as well as cities.” For thus it is accustomed to happen, and I deservedly said that tyranny arises from no commonwealth other than democracy: from the greatest liberty comes the greatest and most monstrous servitude.

The reason why the man to whom the people has entrusted itself oppresses it with tyranny is that he distrusts that he can otherwise be safe. Since many wicked men seek many things

[Printed page 43]

and terrify him, he cannot hold them by love for himself; therefore he prepares force.

§ 4. There are four kinds of democracy. The first exists when the more honorable part of the city, which possesses moderate means, deliberates after excluding the rich and entrusts magistracies to rich men as well as those of moderate means. Because this form attributes more to magnates, it is firmer. For it does not exclude the rich and noble from public affairs, and it entrusts itself to be ruled by the fidelity of those whom it possesses as candidates and supplicants.

The second form exists when it is permitted to everyone, so far as birth is concerned, to administer the commonwealth, yet no one is admitted unless it is possible for him to be at leisure. This administration generally also belongs to the best men, for craftsmen, merchants, and others are removed.

The third form exists when by law even those who cannot be at leisure are admitted to the helm. Yet because they possess no leisure from their own affairs and do not wish to attend to public affairs to the detriment of their domestic property, they voluntarily abstain from magistracies.

The fourth species of democracy--or rather a tyranny of many, as Aristotle judges in book 5, chapter 11 of the *Politics*--exists when the poor are not merely admitted to government but are given payment so that they may be at leisure. That arrangement harms justice in many ways. For honorable and noble men suited to administering public affairs are barred from taking counsel for their fatherland by filth so unbecoming and indeed extreme. Next, since money must be gathered from the entrails of the commonwealth to support the leisure of the poor, the nobles and rich suffer injury, since they are compelled with their own money to buy magistrates for themselves and indeed to bring it about by their own resources that they cannot attain honors--than which nothing is more bitter. Finally, men of this sort are generally inexperienced in affairs, desirous, and abuse power.

But although a good man would not wish to conduct government for the sake of either money or honor, he nevertheless customarily undertakes this burden lest a worse man command him. For men judge there to be the greatest necessity of assuming the helm lest it be entrusted to the inexperienced and all be endangered for that reason. In this democratic tyranny, however, by violence, laws, and payment it is arranged that honorable men should not preside over the commonwealth, but that every most foul and needy man should command.

§ 5. Moreover, various democratic laws against the best men have been devised by popular leaders; nevertheless, those laws oppressed the people itself and converted liberty under the name of liberty into tyranny. Yet the tyranny of no single person is to be equated with a raging people.

The first law is that a magistrate should come from everyone. Both examples and reason teach how destructive it is. For what is more foreign to true reason than that rulers of the commonwealth should be placed in command by the judgment and opinions of the most imprudent? That those who possess the highest honors and supreme power should be selected from the dregs of human beings? No one entrusts a vineyard to an inexperienced cultivator or a field to an ignorant farmer. What prudence, then, is it to entrust bodies, fortunes, and liberty to the judgments of human beings seeking their own advantages?

What popular leaders say--that the common people generally do not err in selecting magistrates--is altogether otherwise. No one is a less suitable arbiter of his liberty than the people; no one abuses it more in any matter than in creating magistrates. All seek the man whom they judge advantageous to themselves, not the one useful to the commonwealth. Let us trust the Roman people, whose assemblies, after the likeness of the Euripus, changed in different directions. Cato twice suffered electoral rejection; Clodius, Vatinius, Piso, and Antony sat upon the curule chair.

§ 6. The second law: to command in turn and frequently change governments. The people loves this, but it leads to anarchy and license. For what man born from the common people, endowed with a brief power already about to expire, will restrain wicked and audacious human beings from injury to citizens? Who will contain by the fear and force of laws and penalties those whom he is going to see in the supreme position the next day, when the wheel of the assemblies turns? The powerful man whom you irritate today you will experience as your lord tomorrow. As a private person you will receive your enemy armed with public authority. To report familiar things, consider Cicero alone. During his most glorious consulship, the preserver of the fatherland aroused against himself the hatred of the most powerful citizens, and their hatred possessed such force that he was driven into exile.

§ 7. The third law: to divide the goods of condemned men among the common people. If the people judges the case, it would be manifestly inequitable, as Aristotle warned in book 6, chapter 5. Who doubts that a needy judge can be induced without difficulty to condemn an accused man by whose destruction he has determined to increase his own property? If those judgments are in the hands of the best men but the plunder in those of the common people, although there is less danger, it is nevertheless not equitable that a public fine be expended for the advantages of one party. Next, after neglecting labors, they will begin to direct slanders against the rich.

§ 8. The fourth law: that accusations against noble and brave men should be frequent. Nothing was more customary at Athens, and for this reason they fell.

§ 9. The fifth law: that magistrates should be selected by lot. Certainly nothing is more suitable than this law for overthrowing the commonwealth.

§ 10. The sixth law: that revenues should be distributed to those who come to the assembly.

§ 11. The seventh law: that the wealthy should receive no payment for the labor of judging, but those of small means a large payment.

§ 12. The eighth law: that no craft should prevent one from commanding.

§ 13. The ninth law: that no one, except rarely, should hold any magistracy twice.

§ 14. The tenth law: that this can nevertheless occur in a dangerous war.

§ 15. The eleventh law: that no magistracy should be perpetual; indeed, that all should be exceedingly brief, so that more persons may command.

§ 16. The thirteenth law: to admit foreigners also to honors.

§ 17. The fourteenth law: secretly to oppress the nobility, while outwardly cultivating it, and to entrust to nobles certain magnificent and expensive functions.

§ 18. The fifteenth law: to guard against their being irritated.

§ 19. The sixteenth law: to inflame them mutually against one another and wear them down with enmities; to furnish with honors and power, and defend, those from the nobility who possess many enemies.

§ 20. The seventeenth law: to institute very many tribes and intermingle them as much as possible.

§ 21. The eighteenth law: to unite various associations of craftsmen, merchants, and others.

§ 22. The nineteenth law: to permit the license of living as each person wishes. “ἥδιον γὰρ τοῖς πολλοῖς τὸ ζῆν ἀτάκτως, ἢ τὸ σωφρόνως. For it is sweeter for the multitude to live without order than temperately.”

§ 23. The twentieth law: to surround all magistrates with the guardianship of other magistrates, lest they be able to do anything

[Printed page 44]

against the will of the people. Thus at Rome the tribunes of the common people often vetoed the best counsels and, under the appearance of defending the common people, disturbed the commonwealth.

If we weigh the origin, rationale, and examples of all those laws, they can do little to establish the democratic constitution. Consequently, no democracy was ever stable or without perpetual disturbances. Besides Athenian and Roman history, one may read the history of the Florentine Republic from the times of Frederick, in which you will read with astonishment of the greatest and swiftest changes of affairs, internal battles, and fighting from towers.

CHAPTER XXI

That the Best Form of Commonwealth Is Monarchy Tempered by Aristocracy and Polity

§ 1. I propose a question debated not only in the senate house and in an assembly of the people, but also in scholastic exercises. The reason is that it supplies abundant material to ingenious and eloquent human beings for speaking against tyranny, anarchy, and servitude, and in favor of liberty and equality. Accordingly, some inveigh against the excessive power of one man, others against the ambition and dissensions of equals, and others against the confusion and rashness of the common crowd. They do this with all the greater applause because examples of affairs badly administered are lacking in no age, and indeed abound in most. But let us speak of this matter politically and in a manner suited to the institutions of the commonwealth.

§ 2. First, when we compare the three forms of commonwealth with one another and inquire into the best, it is evident that this must be done by a prudent and suitable analogy. For the vices and injuries of one government must not be compared with the virtues and benefits of another, but goods with goods, evils with evils, lesser goods with lesser, and greater with greater; likewise, evils must be weighed with an equal balance. The best monarchy must be compared with the best aristocracy and polity, the middling with the middling, and the worst with the worst.

When, therefore, the matter stands at the same degree, it is asked which commonwealth is better, firmer, and happier. Is that government which is described in Judges 2:6--“Therefore Joshua dismissed the people, and the children of Israel departed, each into his own possession, that they might obtain it. And they served the Lord all his days and all the days of the elders who lived for a long time after him and knew all the works of the Lord which he had done with Israel”--is that aristocracy of elders to be preferred to the monarchy of David or Solomon or another king who regards the common good?

§ 3. Next, all things in this disputation are not to be discussed minutely and mathematically. Rather, because we are treating of the commonwealth, they must be treated in a moral and civil manner. For in vain do we form and construct in thought some Platonic or Utopian city if we give counsel to our cities, in which there are many imprudent, improvident, and wicked human beings, and frequently those very persons whose office it is to protect justice and equity are such.

The founder of a commonwealth ought not to regard one human being or one certain and definite period, but to embrace the whole duration. For although it may happen that one particular prince is excellent and the best men at some time praiseworthy, nevertheless conduct is frequently changed in power, and wicked rulers more frequently succeed good ones. Accordingly, that form of commonwealth must be established in which magistrates are permitted to do the greatest amount of good and the least amount of evil, so that the people may be safe by its laws and not by the virtue of one human being.

The lawgiver, therefore, will not fear to abandon many excellent goods in order to avert the most dangerous evils. Nor will he judge the form of that city most excellent in which one particular thing has been arranged excellently unless provision has been made from every direction concerning all things. All moderate things must rather be chosen than extremes attended by great danger. For amid such great desires, faithlessness, and ambition among human beings, it is impossible to establish a commonwealth in which there is no danger. I shall therefore speak distinctly concerning the best form of commonwealth.

§ 4. **FIRST.** A despotic form of commonwealth, in which the prince is absolute lord of all things, is unworthy of praise, inequitable, and not long-lasting. I call that form despotic which belongs today to the emperor of the Turks, which seems formerly to have belonged to Nebuchadnezzar and the kings of the Egyptians, and which now belongs to certain barbarians. The inhabitants of the Turkish Empire call themselves slaves of their emperor. No one is secure in

fortune or life; all things depend upon the nod of the most cruel, most arrogant, and most lustful tyrant. They even refer the very air which they breathe as something received from the great lord.

It is unnecessary to bring forward arguments. For there is no one who does not flee servitude and embrace liberty; but in that empire everyone, even wives and children, serves servitude. Indeed, divine Scripture numbers being oppressed by servitude among the greatest punishments but regards being asserted into liberty as the highest benefit. Isaiah 19:4: “And I shall hand Egypt into the hand of cruel lords.” And when God had subjected the Jews to Shishak, or Sesostris the Egyptian, he said: “Nevertheless they shall serve him, that they may know the distance between my servitude and the servitude of the kingdoms of the lands.”

Nor can a supporter of tyranny respond and say that an absolute lord can take account of the common good and that such a commonwealth will be like a great household. For if he is lord, he therefore expends the slaves for his own utility, and all the subjects are the possession of the great lord. Accordingly, they are held to care for the advantages of the lord, not their own.

I am not ignorant that the barbarism of certain nations, from native slowness and stupidity of disposition, is such that they seem born for servitude. If they have been captured in a just war, so that they can be reduced into servitude, I do not deny that they ought to possess the same man as king and lord. But this pertains to a few, since, although there are many who have surrendered within a great nation, few have merited servitude. Provision must be made for the whole nation in a royal manner, so that its people may be rightly instructed in religion, humanity, and civil order. It belongs to barbarians, however, to abuse the weakness and stupidity of wretched people for their own gain.

§ 5. This government cannot be long-lasting because it is violent and because everyone condemns it, even those who live amid the highest honor and pleasures. Those whose fortune is most wretched attempt extreme things; and since they consider all things better than those which they suffer, impelled by a slight movement, they dare something great and unexpected. For although they hope for nothing, they nevertheless possess nothing about which they may despair, since to remain in a most afflicted condition is the part of the despairing, but to move and disturb something is the mark of a spirit that is not ignoble.

Seneca therefore spoke wisely in truth: “Power which is exercised to the injury of many cannot stand for long,” book 3 of *On Anger*, chapter 16. Phalaris reigned for more than thirty-two years, but after his first frenzy had raged itself out, he cultivated justice and clemency. He possessed ability and force for seizing power,

[Printed page 45]

but moderation was needed for retaining it. Although all hold tenaciously that one ought to leave a tyranny dragged by the feet, not seated upon a horse--Livy, book 24--nevertheless, very many who abused excessive power have been cast down and readily shaken off.

For since a human being is a political animal, while the most absolute monarchy is violent dominion and more suitable for wild beasts, it is not according to nature and therefore cannot be perpetual. Finally, since so great a power readily exceeds the limits of reason and crushes peoples, it comes about that it corrupts the commonwealth itself. All are free by nature; disaster introduced the name of servitude. Therefore a commonwealth in which there is no liberty is contrary to nature.

§ 6. The Turkish Empire is customarily objected against this, because it has now persevered for many years in the family of the Ottomans, although they oppress all those subject to it with inequitable and burdensome dominion. In that kingdom no one serves more abjectly or more dangerously than the man who moves amid the greatest dignity and power.

I indeed acknowledge that the iron yoke imposed by the Ottomans upon the peoples of Asia and many parts of Europe and Africa has almost grown old, so that it could seem a just government. The complaints of so many nations and the groans of cities testify to it. That tyranny has now persevered for three hundred years; for it was established in the year

1300 by the industry and fraud of Ottoman. It is therefore a savage and long-lasting sovereignty. Nor--shame!--are there lacking among Christians those who suggest Mohammedan counsels to their princes, in order to establish the strength and longevity of principalities by such barbarian examples.

§ 7. But I by no means attribute the stability of that monarchy to its unjust and barbarous domination, but principally to the just vengeance of the divine power, which rules and crushes with an iron rod nations that are impious, apostate, impure, and ignorant of being ruled. It both permits the tyrant to rage and corrupts the counsels and removes the courage of wretched nations, lest they rise to vengeance.

Next, the mutual enmities and wars of its neighbors raised that monarchy to be fearful to everyone. But because the long-lasting power of the Turks dazzles the eyes of many political thinkers, I intend to consider the matter more deeply.

In the year 1300 Ottoman struck down in various battles the petty rulers of the Turks, who were weakened by discord, and from the spoils of many he himself became a great emperor. He presided over the sovereignty for twenty-seven years, a man of great counsel and, when sudden circumstances occurred, of rash but nevertheless fortunate audacity.

Ottoman's son Orchan began his sovereignty with the parricide of two elder brothers. He conducted it somewhat better than he began it. He added a great part of the Empire of Constantinople to his own kingdom, assisted not by his own virtue but by the long dissensions and civil wars of the two Andronici, grandfather and grandson, and then of Cantacuzenus and Palaeologus. For while they contended in crime, faithlessness, and mutual slaughter, he readily occupied regions deprived of aid. Drawn into assisting the parties, as is customary for magnates, he converted the calamities of his neighbors into an opportunity for growth.

Amurath succeeded Orchan. In ambition, endurance of labors, cunning, military discipline, strength, equity, affability, moderation, and blandishments he was superior to all the leaders of the Turks. Access to him was easy; his countenance was mild; in distributing honors and addressing men he displayed the greatest humanity. Therefore at that time the face of the sovereignty was different, and under the growing monarchy there was, if not unimpaired liberty, nevertheless great security. Yet he did not break the Empire of Constantinople by his own martial power. He was summoned by Palaeologus, whom the Greek leading men, assisted by the Bulgarians, were oppressing, and he defeated them. Then again one of his soldiers, carried into Europe by the avarice of a Christian shipmaster, gained an easy victory over the Greeks.

Amurath's son Baiazet, the killer of his brother Solyman, was more ferocious. He stripped Sigismund, king of Hungary, of his camp, but in that battle the fault was rather with our men than courageously conducted by the Turks. For while the French, contrary to the wishes of their leaders, rushed forward without counsel, they were surrounded by cavalry and utterly destroyed. In 1402, he was defeated by Tamerlane and enclosed in a cage; at that time the Turkish Empire was affected by a great disaster. For besides the 140,000 who fell in the battle line, one hundred and twenty thousand were crushed by cavalry.

Calepinus, son of Baiazet, restored the collapsed affairs. After gathering the veterans and being assisted by Greek princes, he then established them by a successful battle against Sigismund of Hungary. For the cavalry of the Christians, borne against the enemy in a rash attack, was driven into flight before aid could be carried to it by the infantry, and it exposed the disordered infantry line to be destroyed by hostile arrows.

Moses killed Orchan, the son of Calepinus, after surrounding him with ambushes; Machomet killed Moses. Machomet was the first to render harsher and more atrocious the kingdom which until that point had been in some fashion political. For by force, fraud, and arms he oppressed and stripped of their dominions the petty kings and princes of the Turks who were suspect to him for any reason whatever. That destruction extended so widely that a little afterward there were no princes, but mere slaves. He died in the year 1419. From this one may gather that until that time the Turkish monarchy had been tempered by the power of the best men.

Another Amurath followed, whom John Hunyadi defeated in five battles and whom Scanderbeg, after driving him away from the siege of Croia, compelled to die. He inflicted disasters upon the Greeks, but their sloth was so great that, when about to fight, they selected as commander no one from their own nation but Mustapha, Amurath's paternal uncle; and when he had been defeated, they placed in command of the army another Mustapha, Amurath's thirteen-year-old brother. What wonder is it, therefore, if Amurath increased in power when the other Christians were inactive, certain ones even betraying them, and the Greeks entrusted the fortune of their sovereignty to an exiled boy?

This sovereignty degenerated into a perfect tyranny under Machomet II, who occupied Constantinople in 1453--not by the courage of his own Turks, but by the faithless labor and avarice of the Illyrians, Wallachians, Dardanians, Serbians, and Bulgarians. For these nations had come to him in the hope of military plunder. Savage toward his own people, a despiser of every right, oath, and divine power, he acted as a most absolute tyrant after the rival king at Constantinople had been removed. That beast died in 1481.

Then it became evident with how little counsel that kingdom had been established. For the purple-clad pashas and Janissaries disagreed concerning the successor, so that they came to battles and slaughters. The Janissaries, with men of that family striving in his favor, declared Baiazeth emperor. Others chose Corchutus, the son of Baiazeth, so that, with a boy as king, they themselves might be lords of affairs. But the youth yielded to his father, and the soldiers were placated by a largess. His brother Gemes brought no less a war against him and, defeated in three battles, fled to the Christians. Baiazeth inflicted many disasters upon the Venetians, but soon, after being repressed, was compelled to make peace. From the Persians, however, he suffered greater disasters, so that little was lacking before he lost northern Asia in a single expedition.

[Printed page 46]

Meanwhile, his three sons, Selymus, Acomathes, and Corchutus, contended for sovereignty. Selymus obtained it with the assistance of the Janissaries and killed his father with poison. He killed not only his brothers but the sons of his brothers. He crushed the Persians, but with one hundred thousand of his own men lost.

Solimannus followed Selymus, and Selymus III followed Solimannus; they surpassed their ancestors in savagery and rapacity.

§ 8. After examining these things well, we shall discover that this sovereignty had endured for one hundred and sixty years from the time when it began to be most absolute and plainly tyrannical. Yet it was most unhappy. First, within the Ottoman stock itself, from which one man is destined for the kingdom either by the blandishments of some concubine or by a military disturbance, the entire remaining house is compelled by its death to furnish security to the man who reigns. A crowd of brothers and nephews is slaughtered so that one man may command without fear. Yet that has never occurred. For the sons and descendants of Baiazet were worn down by civil and foreign wars.

Evils are therefore perpetual in this kingdom. First, since there are many sons, as is natural amid the great license of many marriages, all nevertheless conceive a hope of sovereignty, either from the favor of their father or that of the Praetorian soldiers. Next, the fear of death joined to it sharpens that hope, since nothing intermediate is left between throne and tomb, between diadem and noose. What, therefore, should men about to die fear? Extreme fear produces confidence and the pursuit of an honorable and glorious death.

Third, that fear and hope render sons suspect and hostile to their father. For when they have learned by the slightest sign that one is preferred to the others, they now judge themselves condemned to death by their father. I add that they reduce the entire imperial house to one head; if anything human should happen to him, either no heir or a boy will then exist.

Innumerable calamities for the subjects arise from this. Agriculture is altogether abandoned. They plunder the regions so thoroughly that scarcely the necessities of life are left to them. No farmer thinks about private property, for even noble and very fertile fields lie uncultivated far and wide, and through the injury of those who reign all things tend

toward devastation. Arms are taken from everyone; only a few men, as if they were robbers, are permitted everything. From this it is evident that this kingdom is most weak and has stood through the discord of its neighbors--if to be stained with so many calamities and slaughters is to have stood. I therefore conclude that that absolute and despotic monarchy is destructive, brief, full of fear and blood, and exposed to everyone who attacks it.

§ 9. It must therefore be established, second, that a tempered monarchy is to be preferred, one in which the authority of the best men, or of the senate, possesses force and in which the cities and other orders possess some power. Yet in it this must be guarded against: that the king should not command on sufferance; rather, when he has judged justly and according to the laws, his power should be supreme. For if the vigor of the supreme power withers, it is necessary that the property of the subjects be plundered and carried away, since without fear of the laws the injuries of the more powerful continually increase.

The first reason is that we see that most wise men judged thus: Plato in the *Statesman*; Aristotle in book 3 of the *Politics*, chapter 5, and book 8, chapter 10; Herodotus, book 3. Indeed, that Homeric saying has been approved by everyone:

Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἰς κοίρανος ἔστω.

The dominion of many is not good; let there be one lord.

Philo, in the book *On the Confusion of Tongues*; Plutarch, in the *Banquet of the Seven Wise Men* and likewise *On Monarchy, Oligarchy, and Democracy*; Demosthenes, *Against Androtion* and *Against Timocrates*; Maecenas in the presence of Augustus; Philostratus in the presence of Vespasian; Isocrates, in the *Nicocles*; Stobaeus, discourse 45. The holy Fathers possessed the same opinion: Justin, *Exhortation to the Greeks*; Cyprian, *On the Vanity of Idols*; Athanasius, *Oration Against the Idols*; Jerome, the letter to the monk Rusticus; Saint Thomas, book 4 of *Against the Gentiles*.

Indeed, you will not readily find a dissenter even among those who, educated in a free commonwealth, held honors and magistracies. Cicero certainly admits that at one time the government of one man pleased the city and that the royal kind of constitution was rejected not because of the kingdom but because of the vices of the king. Book 3 of *On the Laws*.

§ 10. Not only is this the opinion and consensus of the wise, but it is also the practice of the whole world. For all ancient nations first obeyed kings. Cicero, book 3 of *On the Laws*. Justin, book 1: "In the beginning of affairs and nations sovereignty was in the hands of kings." Seneca judges the royal kind of constitution to be according to nature in book 1 of *On Clemency*: "For nature devised a king. This may be recognized from other animals and from bees, whose king possesses the most spacious chamber in the middle and safest place. Moreover, he is free from labor, the exactor of the works of others; and when the king is lost, the entire swarm falls apart."

Antiquity and sacred and profane history have confirmed the same thing for us by their authority. For after, while Noah and his sons were still living, the construction of the insane tower introduced the confusion of tongues, individual families began to possess kings. Indeed, even Nimrod, son of Cush and grandson of Ham, born near the very ark which had enclosed the whole human race within narrow spaces, planned a kingdom against his neighbors. For "he began to be powerful upon the earth and a mighty hunter before the Lord."

Certainly, from the flood to Peleg there are 101 years. But he received his name from the fact that in his days the earth was divided, Genesis 10:25. From Peleg to Abraham there are 191 years. But at that time all things were already full of kings and cities; indeed, alliances and servitudes of kings were already known. For the kings of Canaan served Chedorlaomer, king of the Elamites, for twelve years, and the king of Shinar, or Babylon, was allied with him.

The Elamites are Persians. Thus it is marvelous that, while Noah and indeed Shem, Japheth, and Ham were surviving, and while even Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, and Peleg, who had been educated under one grandfather and beneath one roof,

were looking on, their descendants waged such great wars that they came all the way from Persia with a hostile army, struck the Rephaim, Karnaim, Zuzim, Emim, and Horites, and rushed as far as the wilderness of Paran.

Therefore, when they no longer lived under a true father of the household, they nevertheless did not wish to exist without a single magistrate, but placed over themselves men in whose integrity, prudence, and courage they trusted. Nor did that custom afterward cease to exist. Thus in 1 Kings 8 the Israelites request a king: "Establish a king for us, that he may judge us, just as all nations possess." The liberty of commonwealths existed in Greece and in a few Italian and Punic cities. For few desire liberty; the greater part desire just lords.

§ 11. The second reason by which monarchy is commended to us is longevity. The kingdom of the Assyrians persevered for 1,240 years; that of the Medes, 260; that of the Persians, 233 and, after the power of the Greeks had been abolished, 480; Sparta, 500; and the kingdoms of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Egyptians for very many years. Of all cities which possessed aristocracy or polity, the government was exceedingly brief, followed by tyranny or destruction.

[Printed page 47]

Tyrants infamous for cruelty, avarice, and outrage existed in Greece and Italy because they judged that the brief power of the people must be worn down by burdensome servitude.

The Sicilian cities were free, but at intervals of time they were given as plunder to tyrants. How often did Athens, Corinth, and the other cities of the Greeks suffer tyrants? During the four hundred years between the kings and the Caesars in which Rome professed that it possessed liberty, did it not live as if in a perpetual contest and disturbance? Hence came secessions; hence the broken fasces of the consuls and, through hatred of a commander, victory furnished to the enemy; hence tribunician power, the sharing of marriages and honors, military tribunes, decemvirs for writing the laws, dictators, and masters of the horse. What year passed without disturbance, except when a common fear from an enemy threatened the parties? The inhabitants of the Roman city therefore collided with one another until the commonwealth arrived at one man.

The Republic of Venice alone, although it belongs to the best men, now numbers one thousand years, which is the sole example of a long-lasting aristocracy. But because it possesses a perpetual duke whom they call great, its government customarily seems to me as monarchical as aristocratic.

For although the authority of deciding and commanding is in the hands of the senate or Great Council, the duke is nevertheless the head of the senate and of the whole commonwealth. First, that magistracy or principate is perpetual, a thing which lovers of aristocracy are certainly accustomed greatly to dread. Therefore Antony, in order to conciliate the affections of human beings, abolished by an enacted law the name and power of dictator in perpetuity, because Julius Caesar had accepted a perpetual dictatorship.

Next, it belongs to the Venetian duke to summon the senate and consult it. Although he himself determines nothing except from a decree of the senate, this is the same as if at Rome he held a perpetual consulship. That kind of commonwealth certainly draws very much from the royal kind of government. Third, since at Venice there are easily sixty-nine councils, tribunals, or orders of judges, the duke can attend and preside over all of them; no one is ignorant of how important this is within a commonwealth. Fourth, royal honor is conferred upon him, whether you consider his public retinue or the observance of others toward him.

Finally, the fear of the best men shows how great the duke's power is. For they are accustomed to raise to that summit a man advanced in age, moderate, loving the commonwealth, and of a civil disposition, and to strive with the greatest care lest he be able to become more powerful either by conciliating popular favor to himself or by courting the friendships of princes. For if some Sulla, Marius, or Julius obtained the authority with which the duke of Venice is endowed, he would subject the whole commonwealth to himself without a difficult outcome. In that matter he would be assisted not a little by the very form of the decrees, all of which are written out and published in the duke's name.

He who weighs these things will readily understand that the longevity of the aristocracy comes from its conjunction with monarchy. For perpetuity of dignity; the right to summon and consult the senate; the right to approach all councils and assemblies of judges with dignity and prerogative; princely honor and splendor; and the power of publishing decrees in his own name are so proper to monarchy that the Romans abominated each as though royal.

What else did Pompey, although chief of the senate, desire than to belong to one who reigns? What did Caesar desire except that account should be taken of him while absent? How great were the wars which arose between father-in-law and son-in-law, because

Caesar could not endure a superior,
nor Pompey an equal?

Why was Caesar sacrificed with so many wounds before the statue of Pompey? Because he retained a perpetual dictatorship. But the great duke of Venice must deservedly be regarded as a perpetual consul or dictator, in whose name all things are conducted and to whom ambassadors direct their speech in the council. Although his power is not altogether dictatorial, his honor is nevertheless royal.

Accordingly, in this respect I prefer the Republic of Venice to the Roman commonwealth. For it is free from innumerable dangers which arose from the rivalries of ambitious men; nor in it

do the yearly contests return for sale upon the Field.

§ 12. The third reason why I prefer monarchy is that in it concord and the conjunction of minds can be preserved most fully and readily. No commonwealth can subsist without concord; scarcely any has perished without discord. Unity is readily preserved under one man. Accordingly, God also willed in his Church to remove occasions of dissension and schism by establishing one governor and head. This was also the mind and opinion of political writers. Tacitus, *Annals* 1: "There was no other remedy for a discordant fatherland than that it should be ruled by one man."

Nature itself dictates the reason to us. For in government by the best, power is scattered among several men. Since it is tossed by diverse opinions and affections, it tears the commonwealth apart. Where one man commands, the minds of individuals accommodate themselves to his commands and cannot divide the city, being subjected to one greater power.

If we consider the dissensions of the best men in the Roman city, we shall find them both perpetual and most destructive. At Athens, where the popular kind of constitution prevailed, the discord and mutual hatred of the leading men were so great that no one among the best men escaped exile or a fine. For contests among powerful men always exist unless some greater power restrains and binds the strength and desire of each. Two consular colleagues were rarely harmonious; ten tribunes, most rarely. The Italian cities in the times of Frederick and afterward were almost exhausted by continual contests among magistrates, while they imposed and suffered exiles in turn. At Florence neighbors fought against neighbors from towers; at Milan nobles and common people raged mutually against one another; the people of Padua, Verona, and elsewhere, through hatred and disgust for their own citizens, preferred foreign judges.

§ 13. The fourth reason: not only can concord be guarded more readily, but justice also, if one body of government is ruled by one soul. For when the best men command, they have regard for one another, forgive themselves, and indulge one another so that they themselves may enjoy equal impunity. Meanwhile,

Whatever madness kings commit, the Greeks are punished.

Kings possess greater care and more effective authority for preserving justice, and less cause for violating it. For either the prince himself pronounces the law, and thus does not readily depart from integrity and rectitude, or he establishes judges whom the obligation to render an account readily holds in their duty. They can neither oppress an accused man

nor gratify relatives or powerful men, since appeal to the prince and examination of the sentence pronounced not only commend observance of the laws but also announce immediate punishment to a transgressor.

For princes most readily punish wicked judges,

[Printed page 48]

although they themselves may not be lovers of justice. The reason for this is that, to their greatest glory, they punish them as public robbers; next, they also conciliate to themselves the love of their subjects as a protection, since they themselves are enemies of those whom everyone hates; finally, it is an ancient practice to enrich the treasury by the deaths and confiscations of wealthy magistrates. Since judges established by kings therefore are not ignorant that they themselves must at some time undergo judgment, they take great care lest by their own condemnation they be compelled to render the prince's reputation celebrated and increase the fisc.

The despotic government of the Ottomans is harsh, but nevertheless, amid so crude a tyranny, the prefects of provinces and cities vehemently dread every appearance of injustice. Many are slaughtered in individual years for the smallest offenses after their goods have been confiscated. That savagery renders the cruelty of the tyrant more tolerable to the peoples, since they understand that the instruments of tyranny are punished.

No one will estimate more readily the great indignity and violence with which justice and laws are harassed among the best men than one who weighs the deeds of the Romans, who were regarded as the most just of nations. Let us hear from a Roman consul what justice suffered among those lords of the earth. He says in the fifth oration *Against Verres*: "An opinion destructive to the commonwealth and dangerous to you has now become inveterate. It has grown widespread in the speech of everyone, not only at Rome but also among foreign nations: with the courts as they now exist, no wealthy human being, however guilty, can be condemned."

Nor did Verres boast without cause: "Those men ought to fear who stole enough only for themselves; I have plundered enough that it can suffice for many. Nothing is so sacred that it cannot be violated, nothing so fortified that it cannot be taken by money."

Nor did Cicero hesitate to profess this publicly before the Quirites when he spoke in favor of the Manilian law: "It is difficult to say, Quirites, in how great a hatred we exist among foreign nations because of the injuries and lusts of those whom in these years we have sent to them with command. For what sanctuary in those lands do you judge to have been sacred to our magistrates? What city holy? What house sufficiently closed and fortified? Rich and abundant cities are now sought against which a cause of war may be brought because of the desire to plunder." And: "Do you judge that you send an army for allies against enemies, or, under the pretense of enemies, against allies and friends? What city exists in Asia which can contain the minds and spirits not merely of a commander or legate, but of one military tribune?"

The same man exclaims: "There is no severity in the courts, no religious scruple; finally, the courts are now judged not to exist at all." Nothing, however, demonstrates the corruption of the courts more than what Cicero dared to recall at Rome before an assembly. He judged that foreign nations would send ambassadors to the Roman people requesting that the law and court concerning extorted money be abolished. For if there were no courts, they thought that each man would take only as much as he judged sufficient for himself and his children. Now, because courts of this kind existed, each man took as much as would be sufficient for himself, his patrons, advocates, praetors, and judges. This certainly was infinite: it was possible to satisfy the desire of the most avaricious human being, but not that of a most harmful victory. "O courts worthy of commemoration, and illustrious reputation of our order, when the allies of the Roman people do not wish courts concerning extorted money to exist, although they were established by our ancestors for the sake of the allies!" Thus a Roman consul spoke concerning his own commonwealth.

The aristocratic form of the commonwealth was the cause of so great a wickedness and shamefulness. For since the best men were joined to one another by kinship or affinity, were entangled in the same faults or desired indulgence for

themselves from others, lived avariciously, needily, and prodigally, and finally conciliated the favor of powerful men to themselves through shameful deeds and flatteries, they destroyed the people, provinces, commonwealth, and at last themselves.

For the world, which could satisfy the desire of even any single most avaricious man, did not suffice for so many thousands, especially when new robbers were sent every year. Having squandered their patrimonies, they judged that by the vote of the people they had obtained the right to harass and despoil the provinces. Justice is therefore difficult under the rule of the best men and of the people; it is preserved more readily even under an inequitable king. One man also restrains desire more readily, either by abundance or disgust, than many.

§ 14. The sixth reason. Although the complaint concerning the rarity of good princes is ancient, and is circulated either through the malice of the common crowd, which willingly disparages the magistrate, or because it is true--namely, that all good princes could be inscribed upon one ring--I nevertheless find more commonwealths administered rightly by kings and monarchs than by the best men or the people. For one man tenacious of what is right and honorable is found more readily than many.

Cicero censures Cato's imprudence because he expressed his opinion amid the dregs of Romulus as though he were in Plato's commonwealth. Who, therefore, was a good man in so vast a senate house, in so numerous an army of conscript fathers? Shall I indeed number Cato himself among the good? I do so with the agreement of Tullius, who in his letters complains that Cato had been malicious toward him. But he is not a good senator who is malicious toward the father of the fatherland.

Since there is, therefore, a great rarity of good, constant, and prudent men, it is necessary that, where many are employed in magistracies, those commonwealths should generally be administered by wicked, fickle, and foolish men. This is all the more so because the wicked open a path for themselves through canvassing, largess, fraud, audacity, and violence; the good rely upon virtue alone, which nevertheless is frequently oppressed by slanders and is often hateful. But the multitude of distinguished men which we see today in certain commonwealths is the work of the Christian faith, not of political discipline.

§ 15. The seventh reason is drawn from the nature of the people, who are accustomed to fear a king but envy the best men. For a king, as though a god, seems to have been placed above envy; the best men seem to be citizens and, in their own manner, equals. But spite blazes among "ὁμοίους" and equals. Hence a king is accustomed to be better disposed toward the people than the best men; and, conversely, histories relate the marvelous affections of peoples toward their kings. With how great a joy do they receive them? With what weeping do they accompany them when dead? Evidently they trust the kings but regard the best men with suspicion.

For it belongs to the king to protect the people, and he is generally formidable only to the powerful. "Βούλεται δέ," says Aristotle, "ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶναι φύλαξ, ὅπως οἱ μὲν κεκτημένοι τὰς οὐσίας μὴδὲν ἄδικον πάσχωσιν, ὁ δὲ δῆμος μὴ ὑβρίζηται μὴδέν." The office of a king is to take care that the wealthy suffer no injury and that the people are subjected to outrage in no matter." Princes generally do this; but in another kind of commonwealth the rich aspire to immeasurable resources through the harassment and outrages of those of small means. Since, however, that city in which ruler and subjects are joined by mutual charity and concord is firmer and better than one in which subjects hate the magistrates, there can be no doubt that monarchy ought to be preferred to the other forms of commonwealth.

§ 16. The eighth reason. Nothing is more shameful or destructive in a commonwealth than contempt for magistrates. It occurs most rarely in a kingdom and always in popular government and the government of magnates. If a prince is fickle, foolish, poor, fearful, or lustful, he is accustomed to be despised. For these vices are accustomed to excite the biting sayings and disdain of peoples more than hatred. Yet, because the audacity of wicked and seditious men is strengthened by these things, that prince is readily overthrown. For the man commands on sufferance whom good men pity and wicked men despise.

But although all these things are present in a prince or monarchy, they are nevertheless not readily recognized or assessed. He can perform many things by himself and many through his servants spiritedly, prudently, magnificently, and chastely, which conciliate a reputation for honor and the stability of the kingdom.

Alexander the Great, a most shameful man, attained great praise by guarding the wife and daughters of Darius chastely. Claudius, fickle, foolish, and timid, was protected for a long time by the magnitude of the sovereignty; for men revere so great a power even in the most contemptible little man. Thus at the beginning of his reign he was certainly most pleasing. But if those disgraces are detected among the best men, they are published without fear by rivals, received most greedily by peoples, and, since there is nothing by which authority may be retained, they are held in the greatest contempt among everyone. This occurs even more in a democracy, when vices born amid domestic filth seize the helm of the commonwealth and display mimes and buffoons rather than rulers to the peoples.

[Printed page 49]

§ 17. The ninth reason. Monarchy possesses united forces; other kinds of commonwealth possess dispersed forces. Themistocles envies Aristides and is tormented by his trophies. Pompey is burned by Caesar's glory and would destroy his father-in-law even with the loss of the Gauls. Cato barks at Scipio, and Hanno at Hannibal; they prefer to lack victory rather than to see a fellow citizen glorious through victory.

Hence a commonwealth of the best men or of the people is never “αὐτάρκης” and sufficient to itself. Rather, when it is necessary to exercise power, when it is assailed by a disturbance or war, they designate a monarch. In war they place one commander in charge; in danger a consul names a dictator. Let us therefore conclude this part and establish with ourselves: there ought to be one God in the world, one sun, and one leader in one commonwealth. But now let us hear those who think otherwise.

CHAPTER XXII

That the Arguments for Government by the Best Men and by the People Are Weak

§ 1. The importunate conduct and vices of tyrants bring it about that learned men and political writers advance many things against the governments of kings and princes, as if I were defending the Mezentii, Phalarides, Neros, Ucilini, and similar disgraces to human nature, the memory of whom ought not even to cling to the minds of princes. Accordingly, I prefer a benign, moderate, prudent, and frugal prince to the dominion of the nobles or the common people.

I condemn the tyrant; I reject the absolute governments of the Scythians, Persians, and Turks, and “τὰς αὐτοβασιλείας,” or autocratic monarchies. I proclaim a monarchy tempered by laws, constrained by customs, supported by the authority of the best men, and answerable to the just wishes of a good people. I approve fidelity bound by a reciprocal oath. To state it in one word: I approve that commonwealth in which the prince can do the greatest possible good and the least possible evil; in which the laws possess more power than might; in which a private person can contend with the king under equal right; and in which the supreme power does not judge it unworthy of its majesty to lose a case and be cast out of a private possession.

This is a great and plainly royal dignity of the Franks: when a lawsuit arises concerning possessions, they respond to their subjects under equal right. I judge that king who first enacted so salutary a law to have been above kingship. If we weigh these things rightly, we shall find that most arguments against monarchy have already fallen.

But now let the defenders, as they wish to appear, of the best men and the common people plead their cause.

§ 2. First, divine authority is objected against us, for God is most gravely angered at the Jews when they request a king. God says in 1 Kings 8:7: “Hear the voice of the people in all things which they speak to you. For they have not rejected you, but me, lest I reign over them. According to all their works which they have done from the day on which I led them out of Egypt even to this day, just as they abandoned me and served foreign gods, so they do also to you. Now, therefore, hear their voice.”

And chapter 12:16: “But even now stand and see this great thing which the Lord will do in your sight. Is it not the wheat harvest today? I shall invoke the Lord, and he shall give voices and rains; and you shall know and see that you have done a great evil in the sight of the Lord by requesting a king over yourselves.” The people too, stunned by the tempest and thunder, recognized its transgression. “Pray,” it says, “for your servants to the Lord your God that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil that we requested a king for ourselves.” It is therefore evil to request a king, and kingship is not from God except when he is angry and punishing.

The reason which is added is certainly grave: “They have rejected me, lest I reign over them.” Therefore, when a mortal human being is exalted into a kingdom, there is a withdrawal from the kingdom of God, and the immortal king is cast down from his throne.

§ 3. The answer in this case is not difficult. For the faculty of establishing a king is conceded by a divine oracle in Deuteronomy 17:15; and in Genesis 17:6 it is promised to Abraham that kings will be born from him. But there would be no favor in the promise if every kingdom were unjust and kings detestable after the likeness of robbers. Finally, God did not command the Israelites to return to aristocracy or democracy, but commanded that a kingdom should exist, and he gave many kings of distinguished virtue and knowledge of ruling.

In what, therefore, did they sin by requesting a king? First, they were ungrateful to Samuel, their prophet and leader. Although he had deserved excellently of them and governed the commonwealth excellently, they compelled him to abdicate his power and subjected him to a king. Next, they departed from the will and government of God, by whose

command and authority Samuel and the other judges had been given. Their power was less than royal power. For although this government was monarchical, the liberty of the best men and people was nevertheless very great, so much so that each did what seemed right to himself. They therefore importunately desired to change the form of commonwealth established by God.

Third, there was no sufficient cause for changing the commonwealth. For although Samuel's sons, degenerate from their father, did not walk in his ways but turned aside after avarice, accepted gifts, and perverted judgment, they could nevertheless have been corrected by Samuel and the commonwealth, cast down from their dignity, and judges of proven integrity and holiness established. It was not necessary to introduce a new form of commonwealth for that reason--as if kings could not also pervert judgment.

Fourth, they distrusted God and were ungrateful for his benefits, for through a vain fear of the Ammonites they requested a king. Samuel reproaches them for this in 1 Kings, chapter 12: "Now, therefore, stand, that I may contend with you in judgment before the Lord concerning all the mercies of the Lord

[Printed page 50]

which he performed with you and with your fathers: how Jacob entered Egypt and your fathers cried to the Lord, and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron and led your fathers out of Egypt and placed them in this place. They forgot the Lord their God, and he handed them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines and the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. But afterward they cried to the Lord and said: 'We have sinned, because we abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and Astaroth; now, therefore, rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and we shall serve you.' And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, Bedan, Samson, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel, and rescued you from the hand of your enemies round about, and you dwelt confidently.

"But, seeing that Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, had come against you, you said to me: 'By no means; rather, a king shall command us,' although the Lord your God was reigning among you. Now, therefore, your king whom you selected and requested is present; behold, the Lord has given you a king. If you fear the Lord and serve him and hear his voice and do not provoke the mouth of the Lord, both you and the king who commands you shall be followers of the Lord your God. But if you do not hear the voice of the Lord but provoke his words, the hand of the Lord shall be upon you and upon your fathers."

Finally, they requested a king such as all the surrounding nations possessed, evidently so that they might feed their eyes upon that external splendor and arrive at distinguished power and license. For the magnates contemplated honors and courtly dignities for themselves, and the people resources and luxury. Thus everyone, disgusted with present things and gaping after future ones, requested a king, as if God could no longer raise up any Gideon or Samson. In this matter they transgressed gravely by rejecting God, their supreme commander, who had been accustomed to establish judges and leaders of war, and by despising his most special and benevolent providence, by which he himself governed his people and directed them with a gentle government without tributes and exactions.

§ 4. Second, they object: Prudence is greater among many; among princes there is the greatest scarcity of truth. It is therefore better that the safety and fortunes of peoples be entrusted to the counsels of many than to the judgment of one man, however prudent.

I answer that this indeed is to be desired: that one man should command in the place of many; that kings should possess force in prudence and counsel and, above all, be governed by the divine Spirit itself, like David and Solomon. But wisdom does not always accompany the scepter, and the pride of the purple frequently excludes the Holy Spirit. Hence come rash counsels and frequently precipitate conduct of affairs without counsels--not through the fault of kingship, but of kings.

Nevertheless, I do not see why kings cannot possess counselors proven in prudence and experience; and it is evident that a great part of the best men is often untrained. Certainly now in Germany, Italy, and the other kingdoms of Europe

we see an extraordinary abundance of wise and brave men. Therefore, although either ability, learning, or prudence may partly fail the prince, he will nevertheless decree many salutary things according to the opinion of his council; and because what has been decreed depends upon one man, it can be effected swiftly. In the deliberations of the best men, although there is agreement, nevertheless, because of rivalry, favor, and other inconveniences, they arrive at execution slowly and not without altercations. Whatever superiority a multitude of votes might therefore possess in counsels, it loses through delay and impediments in conducting affairs.

§ 5. Third, they object: Several persons are corrupted with greater difficulty and judge more incorruptly; one man is readily enticed into fraud.

I answer that I taught the contrary in the preceding chapter: judgments in an aristocracy and polity were more corrupt than in a kingdom, as was evident from the example of the Romans. In a popular commonwealth the great city of Athens, “μεγαλόπολις Ἀθῆναι,” inventress and nurse of all arts, supplies us with a proof. It seems similar to a monster that in the same city in which the cultivation of letters and arts and philosophy fixed its highest summit, judgments were also most corrupt, most inequitable, and truly predatory.

I do not accuse the Areopagus, although even its judgments lost their authority; nevertheless, its judgment owes its integrity not to fidelity but to night and darkness, and indeed to ignorance of the accused. I speak of the judgments of the people, than which nothing was more shameful, destructive, or unjust. They afflicted good and just men, even men unknown to them, by ostracism and harassed them with exiles. In this matter most cultivated Attica surpassed every barbarism.

I brought forward above the reasons why judgments of the best men and of the people are readily corrupted. Now I shall speak of corruption by gifts, which much more readily penetrates the homes of avaricious and needy judges than those of kings, whose immense resources bring it about that the sordid gifts of private persons are despised. For if a prince either possesses something of nobility in his spirit or displays it in his conduct, no one will readily show that he despises him so much that he boasts that he can purchase him for himself at a price and draw him into the shameful obedience of betraying justice.

Since, therefore, small and moderate gifts possess no weight amid the most ample fortune of kings, and since access to them is difficult and dangerous, more sincere judgments can be expected from them. But even a few coins, bullocks, little hares, little cheeses, and fruits of the strawberry tree, when carried into the homes of citizens, crush Themis--what wickedness!--in her own sanctuary, that is, in the tribunals. I would bring forward proof from Cicero concerning the corrupted and violated Clodian trial if modesty did not restrain me.

But I appeal to commonwealths. Who today accuses princes or kings as though they were hunters after gifts? This complaint concerns those who pronounce law upon the lower benches. It is less when princes are severe and strict defenders of justice and never pardon a corrupt judge. It is greater when princes are negligent and slow. It is greatest when no higher magistrate makes inquiry, or if that censorship is given to relatives, connections by marriage, and persons under obligation, and directed against those who have at some time conducted a prevaricating censorship or are feared as though they will conduct one. These things generally occur in government by the best men. Hence so many laws in cities struggle with so many frauds: that two brothers, father and son, or father-in-law and son-in-law should not sit in the same court.

§ 6. The fourth objection: No one dares to admonish a prince who errs, much less censure or teach him. But if anyone dares things that are true and strong, readily overcome by the multitude of flatterers, he is compelled to depart to the other side or withdraw from the court. Princes judge being admonished to be the same as being conquered; they judge their majesty injured unless someone praises even the vices of kings.

But in another form of commonwealth, since an adversary threatens each of the best men from the opposite side, all transgressions are not only noted but even drawn into judgment. In every aristocracy there are parties, and because

many are equal, all are watched by all and held in their duty. Aristides fears Themistocles, Demosthenes Aeschines, Pompey Caesar, each of them Crassus, Cicero Clodius, Scipio Cato; all fear many,

[Printed page 51]

and no one is free of danger. But that mutual fear restrains avarice, checks lusts, and represses anger.

I answer that a prince in whose presence truths are kept silent is most wretched, and more wretched is he whose evils are also praised. Nevertheless, kingship is not inferior to aristocracy on account of this. Or if the “αὐθάδεια” and pride of princes, ignorant of admonitions, often reject counsels, other goods by which this evil is compensated are nevertheless not lacking, as was explained some time ago.

But the conduct of a few is maliciously and enviously transferred to everyone. We know many kings who not only did not turn away timely admonishers, but attended their sincere liberty with beneficence and adorned them with dignities. Many also bore rumors, jests, and the sharp speech of the common people with a gentle and civil spirit, judging it sufficient if they had obtained this: that no one could do them harm.

In this matter the moderation of Augustus Caesar must certainly be commended greatly. He was content to bar from his house a historian by whom he had been gravely injured. But since I am treating of virtues, I shall treat this praise of civility there.

For now this is certain: princes have many admonishers. For they possess without offense the books of ancient and living authors, although they sometimes read their own errors in them; they hear sacred sermons; they themselves examine their conscience and demand an account from themselves. Finally, no prince is so unhappy that he does not possess many who counsel him freely and whom flattery and unbecoming servitude offend. This is especially true if they are Christians, among whom there cannot be lacking men like Hilary, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Gregory, whose liberty can stand against the sins of those who reign.

Only let public, bitter admonition resembling reproach and mockery be removed from the midst, both because it is dangerous to admonishers and because it rouses exasperated powers to excuse and defend their error, lest princes appear to have been conquered, and not to amendment, which ought also to be the end in censuring private persons. For importunate liberty is foolish rashness. It does not correct the man who errs, since it always needs pardon itself and rarely obtains it.

He cannot be a teacher and corrector of a prince with whom matters are conducted excellently if he escapes punishment and if, by admonishing another, he does not overthrow himself. The people praises things spoken freely and delights in abuse of princes; but the same people does not marvel at the destruction of those who act thus--indeed, afterward it pours itself out in praises of the prince who rages. It judges that the man who spoke in such a way that the prince was deservedly angered against him deservedly perished.

Who approved Galba's rashness when in the forum he told Julius the dictator that he was being summoned concerning the money for which he had become surety to Pompey the Great, his son-in-law? For thus he reproached Caesar with his slain son-in-law and his goods subjected to the auction spear. Caesar did not rage then, but Rome nevertheless marveled that this was not Galba's final act of audacity. For he could have conducted the matter privately or through a written petition.

The common crowd is astounded by the mad harshness of Theodorus of Cyrene. For when he answered Lysimachus, who was threatening death, “A magnificent thing has fallen to you, because you have attained the power of a cantharid beetle,” prudent men disapprove. For what purpose was served by driving a tyrant voluntarily cruel into madness through contumacy and giving him an occasion to seem to rage justly? And certainly, when raised upon a cross, he learned the difference between rotting on the ground and rotting aloft.

Through this perversity of admonishing, many persons make princes worse. Since they seek the praise of constancy and liberty rather than the good of the commonwealth or the amendment of princes, they must be kept far from princes. For they exasperate them and imbue them with the most perverse and destructive opinion that they are not loved by their subject peoples; conversely, they themselves begin to hate those peoples. They are inflamed much more when they understand that the things said against them are received by the citizens pleasantly and with applause. But I shall give counsel concerning admonishing princes in its own place. For I prefer this to admonishing princes and, unless I am mistaken, it is safer.

§ 7. The fifth objection. Laws are the soul of the commonwealth. Where laws either do not exist or are harassed by the more powerful, the commonwealth is corrupt. But who can enclose a prince within the barriers of the laws?

I answer with the great emperor that it pertains to the majesty of one who commands that he should obey the laws. Therefore I have already excluded “*παμβασιλείαν*,” or universal monarchy, and the absolute dominion of one man over the rest. Yet that dominion is no more burdensome than the absolute government of the best men over the rest, for in the latter there are as many tyrants as heads. What good shall we judge those men likely to bring to the citizens who, when enrolled in the senate, swore, as Aristotle says, “*ὅτι τῷ δήμῳ κακόνους ἔσομαι*,” “that I shall be ill-disposed toward the common people”?

The Roman citizens certainly experienced this when they seceded to the Sacred Mount and when, by the counsel of Coriolanus, grain was denied them. What equity of laws existed at Rome when even the tribunes themselves brought forward many bills conjointly? Appius Claudius says that this was the same as if someone set poison together with food before a man whom hunger presses and ordered him either to abstain from that which gives life or to mingle what is deadly with what gives life. Gather everything praised in the Roman commonwealth and show that the senate, the best men, or even the decemvirs for writing the laws were ever able to be restrained by laws.

§ 8. The sixth objection. Liberty is equal for all, and everyone ought to enjoy it. But where more persons participate in liberty, there the commonwealth is more just. Thus the wisest founder of a commonwealth, Aristotle, book 2 of the *Politics*, chapter 2: “*διόπερ τὸ ἴσον τὸ ἀντιπεπονθὸς σφάζει τὰς πόλεις· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐλευθέροις καὶ ἴσοις ἀνάγκη τοῦτ’ εἶναι*. Therefore equality and reciprocal alternation preserve cities; for among free and equal persons it is necessary that this exist.” But nowhere is equality less than in monarchy, where all obey one.

I answer that Aristotle pronounces judgment for us. “*Δῆλον*,” he says, “*ὡς τοὺς αὐτοὺς αἰεὶ βέλτιον ἄρχειν*. It is manifest that it is better for the same persons always to command.” Nor is that injustice detected here, for equality agrees only with equals, and inequality with unequals; it is contrary to right to attribute equal things to unequals. Nor is there any commonwealth in which everyone can command.

Next, liberty is badly estimated when it is denied to exist under a prince. For some pursue an extreme license of liberty which is the beginning of extreme servitude; others do not judge themselves free unless they command; still others cannot bear even laws and a master. They are certainly deceived. Liberty is indeed that power of living as you wish, but it is nevertheless necessary that you wish justly and rightly. For just government and the restraint of written laws are not opposed to liberty.

There is no reason why we should call the Roman people free when quarreling with its patricians but call the Jews slaves under David and Solomon. Nor ought those who live under kings to be classified by the appellation of slaves because they are oppressed in a servile manner by wicked and unjust kings, since the common people never lived under an equal condition beneath the best men. We in

[Printed page 52]

Germany properly call certain cities free and their citizens free, although they are ruled by Caesar and call him their supreme head and lord. Therefore those who measure liberty by “*ἀναρχία*,” or anarchy, and the wandering license of nomads err just as much as those who measure it by impunity for crimes.

§ 9. The seventh objection. Princes remove leading and illustrious men from the midst because they fear them; they hate men prudent and upright in life as troublesome censors of a luxurious court. But among the best men and among the common people these men alone are raised to the summit. The supreme power of one therefore oppresses virtue; but where there is government by several, because honor and magistracy are given as a reward to virtue, probity, industry, and courage are sharpened.

The answer: Princes are not accustomed to persecute good men unless they are plainly tyrants; and in a commonwealth of several, fraud and audacity more often than virtue obtain the people's fasces. For who can excuse the ostracisms of the Athenians and the exiles of virtues ordered by the people? Since they had frequently lost liberty and experienced the most grievous servitude from the sudden setting of liberty, they therefore rose against everyone in whom virtue, industry, eloquence, or resources seemed to be eminent. They removed not vices but suspicions of vices and dangers.

Concerning the Romans we possess an abundant witness in T. Quinctius in Livy: "Discord among the orders is the poison of this city. The contests of the fathers and common people--while neither for us is there a limit to sovereignty nor for you a limit to liberty; while you are weary of patrician magistrates and we of plebeian ones--have raised their spirits. By the faith of the gods, what do you wish for yourselves? You desired tribunes of the common people; for the sake of concord we conceded them. You desired decemvirs; we permitted them to be created. You became weary of the decemvirs; we compelled them to depart from the magistracy. While your anger against those same men as private persons remained, we permitted the noblest and most honored men to die and be exiled. You wished to create tribunes of the common people again; you created them. Although we saw that it was inequitable to the fathers, we saw consuls of your parties created and even a patrician magistracy made a gift to the common people.

"Tribunician aid, appeal to the people, decrees of the common people imposed upon the fathers--under the title of equalizing the laws, we endured and endure our rights being oppressed. What end will there be to dissensions? When will it be permitted to possess one city, when this common fatherland? We, conquered, rest with a more equitable spirit than you as conquerors. Is it enough that we must fear you? Against us the Aventine is seized; against us the Sacred Mount is occupied. When the Esquiline was almost taken by the enemy, and the Volscian enemy was climbing the rampart, no one drove him off; against us you are men, against us you are armed.

"Come now: when you have besieged this senate house, rendered the senate hostile, and filled the prison with leading men, go out with those same fierce spirits beyond the Esquiline Gate; or, if you do not dare even this, look out from the walls upon your fields devastated by sword and fire, plunder driven away, and houses smoking after being burned everywhere. But, you say, the common interest is in a worse position through these things: the field is burned, the city besieged, the glory of war is in the hands of enemies. In what condition, then, are your private affairs? The report of his own losses from the fields will now be brought to each. What is there at home from which you may replenish them? Will the tribunes return and restore what you have lost? They will heap upon you as much voice and words as you wish, and accusations against the leading men, laws one upon another, and assemblies."

Indeed, monuments relate that Camillus was exiled; Tarquinius Collatinus cast out of the city solely through hatred of his name; Valerius regarded with suspicion because he was building a house upon the Velia, a more elevated place; the Scipios made to waste away in the country; and others, through the fault of an ungrateful fatherland, possessed the most wretched ends. Thus princes must be judged moderate if one pleases to consider the rivalry and malice of citizens ordering wicked things.

Those who compelled a city still retaining the spirit of its ancient liberty to serve unworthy persons under violent and savage domination increased hatred of the principate. Indeed, conspiracies, seditions, sarcasms, and slanders inflamed the harshness of masters. Now in Europe there is a different appearance. How great is the rivalry among the most powerful kings to join brave, noble, and prudent men to themselves? I judge that the king of the Spains alone possesses so many men outstanding in experience, ability, and wisdom that he could furnish us even one hundred Scipios. Count the commanders, masters of cavalry, and tribunes, and admire the supports of so great a monarchy.

“Kings,” they say, “hate brave men and remove them from the midst.” I appeal to the history of our age and seek outstanding men slaughtered by the tyranny of kings. I deny that even one can be produced, unless one pleases to deplore those who, convicted of injustice, plunder, an offense against majesty, or treason, paid deserved penalties. For we do not now treat of those whom kings or princes following new opinions tortured and killed on account of the ancient faith and religion, although the people and petty tyrants killed more.

§ 10. The seventh objection. Nothing afflicts and tears apart the commonwealth as much as variety and inconstancy of laws and actions. For it altogether removes the ruler’s authority; next, it renders everyone uncertain about his own affairs and therefore hostile to the prince. For just as no prudent man builds a citadel upon ground shaken by frequent earthquakes, so all are alienated from and withdraw from a prince who is carried into contrary courses, because he readily overturns his benefits and changes friends. Even those who have received benefits fear that, having changed his mind, he will soon take back what he rather cast away than gave and add loss and outrage besides.

Niccolò Machiavelli, book 1 of *Discourses on Livy*, attempts to prove that there is greater constancy among the people. But he compares a prince released from the laws with a people which employs no laws, and a prince who administers the commonwealth according to the prescription of the laws with a people which employs good laws; and in each case he prefers administration by the people. For the Romans most bitterly hated kingship for four hundred years. The people rarely affects manifestly wicked human beings with honor. The people rages more gently and is placated more readily. The reason why the people’s inconstancy is censured by writers is not that the people transgress more than princes, but that it is safer to exaggerate the vices of the people than those of princes, for no individual is censured here.

I answer first that Machiavelli admits that he speaks and teaches against all writers. Livy in many places, and all the other writers with nearly one voice, testify that the multitude of the people is inconstant, variable, and mutable. What all writers and all rulers of peoples testify, one Machiavelli ought not to have denied--much less strike everyone with a grave accusation, as though they exaggerate the transgressions of the people and close their eyes to the vices of princes.

That is a malicious and manifestly false slander. For men who lived among a free people testify to it, for whom it was dangerous to praise monarchy and censure the people. Plato says: “The people is ungrateful, lightly sated with any thing, mutable, cruel, envious.” But let us hear Tullius, the greatest patron of the people, thundering against his own people after receiving the greatest benefits from the people: “Within an inexperienced multitude there are variety and inconstancy and, just as frequent changes of weather, so frequent changes of opinions.” *For His House* and *For Plancius*.

“The people does not always judge in assemblies, but is generally moved by favor, yields to prayers, and creates those by whom it has been most thoroughly canvassed. Finally, if it judges, it is not led to judging by any selection or wisdom, but sometimes by impulse and even a certain rashness. There is no counsel in the common crowd, no reason, no discrimination, no diligence. Wise men always judged that the things which the people had done must be endured, but not always praised.” And *For Murena*: “No strait and no Euripus possesses so many movements and such great and various agitations of waves as the procedure of assemblies possesses disturbances and surges. One intervening day, or one night placed between, often disturbs all things; and a small breeze of rumor sometimes changes the whole opinion. Often, even without any evident cause, something other than what we judge occurs, so that sometimes even the people marvels that it was done thus, as if it had not itself done it.”

These are Cicero’s words concerning the people that was lord of the nations, the people which daily heard orators and the most prudent men contending concerning the commonwealth and, having heard them, commanded with supreme power what it wished to be done. The cause of so great a mutability is rightly pronounced by the same man: “It estimates few things from truth and many from opinion,” *For Roscius of Ameria*. “They judge honorable that which is

praised by many." Since inexperience therefore often errs, is led by opinion, and hears imprudent and fickle human beings, it is necessary that it change often and be a source of honor and profit to its tribunes.

But the hatred of the Roman people against those seeking kingship was constant and bitter. Entirely so, because they feared tyranny; Cicero testified to this in his book *On the Laws*. For he who had seized dominion at Rome would reign with much blood. But I observed two things in the Roman commonwealth which implanted hatred of tyrants in the city. First were the examples of the Sicilians and of many cities in Greece which were tormented by barbarous and monstrous tyranny. In the period of Roman liberty the affairs of the Persians flourished; in Sicily there were Gelo and the Dionysii; in Greece Periander, Thrasybulus, Alexander of Pherae, and the Thirty Tyrants at Athens; and scarcely any city was ruled at that time without savage cruelty. Hence came so great a hatred of kings and, among a warlike people, a hand ready against them; and punishments imposed when the cause of suspected persons had scarcely been heard--certainly while the lawsuit was pending.

Under a mild and just king extreme liberty is not greatly desired; most live content with quiet and the protection of their affairs. But when they grow pale beneath the blow of a raging tyrant, they pour themselves into whatever nearby opportunity for liberty is opened, although with great danger.

But an angry people too, they say, rages more gently. Indeed, there is no beast more cruel than the people. The ambassadors of the fathers objected to the Roman common people that, through hatred of cruelty, they were rushing into cruelty; before they were free, they wished to dominate their adversaries. If you intend to consider the cruelty of peoples, see the Lemnians, Etruscans, Samians, and Athenians. The cruelty of the Lemnians passed into a proverb, so that whatever was done most monstrously was said to have been done by a Lemnian hand. The Etruscans joined living bodies to dead ones, for this was not the deed of Mezentius alone. The Samians carved an owl upon the foreheads of the Athenians; the Athenians carved a Samian ship upon the foreheads of the Samians--cruelty repaid by a foul example between the most cultivated peoples.

Do you wish me to speak concerning the Romans? The first emperors were cruel and certain monsters of human beings; I except no one, neither Augustus nor Titus. Yet the people was more cruel than they, delighted throughout entire days by the torments and deaths of the amphitheater. Next, were those very monsters not drawn from the citizens? Were the Roman best men gentle? Fimbria, Sulla, Telesinus, Catiline, Pompey, Pollio, Marius, and those who belonged to the Marian or Sullan parties--that is, all Romans. Few kings equaled the cruelty of the Roman leading men. But the Roman people surpassed them all, displaying horrible examples in the punishment of Nero, Caligula, Galba, and other princes, most cruel in punishing cruelty. The medicine exceeded its measure; the guilty and innocent perished.

The people is therefore both inconstant and cruel. The cause of its inconstancy is that it does not judge and is moved only by slight things, and therefore it is also moved to the other side. Although kings too frequently rave, nevertheless the ignorance of the people is greater, since its greatest part is occupied by private affairs. In the judgment of the people no one fears his own personal disgrace or hopes for praise if the counsels turn out badly; each imputes them to others rather than himself. For why should the reputation of the commonwealth touch the most sordid human beings? But where there is a prince, he both fears to establish what must immediately be changed and necessarily turns away from sudden transformations of affairs and the desire to fasten and unfasten laws as from a plague of the commonwealth.

CHAPTER XXIII

Machiavelli's Opinion concerning Monarchy, and Its Arguments Refuted

§ 1. I shall set forth and examine the opinion of a man who follows his own judgment rather than a prudent one, so that it may be evident to all that he not only employs weak reasoning but also sins against the fidelity of history and deduces conclusions and consequences from things that are utterly false. In book 2, chapter 2 of *Discourses on Livy*, he writes thus:

Love of preserving liberty, which at that time resided among many nations, rendered victory over neighboring and certain other peoples difficult and arduous for the Roman people. For they endeavored to defend it with so much zeal that they could not be conquered and overcome except by a certain extraordinary valor. As proof of this fact, you have examples of so many dangers which they were willing to undergo for the sake of defending and recovering it, and of so many and such dreadful punishments exacted from those who had furnished the cause of its loss. Nor is it obscure from the reading of histories how highly liberty ought to be valued, and how great and how difficult for a people the yoke of servitude is.

In our age a single nation seems to survive in which there are free cities; formerly the freest peoples existed throughout every region of the world. Certainly, in Italy, between the Alps, which divide Cisalpine Gaul from Tuscany, and the furthest shore of Italy, many free peoples dwelt: the Etruscans, Romans, Samnites, and others. Nor is mention made of any kings who then ruled in Italy, apart from the kings of the Romans and Porsenna. Although the histories have handed down nothing to memory concerning the destruction of his stock, it is nevertheless established that Tuscany, over which Porsenna had ruled, was free at the time when the Romans undertook war against Veii. Indeed, it enjoyed liberty with so much delight and held the designation of monarchy in so great hatred that, when the Veientes had created a king for the sake of defending themselves and had sought aid from the Etruscans against the Romans, the Etruscans, after long deliberation upon the matter, finally judged that assistance ought not to be brought to them so long as they had a king. For it was not fitting to bring aid to those who had subjected their fatherland to the government of one man.

Nor without cause does the love of liberty reside in every people. For experience testifies that no city enriches its citizens except in a time of liberty, nor even acquires dominion or augments the public resources in any manner. It is worthy of the highest admiration that the Athenians, freed from the tyranny of Pisistratus, were able to augment their strength and power so greatly within the space of one hundred years. And it is still much more astonishing that the commonwealth of the Romans, after the kings had been expelled, was able to arrive at so great a summit. All these things happen

[Printed page 54]

because it is not the resources of private persons but those which are public and common that augment the commonwealth; nor is account taken of the public good except in free cities, in which that which can equally benefit all or as many as possible is always decreed, while no account is taken of certain few whom that which benefits all might perhaps harm. The contrary occurs in those cities which obey the government of some prince. For in them it generally happens that what can benefit the prince harms all the citizens.

Hence it happens that, if a free commonwealth is reduced beneath the tyranny of someone, it may number among the lightest losses arising to it from that event the fact that it can no longer be augmented either in resources or in dominion, but begins even to decline gradually. For although we concede that this tyrant, beneath whose government it has been reduced, is an industrious man and outstanding in military valor, nevertheless he converts what he acquires to his own private advantage, not to public uses. And since, through fear of vengeance, he does not dare to select from his

subjects, whom he rules tyrannically, all the most outstanding men and put them in charge of affairs, if he should occupy any cities besides, he certainly will not make them tributary to this commonwealth. For the tyrant's aim is not to augment the power of his subjects, but to preserve them in subjection to himself and to crush the strength by which they might someday shake off the yoke. On this matter many excellent things are read in Xenophon's book on tyranny.

Since these things are so, it ought to seem astonishing to no one that the ancients burned with so great a zeal for liberty and held the name of tyrants in so great a hatred. Thus, when a messenger once reached the army concerning the slaying of Hieronymus, grandson of Hiero of Syracuse, and all the soldiers were roaring against the conspirators, nevertheless, when it was reported a little later that liberty was being proclaimed publicly at Syracuse, they laid aside their anger against the conspirators and began to deliberate concerning the manner of preserving liberty.

For the same reasons those who had been willing to become the authors of liberty's loss were very often afflicted with enormous punishments. Although very many examples of these exist, in this place I shall adduce only one, and that a dreadful and memorable one, which occurred at Corcyra in the time of the Peloponnesian War. For since all Greece was then divided into two factions, one of which endeavored to retain the friendship of the Athenians and the other that of the Spartans, and the best men at Corcyra, having become superior, had once taken liberty away from the people, it afterward happened that the people, assisted by the aid of the Athenians, again conquered the best men.

And so, after the yoke of servitude had been shaken off, they confined all the best men in a certain large prison. Then, leading them out of it ten at a time, one group after another, as though they wished to send them into exile, they afflicted them with various punishments. When the others in the prison were finally made more certain of this fact, they resolved to defend themselves from such foul punishments in whatever manner they could. Therefore, making an assault upon those who were entering the prison, they repelled them and prohibited their entrance. But when the people learned of this fact, they stirred up a tumult, opened the flooring laid over the prisons, and suffocated everyone at once through the collapse of the walls.

Several other examples of cruelty of this kind also occurred then in defense of liberty. Yet human beings are accustomed to avenge liberty when it has been taken away with a greater impetus than they are accustomed to be carried against those who wished to take it away. But not without reason might someone marvel in this place at the cause why those ancients seem to have labored far more for public liberty than we see done in our age. I indeed think that this happened for the same reason on account of which those same men were braver than ours, and that this reason depended for the greater part upon education itself and upon the difference between their religion and ours.

For since from our religion we perceive the truth of things, we learn from it at once to despise the honors and pomp of this world. But the pagans valued all these things greatly and thought that the highest good was situated in them; for this reason they were more ready and fierce defenders of things of this kind. This is apparent from many of their institutions. For if you compare even their sacrifices with ours, in theirs you will discern a certain dreadful magnificence, but in ours a certain delicate softness. In theirs the slaughter of many animals was joined to pomp and magnificence, and this terrible sight rendered even human beings fierce; ours lacks all these things.

The religion of the pagans rendered human beings blessed by no things other than glory and the praise of valor for affairs conducted well and successfully in war or peace. From the institution of our religion, those who are humble and devoted to the contemplation of divine things are judged more blessed than those who have accomplished great affairs. It establishes the highest good, moreover, in humility and contempt for the things of this world. The pagans believed that all things stood in the contrary manner, for they judged that the highest good was situated in greatness of spirit, in strength of body, and in all the other things customarily done by the bravest men.

This institution of the Christians' life seems to have rendered the world unwarlike, so that it is customarily a certain prey for criminal and faithless princes. For most mortals, through hope of the blessed life, think more about enduring injuries than about avenging them, as though heaven ought to be acquired without any arms, by leisure alone. But that explanation of our religion is not free from error, and those who have so interpreted it were abject human beings to

whom leisure rather than valor was dear. For the defense of one's fatherland and the enlargement of its dominion by a legitimate manner are in no way opposed to the Christian religion. It is permitted to all to love their fatherland, to hold it in honor, and to prepare themselves for its defense.

But that inept manner of education brings it about that, if in our age you traverse the entire world, you can by no means find so many free peoples and so many free commonwealths as formerly existed, nor human beings who are lovers of liberty and its keen defenders. Indeed, the magnitude of the Roman Empire also contributed not a little to this, since it subjected the free commonwealths throughout the entire world beneath its yoke. But even after the Roman Empire had been destroyed, nevertheless only a very few were able to recover their former liberty.

At the time when the Roman Empire was being increased, there were found in every region many free peoples, many free commonwealths excellently instituted, and the keenest defenders of liberty; and consequently they could not be conquered and overcome by the Roman people without extraordinary valor. The Samnites alone can serve as an example. Livy testifies that they were so powerful in peace and war, and so keen as defenders of liberty, that they waged war with the Romans for forty-six years and could not be conquered entirely before the time of the consulship of Papirius Cursor, who was the son of the first Papirius, although they had suffered innumerable slaughters.

For this reason it is all the more worthy of pity if anyone sees in our age that region almost desolate which was formerly inhabited by so many free human beings and adorned with so many free and excellently instituted cities. All these things derive the cause of their difference from liberty and servitude. For whatever cities and regions enjoy liberty are augmented in resources, dominion, and multitude of human beings. For who would not more gladly procreate human beings in those places where marriages and resources are free than where there is fear that, if by your labor you have acquired something for educating your children, it may be taken from you by some tyrant? Where liberty exists, you are able to promise yourself not only that the children whom you beget will not be slaves, but also, if indeed they devote themselves to virtue, that they will be employed in public affairs.

Resources are augmented here, not only from agriculture but also from all other honorable arts, because we are all so disposed that we gladly acquire in that place where we hope to be able to enjoy in safety the things acquired. In places of this kind all competitively take account both of public and of private advantages and endeavor to augment them. But where human beings are oppressed by the yoke of servitude, all things occur in the contrary manner, and all the more so, the harsher the servitude has been.

The servitude of those cities and regions which obey the dominion of a free

[Printed page 55]

commonwealth seems harshest. First, it is customarily of the longest duration, so that no hope of attaining liberty is set before them. Next, free commonwealths, for the sake of augmenting their own strength, are accustomed to diminish the power of cities subjected to their dominion and to suck out almost all their vital juice. Princes are accustomed to act otherwise--not those who are wholly barbarous, such as in our age are the eastern princes, corrupters of all civil life. The others, instructed in humane arts, are accustomed to be more equitable and to love their subjects; and they permit not only that their subjects acquire property by their customary arts, but leave their ancient statutes and laws intact, so that if, on account of this servitude, they can receive no further increase, they may nevertheless be able to preserve the things previously acquired by them.

And indeed in this place I speak of a principate which is occupied by an external man; concerning the tyranny which a citizen invades in his own fatherland, we spoke above. If you contemplate all these things diligently, it ought not to seem astonishing that the Samnites arrived at so great a power at the time when they enjoyed liberty and, after it had been lost, were ultimately reduced to the lowest condition. On this matter Livy says in the Punic War that the Samnites were oppressed by a single legion of the Romans near Nola to such a degree that they were compelled to send ambassadors to Hannibal for the sake of imploring aid. The ambassadors also complained of their misery before the

Carthaginian: they were those who had waged war with the Roman people by their own strength for one hundred years and had often withstood two consular armies; now they had been reduced to such misery that they could not withstand a single legion.

§ 2. The Machiavellian propositions are these. First: In our age a single nation survives in which there are free cities, whereas formerly there were innumerable free peoples. Second: No commonwealth other than a free one enriches its citizens or acquires dominion. Third: In a monarchy it ordinarily happens that what is advantageous to princes harms citizens. Fourth: When some free commonwealth oppresses other cities with servitude, that servitude is both long-lasting and most harsh. Fifth: Account is taken of the public good only in free cities. Sixth: The Christian religion brings it about that human beings are not lovers of liberty; the Roman Empire also contributed not a little to this.

§ 3. These things must be considered from reason and experience. For Machiavelli himself denies that, when the Romans possessed dominion, there were free nations, except for a very few. If we regard more ancient times, sacred scripture teaches us that there were kings throughout the whole East, and this from the time of Abraham down to the Roman Empire. The Roman wars teach sufficiently that Italy possessed free peoples in the time of the Roman kings and consuls; nevertheless, not all were free, but many cities also had their own kings. Gaul and Germany, except when their inhabitants dwelt dispersedly, were governed by kings and petty kings, as likewise were the Spaniards and, apart from the Carthaginians, the Africans.

Now Venice, Genoa, Ragusa, Switzerland, Holland, indeed also cities of Germany, and the Kingdom of Poland, although it has a king, are free. But many abuse the name of liberty. For why is Venice free, because many myriads of citizens are so governed by a few nobles that they are compelled to obey their word, while they themselves do not rule in turn, but the Colony of the Ubii is not free, which is so governed by its own citizens that it possesses alternations of obeying and commanding, the moderated governments of magistrates, and the readiness of citizens in obeying, although it recognizes the emperor as its supreme head? But it recognizes an emperor who, according to the laws and received rights, examines and decides controversies.

If these things are examined by reason, we shall find very many entirely free cities in Europe. For liberty is various, and that which is judged the greatest, and exists in democracy, is plainly the worst of all. The Roman common people extorted this liberty to its own destruction: first laws, then tribunes, finally participation in magistracies and intermarriage, until all things were now within its power. Thus the Roman people would have denied that the Venetian people was free. For the former sought and retained tribunician aid against the fathers; the Venetian people remains within the power of the nobles.

§ 4. Second, he says: No commonwealth enriches its citizens unless it is free. If he speaks of a free commonwealth such as the Roman or Athenian commonwealth was, where the supreme power was in the hands of the people, then no commonwealth is now free, and none enriches its people; for all are governed by princes or by the best men, unless one pleases to except the Swiss. But there are many distinguished cities in our age, and there were formerly, which we see have attained great resources under the government of kings. Look upon the distinguished cities of Europe under the emperor and under the kings of France, Spain, Poland, and Britain, and show me free cities formerly in Greece with equal cultivation, equal felicity, and equal resources.

In Italy, in Samnium, in Campania, and in Latium there were free peoples, but certainly their cities were small, rustic, poor, and--to speak truly--barbarous rather than free. Florus, the epitomator of Roman history, says that his Quirites led a rustic life and carried off rustic spoils, the cattle of the Volscians and the flocks of the Sabines, until, after they had entered Asia, they carried resources and luxury home. But in Asia, what cities and of what quality were founded, fortified, and adorned by kings and burdened beyond measure with riches? Babylon, Nineveh, Ecbatana, Persepolis, Sidon, Jerusalem, Damascus, Tyre, Memphis, Sardis. The Holy Spirit in Ezekiel describes for us the riches of Tyre as an example of a prosperous city.

But in Italy Rome was then the greatest, and Capua next. For when a triumph was celebrated over Tarentum and Pyrrhus, they received their first experience of riches. “Before this day,” says Florus, book 1, chapter 28, “it had seen nothing but the cattle of the Volscians, the flocks of the Sabines, the wagons of the Gauls, and the broken arms of the Samnites. Then, if you looked upon the captives, there were Molossians, Thessalians, Macedonians, Bruttians, Apulians, and Lucanians; if upon the processions, there were gold, purple, statues, paintings, and Tarentine delicacies. But the Roman people looked upon nothing more gladly than those beasts which it had feared, with their towers: they followed the conquering horses with necks lowered, not without a sense of their captivity.”

The Roman consul himself, when he speaks of the ancient Romans, teaches us that they were ignorant of Asiatic riches. The Romans judged that only three cities in all the lands--Carthage, Corinth, and Capua--were able to sustain the weight and name of empire. Therefore what Machiavelli reports in the third place is false: that in a monarchy all things are referred to the advantage of the prince; for a legitimate prince regards the advantage and safety of the people, and by this end is distinguished from a tyrant. Moreover, to possess opulent peoples is also the advantage and dignity of the prince. And so the Roman city also grew under kings, as did the other Italian cities; the affairs of the Corinthians grew under the civil and humane administration of tyrants. Therefore, he who accuses princes of being intent solely upon their own advantage condemns them all, by one vote, of tyranny unless they are extraordinarily clement and liberal.

§ 5. It is therefore a consequence that this statement too is false, which he makes: In free cities alone is account taken of public advantage. Is that truly so? Did those who defended their peoples and poured out their blood, not from desire for dominion but in defense of their fatherland, and the founders of so many cities, temples, and academies, accomplish nothing for the public good? Cobblers, evidently,

[Printed page 56]

and athletic anointers, while they are elevated by an annual government, take account of the public good, but kings and princes devote themselves only to their own affairs.

The contrary must therefore be established: in the government of the best men and of the people, each person is more zealous for his own advantage than for the public advantage. For the best men endeavor to turn the majesty and advantage of government toward themselves--to such a degree that at Rome the tribunes so often cried out, both spitefully and truly, that there were two cities. The common people regarded its own advantages: agrarian laws, new account books, and assemblies; it sought bread and circuses and the gifts of candidates. There was no mention of public advantage except where the magnitude of danger also threatened private losses.

T. Quinctius Capitolinus spiritedly reproaches his citizens with this: “But through these things the common interest is in a worse position: the field is burned, the city is besieged, the glory of war is in the hands of enemies. Yet in what condition are your private affairs? Now the report of his own losses from the fields is being brought to each. What, finally, is there at home from which you may replenish them? Will the tribunes return and restore to you what you have lost? They will heap upon you as much voice and words as you wish, and accusations against the leading men, laws one upon another, and assemblies. But from those assemblies no one of you has ever returned home increased in property and fortune.

“Has anyone carried anything back to wife and children besides hatreds, offenses, and public and private enmities, from which you are always safe not by your own valor and innocence but by the aid of others? But, by Hercules, when you served your campaigns with us as consuls, not with the tribunes as leaders, and in the camp, not in the forum, the enemies trembled at your shout in the battle line, not the Roman fathers in the assembly.”

§ 6. Finally, we admit that the Christian religion brings it about that human beings are less lovers of liberty, and this not only because they estimate fleeting and perishable things at their own value. For, instructed by divine oracles, they hope that one day they are to be asserted from servitude and the workhouse into the liberty of the children of God.

They believe and follow the admonition of the Apostle: "Let each one remain in that calling in which he was called. Were you called as a slave? Let it not be a care to you; but if you can become free, use it rather. For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was called as a free man is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human beings." 1 Corinthians 7:20.

But they fear the governments of princes less--indeed, they willingly entrust themselves to them--because those princes also know that they are slaves of Christ and treat their fellow slaves moderately and clemently, mindful that they themselves stand in the sight of their common Lord. For where among Christian princes are found the familiar and customary savagery and plunderings of the ancients? But I shall show that it is a slander that our religion makes men soft, not brave, when I treat of fortitude.

Now I shall refute this impious pseudo-politics by the testimony of Tertullian and by reason. For if Christians so despise death and torments, how brave would they be in battle, they who possess so great a desire for an honorable death? They endure so many devices of executioners when they are able to rescue themselves from vexations with one word, if they should say, "I am not a Christian." Certainly, if I wish, I am a Christian; you will therefore condemn me if I wish to be condemned. But since you cannot do what you are able to do against me unless I wish it, what you are able to do is now a matter of my will, not of your power. Hence the common crowd also rejoices vainly in our vexation; hence the joy which they claim for themselves is ours also, since we prefer to be condemned rather than to fall away from God. On the contrary, those who hate us ought to grieve, not rejoice, because we have attained what we chose.

Certainly, one who is prepared to die and laughs at torments is not unfit for war. And in the *Apologeticum*, chapter 5: "Therefore, you say, why do you complain that we persecute you, if you wish to suffer, since you ought to love those through whom you suffer what you wish? We plainly wish to suffer, but in the manner in which a soldier also wishes war. No one indeed suffers willingly, since both trembling and danger are necessary; nevertheless, he both fights with all his strength and, when victorious in battle, rejoices--the man who complained of the battle--because he obtains both glory and spoil.

"For us, the battle is that we are summoned before tribunals, so that there, under peril of the head, we may contend for truth. But victory is to obtain that for which you have contended. That victory possesses both the glory of pleasing God and the spoil of living eternally. But we are overcome. Certainly, when we have obtained our object. Therefore we conquer when we are killed; finally, we escape when we are overcome. You may now call us *Sarmenticii* and *Semaxii*, because, bound to the stake of half an axle, we are burned amid a surrounding mass of faggots. This is the attire of our victory; this is our palm-embroidered robe; in such a chariot we triumph. Deservedly, therefore, we do not please the conquered.

"For this reason we are judged desperate and lost. But this desperation and destruction, when it is among you for the sake of glory and fame, raises the standard of valor. Mucius willingly left his right hand upon the altar. O sublimity of spirit! Empedocles gave his whole self to the Etnaeian fires of the Catanians. O vigor of mind! A certain foundress of Carthage gave herself to the funeral pyre as a second marriage. O proclamation of chastity! Regulus, lest he alone live in exchange for many enemies, suffers tortures over his whole body. O brave man, and victor in captivity!

"When Anaxarchus was being pounded to destruction with the pestle for barley-groats, he said, 'Pound, pound the sack of Anaxarchus! For you do not pound Anaxarchus.' O magnanimity of the philosopher, who jested even thus concerning his own end! I pass over those who contracted for praise with their own sword or some other gentler kind of death. For behold, contests of torments also are crowned by you. An Attic courtesan, when the executioner was now exhausted, finally spat her own chewed-off tongue into the tyrant's face, so that she might spit out her voice also and be unable to confess the conspirators, even if, when conquered, she had wished to do so.

"Zeno of Elea, when asked by Dionysius what philosophy furnished and when he had answered, 'Contempt of death,' was cast, insensible to suffering, before the tyrant's scourges and sealed his judgment even unto death. Certainly, the

scourges of the Laconians, made more bitter beneath the eyes of kindred who even exhort them, confer as much honor of endurance upon their house as they have shed blood. O permitted glory, because it is human, to which neither a lost presumption nor a desperate persuasion is imputed in contempt of death and of cruelty of every kind; for which it is permitted to suffer as much for fatherland, for empire, and for friendship as it is not lawful to suffer for God!

“And nevertheless you both cast statues for all those men, inscribe images, and engrave titles for eternity, so far as you are able by means of monuments. Evidently, you yourselves also furnish this resurrection, in a certain manner, to the dead. Is he who hopes for the true resurrection from God, if he suffers for God, insane?”

Therefore softness is not the cause why Christians love their kings, but the ordinance of God, the moderation of those who command, and the virtue of those who obey. For the Romans also rejected their kings only on account of their vices. Florus himself is a witness, book 1, chapter 8: “Finally, the importunate domination of that proud man was of some--indeed, of the greatest--benefit. For thus it came about that the people, agitated by injuries, was inflamed with desire for liberty.” Most wisely, therefore, did Tertullian show that Christians were brave and could bear commands, since they could bear martyrdoms.

I shall conclude a little differently. If through the Christian religion so many Muciuses, so many Anaxarchuses, so many Zenos, so many Laconians, and all in a better cause, have been made, the Christian religion does not enervate the strength of human beings but confirms it. But concerning these things in their own place. Now, against the pseudo-politician, I give this warning: when I praise the just government of a just prince, I do not act against liberty.

It is an inestimable good to become one's own. But, as Aristotle says, *Metaphysics* 1, chapter 2, the free man exists for his own sake, not for another's. All judge loss of liberty the gravest, and

[Printed page 57]

the poet sang with applause:

“οὐ θνήσκει ζῆλος ἐλευθερίας.”

The love of liberty does not die.

And rightly Strabo also:

“Ἐλευθερία μόνη ἴδια ποιεῖ τῶν κτησαμένων τὰγαθά. Τὰ δ' ἐν δουλείᾳ τῶν ἀρχόντων, οὐκ ἀρχομένων ἐστί.”

Liberty alone makes the goods of those who possess them their own; but the things that are under servitude belong to those who command, not to those who obey. But I have now shown that to obey a just government and one according to laws is not servitude, but the safest liberty. But if the prince departs from justice and breaks the laws through avarice, anger, and lust, nevertheless the tyranny of one will not be more grievous than the savagery and outrages of many masters.

CHAPTER XXIV

That the Magistrate Is Obligated to His Fatherland

§ 1. This question is customarily proposed concerning the prince; but because I have undertaken to instruct not only the prince but also the senate and the people, I have had to dispute concerning them all generally. The question, taken thus, is twofold. For it is asked: Can the supreme magistrate do more than the whole commonwealth? Next: In what matters is the magistrate obligated to the commonwealth?

The first question is difficult and perhaps dangerous. For if you say that the magistrate can do more, you will perhaps kindle tyranny; if you attribute supreme power to the commonwealth, you will seem to reduce kings to order. Therefore a method must be found by which both the magistrate, who is the head and likewise a part of the commonwealth, may be assured of his authority and the commonwealth may preserve its own right.

§ 2. Therefore, first I answer: Every commonwealth which places magistrates over itself--whether it elects a king, as formerly the Romans and now the Germans and Poles do; or a council of the best men and a public council, as the Romans did after the kings had been expelled; or designates rulers from the whole people, as we read was also done at Rome after patrician magistracies had been shared with the common people, and as now the Swiss and the federated provinces of Belgium have for their custom--every such commonwealth, I say, whatever magistrate it elects, ought to bind him by the prescription of certain laws, to deprive him of power over certain matters, and to reserve that power to itself. Otherwise it will introduce over itself a dominion almost despotic, as we now see has been done in Muscovy and Turkey; we have already rejected that form of commonwealth above as destructive.

Next, no province in Europe now struggles beneath governments of this kind, nor do Christian princes or magistrates seem to affect such a form. Nevertheless, if there is some such commonwealth, as that of the Turks now is, there is no doubt that supreme power is in the hands of one man, and neither any one of the others nor all together can lawfully oppose themselves to him, any more than slaves can resist masters. But that is a commonwealth of workhouse slaves, not of citizens.

§ 3. Second, I establish this: In a commonwealth constituted by laws, supreme right is in the hands of the magistrate, both because he is eminent above all private persons and because in certain matters he can do more than the whole commonwealth. Therefore his power is rightly, simply speaking, the greatest; nor is tyranny to be feared from this, for there can be supreme power even if it cannot do all things. But that power is called supreme which, according to the laws, has no equal or superior.

Accordingly, I call the king greater than the whole multitude. For no commonwealth can cast down its king from the throne; and although they may have designated him by the freest votes, nevertheless, once they have transferred their power to him, they cannot revoke it at will. Next, not even the whole commonwealth is able to impede or delay the exercise of royal right and its legitimate functions. For it did not institute an imaginary or painted king, but conceded to him the sword and the use of the sword.

Third, the commonwealth cannot compel its magistrate to yield even part of his right, but is bound to preserve it whole for him and diminished neither by force nor fraud. Finally, in the administration of justice, the defense of the innocent, and the pardon of offenses, even if the leading men, the council, and the people dissent from the king, they are nevertheless compelled to follow, assist, and support him. For the whole remaining commonwealth cannot compel the prince to release a guilty man, abandon the cause of an innocent man, or punish according to the laws a defendant to whom he could otherwise show indulgence.

It is my intention to demonstrate the matter by an excellent example conspicuous for the firmness of government. In the Samnite War, Camillus the consul named L. Papirius Cursor dictator. He named Fabius Maximus master of the horse, and, setting out for Rome to renew the auspices, commanded Fabius not to fight in his absence. But Fabius, having obtained an opportunity to conduct the affair successfully, engaged the enemy and carried back a distinguished victory. The dictator arrived while the soldiers' joy and congratulations were still fresh, threatened the master of the horse with death, and ordered him to be stripped and the rods and axes made ready. But the Triarii received and protected him when he implored the soldiers' fidelity, and the army pleaded on behalf of the master of the horse, now also a victor.

Yet they did not move the severe and excessively imperious dictator. Ordered to appear the next day, Fabius, when he understood that he would have him as a still more hostile judge, fled to Rome. He appealed to the foremost of the fathers and hoped that through the intercession of the senate he would be immune from the dictator's savagery. Papirius nevertheless persisted in his judgment until at last Fabius's father appealed to the people. In Livy he concludes his speech thus: "Since in your presence neither the authority of the senate, nor my age, for which you are preparing childlessness, nor the valor and nobility of the master of the horse named by you yourself, nor prayers--which have often softened an enemy and placate the anger of the gods--possess any force, I appeal to the tribunes of the common people and appeal to the people. I bring as judge over you, who flee the judgment of your army and flee the judgment of the senate, the one body which certainly can and does possess more power than your dictatorship. See whether you will yield to an appeal to which Tullus Hostilius, a Roman king, yielded."

But what did Papirius do after Fabius's most odious speech? He still persevered in his undertaking and demanded the master of the horse for punishment. What did the Roman senate, the Roman people, and the tribunes of the common people themselves do here? The people began to plead, and the tribunes of the common people likewise, that pardon might be given to the youth of Fabius and that the punishment of the master of the horse might be remitted for their sake. Fabius's father, prostrate upon his knees, entreated on behalf of his son.

Then indeed Papirius declared that he granted the condemned man to the people and the tribunician power. His words are: "It is well, Quirites. Military discipline has conquered; the majesty of command has conquered--things which had been placed in doubt, whether they would exist at all after this day. Q. Fabius, who fought contrary to the commander's edict, is not released from guilt; rather, condemned for his guilt, he is granted to the Roman people, granted to the tribunician power as it pleads, not as it brings lawful assistance.

"Live, Q. Fabius, happier because of this consensus of the city to aid you than because of the victory in which you exulted a little while ago. You dared a deed for which not even your parent would have granted you pardon, if he had been in the same position in which L. Papirius was. You will return into favor with me when you wish. You will furnish nothing greater to the Roman people, to which you owe your life, than if this day has given you sufficient instruction that in war and peace you must be able to endure lawful commands."

[Printed page 58]

I judge Papirius's severity in rejecting a suppliant rash and not to be imitated by any prince. Yet I judge that he acted lawfully and according to the laws. Neither the senate, nor the people, nor the tribunes could exempt from punishment a man lawfully condemned by the dictator; that entire popular and aristocratic commonwealth was a suppliant to the dictator. If that temporary magistrate was greater than the whole commonwealth, who would marvel that this is admitted in a monarchy?

But if in the administration of justice the prince depends upon the people or upon the senate and people, what will arise from this except appeal to the people, evasions of the laws, and eternal lawsuits? Next, the authority of the ruler must fall into contempt and ridicule if the people sits as his judge and renders void what has been judged rightly. Nor do I see how there is any monarchy if in every government supreme power is in the hands of all together.

I see that this also has assuredly been received through custom in the Roman Empire: although the German princes have established a measure and limits for the imperial power, they nevertheless preserve its authority in judging safe and intact. For this reason, when some of the princes attempted to diminish this right and endeavored to obtrude a certain other judgment of princes, they were gravely admonished by the Catholic princes not to pluck away and enervate the force, right, and gravity of the empire. They also exhorted the Emperor Matthias himself to protect the right of the empire whole, inviolate, and sacrosanct. Let it therefore remain established that supreme right resides with the prince. For although he is bound to his citizens by the laws and his oath, he himself is nevertheless the guardian of those laws.

§ 4. Third, it is most certain that it is useful and salutary not only for the whole people, but also necessary for the magistrate's peace and long duration, that there should be many things which he cannot do, but in which a lesser magistrate and the people can do more than he. First, that he cannot impose new tributes or establish new taxes without consulting the commonwealth, which has been established most wisely in Spain, Germany, and other kingdoms. For by no other thing is sin committed more grievously, and nowhere do more grievous disturbances arise, than through the excessive and harsh exaction of tributes and taxes. Since this touches individuals, it is equitable that, with the commonwealth consenting, they should rather be given by willing persons than extorted from unwilling persons with curses and imprecations against the prince and the groaning of the poor.

Deservedly, therefore, in this matter a bridle is placed upon princely license and upon the greed of ministers who, while they profess that they are defending the prince's fisc and treasury, seek their own profits by no unfamiliar arts. The fisc has many patrons and itself patronizes many.

§ 5. Next, it is most consonant with the laws of a good city that the authority of establishing and abolishing laws ought to be in the hands of the commonwealth, not of one magistrate, whether that magistracy is a principate or a senate of the best men. Since I shall treat this matter in the book on laws, I refrain from bringing forward the reasons here.

§ 6. Third, neither should it be within the power of one prince to select his successor. I think that this is observed in all provinces where the principate is conferred by election and votes; but where succession occurs by inheritance, this must be done by the norm of laws and by custom, not by the prince's will. And if a controversy arises concerning the heirs, the whole commonwealth will resolve it. For it ought to be able to do more than a doubtful heir, since this is a matter of the greatest consequence for everyone.

The reason why, where a prince is established by election, I would not wish the judgment even of a moderate and prudent prince to prevail is this: every worst man will insinuate himself through dissimulation and fraud; he will remove by plots, slanders, and the sword his rivals or those in whom he suspects that there is hope of the kingdom. Augustus was uncertain concerning an heir, and the man whom he appointed would become lord of affairs. What slaughters, what tragedies did that power produce? Germanicus and his stock were removed from the midst by the arts of women, and at last a successor was selected from exile who was to reign with much blood. Augustus himself said that he grieved for the lot of the Roman people, which would be beneath such slow jaws. He nevertheless made Tiberius emperor, whether from necessity, as though unequal to the latter's power, or from choice, so that he himself might be rendered more commendable and more desirable by the monstrous conduct of his successor. Nor was the condition of Tiberius better: after better men had been killed in various outcomes, Caligula succeeded him.

§ 7. Fourth, concerning peace and war also I would prefer the right to belong to the commonwealth rather than to the prince, although I see that this right belongs for the most part to kings, so that they are arbiters of wars and peace. The reason is that wars will thus be begun more slowly and ended more quickly. Princes, often greedy for praise and obstinate in vengeance, leap to arms for slight causes. Noble tribunes incite them; they set before them examples of Alexanders, Scipios, and Caesars and assail as though cowardly those who sit inactive at home and accomplish nothing. This is a great error of fierce human beings, as if it were not the greatest work of all to contain so many

thousands of human beings and so many hundreds of wicked men in peace and to compel them by authority and fear to live without injury to others.

That praise belongs to beasts: that the one stained with more slaughters is the bravest. A prince is selected for preserving human beings; otherwise, when a prince is peaceful, a notorious robber will be called more glorious. But since very many of the best and wealthiest of the subjects desire and seek peace, and since it concerns them especially that their lives and fortunes should not be committed to the uncertain die of wars, equity demands that their consent also be sought. This is especially advantageous to the prince, for he will experience as faithful helpers those who already decreed the war beforehand.

But since during a time of war the reputation of princes is torn apart especially, and since it can never be otherwise--for whatever losses subjects receive from the enemy and from friendly soldiers, they impute them all to the prince--it must be diligently arranged that war and the expenses for war should be decreed by the judgment of all. When this has been done, the prince will not indeed escape all detractions and slanders, but he will nevertheless attain this: that he does not possess everyone as an adversary, but has some as approvers.

§ 8. Fifth, I greatly approve what has been established in many provinces of Germany, especially ecclesiastical ones: that a prince should not be permitted to contract debt without the knowledge or against the will of his subjects. For in this manner a part of the kingdom is mortgaged to outsiders, its strength is dissipated, and the necessity of a new tribute is imposed under another name while either the principal or the interest must be discharged. Indeed, I judge it more tolerable to come to the aid of the prince's necessities by some mild tribute than to render the fatherland obligated to moneylenders and to expose the majesty of the prince to ridicule.

These are the principal things which are prudently reserved to the commonwealth as certain possessions of its own. There are others peculiar to many kingdoms: that it is permitted to assemble conventions of princes without the king's command; to establish a tribunal independent of the king; that the king has no right in punishing the offenses of princes or nobles; and that appeal from the king to lesser magistrates is given. I shall treat of these matters in their own place. Now I teach only this: it is altogether useful that the power of princes should be so enclosed by laws that it cannot easily wander beyond bounds and pass over into tyranny, yet so free that it suffices for coercing the wicked and protecting the good and is a terror to enemies.

[Printed page 59]

For many provinces, while they cut down the authority of princes excessively, have been overthrown; for wicked human beings, contemptuous of a precarious and, as it were, enslaved power, confound all things from top to bottom.

§ 9. The other obligation of the magistrate is discerned in the performance of his own office. Cicero said excellently and, as I think, from his heart, that he desired two things: first, that when dying he should leave the Roman people free; second, that as each man was disposed toward his fatherland, so also should he enjoy that fortune. He attained neither. For, when about to die, he saw his fatherland captive, and its defenders paid for their love of country with death and exile. Nevertheless, he showed us what sort of prince and what sort of citizen he wished: namely, one most loving toward his fatherland--the whole of it, I say, and the individual orders, individual parts, towns, villages, and human beings within that fatherland.

For even in private persons so great is love of fatherland that one fatherland embraces all the affections of all, as the same Cicero says in book 1 of *On Duties*. To demonstrate love for it, they imagine that Ulysses, the wisest man, preferred his fatherland to immortality:

“ἰέμενον τὸν καπνὸν ἀποθρώσκοντα νοῆσαι ἤζ γαίης”

Desiring to see smoke rising from the hearths of his fatherland.

If by nature nothing is more closely joined than fatherland; “οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστὶ οἰκειότερον πατρίδος”; if no good man hesitates to die for the fatherland, if he will benefit it; if we ought to die for it and to stake and, as it were, consecrate all our possessions, with how much love and zeal toward it ought the magistrate, the prince of the commonwealth, to be affected? He ought not only to love the fatherland, to which he must furnish all things without payment, but that fatherland from which they possess so many pledges of reciprocal affection, and by which they have been carried up to honors, resources, and glory.

For the obligation of princes is most extraordinary and most grave. For, first, the fatherland has committed itself to their affection, fidelity, diligence, and justice. No one is so barbarous that he does not love the person whose so great love toward himself and so distinguished a judgment he has experienced. Next, the fatherland supports the prince most magnificently and sumptuously. Amid so many thousands of poor persons and so many myriads sustaining life by hard labor, all things are supplied to the prince most abundantly, not merely for necessity but for display, magnificence, and recreation.

Something is deducted from the industry of merchants, the vigils of craftsmen, the sweat of countrymen, and the hardships of miners for the prince to consume upon luxury and dignity. But it is not, nor ought it to be, the sentiment or will of the fatherland that it should confer these resources upon one or a few so that magnates may luxuriate from the labor of all, but that by their affection, prudence, labor, even dangers and death, they may render all and each safe and unharmed.

If a soldier is unwilling to discharge the duties of the camp, if he fears to stand in the battle line, the commander will withdraw his pay. But if a prince is guided by religion and conscience, he readily understands that he is supported by so great honor and such great resources in order that he may benefit his fatherland; that the royal retinue, purple, crown, conferred honors, splendor of the court, delights of the most exquisite banquets, treasures, and obedience of peoples are the pay for his labors, the earnest-money for his vigils, the alleviation of his greatest cares, and an incitement that he may augment his fatherland's goods and transfer its evils upon himself, and that he may judge negligence in caring for it a most grave disgrace.

Aristotle says excellently in book 5 of the *Politics*, chapter 9: “Those who are to conduct the greatest magistracies of the whole city, and in whose hands is the supreme power of the commonwealth, ought to possess three things: first, benevolence toward the condition of the commonwealth; next, the greatest faculty for discharging the duties of that magistracy which they conduct; in the third place, virtue and justice in each form of administering the commonwealth, according to the form of each commonwealth.”

§ 10. I shall treat of the duty of magistrates in a separate book. Now I give this warning: the greatest care, industry, and diligence in every kind of affair is required in a prince. I judge that many princes otherwise blameless and just will be examined before the King of kings and Lord of lords in the most severe inquiry and condemned by the most sorrowful sentence because they did not conduct themselves in their office with the diligence with which they ought, and dedicated to amusements the time owed to serious business and the public safety.

For if, through the negligence of an advocate, a client has lost his case; if, through the sloth of a vine-dresser, the autumn harvest has perished; if, through a soldier's drowsiness, a town has been brought into danger, pardon is denied in the lesser offense. What if through a prince's negligence in the council chamber the whole commonwealth suffers loss--who will pardon him? It is easier to estimate than to expound the labors and miseries of a prince, if he himself understands the magnitude of his duty and the dangers of errors. It is wretched and full of innumerable cares to become a prince. For since individuals are bound to individual concerns, the whole mass of cares rests upon the prince--a mass burdensome even to a pagan prince, more troublesome to a Christian, who believes that he must prove to God the sedulousness and integrity of his duty.

It is necessary that those pressed by so great a weight of affairs either grow weary and almost fail in strength, or become stupefied so that they do not feel the gravity of their burden. Septimius Severus, praised by historians but

impious and a monstrous persecutor of Christian piety, was raised from a common soldier through every grade of honors and labors to the imperial summit. When dying, as he reviewed all the deeds of his life, he said, "I have been all things, and nothing is of advantage." I do not doubt that this is the utterance of all princes.

Let an aged prince come forward before me, one who has now transferred the scepters to his heir. Let him say how he was offended and despised by his own people; what offenses of ministers he was compelled to dissemble; by how many plots of enemies and how many slanders of the malevolent he was assailed; how often he was led into fraud; how importunately he was vexed. I do not doubt that, if he recounts the entire course of his life without disguise, it will happen that he himself marvels that he was able to endure so much.

But if there is also a prince to whom piety is dear, who emulates justice, loves the commonwealth, and knows that an account concerning all things must be rendered to God, with what horror will he examine himself? Did he furnish promptly, diligently, and seasonably, without harm and without price, all things which had to be furnished to God, to the poor, and to the rich? Kingdom, scepters, and majesty are benefits of God; the greater they are, the more grievous are the judgments established for those who sin. For the more indulgent the liberality, the more inexcusable is the abuse of largesse. Gifts are augmented, and the accounts of gifts increase. As much majesty as is added, so much servitude--and servitude of the most dangerous kind--is demanded.

I shall close this part with a sentence of St. Augustine: "In this do kings serve God: if in their kingdom they command good things and prohibit evil things, not only those which pertain to human society but those which pertain to divine religion."

[Printed page 60]

CHAPTER XXV

That It Is Better for a Prince to Be Hereditary than to Be Elected

§ 1. Not only the altercations of those who dispute, but also the judgments and practices of the greatest empires, render the question difficult. The Germans who possess the imperial government, the Poles, and others elect kings; the Spaniards, French, English, and most others possess hereditary lords. Whose institutions and laws, therefore, are to be approved? Is it fitting for me to judge concerning the ancient compacts and customs of kingdoms?

It is indeed fitting, if the purpose is to give counsel to the commonwealth. Nor will the heirs of kingdoms bear it ill if I prefer elected rulers, because they are friends of elected rulers; nor will elected rulers grow angry with one who praises hereditary kingdoms, since they too possess many hereditary things. For if either the emperor or the electors of emperors prefer all things to be established by free votes, let them themselves yield their inheritances and dominions and commit them to the decision of election. I shall therefore explain my judgment clearly and briefly in a few propositions.

§ 2. **Proposition 1.** A polity, or popular government, necessarily requires election. For since access to honors ought to lie open to all citizens, while those who can command must be few, a distinction must be made by election.

§ 3. **Proposition 2.** In an aristocracy also, election is necessary. For there are more of the best men than can be in magistracy. But if some obtained dignities by right of birth, the others would be excluded, and the commonwealth would degenerate into the domination of a few.

§ 4. **Proposition 3.** In general, I prefer hereditary succession to election.

The reasons which induce me to judge thus are various, and I bring them forward into the midst for everyone to consider.

§ 5. **The first reason.** In antiquity kings were born, not elected; but that which is most ancient in the commonwealth ought not readily to be changed. For the dignity of kings is most similar to paternal power. Those who were more prudent among the fathers governed the family; next, the firstborn were lords of their brothers, and the sons of their mother bowed before them. Isaac, his eyes growing dim but obeying the divine oracle, gave Jacob dominion over the brother who had preceded the supplanter by a brief interval of birth. “I have established him as your lord,” he says, “and I have subjected all his brothers to his servitude.” Genesis 27:37.

Concerning Reuben also he says the same: “First in gifts, greater in command,” because he too was the firstborn, but had fallen from his dignity through incest. Therefore the heads of families held that position by the valuation of primogeniture, not by the election of their brothers; and the first kingdoms were nothing other than great families. To Ishmael also were born twelve princes of their tribes, Genesis 25:1. At the same time also the Horites on Mount Seir entered upon their leadership by inheritance, as is established from Genesis 36:20.

Indeed, that custom remained afterward. For the king of the Moabites seized his firstborn son, who was to reign in his place, and offered him as a holocaust upon the wall. The kingdoms of the Assyrians, Chaldaeans, Egyptians, Medes, and Persians were also hereditary. By divine gift also princes were born from the stock of David; and among the Israelites, even in the schism itself, the sons of tyrants were the successors of their fathers unless, when another tyrant pressed upon them, they were slaughtered before obtaining government.

Nevertheless, the election of kings was not unknown even in that age. For in Genesis 36, from verse 31, eight kings of the Idumaeans are enumerated, none of whom obtained the kingdom by inheritance. Nor is it credible that they all obtained the kingdom of a warlike nation by adoption or tyranny; therefore they were elected.

§ 6. Therefore those prudent and great men ought not to be heard who maintain that election is more ancient and that in those heroic times kings were made in scarcely any other way, principates in peace or war being assigned by the prerogative of valor or strength. For they say that it belongs to nature to subject inferior things to superior ones. Hence Brazilians, when brought to Charles IX, king of France, marveled that strong and tall Swiss obeyed a small and tender king.

Those great men err. For in the heroic ages we see that those who fought at Troy were kings and sons of kings; most even referred their descent to the gods. If the matter is to be determined by fables and demigods are to be adduced, I shall collect in Egypt, through fifteen dynasties and 3,317 years, many kings, and the first eight as heirs by a continuous succession of children. Afterward, women also were admitted to the succession by a law enacted.

But I pass over those things. In the time of Moses, Dardanus reigned at Troy; his descendants were Erichthonius, Trosillus, Laomedon, and Priam. Who would deny that the government of Troy was hereditary? The kings of Tyre were Abibaal, Hiram, then Astarthus, Asserimus, and Pheles. The kings of Mycenae were Pelops, Eurystheus, Atreus, Agamemnon, Orestes, and Penthilus, the last of the Pelopidae.

Of the kings of the Athenians, Erichthonius, son of Vulcan, founded a family which held government for 285 years. Then, after the government had been transferred to Melanthus, it had fourteen kings, so that a son always succeeded his father. In the Spartan kingdom there was greater variation, heirs being driven out by tyrants; but many things show that it too was held by succession. It was not only hereditary but even dotal, for Menelaus, son of Atreus, received Sparta as dowry after marrying Helen. Afterward, the kingdom of the Heraclidae endured through an uninterrupted series of descendants longer than any other.

Among the Corinthians also in the age of the heroes, kings were born: Sisyphus, son of Aeolus, Ornition, Thoas, Damophon, Propodas, and Doridas; the Sisyphidae reigned for 259 years. I refrain from speaking of Janus, Saturn, Faunus, Picus, and Latinus, kings of the Aborigines, lest I seem to wish to establish the matter even by fables. But that ancient opinion of certain men who affirm that kings were formerly made by election and that the kingdom was granted by the prerogative of valor or strength must be plucked out. Certainly the kings themselves would deny it and would say, "I am a son of wise men, a son of ancient kings." Nevertheless, I do not abolish every election: namely, if they should begin a new kingdom, if the royal stock should fail, or if an heir should be judged unfit for the kingdom.

§ 7. **The second reason** is taken from election itself, which is exposed to tumult and the new machinations of seditious persons. For transitions of affairs are opportune for evil attempts. And since the future outcome is uncertain, the spirits of many are raised and the hopes of many are inflated--all of which are restrained if the successor is not uncertain. The canvassings of the Roman assemblies, when a consul--indeed, an aedile--was elected, were turbulent and attended with blood, although that magistracy was annual. What if they had contended for a perpetual dictatorship?

How greatly dominions are endangered at the time of a new election is demonstrated by the very anxiety of human beings, and so many examples have taught it down to the present. And it is assuredly wretched that not only in a political magistracy but also in ecclesiastical offices and among sacred men an election sometimes cannot be conducted without a great wound to the Church and commonwealth. But no one acquainted with history is ignorant of what disasters election introduced into the Roman Empire. Nero rages at Rome; Galba brings savagery and avarice from Spain, Vitellius from Gaul, and Otho sets out from the city. They were equal in strength and vices; meanwhile Vespasian is elected in another region. If you regard the times of the Antonines and Gallienus, thirty tyrants invaded the government simultaneously. For while fortune permits and while it is lawful to hope, anyone attempts what can be done and judges that he has attained what he dreamed while awake.

[Printed page 61]

§ 8. **The third reason.** The foundation and safety of government is the authority of the ruler; contempt is its ultimate destruction. But the dignity and authority of those who are born from kings is greater. He who owes the kingdom to the

vote--that is, to the benefaction--of others is compelled to attribute many things and indulge many things to the authors of his majesty, and to dissemble concerning their offenses lest he seem ungrateful. Electors also provide for their liberty by many compacts and guarantees, so that they attribute as little power as possible over themselves to the man whom they have determined to elect. As much as they diminish from his power and arrogate to their own privileges, so much they detract from his authority; for authority is unstable when it is not supported by solid power.

Next, they do not value highly a man whom they have at some time seen as an equal and at another time as inferior to themselves. The Romans despised Tiberius, whom they had seen as an exile and cloaked after the custom of petty Greeks; from this arose suspicions, slanders, conspiracies, and the butchery of nobles. Galba was held in contempt as a man who previously, burdened by debt, had scarcely been able to remain at Rome; therefore the briefest government and a most shameful end befell him.

The soldiers killed Aelius Pertinax, Macrinus, Maximinus, Balbinus, Pupienus, Tacitus, Probus, and Carus with his sons almost in mockery, just as they had created them emperors. Nor was there greater reverence toward them than toward fellow soldiers who had deserved the cudgel. For once the insignia and name of Augustus had been taken away, since they excelled by no distinction or prerogative of virtue or lineage, the soldiers slaughtered most of them with exquisite punishments as the lowest and most guilty of human beings. From equality, therefore, comes contempt; from contempt, when something is commanded rather harshly, come indignation and the communication of one's grief with others; from these come plots and the destruction of one party, and more often of both.

Third, it is necessary that a king, unless he possesses extraordinary strength of spirit, should command timidly, not without cause fearing the rivalries and enmities of powerful and audacious human beings. For when he weighs the brevity of life and the variability of fortune, he will not readily offend, however deserving they may be, those whom he suspects will someday command. He will not judge it wise to leave many enemies to his family, sons, and wife. From this follows the great power of magnates, their greater impunity, the oppression and outrages of inferiors, the slowness of judgments, the delay of causes, and the difficult execution of pronounced sentences and adjudged matters.

I am not ignorant that by the providence of kings who possess a heroic spirit and an unstained equity in judging, the wicked attempts of all can be resisted; but I give warning of what follows from the nature of election. Fourth, if the man who has been elected by the votes of the commonwealth has sons, who does not see that the father will canvass all those possessing the right to vote on behalf of his sons and do all those things which eloquent and humble candidates are accustomed to do? Cicero judged it most alien to his circumstances to accuse Verres when he was seeking a magistracy, for all the friends of Verres would oppose his candidacy. And it is necessary that a prince who designates his son as his successor by the votes of others should often lay aside his majesty and conduct himself as equal or inferior to his subjects.

But if his spirit is insufficiently firm and he thinks himself a father more than a king, he will often concede many things and dissemble many things so that he may prepare voters for his son. Many things will also be requested from the father through the son who is a candidate for the kingdom, things which custom, reason, and equity will prohibit him from furnishing; and nothing will readily be denied to the person from whom the kingdom is sought. Nor will kings be lacking who, by giving and indulging beyond due measure, take greater account of their own blood than of justice.

§ 9. The fourth reason. What if the condition of that kingdom in which the king fears that he will be the last of his family is not even safe? Nature has so arranged it that parents are no less industrious and keen in procuring honors for their children than for themselves. Ptolemy, king of Egypt, after he had established his son as king in his own place, stood among his bodyguards as his guardian; to such a degree did he judge that to be the father of a king was something more august than to be a king.

Severus slaughtered, for the sake of his sons, all whom he suspected would attempt some novelty. Gordian, hearing that his son had been killed by the Maximini, was overcome by grief and strangled himself with a noose. Nero's

mother judged that her son's government was well purchased by her own life; for when seers had foretold that, if he should rule, he would kill his mother, she said: "Let him kill me, provided that he rules." Demetrius yielded his wife to his enamored son, with a signal outrage to the three. Since, therefore, so great is the force of human affection and blood, they ought certainly to fear that a father will strive by force, fraud, and blandishments to bring it about that his son cannot be barred from the kingdom. Nor do I see why this should be difficult, especially if the son shows himself fit for the kingdom and the father draws part of the nobles to his judgment.

§ 10. The fifth reason. If you regard the advantage of the kingdom, succession possesses many advantages in which election is deficient. He who hopes that he will leave heirs of his majesty cares for all the business of the kingdom as his own, provides for his heirs, and takes thought for the treasury, arsenals, and safety of the citizens. Thus David arranged all things carefully for Solomon.

But he who at his death will end government in his family has no great cause to provide for the protection and dignity of the kingdom far into the future, since it will soon be in the hands of others and perhaps even of enemies. Rather, he will direct every thought toward furnishing defenses and security for his children and family, to whom he leaves envy and many enmities, so that, once private persons, they do not suffer not only the mockeries and commands of the new king but also a shortage of necessary things.

§ 11. The sixth reason. The officials and ministers of those who have been elected are less faithful and in some measure more rapacious. For since they are not ignorant that their functions too will die with the life of the prince, they hasten toward resources and honors. For after the principate has been changed and transferred into another family, the old ministers are either dismissed or placed after others, because each man rightly judges that his own people, whom he possessed as faithful men and friends when he was a private person, ought also to enjoy the honors of their lord.

§ 12. The seventh reason. Affection toward a hereditary prince is greater, because from him not only, but also from his ancestors and descendants, every private person expects benefits. They are accustomed to disdain new rulers before they begin to love them; and after all their benefits the rulers attain much if a successor is awaited civilly, together with the honor of another family.

[Printed page 62]

§ 13. The eighth reason. A single reason is given for election: that it is possible to select from thousands the best and most prudent man, the most distinguished when fortitude and justice are considered. But this matter failed so often formerly--and now also, I fear--that it is rarely secure. I do not wish to blame the voters, as though they had elected wicked men. Human weakness, sudden felicity, arrogance made more insolent by emergence from slender circumstances, suspicions, opinion, contempt, and fear can cast down from his mind even a successor whose mind was well founded.

If they did not know crimes, the kingdom taught them; a flatterer instilled them; a minister induced them. Kingdoms made many good men wicked; few were made better in a kingdom. The reason why voters chose wrongly was love, hatred, and hope. These passions have been brought into every assembly and will not readily go into exile in the future.

Alexius, about to die without an heir, deliberated concerning a successor. Accordingly, different men were named by different persons in various ways, but all named those who would be opportune and useful to themselves. No one possessed any care or thought concerning the election of the man who would command best and according to the public advantage. Choniates, *On Alexius*.

The excuse for the Neronian election among the Romans, in Tacitus, book 13, is more honorable: "Others, on the contrary, said that it had turned out better than if Claudius, feeble from old age and sloth, were called to the labors of military service and were to obey servile commands. Burrus and Seneca, nevertheless, were known by experience of many affairs; and how much strength did the emperor lack, since at the eighteenth year of his age Cn. Pompey, and at the nineteenth Caesar Octavianus, had sustained civil wars? Most affairs in supreme fortune are conducted by auspices

and counsels rather than by weapons and hands. He would plainly give proof whether he employed honorable friends or otherwise; whether, after envy had been removed, he selected an outstanding commander, rather than a destructive one supported by favor through canvassing.”

This excuse concerning Nero is more modest and rests upon some hope. Otherwise, scarcely any successions designated by the vote of the senate or soldiers were praiseworthy. Claudius was a blockhead and a monster, and lively only when he ordered men to be led away unheard. Nero was chosen by the senate; Galba, Otho, and Vitellius by the soldier. Titus succeeded his father and was accordingly among the good princes. Nerva lacked strength and age, not goodness. Trajan was both most shameful and cruel; I do not intend to collect the monsters that followed. Charlemagne and his progeny were better. Never were there so many good emperors in one series as from Albert II, from one family, down to Matthias I, who now sustains the honor of the empire.

Therefore those who approve election stir up great contests in a commonwealth. They render all things venal when morals are corrupt. Julian--not that apostate, but the one who preceded Severus--openly promised money to the praetorians if he were elected. Otho professed that he would possess only that which the soldiers had left him. Severus ordered the soldier to be cultivated and advised that the others be despised. The soldiers raised to government only each most loathsome man and one under whom they might conduct themselves more licentiously.

I know that Probus is excepted, whom they proclaimed prince; but soon, offended by his probity, they killed him. Nevertheless, they marked their own crime and the emperor's integrity with an epitaph: “Here lies Probus the emperor, truly *probus*.” They therefore confessed that they were wicked men who had removed Probus.

What was more turbulent than the elected kings of the Goths in Italy--Athalaric, Theodahad, Witiges, Ildibad, Alaric, Totila, and Teia? All were wicked, badly elected, reigned badly, and perished badly, killed by their own people; captivity freed Witiges from that disgrace. The Goths who were in Spain possessed kings far worse than the Italian ones. Therefore I appeal to examples; the multitude of examples and the antiquity of ages have taught that the best men are not always carried up to the royal throne by election.

§ 14. I am not ignorant that various things are objected to me. First: The sons of kings, educated amid delights and flatteries, are inflated by pride, broken by pleasures, and do not know how to estimate the necessities of their subjects. Second: They readily burst forth into tyranny and regard the kingdom as though it were a patrimony, their subjects as though they were slaves. Third: In election a field is opened to virtue, and many will endeavor to prove themselves to their fatherland if they see that access to supreme government lies open to good men. Fourth: Succession took its beginning from flattery and evil arts. Fifth: Through succession it is often necessary to possess as prince a boy, a woman, a fool, an avaricious man, or a cruel man. A good man can certainly be elected; this lies within the power of the electors. Sixth: It is equitable that one who will command all should be elected from all. Seventh: Poland, a most flourishing kingdom, rich in men and virtues and warlike, creates its king by election, and quite often a foreigner. The imperial government of Germany is given by the vote of electors and is nevertheless governed by the best laws.

Eighth: Hereditary successions have possessed their own certain and great vices. For the sons of heroes have generally been banes. Solomon departs from the piety of David, and Rehoboam from the wisdom of Solomon. Jehoshaphat, a good king, intervenes; but Jehoram, Athaliah, Joash, and Amaziah were impious. Jotham fears God, but Ahaz made a secession from God and religion. Hezekiah, a most holy king, possessed in Manasseh and Amon a most wicked son and grandson. The fervent piety of Josiah is praised, but his degenerate posterity paid for its crimes by destruction and captivity.

Finally, nowhere is labor expended with so much zeal in procuring succession without sedition as in the monarchy of the Turks, but nowhere is it more unhappy. To recount a few things: Bayezid II slaughters the sons of his fleeing brother; the sons of Bayezid make war concerning the succession while their father is alive; at last Selim, as victor, kills his father in his absence, and his suppliant brothers and their sons in his own sight, by the noose. That tyranny is

never reached without the slaughter of blood relatives. Therefore election seems to be better than hereditary succession.

§ 15. These things have been answered in part, but I shall explain the matter more clearly.

Proposition 4. Election rather than succession is suitable to certain peoples, not because the former is to be preferred to the latter simply, but either by reason of their customs and regions or by reason of the parts of the commonwealth constituted long ago, which it belongs neither to a good man nor, therefore, to a political writer to change.

Accordingly, to elect some one king in a very broad kingdom is not unsuitable and does not possess all those disadvantages which I recalled above, if that kingdom embraces many princes and, as it were, lesser kings, as we see occurs by custom in Germany. For when this empire was first transferred into Germany, it did not seem good to bind it to some one house, but that it should be a benefit common to all. Nevertheless, the disadvantages of election down to the present have been very numerous, as have discords and wars; but the small number of electors removes very many dissensions. For there are six, and if the number of votes is equal, the king of Bohemia is added as arbiter and elector. Of these, three are archbishops, who cannot aspire to the kingdom; four are secular electors, who can themselves be elected, but there is always someone among them who cannot be elected on account of age or other causes.

Thus the election is by no means turbulent, nor are the other princes, although powerful, indignant that they are excluded from the votes; rather, they acquiesce in the laws. Next, the election of the Germans is joined with succession, not by a prescribed right or custom

[Printed page 63]

which possesses the force of law, but by the prudence, moderation, and affection toward the fatherland of the princes who are electors. Let us recount the monuments of antiquity: we shall find almost no emperor's son passed over in a peaceful election, although they were adolescents; nor do I think that it will readily happen in the future that supreme government will be conferred upon anyone other than the emperor's son.

Formerly Augustus, Tiberius, and others endeavored through adoptions of stepsons or grandsons to retain the diadem within their own family. Sons of emperors commanded: Titus, Domitian, Commodus, Caracalla, Heliogabalus, Gallienus, Carinus, Numerianus, Constans, Constantine, Constantius, Gratian, Valentinian the Younger, Arcadius, Honorius, Theodosius the Younger; then the progeny of Charlemagne and of the Ottos, a few others, and now that of the Austrians. Thus in the Roman Empire election was mingled with succession. In this manner the disadvantages of the fourth and fifth reasons were generally absent. For if the emperor possesses sons--or indeed if he is without children, provided that he possesses brothers worthy of government--he seems certain concerning the succession. Thus he will neither diminish the vigor of the government through anxiety nor neglect the affairs of the empire as though they were to be alienated from his family.

§ 16. The Germans also remove contempt for the ruler, for they generally elect the most powerful princes and those of the most illustrious name, such as Maximilian I, duke of Austria, and so forth; Charles V, the most powerful monarch of all Europe; Ferdinand; Maximilian II; Rudolf; and Matthias. For it is established that those princes were most noble and powerful.

Since, therefore, the order of election is accurately observed, since succession--although without prejudice to the freest election--is joined to election, and since great princes are elected, they avoid many detriments of election and attain many of its advantages. But this must be attributed to the gravity of the nation, its sincerity, love of peace, and zeal for the fatherland, especially because the princes of Germany, although most tenacious of their own right and dignity, nevertheless are not desirous or ambitious for what belongs to another. Accordingly, we owe peace and concord to their customs, not to the nature of election or the form of the commonwealth.

Look upon the customs of the Turks: see the mutual slanders and slaughters of brothers; see decrepit fathers slaughter sons in their sight and these fathers be removed by those sons with poison. How great would be the discords, what

corruptions of commanders and soldiers, if election should fall amid those customs? Let the moderation of the most august Austrian house be an example for us. The Emperor Matthias lives; his brother Maximilian lives, and another brother, Albert, prince of the Belgian provinces. The emperor has now yielded the Kingdom of Bohemia, Silesia, and Moravia to Ferdinand and will soon yield the remaining territories. Maximilian and Albert, whose right and succession is the nearest, assist that cession. Charles V himself and Philip, king of the Spains, had formerly yielded those regions to Ferdinand.

Compare the desires, frauds, and slaughters of the ancients with these things. See Romulus and Remus, whose kingdom was one hearth and merely the hope of a rustic city, and nevertheless:

“The first walls were drenched with a brother’s blood.”

But although the moderation, prudence, and gravity of the German princes is such, they nevertheless do not bring it about that during the time of an interregnum all are not in great fear lest most grievous wars someday wear down the fatherland. Recall to memory the Henrys, Louises, Fredericks, and Alberts; you will see:

“Standards, equal eagles, and javelins threatening javelins.”

Nicetas, a foreign writer concerning us, judges thus: “O how much worse is the vote and election of many than that of one! You, illustrious Roman Empire and majesty to be adored by nations, what tyrants have you endured? What sort of lovers have sought you? Beneath what men, laid low, have you given possession of yourself? What sort of men have you adorned with crown, diadem, and purple garment?”

But let complaints cease. Let us pay vows to God for those princes and furnish such morals as deserve and bear good princes.

The Poles also have approved election, but in truth they too have often suffered enormous losses: they were deserted by Henry, king of France, and at one time elected two men through contrary partisan zeal. But in this part also the Poles conduct the matter moderately and prudently. First, they never excluded or passed over an heir and did not transfer the kingdom into another family, except when they deposed Ladislaus and substituted Wenceslaus of Bohemia in his place; nevertheless, they afterward restored Ladislaus.

They took account of royal daughters no less prudently than humanely. Hedwig, from the stock of the extinct royal family, was placed in marriage with Jagiello, who was prince of Lithuania, so that at least in this manner they might display their affection toward their kings; that deed occurred in the year 1380. They did not withdraw from the Jagiellonian family so long as heirs from it lived. When they had died, this also was arranged: that Anna, who remained from the royal stock, should marry Stephen, a distinguished hero. The fact that Sigismund III was born from Catherine, Anna’s sister, rendered him commendable to them.

Therefore they prudently mingle election with succession, so that although the votes of the electors are entirely free, nevertheless so great an affection toward the children of their kings remains as if the kingdom were hereditary. By this one thing they protect the peace, tranquility, honor, and majesty of the kingdom. Nevertheless, they have not lacked enormous disadvantages. For since the nobility is magnanimous and warlike, if they were willing to endure a hereditary king, one to whom the kingdom belonged as his own, they could with easier business than any nation occupy all territories as far as the Euxine Sea and invade either the territory of Constantinople after crossing the Danube or Asia after crossing the Black Sea. The Turk assuredly fears this; and therefore he dissembles, as much as he can, the losses inflicted by the Poles and is content to purchase peace in whatever manner.

§ 17. I have discoursed concerning election and succession; now those who prefer the liberty of election must be answered. I shall not refute them in such a manner that I do not concede that there are many advantages of election in which succession is deficient, but in such a manner that, when all the advantages and detriments have been collected into one, I show that there are more detriments in election and more advantages in succession.

First, the arrogance and delights of kings who were born and educated in the purple are objected without cause. The pride of those who came to the kingdom from a private fortune was more intolerable. For a sudden and unaccustomed raising on high makes men swollen. And just as the eyes of those around whom a great light is suddenly poured when they rise from sleep grow dim, so private persons, stunned by the novel splendor of unexperienced majesty, forget themselves. Indeed, nature is so arranged that solar rays falling upon an opposing face drive out memory, especially from those accustomed to shade.

Thus Aristotle also, no poor teacher of kings, admonishes us in book 5 of the *Politics*, chapter 8: “The common method of preserving every commonwealth is to adorn no one beyond measure, but rather to attribute honors that are small and of long duration than great ones swiftly; for through such things men become worse. And not all can bear prosperous fortune.” Certainly not all--indeed, few. Otho was the best servant before government and the worst master, as was cast about concerning him in a proverb.

[Printed page 64]

On the contrary, an emperor spoke prudently when, having been carried from command to the imperial summit by the soldiers’ impetus, he cried: “O fellow soldiers, you have lost a good commander, nor yet have you made a good emperor.” I do not deny that there is danger in the children of kings. “Most command their desires less amid the obediences of fortune.” Curtius, book 8. Nevertheless, because tender dispositions are most readily incited toward love of the honorable and right, and because the natural quality of a human being is such that he is not born good or evil from the stock itself--I speak of that evil which is outside the inherited guilt of origin--but receives a disposition inclined toward each, all can be rendered better by care, work, and unwearied labor, even contrary to the inclination of nature.

§ 18. Nevertheless, in our age the children of princes have always possessed the least license. Formerly that manner prevailed, when their tender age was compelled to behold blood not only in the amphitheater but even at a banquet, and when, without their knowing, injuries to every kind of morals were displayed upon the stage. Now princes generally select those who are to instruct their children with as much judgment as many commonwealths employ in placing not even a prince over themselves. Meanwhile they are taught to moderate their passions, love justice, pity suppliants, and benefit all. But education must be treated in another place. I come to the second objection, which concerns the danger of tyranny.

I said above that tyranny is to be feared in every kind of government. I also added this: an elected prince possesses more cause to change the principate into tyranny than does one who commands by hereditary right. For the former shears and flays more greedily because he is soon to depart; the latter awaits the produce of the following year also and plants pear trees for his grandchildren to pluck.

§ 19. But third, they say, by election a field is opened to virtues. First, how many can hope? Out of one hundred myriads scarcely one commands. Next, what kind of virtue is it to hope for a kingdom as the reward of virtue? That hope will make dissemblers and candidates for the purple, not cultivators of true piety and justice. But what if the worst men are selected after the good have been passed over?

I do not speak of the Ethiopians, who placed over themselves as king a man selected from bodily beauty, a fallacious and fleeting thing; nor of others who estimated that dignity by the mass and magnitude of bodies. For it is easy to surpass them, as also the Auruncans, peoples of Peru, who placed a heavy log upon the shoulders of several men: the one who had carried it longer before collapsing was proclaimed king. Nevertheless, we who mock barbarians discern these and fouler things among the most cultivated peoples.

The Quirites elected Romulus, a fratricide; most of them were robbers and men who had escaped punishment by the asylum. After his death, they summoned Numa, a magician and impostor, from the Sabines. In Tullus Hostilius there was an appearance of fortitude, but the deeds of a robber, since without any right he stirred men at rest to arms. Ancus,

the most ambitious of the men of his time, received the kingdom by artifice. Priscus also imposed upon a rustic people through Greek arts. Servius, truly a slave, obtained the kingdom by fraud; Tarquin killed him.

There were seven kings. Romulus was changed into a tyrant and torn apart by the senate. Numa occupied the government by a simulation of piety. Tullus administered it tyrannically. Priscus thrust himself in by deceptions; Servius by the fraud of a woman; Tarquin by the slaughter of his father-in-law. Behold, consider these things and give virtue hope of honor. See Claudius, lifted into the camp by the shout of one soldier, command; see Otho purchase the government of the world for a few coins; one man selects Vitellius, and the stupor of the soldiers follows. Probus, while he is commended to the army so that they may name a brave, clement, and upright emperor, becomes Augustus through the prerogative of his name. Regillianus from his name, Proculus from a game, are imposed upon the world as robbers rather than princes.

§ 20. What is said in the fourth place--that succession arose from flattery--I refuted above when I showed that it is most ancient and was approved even among the people of God. But often a boy unequal to so great a burden will put on the purple. That will be rare; nevertheless, Solomon also was a boy and possessed adult brothers when all Israel marveled at his prudence. The boyhood of kings can be ruled by the prudence of mothers, guardians, and kinsmen. Joash also, as a boy, did what was right before the Lord all the days in which Jehoiada the priest taught him. The five-year period of Nero himself, with Seneca and Burrus as guides, surpassed many good princes. Boys too can command, but with the support and guidance of old men.

Theodosius the Younger was a boy, but what prince equaled the government of the boy? I dread the danger of the age, and I hear God saying: "Woe to the land whose king is a boy." But I join Benaiahs, Jehoiadas, Senecas, Burruses, and Pulcherias for supporting weakness. For this reason Scripture does not reject tender age simply, but measures a land's unhappiness by two things: namely, if its king is a boy and its princes eat in the morning. For if you place beside youth, which is inclined toward amusements and delights, voluptuous princes and artificers of enticements and banquets, truly not even safety itself could preserve that land.

§ 21. The seventh objection was that it is equitable that one who will command all should be elected by all. This is plebeian and, as Aristotle is accustomed to speak, "ἄγρειον." It has been taken from tribunician declamations; now it has been refuted by laws, practice, reason, and the advantage of the commonwealth itself. It is certainly established that there is no people which as a whole elects its prince, except perhaps among Peruvians, cannibals, or wandering Ethiopians; nor did that "ὄχλοχειρία," or mob election, ever turn out rightly for them.

I pronounce that these things are generally so, for I have never judged that the best princes selected from the common people should be placed after Sardanapaluses and purple-born plagues. Otherwise, there is in nobility a certain disposition toward great things and, if it is polished, honorable ones. They see the images of their ancestors in the archive so that they may imitate them. Father Aeneas and maternal uncle Hector are a great incitement toward virtue. Euripides says nobly:

"οὐκ ἔστι τοῦδε παισὶ κάλλιον γέρας,"

"ἢ πατρὸς ἐσθλοῦ καγαθοῦ πεφυκέναι."

"No distinction is more beautiful for children than to have sprung from a good and honorable father."

But only so that the progeny is no less of virtue than of blood; otherwise, the greatness of the father does not bring the son forward but overwhelms him. What Spartianus says is false and odious, but received by the inclined ears of the common crowd: "Almost none of the great men left behind a son who was excellent and useful; most left such sons that it would have been better to depart without posterity." It is false. Many left good sons and many middling ones; many corrupted them by error and many by neglect of education; some corrupted themselves willingly.

Heliogabalus was a monster of government. “If I have an heir,” he says, “I shall give him a guardian who will compel him to do those things which I myself have done and which I am about to do.” Therefore it is frequently the fault of fathers; often the depravity of sons is obstinate against every labor of education.

§ 22. Those who leave kings free judgment in selecting a successor to the kingdom from among their children fill all things with slaughters. Plutarch writes concerning Pyrrhus, and others concerning others. No firstborn will permit himself to be excluded; and if he is excluded, avengers will not be lacking. The case of Pertinax is different, who wished election to be seen as reserved to the senate.

[Printed page 65]

Hereditary succession is not a benefit of the dead man, but a prerogative of the family. Thus Philip pressed his right in Portugal; thus the Britons rendered Edward’s testament void.

A firstborn son born while his father was not yet king is preferred to the others, although they were born in the purple. Thus the jurists hand down by consensus. Ulpian, in law 5, *On Senators*. For the rationale is the same.

CHAPTER XXVI

That the Governments of Women Are to Be Admitted, but Rarely

§ 1. I do not judge it equitable for a woman to hold government over men unless, in an extraordinary danger or through heroic virtue, the woman should be an example to the men themselves. Nevertheless, women are not excluded from public life through injury and contempt for their sex, but because they are weaker. “The counsel of a woman is without strength, that of a boy imperfect,” says Aristotle in book 1 of the *Politics*.

Those who proclaim that all women are wicked and all instructed in the same school for wickedness are injurious toward their own mother. It is not astonishing that all speak against that sex which is defended by no one. Let us weigh the matter in a political and humane manner. For what an impudent persecutor of women says is bitter:

“Γυναῖκες εἰς μὲν ἐσθλὰ ἀμηχανώταται”

“Κακῶν δὲ πάντων τέκτονες σοφώταται.”

“We women are indeed most unfit for good things,

but most cunning artificers of all evil things.”

But it has seemed otherwise to others. The case is before the judge. The Salic Law bars women from the scepter. “Lilies do not spin,” Philip of Valois announces to Edward the Briton. Cujas, book 8 of *Observations*, chapter 14; Tolosanus, book 7, chapter 16; Heigius, book 1, question 7. It seemed otherwise to the Spaniards, English, and Scots, and also to the Austrians.

§ 2. First, indeed, there is the natural weakness of women. Men, because they are strong and ambidextrous, can rule and be ruled; but women are ruled only, for they are subject to men. And they speak truly when they repeat what Hippocrates teaches in the *Aphorisms*, section 7, chapter 44: “γυνὴ ἀμφοδέξιος οὐ γίνεται”; “A woman does not become ambidextrous.” Pliny also teaches this, book 7, chapter 17.

Weakness of counsels also follows this infirmity of nature. Assuredly, by the Roman laws a tutor and curator is given to women although they are fully adult, indeed even after the husband’s death. Cicero, *For Flaccus*: “Women are not permitted to conduct any matter without the counsel of tutors and procurators.” And *For A. Caecina*: “What a woman promised without a tutor as author is not owed.” And *For L. Murena*: “Our ancestors wished all women, on account of the weakness of their counsel, to be within the power of tutors.”

At Athens, a limit upon their transaction of business was prescribed by law, and it was defined as six *modii* of barley. This also seems to have been transferred to the Romans. “Our ancestors,” says Cato in book 4 of the *Macedonian War*, “did not wish women to conduct even a private matter without an author.” Much more, therefore, are they to be barred from scepters. That defect is one of judgment and prudence, from which arises a certain inconstancy of will, an inclination toward a fall, and a lack of control over the passions. Thus they neither possess authority nor can execute most things without others; it is also not fitting for them to speak in public.

“γυναικὶ κόσμον ἢ σιγὴν φέρει.”

“Silence is a woman’s ornament.”

§ 3. For these reasons the Parthians and Thracians treated women after the fashion of slaves; more mildly did the Lydians and Numidians, among whom women commanded at home and men outside. More mildly, but not rightly; more consonant with nature and reason was the law of Romulus, by which a chaste wife who was compliant toward

her husband was mistress of the family equally with the man. For since a woman has been added to a man and it has been said, “You shall be beneath the power of the man,” and since Lucretius sings truly in book 5:

“The whole male sex far excels in art
and is much more skillful,”

equity demands equal rights for the same nature, so that the man may command after the manner of a father of a family, not with the harshness of a master.

Those who cast down into the condition of female slaves the women from whom they were born with pain and by whose milk they were nourished are ungrateful toward nature--women whom they ought to assert into liberty, even at peril of their own head, lest they be slaves. But if, because their nature is less noble than that of men, they must for that reason be deprived of participation in liberty, “Τὸ χεῖρον γὰρ ἀνάγκη νικᾶσθαι ὑπὸ τὸ κρεῖττον, ὅπου τὸ χεῖρόν ἐστι.” For it is necessary that what is inferior should be conquered by what is better, wherever the better exists. Let us also diminish the civil standing of men debilitated by vices, in strength, and in mind, and consign them to workhouses. For there are many women more excellent than many men in many things, as Plato says in book 5 of the *Republic*.

Therefore the liberty of women, their right within the family, and their honor must be defended no less than their chastity and reputation. For the Christian law also orders that more abundant honor be placed around the weaker vessels, 1 Corinthians 12:23. But only so far that they are companions and assistants, not that they dominate.

Among the Achaeans indeed dominion and the conduct of business resided with women. Hence in Homer’s *Iliad* they are called insultingly, “κρατούμενοι,” or “those ruled [by women],” “Ἀχαιοὶ οὐκ ἔτι Ἀχαιοί”: “Achaean women, no longer Achaeans.” Histories hand down that the Lycians also were subjected to governments by women. And, what I grieve to report, Tacitus says concerning the unconquered Germans: “A woman dominates; to such a degree do they degenerate not only from liberty but even from servitude.” At Rome it was the highest reproach to live an Achaean life. For Plutarch says most truly: “ἡ φύσις παρανομεῖται γυναικοκρατουμένη”; “It is a transgression of nature to be governed by a woman.”

§ 4. Therefore I approve a middle way. Let women and slaves not be held in the same position, as occurs among barbarians according to Aristotle’s testimony. Nor let a husband possess the right of death over them, as among the Gauls, as Caesar teaches in book 6; much less let old women be sold, oppressed by labors, or even buried alive, as was customary among the most monstrous of the barbarians, the Parthians and Thracians.

Conversely, I would not wish government to be conferred upon them by human law unless a great reason demands it. For if it is fitting that an honorable woman should obey her husband, how is it suitable that she should command armies and kingdoms? A man is rendered infamous if he obeys his wife; a wife infamous if she commands her husband.

§ 5. This is a strong presumption against the scepters of women, but not a judgment by which all power and right of governing is denied them. For although the laws order that a woman obey her husband, she is nevertheless mistress of the family--that is, of the maidservants and servants--and illustrious women retain right over their cities and dominions.

§ 6. Therefore I judge the government of a woman legitimate and useful to the commonwealth when, after her husband has died, the children are heirs at an age too young to administer government. Then I judge that, together with the tutors, the mother must be admitted not only to a share in the kingdom but even in precedence over the tutors, with chief authority for educating the son and governing. For she is the mother of the family, and care of the offspring ought not to be denied to her. But that care possesses as an annex the care of the inheritance--that is, of the kingdom. Nor will maternal authority suffice for ruling the son and the son’s ministers unless she also possesses lawful power in the kingdom.

Next, great dangers surround an infant king; and many make use of his age for wrongdoing, many attempt novelties. In this necessity

[Printed page 66]

no one is more sagacious than the mother, no one more faithful to the son, especially since the son's danger will also drag the mother with it. And the practice of the noblest kingdoms possesses this rule. France does not allow women to be heirs of the kingdom, nor does almost any part of Germany. Nevertheless, queen mothers and princely matrons in Germany, as the most loving guardians and helpers of their sons, are always held in chief honor and consulted concerning public business. I judge that this is done most prudently for many reasons.

For first, it is a decree of divine law that a son should honor his mother. Therefore to approach her, seek counsel, and admit her into participation in affairs is consonant with the bond and obligation of nature. For whom will the prince trust if he does not trust his mother, by whose pain he was born, from whose breasts he hung, and whose safety rests upon the preservation of her son?

Next, it is useful to none of the administrators that the mother should be separated from the administration of affairs. The prince will soon grow to adolescence and recognize the authors of that alienation. He will either disdain the ministers or certainly cast them away when they are detected in some error. Nor will errors be lacking among many; and if they are lacking, nevertheless they will not escape denunciations. Meanwhile the mother will be reconciled with her son; they themselves will pay the penalties of their ill-considered rashness.

But if they possess the prince's mother as conscious of and authorizing their business, their accounting will not be difficult with such an advocate, nor, in an offense, their pardon with such an intercessor. Therefore it is advantageous to all that authority should remain with the mothers of princes.

§ 7. Second, I approve the government of a woman when, according to the laws of the kingdom, she herself is the heir. For if a farm or castle ought not to be taken from a woman because she is a woman, neither, therefore, should a kingdom, unless by the laws of the kingdom the inferior sex is barred from the scepter. This, nevertheless, under the condition that, with the fatherland consenting or not opposing, she should come under the laws and into the house of a husband; meanwhile, she herself should administer the state.

In this matter, the advantage of the fatherland and the integrity of religion show that two things must be observed. First, let her not love a bridegroom unwelcome or suspect to the fatherland; next, let the fatherland not obtrude upon the heir a man hateful to her. Rather, by mutual consent let them select both a good husband and a good prince. By this method the Spains grew to so great a magnitude; and the best poet begins Roman majesty from a dotal kingdom, "when an only daughter preserved so great a house."

But it is fitting that this kingdom of a woman should be brief. For there are customarily many competitors when a wife draws so great a dowry; some even advance to such shamelessness that they adorn nuptials with war and blood. For most of the wars which Francis, king of the Gauls, waged with Charles, duke of Guelders, although other causes were displayed as pretexts, tended toward this: that Charles should select for himself a son-in-law from the princes of Gaul. This was so much the case that at times the king himself and Charles were ignorant of the true and inward cause of the war, as Commynes, a most prudent counselor of kings, left in writing.

§ 8. Third, I approve it if the matron is of proven constancy, piety, and prudence, of royal lineage, and possesses the favor of the common crowd and the nobles, especially if otherwise seditions and the promotions of unworthy persons are feared. Pulcheria assuredly preserved the commonwealth while her brother was alive and vindicated it excellently after he died, calling Marcian, a man both brave and just, into partnership.

§ 9. The crimes of women in administering governments which political writers enumerate provide insufficient cause for us to bar all women from public affairs. Jezebel was impious, Athaliah cruel. Laodice, the wife of the Cappadocian,

was the murderess of six sons born from herself, much more savage than Medea. Cleopatra was wanton and savage toward her brother. Messalina, Faustina, and Fredegund were monstrous harlots; for these royal women are adduced.

But if we employ that argument, we should not judge even men to have the right to command; they have sinned more often and in more things. Against one Jezebel I set Ahab together with all the apostate kings of Israel; against Athaliah, Abimelech, who killed all his brothers, seventy men, upon one stone. They are indignant that Laodice was savage toward her sons; the Turks do this daily, for they are not ignorant of the law and custom by which they decree government for one and death for the others.

We deny that Messalina, Faustina, and Fredegund commanded. They were powerful harlots and poisoners, and they employed male administrators no better than themselves. Nero surpassed Messalina; Commodus, his mother Faustina. We certainly can recount excellent heroines and bring forward women constant beyond manly strength.

The first is Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, blessed in her tent. She gave milk to him who sought water and offered butter in the bowl of princes. She put her left hand to the nail and her right hand to the workman's hammers, struck Sisera, and sought a place for the wound in his head. The second is Deborah, who judged the people, for all Israel ascended to her for every judgment. Judges 4 and 5: "Arise, arise, Deborah; arise, arise, and speak a canticle. The remnants of the people were saved; the Lord contended among the brave. The leaders of Issachar were with Deborah and followed the tracks of Barak, who exposed himself to danger as though plunging headlong into an abyss."

I would not even exclude from the kingdom that wise woman who settled a most grievous sedition through her eloquence, 2 Kings 20. For she went out to the people and spoke wisely to them, and they cut off the head of Sheba, son of Bichri, and cast it to Joab. She furnished more than victory itself, more than David's bravest army. The histories of Judith and Esther also are known; I hasten to others: Mamaea, the mother of Alexander; Placidia; Pulcheria; finally Matilda, who, although of unequal power, nevertheless with the highest constancy, fidelity, piety, and prudence defended Italy and the Church against the most powerful kings.

I add to them Isabella, wife of Ferdinand; Irene Augusta; and especially Libussa, queen of the Bohemians, whose government was peaceful, just, and brave. Then she lost the kingdom not through sloth or tyranny but by making a correct judgment for the people, as Aeneas Silvius relates. Two of the best men were contending before her concerning possession of fields. A sentence was pronounced from goodness and equity: the more powerful was condemned in favor of the humbler. He, as if it were an injury for the more powerful man to succumb in a trial, appealed to the people and said that it was dishonorable and unworthy that so great a people, so many nobles, and so great a government should be subject to the judgment of one woman.

The multitude, stirred by his voice, began to accuse government by a woman, to bring forward the customs of neighboring nations, and to seek a man who would rule over them. Libussa, after ordering silence, said that she had perceived the desire of the people and would not frustrate them in it; after her father's death she had held government for her subjects, not for herself. She ordered them to return on the following day. They obeyed; they departed and returned.

When Libussa saw in the assembly that the multitude was present, she said: "Bohemians, down to this day I have commanded you peacefully and gently, as is the custom of women. I have taken from no one what was his; I have injured no one. You have experienced a mother, not a mistress. But my government is unacceptable to you. You act with me according to the custom of human disposition: nothing pleases a human being for long. Peoples desire a pious and just prince more readily than they endure one.

"Be free, therefore, by my judgment. I shall give you a man who will be over you and judge your heads according to his own decision, as you wished. Go, saddle my white horse and lead it into a broad, open field; release it there free and unbridled, following it wherever it goes. The horse will run for some

time; finally it will halt before a man eating upon an iron table. He will be my husband and your prince.”

The speech was pleasing to the assembly. The released horse traversed ten thousand paces. At last it halted beside the river Biela before a plowman named Primislaus. The nobles and people, reassured after they saw the horse standing and caressing and fawning upon the plowman, came nearer and said: “Hail, good man, whom the gods have given us as prince. Unyoke the oxen, mount the horse, and come with us. Libussa seeks you as husband, Bohemia as leader.” Primislaus, although rustic, received the messengers kindly and answered that he would do what was asked. Thus the most learned man relates it most briefly from Silvius.

But if the rationale of those who admit women also into the hope and inheritance of the kingdom does not yet please, let them assuredly hear of many other reigns by no means to be regretted. Semiramis augmented Babylon. Tomyris propagated the bounds of her government widely and--what is a distinguished glory--satiated the slain Cyrus with blood. Rhodogune vindicated her fatherland; and the kings of the Persians, delighted by her valor, stamped coins with an image of Rhodogune startled, her hair loosened and blowing. For when she heard of the defection of her people while she was washing, she set out against the rebels without drying her hair and even bound herself by an oath that she would not wash her hair unless victory over the enemies had been carried back.

Zarina, queen of the Sacae, by prudence and clemency led her nation toward a gentler and more humane cultivation and founded many cities. So great was her glory among her own people that the Parthians defected from the Medes to her, a distinguished commendation of government by a woman. For they preferred her justice and humanity to the insolence of the Medes and judged that so great was the strength in a woman that they did not doubt they could be defended by her against their former lords.

With how great valor did Blanche, queen of France and mother of St. Louis, both administer the kingdom and educate her son? Margaret, queen of England and wife of Henry VI, when her husband's zeal for quiet withdrew his mind from public affairs, administered all things in peace and war as an equal to great kings. She restored Henry, captured by conspirators, to liberty by war; expelled from the kingdom, with an indefatigable spirit she sought it again three times with a fleet.

The Poles, bravest of peoples, conferred government upon the heroine Wanda. Since she said, “I prefer to be a prince rather than the wife of a prince,” she lived unmarried and triumphed over the Marcomanni. What people is fiercer, what people more arrogant, than the Lombards? Nevertheless, when Authari died and, as occurs, they divided into factions concerning the successor and sedition and civil war began to grow, they conferred government upon Theodelinda of Bavaria, Authari's wife, under this law: that whomever she chose as husband, the entire nation would also venerate as king. Thus it was done. She named Agilulf, and from his government that nation began to be more cultivated and humane.

And these things suffice concerning the first causes of the commonwealth--efficient cause, matter, and form. Now let us treat of the end.

CHAPTER XXVII

That Majesty Shines Forth in All These Forms

§ 1. In all these forms shines forth human majesty, but one of divine origin and nearest to God. For it--as they are accustomed to speak--is either real or personal. The former endures together with the kingdom, even when there is an interregnum; the latter, attached to persons, shines forth now in one, now in several, whether in a king, the best men, or the people. But wherever government exists, there is care for another's safety. Oppian, book 5 of the *Halieutica*, names kings “ὀλύμπια τείχεα γαίης,” “the heavenly walls of the earth.” See Augustine, *The City of God*, book 19, chapter 15. For government undertakes that all are to be defended, whether its reign extends widely or its city bounds are narrow. Alexander used to say that the world was one city and that his camp was its citadel.

By real majesty the kingdom is constituted, and its fundamental laws are confirmed by common consent. Personal majesty is the power of governing and disposing all things. Hence there is something admirable and beyond nature when all obey one or a few, as Tolosanus and Lipsius rightly teach. Thus also *Fasti* 5:

“Hence Majesty was born, who tempers the whole world,
and on the day she was brought forth, she was great.”

Hence the crime of injured majesty is the gravest among all, because it is against the greatest thing and against all.

§ 2. The rights of majesty are: to give laws, not receive them; to dispense contrary to the laws; to defend the fatherland; to administer the highest affairs; to judge all and be judged by no one. Majesty is the right or power itself from which all these so great effects flow.

The regalia are the effects of majesty, or rights consequent upon majesty, among which many number being released from the laws, as Bocer, book 1 *On Regalia*, §2, and Arnisaeus, book 2 *On the Right of Majesty*, number 1. They all arise from the supreme power of commanding, which contains both lawgiving and judging.

§ 3. They distinguish the regalia into greater and lesser. They call the former rights of dignity and the latter rights of utility or of the fisc. Not rightly; for those of the fisc contain all the defenses and sinews of power. Without them majesty is either nothing or precarious. Thus they are not lesser but great, often greater than those which are called rights of dignity.

Joachim Stephani, book 3 *On Jurisdiction*, chapter 8, §2, says that the regalia consist in “αὐτεξουσία & δεσποτεία.” This is confusedly said and not truly. For we do not acknowledge “δεσποτείαν” in a moderate government. If we speak properly, it is the name of a private person; if broadly, it is power itself. Next, “αὐτεξουσία” is each person's free judgment, which is supreme in the supreme prince--but “νόμιμον,” or lawful; otherwise it is unjust.

But I would not wish that name to be abused in this matter, lest the will of the prince be judged justice. Those things assist royal dogs--parasites who are destroyers of kingdoms--excessively.

§ 4. The regalia which are customarily given to lesser princes in a kingdom are called so improperly, for they are “ἀπόρρωγες,” or offshoots, and communications of rights similar to supreme right. The highest right of princes under a king in Germany is to promulgate edicts and establish laws. Therefore what Fachinaeus, Bocer, Camman, and others refer among the things reserved to supreme majesty is false.

It belongs to the same authority to establish new laws and to approve or repeal old ones. Bodin, book 1 of the *Politics*, number 94. But, as I said, not only an evident advantage but a certain necessity ought to exist for departing from that which has long seemed equitable. Law 2, *On the Constitutions of Princes*. Every most factious person learns to dispute all laws when he sees that what was long held sacred is repudiated.