

ADAM CONTZEN

TEN BOOKS OF POLITICS

BOOK TWO

On Religion to Be Maintained in the Commonwealth

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CHAPTER I

The Connection and Order of the Two Following Books

ON RELIGION TO BE MAINTAINED IN THE COMMONWEALTH

§ 1. In the first book we treated of God, the principal cause of the commonwealth, from whom all power comes and in whom it terminates; of the human beings from whom that political body is fitted together as though from its members, and is moved and acts; and likewise of its manifold form. Now a discourse must be undertaken concerning the cause which is first in the mind of the agent and last in the execution of the work--namely, concerning the end of the commonwealth. Since that end consists in the exercise of virtue and the contemplation of what is honorable, we must hereafter speak concerning the virtues of magistrates and subjects. But since true faith in God is the foundation of all virtues, I shall treat principally of it in the second book, and of the others in the third book.

Although that doctrine might seem to pertain to individuals rather than to the commonwealth, nevertheless, mindful of my undertaking, I shall accommodate all the precepts of the virtues to the formation of magistrates and of subjects insofar as they are citizens and members of a great body, so that it may be wholly evident to all by what things the majesty of governments has grown, and by what things it has been afflicted and given over to destruction.

CHAPTER II

The End of the Commonwealth Is Its Happiness

§ 1. The happiness of individual human beings and of the whole commonwealth is the end. All seek this; in this are all the things that make one happy. There can be many who do not seek to be rich, kings, or brave; there is no one who wishes to be wretched or does not wish to be happy. The ancients believed Happiness to be a goddess--almost truly, for Lucullus was the first to establish a temple for her. But no one who worships the gifts of God in place of God can be happy.

§ 2. All therefore seek to be happy; but in what thing does happiness consist? For if it consists in riches, pleasures, freedom from pain, or honors, the commonwealth must be directed toward those goods; if in virtue, the minds of human beings must be exercised toward this. The commonwealth must therefore stand or fall with this judgment. For τὸ τέλος, “the end,” is the target, cynosure, and norm by which all public and private plans are directed. What must be sought so greatly in life as what its end is--what is the final and ultimate thing to which all counsels for living well and acting rightly must be referred? Seneca, Epistle 71: “Whenever you wish to know what must be avoided or what must be sought, look to the highest good and the purpose of your whole life. For whatever we do ought to agree with it. No one will arrange individual things unless the sum of his life has already been set before him. No one, although he has his colors prepared, will reproduce a likeness unless it is already settled what he wishes to paint. We err for this reason: we all deliberate about the parts of life, but no one about the whole. He who wishes to shoot an arrow ought to know what he seeks, and then direct and govern the missile with his hand.”

Since these things possess the greatest force in private life, they possess so much the greater force in the commonwealth as the fall of great bodies is more serious. For if some Epicurean or Aristippean should set an end for the city, all will be dissolved into pleasures; they will become Sicyonians, Sybarites, and Babylonians. They will overthrow everything honorable and, finally, the commonwealth itself.

It is indeed untimely now to pursue the opinions of the ancient philosophers. For who is now so mad as to place the highest good in pleasure or riches, although he lives in such a way that he seems to acknowledge no good besides feeding and lust?

I leave these things to the philosophers in their thinking-shops. I deny that anyone who refers all things to his own advantage and pleasure can be a statesman; I affirm that he cannot be a good citizen. He will not protect right, he will not rescue an innocent person from punishment, he will not offer food to one perishing from hunger, much less will he put on arms or descend into the arena except for the sake of pleasure. Such savagery and brutish folly will remove from the midst every association of the human race and civil fellowship.

§ 3. More humane, and in a certain manner more cunning, is the reasoning of others who think that commanding is a great part of happiness, and therefore that government exists for its own sake. Dionysius indeed substituted the schoolmaster’s rod for the scepter at Corinth and, lest he should not command, sought a scholastic kingdom. Caesar’s mind was no different: he preferred to be first in an Alpine town rather than second at Rome. But not even that error is tolerable, as St. Augustine rightly says in book 5 of *The City of God*, chapter 24:

“For we do not call certain Christian emperors happy for the reason that they either ruled longer, or left sons ruling after a peaceful death, or subdued enemies of the commonwealth, or were able both to guard against and to crush hostile citizens rising against them. For certain worshipers of demons, who do not belong to the kingdom of God to which these men belong, deserved to receive these and other gifts or consolations of this wretched life. And this was done by his mercy, lest those who believed in him should desire such things as though they were the highest goods.

“But we call them happy if they rule justly; if, amid the tongues of those who honor them sublimely and the exceedingly humble services of those who salute them, they are not exalted, but remember that they are human beings.”

§ 4. If we also weigh the matter by human reason, this readily occurs: kingship is not the ability to command, but a duty. For neither does the principate exist for its own sake, nor is the prince an end to himself; rather, the supreme good of both is the safety and protection of peoples. No prudent person will have thought that so many thousands of cities and peoples which obey the king of the Spains exist for his sake, but that the king exists for the peoples, and that the king’s duty is to provide for the safety of all and to remedy the evils of all.

Therefore, since servitude exists not for its own sake but for the sake of the master, and kingship is servitude, it does not exist for its own sake. Thus Antigonus most prudently said to his son when he was conducting himself rather insolently and fiercely: “Know, my son, that our kingship is a splendid servitude.” There is also the royal utterance of Sopater to his brother Demetrius in Stobaeus, Sermon 44: “See that you are worthy of government, not by the condition of the commonwealth, but by excellence of virtue and devotion toward your subjects. Those whom previously you did not acknowledge, and whom you thought pertained to you no more than any human being does by the common nature of all, once made prince you ought to revere as now known and familiar.”

Would that all kings, in imitation of Moses, the mildest of human beings upon earth, loved their own people. Numbers 11:11: “And he said to the Lord: Why have you afflicted your servant? Why do I not find favor before you? And why have you placed the weight of this whole people upon me? Did I conceive all this multitude, or beget it, that you should say to me: Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse is accustomed to carry an infant, and bear them into the land concerning which you swore to their fathers?” Moses, established as prince by God, is oppressed by the weight of the people, and God shows how capacious the bosom of princely clemency ought to be. “Carry it,” God says; “carry it as a nurse, solicitously, gently, as one who will render an account to me, the parent.” To that sense another also rightly said: “A good king is a public servant.” And Antoninus the Philosopher received royal adoption sadly, not ignorant how many cares and dangers one headband bound together.

Therefore happiness in kingship exists only in opinion; and when opinion deceives, it removes all happiness, for error makes people wretched. If we also believe those with experience, we shall discover that magistracy is not even to be desired. “The inexperienced man seeks great power; the experienced man hates it,” Pompey used to say. But if he had not hated it too late, he himself and his sons, after nations had been triumphed over, would not have made expiation by so pitiable a death.

I would scarcely believe Themistocles if, endowed with the highest talent, he could not have condemned his own ambition. He used to declare that he preferred to go to the tomb rather than to the tribunal (Aelian, book 6). It is assuredly a great servitude; but because it is splendid and honored, it is loved, especially because insults are feared in private life.

§ 5. So great a labor and care, therefore, belongs not to one who is happy but to one who is busy. Seleucus used to say: “If the common crowd knew how laborious it is merely to read and write so many letters, it would not judge the diadem worth lifting even from the ground.” It is beautiful, I confess, to admit into one’s mind the care of the whole commonwealth, to undertake the destinies of a people, and, in a certain manner forgetful of oneself, to live for nations; to receive innumerable reports from every direction and send out as many commands; to think about so many cities, nations, and provinces; to endure anxieties all nights and days and to take thought for the safety of all. This is beautiful; it is not happy. For happiness is not laborious, is not anxious, does not expend itself upon the advantages of others, but accomplishes whatever it does without any vexation.

Antiochus had this consolation for his defeat: when conquered by the Romans and ordered to reign within Taurus, he declared that he would be freed from a great care because he had been enclosed within modest boundaries of a kingdom. Henry VII, son of Frederick II, applied himself continually to affairs and remembered to take food only late.

When admonished that he should have regard for his strength and health, he answered: “For a private person, every time is a time for food when he wishes or is accustomed; but for a king, if he does not renounce his name, only that time in which he is free.”

Alfonso, king of Aragon, experienced this; for when an old man pressed upon him rather importunately during dinner, he said that asses were happier than kings: “For while they eat, their drivers take the packsaddles from them; but this old man places one upon me while I dine.” Tiberius testified that he was a servant--with a feigned mind, but with an utterance to be emulated by good kings: “I have said both now frequently and at other times, Conscript Fathers, that a good and salutary prince, whom you have furnished with so great and so free a power, ought to serve the senate and all citizens, often and generally even individuals; nor do I repent of having said it.” Tiberius said it but did not do it. Charles V both said it and added weight to his words; for by deed he showed what kingship was. Lord of as many kingdoms as others scarcely are of cities, he wished to die a private person; and when he transferred the Belgian provinces to his son Philip, he said: “O son, I place a great burden upon you. For throughout the whole time of my principate I never had a quarter of an hour free from great cares and anxieties.”

Therefore, if he is an emperor in the true sense of the name, if he weighs his duty not merely in appearance and name, and if he considers not the purple, scepter, and diadem but the affair of the people, he is never his own, always the commonwealth's, and often even the property of individuals. Rudolf I accomplished this excellently, as he did many other things. For when he saw poorer persons being kept away by his attendants, he exclaimed: “By God, permit human beings to come to me; for I was not called to government so that I might be shut up in a little chest.”

§ 6. Those occupations are grave and troublesome; nevertheless, because they are mingled with the sweetness of commanding and the enticement of the highest honor, they are loved by the frivolous and tolerated by the serious, and therefore are thought to hinder happiness less. But if princes should look upon the dangers and evils, they will confess themselves most wretched. This is indeed accustomed to happen to wicked princes; for because they lay aside the care of the commonwealth, they are oppressed by fear. Indeed, as perpetual labor exercises the good prince, so fear--a worse evil than labor--exercises the wicked one.

Hear the oracle of a wise man fleeing government (Vopiscus, *Proculus*): “You do not know, friends, what an evil it is to rule. Naked swords hang over our necks; spears threaten from every direction, missiles from every direction. The guards themselves are feared; the companions themselves are dreaded. Food is not taken for pleasure, a journey not for authority, wars not according to judgment, arms not according to devotion. Add that every age in government is criticized. Someone is old: he is judged incapable; but if he is not, madness is within him. For because you desire me as emperor, you draw me into the necessity of death. But I have a consolation for death: I shall not be able to perish alone.”

§ 7. What furies, what torments shall we believe tore apart the mind of Heliogabalus? Aelius Lampridius writes thus concerning him: “And it had been predicted to him by Syrian priests that he would die a violent death. He had therefore prepared cords entwined with purple, silk, and scarlet, with which, if necessary, he might end his life by a noose. He had also prepared golden swords with which he might kill himself if some violence pressed him. He had also prepared poisons in thunderstones, hyacinths, and emeralds, with which he might destroy himself if anything more grievous threatened. He had also made a very high tower, with gold and jeweled tablets laid beneath it before him, from which he might cast himself down, saying that even

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“his death ought to be precious and in keeping with the appearance of luxury, so that it might be said that no one had perished in such a manner. But those things availed nothing. For, as we have said, he was killed by buffoons and dragged most foully through the streets. This was the end of the name of the Antonines in the commonwealth, since all knew that this Antoninus had been as false in life as in name.”

If anyone, seeing him swimming either among roses or in pools of perfumes, thinks that he was happy, he is no less mad than the gladiator himself. He certainly was not secure, although security in the possession of good is the first portion of happiness. If he knows the dangers that threaten, he is anxious; if he is ignorant of them, he is foolish; nowhere is he happy. Therefore the flattery that is in the open will not inflate a wise king, but the envy that is always hidden, and the conspiracy that must always be feared, will restrain him with salutary fear.

§ 8. What, therefore, is the happiness that is the end of the commonwealth and, as they say, the highest good? I answer:

The end of the commonwealth is the highest good, the public good, the civil and human happiness of all and of individuals, consisting in acts of virtue; also divine happiness, toward which human happiness tends and without which human happiness is scarcely obtained. To these I add external order, peace or the defenses of war, an abundance of resources, and a copious supply of provisions. Since individuals do not suffice for themselves, they unite into one so that they may live honorably, peacefully, easily, and abundantly. Aristotle describes the public good to us no differently: “Ἐστὶ δὲ πολιτικὸν ἀγαθὸν τὸ δίκαιον. Τοῦτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ κοινῇ συμφέρον.” “The civil good is right, or what is just; for this is suitable to all.” Those words must be understood concerning a distinguished part of happiness; for generally, where administration is just, the commonwealth flourishes most greatly.

Moreover, the same Aristotle, book 7 of the *Politics*, chapter 2, affirms that the happiness of each individual human being and of the city is the same. His words are: “Whether the happiness of each individual human being and of the city must be said to be the same or not remains for us to explain. But this too is readily apparent. For all would grant with one voice that it is the same. For whoever places living well for one human being in riches also declares a city happy if it is wealthy and abundant; and whoever places the tyrannical life before all others also pronounces the city that commands the most people the happiest; and if anyone especially admires and approves an individual on account of virtue, he will also have said that the more adorned with virtue a city is, the happier it is.

“But there are now two things that need consideration: one, whether that life is more desirable which is passed in participation in the administration of the commonwealth and the city, or rather the private life of a foreigner, segregated and released from civil society; the other, what form of administering the commonwealth and what disposition--or ordering or, so to speak, arrangement--of the city must be judged best, whether participation in civil society is desirable and to be sought by all, or by some not at all but nevertheless by most.”

And in chapter 3 he says that εὐδαιμονίαν is πράξις, “that happiness is action,” and finally concludes that the same life is the best end for each individual human being and for the whole commonwealth.

§ 9. Nevertheless, I propose that two things be observed here. The first is that the happiness which we define is very imperfect, scarcely to be designated by the name of happiness; for it is both inconstant and insincere, contaminated by the intervention and mixture of many evils. It is rather the way to true happiness; nevertheless, he who is upon the way of happiness is also called happy. Thus the royal prophet also pronounces: “Blessed is the man who has not gone away in the counsel of the impious, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the chair of pestilence, but his will is in the law of the Lord.” Yet that happiness does not consist in the goods of pleasures, resources, and honors, which call the mind away from the good and do not lead it to the end.

The second admonition is that I join to happiness begun, or to the actions of the virtues, peace, resources, fortifications, and dignity--not as though people could not be happy without these things. Certainly the poor, the afflicted, and the martyrs have been happier through contempt for and loss of these things. But because these things are sought in the commonwealth, and are preserved well and with virtue--for that fortitude by which people can sustain calamities gladly and willingly belongs to few--the safety of all must therefore be pursued. Although the Stoics deny that soundness of limbs, health, strength, honors, and resources are goods, nevertheless the holy Fathers also number these things among the good gifts of God, which ought both to be sought and to be causes for thanksgiving. For it is permissible to use these as defenses toward true happiness; but when they are absent, the wretched are often cast headlong into crimes through need.

This, therefore, is the political end; yet it tends farther and searches out a richer happiness--namely, heavenly happiness. For the earthly city was established by God for this purpose: that it might transfer its citizens to the heavenly city. Hence it comes about that the earthly commonwealth ought not to be separated from the Church, but that there ought to be the highest conjunction of both. Nor will anyone obtain natural good and the moral virtues without the assistance of more divine grace.

Let no one teach that this can be done; it has not hitherto been done. All things were full of vices and crimes wherever the grace of God was not acknowledged. The Christian religion teaches us that without a special influx of divine goodness, one can neither arrive at perfect virtues, even human and moral ones, nor avoid sins for long. Aristotle himself, book 1 of the *Ethics*, chapter 9, and the final book, final chapter, taught that attaining the virtues is a divine gift. But we shall treat of that matter afterward in its own place. Now let us establish this with Aristotle, book 7 of the *Politics*, chapter 18: “Εὐδαιμονίαν εἶναι ἐνέργειαν καὶ χρῆσιν ἀρετῆς τελείας.” Happiness is action and the use of perfect virtue, with those aids added which conduce publicly to virtue.

CHAPTER III

That Virtue Must Necessarily Be Cultivated in the Commonwealth

§ 1. Let no one attempt to remove virtue from the commonwealth. It is an arduous thing; a narrow path leads to it; it has need of a spirited guide and teacher. Vices are learned without a master, and they drag those prone to them down the slope. I commend virtue, as the supreme treasure of the commonwealth, to kings, aristocrats, and the people. Virtue regulates kingdoms, cities, and provinces; it bears laws; it cultivates friendships; it distributes duties among relatives and children. Let princes and the people pursue virtue, but especially the prince, whose virtue has three distinguishing marks: for it both benefits the greatest number, is most conspicuous, and instructs, preserves, and corrects the commonwealth by example, not merely by deed.

No one is ignorant that it benefits the greatest number, since we read that great vices joined with supreme power have destroyed the world, and that all have been restored by the virtue of one good prince. For what floods, fires, famines, and pestilences are, wicked magistrates are; and just as provinces are compelled to endure storms and public brigandage, so too the losses caused by evil princes.

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But what fertility of the earth is, what a favorable wind is to the sea, what the sun is to the world, this a prince endowed with virtue provides to the commonwealth. He speaks thus with himself: “Of all mortals I have found favor and been chosen to discharge the office of the gods--of God--upon earth. I am the arbiter of life and death for nations; what condition and lot each person has is placed in my hand. I shall therefore do this: harm no one, benefit all. The fatherland is a sacred thing; to harm it is sacrilege. But he harms the fatherland who injures individuals; and he who possesses power in the fatherland but does not aid individuals does not use his power rightly.”

§ 2. But the principal glory of princes lies in example. The most faithful manner of giving precepts is to teach by examples; for virtue is shown by example, not recommended. The heliotrope and certain other plants are bent toward the movement of the sun by continual turning, and the people, intent upon the morals of princes and aristocrats, are drawn by their example. But they are drawn more powerfully when there is a departure from virtue, because enticements coming from so great an authority do not bring shame with them but wipe it away from those who possess it. Nazianzen truly said: “Subjects imitate the vices of their governors more readily than their virtues.” Accordingly, this too is true: princes harm more by example than by sin. For camps are accustomed to be very like their king; and because those who pursue a contrary life seem to condemn the deeds of magistrates, magnates sin most dangerously, since their crimes are born for the ruin of others. Therefore a good prince is exceedingly praiseworthy, whose condition is such that right deeds possess a double reward from the edification of others, and offenses a greater punishment from the corruption of subjects.

Yet the citizen is not to be excused, although the prince has supplied examples by his vices, although the commonwealth, wounded by another’s deed, has rushed headlong into vices. For he too, because he is a member, is burdensome by his disease not to himself alone, but makes the whole commonwealth worse and infects his neighbors by the contagion of his corruption. And although a disease that descends from the head is more serious, nevertheless that which clings to the members is often more troublesome. We see daily how private and foreign vices increase and spring up in the commonwealth. Nothing can be opposed to these more powerfully than the examples of magnates and of citizens of greater standing, which are stronger than punishments and laws. Moreover, the same change that is accustomed to occur in the prince follows in the people, but more swiftly when it is toward evil.

Next, it is highly fitting that princes and the whole commonwealth labor at this: that they struggle toward virtue especially when placed between contrary vices. For unless the prince’s diligence and the severity of the

commonwealth oppose them, custom, like a torrent, will abandon the whole people to the open field of vices. There are often atheists, impious persons, dissemblers, and the ambitious in courts; the prince must therefore take all the greater care lest he become worse through their company. For he who perseveres as good among the wicked must be exceptionally good.

§ 3. I am ashamed to say it, yet it must not be kept silent: in the courts of Christian princes there are often such corruptions that purveyors of vices and peddlers of lust, drunkenness, and vanity seem to have established their seat in them. How often have I heard courtiers complain that they could not tolerate that life any longer, that by the continual practice of drinking their strength was buried, their intellect diluted, and their death hastened--and they drank, and drank down a great cohort of weariness and fevers. This is the supreme evil in courts: that their examples flow out among the common people. At public assemblies a law necessary for the Germans was passed against pledging drinks and compelling men to equal draughts. It could have been observed, but at its first utterance it was crushed by the license of the court, and thereafter employed only in mockery.

Would that what Tacitus says of Roman morals did not apply to our commonwealth: "Modesty is scarcely retained amid honorable pursuits, much less is anything of upright morality preserved amid contests of vices."

§ 4. The first care of the commonwealth ought also to be divine worship, because it is under one God and can be corrected by him alone. If it publicly repudiates reverence, fear, and love for him, there is nothing by which it may be brought onto the way; it reckons it of little importance that it is vicious if it thinks sin will go unpunished. Nor has any other thing destroyed the highest powers more than liberty to sin. In a private person, poverty, fear of the laws, an accuser at hand, and a mocking neighbor restrain and curb this liberty; in magistrates, unless it is checked by reverence for God, it will burst forth into public disgraces. Therefore, under God alone as judge of the contest and judge, they stand before him who regards

The settled law and divine right of the mind, and the holy recesses

Of the soul, and the heart steeped in noble honor.

This I bid them bring to the temples, and they will sacrifice acceptably with meal.

For the divine power demands not ceremonies but the purity of an undefiled heart. The mind of that man, cultivated more by eloquence than by life, also acknowledged this when he said:

The heavenly powers rejoice not in a slaughtered ox,

But in faith, which must be displayed even without a witness.

§ 5. Fourth, if we seek the end, it lies in virtue while we live, and in the reward of virtue while we die--or rather, while we pass to immortality. If the commonwealth neglects this, it runs beside the way and indeed labors, but falls away from the fruit of its labor; finally, troublesome to itself and dashed against itself, it will either be crushed by its own vices or yield to an external enemy into servitude. This was the outcome of all--of all, I say--commonwealths, when evil morals brought the laws under their power, when laws without efficacy were fastened to the wall, while evil morals insulted those wretched laws and, with their standard raised and in square battle formation, entered the citadel of liberty.

§ 6. Finally, the natural judgment of our conscience impels us to embrace virtue and flee vice. For no good work is ever deprived of its most pleasant fruit, nor is a crime committed without a savage bite; for only after its commission is its magnitude and atrocity understood. The sorrowful thought of duty violated in any manner torments and reproaches the mind; approval of justice and honor preserved raises it up with quiet and joy and kindles it toward better things. Nor can this be torn away from the impious without its always striking with a muffled lash, so much so that it ravages and afflicts not only the mind but the body besides.

Those testimonies are greater than every exception for everyone, because each person announces them to himself, each speaks thus to himself and feels himself convicted. Seneca speaks truly in Epistle 105: “A great portion of security is to do nothing unjustly. The uncontrolled lead a confused and disturbed life; they fear as much as they harm, and are at leisure at no time. For when they have acted they tremble, they remain fixed; conscience does not permit them to do anything else and continually forces them to look back upon themselves. Whoever expects punishment suffers it; and whoever has deserved it expects it. Some circumstance affords safety amid a bad conscience, but none affords security. For even if he is not detected, he thinks that he can be detected; he is disturbed among his dreams, and whenever he speaks of someone’s crime, he thinks of his own.

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“It does not seem sufficiently effaced to him, nor sufficiently concealed. The guilty man has sometimes had the good fortune of lying hidden, never the assurance.”

§ 7. Crimes can therefore be safe from a human being, but cannot be secure; from God, however, they cannot even be safe. Epicurus himself, amid his cups, perceives that force. Thus he writes to Menoeceus: οὐκ ἔστι τὸν λάθρα τι ποιοῦντα πιστεύειν ὅτι λήσει, κἂν μυριάκις ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος λανθάνῃ· μέχρι γὰρ καταστροφῆς ἄδηλον, εἰ καὶ λήσει. “It is not possible for one who does something in secret to trust that he will escape notice, even if he should escape notice ten thousand times at the present; for until his destruction it is uncertain whether he will escape notice.” Seneca expresses it thus in Epistle 97: “It can befall a guilty man that he lies hidden; confidence that he will lie hidden cannot befall him.” Οὐδείς οὕτως οὔτε μάρτυς ἐστὶ φοβερὸς, οὔτε κατηγορὸς δεινός, ὥς ἡ σύνεσις, ἡ κατοικοῦσα ταῖς ἐκάστων ψυχαῖς. “No witness is so formidable, nor any accuser so vehement, as conscience dwelling in the minds of all.”

Take this away from a private person, from a senator, from a king, and you have driven them all together into an evil dwelling. Take it away from a commonwealth, and from so many nations you will make a single slaughterhouse. He therefore puts off humanity who dares deny what nature herself declares. But I desire a prince who not only does not fear himself, but even lives in public, who does not desire to lie hidden; who frequently impresses this upon himself: “What you think secret is the rumor of the people; you are the last to learn of a deed which you ought to have prevented.” Hear, prince, the counselor of a Roman prince, Seneca, Epistle 43: “Then judge yourself happy when you can live in public, when your walls cover you but do not conceal you--walls which for the most part we judge to stand around us, not so that we may live more safely, but that we may sin more secretly. I shall tell you a thing from which you may estimate our morals: you will scarcely find anyone who can live with his door open. Our conscience, not pride, has set doorkeepers before us. We so live that to be suddenly looked upon is to be detected. But what does it profit to hide oneself and avoid the eyes and ears of human beings? A good conscience summons the crowd; a bad one is anxious and troubled even in solitude. If the things you do are honorable, let all know them; if shameful, what does it matter that no one knows, when you know? O wretched you, if you despise this witness.”

Therefore cultivate virtue, whose prerogative is also this: that those who do not imitate it nevertheless admire and look up to it; that it is not removed by calamity but persists unmoved amid either fortune.

CHAPTER IV

Machiavelli's Impious Doctrine Is Refuted

§ 1. Vices have no need of a teacher, because examples always strike those they meet: every age will produce Clodiuses, not every age Catos. We are readily inclined toward worse things because neither a leader nor a companion can be lacking; indeed, the thing itself advances even without a leader and without a companion. We are not merely inclined toward vices, but headlong. Indeed, as Cyprian reproaches Demetrianus: “Amid the very adversities in which the soul, constricted and hemmed in, scarcely breathes, you have leisure to be evil and, amid dangers so great, to judge not yourself so much as another. You are indignant that God is indignant, as though by living badly you merited something good, as though he did not still permit all those things that happen to be less and lighter than your sins.”

But this is a peculiar evil of our age: to possess a public teacher of vices, one celebrated besides with the morals of many voting in his favor. He is Machiavelli. He so instructs a prince toward virtue that he nevertheless also permits vices and sets them before the virtues as though more useful to a kingdom. Let us therefore hear him. In *The Prince*, chapter 15, he says: “I know that no one will fail to confess that it would be a thing celebrated with the highest praises if a prince were adorned with all those qualities which, from what has already been said, are considered good. But since they can neither be possessed nor, because the condition of human life opposes it, preserved, it is necessary for him to employ that prudence by which he may flee the infamy of those vices through which his government could be taken away from him. Let him also beware, if it can be done, of those which nevertheless will not take it away; but if this cannot be accomplished, they can be disregarded with less loss. And assuredly let him not labor greatly if he incurs the infamy of those vices without which he could not easily preserve dominion. For if the matter is diligently considered everywhere in the mind, certain things will be found which are said to bear the appearance of virtue but which, if you follow them, will result in your great evil; while, on the contrary, some things will be discovered vicious in appearance which, if you assume them, will return to your security and safety.”

And in chapter 16: “And again, if someone should say that many princes have existed who accomplished great things with their armies and who nevertheless excelled in that beneficence, it must be said that a prince makes expenditures either from his own goods or those of others. If the first, he ought to be sparing; if the second, it is necessary that he omit no part of liberality. Yet for a prince leading an army on campaign--which army must be sustained by booty, plunder, and tribute--and handling the possessions of others, this liberality is necessary; otherwise the soldiers would not follow him. But that which is neither yours nor your people's can be bestowed more liberally, as it is agreed was done by Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander. For that which you expend from the goods of others does not take away your reputation but rather increases it; but loss comes to you when your own resources are consumed.”

In chapter 17 he advises the prince to act so that he is feared rather than loved, and says that a prince already engaged with an army and possessing the management of a multitude must determine entirely to reckon the name of inhumanity as nothing. Accordingly, he even attributes Hannibal's achievements to that man's savage cruelty. In chapter 18 he also teaches him to deceive and dissemble.

These things are drunk in by ready ears; they were practiced of old even without a teacher. Yet they are altogether false and ruinous to the commonwealth, and we shall have to treat them rather often in this book and the following one.

§ 2. I shall now proceed against him from his own words. In chapter 9 of *Discourses on Livy*, he thinks that Romulus's deed is excused by the successful result that followed the killing of Remus. Let us establish that these things be introduced into morals, and that Machiavelli himself be killed so that his colleague may alone be secretary to the Florentine Republic. Let there also be a right to kill others, seize property, and swear falsely for the sake of a kingdom;

and let us concede these things not only to kings, but to praetors, senators, and nobles. What peace can exist in so great a disturbance of the commonwealth?

Let him himself decide the question--eloquent against himself--in chapter 17: "Unless the kings had immediately been expelled from Rome, it was necessary, as it assuredly seems to me, that the city be weakened and lose its former virtue and strength. For consider how depraved and corrupt in morals those kings already were at that time. But if the same corruption had been propagated as far as a third successor, it would readily have crept also into the people; and with them infected, the city could never have been restored and recovered its strength and virtue. But because this destruction had indeed occupied the head of the commonwealth, while the other members were not yet infected, the remaining members could, once that destructive head had been removed, be healed and the liberty acquired be preserved.

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"For it must be established as certain that a city which has grown accustomed to obey the command of a prince and in which the morals of the people are wholly depraved cannot preserve liberty for itself if it should obtain it, not even if that prince's entire family should be extirpated; but it will continually be compelled to obey new lords, who will expel one another, while without a prince it will never subsist--unless perhaps some one citizen should arise in it whose heroic virtue and goodness preserve it for some time. But not even this could last longer than the life of him who preserves it, as we know befell the Syracusans, who at different times preserved liberty by the virtue of Dion and Timoleon, but, when these had died, returned beneath the ancient yoke of tyranny.

"But the most evident example of all is that of the Romans, who, after the Tarquins had been cast out, immediately grasped the method of preserving liberty; but after Gaius Caesar had been killed, and Gaius Caligula and Nero removed together with the whole stock of the Caesars, they were able neither to preserve liberty nor to introduce any beginning of it. The cause of so great a difference depended solely upon the fact that in the time of the Tarquins the morals of the Roman people were not corrupt, as they afterward were in the age of Gaius Caesar, Caligula, and Nero. This can be gathered even from the fact that at that time, to preserve the people's zeal against tyranny, the oath by which they swore that they would never consent that anyone should reign at Rome sufficed. But after Gaius Caesar had been killed, neither the authority and severity of Brutus nor the legions stationed in the East could move the people to defend with a constant and firm mind the liberty which Brutus had introduced into the city in imitation of the first Brutus.

"So great a corruption had by then infected the morals of the Roman people, especially of those who had belonged to the Marian faction; and when Gaius Caesar had obtained leadership in that faction, he had won over the plebs to himself and gradually subjected them with so great an artifice that they did not feel the yoke being placed upon their necks. This example of the Romans is most suitable to the proposed disputation, but examples are also not lacking of peoples to whom the same thing that befell the Romans has occurred in our own age. For the Milanese and Neapolitans, in whatever manner they may be freed from the yoke of servitude, can never preserve liberty; and this befalls them because of the depraved and corrupt morals of all. The Milanese themselves, after Filippo Visconti had died, had obtained liberty and wished to introduce a method of preserving it, but they could not preserve it. It was therefore auspicious and fortunate for the Romans that their kings quickly began to grow insolent and to be depraved in morals; for thus it came about that they were expelled before that corruption of morals could also creep into the people. If it had infected them also, the many contentions of plebs and senate which afterward arose could not have obtained so happy an end that they profited the city rather than bringing any loss upon it."

§ 3. Indeed, in chapter 18 he also denies that liberty can be restored to a people if it is corrupt in morals. But I conclude in like manner that a kingdom also cannot be preserved when the corruption of morals is extreme. For why can the liberty of the people not be preserved amid extreme corruption? He answers: "Because scarcely any laws can curb the extreme corruption of a people. For neither are good morals preserved in a city without good laws, nor good laws

except through people of good morals.” Entirely excellent--but on behalf of truth and against his own propositions. Good laws therefore need a good guardian and a good avenger; but such is not an evil prince.

In the time of Caligula there was extreme corruption, good laws, and the worst morals; there came in addition a most shameful prince, who exhausted the treasury, killed two hundred thousand soldiers, and cut down the senate. What if he had been able to live and command longer--with need pressing, lusts increasing, and cruelty grown savage? Would he not have reduced Rome to a solitude? Vices therefore destroy the commonwealth; virtues preserve and fortify it. Let us hear the voice of nature: she will testify that vices are against God and nature, and therefore cannot subsist unless they are mingled with virtues.

Moreover, there are two kinds of sins: some are seen in the corruptions of disgraceful acts, others in deeds of doing harm. Both overturn the commonwealth by their own wickedness, but more swiftly those that are injurious to others. For since these are hateful and give offense, they necessarily violate charity, stir up enmities and wars, and commit the human race to hatred and fury. Hence therefore arises the vengeance of those injured--or flight, if vengeance is despaired of or believed likely to cost dearly. Show me a divided household or army, a city turned against itself, and you will understand that it can be preserved only by peace; but crimes are troublesome to all, often even to those whom they profit.

If therefore virtue is in exile, if all in the commonwealth are unjust, avaricious, lustful, and timid, if judgments are predatory and laws conquered, a city cannot stand amid these vices. Seneca speaks elegantly and wisely in book 2 of *On Anger*, chapter 31: “It is impious to harm the fatherland; therefore also a citizen, for he is a part of the fatherland. The parts are sacred if the whole is venerable; therefore human being is sacred to human being, for he is a citizen with you in the greater city. What if the hands should wish to harm the feet, or the eyes the hands? As all the members agree with one another because the preservation of the whole concerns each one, so human beings will spare individuals because we have been born for union. Society, however, cannot remain safe except through the love and guardianship of its parts. We would not even crush vipers and water-snakes, and any things that harm by bite or blow, if we could tame them as we can other animals, or bring it about that they should not be a danger to us or to others. Therefore we shall not harm a human being because he has sinned, but lest he sin; punishment will never be referred to the past but to the future. For it is not angry, but takes precaution. For if everyone whose nature is depraved and disposed to evil must be punished, punishment will except no one.”

§ 4. Experience supports the reasoning. If vices are once admitted and approved because they are thought sometimes to have profited, they assuredly cannot be endured when they grow. In the ancient age, luxury played with water in little Rome; to have worn a gold ring, built a suburban villa, or dined for ten asses was a great thing. But afterward pearls were trodden underfoot, royal structures were cast into the sea, and the revenues of provinces were heaped together for a single dinner: thus pomp, thus plunder, thus cruelties grew. What then? Can the commonwealth remain safe even while evils so mature and so great reign? If it cannot, let them be met at their beginnings, because once strengthened they either conquer or are conquered at greater loss.

Cities and kingdoms have this property: that when they have withdrawn too far from virtue, they burst like excessively swollen bodies. Vices have this property: that they do not stand still. It is an ancient complaint that wickedness reigns, that human affairs slip toward worse things and rush into every impiety. Vices do not remain in place, but through practice and imprudence acquire confidence. Vices are needy; they are nourished only by injury to others. They advance and increase until they are crushed by divine vengeance. Since therefore nature recommends virtue and exercises her force within us to such a degree that even what we cannot or will not do we nevertheless judge to have been rightly done in others--and Juvenal truly said,

Never will nature say one thing, wisdom another--

he therefore fights against nature and against the judgment of all wise persons who introduces crimes and the simulation of virtue into the commonwealth.

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CHAPTER V

That the Commonwealth Cannot Be Governed without True Virtue and Piety Is Taught from Sacred Scripture

§ 1. It is agreed that without a true understanding and worship of God, without religion, without justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude, and--in one word--without true, solid, and genuine virtue, no commonwealth can be happy for long, but must struggle with many seditions, wars, and disadvantages; and that it experiences these the more greatly the more it departs from virtue, but experiences lesser evils if it somehow maintains possession of certain virtues.

First let us hear God concerning this matter: the holy divinity, the God whom we believe both to exist and to be a rewarder; but those who do not believe this will experience him as avenger. Yet I maintain this: kingdoms are not always given on account of justice, since I see that the most savage of human beings have commanded; but there are only the most wretched kingdoms in which great vices rule, and kingdoms are overthrown through vices. The Lord warns the Israelites, Deuteronomy 9:4: “Do not say in your heart, when the Lord your God has destroyed them in your sight: ‘Because of my justice the Lord has brought me in to possess this land,’ when those nations have been destroyed because of their impiety.

“For you do not enter to possess their land because of your just deeds and the equity of your heart; rather, because they acted impiously, they were destroyed as you entered.” The crimes of the Israelites were serious, so that they deserved death, much less the best of all lands; but on account of Abraham and the patriarchs, with Moses interceding, pardon and Palestine were given, while very numerous and very powerful nations were destroyed because of impiety that was now complete. For the same oracle teaches that it had not yet been completed in Abraham’s time, Genesis 15:16: “But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquities of the Amorites are not yet completed up to the present time.”

§ 2. To this pertains that whole speech of Moses which is in Deuteronomy 11, 12, and 13, and especially chapter 28: “But if you will hear the voice of the Lord your God, so that you do and keep all his commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will make you higher than all the nations that dwell upon the earth. And all these blessings will come upon you and overtake you--if only you will hear his precepts. Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, and the fruit of your beasts, the herds of your cattle and the folds of your sheep. Blessed shall be your storehouses, and blessed your remnants. Blessed shall you be when entering and when departing.

“The Lord will give your enemies who rise against you falling down in your sight; by one way they will come against you, and by seven they will flee from your face. The Lord will send blessing upon your cellars and upon all the works of your hands, and will bless you in the land which you will have received. The Lord will raise you up as a holy people to himself, as he swore to you, if you will keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in his ways. And all the peoples of the earth will see that the name of the Lord has been invoked over you, and they will fear you. The Lord will make you abound in all goods: in the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your beasts, and the fruit of your land which the Lord swore to your fathers that he would give you. The Lord will open his best treasure, the heaven, that he may give rain to your land in its season; and he will bless all the works of your hands. And you will lend to many nations, and you yourself will receive a loan from none. The Lord will establish you as the head and not the tail; and you will always be above and not beneath--if only you will hear the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today, and will keep and do them, and will not turn aside from them either to the right or to the left, nor follow foreign gods or worship them.

“But if you will not hear the voice of the Lord your God, so that you keep and do all his commandments and ceremonies which I command you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, cursed in the field. Cursed your storehouse, and cursed your remnants. Cursed the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, the herds of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep. Cursed shall you be when entering and cursed when departing. The Lord will send upon you famine and hunger and rebuke in all your works which you perform, until he crushes you and destroys you swiftly because of your most wicked inventions in which you abandoned me. May the Lord join pestilence to you until he consumes you from the land which you enter to possess. May the Lord strike you with want, fever, and cold, with burning and heat, with corrupt air and blight, and may he pursue you until you perish. May the heaven above you be bronze, and the earth you tread iron. May the Lord give dust as the rain of your land, and may ash descend upon you from heaven until you are crushed.

“May the Lord deliver you falling before your enemies; by one way may you go out against them, and by seven may you flee, and may you be scattered through all the kingdoms of the earth. And may your corpse be food for all the birds of heaven and beasts of the earth, with no one to drive them away. May the Lord strike you with madness and blindness and fury of mind, and may you grope at midday as the blind man is accustomed to grope in darkness, and may you not direct your ways. At every time may you endure calumny and be oppressed by violence, and have no one to deliver you. May you take a wife, and another sleep with her. May you build a house and not dwell in it. May you plant a vineyard and not harvest it. May your ox be slaughtered before you and you not eat from it. May your ass be seized in your sight and not be returned to you. May your sheep be given to your enemies and there be no one to aid you. May your sons and daughters be delivered to another people while your eyes see and fail at the sight of them the whole day, and may there be no strength in your hand. May a people whom you do not know eat the fruit of your land and all your labors; and may you always endure calumny and be oppressed all your days, and be stupefied at the terror of the things your eyes will see. May the Lord strike you with the worst ulcer in your knees and calves, so that you cannot be healed from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head. The Lord will lead you, and the king whom you establish over yourself, into a nation which neither you nor your fathers know, and there you will serve foreign gods, wood and stone.

“And you will be lost, as a proverb and a tale among all the peoples to whom the Lord will lead you. You will cast much seed into the earth and gather little, because locusts will devour everything. You will plant and dig a vineyard, but you will not drink wine nor gather anything from it, because it will be laid waste by worms. You will have olive trees in all your boundaries and will not be anointed with oil, because they will shed their fruit and perish. You will beget sons and daughters and will not enjoy them, because they will be led into captivity. Blight will consume all your trees and the crops of your land. The stranger who dwells with you in the land will rise above you and become higher, but you will descend and be lower. He will lend to you, and you will not lend to him. He will be the head, and you will be the tail.

“And all these curses will come upon you and, pursuing you, will overtake you until you perish, because you did not hear the voice of the Lord your God nor preserve his commandments and ceremonies which he commanded you. And they will be signs and wonders in you and in your seed--in joy and gladness of heart because of the abundance of all things. You will serve your enemy whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst and nakedness and every want; and he will place an iron yoke upon your neck until he crushes you. The Lord will bring upon you a nation from afar and from the outermost boundaries of the earth, like an eagle

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“flying with violence, whose language you cannot understand: a most insolent nation which will not show regard for an old man nor pity a little child, and which will devour the fruit of your beasts and the crops of your land until you perish, and will not leave you wheat, wine, and oil, herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, until it destroys you and crushes you in all your cities, and your strong and lofty walls in which you had confidence throughout all your land are destroyed. You will be besieged within your gates throughout all your land which the Lord your God will give you;

and you will eat the fruit of your womb and the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the Lord your God gave you, in the straitness and devastation with which your enemy will oppress you.

“The delicate and exceedingly luxurious man among you will begrudge his brother and the wife who lies in his bosom, lest he give them any of the flesh of his sons which he will eat, because he has nothing else in the siege and want with which your enemies have laid you waste within all your gates. The tender and delicate woman who was not able to walk upon the ground nor set down the print of her foot because of her softness and excessive tenderness will begrudge her husband who lies in her bosom concerning the flesh of her son and daughter, and concerning the uncleanness of the afterbirth which comes forth from the midst of her thighs, and concerning the children who were born at that very hour; for they will eat them secretly because of the want of all things, in the siege and devastation with which your enemy will oppress you within your gates.

“Unless you will keep and do all the words of this law which are written in this volume, and fear his glorious and terrible name--that is, the Lord your God--the Lord will increase your plagues and the plagues of your seed, great and persistent plagues, the worst and perpetual infirmities; and he will turn upon you all the afflictions of Egypt which you feared, and they will cling to you. Moreover, the Lord will bring upon you every illness and plague not written in the volume of this law until he crushes you; and you will remain few in number, who before were like the stars of heaven because of your multitude, since you did not hear the voice of the Lord your God. And just as the Lord formerly rejoiced over you, doing good to you and multiplying you, so will he rejoice in destroying and overthrowing you, that you may be taken away from the land which you enter to possess.

“The Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from the summit of the earth to its boundaries; and there you will serve foreign gods, which neither you nor your fathers know, wood and stone. Among those nations also you will not rest, nor will there be rest for the sole of your foot. For there the Lord will give you a fearful heart, failing eyes, and a soul consumed by sorrow; and your life will be as though hanging before you. You will fear by night and day and will not trust your life. In the morning you will say, ‘Who will grant me evening?’ and in the evening, ‘Who will grant me morning?’ because of the fear of your heart by which you will be terrified and because of the things you will see with your eyes. The Lord will lead you back by ships into Egypt by the way of which he said to you that you should see it no more. There you will be sold to your enemies as male and female slaves, and there will be no one to buy.”

If the world believed these things, if these sounded privately and publicly in the ears of kings and counselors, we would now possess the matter as settled. Those cunning devices and prudence of counsels would melt away at this thunder. I am not ignorant that the impious have reigned, for the Canaanites also already ruled in Abraham’s time; but as morals slipped toward worse things, calamities, the companions of impiety, increased until they were utterly destroyed. Nor were the kingdoms of others due to merit, but in order that they might punish the wicked. “Kingdoms,” says Cyprian in *On the Vanity of Idols*, “do not fall to anyone by merit, but are varied by chance. Furthermore, before them the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians held command, and we know that the Greeks and Egyptians reigned. Thus, in the alternations of powers, a time to command befell the Romans also, just as the rest. But if you return to their origin, you blush. A people is gathered from criminals and the guilty, and, when an asylum has been established, impunity for crimes creates their number. In order that the king himself may possess primacy in crimes, Romulus becomes a fratricide. And in order to make marriage, he inaugurates a thing of concord through discords.”

§ 3. The wicked punish the wicked; the impious are dashed against the impious, and both are broken. Nor is it remarkable, for it is a battle of potsherds and clay. “This is the portion of an impious man with God and the inheritance of violent men which they will receive from the Almighty. If his sons are multiplied, they will be for the sword, and his grandsons will not be satisfied with bread. Those who remain of him will be buried in destruction, and his widows will not weep. If he heaps up silver as though earth, and prepares garments as though clay, he will indeed prepare them, but the just man will be clothed in them, and the innocent will divide the silver. Want will seize him like water; a tempest will oppress him by night. A burning wind will take him up and carry him away, and like a whirlwind will snatch him from his place.”

“God,” says David, “will destroy you unto the end, and will pluck you out and remove you from your tabernacle, and your root from the land of the living.” And Psalm 91: “When sinners have sprung up like grass and all who work iniquity have appeared, it is that they may perish for ever and ever.”

The impious therefore perish, although they blossom most splendidly with swift germination. But there is no need to remain upon this passage: the whole of Scripture indicates this to us. Abraham, an exile from his fatherland, follows God when he calls and is defended; even his increase is a terror to kings. The same God is given as a possession to Isaac and Jacob. That commonwealth was happy when Joshua and pious judges administered it; but when they did evil in the sight of the Lord, they were delivered into servitude to neighboring kings.

Let us read the history of the kings, and the fortune corresponding to each one’s morals. David, a man according to God’s heart, raised the kingdom to its highest summit, although it suffered disasters on account of his sins. Solomon administered it peacefully and most happily until by his vices he stirred up Hadad the Edomite and resigned ten tribes to Jeroboam. As the deeds of Rehoboam and Abijah were rash and impious, so too their calamities were new: the city was captured, the temple plundered, and royal dignity transferred from gold to bronze. Asa, pursuing virtue, removed the impure and reduced his mother to her proper station; he defeated Zerah the Ethiopian, who was drawing one million men with him, but at last, turning away from God and afflicted by arthritis, he died through his own fault alone. Asa’s son Jehoshaphat was pious, brave, and renowned, but he had as heir the degenerate Jehoram, who defiled the kingdom with fratricide and idolatry; therefore the Edomites and other tributary nations revolted.

But it is preferable to hear from Scripture itself the vengeance of God upon the impious king, 2 Chronicles 21:12: “Letters were brought to him from Elijah the prophet, in which it was written: ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father and in the ways of Asa, king of Judah, but have proceeded along the way of the kings of Israel and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fornicate, imitating the fornication of the house of Ahab; moreover, you have killed your brothers, your father’s house, who were better than you: behold, the Lord will strike you with a great plague, together with your people, your sons, your wives, and all your substance. But you will fall sick with the worst disease of your belly until your vital parts come forth little by little on each successive day.’

“The Lord therefore stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and of the Arabs who border upon the Ethiopians; and they ascended into the land of Judah and laid it waste, and plundered all the substance found in the king’s house, and moreover his sons and wives; nor did a son remain to him except Jehoahaz, who was youngest by birth. And beyond all these things the Lord struck him with an incurable disease of the belly. And as day succeeded day and the spans of time rolled by, the cycle of two years was completed; and thus, consumed by a long wasting disease, so that he even discharged his entrails, he was deprived alike of disease and life. And he died in

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“the worst infirmity; and the people did not make funeral rites for him according to the custom of burning, as they had done for his ancestors.”

After him Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash, and Ahaz obtained wretched ends, with the shaking of the whole kingdom. Hezekiah restored all things by his piety; Manasseh lost them. Josiah, again imitating his grandfather, restored the former happiness; his descendants perished by impiety.

§ 4. It would be easy to object that the lot of other nations was happy amid the greatest crimes; but I appeal to the whole of history. Success exists in some one matter; happiness in the whole commonwealth does not. If it pleases, let us examine the kingdom of Macedonia, which is accustomed to be adduced as an example of human happiness. After war had been waged in Greece and his brothers and relatives killed, Alexander entered Asia; he passed twelve years most calamitously in the greatest care, pain, many wounds, fury, the blood of his household, conspiracies, and fear, until he perished through drunkenness or poison. A little later all his posterity was cut off--and not only it, but also his

commanders and the Silver Shields whom he had burdened with the spoils of the East. But it is no happiness to rage for twelve years so that the whole nobility may obey. He who reads history with prudence will understand that the kingdom of Macedonia, while King Alexander and his commanders strove together, was unhappier than the kingdom of Israel, even when it paid penalties for evil morals. In this it is also memorable that so many commanders, apart from the Ptolemies and Seleucids, were cut off together with their entire families.

But here we are treating of the kingdom of Israel and Judah, concerning which 4 Kings 17:6 says thus: “In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of the Assyrians captured Samaria and transferred Israel into Assyria. He settled them in Halah and in Habor beside the river Gozan, in the cities of the Medes. For it came about, when the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had led them out of the land of Egypt, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that they worshiped foreign gods. And they walked according to the rite of the nations which the Lord had consumed in the sight of the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, because they had acted similarly.

“And the children of Israel offended the Lord their God with words that were not right, and built themselves high places in all their cities, from the watchmen’s tower to the fortified city. And they made themselves statues and groves upon every high hill and beneath every leafy tree; and there they burned incense upon altars according to the custom of the nations which the Lord had transferred from before their face. And they did the worst things, provoking the Lord; and they worshiped uncleannesses concerning which the Lord had commanded them not to do this thing. And the Lord testified in Israel and in Judah by the hand of all the prophets and seers, saying: ‘Return from your most wicked ways, and keep my precepts and ceremonies according to all the law which I commanded your fathers and as I sent to you by the hand of my servants the prophets.’

“They did not hear, but hardened their neck according to the neck of their fathers, who were unwilling to obey the Lord their God. And they cast away his statutes and the covenant which he made with their fathers, and the testimonies by which he testified against them; and they followed vanities and acted vainly, and followed the nations that were round about them, concerning which the Lord had commanded them not to do as they did. And they abandoned all the precepts of the Lord their God, and made themselves two molten calves and groves, and adored the whole host of heaven; and they served Baal, and consecrated their sons and daughters through fire; and they devoted themselves to divinations and auguries, and delivered themselves up to do evil before the Lord, so that they provoked him.

“And the Lord was exceedingly angry with Israel and took them away from his sight, and none remained except the tribe of Judah alone. But not even Judah itself kept the commandments of the Lord its God; rather, it walked in the errors of Israel which it had committed. And the Lord cast away all the seed of Israel and afflicted them and delivered them into the hand of plunderers until he cast them from his face.” Divine wisdom, therefore, which is the fountain of all goods, defines happiness by religion and virtue.

CHAPTER VI

All Holy Men Estimated the Happiness of the Commonwealth from Virtue

§ 1. The harmonious and true judgment of all the saints is that there are two foundations of political society, justice and religion, and that as soon as a prince withdraws from God, he also experiences the greatest rebellion within himself. True piety alone is sufficient for princes unto safety; just as, on the contrary, without it armies, horses, attendants, the force of swords, innumerable forces of men, gold and silver, and whatever other equipment there is besides, profit nothing. These things are spiders' webs unless they stand firm through piety.

It is indeed not right to number Tertullian among the saints, because although he began rightly, he nevertheless fell with great scandal to the Church. Yet he, before the rest, pressed this argument in the *Apologeticum*. This was the judgment of the nations: if the Tiber rose to the walls, the Nile did not rise into the fields, the heaven stood still, the earth moved, or famine or pestilence invaded the world, immediately the Christians, as guilty of the crimes, were sought for the lion. But he proves that the gentiles especially furnished the causes, and that those evils are now lighter because the Christians are intercessors before God. The common judgment of the world, therefore, was that punishments are inflicted for offenses.

St. Cyprian also, in the book *On the Vanity of Idols*, teaches that the disasters of the Jews were the punishment of impiety: "The Jews first possessed favor before God. Thus once they were just; thus their ancestors obeyed religious observances. Hence both the sublimity of their kingdom flourished and the greatness of their race advanced. But afterward they became neglectful, undisciplined, and proud, and, inflated by confidence in their fathers, while they despised the divine precepts, lost the grace given to them. But how profane their life was, and what offense was contracted from violated religion, they themselves also testify; although they are silent in voice, they confess by their outcome: scattered and wandering, they roam alone, exiles from their own sky, and are tossed among the dwellings of strangers."

And St. Jerome, on Jeremiah 15: "I shall give them into heat, or commotion, and the straits of the whole earth." This was fulfilled in part under the Babylonians and is now fulfilled in whole, when an impious people imitated the worst king, who had filled Jerusalem with the blood of the just from gate to gate. From this we learn that peoples are generally destroyed by the crime of kings, princes, and governors. The supreme destruction, therefore, is an impious prince.

§ 2. St. Ambrose, on Jonah 4, says that the sole means of preserving the fatherland is the uprightness of the citizens, just as their sins are the cause of its overthrow: "The Ninevites possessed so great a wisdom that they defended themselves not by external protections but were saved by their own devotion. For they did not immediately despair of their safety because they heard from the prophet that they would be overthrown together with the walls of the city; rather, when their destruction close at hand was announced, they armed themselves all the more with religious acts. Nor did they abandon their city to be overthrown, but instead remained in it--wise indeed, so that the city which was afflicted by the sins of its citizens might be saved by the prayers of its citizens, and that religious devotion might confer safety upon the city to which an evil manner of life had brought destruction. For it was just that the very persons whom it had endured as sinners should be its own defenders.

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"For destruction is inflicted upon a city only because of the sins of its citizens. Cease therefore to sin, and the city will not perish. Why do you flee your fatherland? If you wish to be safe, flee rather from your sins. If you cease to sin, the enemy has been conquered. Divine Scripture says to Abraham that the fatherland can be saved by ten just persons. Therefore, if the just are those who make the fatherland safe, assuredly the unjust are those who abandon it. And if the

former obtain favor because of their presence, it is necessary that the latter deserve offense because of their desertion. Plainly unjust and impious is the son who abandons his mother when she is in danger. For the fatherland is in a certain manner a sweet mother, who bore you, who nourished you, who made you rich so that you might be able to suck.”

And St. Augustine, on Psalm 118, especially impresses virtue upon princes: “It must be greatly attended to that, within the sanctuary of his mind, humility should sit presiding in its chair in the man who is set above others for governing human beings; and when others stand outside in attendance upon him as he judges, he should with vigilant eye look unceasingly upon the judge before whom he himself must one day stand to be judged concerning these things.” Deservedly, indeed: for an appeal to God remains open to all who have been condemned under any law; whoever has lost his case is restored in full before that great tribunal, and is sometimes raised up to the honor of his own judge.

The same Augustine is witness, in book 2 of *The City of God*, chapter 23, that the Roman commonwealth perished through evil morals: “While that commonwealth was therefore perishing through evil morals, their gods did nothing to direct or correct its morals so that it should not perish. Indeed, they contributed to the depraving and corrupting of its morals, so that it should perish.”

Finally, in book 19 of *The City of God*, chapter 21, he teaches that a commonwealth cannot exist without justice: “For he briefly defines a commonwealth as the thing of a people. If this definition is true, there never was a Roman commonwealth, because it never was the thing of a people, which he wished to be the definition of a commonwealth. For he defined a people as an assemblage of a multitude associated by agreement in law and community of advantage. What he means by agreement in law he explains in his disputation, showing by this that a commonwealth cannot be administered without justice. Where true justice is therefore absent, there can be no law. For what is done by law is assuredly done justly; but what is done unjustly cannot be done by law. For unjust enactments of human beings are neither to be called nor thought laws, since they themselves also say that law is that which has flowed from the fountain of justice; and what is accustomed to be said by certain persons who think incorrectly is false: that law is what is useful to him who possesses greater power.

“Accordingly, where true justice does not exist, there cannot be an assemblage of human beings associated by agreement in law, and therefore no people according to that definition of Scipio or Cicero. And if no people, then neither the thing of a people, but the thing of some sort of multitude which is not worthy of the name of a people. And by this reasoning, if a commonwealth is the thing of a people, and there is no people which is not associated by agreement in law, while there is no law where there is no justice, it is gathered beyond doubt that where there is no justice there is no commonwealth. Moreover, justice is that virtue which distributes to each his own. What justice of a human being is there, then, which takes that very human being away from the true God and subjects him to unclean demons?”

§ 3. Orosius too attributes to the religion and piety of Christians the fact that the world is shaken by lighter evils; Arnobius indeed expressly strives to prove it. So much did they attribute to piety and virtue. Hippolytus the martyr predicted that the gravest calamities would invade the world in a great column at the time when, morals having been loosed, Antichrist would reign most widely, when the laws of all kingdoms would fall; and, alas, preparations and preludes to those evils now already exist.

In this manner the bishops [name illegible in the print] exhort Emperor Leo to virtue: “When these things have been well arranged, the hand of the enemies is turned to fear, and those who formerly had learned rashly to resist will, confounded because of the greatness of your faith, come to ruin. For, being established as imitators of those princes who were illustrious for justice and equity, you will most readily prevail over present affairs.” And the bishops of Mesopotamia: “When your piety, together with the priests of Christ, holds and confirms these things, it will govern the rudders of the empire in peace.”

And Julian, bishop of Cos: “Marcian is crowned with the diadem of divine love; receiving spiritual truth also, and kindled by desire for the orthodox faith, he hastened that the dogmas of the Apostles should be confirmed by the

prelates of the Church. When your piety imitates this, it both obtains victory against the barbarians and destroys the enemies of truth as well.” The sixth synod promises Constantine IV that because of his piety God will make all his acts happy and prosperous, he who promises in his holy Gospels, saying: “Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you.”

The seventh synod to Constantine and John: “May God the Savior of all, who reigns with us, grant his peace to the Church as his reward; and may he preserve your empire, together with the senate, commanders, and most faithful army of soldiers, for many years, and grant us victory. For he himself said: ‘As I live, says the Lord, those who glorify me I glorify.’ He it is who, girding you with power, will remove from you every hostile assault and procure obedience among you.” The Synod of Toledo to Sisenand: “The wrath of heaven has so changed many kingdoms of the earth that, because of their impiety toward the faith and morals, one was dissolved by another. Hence we too ought to guard against the fall of nations of this kind, lest we be similarly struck by a headlong plague and punished with a cruel penalty.”

Most truly Ambrose, Epistle 31 to Valentinian: “This is the love to be expected; this is the love greater than empire: if the faith is kept safe, which preserves the empire.”

§ 4. We too experience in Greece and Hungary what Jerome complained of concerning his own times in the epitaph for Nepotian: “By our sins the barbarians are strong; by our vices the Roman army is overcome. Wretched are we who so greatly displease God that through the hands of the barbarians his anger rages against us. Hezekiah did penance, and one hundred eighty-five thousand Assyrians were destroyed by one angel in a single night. Jehoshaphat sang together the praises of the Lord, and the Lord conquered on behalf of him who praised. Moses fought against Amalek not with the sword but with prayer. If we wish to be raised up, let us prostrate ourselves.

“For shame! A mind foolish even to cruelty! The Roman army, victor and lord of the world, is conquered by these men, fears these men, is terrified at the sight of those who are unable to walk, who think themselves dead if they touch the earth. And we do not understand the voices of the prophets: ‘A thousand flee when one pursues.’ Let us cut away the causes of the disease, so that the disease may likewise be taken away.”

Would that these things were impressed upon the hearts of all amid today’s calamities. Although many endeavor to resist the calamities, nevertheless few abandon the vices because of which we suffer them.

St. Augustine, book 5 of *The City of God*, chapter 25: “The good God, lest human beings who believed that he must be worshiped for the sake of eternal life should think that no one could obtain these high stations and earthly kingdoms unless he supplicated demons, on the ground that those spirits possessed great power in such things, filled Emperor Constantine--who did not supplicate demons but worshiped the true God himself--with earthly gifts so great as no one would dare desire. He also granted him to establish a city as an associate of the Roman Empire, as though a daughter of Rome itself, but without any temple or image of demons. He ruled for a long time; as sole Augustus he held and defended the whole Roman world. He was most victorious in administering and waging wars; he was prosperous in all things in suppressing tyrants; he died at a great age from disease and old age; he left sons ruling.”

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St. Gregory Nazianzen teaches in his oration against Julian that an empire is overthrown by impiety: “With the saving doctrine of Christ poured out far and wide and flourishing especially around us, to attempt to overturn and undermine the Christian religion would have been nothing other than to tear down the Roman Empire and endanger all parts of the commonwealth, and to receive from our own selves those things than which not even enemies could imprecate anything more grievous against us.”

St. Chrysostom on Isaiah: “‘The affairs of princes do not stand rightly’; of these things we speak very often. It is an immense danger. But what is its cause? ‘The thoughtlessness,’ they say, ‘of those who exercise the principate.’ It is not the thoughtlessness of princes; rather, our injustice is a punishment exacted for our crimes. Our crimes have mixed all

things above and below, have contrived whatever calamities exist, have armed the enemies, and have brought it about that we descended as conquered. A swarm of evils has flooded in from no other source than this cause.”

Today also, how many persons amid lawsuits, usury, hatreds, drunkenness, and adulteries accuse the idleness of princes, although by their own sins they draw punishment upon themselves, and desire peace for no other reason than that they may indulge their vices and pleasures securely.

But lest I pursue more, the following may be read: St. Cyril, *On the Right Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ*, to Theodosius; Hilary on Psalm 137; Gregory to Theodoric the Frank; St. Leo to Theodosius and the Augusta Pulcheria; Athanasius to Constantine and Jovinian; John to Justinian; the Council of Meaux to Charles the Younger, king of the Franks; Symmachus to Anastasius; the Council of Paris to Louis and Lothair; St. Bernard to Louis; Hormisdas to Justin; Nicholas to Michael; and the bishops of the Spains at the coronation of the king.

CHAPTER VII

That Pious Princes Agree with the Holy Fathers

§ 1. We deservedly ought to believe so great an authority, since they had no occasion or cause for deceiving. I omit those kings who are in Scripture, because those who do not acknowledge divine oracles yield more readily to human testimonies. Nevertheless, all prudent princes have considered that decree to have been declared to themselves which the divine oracle announced to David: “If your sons will keep my ways and walk before me in truth, with all their heart and all their soul, a man from the throne of Israel will not be taken away from you.”

Philip the Arab, since he was not ignorant that he had obtained the empire by parricide, having been instructed better concerning religion, stood as a suppliant among the penitents before the Church at the command of Fabian the pontiff. By his deed he showed that no governments acquired by crime are lasting, for he too was soon killed.

Among princes scarcely any obtained greater glory than Constantine, for he both ruled most widely and cultivated religion before the rest: he closed the temples of demons, built temples for the true God, and fostered the commonwealth. Yet he attributed all things received to piety and subjected all matters in the judgment of religion to the Council of Nicaea. Jovian, a man of the greatest spirit and loftier than the august empire itself--first a confessor and afterward the successor of him whom he had endured as a tyrant--denied that, being a Christian, he wished to command an army which worshiped false gods, because he judged that amid such great crimes no happiness of the commonwealth could exist.

Theodosius and Valentinian wrote to the Synod of Ephesus that through those things which pertain to preserving piety and religion they could attain all other things also. Accordingly, Theodosius himself, accustomed to sing Psalms and say prayers with his wife Eudoxia and his sister Pulcheria, held the kingdom for a long time and happily.

The same is the judgment of Justin to Hormisdas, of Honorius to Arcadius, of Justinian II, of Charlemagne to the bishops of Spain, and of the others whose commendation is in history and whose memory is among posterity.

But in this matter no reasoning can be produced more illustrious, more effective, and more approved through many centuries than the law of the Roman Empire--that is, the public law of the world--which has now been accepted by so many nations and confirmed by so many kings that to wish to tear away its primary part is to disturb human affairs and overthrow the commonwealth.

CHAPTER VIII

It Is Taught by Testimonies of the Civil Law That Religion Must Be Cultivated Seriously in the Commonwealth

§ 1. The emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius: “We desire all the peoples whom the government of our clemency rules to conduct themselves in that religion which the religion introduced by the divine Apostle Peter and continued from him until now declares that he delivered to the Romans, and which it is evident that Damasus the pontiff and Peter, bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness, follow: that is, that according to apostolic discipline and evangelical doctrine we believe in one Godhead of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, under equal majesty and under a pious Trinity.”

§ 2. Nor do the same men merely think thus, but they willingly and of their own accord abrogate their own laws if any have crept in against religion. To Eutropius, praetorian prefect: “Let there be no place for the ministries of heretics; let no occasion lie open for exercising the madness of a more obstinate mind. Let all know that even if anything has been obtained by this kind of people through some special rescript elicited by fraud, it is not valid. Let the crowds of all heretics be restrained from unlawful congregations, but let the name of the one highest God be celebrated everywhere. Let the observance of the Nicene faith, long ago delivered by our ancestors and confirmed by the testimony and assertion of divine religion, possess enduring permanence.”

Marcian, in the best faith, to Palladius, praetorian prefect: “Let no cleric, soldier, or person of any other condition hereafter attempt to treat publicly of the Christian faith before crowds gathered and listening, seeking from this an occasion for tumult and perfidy. For he also does injury to the judgment of the most reverend synod if anyone should strive to reconsider and dispute publicly what has once been rooted and rightly settled, since the things now established concerning the Christian faith by our commands by the priests who assembled at Chalcedon are recognized as defined according to the apostolic expositions, like the institutions of the 318 holy Fathers at Nicaea and of the 150 in this royal city.”

Justinian indeed says: “Applying every providence concerning the most holy churches, to the honor and glory of the holy and incorrupt consubstantial Trinity, through which we have believed that both we and the commonwealth will be kept safe, and adhering also to the doctrine of the holy Apostles concerning the creation of irreproachable priests--who are ordained chiefly for this purpose, that by their prayers they may obtain the kindness of the most humane God for common affairs--we enact by the present law.”

And to Epiphanius: “Always applying every providence concerning the most holy churches,

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“through which we have believed that both our empire is sustained and common affairs are fortified by the grace of the most merciful God; and striving for both our own souls and those of all others to be saved; and for that reason being continually solicitous lest the resources of the most holy churches, in whatever city they have been established, be diminished by any means; lest the divine liturgies performed in them be hindered by the absence of the priests most beloved of God or be tended unsuitably; and lest the property of the most holy churches be consumed by the expenses both of journeys and of priests traveling here and the clerics accompanying them.”

And to John, praetorian prefect: “With God furnishing us aid, we desire to establish by laws and fulfill by works all things which, for the honor of the holy Catholic Church, we hasten to accomplish according to God’s pleasure. And indeed we have already established with his aid many things which accord with ecclesiastical doctrine and condition.”

Justinian, the distinguished lawgiver, excellently expounded this in Novel Constitution 137: “If we strive for the civil laws, whose authority God in his kindness toward human beings entrusted to us, to be kept firmly by all unto obedience and security, how much more zeal ought we to employ concerning the keeping of the sacred canons and divine laws, which were defined concerning the salvation of our souls? For those who keep the sacred canons are worthy of the aid of the Lord God; but those who transgress them render themselves liable to judgment. Therefore the most holy bishops, to whom it has been entrusted and committed both to examine and preserve the canons, are subject to greater condemnation if they leave uncondemned and unpunished anything that has been neglected from them.

“Assuredly, since the canons have hitherto not been observed rightly, we have consequently suffered various complaints against clerics, monks, and certain bishops, on the ground that they did not live according to the divine canons, and that some among them were found who neither retained nor knew even the prayer of the holy oblation or of holy baptism. Understanding, therefore, and fixing in our mind the judgment of God, we have commanded both the investigation and correction of the individual things reported to us to proceed canonically. For if the general laws do not permit the things sinned by laypersons to remain without investigation and punishment, how shall we suffer the things canonically established by the holy Apostles and Fathers concerning the salvation of all human beings to be despised?

“Assuredly, we have discovered that many fell into sins especially because synods of the most holy priests were not held according to the things defined by the holy Apostles and Fathers. For if this had been observed, each person, fearing a grave accusation in the synod, would assuredly have striven both to learn the sacred liturgies thoroughly and to live temperately, lest he be subject to the condemnation of the divine canons. This also afforded certain persons an occasion of sinning: that bishops, presbyters, deacons, and other clerics are ordained without examination and testimony of right faith and an honorable life. For if those destined to pray for the people are found unworthy of the divine ministry, how will they be able to make God propitious for the transgressions and offenses of the people?

“That the ordinations of priests ought to be conducted with all diligence and rigor is taught to us also by Gregory the Theologian, who is numbered among the saints and followed the holy Apostles and divine canons. For thus he says in his great *Apologeticum*: ‘But who, directing himself according to Paul’s canons and definitions which he established concerning bishops and presbyters--that they should be dry, or sober, modest, not given to wine, not strikers, fit to teach, irreproachable in all things, and not associating with the wicked--will not discover that he wanders greatly from that rectitude of the canons?’ And the same man again speaks in these words: ‘One ought first to be greatly cleansed, and then to cleanse; to become wise, and then to teach wisdom; to become light, and afterward to illuminate; to approach God, and then to lead others to him; to be sanctified, and then to sanctify; to lead by the hand with hands, to counsel with counsel.’

“And again the same Gregory, numbered among the saints, writes this concerning the same persons in the same oration: ‘Who, like a potter turning his earthenware in a single day, would thus suddenly fashion a guardian of true worship, standing with the angels, singing praises with the archangels, and sacrificing together with Christ?’ By these words the Theologian indicates what sort of persons ought to be promoted to the priesthood. But concerning those who are ordained unworthily, the same man says these things in the same oration: ‘Although they have brought nothing to the sacred altar of God and to the priesthood, nor first sweated and labored in virtue and what is beautiful, they are shown simultaneously as disciples and teachers of piety; and before they have been purified, they purify; yesterday sacrilegious, today priests; yesterday outside the sacred rites, today prelates of the mysteries; veterans in wickedness, novices in piety; persons who are the work and fabrication of human favor, not of the Holy Spirit.’

“Moreover, Basil, numbered among the saints, also teaches that the divine canons prohibit those who have married a second wife from being clerics, saying thus: ‘The canon has excluded twice-married men from the ministry, and those begotten from them.’ Thus far St. Basil. But the Fathers possessed so great a care for priests that those who assembled at Nicaea issued a canon having the following content: ‘The great synod has wholly forbidden a bishop, presbyter,

deacon, or anyone at all who is in the clergy to possess a woman brought in under pretext, unless perhaps a mother, sister, aunt, or only those persons who escape suspicions.”

§ 3. The constitution of Tiberius Constantine displays no less piety in words: “Since works that befit God and have, together with him, the same origin as the human race are to be beneficent toward suppliants, to extirpate evil deeds, and both to consider and to perform whatever things are useful to subjects; and since we have judged those very things to be the principal distinguishing mark of imperial majesty, from the time when God gave us the command and rudders of the commonwealth, on no day or night, so to speak, have we held anything more ancient or dear than zeal for those things.”

§ 4. What King Reccared admonishes in the Third Synod of Toledo ought also to obtain the force of law: “Although the omnipotent Lord God granted us to ascend the summit of the kingdom for the advantages of the peoples and committed the government of not a few nations to our royal care, we nevertheless remember that we are constrained by the condition of mortals and cannot merit the happiness of future blessedness otherwise than by devoting ourselves to the worship of the true faith and pleasing our creator at least by the confession of which he is worthy. For this reason, by as much as we are raised above our subjects by royal glory, by so much ought we to be provident in the things that pertain to God, either to increase our hope or to take counsel for the nations entrusted to us by God.”

Justinian, Code, title 4: “We believe most certainly that the purity and honor of priests, their fervor toward the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, and the perpetual prayers sent forth by them furnish much favor and increase to our commonwealth; through these it is given to us both to subjugate barbarians and reduce under our dominion those whom we did not possess before. And by as much as honor and dignity are added to their affairs, by so much the more do we believe our commonwealth also to be increased. For if they display an honorable and wholly irreproachable life, and instruct the rest of the people so that they, looking toward their honor, abstain from many sins, it is plain that from this the souls of all will also become better, and suitable clemency will readily be bestowed upon us by the most high God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”

For this reason good emperors possessed so great a care for protecting true religion, abolishing the heresy of the Jews and

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the superstitions of the gentiles, that they endeavored, insofar as lay within them, to restrain the negligence and ambition of bishops.

§ 5. Emperors strike heretics with many laws to show that the commonwealth cannot be preserved amid so great a variety of religions and license of the impious.

Constantine, Constans, and Constantius: “The privileges bestowed in consideration of religion ought to benefit only the observers of the Catholic law. We desire heretics not only to be excluded from these privileges, but also to be constrained and subjected to various public duties.”

Gratian, Valentinian, and Valens, Augustuses: “Let all heresies forbidden by divine laws and imperial constitutions remain perpetually at rest. Let no one hereafter attempt either to teach or learn any profane precepts which he has discovered. Nor let their prelates dare to instill a faith which they do not possess, or create ministers who are not such. Nor, through the connivance of judges and of all to whom care concerning this matter has been committed through paternal constitutions, let audacity of this kind be neglected and increase. Moreover, under the designation of heretics are contained, and ought to succumb to the sanctions enacted against them, those who are found to have deviated even by a slight argument from the judgment of the Catholic religion and from the straight path.”

And afterward: “Arians, Macedonians, Pneumatomachi, Apollinarians, Novatians or Sebatians, Eunomians, Tetradites or Tessaescaedecadites, Valentinians, Paulians, Papianists, Montanists or Priscillianists, Phrygians or Pepuzites, Marcionists, Barborites, Messalians, Euchites or Enthusiasts, Donatists, Audians, Hydroparastatae, Tascodrogites,

Batrachites, Hermogenians, Photinians, Paulinians, Marcellians, Ophites, Encratites, Carpocratians, Saccophori, and the Manichaeans, who have arrived at wickedness reaching even to the lowest depth of crimes, are nowhere to possess the ability to assemble or remain in a Roman place.” There are also laws concerning the Manichaeans’ expulsion from cities and their delivery to capital punishment, “since no place is to be left here in which injury is done even to the elements themselves.”

Thus, in title 7, the same Augustuses Theodosius and Valentinian condemn decurions who are Nestorians. Marcian likewise condemns the Eutychians in the law *Quicumque*.

§ 6. But so that it may also appear how much that matter was at heart for later emperors, it is worthwhile to hear the constitution of Emperor Frederick: “Moreover, we condemn believers in, receivers, defenders, and supporters of heretics, firmly establishing that if, after any such person has been marked by excommunication, he has disdained to make satisfaction within a year, from that time he shall by the law itself be infamous; he shall neither be admitted to public offices or councils, nor to choosing others, nor be admitted to testimony. He shall also be incapable of making a testament, so that he has neither a free power of making a will nor access to hereditary succession. Moreover, no one shall answer to him concerning any matter, but he himself shall be compelled to answer others. But if perhaps he has been a judge, his judgment shall obtain no validity, nor shall any causes be brought to his hearing. If he has been an advocate, his patronage shall in no wise be admitted. If a notary, instruments prepared by him shall be judged utterly without effect.”

§ 7. The imperial code, title 7, demonstrates how great a severity they employed against apostates. Thus the emperors Theodosius and Valentinian, in the law *Apostatarum*: “Let the sacrilegious name of individual apostates be assailed by the continual voice of accusation, and let investigation of a crime of this kind be restrained by no limitations of time. Although previous prohibitions suffice for them, nevertheless we also repeat this: that after they have departed from the faith they shall possess no ability to make a testament or donate anything, nor shall they be permitted to defraud the law under the appearance of a sale; but the whole shall descend by intestacy preferably to relatives who follow Christianity.

“Moreover, we desire an action against sacrileges of this kind to be perpetuated to such a degree that we do not deny to all coming by intestacy, even after the offender’s death, an unrestricted voice of suitable accusation. Nor shall we permit this to stand as an obstacle: if nothing concerning the profane person was brought into contestation while he lived. But lest the interpretation of this crime wander more widely in uncertain error, we pursue by the present oracles those who, clothed with the name of Christianity, have performed sacrilegious sacrifices or commanded them to be performed. Their perfidy, proved even after death, is to be punished in this manner: with donations and testaments rescinded, those to whom legitimate succession would convey it shall possess the inheritance of persons of this kind.”

§ 8. They also oppose the wickedness of the Jews, title 9: “Jews will be condemned both to confiscation of goods and perpetual exile if it is established that they circumcised, or caused to be circumcised, a person of our faith.”

And in the Code, title 10, law *Iudaeus*: “A Jew shall neither be permitted to purchase a Christian slave nor obtain one as a gift or by any other title. But if any Jew has possessed a slave who is either a Christian or one whom he believed could be possessed from any cause although of another sect or nation, and has circumcised him, he shall not only be fined by the loss of the slave but also punished by a capital sentence, with liberty being given to the slave himself as a reward.”

§ 9. They also attacked and crushed with laws and immense penalties the impiety of the pagans, which was powerful in practice and strength.

Thus Emperor Constantius: “It has been resolved that temples in all places and all cities shall immediately be closed, and, access being forbidden, the license of sinning shall be denied to all the abandoned. We also desire all to abstain from sacrifices. But if they should perhaps perpetrate anything of this kind, let them be laid low by the avenging

sword. We also decree that the property of the slain be claimed for the fisc, and that governors of provinces be punished similarly if they neglect to avenge the crimes.”

And the emperors Valentinian and Marcian: “Let no one, with the intention of venerating and adoring, reopen shrines which were long ago closed. Far be it from our age that the former honor be restored to unspeakable and execrable images, the impious doorposts of temples be wreathed with garlands, profane fires be kindled upon altars, incense be burned upon them, victims be slain, wine be poured from bowls, and sacrilege be regarded as religion. But whoever attempts, contrary to this sanction of our serenity and contrary to the prohibitions of the most holy ancient constitutions, to perform sacrifices shall lawfully be accused before a public judge as guilty of so great a crime and, when convicted, shall undergo confiscation of all his goods and capital punishment. Those conscious of the crime and the ministers of sacrifices shall sustain the same penalty which was inflicted upon him, so that, terrified by this severity of our law, through fear of punishment they may cease to celebrate forbidden sacrifices. But if a most illustrious man who is governor of a province, after lawful accusation and after the crime has been proved at the inquiry, should dissemble in avenging so great a crime, the judge himself shall be compelled immediately to pay fifty pounds of gold to our fisc, and his office fifty also.

“Let no one dare to attempt the things that have rather often been forbidden to persons of pagan superstition, knowing that he commits a public crime who has dared perpetrate these things. Moreover, we desire deeds of this kind to be cut away to such a degree that, even if something such should be perpetrated on another’s estate or in another’s house, with the owners of course knowing, the estate or house shall be adjudged to the most sacred rights of the treasury. But the owners, for the sole reason that they knowingly consented that their own places be contaminated by such crimes, if indeed they are adorned with some dignity or military rank,

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“shall be punished by loss of military rank or dignity, and also by confiscation of their property; but those established in private or plebeian condition, after corporal tortures, shall be assigned either to labor in the mines or to perpetual exile.

“If anything has been given or bequeathed to places or persons, or for the construction of pagan error, the city in which the persons dwell or under which the places are subject shall receive it; but it shall be expended in the likeness of imperial revenues. Governors shall punish the impieties of pagans and report to the emperor those things which exceed their own power.

“Those who after holy baptism remain in the error of the pagans are punished by capital punishment. But those who have not yet been baptized shall bring themselves, together with their children, spouses, and all their people, to the holy churches, so that they may cause their little children to be baptized without delay, while the older are first taught the Scriptures according to the canons. But if, in order to possess military rank, dignity, or property, they pretend to be baptized and leave their children or spouses, or their domestics, in error, and those who belong to them and are joined by kinship, they shall be deprived of their property and suitably punished, and shall not engage in public affairs. But if they have not been baptized, they shall have no share in any part of public administration, nor shall they be owners of movable or immovable property; rather, the fisc shall claim these things, and they shall be suitably punished and go into exile. But if they appear to sacrifice or worship idols, they shall be punished like Manichaeans. Moreover, a pagan shall not teach any kind of doctrine, nor shall they enjoy the public grain allowance, not even according to the sacred register.”

All these things are directed to this: that since all make a display of piety, the true may be introduced and the false abolished.

CHAPTER IX

By the Judgment of Impious Human Beings, All Private and Public Happiness Comes from Virtue

§ 1. So great is my confidence in the cause that I deliver the decision to an adversary: let him speak testimony for us against himself. A cause to which aid is furnished from the opposing camp cannot appear bad. Profane authors relate that their princes were reduced to madness because piety was violated. Look upon Tiberius in Tacitus, book 6 of the *Annals*: “What am I to write to you, Conscript Fathers, or how am I to write, or what at this time am I altogether not to write? May the gods and goddesses destroy me worse than I feel myself perishing daily, if I know.” To such a degree his own crimes and disgraceful deeds had turned against him as punishment. Nor without reason was the most distinguished teacher of wisdom accustomed to affirm that, if the minds of tyrants were laid open, lacerations and blows could be seen, since minds are torn by cruelty, lust, and evil counsels just as bodies are by lashes.

For among all the evils of sinners this is the greatest: that every crime is a punishment to itself.

Plato in the tenth book of *The Republic*: “I ask,” he says, “that you explain what reward justice receives from gods and human beings, so that it may also carry off the palm from opinion and manifest estimation, by which it too adorns its cultivators, after it has been openly seen that by its very appearance it confers benefits upon us and does not deceive those who truly possess it.”

“You ask what is owed. First, indeed, you will grant me this: that what sort each of the two is--the just and the unjust--does not escape the gods.” “We grant it.” “If it does not escape the gods, the former will be loved by God, the latter held in hatred, as we confessed at the beginning.” “It is so.” “The best things are altogether bestowed by the gods upon the friend of the gods, insofar as this can be done, unless some evil threatens from an earlier offense and a certain necessity.” “Altogether.” “Thus one must judge concerning the just man: whether he is subject to poverty, diseases, or any other things that seem evil, these things ultimately conduce to some good for him, either living or dead. For he is never neglected by the gods who will emerge as just and endeavor, through the duties of virtue, to become like God insofar as is permitted to a human being; for it is fitting that such a man not be despised by one like him. But concerning the unjust man, one must judge altogether to the contrary.”

And in book 4 of *The Laws* he impresses these things with many more words, so that it is remarkable that so great a knowledge of virtue and piety flourished in a gentile philosopher.

§ 2. Aristotle teaches wholly the same things: for him only the wise person is happy, and he proclaims that commonwealth happiest in which virtue is cultivated most greatly. This is so true that without reverence for God good laws are of no profit, nor is any discipline preserved, and therefore the ruin of governments necessarily follows.

Valerius, book 1: “Governments do not hesitate to serve sacred rites, for God is the keen avenger of his divinity. Although punishments for evil deeds are sometimes late, they are nevertheless never ineffectual.”

§ 3. Certain persons became so religious from this that they ended in superstition. Hence the image of Hercules is carried before the army into battle against Porus, Curtius, book 8. Hence the Germans carry into battle images and standards taken down from groves. Hence the innumerable imitations of piety recounted in sacred and profane histories.

Bias makes laws with the Prieneans: “Let the prince of the Prieneans be religious and the highest defender of sacred buildings; otherwise, if he does not revere God, there is no reason for human beings to hope that justice will be commanded to them by him.”

And Xenophon, *On Revenues*: Σὺν θεῷ τῷ προϊσταμένῳ, εἰκὸς καὶ τὰς πράξεις προῖέναι ἐπὶ τὸ λῶον ἀεὶ τῇ πόλει.
 “If affairs begin with God, it is reasonable that the undertakings will turn out for the advantage of the city.”

§ 4. How great a care the nations possessed concerning religion Plutarch shows in his book *Against Colotes*: “In the constitution of laws, the first and greatest thing is opinion concerning the gods. Therefore Lycurgus consecrated the Lacedaemonians to the gods, Numa the Romans, Ion the ancient Athenians, and Deucalion almost all the Greeks, rendering them devoted and bound to the gods by vows, oaths, divinations, and all things through hope and fear. And if you traverse the lands, you may find cities lacking walls, letters, kings, resources, or coin, and knowing nothing of gymnasia and theaters; but no one has ever seen a city lacking temples and gods, which does not employ prayers, an oath, or an oracle, does not sacrifice for the sake of goods, and does not strive to avert evils by sacred rites. But I think that a city could more readily be founded without ground than that, with opinion concerning the gods utterly removed, a civil community could assemble or remain standing.”

Papinian therefore also says rightly: “That is the highest reasoning which acts on behalf of religion.”

Isocrates to King Nicocles: “Preserve,” he says, “the religion you received from your ancestors, and consider this the solemn and most beautiful sacrifice and the greatest worship: if you yourself are the best and most just. For there is greater hope that persons of this kind will obtain something good from the gods than those who build altars and shrines.”

Varro, book 14, chapter 7: whenever the senate was convened at Rome, no matter was treated before religion.

It was also provided by the law of Octavius that supplication should first be made with incense and unmixed wine. And Plutarch, in the life of Marcellus, is assuredly witness that the Romans judged religion to possess more force than arms for preserving the commonwealth.

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§ 5. From that source flowed hatred against Christians, as though they were enemies of piety. “Through sacrilege,” says the superstitious man, “this year has withered; it was necessary that all things perish because they were denied to the religions.”

Claudian, an enemy of the true religion, nevertheless sings that victory depends upon piety:

O you too greatly beloved by God, for whom Aeolus pours

Armed winters from his cave, for whom the sky fights,

And the winds come in league at the trumpet calls.

Nor does Cicero speak badly, if he changes the persons: “With piety toward the gods removed, it is necessary that trust and the association of the human race, and justice, the one most excellent virtue, also be removed.” Let piety therefore be preserved in the commonwealth. For just as pearls, although they are born in the sea, nevertheless possess more kinship with heaven, whose face they reproduce, so a pious and noble commonwealth depends more upon heaven, from which it draws its origin, than upon the earth on which it lives.

But human affairs would have been most badly provided for if the government and happiness of the commonwealth did not depend upon virtue and piety. Just as neither a household nor a commonwealth would appear to be ordered according to a certain reason and discipline if in it there were no rewards for right deeds and no punishments for sins, so there is assuredly no divine governance of the world over human beings if in it there is no distinction between good and evil persons. But leaving behind those who either did not acknowledge God or did not worship him, but vanished in their thoughts, let us fight atheists with other weapons.

CHAPTER X

From the Nature of Virtue We Are Taught That It Is Necessary to the Commonwealth

§ 1. If we consider the duties and functions of the virtues, and the infinite desires and deviations of the vices, we shall readily conclude that no commonwealth can stand without the cultivation of the virtues and the flight from and punishments of the vices. Let us establish a human being adorned with many gifts of fortune, distinguished by eloquence, strength, beauty, and resources, but foolish--some Nabal, as it were, and a golden wether. He will assuredly be able neither to administer the commonwealth, govern a household, nor be useful to friends; he is commended to his relatives, lest he turn all those things into the reproach of himself and his friends. Can a city therefore be governed, a war waged, or a kingdom maintained without prudence?

Next, let the commonwealth indeed be prudent, but a deserter of justice: will it be able to stand? It will endure for a time, like certain bands of brigands. If justice is absent, the stronger will despoil the inferior; he will suffer the same from one greater; weapons will remain to those despoiled. Now, amid rods, axes, red-hot plates, racks, pyres, and crosses, wickedness exults; all things are full of evils; the name of innocence has almost perished, because οὐδὲν οὕτω ῥᾶδιον ὥς τὸ γίνεσθαι κακόν, “nothing is so easy as becoming bad.” Unhappy wickedness finds rivals; what if it should flourish and thrive?

Third, without fortitude and constancy there can be no city, indeed no justice; for if the judge is fearful, he will not pronounce sentence against the powerful. The soldier will flee before the trumpet and surrender himself to the enemy as bloodless booty. What shall I say of temperance? Let him be wise, just, and brave. If he is the slave of drunkenness or lusts, he will not be able to be happy. Luxury broke the strength of Samson; lust and its companion idolatry cast down the wisdom of Solomon. The calamitous ends of the Babylonians, Tyrians, and indeed of many regions of the world teach this: very many kingdoms were overthrown by lust; one adulterer committed Asia and Europe to war; and incestuous marriage-beds again, the Trojans and Latins. Therefore, if these vices are strengthened and become powerful, if they pass into morals and into a second nature, there will cease to be a place for remedy. But when the poison has so occupied the inward parts that the contagion rejects medicine, the evils are ended only by death and destruction, as in Sardanapalus, Nero, Gallienus, Heliogabalus, and the other pests of the human race, whom God willed by their horrific ends to be examples unto the detestation of crimes.

§ 2. Since those virtues are therefore altogether necessary to the commonwealth, and nevertheless cannot be stable without true piety and fear of God--for religion is the foundation of every virtue--it is necessary that he who governs the helm of the commonwealth keep continually before his eyes the supreme Lord of all things, to whom an account must be rendered even of right deeds. Otherwise, when occasions offer themselves, even good princes will readily slip toward worse things.

Nor will subjects be able to be contained in duty without fear of eternal punishment or hope of reward. For fear of the laws and the penalties customarily inflicted upon the guilty possess little effectiveness for terrifying and obstructing crimes. Many despise death, or do not so fear it that they bring themselves to restrain their desires by that thought. They also hope that they can deceive and escape punishments until they are in the very chains. Therefore, he who has cast away piety will not only dare whatever crimes he has conceived whenever there is hope of lying hidden, but will carry the criminal desires of a criminal mind into prisons, chains, the rack, and pyres. He will not be corrected by lashes but made more savage; he will condemn not the crimes but their unhappy outcomes, and will prepare himself for the future so that he may offend more cautiously and secretly.

CHAPTER XI

Friendship and Concord Cannot Exist without Virtue

§ 1. The friendship of citizens, like the harmonious adjustment of members in a body, is necessary for the safety of the commonwealth; for there is no gathering, no assembly, without friendship. Friendship, I say, that is gratuitous, not venal, not a cunning observer of its own advantage. But true friendship does not exist without virtue and cannot exist without it; therefore neither can the commonwealth.

Friendship ought first to be entrusted through practice, weighed by proofs, and free from suspicions. Its most tenacious bond is similarity of morals; it is fostered by conversation and services. But if each person does all things for his own sake, if each one's end is his own advantage, the most beautiful thing of all after the virtues falls--namely, friendship. Cicero rightly teaches that the Epicureans, who said that they did all things for the sake of their own pleasure, removed friendship altogether. Plato therefore taught excellently that to lack friends and faithful men is a greater sign of vice than any other can be, and that to abound in friends is an indication of virtue, Epistle 7.

But the rich, and those who are in principate and power, have the greatest need of friendships, as Aristotle admonishes in *Ethics* 8, chapter 4. So great is the necessity of friendship that even the wise person seems to need it; certainly everyone desires to possess very many friends. But true friendship is that toward which no advantage or natural propensity carries a human being, but an honorable reason for deserving well of another. The sweetness of friendship is innate in us, and nature has implanted a certain stimulus toward loving and joy concerning friendship.

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None of these things can exist in a commonwealth of atheists. If a tyrant plunders and rages; if wisdom, the examiner of true affection, is absent; if justice is neglected; if each person measures all things by his own pleasure, no one will love another. A new poison will permeate households and the families of the powerful, and will stir the natural affections of parents and children mutually against one another. The judgment of Epicurus and of political atheists is that friendship is not the reward of virtue and that each person does all things for his own sake. The words of Epicurus in Laertius are: ἔνεκα γίνεσθαι τὴν φιλίαν διὰ τὰς χρείας, “friendship comes about because of needs.” So much so that Plutarch, in his book *On Affection for Offspring*, testifies that this disgraceful doctrine of Epicurus was refuted by a shout from the theater:

Μισθῷ γὰρ ἀνθρώπου τίς ἀνθρώπον φιλεῖ;

For who loves a human being for a human being's payment?

He says that this was an object of admiration in the theaters; but according to Epicurus a father and mother love a son in this way, and the children themselves love their parents in this way.

Seneca speaks with much greater wisdom, Epistle 9: “The wise person, even if content with himself, nevertheless wishes to have a friend--if for no other reason, so that he may exercise friendship, lest so great a virtue lie idle. Not for the reason which Epicurus stated in this very epistle: that he may have someone to sit beside him when sick, or assist him when cast into chains and in need; but that he may have someone beside whom he himself may sit when that man is sick, someone whom he himself may free when surrounded by an enemy guard. He who looks to himself and for this reason comes to friendship thinks badly; as he began, so will he end.

“He has prepared a friend who will bring aid against chains; as soon as the chain rattles, he will depart. These are the friendships which the people call temporary. He who was adopted for the sake of utility will please as long as he is useful. For this reason a crowd of friends sits around the flourishing; around the fallen there is an immense solitude, and friends flee from the place where they are tested. For this reason there are so many impious examples, some

abandoning through fear, others betraying through fear. It is necessary that beginnings and ends agree with one another. He who began to be a friend because it is expedient will be pleased by some price against friendship, if any price in it pleases him beyond friendship itself. For what do I prepare a friend? That I may have one for whom I can die, that I may have one whom I may follow into exile, to whose death I may oppose and devote myself. That which you describe is commerce, not friendship: it approaches for advantage and considers what it will obtain.”

Friendship is therefore necessary, but that friendship which, as the philosophers establish as certain, can exist only among the good. The Stoics say: **φιλίαν ἐν μόνοις τοῖς σπουδαίοις εἶναι διὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα**. “It exists among the good alone, and this because of similarity.” But since among the wicked there is no love of a friend, nor anything in which one approves the other, it is necessary that through the vices of the wicked the commonwealth utterly perish, because all plead their own private cause and no one the public cause.

CHAPTER XII

Examples Teach That Things Turned Out Unhappily for the Impious and Prosperously for the Good

§ 1. It is scarcely worthwhile to collect examples; Thomas Bozius has done this at length and laboriously in eight books *On the Ruins of Nations*. To this I appeal to all and admonish that, if words do not satisfy anyone, he should tremble at the examples of the whole world. We are moved more by a few examples than by very many words; but now there are more examples than any volume could contain words. Let each person, contemplating in those examples an image of his own danger, abstain from vices.

§ 2. I shall omit those familiar things: the Flood and the vices of the primeval world settling into the waves; the fires of the Pentapolis; the Canaanites destroyed; fifty nations that afflicted the chosen people cut off; the corpses or slender remains of nearly all ancient cities; and the changes of all kingdoms with the shaking of the whole world. Let us look upon one commonwealth--not its whole course, but a brief and nevertheless most calamitous time.

Julius Caesar, the most disgraceful of human beings, cut down 1,100,000 in various battles in Gaul; afterward he wages civil wars and is himself preserved for his enemy for a few years, until he is sacrificed by many wounds in the sight of the senate. Poisons from domestic plots avenged Augustus and Tiberius; the avenging sword, Gaius; a mushroom, Claudius; his own hand, Nero. No less were those who followed vessels of wrath and examples of heavenly vengeance. Vitellius, Otho, and Galba seem to have been raised to government so that history might not be silent about their bloody and horrific ends. The force of disease and despair brought Vespasian's life to an end; Titus, dying by a brother's poison, was buried nearly alive; a conspiracy of Domitian's household, among whom was his wife, crushed him. Disease and sorrow extinguished Nerva; poison given in food, Trajan; impatience with torments, and starvation voluntarily undertaken, Hadrian--and avenged Christian blood. Apoplexy carried off Lucius Verus; voluntary hunger, Marcus Aurelius.

Commodus, the most criminal of all, was slaughtered with mockeries added. His successor Pertinax, after he had ruled for eighty-two days, was stripped of government and life by his own praetorians. Severus, often assailed by plots from his son Antoninus Caracalla and attacked by open parricide, died of sorrow. Caracalla himself, after he had killed his brother Geta in his mother's bosom, was stabbed by his own centurion; for he was a parricide, incestuous, and especially an enemy of his father, mother, brother, and God. The emperors Macrinus and Diadumenian afterward fell by the hands of their own soldiers. The slain Heliogabalus's body was dragged and cast into the Tiber. Not even a certain piety profited Alexander so as to prevent his being killed by Maximinus. But Maximinus was slaughtered together with his son, and their heads sent to Rome for the consolation of the afflicted city. Soldiers killed Balbinus and Pupienus--raised to government by the senate--after subjecting them to mockery and torturing them most dreadfully.

Philip, Gordian's colleague and unmindful of his benefit, killed him most cruelly and indignantly. Philip, together with his son, although now a Christian with changed morals, was nevertheless struck down by Decius in vengeance for his offenses--the father at Verona, the son at Rome. Their successor and parricide Decius, after his son had been slaughtered by the commander Trebonianus, while fleeing the sword of his own soldier, was swallowed in a marsh together with his horse. Gallus and Volusianus, while marching against Aemilianus, were killed by their soldiers, and Aemilianus four months afterward by the same men. Valerian served a servitude in Persia. His son Gallienus, together with his brother and sons, was killed by his own commanders. Claudius, broken by plague, died; his brother Quintillus, made emperor by the soldiers, was killed by the same men on the seventeenth day. The same punishment befell Aurelian, and the fortune of Probus was no different; his parricidal soldiers set up this epitaph for him: "Here Probus

has been placed, truly upright.” God struck Carus with a thunderbolt from heaven. Carinus, conquered in battle in vengeance for adultery, was afterward

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stabbed by a member of his household. Numerian was killed by his father-in-law Aper, and Aper by Diocletian. Diocletian ended his life through sorrow, Maximian Herculius by a noose.

Behold, in the most noble and powerful monarchy, the most thoroughly furnished with laws, the emperors succeeding one another in uninterrupted order for three hundred years: all died by violent death, none extinguished on his own day, none by his own fate. I permit you to except one, Antoninus Pius, whom they report to have died from disease. Behold, the wrath of God is revealed against all impiety and injustice; resources or majesty protect no one. Why did God for so long avenge himself upon the wicked by so conspicuous an example? Assuredly, lest anyone be ignorant that punishments for crimes are made present, and lest a private person hope for impunity when he saw the heads of the world destined for the executioner in so long a series.

Look upon so many deaths of emperors; but first let us consider the monstrous, shameful crimes hostile to the nature of things; then the remarkable misfortunes of the many tyrants who warred with them, the senators who were killed, and the cities that were overturned, so that it may appear most clearly to us how the wrath of God is revealed against every impiety and injustice of human beings who hold the truth of God in injustice.

For emperors and heads of peoples fell amid the greatest shaking of the world, through the flanks of princes and the destructions of peoples.

CHAPTER XIII

That the Simulation of Virtue, and Especially of Religion, Is Harmful to the Commonwealth

§ 1. The pseudo-statesmen sometimes also praise virtue; but when it is seriously required in a prince, when the senatorial order and the tribes of the people are formed toward it, they set before us the shadow and dead image of virtue in place of virtue itself. They consider it sufficient to simulate justice and temperance; they fashion for us a city which is Helen outside, Hecuba within. They so instruct the prince that he formulates prayers in these words:

Grant me to deceive; grant me to seem just and holy.

Set night before my sins, and a cloud before my frauds.

But they fashion senators and tribunes not dissimilar to the prince:

Οἱ τ' εὖ μὲν λαλέουσι, κακῶς δ' ὅπιθεν φρονέουσι.

Who indeed speak well, but afterward contrive evil.

Machiavelli assuredly denies that a prince can be good, chapter 15: “For the manner in which human beings live is so far removed from that in which it would be right that they live, that he who neglects what is done in order to follow what ought to be done summons ruin for himself in learning this, rather than willing that counsel be taken for his safety. For he who strives to profess himself a good man in every part must assuredly be endangered among so many who are not good. It is therefore necessary for a prince, if he wishes to be safe, to have perceived the manner by which he can be not good, and, according to the necessity of the matter, either turn this to his use or not turn it.

“Therefore, setting aside the things fashioned in the mind concerning a prince only, and discoursing concerning those things which are true, I say that all human beings--and especially princes, since they are placed in a higher position--are accustomed to be noted for some of the following qualities: one is called liberal, another restrictive and tenacious; one munificent, another a plunderer; some cruel, others merciful; some breakers of treaties, others religious; some effeminate and soft, others, on the contrary, manly and fierce; many humane, others swollen with pride; very many lustful, some endowed with chastity; integrity of life is perceived in not a few, most harmful fraud in many; very many are harsh in morals, some adorned with affability and mildness; some grave and severe, others, on the contrary, light and dissolute; many cultivate piety, while, on the contrary, there are those who oppose it exceedingly--and other things similar to these.”

Since therefore he denies that a prince can be good, he nevertheless admonishes him to beware of the infamy of those vices by which his government might be taken from him, and not to labor greatly concerning the others, without which he cannot easily protect his dominion. And chapter 18: “He who was more sagacious, so that he expressed the nature of foxes better, found all things turning out more happily. But since there are two kinds of contending, one by the right of laws, the other through force; and since the former is proper to a human being and the latter to beasts, one must have recourse to the latter if it is not sufficient to employ the former. Accordingly, it is necessary that a prince hold the right use of both, beast and human being.

“This part was delivered to princes under a certain covering by the ancient writers, who assert that Achilles and many other princes of old were entrusted to Chiron the centaur to be educated and placed under his discipline. For in saying that they had a teacher of mixed kind, both human being and beast, they teach nothing other than that the use of both natures will be necessary for a prince. Since therefore it matters greatly that a prince skillfully put on the nature of a beast, he must assume the morals both of the fox and the lion. For the lion does not guard himself against snares, while the little fox fears wolves. Therefore, in order that snares be perceived, one must act the little fox; but in order that

wolves be terrified, the leonine nature must be assumed. Those who simply insist upon the lion's tracks assuredly do not grasp the matter itself.

"A prince who is endowed with wisdom ought therefore to avoid those promises which he sees will be contrary to his own advantages. And indeed, if human beings were all upright, this precept would have been plainly useless; but since they are wicked, their wickedness and perfidy must be carefully eluded. Moreover, causes will never be lacking to human beings by which they may introduce a color over violated faith. Almost infinite recent examples could be brought forward on this matter and show how many treaties of peace, promises, and agreements have been rendered ineffective and vain by perfidy. But it matters greatly that one know how rightly to clothe this nature with color, both by simulating and dissimulating. For human beings are so simple and so compliant with present necessities that one who is deceitful and instructed in the art of simulation will immediately have someone who delivers himself to be deceived by him. Such persons must therefore be guarded against all the more, and their art frustrated by art."

And even if that teacher of vices had said none of the other things, these assuredly suffice abundantly to overthrow the commonwealth.

§ 2. Nothing is more shameful than a simulator, whom no one except a madman can believe even when he acts seriously. For the present I shall omit most things against hypocrisy and the deceptive art of simulating and dissimulating, but shall touch chiefly upon those which pertain to civil government.

The Holy Spirit frequently impresses that simulation, deceit, and hypocrisy greatly displease God. Job 8:13: "The hope of the hypocrite will perish. His folly will not please him, and his confidence will be like spiders' webs." And Job 36:13: "Simulators and the cunning provoke the wrath of God." And Psalm 5:8: "The Lord will abominate the bloodthirsty and deceitful man." The same things are repeated in Job 15:34 and 20:5; Psalm 54:24; Matthew 7:5; Luke

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16:15. The magnitude of this crime is taken from four causes.

§ 3. First, it most gravely offends God, because it always joins and couples two crimes. For, as St. Augustine says on Psalm 36: "Simulated innocence is not innocence, and simulated equity is not equity, but a double iniquity, because it is both iniquity and simulation." A most beautiful reason has been given. Alfonso explained it when, returning victorious from Africa to the island of Aenaria, he heard that Antonio Piceno, a distinguished craftsman of simulation, had ended his life most wretchedly, eaten away by little worms because of his blasphemies and hypocrisy. He said that hypocrites were so hateful to God because they bewitched and deceived mortals, made God the mediator of this crime and perfidy, and undertook crimes under the pretext of so great a majesty. Therefore they are not only consigned to eternal punishments after death, but are generally punished and tortured in the sight of the human beings whom they deceived.

Accordingly, we see that when God brings out what was done in darkness and makes it manifest in the sight of this sun, the error is removed. For unless divine justice, the immutable exactor of sincerity, acted so severely against those wicked persons, human beings, from the habit of deceiving, would judge that they could deceive even God. Isaiah, chapter 29:15, testifies that counselors and statesmen who thought thus were not lacking to perishing Judaea: "Woe to you who are deep in heart, so that you hide counsel from the Lord, whose works are in darkness, and who say: 'Who sees us, and who knows us?' This thought of yours is perverse, as if clay should think against the potter and the work should say to its maker, 'You did not make me,' and the thing fashioned should say to its fashioner, 'You do not understand.' Will not Lebanon yet, in a little and a short time, be turned into Carmel, and Carmel be reckoned as a forest?"

§ 4. Second, the simulator himself both readily slips and is cast headlong by his own arts, so that he can never escape. For he cannot be admonished and corrected, since he himself, as though innocent and just, anticipates chastisements as the leader and author of others. They are tombs, but closed ones, and for as long as they can, they restrain their stench.

Such were the monks in Syria and Egypt whom they call Sarabaites; Jerome calls them Remoboth. They feigned holiness by habit, gesture, and solitude, while most wicked in their minds. They are obstinate in this very evil: that whatever good thing they are commanded to do, they simulate it.

§ 5. Third, human beings are accustomed to be offended by nothing more than the simulation of justice and piety, just as they are delighted by sincerity and faith. It is an oracle of St. Ambrose, book 2 of *On Duties*: “Direct simplicity of mind abounds for all things and sufficiently commends itself.” Therefore nothing in the commonwealth is more harmful than suspicion of simulation, which renders all benefits ineffectual and every courtesy and every humanity hateful. Without a reputation for faith and piety the commonwealth cannot be governed; but if simulation is perceived, the most extreme hatreds and contempt follow. It is certain that nothing feigned and painted is the work of true virtue; indeed, it is not even accustomed to endure. At the beginning it blossoms; in its course it is scattered and dissolved like a little flower. But what is right and sincere is established upon a deep root. Not even simulators and the wicked themselves can endure hypocrites who are rivals in their art.

Assuredly, a certain poet contemplates flight lest he injure his eyes, so burdensome to him was the sight of simulation--Juvenal, Satire 2:

I desire to flee from here beyond the Sauromatae and the icy
 Ocean, whenever they dare anything concerning morals,
 Who simulate Curii and live Bacchanals.
 First, they are unlearned--although you may find all things full
 Of plaster busts of Chrysippus. For the most perfect of these is
 One who buys an image of Aristotle or Pittacus
 And commands archetypal Cleantheses to guard his shelf.
 There is no trust in the face; for what street does not abound
 In gloomy obscenities?

But where will you flee? Perhaps you will carry a hypocrite with you even beyond the icy Ocean; perhaps some pus is concealed in your own heart, and a foul crime is covered by a polished forehead. Perhaps the countenance is a lamb's, while the inward parts are a dragon's. How hatefully Seneca lashes these things in the *Hippolytus*:

Where is that countenance, and the feigned majesty of the man?
 And his bristling appearance, seeking ancient and bygone things?
 And the gloomy old age of morals, grave in aspect?
 O deceitful life, you bear hidden thoughts,
 And put a beautiful face upon troubled minds.
 Modesty conceals the shameless man, quiet the audacious,
 Piety the impious; the false approve true things,
 And the soft simulate hard things.

§ 6. I doubt whether any prince surpassed Tiberius in the art of simulation. Dio of Nicaea describes his nature: “Tiberius was a patrician and learned, but of a peculiar and uncommon nature and morals. For he so concealed all the affections of his mind that he scarcely ever said what he desired, and his will and desire fought against his speech. For he professed hatred for what he sought most greatly and dissembled what he hated. He was angry although disturbed

by no circumstance; when angry, he was thought to possess the most tranquil and equable mind. He pitied those against whom he had acted severely, and was sometimes angry with those whom he pardoned. He so embraced the most hostile human beings as those most familiar and closely joined to him; but, on the contrary, he conducted himself no more truly with his closest friends than with the most alien human beings. Finally, he thought that the mind of a prince ought to be known to no one.

“If this had stood alone in Tiberius, his will could not have been obscure to those who tried and strove to know it, since they would have taken everything in the contrary sense. For when he had denied that he wished something, they would have judged that he desired it most greatly; and when he said that he desired it, they would then have judged that he did not wish it. But beyond the things said above, he bore it grievously when he suspected that anyone was conscious of and a participant in his counsels; and he commanded many to be killed for no other reason than that he said his will had been observed and perceived by them. Accordingly, almost the only man safe--and this occurred very rarely--was he who neither was ignorant of his character and morals nor revealed that he knew them. For in this manner those who obeyed him were not deceived and did not therefore come into his hatred by showing that they perceived the things he did.

“Endowed with these morals, Tiberius, as though he had immediately obtained the empire, sent letters from Rome not only to the army but also to all nations; yet in them he did not write that he had been made emperor, because he rejected that name decreed to him by the senate together with his other names, and admitted the inheritance of Augustus but not his surname.”

§ 7. Such was the disposition of the prince, fashioned for dissimulating and simulating. But now let us look upon the things that followed from it. First, when he had refused the empire, there was more dignity than faith in such speech. Therefore someone objected that others were slow to perform what they promised, but Tiberius slow to promise what he would perform; for only when he spoke in the senate was he a delayer.

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§ 8. Second, he had now accustomed his mind to simulation to such a degree that he could not bring forth sincere words. “And in Tiberius,” says Tacitus in book 1 of the *Annals*, “even in matters which he did not conceal, whether by nature or habit, his words were always suspended and obscure. But then, when he strove utterly to hide his thoughts, they were entangled all the more in uncertainty and ambiguity.” How great a loss joined with dishonor it is for deceit and falsehood to appear in every speech of a prince, and for the fox’s skin always to flash forth!

§ 9. Third, nothing was accomplished by so great an art. For just as actors or hypocrites are regarded as better hypocrites by as much as they adapt voice and gesture to theatrical trifles with greater skill and assimilate feigned things more closely to true ones--for hypocrites are simulators, as though reciters of other persons, as Augustine says in the *Sermon on the Mount* and Basil in the homily *On Fasting*--so magistrates are judged more cunning and fraudulent by as much as they simulate benevolence, justice, and piety with greater art.

For no one believed Tiberius. Behold the miseries of the subjects under that ape. Tacitus, *Annals* 1: “But the Fathers, who possessed one fear--that they might appear to understand--poured forth into complaints, tears, and vows, stretching their hands toward the gods, toward the image of Augustus, and toward his own knees.” Nor without cause. It was afterward understood that the doubt had been introduced in order also to inspect the wishes of the nobles, for he stored away words and countenances, twisting them into a charge. Great was the danger for minds so consternated, so doubtful. For if even one man of the spirit of Brutus or Cassius had then existed, by one word he could have freed all the Fathers from so great a fear. Assuredly that prince possessed no true friend: a painted friend of all human beings, a true enemy, he wasted away in the dreadful hatred of all.

§ 10. Fourth, not only the things which he simulated openly and concerning which they labored lest they appear to understand, but all his secrets were published. The quaestor Crispinus charged Marcellus, praetor of Bithynia, with

treason and accused him of having held sinister conversations concerning Tiberius. The charge was unavoidable, since the accuser selected from the prince's morals each most shameful thing and cast it against the defendant. For because they were true, it was believed that they had also been said. Therefore all his secrets lay open, and what was covered by so great an art was already rumor.

Suetonius, chapter 66: "Moreover, various reproaches from every direction burned his anxious mind, since every one of those condemned cast every kind of insult upon him, either in his presence or by placards set in the orchestra. By these he was indeed affected in the most diverse ways, sometimes so that from shame he wished all to be unknown and concealed, and sometimes so that he despised the same things and voluntarily brought them forth and published them. Indeed, he was also torn apart by a letter from Artabanus, king of the Parthians, who cast parricides, killings, cowardice, and luxury against him and admonished him to make satisfaction as soon as possible, by voluntary death, to the greatest and most just hatred of the citizens. Finally, having become weary even of himself, at the beginning of a letter he all but professed the sum of his evils."

§ 11. Fifth, he was never secure by that simulation. Clemens, a slave of Agrippa, had prepared a force not to be despised in vengeance for his master, and many secretly assisted him. Lucius Scribonius Libo was attempting revolution; there was a mutiny of the soldiers in Germany and Illyricum. Finally, hateful to everyone at Rome, Tiberius shut himself upon an island. What disposition human beings had toward him was disclosed at his death. For the people rejoiced so greatly at his death that, when the first report arrived, some, running about, shouted that Tiberius should be dragged into the Tiber; some entreated Mother Earth and the gods of the dead not to give the dead man any dwelling except among the impious; others threatened his corpse with the hook and the Gemonian stairs.

He also passed his life in perpetual fear. For through fear of Sejanus, when the matter was uncertain, he prepared ships and contemplated flight to any of the legions, repeatedly observing from the highest rock; and, lest the messengers delay, he had commanded signals to be raised far off according as each thing had been done. But even after the conspiracy of Sejanus had been crushed, no more secure or steadfast, he did not depart during the following twelve months from the villa called that of Jupiter.

§ 12. Sixth, hence there was no care for the commonwealth in the senate, even if the most extreme things of the empire were dishonored, for inward dread had besieged it. Meanwhile simulation did not abandon Tiberius even when he was now dying; for even when failing, he ordered a banquet to be renewed, until Macro, prefect of the praetorian cohort, ordered the old man to be smothered by a heap of clothing. Thus it came about that he possessed no friend except a simulated one. By the just and true judgment of God he perished by his own arts: throughout his whole government he had labored to disclose the secrets of his heart to no one, and had killed many solely because they seemed to have perceived his will and counsels.

§ 13. Simulation is therefore useless to a government and always ruinous to a prince. Human minds are so constituted by nature that they immediately hate a person whom they hold suspect and perceive to be distrustful; they neither commit themselves to him nor remain faithful, for mutual trust binds trust.

Nor can simulation in a prince be concealed for long. With the passage of time many things must be done which had been covered, while their contraries had been simulated.

The observation and experience of one year therefore instruct most people sufficiently concerning the nature of a prince.

They see persons driven into exile or slaughtered whom a little before the prince appeared to carry in his bosom. They cannot doubt that those persons were raised on high so that a heavier fall might shatter them.

The following admonition is therefore for a good prince:

You live--and rule--rightly if you take care to be what you hear yourself called.

For the simulator, however, this is the proper admonition: Ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος ὁμῶς Ἀΐδαο πύλησιν, ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεῖθι ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἴπη.

He is as hateful to me as the gates of the infernal regions,

Who hides one thing in his mind and speaks another.

§ 14. Therefore the evil of hypocrisy is supreme, because it secretly covers, fosters, and increases all crimes. Since so many true evils are concealed by a thin, uncertain, and mutable simulation of false good, it is necessary that the commonwealth perish by that art.

§ 15. Nevertheless, atheists remain in their opinion and maintain that opinion can accomplish the same thing as truth. Minos, king of the Cretans, pretended that he was descended from Jupiter. He was accustomed to descend into a deep cave of the most ancient superstition, as though to receive laws from Jupiter. Following his example, Numa wished it to be believed that he held nocturnal meetings with Egeria, was instructed by her, and delivered sacred rites received from the immortal gods.

Lycurgus, with a similar fabrication, declared Apollo the proposer of his laws. Zaleucus persuaded the Locrians that he had employed Minerva's counsel. Scipio Africanus did not go forth to business unless he had delayed in the cell of Jupiter. Sulla embraced a small image of Apollo before battle and asked it to hasten what it had promised. More foolishly than all, Sertorius deceived the Lusitanians--a nation fierce and barbarous at that time, now the most cultivated of all--by leading around a white doe, tame and familiar, as though prophetic.

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Therefore a prince can sometimes employ simulated religion.

I indeed confess that the common people are held by superstition and are sometimes moved by it more strongly than by true religion. Just as those who suffer from pica are carried more ardently toward inhuman and filthy foods than healthy persons, whom natural appetite stimulates, so a people whose morals are already corrupt is led by the shadow and vanity of religion. But when superstition is treated, I shall show that this is not only impious but useless to a kingdom.

But because they employ examples, these too must be refuted. For I deny that the sacrileges of feigned religion ever turned out well either for these men or for others.

§ 16. Minos bound the minds of the Cretans by superstition, so that they received the laws as though from Jupiter's parchment. Thus indeed; but the Cretans neither preserved the laws and were infamous for two things, being counted among the three worst kappas--namely, because they were fraudulent and contentious. Hence the name "Cretism" denotes malicious cunning, and "syncretism," according to usage, a fraudulent pacification.

Minos himself paid penalties for simulation. For although he boasted that he enjoyed conversation with Jupiter, was admonished by him concerning all matters, and even possessed foreknowledge of the future, he did not know his domestic disgraces. That unhappy simulator went so far as to possess an adulterous wife--that is, a simulator, or, if tales are to be believed, a follower of the most impious lust--and no faithful person at home to disclose the arts of Daedalus. Nor, when Theseus guided his footsteps by the dowry-thread and led away his daughter, did Jupiter his father admonish him. Nor did he foretell the king's unhappy death when Minos went to Sicily to avenge the injuries received from Daedalus, although this pertained more greatly to the king's safety.

For whether he was killed by Sicilian women, as Herodotus says, or was suffocated by Cocalus with the heat of a bath, as Diodorus maintains, he gave a distinguished proof that God is the avenger of simulated religion and wills to be honored only by true and sincere religion. He was also regarded as a fool by his subjects: although foreknowing the future, he was ignorant of the lusts of his wife and daughter.

§ 17. Numa and Lycurgus imitated Minos. Numa, a magician, indeed established superstition at Rome. Augustine speaks prudently concerning him in book 3, chapter 9 of *The City of God*: “That man ought to have been congratulated for so great a leisure, if only he had known how to expend it upon salutary things and, with most destructive curiosity neglected, to seek the true God by true piety. But as it is, the gods did not confer that leisure upon him; rather, perhaps they would have deceived him less if they had not found him at leisure. For by as much as they found him less occupied, by so much the more did they occupy him. Varro discloses what he attempted and by what arts he was able to associate such gods with himself or that city. If it pleases the Lord, this will be discussed more diligently in its own place.”

But for the present, since the question concerns their benefits, peace is a great benefit. Yet it is a benefit of the true God, generally bestowed even upon the ungrateful and wicked, like the sun, rain, and other supports of life. But if those gods conferred so great a good upon Rome or Pompilius, why did they never afterward furnish it to the Roman Empire during its more praiseworthy times? Were the sacred rites more useful while they were being instituted than when they were celebrated after institution? But at that time they did not yet exist and were being added so that they might exist; afterward they did exist and were preserved so that they might profit.

What, then, is the reason that those forty-three--or, as others maintain, thirty-nine--years were passed in so great a peace while Numa reigned, but afterward, with sacred rites instituted and those very gods who had been invited by the rites now acting as guardians and protectors, scarcely one year, after so many years from the founding of the city down to Augustus, is commemorated as a great marvel after the First Punic War, in which the Romans were able to close the gates of war?

Thus Numa, by simulating, made the city unhappy; afterward no one believed him, for all confess that he simulated conversations with the gods. But many gods were added afterward, and they were not content with Numa's divinities; and Rome, burdened by so many divine powers, lived amid perpetual disaster.

§ 18. Lycurgus and Zaleucus are also praised. But although I grant that certain things in each are worthy of praise, I condemn their vain pursuit of the glory of divination. Lycurgus gave laws to the Lacedaemonians, but laws which no city wished to employ and which soon became obsolete. He indeed bound all by oath that they would preserve the laws while he was away; but lest by his return he release them from the religious obligation of the oath, he chose voluntary exile. And lest he himself someday return to the fatherland through weariness of wandering, he took his own life. He was unhappy not only in his death but also in his laws, a great part of which Lacedaemon soon abrogated, whether by practice and morals or by contrary sanctions.

Lycurgus was therefore not wise, as is evident from his laws, which are in Xenophon's *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*. Next, if he loved his fatherland, he should have returned himself and brought good laws into morals; for even while present he could compel them by oath. But if he did not wish to return, why did he kill himself? What had he himself deserved so badly from himself that, contrary to the law implanted by nature, he wished to be his own executioner? Did he trust himself so little? Was the desire to see his fatherland so great that it could be quieted only by death? Although others--and I believe this more readily--relate that, inflamed by grief and anger because he understood that his laws were being violated, he wished by death to withdraw himself from that insult.

§ 19. Zaleucus, the lawgiver of the Locrians, also paid penalties for hypocrisy. For when he had established that an adulterer's eyes should be dug out, and his son had deserved that punishment, he divided the punishment with him so that his son would not be altogether blind: one eye was dug out for his son, the other for himself. But not much later all the laws were neglected and adulteries went unpunished.

The matter is more obscure concerning the death of Zaleucus; nevertheless, many things throughout history teach of the disasters of the Locrians, showing that they were not made happy by the lawgiver's simulation. The case of Lycurgus is better attested from Plutarch, Herodotus, and Stobaeus. It will suffice me to append what Valerius Maximus has in book 5, chapter 3: “Lacedaemon produced no man greater or more useful than Lycurgus, since Apollo

at Delphi is reported to have answered him when he sought an oracle that he did not know whether to number him among human beings or gods. Yet neither the highest sincerity of his life, nor his most constant love toward the fatherland, nor laws salutarily devised could assist him so that he did not experience hostile citizens.

“For he was often attacked with stones, at one time driven out by public fury, and even deprived of an eye; finally, he was expelled from his own fatherland. What should other cities do when even that one, which claims for itself the outstanding praise of constancy, moderation, and gravity, proved so ungrateful toward one who had deserved so well?” Behold a distinguished priest of feigned sanctity and simulation, and the punishment of violated religion made present for you. How, therefore, was Lycurgus happy amid these things through simulation?

§ 20. Concerning Scipio, it is agreed that he was not at all superstitious, that his simulation was mocked at Rome by his adversaries, and that he contended against Hannibal by virtue, not superstition. Nevertheless, he paid penalties: despised and with the people offended, he grew old upon his little farm,

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and died wasted away by sorrow. Sulla too was assuredly not at all happy: after abdicating the dictatorship, he was consumed by worms at Puteoli. The outcome mocked the divinations of Sertorius; for, killed by his own men amid a banquet, he taught the Lusitanians that he had not been a prophet. Why did that beast foretell the time and manner of all things to be done, but warn nothing concerning the death of Sertorius, which was followed by the servitude of the whole nation?

§ 21. Vain and hateful, therefore, is the simulation of virtues; indeed, it is generally destructive. The reason is that although the rude common people are led by vanities, nevertheless among the citizens there are many who both recognize and laugh at these things. Who does not know that Proculus swore falsely when he said that Romulus had been seen by him departing into heaven and being called Quirinus? It was said with perjury that Drusilla, Augustus, and Tiberius had gone to the gods; nevertheless, no one believed them for so good a report.

For these things are accustomed to be derided. But if the stupidity of certain persons is entangled by and trembles at such things, it is nevertheless readily instructed by the witty sayings of clever human beings, so that those who hunted a reputation for sanctity by deceptions are regarded as impostors. But if it happens that they err and slip in any matter, as human weakness does, a great part of their authority immediately falls.

Finally, let the prince, magistrates, and people hold this fixed: that the reputation which is tossed about by the opinions of fools is made of glass, and once broken can be repaired among neither the wise nor fools; but such is the glory that does not arise from truth. That saying of Cicero is an oracle: “True glory puts down roots and is also propagated; all feigned things quickly fall like little flowers, nor can anything simulated be lasting.”

When their fraud has been detected, aristocrats come into the greatest contempt. No one laughs at a grave matron if she lacks the grace of beauty; but if her painted purple and antimony run down, she becomes the tale of the common people, because she affected an allurements beyond what was fitting to her age. Thus the impiety of magnates is less detestable if it lacks a veil of piety. Applause was given to him who said that fraud in a prince is more shameful than violence. Deservedly indeed; I add also that the fraud of princes is violent. For if a higher power wishes to circumvent you by malicious deceit, you will permit yourself to be deceived with less danger than you will judge the fraud once understood. For when deceived you will bear only the loss; if you meet the fraud, you will be counted among the enemies, as though conscious of the prince’s sin.

CHAPTER XIV

Superstition Must Be Removed from the Commonwealth

§ 1. There are two rocks against which religion and piety, if they turn aside from their right course, are dashed and frequently shattered. One can be seen from afar, for it rises above the waves and openly threatens those sailing by with the sea's immense ridge; the other lies hidden beneath the waves and catches the unwary, and therefore is avoided only by the skilled and vigilant. Those rocks are impiety and superstition. Hence there are two kinds of those who administer the commonwealth: one plainly of atheists, the other of the superstitious.

Those who are altogether atheists rejoice to be called *politicians*, by an altogether false name; for nothing is more opposed to civil prudence than atheism and ignorance and contempt of God. Nevertheless, atheists, or pseudo-politicians, hold a twofold opinion concerning the governance of the commonwealth. For some openly remove from its midst not only all religion but also superstition. They follow the Epicureans and Diagoras, as Mezentius does:

My right hand is my god, and the weapon that, as a missile, I hurl.

And older than Mezentius was Capaneus, who was heard speaking in the midst of the stars, in book 10 of the *Thebaid*:

Do no divine powers stand for trembling Thebes?

Where are those sluggish offspring of the infamous earth,

Bacchus and Alcides? It is irksome to challenge lesser beings.

You rather should come--for who is worthier

To meet us? See, ashes hold Semele and her tomb.

Come now, Jupiter, strain against me with all your flames.

Are you stronger at frightening timid girls with thunder

And destroying the towers of your father-in-law Cadmus?

Antiquity sings to us of such Giants and Aloadae; but those accursed prodigies among humankind have never been wanting. Dionysius plundered temples as a jest; Brennus likewise plundered Delphi, and others did the same. Nor were they wanting in Christian times. Frederick II said that there had been three distinguished impostors who had led the human race astray: Moses, Christ, and Muhammad. Many now tend toward the same position, for, since amid so great a variety of religions they cannot choose any, they are without all religion.

I have long been arguing against these men. For they are little concerned about the piety, justice, and innocence of their peoples; they hold it sufficient if they use them as subjects and if they obey their will. Indeed, they desire them to be devoted to crimes, enervated by lusts, and given exclusively to pleasures, lest they dare to move anything against their rule. Among them one sin alone is acknowledged and punished: the crime of injured human majesty. But they err, and by their error overthrow both themselves and the commonwealth. For it cannot happen that they govern gently a people depraved by pride, luxury, anger, and avarice. Such people therefore need a harsh and imperious ruler, just as untamed horses with defiant mouths must be restrained by a sharper bridle and hard curb-bits. Then from license arises greatness of expenditure; from this, poverty, whose offspring are injustice, theft, rebellion, and a desire to disturb or overthrow the commonwealth.

§ 2. The other kind of atheists consists of those who are themselves held by no superstition, yet judge that the common people must be oppressed by the terrors of the shades of divine powers. They add ceremonies to ceremonies and

divinities to divinities--irreligious founders of various religions. Very many magistrates of states have done this, and Varro teaches that it was already long ago established as custom. He says that there are many true things which it is not only not useful for the common people to know, but also many things which, although false, it is expedient for the people to judge otherwise; and that for this reason the Greeks enclosed initiations and mysteries in secrecy.

“Here certainly,” says Augustine in book 4, chapter 31, “he betrayed the whole counsel, as it were, of the wise men through whom states and peoples were to be governed.” And in chapter 32: “He also says that, concerning the generations of the gods, peoples were inclined more toward the poets than toward the natural philosophers, and therefore that their ancestors--that is, the ancient Romans--believed both in the sex and the generations of the gods and established their marriages. This assuredly appears to have been done for no other reason than that it was the business of supposedly prudent and wise men to deceive the people in matters of religion and, in that very thing, not only to worship but even to imitate the demons, whose desire to deceive is very great. For just as demons cannot possess any except those whom they have beguiled by deceiving, so too human princes--not indeed just men, but men like demons--recommended to the peoples as true, under the name of religion, things which they knew to be vain, in this way binding them, as though more tightly, to civil society, so that they might possess them similarly as subjects.”

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“But what weak and unlearned person would escape at once deceitful princes of the state and demons?”

Cicero, in book 1 of *On the Nature of the Gods*, teaches that Augustine does them no injury: “Who was ever so blind in contemplating things that he did not see that these forms of human beings had been transferred to the gods either by some design of the wise, so that they might more readily turn the minds of the unskilled from the depravity of life toward the worship of the gods; or through superstition, so that there might be images which, when venerating them, they would believe themselves to approach the gods themselves? Moreover, poets, painters, and craftsmen increased these same things. But it was not easy to represent gods doing and contriving anything in the likeness of other forms.”

§ 3. This whole kind of superstition must therefore be driven out; for it matters little whether superstition is introduced into the commonwealth by a superstitious man or by an atheist.

The harms of superstition are indeed great. First, because it is itself a pretender to, and corrupter of, true religion, and by error holds minds captive as though in chains. Plutarch marvels in his *Camillus*:

Ἀνθρωπίνην ἀσθένειαν ὁρῶ, οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀλλ’ ἐκφερομένην, ὅπου μὲν εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν καὶ τύφον, ὅπου δὲ εἰς ὀλιγωρίαν τῶν θεῶν καὶ περιφρόνησιν.

He marvels at human weakness, having no limit but rushing beyond bounds, here into superstition and pride, there into neglect and contempt of the gods. Superstition, therefore, belongs to timid and petty minds and makes commonwealths liable to impostors. Indeed, by the appearance of piety it makes human beings not merely servile but even childish.

§ 4. Next, excessive anxiety about worshipping and fearing the gods makes minds anxious--indeed, it makes human beings foolish and ridiculous. Thus it particularly assails barbarians, little women, and those whose judgment in discerning matters is weak from youth or old age. I know that among the Romans, even when already cultivated, superstition was great; but its fabricators were generally objects of mockery. Numerius Atticus indeed swore that he had seen Augustus ascend into heaven, but no one believed him, not even Livia, although for so infamous a perjury she had paid the man a million sesterces.

§ 5. Third, worshippers of vain divine powers and those addicted to superstitions never remain in the middle, but pass into vain, absurd, horrible, and shameful things. For superstition is a dreadful thing, and there is no crime so foul to tell or deed so monstrous that it has not driven into it minds subject to false religion and opposed to truth.

Augustine, however, sets forth its miserable and ridiculous vanity in book 6, chapter 10 of *The City of God*: “Certainly the freedom which this man”--Seneca--“lacked to dare to censure openly this civil theology, which was most like the

theatrical one, as Varro censured the latter, was not altogether lacking to Annaeus Seneca, whom we discover from certain indications to have flourished in the times of our apostles; it was lacking not entirely, but in some part. For it was present to him when he wrote, but absent when he lived. For in that book which he composed against superstitions, he censures this civil and urban theology much more copiously and vehemently than Varro does the theatrical and fabulous theology. For when he treated of images, he says: ‘They dedicate the sacred, immortal, and inviolable gods in the vilest and immovable material; they clothe them in the shapes of human beings, beasts, and fishes, while some clothe them in mixed sex and differing bodies. They call things divine powers which, if they suddenly met us after receiving breath, would be considered monsters.’

“Then a little afterward, when, commending natural theology, he had arranged the opinions of certain philosophers, he posed a question to himself and said: ‘Someone will say in this place: Am I to believe that heaven and earth are gods, and that some are above the moon and others below it? Am I to endure either Plato or the Peripatetic Strato, of whom one made God without a body, the other without a mind?’ And, responding to this, he says: ‘What then? Do the dreams of Titus Tatius, or Romulus, or Tullus Hostilius appear truer to you? Tatius dedicated the goddess Cloacina; Romulus, Picus and Tiberinus; Hostilius, Pavor and Pallor, the ugliest affections of human beings, of which one is the motion of a terrified mind, the other of the body--not even a disease, but a color. Will you rather believe these divine powers and receive them into heaven?’

“But concerning the cruelly shameful rites themselves, how freely did he write? ‘One,’ he says, ‘cuts off his male parts; another cuts his arms. Where they fear angry gods, how will they merit those gods as propitious? But gods ought not to be worshipped at all if they desire this. So great is the madness of a mind disturbed and driven from its seat, that the gods are appeased in a manner in which not even the most savage human beings and those whose cruelty has been handed down in tales rage. Tyrants have torn apart the limbs of some men; they ordered no one to tear apart his own. Some have been castrated for the pleasure of royal lust; but no man, at his master’s command, laid hands upon himself lest he be a man. They cut themselves to pieces in the temples; with their wounds and blood they make supplication. If anyone has leisure to observe what they do and what they suffer, he will find things so unbecoming to the honorable, so unworthy of the free, so unlike the sane, that no one would doubt that they were mad if they were mad with fewer companions; as it is, the multitude of the insane is the defense of their sanity.’

“Next, the things which he relates were customarily done on the Capitol itself, and which he convicts altogether fearlessly--who would believe them to be done except by mockers or madmen? For when he had derided how in the Egyptian rites the loss of Osiris was mourned but soon afterward there was great rejoicing at his discovery, although his loss and discovery are fabricated, while that grief and joy are truthfully expressed by those who had lost nothing and found nothing, he says: ‘Yet this madness has an appointed time. It is tolerable to be insane once a year. Come to the Capitol: you will be ashamed of the publicly displayed madness and of the duties which vain frenzy has assigned to itself. One submits names to the god; another announces the hours to Jupiter; one is a lictor, another a conveyer, who by the vain motion of his arms imitates one conveying. There are women who arrange the hair of Juno and Minerva, standing far from the temple--not merely from the image--and moving their fingers in the manner of those adorning hair. There are women who hold a mirror; there are those who summon the gods as sureties for their court appearances. There are men who offer petitions and teach them their case. A learned arch-mime, an old man now decrepit, daily performed a mime on the Capitol, as though the gods gladly watched one whom human beings had ceased to watch. Every kind of craftsman, laboring for the immortal gods, sits idle there.’

“And a little afterward: ‘Yet these,’ he says, ‘even if they promise the god a superfluous service, promise one neither shameful nor infamous. Certain women sit on the Capitol who think themselves loved by Jupiter; they are not terrified even by the sight of Juno--most irascible, if you wish to believe the poets.’”

§ 6. Let those things be ridiculous; but how shameful are others? The Babylonians prostituted the whole sex in the worship of their divine power; I prefer to pass over the shameful acts of others in silence. Let us consider the cruelty of

superstition. They slaughtered human victims to Tauric Diana and brought foreigners to the altar; nor were the Greeks more merciful, to whom it is said:

With blood you appeased the winds, and by a maiden's slaughter;

With blood must the return be sought, and atonement made with an Argive life.

For many, too, the bloody oracle of a demon was destruction:

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Καὶ κεφαλὰς ἄδη, καὶ τῷ πατρὶ πέμπετε φῶτα.

And send heads to Pluto, and a man to the father.

When danger threatened Rome, a Greek man and a Greek woman, a Gallic man and a Gallic woman, were buried alive in the earth. At Carthage noble youths were burned to Saturn. The very people of God sacrificed their sons to the idol Moloch. The king of the Moabites offered his firstborn son and heir to the kingdom upon the wall to a demon. Heliogabalus and Julian examined the entrails and fibers of human beings who had been sacrificed. The Malabars, from no hatred but solely from superstition, hurled weapons among themselves; but those who fell among them were judged blessed. American priests gave plucked-out eyes in honor of the sun. Superstition is therefore of the greatest danger if an unskilled multitude is stirred up against the senate, king, or chief men. What crimes will a commonwealth flee when an opinion of religion and sanctity drives it to such atrocities? Great, therefore, was the error of the wise men whose foolish heart was darkened: to commend such great crimes to peoples under the name of religion.

§ 7. Fourth, many examples declare this. Daniel 14:26: "Daniel therefore took pitch, fat, and hair, and boiled them together; and he made lumps and gave them into the dragon's mouth, and the dragon burst asunder. And he said: Behold what you worshipped. When the Babylonians had heard this, they were exceedingly indignant; and, assembled against the king, they said: The king has become a Jew. He has destroyed Bel, killed the dragon, and slain the priests. And when they had come to the king they said: Hand Daniel over to us, otherwise we will kill you and your house. The king therefore saw that they pressed violently upon him and, compelled by necessity, handed Daniel over to them. They cast him into the lions' den, and he was there six days. Moreover, in the den there were seven lions, and two bodies and two sheep were given to them daily; and these were then not given to them, so that they might devour Daniel."

The imposture of the petty sacrificers had been detected and the beast burst asunder; but superstition was so opposed to truth, or so heedless of the fact, that the whole city rose against the king himself. Thus superstition is not only imperious but seditious. The Magi among the Persians commanded kings; Egyptian priests were no less fearsome to kings. Superstition pronounced law even to the Roman Empire. Metellus the pontifex maximus detained Postumius, the Flamen of Mars, who was consul, lest he depart for war in Africa and abandon the rites of Mars. Because Tiberius Gracchus said that he had taken the augural tent defectively, he brought it about that, by order of the senate, Gaius Figulus returned from Gaul and Scipio Nasica from Corsica. Publius Clodius Siculus, Marcus Cornelius Cethegus, and Gaius Claudius, because the entrails had been brought to the altars of the immortal gods with too little care, were at various times and in different wars ordered--and even compelled--by the pontifex maximus to depart from their provinces. Livy, book 26.

There are innumerable examples of these things. But certainly, if commands were taken away from Sulla, Marius, Caesar, Pompey, and Antony because of trifles of this kind, truly they would make all things pay for it with a great slaughter. And yet how often did they observe signs from the sky? How often by auspices did they disturb elections, wars, and peace? Hence Augustine spoke most truly: "Rome lived more happily with fewer gods"; for the greater number filled minds with superstition and emptied houses. Cicero perceived the same thing; for, lest his house be restored to him, its site was consecrated by his enemies.

I pass over what occurred in Christian times. The world has suffered very many things because superstition raged with savagery and avarice. Tertullian reproaches the gentiles with this in chapter 44 of the *Apology*: “But no one observes that injury to the commonwealth, as great as it is real; no one weighs that injury to the state, when so many just persons are expended, when so many innocent persons are squandered. For now we call your own proceedings to witness--you who preside daily over the trials of prisoners, who conclude indictments with sentences. So many guilty persons are reviewed by you under various indictments of crimes: which of them is an assassin? Which a cutpurse? Which a temple-robber, or a corrupter, or a robber of bathers? Which of them is also inscribed as a Christian? Or, when Christians are brought forward under their own designation, which of them is also such as all those guilty persons? From your people the prison always seethes; from your people the mines always sigh; on your people the beasts are always fattened; from your people the providers of spectacles feed their herds of criminals. No Christian is there, unless he is simply only a Christian; or, if he is something else also, he is no longer a Christian.”

§ 8. In the history of the Jews also, public calamities followed superstition. Jerubbaal, the bravest of the leaders, was demanded for punishment because he destroyed the altar of Baal. Jeremiah was stoned, and the remnants of the land of Israel departed into Egypt. In the time of the Maccabees, the Sadducees and Pharisees disturbed the commonwealth and brought destruction upon the royal family. What formerly harmed the Palaeologi, what harmed the Bohemians, except error and rivalry in false religion? What of the dreadful superstition of the Calvinists today? Is it not an inciter of rebellions, and does it not contrive the increase of its sect through civil bloodshed? There can be no honorableness in that sect in which falsehood is law, the devil religion, and factions the works.

§ 9. Fifth, God is truth; only by true things is advancement made with him. The society of the human race is from nature and from truth; only by true things is advancement made in it. Therefore, when action is taken through simulation and fraud, the return upon lying is small: amid so many who have eyes, the people are not deceived for long. Every superstition, because it consists in opinion, is easily changed; and because it consists in an absurd opinion alien to reason, even those who seemed most obstinate become ashamed of their madness. For what if someone instructs the wretched and shows that it is not human beings who are preserved by images, but images by human beings?

Therefore, the prince who deprives those subject to vain religions of their reason is in perpetual danger lest a fraud so well known to the wise become known also to the deceived peoples. Once that error has been removed, whatever protection there was in superstition will go away into smoke--indeed, it will turn into hatred and contempt. For when the people understand that they have been led into fraud by empty and vain things, that through panic fear they have suffered loss of property or reputation, that they have trembled without cause, and that they have been an object of mockery to the prince or aristocrats, they are no less indignant than if they had been confined by prison and chains and bound to another's will. For this is the nature of human beings: no one wishes to be deceived, and one who has been deceived turns his anger against the author of the deception.

That fraud never remains hidden, because by its increase and mass it is compelled to betray itself. The Romans once believed that the gods existed. But after altars began to be decreed to proconsuls, after the flattery of the Smyrnaeans established a temple to Porcius, after the Alabandans imitated a servile religion, who did not laugh at the novel gods? Especially since those new heavenly beings were consecrated whom no sane person would wish to have as parents. When Augustus, while alive, was worshipped through altars and flamens; when Livia was priestess of her husband and made him by poison, from a terrestrial god, a celestial one; when all the provinces imitated this--and kings too, or assuredly were compelled to it; for neglect of the rites of Augustus was charged against the Cyzicenes, with crimes of violence added, and they therefore lost the liberty given during the Parthian war--what wise person did not laugh when

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he saw Caligula come forth in the garb of Hercules or Venus? When he saw Augustus, adorned with thunderbolts and rays, placed upon an altar? Indeed, when he saw that house approached through temples? But although in reality no one believed it, they nevertheless said that they believed it.

Pliny speaks absurdly in his *Panegyric of Trajan*: “Tiberius dedicated Augustus to heaven, but so that he might introduce back again the charge of injured majesty; Nero dedicated Claudius, but so that he might mock him; Titus dedicated Vespasian, and Domitian dedicated Titus--but the former so that he might be seen as the son of a god, the latter as a brother. You have restored your father to the stars, not to inspire fear in the citizens, not in contempt of the divine power, not for your own honor, but because you believe him to be a god.”

What are you saying, most prudent man and, unless I am mistaken, most studious of all human beings? Your Quirites made so many gods whom they did not believe to be gods.

With a flamen and altars he worshipped Augustus; with a calf and lamb he appeased him;

The inscriptions bear witness, the decrees of the senate disclose it,

Establishing a Caesarean temple in the likeness of Jupiter’s.

Pliny does not believe that they were gods, nor does he believe that the Romans believed it. Yet he says that Trajan believed his father to be a god. What then? Did Pliny believe it? How does he believe Trajan’s father to be a god if neither Augustus, nor Claudius, nor Vespasian, nor Titus was a god? Or again, if Trajan had not come to the empire, would his parent have been worshipped as a divine power?

§ 10. This evil is ancient: kings’ ambition for divine honors. Curtius, in book 8, relates the speech of Cleon, a man of the most abject flattery, in which he speaks on behalf of Alexander’s divinity. He says that the Persians acted not only piously but also prudently in mingling their kings among the gods, since the majesty of command is the safeguard of safety. They acted impiously and imprudently: impiously, because they adored the most abominable human beings as the holiest divine powers; imprudently, because, when they saw them take pleasure in an empty and false honor, they did not judge them worthy even of a moderate honor, but made them proud and hateful to their peoples. For divine honor, transferred to kings among human beings by sacrilege, afflicted both the kings themselves and the kingdom.

Certainly no divinity defended Cyrus from death, nor did the queen of the Massagetae judge him a god when she enclosed his head with Persian blood in a skin. No one believed Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, who was endowed with the vilest morals and was the murderer of his brother and his sister, who was also his wife, to be a god--any more than the Egyptian bull which Cambyses slaughtered. The sword proved that Cambyses was not a god when, falling from its sheath as he mounted his horse, it inflicted a deadly wound upon his thigh. The Magi, having ruled for a few months, were killed without any reverence for royal divinity. Darius followed; being more moderate, he reigned more happily. Xerxes, although he almost believed himself a god, wrote letters to mountains and inflicted lashes upon the sea; he was killed by Artabanus. After seven months of tyranny, Artabanus paid the penalty.

The longest rule was that of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who, as it appears, was a worshipper of God; for he commanded that the building of Jerusalem and the temple be completed and held the most holy man Nehemiah exceptionally dear. And so he administered the kingdom happily for forty years. Next, the divinity of Sogdianus lasted only seven months. Artaxerxes was wounded by Cyrus, who neither loved his brother nor feared God. Nor did Darius, the son of Artaxerxes, ever regard him as a god; for if he had thought him a god, he would neither have sought his concubine Aspasia nor, after sending in Tiribazus, have attempted to inflict an abominable murder upon his father. But neither did Artaxerxes regard his son Darius, whom he had made king, as a god; nor did the princes of Persia, by whose judgment he was slaughtered as a parricide. Ochus then came to the throne after killing his brothers, but was killed by the general Bagoas. Arsames, the son of Ochus, was made king by Bagoas and was destroyed four years later. The last of the kings was Darius Codomannus, whom Alexander overthrew; he was treated contemptuously by his own friends and slaughtered with immense cruelty.

§ 11. From this certainly the faithful person will learn the rectitude of divine judgments; but the impious man and impostor will learn that superstition and vain fears instilled into the people not only do not help to protect a kingdom but greatly harm it. For they prepare hatred and contempt. The Roman emperors can also serve as evidence. While they lived, divine honors were lavished upon them and altars were set up upon which oaths had to be sworn by their name; yet, when the least occasion was given, the Romans dragged their new gods with the hook and hurled them down the Gemonian stairs.

Numa's counsel, therefore, was imprudent: he thought that the most effective means of keeping the multitude--rude in those times--in its duty was to instill fear of the gods. For when that vain fear of monstrous divine powers was dispersed by some good ray of the light implanted by nature, they judged that there was no God, and through weariness with superstition stripped off all religion. Indeed, when a savage and ungovernable multitude has been captured by vain religion, it obeys seers better than leaders; but when it understands that the seer is betraying his trust and, like that oracle, φιλιππίζειν--"to Philippize," or favor Philip--it suppresses every consciousness of right and judges that there is no divine power, because where it believed that divine power alone resided, there it found sheer fraud.

Finally, superstition makes nations restless and mutable; experience has taught this. But where there is restlessness and changeableness, there too is sedition. The cause is that all false and vain things frequently change, and that, when religions suffer a defect in some slight ceremony, they judge all things to have been thrown into confusion. The Romans, certainly, in order to diminish the superstitions by which they were burdened, forbade Sibylline verses to be held and read privately. Dio, book 54. Augustus gathered together from every quarter and burned more than two thousand prophetic books, of both Greek and Latin kind, which circulated commonly under no authors or authors of little fitness; after making a selection, he stored these too in two gilded cases beneath the base of Palatine Apollo. Thus they also frequently persecuted foreign religions because they did not dare to recall their ancestral ones to the assay and anvil.

§ 12. The Egyptians were most tenacious of their superstitions. Cicero speaks truly of them in book 5 of the *Tusculan Disputations*: "Who does not know the custom of the Egyptians, whose minds are steeped in depraved errors? They would undergo execution sooner than violate an ibis, an asp, a cat, or a crocodile." Diodorus Siculus describes a sedition born from superstition: "Ptolemy"--he says--"whom the Romans afterward restored to the kingdom, had at first been named ally and friend by the senate and people of Rome, and there was great public rejoicing and a gathering. Romans too were in the crowd, and among them a soldier by chance--for not intentionally--killed a cat. Shouting, anger, and tumult arose. Neither the ignorance of the wretched man, nor reverence for the Roman name, nor the king's authority--although he had sent the foremost of his courtiers to quiet them and make entreaty--none of these things, I say, availed to prevent the man from immediately being torn apart by thousands of hands, so that nothing remained for funeral or pyre."

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The matter is therefore clear concerning the superstition of the Egyptians. Since the authors have much to say about their most restless life, I must recount a few things, so that it may appear that the companion of extreme obstinacy in superstition is the greatest levity and mutability. These are Hadrian's words to the consul Servianus, by which he testifies that he learned that all Egypt was frivolous, wavering, and flitting about at every movement of rumor, and that its people were the most seditious, cowardly, and injurious. The cause was perpetual dissensions and conflicts over religion; for cities often join battle with one another over ridiculous things.

Next, those most religious people, who were set up by kings as though gladiators for mutual quarrels concerning divine powers--that is, garlic and onions, for these divine powers grew in gardens--were insolent and faithless toward kings. Seneca, in chapter 9 of the *Consolation to Helvia*, calls Egypt faithless; and in chapter 17 of the same discourse: "And so this talkative province, inventive in insults against its prefects--a province in which even those who avoided

guilt did not escape ill repute--looked up to him as the one example of holiness; and, a thing most difficult for it, although dangerous witticisms also please it, restrained all license of words." Herodian, book 4, says: "The Egyptians are by nature people disposed to mockery and formed for uttering taunts or jests. They hurl many of these against eminent men, things which appear pleasing or witty to themselves, but which bite and sting those against whom they are hurled." Innumerable killings and disturbances followed these insults.

Examples are the kings called Philadelphi, Philometores, and Physcones--because of a brother and mother killed, and because of the fat of a pendulous belly. Although these names conveyed insults concerning crime, they nevertheless clung perpetually as though proper and family names. Flavius Vopiscus calls them windy, furious, boastful, injurious, and avid for revolution. Ammianus records that the Alexandrians were also deceitful, always thinking one thing and pretending another, becoming inflamed at every movement, contentious, and most vehement demanders of restitution. Philo of Alexandria, a domestic witness, also testifies to this in *Against Flaccus*. Juvenal, Satire 15.

Dio likewise says of the Alexandrians: "The Alexandrians have sufficient spirit to hear anything; and by nature they are most ready rashly to carry out in words whatever they have proposed to themselves. The same people are the most unfit of all for war and its labors, although in the seditions which occur among them both most frequently and on the greatest scale, they repeatedly come to killings and, through zeal for contending about the matter proposed, hold life in the greatest contempt and judge death in those conflicts to be a certain good especially to be sought."

Thus the Egyptians were frivolous, discordant, and seditious, and in addition so fraudulent that their malicious cunning passed into a proverb. Aeschylus:

δεινοὶ πλέκειν τοὶ μηχανὰς Αἰγύπτιοι.

The Egyptians are excellent at contriving devices.

And Theocritus:

οὐδεὶς κακοεργὸς δαλεῖται τὸν ἰόντα παρέρπων Αἰγυπτιστί.

No evildoer harms the passer-by by creeping up in Egyptian fashion.

That these things were accustomed to arise, and to draw their habitual character, from sacred rites and superstitions is easy to gather from the things Herodotus relates in his *Thalia*. For because of an ibis, a cat, and other trifles, they raged so greatly:

We see peoples for whose anger it does not suffice

To have killed someone, but who have believed his breast, arms,

And face to be a kind of food.

§ 13. A poet indeed, but with historical truth, teaches that superstition is the source of all these evils--Juvenal, Satire 15:

Who does not know, Volusius Bithynicus, what monsters

Demented Egypt worships? One part adores the crocodile;

Another trembles before the ibis glutted with serpents.

The golden image of the sacred long-tailed ape gleams

Where the magic chords resound from half of Memnon,

And ancient Thebes lies buried beneath its hundred gates.

Here they venerate blue fishes; there, a fish of the river;

Whole towns worship a dog; no one worships Diana.
To violate a leek or onion and break it with a bite is sacrilege.
O holy nations, for whom these divine powers grow
In gardens! Every table abstains from wool-bearing animals;
There it is sacrilege to slaughter the offspring of a she-goat;
But it is permitted to feed on human flesh. When Ulysses,
Astonishing him, related over dinner such a deed
To Alcinous, perhaps in some he had stirred bile or laughter,
As a lying teller of marvels. "No one casts this fellow
Into the sea, worthy of the savage and genuine Charybdis,
Who fabricates monstrous Laestrygonians and Cyclopes?
For I would sooner believe in Scylla, or the Cyanean rocks
Colliding, and skins full of tempests,
Or Elpenor, struck with the slender wand of Circe,
Grunting with his fellow oarsmen as pigs.
Did he judge the Phaeacian people so empty-headed?"
Thus someone not yet drunk would justly speak, one who had drawn
The least wine from the Corcyraean jar;
For this Ithacan alone sang these things, with no witness.
We shall relate wonders indeed, but things done recently,
When Iuncus was consul, above the walls of hot Coptus--
A crime of the common people, and more grievous than all tragedies.
For, though you unroll all the tragic robes, no people
Among the tragedians commits a crime from the time of Pyrrha.
Hear what example dreadful savagery has produced
In our own age. Between neighboring peoples an old
And ancient feud exists--an immortal hatred
And a wound never to be healed. It still burns
Between Coptus and Tentyra. Hence the highest fury
On both sides among the common people, because each place hates
The divine powers of its neighbors, since each believes that only
Those gods whom it itself worships ought to be held as gods.
But at the festival of one people, all the leading men

And commanders of its enemies thought the opportunity should be seized,
Lest they should feel the glad and cheerful day, the great joys
Of a feast, with tables set and arranged at the temples,
And with a couch kept wakeful, on which the seventh sun sometimes
Finds a man lying through night and day. Egypt is savage indeed;
But, so far as I myself have observed, in luxury its barbarous throng
Does not yield to infamous Canopus. Add that victory is easy
Over men drenched, stammering, and staggering from unmixed wine.
On one side, therefore, there was men's dancing to a black piper,

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Perfumes of every kind, flowers, and many garlands on the forehead;
On the other, fasting hatred. But the first quarrels begin
To resound in their burning minds. These are the trumpet of the brawl.
Then they meet with equal shouting, and the naked hand
Rages in place of a weapon. Few cheeks are without a wound;
In the whole contest scarcely anyone--or no one--has a nose intact.
You could now see throughout all the ranks half-faces,
Faces of another form, bones gaping from broken cheeks,
And fists filled with blood from eyes.
Yet they themselves believe that they are playing and exercising
Childish battle lines, because they tread upon no corpses.
And, indeed, why should so many thousands of a brawling crowd
Do so, if all are alive? Therefore the attack grows fiercer,
And now with arms bent they begin to hurl stones
Sought along the ground--the weapons of domestic sedition--
But not a rock of the weight with which Turnus and Ajax,
Or the son of Tydeus, struck the thigh of Aeneas;
Rather one which right hands unlike theirs, born in our age,
Are able to discharge. For this race was already diminishing
While Homer lived. The earth now produces evil and puny men.
Therefore whatever god looked on laughs and hates them.
Let the story be resumed after this digression. When one side,
Increased by reinforcements, dares to draw iron

And renew the battle with hostile arrows, all who dwell
In neighboring Tentyra, shaded by palms, press upon the backs
Of those who excel in rapid flight. Here one man slips,
Hastening his course through excessive fear, and is caught.
The victorious crowd cuts him into very many pieces
And little portions, so that one dead man may suffice for many;
With the bones gnawed clean, it eats him whole. It did not cook him
In a blazing bronze cauldron or upon spits; so long
And slow did it judge waiting for fires, content with the raw corpse.
Here one may rejoice that it did not violate the fire
Which Prometheus, snatched from the highest region of heaven,
Gave to the earth. I congratulate the element, and think that you too
Exult. But the man who endured biting the corpse
Never ate anything more gladly than this flesh.
For in so great a crime, do not ask and doubt whether
The first throat felt pleasure. But the last man,
Who stood when the whole body had already been consumed,
Draws his fingers along the ground and tastes something of the blood.
The Vascones, as report has it, prolonged their lives
By the use of such foods; but the case is different. There
The blame there lies with fortune: the extremity of wars, extreme circumstances,
And the dreadful famine of a long siege.
For this example of food which is now at issue ought to be pitiable.
The people just mentioned, after all herbs and every animal,
After whatever the madness of an empty belly compelled,
While their pallor and leanness and thin limbs moved even enemies
To pity, tore with famine limbs not their own, ready
To eat their own also. What human being or god would have denied
Pardon to those who suffered dreadful and monstrous things,
And whom the very shades of those whose bodies they ate
Could forgive? Zeno's precepts advise better than we do,
For he judges that some things, not all, must be done for life.
But whence was the Cantabrian a Stoic, especially

In the age of the ancient Metellus? Now the whole world
Has Greek and Roman Athens. Eloquent Gaul has taught
The Britons to be advocates; Thule now speaks of hiring a rhetorician.
Nevertheless, that noble people of whom we spoke--and Saguntum,
Equal in courage and fidelity but greater in disaster--excuses
Some such deed. Egypt, more savage than the altar by the Maeotic Sea,
Does not. For that altar, inventor of the abominable Tauric rite,
Sacrifices human beings, so that you may believe the poems which now
Hand these things down to be worthy of trust--but no more than that.
The victim fears nothing further or more grievous than the knife.
What accident drove these men? What so great hunger, what arms
Hostile to their rampart, compelled them to dare so detestable
A monstrosity? Or would they create another object of reproach
For land dry around Memphis when the Nile was unwilling to rise?
With a madness in which neither terrible Cimbri nor Britons,
Fierce Sauromatae, nor monstrous Agathyrsi ever raged,
This unwarlike and useless common people rages,
Accustomed to spread little sails upon earthenware skiffs
And lean upon the short oars of painted pottery.
You will find no penalty for the crime, nor will you devise
Punishments worthy of peoples in whose mind anger
And hunger are equal and alike.

§ 14. To all these is added a greater evil, and one dangerous to those who reign: namely, concern for future things, auspices, entrails, and the impostures and profits of seers. By these whole nations have often been sent into the greatest dangers. Croesus, deceived by an oracle, became the mockery of his enemy. Demons, by lying, drew Julian into Persia. The seers sang:

We gods shall go against Theren; victory is certain.

I, Mars, unconquered in arms among the gods, shall be the leader.

Indeed, even Ahab, a patron of impious superstition, was deceived by his prophets and destroyed himself, his army, and his family. This thing frequently afflicted the Gauls and Germans. Plutarch, in his *Caesar*: "Moreover, the prophecies of their divining women disturbed them more, women who foretold the future by inspecting the eddies of rivers and observing the windings and noises of streams. They forbade battle to be joined before the new moon had shone. When these things had been reported, Caesar, since he perceived that the Germans were at rest, judged that he would act best if he fought with them while they were sluggish rather than, by awaiting their times, fail in his desire. And so, by attacking their fortifications and the mounds on which they had settled, he harassed and provoked them so

that they descended with fury to fight. After routing them with immense slaughter, he pursued them thirty-seven thousand five hundred paces all the way to the Rhine and filled this whole plain with corpses and spoils.”

Those predictions were also destructive to Spain. Our Mariana relates the affair in book 2, chapter 14 of *The Education of a King*: “It was harmful that Martin Barbuda, Master of Alcántara, deceived by a certain John, a magician who had long conducted a life secret from everyone and promised victory as though by divine admonition, contrary to the laws of the treaty recently struck

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with the Moors, gathered a great but disorderly multitude of men under the appearance of religion and, while making an incursion into the territories of Granada, was surrounded by the enemy’s onset and perished with all his men. And the eighth day commemorating Christ restored to life, white both in fact and in name, was turned black; and by a noble example it was established that fraud is often present beneath an extraordinary appearance of holiness.”

We therefore do not wish the prince readily to lend his ears to these human beings. We do not wish him to consume whole days and nights in prayers and anxiety of mind, which would be no less harmful. But he ought so to order himself that he does not labor greatly over future events; that he places the hope of safety in divine protection and piety; and that, to treat illnesses, he summons none other than those skilled in the medical art and employs wholesome herbs according to their counsel.

§ 15. But it is so clear that useful counsels are hindered by these things, that seditions, hopes of revolution, and plots arise, that no times of a pagan emperor were without them. For under what emperor were there not investigations against those who had consulted magicians concerning the prince’s life or his successor? Moreover, this great mystery of impiety vehemently afflicts the minds of the ignorant common people. To tremble at every movement, every advance, every voice, every meeting with either human being or beast, at the song of an ominous bird, at the flight of birds, at a morsel falling from the mouth of a chicken--and not only to tremble, but to lead out an army or confine it in camp, to cross the sea with a fleet or remain in harbor, and to govern the arts of war and peace--is of such great folly that it does not seem capable of befalling a human being.

Julian is terrified by a falling star and consults soothsayers, who advise him to do nothing. Augustus was of such a character regarding religions, as Suetonius says, that “he was somewhat excessively frightened by thunder and lightning, so that always and everywhere he carried the skin of a sea-calf around as a remedy; and at every suspicion of a greater storm he withdrew into a concealed and vaulted place, having once been terrified during a nocturnal journey by a flash of lightning,” as we said above.

Alexander was even more pitiable than Augustus; he conducted himself in such a way that there was nothing so small or absurd--provided only that it was unusual--which he did not turn into a prodigy or omen. Consequently, the palace was full of sacrificers, purifiers, and diviners.

But if an enemy rushed upon him while heaven thundered, would the veteran commander not hide himself in concealment? If the army were held by an equal fear, would it not become bloodless booty solely because its members falsely believed their own destruction to be indicated by the lightning?

§ 16. Superstition makes people trembling, unwarlike, and servile, just as true religion makes them spirited, brave, and confident in the protection of the divine power. The Egyptians, the most superstitious of nations, were unfit for war; they were almost always enslaved. Indeed, although they possessed so fertile a region, they ministered to foreigners in the vilest occupations. And so, by way of contempt, they were called ἀχθοφόροι, πλινθοφόροι--burden-bearers and carriers of bricks. Yet they were of a huge and sinewy body, which, however, they exercised not with arms but with servile burdens, because they possessed minds humbled by fear of the gods and pressed down toward the earth.

Thus Aristophanes jokes about those βαστάζοντες--“carriers”:

δύ' ἄρματ' εἰσέθηκε καὶ νεκρῶ δύο, οὓς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιντ' οὐδ' ἑκατὸν Αἰγύπτιοι.

He placed upon it two chariots and two dead men,

Whom not even a hundred Egyptians could carry.

For how can there be a great spirit in one who venerates such worthless things as a divine power? Who locates the supreme good in the smallest things? How servile in spirit are the Turks? They say that the stars hang from golden chains; they superstitiously supply food to animals. Some Indians build hospices and palaces for birds, while meanwhile neglecting human beings. How superstitious are the Americans and Japanese! Yet they are all foolish, unwarlike, abject, and, as it were, born to serve. For since they are compelled to fear all things, they cannot be magnanimous.

CHAPTER XV

Machiavelli's Imprudence and Superstition Demonstrated

§ 1. Since many of the pagans judged it to have been done wisely that they restrained the multitude by fear of ceremonies and by a certain tragedy of religion, I have already refuted this. But because Machiavelli, who wished to be regarded as a Christian, nevertheless leads his prince to the same thing, what he wrote in book 1, chapters 11, 12, 13, and 14 of *Discourses on Livy* must be examined. For these writings combine great imprudence with the utmost superstition.

Chapter 11: “Although Rome derived its first origin from Romulus and ought deservedly to acknowledge him as a daughter acknowledges her father, nevertheless the immortal gods saw that the laws and institutions established by Romulus were not sufficient for acquiring so great an empire. Therefore, when he departed from this life, they moved the senate to choose Numa Pompilius as his successor, so that he might supply the things which had been neglected by Romulus. When, therefore, he had come to power, he found the Roman people trained in the arts of war and fierce; and since he desired to train them for peace and tranquillity, he directed all his effort toward establishing the worship of religion. He established it so excellently that for many centuries nowhere among nations was there so great a fear of God as that which existed among the Romans from Numa’s institution; and this thing greatly advanced all those institutions.”

He proves that Rome’s safety depended upon that reverent worship of religion because they were accustomed to keep the oath which they had been compelled to swear. Thus, after the disaster at Cannae, Scipio compelled the frightened youth, who under the leadership of Metellus were contemplating departure to some king, to swear at sword-point that they would not desert their fatherland. Thus Titus Manlius compelled the tribune Pomponius at dagger-point to swear that he would desist from accusing Manlius’s father. Accordingly, he affirms that the Romans owed more to Numa than to Romulus. Finally he concludes in these words: “Since these things are so, I conclude that the worship of religion instituted by Numa Pompilius was one of the principal causes because of which the Romans were so fortunate in conducting affairs. For where religion exists, good laws and good discipline have a place; and from these arise fortunate and happy outcomes of affairs, especially in military expeditions. Conversely, with religion removed, the commonwealth must fall; for with fear of God removed, impiety follows, and from this the ruin of empires. For although the prince himself may perhaps be pious and may in some manner compensate by his virtue for the impiety of his subjects, nevertheless, because he is mortal and perhaps also of a brief life, it must happen that, when he dies, the virtue which had prevailed gradually declines together with the empire.”

§ 2. In chapter 13 he says: “I think that I shall not act irrelevantly if, by setting forth examples, I show that the Romans often settled a disturbed commonwealth and undertook certain expeditions by the assistance of religion. Although many examples of this kind occur in Livy, I shall nevertheless adduce only these few.

“After the Roman people had created tribunes of the plebs with consular power, and all of them except one

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were plebeians, there arose in Rome in the same year a severe plague and scarcity of grain; in addition, certain other portents appeared. The patricians therefore seized this occasion and asserted that these calamities had been sent upon the Roman people by the immortal gods because of abuse of the majesty of government and wrongful usurpation of tribunician power, and that the gods could not be appeased otherwise than if the lawful arrangement of tribunician power were restored. Terrified by this matter, the plebs created all the tribunes from the patrician order.

“In the very long siege of Veii also, when the soldiers, wearied by tedium, wished to return to Rome, they were kept by their leaders in continuation of the siege under a certain pretext of religion. For when the Alban Lake had risen, they

interpreted the oracle of Apollo as though that inundation of waters announced that the city would be taken in that year; and a seer, who was held captive at Rome, was employed for the expiation of this Alban prodigy and the appeasement of the gods. Persuaded by all these things, the soldier patiently endured the hardships of war; and from this it came about that Camillus, having been created dictator, took the city which the Roman people had besieged for an entire decade. The Romans would never have accomplished these things so happily, nor could they have restored tribunician power to the patricians, unless, assisted by the pretext of religion, they had known how to keep both the soldiers and the plebs in their duty.

“Similar to these examples is what happened when Terentillus, tribune of the plebs, wished to promulgate the Terentillan law, concerning which we shall dispute later. For then also, to quiet the disturbances which this matter had produced, the Fathers employed a certain pretext of religion in two ways. First, they ordered the duumvirs to consult the Sibylline books and then announced from them that danger threatened the state of losing its liberty in that year unless men abstained from seditions. Although the tribunes charged that this had been done by the Fathers to obstruct the law, it nevertheless moved the minds of the plebs so greatly that it no longer followed the tribunes with such ardor.

“Next, when, amid the same disturbances, a certain Appius Herdonius, with the aid of exiles and slaves--of whom he had four thousand five hundred with him--occupied the Capitol and citadel by night, and there was danger that, if either the Aequi or Volsci, perpetual enemies of the Roman name, should arrive, they would take the city; and when the tribunes still did not cease to press the promulgation of the law and asserted that this too had been fabricated by the Fathers in order to obstruct the law, then the consul Publius Valerius, a grave and eloquent man, came out from the senate and, mingling threats with arguments, demonstrated to the people what dangers threatened the city because the Capitol had been seized and how untimely that occasion was for carrying the law. He accomplished so much that all were bound by oath not to depart from the consul's will. The plebs therefore followed him and recovered the Capitol.

“But when Publius Valerius had been killed in that assault and Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus had succeeded him in the consulship, he resolved to lead the legions against the Volsci and Aequi, lest he leave the plebs leisure or furnish it an opportunity to consider and press the same Terentillan law. But when the tribunes tried to frustrate this and asked by what arrangement the consuls would lead out an army, since no one would permit them to conduct a levy against the will of the tribunes, Quinctius said: ‘But we have no need of a levy. For when Publius Valerius gave arms to the plebs for the recovery of the Capitol, all swore allegiance: that they would assemble at the consul's command and would not depart without his command. We therefore proclaim that all of you who swore allegiance are to be present armed at Lake Regillus tomorrow.’

“Although after these words the tribunes resisted and attempted to release the plebs from its religious obligation, on the ground that the oath had been rendered not to Quinctius, who was then a private man, but to the consul, nevertheless the plebs, moved by reverence for religion, preferred to follow the consuls rather than appear to violate its oath in any manner. To such an extent, assuredly, were those times happy and human beings very little evil. And as Livy says: ‘That neglect of the gods which holds our age had not yet arrived, nor did each man make oaths and laws suitable to himself by interpreting them; rather, he accommodated his own morals to them.’

“With these things thus established, when the tribunes saw that they could not resist the consuls, they themselves descended to the consuls' will through fear of losing their dignity; and an agreement was made that throughout the entire year neither would they themselves do anything concerning the Terentillan law, nor would the consuls summon the plebs from the city to war. Here too, accordingly, you perceive that the senate, by the assistance of religion, quieted these turbulent movements of tribunician power and overcame the present difficulties, and that it could not have overcome them without religion.”

§ 3. In chapter 14 he says that the Romans employed auspices, yet frequently fought contrary to omens and at other times interpreted them contrary to common usage, as Papirius did against the Samnites. For when the *tripudium solistimum* had falsely been reported to him and this had been disclosed to the commander, who was now intent upon

the business, he answered the messenger: “May you indeed be honored for your courage and diligence. But if the one who attends the auspice reports anything falsely, he takes the religious guilt upon himself. To me the *tripudium* has been reported, and it is an excellent auspice for the Roman people and army.”

When he had said these things, so that the outcome might answer his omen, he commanded the centurions to station the chicken-keepers among the foremost standards. And so, while the standards were advanced against the enemy, before the shout was raised and battle joined, a chicken-keeper was struck by a spear discharged at random and fell before the standards. When this was reported to the consul, he answered that all things would now proceed under good auspices, since the chicken-keeper had expiated his falsehood by his own destruction and the gods, now appeased, would assist the army. In this passage you perceive manifestly that Papirius interpreted the auspices so that he neither omitted the opportunity of fighting contrary to what they appeared to advise, nor could anyone nevertheless object to him that he had despised the auspices and religion.

The senate approved that dexterity and, by decreeing honors, ratified it publicly.

§ 4. Although the preceding arguments have shown that this is impious imprudence, I shall now nevertheless demonstrate it from histories and from the commonwealth itself--and, unless I am mistaken, from Machiavelli himself.

First, he says that the immortal gods saw that the laws enacted by Romulus were insufficient for acquiring so great an empire, and that they therefore moved the senate to choose Numa so that he might supply what was lacking. What here should I first marvel at or censure? Did the gods foresee that Romulus's laws were insufficient? But neither the divine powers of Romulus nor those of Numa not only foresaw anything, but even saw anything. All those gods grew without foundations and were therefore inclined toward ruin. Romulus made a few gods, Numa more. But those were not gods whose divinity was weighed according to human judgment, since those human beings were propitious to the god: for unless they had decreed it, that crowd of little gods would never have been adorned with ray and stars.

Minucius Felix judged better concerning this business: “The Romans were not so great because they were religious, but because they were sacrilegious with impunity.” But nevertheless the gods moved Numa to establish divine powers and, as Machiavelli wishes, to deceive the simple people. Yet those gods did not suffice for posterity.

“Nor,” says Augustine in book 3, chapter 12 of *The City of God*, “did Rome deign to be content with these sacred rites, although Pompilius had established so many there; for it did not yet possess the chief temple of Jupiter himself. King Tarquin built the Capitol there. Aesculapius, moreover, left Epidaurus for Rome so that, as a most skilled physician, he might practice his art more gloriously in the most renowned city. The Mother of the Gods also came--I do not know whence--from Pessinus. For it was unworthy that, while her son already presided over the Capitoline Hill, she herself should still

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lie hidden in an ignoble place. Yet if she is the mother of all the gods, she not only followed certain of her sons to Rome but also preceded others who were to follow. I marvel indeed whether she herself gave birth to Cynocephalus, who came much later from Egypt. Whether the goddess Fever was also born from her, let Aesculapius, her great-grandson, see to it. But from wherever she was born, I do not think that the foreign gods will dare to call her, a Roman citizen, an ignoble goddess.

“Under the protection of so many gods--who can number them? Native and foreign, heavenly, terrestrial, infernal, marine, of springs and of rivers; and, as Varro says, certain and uncertain; and in every kind of gods, just as among animals, males and females--under the protection, therefore, of so many gods, Rome ought not to have been shaken and afflicted by such great and horrible disasters, of which I shall commemorate a few out of many. For by her great smoke, as though a signal had been given, she had gathered far too many gods for her protection; by instituting and furnishing temples, altars, sacrifices, and priests for them, she offended the supreme and true God, to whom alone these things, rightly performed, are owed.

“And she certainly lived more happily when she had fewer. But the greater she became, the more she judged that more must be employed, as a ship employs sailors; I believe she despaired that those fewer gods under whom, in comparison with her worse life, she had lived better were sufficient to assist her greatness. For first, under the kings themselves, except Numa Pompilius, of whom I have already spoken above, how great was the evil of discordant strife which compelled Romulus’s brother to be killed?”

§ 5. I omit the twelve select gods and the twenty celestial gods. Was that crowd necessary--Cautius, Ops, Lucina, Vagitanus, Cunina, Rumina, Statilinus, Mens, Adeona, Volumnus and Volumna, Bellona, the rustic god, Honorinus, Victoria, Aesculanus, Fessonia, Pellonia, Spiniensis, Fortuna, the goddess Mutua, Agenoria, Stimula, Murcia, Jugatinus, Vallonia, Runcina, Sera, Segetia, Tutilina, Flora, Matura, Ruana, Carda, Limentinus, Forculus, Silvanus, Fever, Fear, Flora, Rest, and the one who alone has a rightful name, Cloacina? These and more were added; for I omit many because I cannot name them honorably. Therefore, if Machiavelli judges that the Roman state stood by the superstition of these gods, he departs very far from the truth. For what did Fever and Pallor foresee concerning the commonwealth?

§ 6. Second, it is owed to Numa that the Romans preserved the religious obligation of the oath, as Metellus did with his companions, and Pomponius. But they observed the religious obligation of the oath not from fear of vain divine powers, but from natural reason and a certain fear concerning the eternal divine power, whose implanted πρόληψιν--“preconception”--they could not shake off; and much more truly from fear of death and infamy. For through their gods--Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter himself--they learned to swear falsely and deceive.

Do you wish me to set the crowd of perjurers against these very few? First, Numa himself was an occupier of the kingdom through guile and a corrupter of so great an empire through the fraud of religion introduced among the citizens. Next, Tullus Hostilius, waging war against the treaties of Alba--that is, against its parent--was consumed by lightning together with his whole house. Tarquinius Priscus was killed by the sons of Ancus contrary to the pledged faith. Servius was killed by his son-in-law. Tarquinius Superbus, a parricide, erected the Capitol and reigned. Brutus expelled his colleague Collatinus without cause. Roman youths conspired against their fatherland on behalf of tyranny. Where here is Numa’s profane piety?

“The Roman senate dealt according to equitable and moderate law while fear from Tarquin and the grave war with Etruria remained. Afterward the Fathers exercised the plebs by servile domination, decided concerning their life and body in the royal manner, drove them from their land, and, with the rest excluded, acted alone in government. Harried by these cruelties, and especially oppressed by usury, the plebs, since it bore tribute and military service at the same time amid continual wars, occupied the Sacred Mount and the Aventine under arms, and then procured for itself tribunes of the plebs and other rights. The end of discord and strife on both sides was the Second Punic War.” Thus Sallust.

It was therefore not through religious piety but through fear that the Fathers showed themselves equitable; and because fear is not a lasting teacher of duty, when it was removed they proceeded to injuries against the plebs. What of Sergius Galba, a man of the utmost perfidy, who sold some and slaughtered others of seven thousand Lusitanians, although he had summoned them after giving his word? The senate banished Bituitus, king of the Arverni, perfidiously captured, to Alba for confinement.

I am not ignorant that there was a greater religious regard for the oath at Rome than among any nation. Cicero, book 3 of *On Duties*: “Our ancestors wished there to be no bond tighter than an oath for binding faith.” Aulus Gellius and Dionysius praise this. Dionysius, book 2, refers it to Numa; Polybius likewise in book 6. But this was in comparison with the Carthaginians, Egyptians, and other most faithless nations.

For as regards fidelity to an oath, I appeal to an author who knew Roman affairs better and assessed them more prudently than Machiavelli: Augustine, book 3, chapter 2 of *The City of God*: “Therefore the great gods Neptune and Apollo, not knowing that Laomedon would deny them their pay, became builders of the walls of Troy for nothing and

without thanks. Let them consider whether it is not more serious to believe in such gods than to swear falsely by such gods. For even Homer himself did not readily believe this, since he makes Neptune indeed fight against the Trojans, but Apollo for the Trojans, although the tale relates that both were offended by that perjury. If, therefore, they believe the tales, let them blush to worship such divine powers; if they do not believe the tales, let them not put forward Trojan perjuries, or let them marvel that the gods punished Trojan perjuries but loved Roman ones.

“For whence did the conspiracy of Catiline, in so great and so corrupt a state, have also a great abundance of those whose hand and tongue were nourished by perjury or civil blood? For what else did senators so often corrupted in judgments, or the people so often corrupted in voting or in whatever cases were treated before it in assemblies, do except sin also by swearing falsely? For amid the most corrupt morals the ancient custom of swearing was preserved for this purpose: not that they might be restrained from crimes by fear of religion, but that perjuries too might be added to their other crimes.”

§ 7. But whatever religious regard existed in the oath soon vanished through contempt for vain divine powers that laughed at and taught perjuries. Therefore, later men swore by the genius of Caesar; and when an oath was demanded of Christians by the safety of Caesar, Tertullian, *Apology* 35, says: “We swear, just as not by the genii of the Caesars, so by their safety, which is more august than all genii.” This, moreover, was judged the greatest oath at Rome, not because they were moved by religion, but because vengeance was readily at hand. “It is safer,” says Minucius, “to swear falsely by the genius of Jupiter than by that of Caesar.”

§ 8. Third, he praises the Romans because they employed the pretext of religion. For when they had created plebeian tribunes with consular power, they persuaded the people that the plague which was raging had been sent because of abuse of the majesty of government; and thus the plebs created all the tribunes from the Fathers. Next, they fabricated that the inundation of the Alban Lake portended the capture of Veii in that year, so that they might keep the soldier in the siege. Third, they first obstructed the Terentillan law by a pretense involving the Sibylline books; then they led the Quirites, bound by the religious obligation of their oath, against the Volsci.

But all the centuries of the Quirites will give testimony for me and for the truth: namely, that by those deceptions the authority and strength of the nobility

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collapsed. For, to omit the tribunes, after a five-year contest they made consuls from the plebs, the first of whom was Lucius Sextius. This was done while Camillus the liberator was still alive. When a new plague afterward arose, a remedy was sought through new religious rites--that is, dramatic games--and not by depriving the plebs of the right to undertake the consulship. And so the Terentillan law was carried, superstition was shaken off, and not in this manner only: they also transferred the priesthoods and auspices to themselves.

Do you desire, reader, to see the fruit of so trivial and so brief an imposture? Read the speech of the consul Decius Mus: “Since this is so, to whom among gods and human beings can it appear unworthy,” he says, “to add pontifical and augural insignia to those men whom you have honored with curule chairs, the bordered toga, the palm-embroidered tunic, the painted toga, the triumphal and laurel crown, and whose houses you have made distinguished among others by the spoils of enemies affixed to them? If a man who has been adorned with the attire of Jupiter Best and Greatest, borne through the city in a gilded chariot, and ascended the Capitol, is he not to be seen with the sacrificial bowl and augur’s staff, with his head veiled, slaughtering a victim or taking an augury from the citadel? Although the consulship, censorship, and triumph will be read with equanimity in the inscription beneath his image, if you add the augurate or pontificate, will the readers’ eyes not endure it?

“For my part--may I say it with the gods’ pardon--I hope that by the benefit of the Roman people we are already men who render no less honor to the priesthoods by our own dignity than we receive, and that we seek them for the sake of the gods more than for our own sake, so that we may worship publicly those whom we worship privately. But why

have I thus far conducted my case as though the patricians' claim regarding the priesthoods were intact and we were not already in possession of one most ample priesthood? We see plebeian decemvirs for performing sacred rites, interpreters of the Sibyl's verses and of this people's fates, and likewise overseers of the Apollinarian rite and other ceremonies. Nor was any injury done then to the patricians when, for the sake of the plebeians, the number was added to the duumvirs for performing sacred rites; and now a tribune, a brave and vigorous man, has added five places of augurs and four of pontiffs, to which plebeians may be nominated--not that they may expel you, Appius, from your place, but that plebeian men may assist you also in administering divine affairs, just as in other human affairs they assist according to their manly share.

"Do not blush, Appius, to have as colleague in the priesthood one whom you could have as colleague in the censorship and consulship, to whom you can be master of the horse when he is dictator, just as you can be dictator when he is master of the horse. A Sabine newcomer, the founder of your nobility--whether you prefer Appius Clausus or Appius Claudius--was received into their number by those ancient patricians. Do not disdain to receive us into the number of the priests. We bring many honors with us--indeed, all the same things that have made you proud. Lucius Sextius was made the first consul from the plebs; Gaius Licinius Stolo the first master of the horse; Gaius Marcius Rutilus the first both dictator and censor; Quintus Publilius Philo the first praetor. Those same things have always been heard: that the auspices are in your possession, that you alone have lineage, that you alone have lawful command and auspice at home and in war. Up to now this has been equally prosperous for plebeian and patrician, and so it will be hereafter.

"Or have you ever heard it said at Rome that the patricians were first created not by descent from heaven, but that those who could name a father and grandfather--that is, nothing further than freeborn men--were patricians? I can now name a consul as father, and my son will now be able to name one as grandfather. There is nothing else at issue, Quirites, except that we should attain all things that have been denied. The patricians seek only a contest and do not care what outcome the contests have. I judge that this law, which may be good, favorable, and fortunate for you and the commonwealth, ought to be commanded as you have been asked." Thus the fraud, once disclosed, harmed more than it profited during the brief time when it lay hidden.

§ 9. They turned the overflowing of the Alban Lake into a prodigy signifying that Veii would be taken in that year. This was a political lie, intended for a brief time and rash--especially since its interpretation was entrusted to a captive. But how was Camillus uncertain of his own fate, which was already impending, while he predicted the fatherland's fate from the outpouring of the Alban waters? I, if it pleased me to prophesy, would affirm instead that the outpoured multitude of the Senones, which devastated everything all the way to Rome--and Rome itself, except the Capitol--was signified by that portent.

But Papirius interpreted the auspices dexterously. It is plainly so. Nor did Claudius act badly when he commanded that the chickens should drink, since they were unwilling to eat; and Scipio acted wittily when, after the commander's slip while disembarking from his ship appeared ominous to the inexperienced soldier, he drew it into a favorable auspice by saying that he held Africa. Thus Augustus, when a comet appeared which is ordinarily regarded as fatal to kings, said that it pertained to the king of the Persians, because that king was long-haired. All these things altogether destroy the superstition of auguries and furnish an occasion for mocking this entire kind universally.

In the same manner Cicero acts in books 1 and 2; although himself an augur, he denies that either Romulus or anyone possesses true auspices, yet says they are retained for the opinion of the common people and the great advantages of the commonwealth. But against Cicero, the Christian Cicero rightly teaches in book 2, chapter 5 of *The City of God*: "For what kind of thing is that which they said was a most beautiful auspice, which I commemorated a little before: that Mars, Terminus, and Youth were unwilling to yield their place even to Jupiter, king of the gods? For thus, they say, it was signified that the Martial people--that is, the Roman people--would yield to no one the place it held; that no one would move the Roman boundaries because of the god Terminus; and that Roman youth because of the goddess Youth would yield to no one.

“Let them therefore see how they regarded that king of their gods and giver of their kingdom, since they set those auspices against him as an adversary to whom it would be glorious not to yield. Yet if these things are true, they have altogether nothing to fear. For they will not confess that the gods yielded to Christ, who were unwilling to yield to Jupiter. For, with the boundaries of the empire preserved, they could yield to Christ both from the seats of places and, especially, from the heart of believers.

“But before Christ came in the flesh, before, finally, those things which we bring forth from their books were written, yet after that auspice occurred under King Tarquin, the Roman army was several times routed--that is, turned to flight--and proved false the auspice that Youth had not yielded to Jupiter. The Martial nation was crushed in the city itself when the Gauls prevailed and broke in; and the boundaries of the empire were constricted into a narrow compass when many states defected to Hannibal. Thus the beauty of the auspices was emptied out, and obstinacy against Jupiter remained--not the obstinacy of gods, but of demons. For it is one thing not to have yielded, another to have returned from the place whence you had yielded.

“And yet afterward, in the eastern regions, the boundaries of the Roman Empire were changed by Hadrian’s will. For he conceded three noble provinces--Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria--to the empire of the Persians, so that the god Terminus, who according to them protected the Roman boundaries and by that most beautiful auspice had not yielded his place to Jupiter, may appear to have feared Hadrian, king of human beings, more than the king of the gods.”

§ 10. It is time for us to hear the pseudo-politician speaking against himself for once. In book 1, chapter 12 of *Discourses on Livy*, he requires true worship: “Whatever princes and commonwealths desire to preserve themselves ought, before all other things, to devote themselves to this one thing: that they rightly establish and venerate the true worship of religion. Nor will you ever be able to have a surer judgment concerning the ruin and destruction of any religion than if you perceive that divine worship is held in contempt and scorned within it. But, so that you may understand that the matter is so, observe upon what foundation the religion of the place in which each person is born rests, because every religious worship stands upon some foundation.”

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Next, in chapter 15, he relates the history of the monstrous conspiracy of the Samnites. Reduced to straits, since they had decided to attempt every extremity and nevertheless understood that they could not conquer unless they had the most resolute spirits among their soldiers for fighting, they fled to religion as their final remedy. For from an old book, with Ovius Paccius as priest, a man advanced in age, they sought a sacrifice according to the ancient religion of the Samnites.

When the sacrifice had been completed, their commander ordered every most noble man to be summoned by an attendant. The apparatus of the sacred rite was of such a kind that it could suffuse the mind with religious awe. For a place stood enclosed with latticework in the middle of the camp and covered with barriers and linen, extending equally two hundred feet in every direction. In the middle were altars, victims slaughtered around them, and centurions standing about with drawn swords. The soldier was brought to the altars more as a victim than as a participant in the sacred rite and was compelled by oath not to disclose what he had seen and heard in that place. Then he was compelled to swear by a certain dreadful formula, composed as a curse upon his person, family, and stock, unless he went into battle wherever the commanders led them, and unless, if he himself fled from the battle line or saw anyone fleeing, he immediately killed him.

At first certain men who refused to swear were cut down around the altars; then, lying among the heaps of victims, they served as a warning to the others not to refuse. So that those bound by this oath might be held by a greater religious obligation, they also adorned them with various distinguishing marks. For, out of the forty thousand whom they had gathered, they clothed about half in white garments and assigned them decorated arms and crested helmets so that they might stand out among the rest. At last they encamped at Aquilonia.

But when the consul Papirius was about to fight against them, he made light of all these things and addressed his own soldiers lest they be terrified by a religious oath of this kind: “Crests,” he said, “do not make wounds; rather, a Roman javelin passes through painted and gilded shields, and the whiteness of clothing and a gleaming battle line, where the affair is conducted by the sword, will be stained with blood. Finally, all these things will recoil upon their own heads, since in an abominable sacred rite they mingled the slaughter of human beings and cattle and, because of treaties so often broken, incited gods, citizens, and enemies against themselves.”

At last the Romans conquered in the conflict because their courage instilled in the Samnites, through remembrance of disaster so often suffered, a greater fear than religion could infuse into them of either courage or obstinacy for fighting. Although this is so, we nevertheless see plainly that, when their affairs were so deeply afflicted, they fled to religion as their final remedy and placed so great a hope for the recovery of courage in no other thing. From this it is possible to understand how much protection anyone may possess in the right use of true religion. And so I have judged that this matter must be discussed in this place, as one which depended upon the most necessary institutions of the Roman commonwealth.

From these things I conclude that no fabricated religion is lasting, and that Roman soldiers, such great despisers of religion, could laugh at the foolishness of their augurs; and therefore that it is the most inconsiderate rashness to rest upon that foundation which can be overturned by one blow and a slight jest. The consular augur confesses that it is so: “Antiquity erred in many things,” he says, “and we see it changed either by practice, learning, or age.” Since, therefore, those opinions are ordinarily changed by practice and learning, the lawgiver who contrives a true and stable commonwealth will not employ them. Although such a commonwealth derives all things from truth, nevertheless its most solid foundations are very frequently shaken by the vice of human beings. How will it be stable if its highest interest and safety depend upon the most foolish and most inconstant opinions of the common people?

CHAPTER XVI

The Prince Must Establish Nothing in Religion

§ 1. To the prince is entrusted the care of protecting true religion; nevertheless, he has absolutely no power to institute or innovate it. The magistrate is the foster-father of the Church; he bears the sword for the vengeance of the evil and the protection of the good. By “evil” I mean thieves, the incestuous, robbers, blasphemers, and the impious. For he avenges not only his own majesty, but much more the divine majesty, which is true and immense, of which every majesty that appears great and dreadful to human eyes in purple and diadem is an ἀπόρροια--a streamlet and trace. Certainly it is fitting that the Best be worshipped by the best, the divine power by the prince, and the King of all kings especially by all kings. Thus Aristotle too, in book 7, chapter 8 of the *Politics*, says that the first royal care is τὴν περὶ θεῶν ἐπιμέλειαν, the solicitude that concerns divine things.

Let it therefore remain certain and fixed that the prince himself ought to be religious, a keen guardian of religion, and a vigilant avenger of impiety.

§ 2. The prince will nevertheless attend diligently to this: that he himself does not innovate the ancient religion or fashion any articles under the name of reformation. For the prince is not the arbiter of religion but its disciple. Let him hold in mind, and demonstrate in practice, that piety is to be cultivated and not rendered perplexed by political edicts. Let him hear Saint Cyprian, Epistle 73: “Nor, dearest brother, do we propose this without the authority of divine Scripture: that we say that all things have been arranged by God under a certain law and proper ordinance, and that no one can usurp for himself, against bishops and priests, anything which is not within his own right and power. For Korah, Dathan, and Abiram also attempted to usurp for themselves, against Moses and Aaron the priest, the license of sacrificing; yet they did not do with impunity what they unlawfully dared.”

There are many enactments on this matter not only of the holy Fathers but also of emperors and kings. It is not within my undertaking to pursue them all; I shall admonish only concerning those which pertain to polity and government.

§ 3. The first reason is that the administration of the commonwealth is connected with religion, as I demonstrated in my book *On the Peace of Germany*. Therefore, when religion is changed, a disturbance or change of the commonwealth must follow. And since true religion is one, while departures from it and mutually conflicting sects are infinite, it will belong to princes to permit no departure from the truth. For since the stimulus of religion is vehement, and there are many who refuse to abandon ancient things even when death is set before them, the indignation of many and discord of all arise.

Next, when the kings of Egypt fabricate or permit new superstitions, they gave the strength of the kingdom to be torn apart by civil contentions. Nebuchadnezzar almost deprived himself of his most faithful and prudent chief men when he disturbed his subjects by the dedication of a new statue. Antiochus the Illustrious for the same reason destroyed both his kingdom and himself when he persecuted the piety of the Jews. If he had defended it and wished to have so brave a nation as a friend amid so many wars, he could easily have obtained dominion over all Asia. Thus Constantius, Valens, Justina, Justinian, Heraclius, Leo the Isaurian, and others innovated religion to the greatest harm of the commonwealth.

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§ 4. The second reason is taken from the nature of magistracy and the court. For since every power is liable to flatteries, men readily creep in under an appearance of sanctity who pervert magnates by lying and flattering. Thus Constantius was led astray by Eusebius, Valens by the Eusebians, and Leo the Isaurian by a Jewish sorcerer. An impostor who was a Monothelite corrupted Justinian when he was already old. But whatever rests not upon divine institution but upon human things is wholly fluid and momentary.

No clearer example of this principle exists than the calamities of our own age display to us. Because by a certain law the princes in Germany regulate religion according to their own judgment, there is hence so great a variety and ignorance of religions that almost no religion survives. Because this is not yet wholly evident to foreign nations, it must be shown clearly and forcibly.

It is the hundredth year since Luther, led by weariness with the ancient faith, together with disgust for monastic discipline and by ambition, laid the foundations of a new heresy. Meanwhile, all things have changed, so that Germany appears to me not unlike ancient Egypt, in which the madness of all superstitions aroused daily disturbances and wars. In this one respect the condition of Germany is worse than that of Egypt: the Germans move about in perpetual change, and things which have pleased them rashly very quickly displease them, whereas the superstition of the Egyptians was more constant.

In these days a man came to me and offered a paper containing an invitation to the jubilee of the γνησίως (*genuine*) Lutheran churches. For ten Lutheran doctors incite all the others to jubilate because Luther made his attack upon the pontiff one hundred years ago. Behold absurdities most worthy of laughter, if the malicious blindness of these most wretched human beings did not call instead for pity and tears.

This rejoicing must therefore be treated, so that the whole world may recognize that there is no constancy in a religion which depends upon the opinion of princes. For this reason the Zwinglians two years ago prudently kept silent concerning their own jubilee, lest they furnish laughter to everyone: they are scattered into so many sects, of which none retains the Zwinglian archetype--indeed, there is none which is not compelled to condemn Zwingli. Although I have disputed copiously concerning this matter in three books--namely, *The Jubilee of Jubilees*, its *Apology*, and its *Coronis*--the disasters of our fatherland are not to be repeated here. From those books magistrates will see how, through the vaunting of religions, faith and piety, and finally human beings and kingdoms, perish.

§ 5. First, those ten commissioners jubilate and exult over the worst affairs, while meanwhile the other Lutherans are so oppressed that, unless moderate men intervene, there is danger that they will be compelled to migrate to Veii or the Sacred Mount. For the condition of the γνησίως Lutheran churches was already miserable fifty-seven years ago and, in their own judgment, almost desperate; but now it is much more afflicted. Yet it is preferable to hear the whole tragedy from themselves. No one lies to his own disgrace. In its preface, the Synod of Mansfeld, an eloquent herald of its own miseries with grief and groaning, expresses the progress of political religion:

“But it is not so greatly to be wondered at,” they say, “that the opinions and sects of fanatical human beings are daily multiplied.

“First, because, since truth is unwelcome to human beings and they do not acknowledge the goodness of God, God is accustomed, in order to punish this sin, to send effective and signal errors, so that human beings believe a lie and are punished for the very reason that they do not believe the truth but delight in injustice. Second Thessalonians 2.

“Second, sects must grow because truly all princes and magistrates neglect their duty in this matter and instead strengthen the wantonness of intellects, because they permit anyone the license to fabricate according to his judgment any false opinion whatever.

“Third, those fat and powerful doctors, as the Psalm calls them, the authors of sects, unite with one another with the greatest effort; they mutually protect the same opinions and the same dispositions. They live peaceably with one another; one defends and excuses another. And although a man may by no means approve another’s sect, he nevertheless loves him, so that it happens as is commonly said: ‘Spare me, so that I may spare you; at least close your eyes if you do not wish to approve, and I shall do the same.’ Thus it often happens that some heresiarch does not attack another’s sect which he does not approve; and if for a time he does something, he nevertheless does not persevere. For this reason the prophet David complains with grief in Psalm 17 concerning the success of heretics, when he says: ‘Their fat ones are joined together.’

“Fourth, the matter has now come to such a pass that many at this time account it a place of shame and disgrace to oppose false brethren and the authors of sects by voice or writings, although this was always the greatest honor in the Church and was celebrated as a true proof of Christian virtue.

“Fifth, what prevents various heresies from arising at this time, when no human beings must endure greater insults, injuries, curses, and taunts than those very men who oppose fanatical doctors? Indeed, by way of insult they are called Stoics--that is, harsh and precipitate men, who wish to have nothing in common with others and to whom nothing belonging to others is pleasing--as though it were a great virtue to be most lightly and even willingly seized and carried about by every wind and breath of false dogmas.

“Next, they are called clamorous--that is, wranglers and brawlers, who with full lips and importunate shouting sound the trumpet-call for the sedition and tumult of human beings. They do not see that the deed they censure decrees the highest praise to us. For it is more tolerable and better to play Cato and the Stoic in these affairs and shout until hoarse than by shameful silence to throw all windows open to frauds. For the wolf is driven off not by silence but by a voice. We pass over the fact that Scripture itself commends the cries of prophets and doctors and, conversely, censures silence so greatly that it compares Silenuses and Mutiuses of this kind to mute dogs.

“Sixth, fanatical human beings have sufficient opportunities to grow at this time because, through a certain dread and fear of losing tranquillity, fortunes, favor, and praise, almost all sincere doctors also remain silent, act feebly, and with horrible rashness and unconcern commit the business to itself and its own fortune. And although some cry out, nevertheless, since they are most shamefully deserted by others, they cannot alone sustain upon their shoulders the mass of so great a business.

“Seventh, even if any sincere doctors still survive and have not yet been infected by the poison of fanatical opinions, they are nevertheless feeble, fearful, and of a spirit somewhat too abject to be willing to incur danger for truth. They therefore remain at rest and are spectators of that drama, although at first they do not wish to applaud it. But if the catastrophe is favorable to the other party--namely, to those men who shout and scribble--they wish it to be favorable to themselves also and arrogate no small part of the victory to their own courage and constancy. But if the contrary happens, as a good cause is often oppressed by violence, they withdraw their neck from the noose, professing that nothing was done by them, and therefore for the sake of external peace surrender themselves, against their conscience, to the others, whose cause is unjust. When heretics therefore observe this,

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“that we do not press our purpose together and with the same fidelity, they are emboldened, maliciously and obstinately cling to the falsehoods they have instituted, and repeatedly devise other new ones.

“Eighth, sects also grow because of that new tyranny which arises in the Church. If anyone does not immediately approve another's error, he incurs the indignation and offense of the more powerful and is often endangered in his life. The applauders of sects establish this tyranny in others; and they themselves are so far from being free of this tyranny that they cannot restrain themselves even when the most humane conferences and dealings are instituted with them. Thus they strike human beings so that they can no longer profess their own opinion freely. Accordingly, all devote themselves to this one thing: that they force errors upon others by a tyrant's violence. Nevertheless, with God's help, they will not do this forever. AMEN.”

CHAPTER XVII

The Method of Preserving True Religion

§ 1. First, indeed, this one thing must be done in the commonwealth: that one true and ancient faith, handed down by the Scriptures and apostolic tradition and known to the holy Fathers, be taught and preserved after all superstitions have been torn out.

For the conflicts of those who think differently not only rupture peace, but also break covenants, religion, and fear of the divine power joined with veneration. For no one readily enters into friendship with one whom he knows to be an enemy of God. And the illustrious example of Theodoric, commander of Africa, is praised: for although he was an Arian, he nevertheless immediately killed a deacon who had defected to Arianism in order to gain the prince's favor--not through an error of understanding, but through the baseness of flattery; for he judged that one who had violated faith with God would not keep faith with him. Without faith, therefore, friendship cannot exist, since friendship is agreement in human and divine things together with charity. This agreement does not exist if each regards the other as impious and detestable. Then all strive, with a certain great desire, to protect and increase their own religion. Our age teaches this, which has seen no heresy so foul, so abhorrent from piety and reason, that it has not embraced it most eagerly--although, as is the custom of those who love greatly, it has very quickly grown weary of it. Hence the most bloody wars are those waged from an opinion of piety, in which killing is judged holiness and falling in battle happiness. No regard is had for affections or kinships; public and domestic peace is disturbed; battles are mingled in the same house; the magistrate necessarily has one part of the people, and often both, as an enemy, for he can comply with only one; and his authority falls, since he is judged impious and profane by the greater number. But these matters have already been discussed above. Let us now set forth the means of preserving religion.

§ 2. The first thing, and as it were the foundation for preserving truth and faith, is to resist vices, beat down the arrogance of subjects, restrain lusts, and set a limit to avarice. No heresy has ever arisen for its own sake: through the novelty of a superstition, nourishment or impunity has been sought for some vice. A human being whom his crimes weigh down is readily driven into error; and just as there are certain prognoses of diseases in a human being, so in the commonwealth there are *προγνώσεις*, and conjectures, of heresies and superstitions. Seneca speaks truly in Book III of *On Anger*, chapter 10:

“It is an old saying that a weary man seeks a quarrel. But the same is true of a hungry and a thirsty man, and of every human being whom anything torments. For just as sores hurt at a light touch, and afterward even at the suspicion of a touch, so an afflicted mind takes offense at the slightest thing, to such a degree that a greeting, a letter, a speech, and a question summon certain persons into a quarrel. Diseased parts are never touched without complaint. It is therefore best to apply a remedy to oneself at the first sensation of the evil; then also to grant the least possible liberty to one's own words and to check the impulse. But it is easy to detect one's passions when they first arise: signs precede the disease. Just as indications of storm and rain come before the things themselves, so there are certain forerunners of anger, love, and all those tempests which torment minds. Those who are accustomed to be seized by epilepsy understand that an attack is already approaching if warmth has left the extremities, if their sight is wavering and there is a trembling of the sinews, if memory slips away and the head grows dizzy. They therefore anticipate the incipient cause with their customary remedies, and whatever estranges the mind is repelled by smell and taste; or they fight cold and stiffness with fomentations; or, if the medicine has accomplished too little, they avoid the crowd and fall without a witness. It will profit us to know our disease and to crush its powers before they have room to spread. Let us see what it is that especially excites us. One person is moved by insults in words, another by insults in deeds. This man wishes his nobility to be spared, that man his beauty; one desires to be accounted the most elegant, another the most learned; this one is intolerant of pride, that one of obstinacy; one does not think slaves worthy of his anger; this one is savage

within his house and mild outside it; one judges it an odium to be asked, another an insult not to be asked. Not all are struck on the same side.”

Heresies arise on account of each of these things: hope has driven one person, fear another, indignation another, drunkenness another, and lust and ambition very many, into new opinions and sects.

§ 3. A prudent magistrate will observe and correct these things in the commonwealth. The ambition of Jeroboam alone introduced superstition among the ten tribes; partly ambition and partly court hatreds produced the dissensions of the Pharisees and Sadducees, when hypocrites began to creep up to powerful men by evil arts. This is, and always has been, the disposition of heretics: before they rendered themselves unworthy of the fellowship of the faithful and liable to punishments through error and obstinacy, and before they separated themselves with the loss of the people, they did so through crimes. What Cyprian writes concerning Novatus in Epistle 49 applies to them all:

“For nothing concerning Novatus needed to be reported from there to you, since he ought rather to be exposed to you by us: Novatus, always greedy for revolutions, raging with the insatiable rapacity of avarice, swollen with the arrogance and stupor of a proud swelling, always ill-known to the bishops here, always condemned by the voice of all the priests as a heretic and a perfidious man; always inquisitive in order to betray, flattering in addition in order to deceive, never faithful in order to love; a firebrand and flame for kindling the conflagrations of sedition, a whirlwind and tempest for bringing about shipwrecks of faith, an enemy of quiet, an adversary of tranquillity, a foe of peace.”

Then he describes his character in such a way that he seems to portray the wrathfulness of Hus, the luxury of Luther, the cruelty of Zwingli, the lusts of Calvin and Beza, and the secret murders of the Anabaptists:

“Nor,” he says, “should anyone wonder at this in such men. Evil men are always carried along, demented by their own fury, and after they have committed crimes they are agitated by the very consciousness of a criminal mind. Nor can those remain in the Church of God who have maintained neither divine and ecclesiastical discipline in the conduct of their actions nor the peace of good morals. People despoiled by him, widows defrauded, and monies also denied to the Church exact from him those punishments which we behold in his madness. His father also

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died of hunger in a village, and afterward, at his death, was not even buried by him. His wife’s womb was struck by his heel, and, the miscarriage being hastened, the offspring was forced out unto parricide. And does he now dare to condemn the hands of those who sacrifice, when he himself is more guilty in the feet by which the son who was being born was killed? He had long feared this consciousness of his crimes. On this account he held it as certain that he would not only be expelled from the presbyterate but also prohibited from communion; and, as the brethren pressed the matter, the day of examination was imminent, on which his cause would be heard before us, had persecution not come first. Receiving this as a certain object of prayer whereby he might escape and gain exemption from condemnation, he committed and confounded all these things, so that he who was due to be cast out of and excluded from the Church might anticipate the judgment of the priests by a voluntary departure--as though to have anticipated the sentence were to have escaped the punishment.”

Such things apply to all the ancients. Lust drove Nicolaus of Antioch into heresy; no cause other than monstrous lusts severed Cerinthus, Menander, the Gnostics, and the Manichaeans from the Church. It is not necessary to speak of the Donatists, Arians, Macedonians, and Mohammedans. Concerning Luther, Oecolampadius, Carlstadt, Zwingli, Calvin, Menno, and the rest, they themselves bear mutual witness that they were most corrupt in disposition, practice, and morals. The magistrate, therefore, should hold as entrusted to himself what the Apostle sets before Timothy, 1 Timothy 1:18: “This precept I entrust to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies going before concerning you, that in them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some, rejecting, have suffered shipwreck concerning the faith; among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

§ 4. The second thing is that sacred doctrine be investigated with great care and zeal; that suitable teachers be appointed; and that they labor to teach, preach, catechize, and profit others by word and example. For since faith is from hearing: “How shall they believe him whom they have not heard?” Romans 10:14. “And how shall they hear without one preaching? But how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim peace, of those who proclaim good things! But not all obey the Gospel. For Isaiah says: Lord, who has believed our report? Therefore faith is from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. But I say: Have they not heard? Indeed, their sound has gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world.”

For there was no other cause of so many errors than that sacred doctrine was neglected, and ignorant, profane men and soldiers occupied the benefices, priesthoods, and honors of the learned: little children wailing in their cradles were made bishops; scarcely born, they were already abbots.

§ 5. The third thing, which I have already advised above, is that even those whose dignity, as it is superior to every command, is likewise accustomed to be impatient of admonitions, should hear bishops and teachers. Most praiseworthy is that law of Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius, Augusti, Title 2, law *With every innovation ceasing*: “We command that antiquity and the ancient ecclesiastical canons, which have prevailed until now, be preserved also throughout all the provinces of Illyricum; so that, if any matter of doubt should arise, it ought to be reserved--not without the knowledge of the most reverend man, the bishop of the holy law of the Church of the city of Constantinople, which rejoices in the prerogative of ancient Rome--for a sacerdotal assembly and holy judgment.”

Those emperors acted excellently, according to the mind and judgment of Constantine the Great, who attended the Council of Nicaea not as lord, but as disciple. Theodosius not only valued Ambrose, who opposed and rebuked him, more highly than the flatterers of his purple, but also loved him. For flattery, when it becomes apparent, offends great men, because it is a reproach of pride; sincerity is loved, because it is confidence in virtue. Since bishops have been commanded by the severe law of God to persevere in teaching, admonishing, reproving, and punishing, even when death is proposed as the penalty, no one ought to doubt that the necessity of obeying has been imposed upon all, since so weighty a province of ecclesiastical government is enjoined upon them. But if that principle is removed, truth cannot be defended for long. Golden are the admonitions--but strong ones, and given to the strong--of the most valiant martyr Saint Cyprian in Epistle 55:

“But if the matter is thus, dearest brother, that the boldness of the most wicked is feared, and that which evil men cannot accomplish by law and equity they accomplish by rashness and desperation, then it is all over with the vigor of the episcopate and with the sublime and divine power of governing the Church; nor can we any longer either endure as Christians or be Christians, if matters have come to this, that we should fear the threats and snares of the lost. For Gentiles and Jews threaten, and heretics and all whose breasts and minds the devil has besieged daily testify with a furious voice to their poisoned rage; nevertheless one must not yield merely because they threaten, nor is the adversary and enemy therefore greater than Christ because he claims and assumes so much for himself in the world. There must remain with us, dearest brother, the immovable strength of faith, and a stable and unshaken virtue must withstand all assaults and attacks of the barking waves, by the strength and mass of an opposing rock. Nor does it matter whence terror or danger comes to a bishop, who lives exposed to terrors and dangers and yet is rendered glorious by those very terrors and dangers. For we ought not to consider and behold only the threats of Gentiles or Jews, when we see that the Lord himself was seized by his brethren and betrayed by him whom he himself had chosen as an Apostle; and in the beginnings of the world none but a brother killed righteous Abel, and a hostile brother pursued the fleeing Jacob, and the boy Joseph was sold by his brethren; while in the Gospel also we read it to have been foretold that those of one’s household would be enemies the more, and that those who had first been joined by the sacrament of unanimity would themselves deliver one another up. It matters nothing who delivers up or rages, when God permits those whom he disposes to be crowned to be delivered up. For it is no disgrace to us to suffer from brethren what Christ suffered; nor is it glory to them to do what Judas did.”

§ 6. The fourth thing is that provision be made aright not only for the learning and integrity of life of bishops and teachers, but that they also be fortified with resources and authority. For if the dignity of governors and judges must be strengthened so that by the excellence of lawful power they may settle civil controversies, with how much ampler majesty must those be adorned who judge concerning heavenly and eternal matters? I am not unaware that the resources of bishops and the clergy appear excessive to many; but I shall dispute concerning that matter in the book on the ecclesiastical magistracy. For now I advise that it profits the commonwealth very greatly if the resources of the churches are great. For first, if the prelates of religion live upon a very slender crust of bread, they are turned toward cares for bodily things; and not only do they lose the opportunity for studies, but they cannot even procure suitable books.

Then they are readily despised not only by the rich and arrogant, but also by the moderate. For this reason the Romans, among whom

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worshippers of the gods were nevertheless held in great contempt, and some were even infamous, added dignity together with the thing itself to the supreme pontiff. Certainly under the old law the majesty of the priesthood was not much less than that of the kingdom, and at length it even coalesced with the kingdom. Third, experience has taught that, when priests are occupied with solicitude for domestic affairs and distracted by the evils of their household, the teachers themselves treat sacred doctrine incidentally and hold it, as it were, in second place; for their first care is living, their second teaching. Hence, if we look upon the Lutherans and Calvinists, we shall easily see that, after the heat of the first fury subsided, and after the multitude of apostates--who, educated in Catholic academies, turned their knowledge into poisons--failed, all things are full of ignorance, impiety, and contentions, and that the name of evangelical ministers is now utterly despised. For because most of them are fathers of families and poor, they are led more by hunger than by piety to retail fables to the people. Hence through fear and hope they are pliable in every direction, and, as actors are accustomed to do, they accommodate themselves to the theater. They hold their reputation and the opinion of their constancy cheap while they gape after the increase of their property.

Therefore, in order that the prince may have prelates and teachers of religion who are constant, of good reputation, noble, powerful, and faithful to the kingdom, he will increase their advantages and will even entrust fortresses and courts to them, as we see done in the Empire and in other kingdoms. For since they are devoted to peace and have remote from them causes for raising tumult, they very greatly assist the cause of the commonwealth.

§ 7. The fifth thing, and a solid safeguard against novelty and discord, is that the handles and beginnings of contentions be cut off, the wantonness of intellects be restrained, and those who judge it more glorious to dispute than to live be banished betimes. The king of Britain shrewdly advised the nobles of Holland to crush the Arminians in the blade; if they had done this, there would have been no need to fight against so great a crop.

This evil is not in the people but in the leading men, and it was so of old. Cyprian, Epistle 64: "But as to contention and guile, what does it concern me to speak, when those vices are more grievous not among the common people, but in our own number?" The mother of these diseases, however, is pride and the greed for human praise, which also often begets hypocrisy.

True is the complaint of a great man: "For often I have perceived, with sorrow and groaning, that many disturbances among the weak are brought about through the contentious obstinacy or superstitious timidity of certain brethren. In matters of this kind, which can be brought to no certain conclusion either by the authority of Holy Scripture, by the tradition of the universal Church, or by usefulness for the correction of life--merely because there lies beneath them some manner of reasoning on the part of the person thinking, or because he himself was thus accustomed in his own country, or because he saw it where he regards his sojourn, the farther removed from his own people, as having made him the more learned--they stir up questions so litigious that they judge nothing right except what they themselves do."

When this zeal for contention rushes upon the commonwealth and religion, it excites the greatest quarrels and hatreds among the closest friends and carries them into the contrary error. Thus Eutyches, by assailing Nestorius, plunged into heresy.

§ 8. Frederick, Elector Palatine, acted advisedly of old when, at the beginning of the changed religion, the Academy of Heidelberg was divided into two factions, Lutheran and Calvinist: he enjoined silence upon both parties. The nobles of Holland acted advisedly when they endeavored to establish concord between the old and new Calvinists and commanded that no one accuse or condemn another of impiety. But where superstition is at issue on both sides, there can be no stable concord, unlike when the liberty of error against truth is taken away. At the beginning of emerging heresies, all demanded, as if by a certain right, the authority of Scripture and the liberty of prophesying or interpreting. But that liberty of errors afflicted the commonwealth in many ways. For it always changes everything, and soon seeks again what it changed, or turns it in another direction. Julian, the most cunning tyrant and apostate, was not ignorant of this; for by an entirely new kind of persecution he inflicted more damage upon the churches than by raging against them. For he permitted each person to live according to his own judgment and to teach according to his own rite, so that by license he might increase the dissensions of Christians.

But if the magistrate should seriously weigh the evils that emerge, he will readily understand that, just as, if license to steal, commit adultery, and rob is permitted, all crimes and shameful acts will soon inundate everything, so, where wickedness has been introduced of thinking about God at will, of blaspheming, and of impious ceremonies and rites--a wickedness destined to range most freely against everything and everyone--the commonwealth must necessarily collapse.

§ 9. The sixth safeguard for preserving religion is the prudent force and compulsion, fines, and punishments employed by the prince and every magistrate according to the laws. I know that it appears harsh to give laws to free minds and bind consciences, since each person ought to be the arbiter of his own salvation or destruction, and God himself is not accustomed to compel anyone to salvation. Indeed, this appears absurd to many, since that severity of laws makes hypocrites, not worshipers of true piety. Do you think that by threats and fear of torments you can compel anyone to love God, or to judge true what he thinks is false?

Nevertheless, not only has this right been given to the prince, but without the crime of neglecting his duty he can in no way omit some severity. When Saint Augustine was consulted concerning this matter, he answered in this manner:

“It displeases you that you are dragged to salvation, although you have dragged so many of ours to destruction. For what do we wish except that you be apprehended and brought forward and preserved, lest you perish? But whatever injury you have suffered in your body, you did to yourself, for you refused to use the beast of burden immediately brought to you and dashed yourself heavily upon the ground. For indeed the other man who was brought with you, your colleague, arrived unhurt, because he did no such things to himself. But you do not think that even this ought to have been done to you, because you judge that no one should be compelled to good. Attend to what the Apostle said: ‘He who desires the episcopate desires a good work’; and nevertheless, in order that they may undertake the episcopate, so many are held unwillingly, led away, shut in, guarded, and suffer so many things which they do not wish, until there is present in them the will to undertake the good work. How much more must you be dragged away from the pernicious error in which you are enemies to us and led to the truth, either to recognize or to choose it--not only that you may possess honor wholesomely, but also that you may not perish most wickedly. You say that God gave free will and that therefore a human being ought not to be compelled even to good. Why, then, are those of whom I spoke above compelled to good? Attend, therefore, to what you do not wish to consider. A good will is mercifully bestowed precisely so that a human being’s evil will may be directed. For who does not know that a human being is condemned only by the desert of an evil will, and is delivered only if he has had a good will? Nevertheless, those who are loved must not therefore be permitted, with impunity and cruelty, to follow their evil will; but, where power is given, they must both be prohibited

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from evil and compelled to good.

“For if an evil will must always be permitted its own liberty, why were the Israelites, refusing and murmuring, prohibited from evil by such harsh scourges and compelled toward the Promised Land? If an evil will must be permitted its own liberty, why was Paul not permitted to go where he was going with the most wicked will by which he persecuted the Church, but was laid low that he might be blinded, and blinded that he might be changed, changed that he might be sent, and sent that he might suffer for truth the same things that he had done in error? If an evil will must always be permitted its own liberty, why is a father admonished in the Holy Scriptures not only to rebuke a stubborn son with words, but also to beat his sides, so that, compelled and subdued, he may be directed to good discipline? Hence the same Scripture says: ‘You indeed strike him with the rod, but you deliver his soul from death.’ If an evil will must always be permitted its own liberty, why are negligent shepherds rebuked, and why is it said to them: ‘You did not call back the wandering sheep; you did not seek the lost’? You too are Christ’s sheep; you bear the Lord’s mark in the sacrament which you received, but you wander and perish.

“Let us not therefore be displeased with ourselves because we call back the wandering and seek the lost. For we do the will of the Lord, who admonishes us to compel you to return to his fold, better than we would consent to the will of wandering sheep and permit you to perish. Therefore do not now say what I hear you say continually: ‘Thus I wish to wander; thus I wish to perish.’ For we do not permit this at all, so far as we are able. Just now, when you cast yourself into the well so that you might die, you assuredly did so by free will. But how cruel would the servants of God be if they permitted you this evil will and did not deliver you from that death? Who would not deservedly blame them? Who would not rightly judge them impious? And yet you willingly cast yourself into the water so that you might die; they raised you unwilling from the water, lest you die. You acted according to your will, but unto your destruction; they acted contrary to your will, but for the sake of your salvation. If, therefore, this bodily salvation must be guarded in such a way that it is preserved even in the unwilling by those who love them, how much more must that spiritual salvation be guarded, in the desertion of which eternal death is feared?”

§ 10. The seventh thing is what was customary of old: the prohibition of pestilential books. To our sectaries this indeed appeared unjust at the beginning, but now they themselves employ the same law, and prohibit not only books of the Calvinists but even those of their own people. There are the complaints of Illyricus and of others: that the presses of Wittenberg and Leipzig stand open to some and are closed to the rest. Since our most learned Jacob Gretser has written most accurately concerning this matter, I refer the reader to him.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Method of Restoring True Religion

§ 1. Most of the things that have been said concerning the preservation of truth and religion also avail for bringing those who wander back into the way. Yet they must be handled in one way and another by political men. Truth is discovered with difficulty, but it is persuaded to one who wanders with much greater difficulty. Nevertheless, it is the prince's duty to apply himself also to this: that depraved opinions be removed from the midst, that his own honor be restored to God, and that provision be made for the salvation of souls that are perishing.

§ 2. The first method is that what musicians do with strings, so as to bring them back little by little into harmony, and physicians in diseases, who draw off harmful humors piecemeal and at intervals, must likewise be done in a commonwealth which labors under the sickness of errors and superstitions. I do not approve the slow and ineffectual advances of the languid, when the undertaking is often abandoned; I counsel that all things which can be applied be attempted, but with a slow and firm step, lest the work be precipitated. Gentle commands and admonitions are of the greatest advantage here.

§ 3. Second: it would be difficult for no prince of Europe, if only he wished it, to recall the minds of human beings to the ancient rites of our forefathers--a thing which formerly was thought never to be possible. For many now begin to love the ancient religion, and they cannot be induced by any calumnies of the ministers to prevent many from returning every year to Catholic unity:

So greatly can long-lived age change things.

What they most ardently desired, they now disdain or even hate. That levity of the common people which marvels at new things and despises old ones is fatal. Therefore, when heresy was in its course, it could be stopped or checked by no force; afterward it proceeded more languidly, and, divided and dashed against itself, lost its impetus; finally it turned backward. Many provinces of Germany, after undergoing several religions, now retain none, their attention fixed upon the will of their lords. The cause of this matter, as I have said, is levity and ignorance of the truth. Another reason is that they cannot long remain ignorant of the wickedness of heresies and heretics, and that they experience everything being changed in almost every single year. Of their own accord they depart in different directions, so that they cannot stand for long. Just as, if you release a crowd of blind persons from a prison, it is easier for none than for all to reach the goal, so, if the magistrate prudently uses this argument, they will permit themselves to be led spontaneously into the way, weary of so many pathless places and having experienced so many deceits of criminal apostates.

§ 4. Therefore one must act with this gentleness, unless perhaps those heresies are of a kind which admit no delay, such as those of the Müntzerites and Anabaptists, and of those who rise up against the magistracy. For, like acute diseases, these deny place and time to a slow medicine; therefore they must be suppressed by a swift and perilous remedy.

§ 5. Third, heresiarchs and teachers of errors must be driven from the commonwealth--on one occasion, indeed, if it can conveniently be done; but if not, gradually and little by little. There is no need of proof in this matter. For, once the turbulent and dizzy Aeoluses have been driven away, the sea which they stirred from its deepest bottom will grow quiet of its own accord. And an error which lacks patronage will fall without a battle. Therefore those emperors who punished Arius, Nestorius, Vigilantius, and others with exile can never be praised enough; but execrable were the Vandals who trampled assembled priests and bishops in Africa beneath horses, or transported them to desert places. There are many reasons for expelling violators of religion, although they scatter their poisons with the people's favor; but the magistrate will do this lawfully and justly, and will allow no calumny to be inflicted. Three powerful princes of

Germany effected a change from the Lutheran religion to the Calvinist, or, as they themselves call it, the Reformed: the Elector Palatine, the Landgrave of Hesse, and the Margrave of Brandenburg, also an elector. And although almost all their subjects hated Zwinglianism, they accomplished that transfer without any tumult--except that Berlin presumed to grow angry.

§ 6. In these changes I have observed approximately the following things from the history of the religion changed in the Palatinate, from the Marburg proceedings, and from the Brandenburg edict.

First, they concealed the intention of changing religion and extirpating Lutheranism--not, indeed, so that the more prudent would remain ignorant of it, but lest the people be disturbed.

Second, by the artifice of the Zwinglians certain persons were suborned to request the exercise of the Reformed religion,

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and to do so with many gentle words, lest the prince appear inclined of his own accord toward a hateful novelty, but rather appear to indulge the consciences of his subjects, and to love and foster liberty. For a prince's affability is commonly praised when he shows himself able to be entreated even in those matters which it would have been better to deny.

Third, one church, or a second, was requested for them. Not even this appeared harsh to the people, since they would retain several and were not excessively solicitous about those.

Fourth, here nevertheless the jealousy of the Lutherans opposed itself, for they perceived that, together with a church, revenue and sustenance were being taken away. The sagacious foresight of the politicians was not ignorant of this, and therefore they contrived a conference and pacification. They met at court; the matter was argued in the prince's council; a notary and witnesses were denied. This must by no means be approved; rather, if a conference is to be instituted, liberty and advantages proper to each party must be left to it. For those who have been pressed by another's power and have occupied the worse position are judged the victors--as were the Arminians in Holland, since, if those whom the prince's favor protected trusted their cause, they ought to have contended with equal right and arms.

Fifth, a decree was published concerning not calumniating, not contending, not condemning others beforehand, and concerning fostering peace and concord. This edict of the princes was effective for the instituted change of religion. For in this way it was brought about that no one dared contradict the Calvinists, Zwinglians, and Sacramentarians--indeed, dared not even name them. But error made much progress when it obtained this: that it should not be uncovered. Yet not even then did any of the people make a disturbance, since otherwise many of the more moderate detest contentious and insulting sermons. For this reason, therefore, the prince was not reviled as a patron of heresies, but praised as a lover of peace, especially since he permitted thesis and antithesis to be taught.

Sixth, an academic disputation was instituted with a Calvinist presiding, who afterward was also appointed ordinary professor.

Seventh, not even after all these things did it appear that this had been done so that Zwinglianism should succeed Lutheranism, but so that peace should be established. For nothing else was then required than that the Lutherans, retaining both dignities and revenues, should be willing to sit and deliberate together with the Reformed in the consistory concerning ecclesiastical matters. When they refused this, they were accused as proud, obstinate, disobedient to the magistrate, and seemed to have deserved dismissal, because they spurned their colleagues and peace.

All these things had thus far been transacted in such a way that they might test what the people could bear. For if a tumult arose, if the co-guardians who had been appointed with John Casimir for the purpose that he should not change the religion bestirred themselves, there was a plausible excuse for these proceedings.

Eighth, when the people of Heidelberg petitioned for the retention of the Lutheran preachers, the matter was passed over in silence, and meanwhile it was arranged that those preachers should be represented as excessively obstinate and headstrong. The common people therefore easily desisted from their petition; and if those who were present displeased them, they requested at least other men, more moderate and suited to peace. For they believed that the offense was against the men, not hatred of Lutheranism; and therefore they continued to hope, and, while there was hope that liberty of belief could be obtained by entreaties, they abstained from force, until finally they laid aside concern for Lutheranism and hope.

Ninth, when everything now appeared secure, the Lutherans were commanded to depart from the parochial house; all the churches were given to the Calvinists. Those who were being driven into exile did not dare complain, but, turned toward domestic cares, requested posthumous and honorific pay, immunity from taxes, and similar things, while the Calvinists laughed profusely that a matter of so great a mass had come down to such humble and abject entreaties.

Tenth, since the academic auditors were Lutherans, they too were dealt with by various arts. Calvinism was offered to the pensioners, or electoral alumni, or dismissal was placed before them; a Zwinglian catechism was forced upon all in place of the Lutheran one. Thus in a brief moment the greatest conversion occurred, as though without movement; for the rural preachers readily changed opinions with the prince.

Eleventh, in the Hessian change I also noted this: that when the Lutherans, both academic professors and preachers, refused to yield their offices and honors, the prince said that he wondered at this, since he had not yet received them into those positions and put them in possession; for at the death of the deceased prince their places too had become vacant, and the rights were in his own power.

Twelfth, in Hesse too they proceeded slowly and piecemeal. Calvinism was not presented whole, but only a certain part which seemed small--namely, the restoration of the precepts of the Decalogue and the breaking of bread. And so, although at the beginning the people of Marburg anxiously ran to the sermons of the Lutherans whom they had heard were about to depart, and took the Supper, they nevertheless afterward made no disturbance, but gradually migrate to Calvinism, being destined to obey much more readily if they are summoned elsewhere--namely, into Arminianism or another sect.

Thirteenth, writings followed from both sides, but those whose favor came from the court prevailed. Moreover, it helped very greatly that the wickedness in morals of the Lutheran ministers became known; on this account they dishonorably dismissed certain of them beneath the gallows.

§ 7. The fourth method is one which I see was employed of old and is now also in vigor--namely, that those who are opposed to true religion be barred from honors, dignities, and public offices. Nor is it unjust that one who obstructs the safety of the commonwealth should not obtain honors and resources from the commonwealth. Those accused of great crimes are barred from honors; why should blasphemers and despisers of truth be admitted?

Theodosius thus decreed; and before him the three sons of Constantine the Great took away from heretics all privileges which had been granted out of regard for religion, *On Heretics*, law *Privileges*. Frederick condemns not only heretics but also those who receive and favor them, and commands that, unless they make satisfaction within a year, they be infamous. He also commands that they not be employed for public offices or councils, or for electing anyone, and adds other penalties which were noted above in the constitution. There are many advantages to this policy. For if adversaries of religion are in dignity, they will have many means by which they may oppose themselves to the prince and harass his subjects without the prince's knowledge. For no one who maintains a religion different from that of his prince is as faithful to him as he is to others with whom he agrees. Then subjects come more slowly to truth when they see their own perfidy honored in the associates of their errors. Third, only the true and Catholic faith grows by persecution, because it alone rests upon hope of future goods; superstitions, unless perhaps in the first impetus, are diminished and vanish when advantages are taken away. Certain princes of Germany understood how important this matter was at the last diet held at Regensburg. For they requested that the Emperor choose court counselors in equal

number from the different religions, although they themselves do not employ Catholics--indeed, neither do the Lutherans employ Calvinists, nor the Calvinists Lutherans.

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§ 8. The fifth method is that, when some entire heresy is to be extirpated, and this must be done moderately and by reason, not by sheer command, those things should first be seized upon which are ill-reputed among the common people and which at first sight display their absurdity even to the unlearned. The Calvinists furnish an example. In order that they might easily wear down the authority of the Lutherans, they often employed the name of Luther with veneration, but called all those Lutherans against whom they acted Flacians; the Flacians, however, were especially a sect of stupidity and madness among the Lutherans. Thus Pareus, who wishes that all Lutherans had one neck, professes that he acts against Ubiquitarians, violent enemies of truth. When the people of Utrecht endeavored at their synod to extirpate rigid Calvinism, they prohibited by edict that which was the chief point of its impiety: all should beware of teaching those things from which God could be held the author of sin. Therefore, when an orthodox magistrate wishes to restore ancient piety by right of return, he will take care that the manifest enormities of the opinions--in which there is greater shame even among the shameless--are seized upon first. For they conceal many things and shadow many things with words, for which, if you look upon the matter itself, there is no pardon. These must be drawn into the light, so that they may be routed with deserved hatred. For thus authority will be taken away from false teachers caught in manifest crime. To have displayed such superstitions is to have refuted them.

§ 9. The sixth method of restoring piety and abolishing error is to turn the quarrels of those who wander to one's own advantage. For who would not readily reduce the Puritans in England to order if he extorted from them approval of the bishops, or those same Puritans from Belgium if, while the controversy raged, he adhered to the milder party? For variety of belief makes doubtful those who seemed certain to themselves. Thus, when the prince's assent is added to one party of those disputing, it easily overthrows the other and renders the whole liable. The Apostle is a great example: in a council which consisted of different sects, by approving the true opinion of one he earned the vote of acquittal, and brought it about that, hindered by their own dissension, they could not conspire against truth. I would especially recommend this to an orthodox prince, for he will use the dissensions of those who wander no less conveniently than the concord of those believing rightly in order to extirpate errors. For even in battles, not only skill and strength in military affairs, but often also the enemies' carelessness or lapse have offered to a commander the most desirable opportunities for accomplishing the business. Let him only remain on watch, so that he may see the critical moments and make a remedy for diseases which is not only suitable but also opportune. A regimen cures many. Formerly, when rigid Calvinism was assailed by the Lutherans in the very heat of its paroxysm, the evil was exacerbated and sudden coercion brought much damage; now, of their own accord, the Arminians have remitted the harshest part of the rigor, judge the Calvinists impious, persecute them in the Academy itself, and compel them to be exiles in other towns; they would dare more and more atrocious things did they not fear the forces of the opposing party. Certainly, if the generous force of Maurice alone stood on behalf of the mild party, the rigor of the Counter-Remonstrants would soften or be broken.

§ 10. The seventh method is that clandestine and public assemblies be prohibited. Thus Arcadius denied Gainas a church for Arian perfidy; thus the emperors Leo and Anthemius forbade the pagans to assemble for impious rites, Code, Title 11: "Let no one dare to attempt those things which have rather frequently been forbidden to persons of pagan superstition, knowing that he commits a public crime who shall dare to perpetrate these things. Moreover, we will offenses of this kind to be cut away to such an extent that, even if any such thing be perpetrated on another's estate or in another's house--the owners manifestly knowing it--the estate or house shall be adjudged to the most sacred rights of the treasury. But the owners, for this alone, that they knowingly consented for their places to be contaminated with such crimes, if indeed they are adorned with any dignity or military office, shall be punished by loss of the military office or dignity, and also by confiscation of their property; but those established in a private or plebeian condition shall, after bodily tortures, be assigned either to work in the mines or to perpetual exile." And before him

Valentinian and Marcian decreed: “Let no one reopen, with the intention of venerating and adoring, the shrines which were formerly already closed. Far be it from our age that the ancient honor be restored to unspeakable and execrable images, that the impious doorposts of temples be wreathed with garlands, profane fires be kindled upon altars, incense be burned upon them, victims be slain, wine be poured in libation from bowls, and sacrilege be regarded in place of religion.”

§ 11. The eighth method is to bring the obstinate to their duty by severity of laws and punishments. The penalty for violated religions differs in one place and another, but everywhere there is some penalty--deservedly and by right. For what is committed against divine religion is directed to the injury of all; what harms all harms to the peril of the commonwealth, and therefore ought to be repelled by the commonwealth. But since these things are taught with danger among those whom conscience does not permit to be at rest, I prefer, concerning that whole class of evil, to cite and set forth a great doctor of the Church.

First he teaches, Epistle 50, that many were corrected in this way: “For that which befell the accusers of Saint Daniel befell the Donatists. For just as the lions were turned against the former, so the laws by which they wished to oppress the innocent have been turned against the latter--except that, because of the mercy of Christ, those laws which appear adverse to them are rather for them, since many have been corrected through them and are corrected daily; and, being corrected and delivered from that furious destruction, they give thanks. And those who hated now love; and, once health has been received, they rejoice over the most wholesome laws that had been troublesome to them, as greatly as in their madness they detested them; and now, with a like love together with us, they are stirred up against those who remain, with whom they would have perished, that together we may press on lest those persons perish. For a physician is troublesome to a raging madman, and a father to an undisciplined son--the former by binding, the latter by beating--but both by loving. But if they neglect them and permit them to perish, this false gentleness is rather cruel. For if a horse and mule, in which there is no understanding, resist with bites and kicks the human beings by whom their wounds, which must be cared for, are handled; and although human beings are often endangered and sometimes injured amid their teeth and kicks, they nevertheless do not abandon them until, through medicinal pains and troubles, they restore them to health: how much more must a human being not be abandoned by a human being, and a brother by a brother, lest he perish eternally, when, once corrected, he can understand how great a benefit was being furnished him when he complained that he was suffering persecution?”

But here let that law prevail: that it restrain by loving, not by raging; that it chastise in order to correct, not take vengeance in order to overthrow.

Then he continues: “Why, therefore, should the Church not compel her lost sons to return, if lost sons compelled others to perish? Although even those whom they did not compel, but only seduced, if they are called back through terrible but wholesome laws into her bosom, their pious mother embraces more tenderly and rejoices over them much more than over those whom she had never lost. Does it not pertain to pastoral diligence that even those sheep which were not violently snatched away but gently and softly seduced, and which wandered from the flock and began to be possessed by strangers, once found, should be called back to the Lord’s fold, if they should wish to resist, by terrors or even pains of scourges?”

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§ 12. These are Augustine’s words. Yet at another time he held this opinion: that it should not be sought from the emperors that they command the Donatist heresy altogether not to exist. But afterward he changed, for he judged medicinal trouble necessary for depraved, cold, and hard minds. “Hence,” he says, “it came about that, when causes of this kind had been brought to his knowledge, the religious and pious emperor preferred by most pious laws altogether to correct the error of that impiety, and, by terrifying and coercing, to bring back to Catholic unity those who bore the signs of Christ against Christ, rather than merely to take away their license to rage and leave them license to wander and perish. But when the laws themselves had now come into Africa, those especially who were seeking an

opportunity, or feared the savagery of the raging, or were ashamed to offend their own people, immediately passed over to the Church. Many also, who were held there solely by a custom handed down from their parents, and who had never before considered what sort of cause the heresy itself possessed, and had never wished to seek and consider it, soon, when they began to attend to it and found nothing in it worthy of the losses they were suffering, became Catholics without any difficulty. For solicitude taught those whom security had rendered negligent. Many who were less capable of understanding by themselves what difference there was between the error of the Donatists and Catholic truth followed the authority and persuasion of all those who preceded them. Thus, when the true mother joyfully received great hosts of peoples into her bosom, there remained hard crowds, standing in that pestilence with an unhappy obstinacy. Of these also, very many communicated by dissimulation; others lay concealed by reason of their small number. But those who dissembled, by gradually becoming accustomed and by hearing the preaching of truth--especially after the conference and disputation which took place at Carthage between us and their bishops--were in great part corrected. Yet in certain places where a more obstinate and implacable multitude prevailed, which the smaller number whose opinion concerning communion was better could not resist, or where crowds subject to the authority of a few more powerful persons obeyed toward the evil side, labor was required for a somewhat longer time."

The same author, *Against the Letters of Petilian*. Petilian said: "But if it had been permissible for anyone to be compelled by law even to good things, you wretched men ought yourselves to have been compelled by us to the purest faith. But far be it, far be it from our conscience that we compel anyone to our faith." Augustine answered: "No one indeed is to be compelled to faith unwillingly; but through severity--indeed, through the mercy of God--perfidy is accustomed to be chastised by the scourges of tribulations. Is it the case that, because the best morals are chosen by freedom of the will, therefore the worst morals are not punished by the integrity of the law? Nevertheless, discipline which avenges evil living is inverted unless it is preceded by doctrine concerning living well. If, therefore, any laws have been established against you, by them you are not compelled to do well, but are prohibited from doing evil; for no one can do well unless he has chosen, unless he has loved, which lies in free will. But the fear of penalties, even if it does not yet possess the delight of a good conscience, at least restrains evil cupidity within the barriers of thought. Yet those who established the adverse laws by which your audacity is repressed--are they not those concerning whom the Apostle says: 'For not without cause do they bear the sword; for they are ministers of God, avengers unto wrath against him who does evil'?"

§ 13. What, therefore? Will the prince act against all by right and law, and compel them to faith? Not against all, but nevertheless he will act on behalf of all. If they are few, if it can be done without disturbance, let him command that heresies, magicians, and idolaters not exist; but let the vigor of the laws be exerted gradually, except where there is danger of contagion. Let those who are pernicious be removed; the prince's authority will lead the remaining crowd. Shame restrains many, fear many, but most are held by empty security, as though nothing better appears for them to follow. Within a few years more than one hundred thousand were converted to the truth in France, more in Germany. No prince of Germany who attempted to bring his people to the Catholics experienced force contrary to his laws. Only the Belgians rebelled; but religion was neither the sole cause nor the pretext. Privileges and liberty were held forth, together with dominion by a foreign nation, always hateful to cultivated peoples; and the exaction of tithes incited the people to sedition.

§ 14. Nevertheless, the decree of politicians who think otherwise remains: they are not to be compelled, for thus they both remain impious and add dissimulation to impiety, and the crime is doubled. Thus you will make worshipers of the purple, not of God. But they err, and oppose the peace of the commonwealth, not religion alone. For first, it is commanded by a wholesome law that they not do evil, not worship a demon by idolatrous sacrifices, not lay waste churches, mock sacred things, inscribe God upon their crimes, and assail truth. For although they obey unwillingly, it is nevertheless better that, when compelled, they be borne into crimes in mind alone than in both mind and deed

together. In the same way, the dread of secular laws also deters many who are already guilty in mind and will from daring and obtaining their object.

§ 15. Nor is law accustomed merely to lead persons away from evils, but also to introduce them into the school and sanctuary of virtue. For it commands honorable and pious things and prohibits their contraries. It commands pious things, I say, and commands them to act piously, not by simulation; let each person impute hypocrisy to his own wickedness. Even the obstinate are commanded to honor the magistrate, because the command is right; nor ought the law for that reason not to command honorable things because a dissembling mind vitiates honorable deeds, but it ought to admonish them to accomplish of their own accord what duty requires. Yet, for the most part, when they are impelled toward honorable things, gradually they also perform them honorably and apply their minds to virtue, since it is necessary for the hands to be applied to the work. But if the hardness of some resists, it is nevertheless softened by custom; and tender age, not yet imbued with evils, is imbued fresh with piety and will carry the sweetness of its good odor into old age. I certainly remember that children were the authors to many parents of laying aside error; and when they grow up, lay aside the bordered toga, and enter a tribe or senate, they show themselves the best citizens of the commonwealth. We now see many thousands doing this in Germany, especially in Bavaria, Styria, Carinthia, and Belgium. And so even a reformation which does not help the advanced nevertheless presents childhood as Catholic.

§ 16. The ninth method, and almost the most efficacious of all, is that the governors of the commonwealth cultivate integrity of life and purity of morals. At the beginning I spoke concerning the morals of all; now I advise particularly that reformation will be slow and difficult unless prelates and teachers shine before the whole commonwealth not only by distinguished innocence but also by a reputation for innocence. For since superstition is a thing so malicious and calumnious that it detracts from the virtue and reputation of the most holy, exposes even the most blameless Athanasiuses to the speech of human beings by fabricated crimes, and drags them to tribunals by the purchased perjuries of witnesses, as though in another's crime there were sufficient cause why heresies should not be abandoned, who can doubt that, when the crimes of priests are public, they are tolerated to the great loss of religion? The shameful life of clerics--of clerics, I say, of clerics, but evil ones--made, increased, and preserves heresies. Frequently I enter into disputation with heretics or with those who believe heretics. After arguments which are solved and turned back with the least labor,

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they turn to the accusation of clerics and bring forth things which can neither be denied nor defended.

What, therefore, will the commonwealth do in this matter? First, it will labor that bishops and prelates be chosen who are chaste, liberal, sober, courageous, and zealous for divine law, who will reform morals; the princes themselves should add whatever power they can. Nor is the remedy difficult: is a canon or parish priest a drunkard or keeper of a concubine? Let an accuser be opposed to him; let another candidate for his dignity and prebend come forward; once convicted, let him be deposed and another receive his bishopric. If the prelates connive with one another and do not correct the vices of their own people, let the Vicar of Christ grant free power of reforming to kings and princes, as he recently entrusted it, to the great benefit of the province, to a certain most serene prince. But since I have dealt sufficiently with this matter in Book II, chapter 9, *On the Peace of Germany*, and this place requires the same things, I prefer to transfer those things here rather than rehearse them here in other words.

§ 17. In the first place, as a thing supremely necessary, without which no peace will ever be established, and once established will not endure, I place the restoration of ecclesiastical discipline where it has grown feeble, and its preservation where it flourishes. The cause of old and recent heresies and persecutions was, for the most part, the dissolution of the Christian clergy and people. It is an ancient wound of the Church, but one which is renewed excessively, so that it may never grow old throughout the whole world and may never be perfectly healed. "The Lord," says Saint Cyprian, "wished his household to be tested," when, namely, he permitted persecution. He speaks, however, of that which occurred under Decius and which was preceded by thirty-eight years of peace in Africa. "And because

long peace had corrupted the discipline handed down to us by God, heavenly censure raised up faith which lay prostrate and, I might almost say, sleeping; and although we deserved to suffer more for our sins, the most clement Lord so moderated all things that everything which was done appeared to be a trial rather than a persecution. Each person devoted himself to increasing his patrimony and, forgetful of what believers had either done before under the Apostles or always ought to do, they gaped after the increase of their possessions with the insatiable ardor of cupidity. There was no devoted religion in priests, no entire faith in ministers, no mercy in works, no discipline in morals. The beard was corrupted in men, the appearance painted in women; eyes were adulterated after God's hands had made them; hair was falsified by falsehood. There were cunning frauds for deceiving the hearts of the simple, treacherous wills for circumventing brethren; to join the bond of marriage with unbelievers, to prostitute the members of Christ to Gentiles; not only to swear rashly but even to perjure oneself; to despise superiors with a proud swelling, to curse one another with a poisoned mouth, and to be divided from one another by obstinate hatreds. Very many bishops, who ought to be an exhortation and example to the rest, despised divine administration and became administrators of secular affairs; abandoning their chair, deserting the people, wandering through foreign provinces, they hunted the markets of profitable commerce; while brethren in the Church hungered, they did not come to their aid; they wished to possess silver abundantly, to seize estates by insidious frauds, and to increase capital by multiplying usury."

These are the words of the holy martyr in his treatise *On the Lapsed*, in the age of the martyrs. Our evils have had more grievous causes, a greater loss of discipline, and a greater dominion of vices, which at length ended in rebellion and heresy. Nor is it wonderful. Without care for discipline, not only can the peace of religion not be maintained, but not even religion itself. "Discipline is the guardian of hope, the bond of faith, the guide of the saving journey, the kindling and nourishment of a good disposition, the teacher of virtue; it causes one always to remain in Christ and continually to live for God, and to attain to heavenly promises and divine rewards." Cyprian, *On the Discipline and Dress of Virgins*.

At this time nothing prevents most people more from returning to the ancient religion than the examples of certain persons who live badly in it. For the common people estimate doctrine from life. When they behold a man enslaved to riches, burning with lusts, swollen with arrogance, they do not believe that they can rightly learn from him the doctrine of liberality, chastity, and modesty. Do you marvel that those who wander are not converted? Do you marvel that you labor without fruit? They doubt your faith because it lies hidden in the mind; your vices are in the open. They avail more toward hatred than uncertain faith toward love. You promise the food of the word of God to the hungry. But while you offer it with an impure and festering hand, you render it suspect and cause enemies to blaspheme the name of the Lord. Your sin is indeed exceedingly great before the Lord, because you draw human beings back from the Lord's sacrifice--not from a sacrifice of rams and calves, but from the sacrifice of prayers, faith, and piety. They are turned away from God whose minister they see stained by so many vices. By nothing do heresies grow more than by the vices of clerics and by the sins of laymen, who so infect their offspring with their vices that it never becomes accustomed to piety. The heretics themselves testify to this: when convicted by Scriptures and reasons, they turn to the accusation of the Roman Curia and of the whole ecclesiastical estate. I shall answer them in another place, for they are no more excusable than the children of Israel, who, drawn back from the sacrifice of the Lord by the crimes of Hophni and Phinehas, worshiped the Baals and Ashtaroth.

Now I admonish those who live from the Church, have grown fat from Christ's patrimony, and receive large donatives from the pay of our commander, but by their sloth, ignorance, drunkenness, and baseness betray their own camp to the enemies, in no way solicitous about the destruction of perishing souls and locating the peace of the Church in the opulence and quiet of prebends. O good God, if it is expedient for him who shall have scandalized one of these little ones who believe in you that a millstone turned by an ass be suspended from his neck and he be drowned in the depth of the sea, what mountains or rocks will be able to suffice to bind to so many necks? How often must those be drowned who scandalize not merely the little ones but the whole world: great and small--the little ones who believe in you, the great so that they cease to believe, and unbelievers so that they do not come to faith?

It has been said to all Christians: “Be without complaint and simple children of God, without reproach in the midst of a depraved and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, unto my glory on the day of Christ,” Philippians 2:15. But to bishops and prelates it is said: “Be an example of the faithful in word and conduct, in charity, in faith, in chastity,” 1 Timothy 4:2. And: “In all things present yourself as an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity; a sound, irreproachable word,” Titus 2:7. And why? He adds the reason: “So that he who is opposed may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say concerning us.” Not by word alone, but above all by example, did the Apostles convert the world; by examples men travel again to unbelief, for while they deny conscience, they make shipwreck concerning the faith. For because they live badly in the sight of the people, so far as lies in them they kill those by whom they are known. Everyone who lives badly in the sight of those over whom he is placed, so far as lies in him, kills.

What, therefore? Do you foretell perpetual war in those regions where ecclesiastical discipline is neglected? Either war, or servitude, or destruction. For if morals are amended, abuses taken away, and scandals removed, a very brief war will be followed by solid victory. If God is further provoked by sins, those who wander will be confirmed in heresy; those who hesitate and are doubtful will be plainly turned away; and God will strike away license and wantonness, as he has now done in many places.

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If bishops and prelates are unequal to the vices of certain persons, God the Zealot will send a stronger avenger, by whom he will at once take away the impious man and his impiety. Thus the Turks occupied Asia, Egypt, and Greece, while neither the clergy obeyed the bishops nor the bishops the supreme shepherd, and while their morals surpassed the wickedness of barbarians. We see that it is generally so arranged that, when vices have climbed to their summit, all things fall together. But they must be believed to have climbed to their summit if they are committed by public law, or by custom and approval; if they break all the force and vigor of the laws and the authority of the magistrate. What cannot be healed dies away. Religion will perish in Europe unless an integrity of morals corresponds to the sanctity of religion. “What, then, do you think must be reformed?” someone who both fears and needs reformation will say to me. In general, whatever has been deformed; whatever, even if it is not deformed, nevertheless, through the circumstances, is the cause of some deformity in the Church.

CHAPTER XIX

Other Lesser Aids for Restoring True Religion

§ 1. There are very many things, according to the variety of times and places, which prudence and an ingenious love of piety suggest and which can be applied to those who are perishing, so that they may be saved. The Chinese are captivated by admiration for the mathematical disciplines; the Japanese rejoice in a prudent exposition of moral matters; very many of the Indians are captivated by beneficence, the Americans by ceremonies and music. Therefore all things must be attempted for the salvation of human beings, since that ever-watchful Dragon contrives all things for their destruction. For the commonwealth is wretched if, indeed, a great multitude overflows in it, but a multitude of those who are perishing.

§ 2. In the first place I set pious and grave music, which should not caress the ears by modulation and harmony alone, but much more instruct the mind by the light of words and thoughts, and affect the will by holiness. Truth is most readily learned and retained by that sweetness. This is clear from the example of those who teach falsehoods and of heresiarchs. Paul of Samosata changed ecclesiastical hymns into foul and flattering songs. The Arians and Pelagians also destroyed faith and discipline by this aid to their errors. Indeed, the audacity of certain persons advanced so far that they even introduced Sotadean songs into the Church. Nor have our own times been rendered infamous by the multitude and foulness of sects in any other way than by songs which insinuate heresy with sweet melody and sound forth mockery of truth. Thus Lutheran hymns, thus Bezan hymns, have killed more souls than writings and declamations. Why, therefore, should an orthodox prince not employ for medicine what impostors devised for destruction? Those things once moved Augustine, *Confessions*, Book X, chapter 33: “How greatly I wept during your hymns and canticles, sharply moved by the voices of your sweetly sounding Church! Your voices flowed into my ears, and your truth was distilled into my heart, and from it the affection of piety grew warm, and my tears ran, and it was well with me together with them.” And afterward: “Thus I fluctuate between the peril of pleasure and the experience of wholesomeness, and I am led more--although not uttering an irrevocable judgment--to approve the custom of singing in the Church, so that through the delights of the ears the weaker mind may rise up into the affection of piety.”

Aristotle, in his books of the *Politics*, prescribes many things concerning music which some have judged superfluous or even insufficiently consonant with the gravity of the subject. But Plato truly thought so as well; and Tullius, the father of his commonwealth and a skilled craftsman of governing, says in Book II of *On the Laws*: “For I agree with Plato that nothing so flows into tender and pliant minds as the varied sounds of singing; and it can scarcely be said how great their force is in either direction. For it both incites the languid and renders the excited languid; it now relaxes minds and now contracts them. And it was important to many cities in Greece to preserve the ancient mode of sounds. When their morals slipped into softness, they were changed together with their songs--either depraved by this sweetness and corruption, as a certain man thinks, or, when their severity had collapsed because of other vices, there was then also room for this change in ears and minds that had been changed. Therefore that man, the wisest of Greece and by far the most learned, greatly fears this stain; for he denies that musical laws can be changed without a change in public laws.”

Germany and Gaul have taught this. For while minds hung in doubt, new music intervened in place of that old music, sweetly severe and the servant of virtue--a new music more licentious, which by enticing sweetness offered heresies smeared upon incautious minds. Now, therefore, it is the office of a prudent physician to season truth and holiness with greater sweetness of harmonies, lest they strike harshly upon minds which have slipped into softness and be rejected. For this reason, after the likeness of David, Asaph, and Jeduthun, many most learned men have adorned psalms and hymns with musical modes; very many bishops have also introduced sacred songs in the vernacular language into the churches.

§ 3. This remedy is sweet, but nevertheless wholesome. The one which follows is harsher, yet neither unjust nor difficult: that before the public announcements and contracts of marriages, both bridegroom and bride be compelled to give an account of their faith. That matter produces no few advantages. For first, they can be instructed and educated in the truth through this occasion. Then a certain care for religion is instilled into all; and in this way, while they promise that they will be in the Church and will embrace the ancient faith, little by little they are bound to the truth and love it.

Heretics must also be caught by their own arts. For when I once heard Lutheran youths hurling dreadful things against the Calvinists, although their prince, after expelling Luther, commanded Zwingli to be received, I wondered that they had not yet been dragged into that trap. And when I asked how Lutheranism was left to them while the reformation was raging, they answered that for the present they rejoiced in the liberty of youth and did not greatly care about the threats of a raging minister, but that a time would come when they saw that the yoke must be undergone. For when they had begun to aspire to marriage, they must yield to consistorial violence and, together with a wife, receive the concubine of shameful obscenity--namely, Calvinism. So harsh is the condition among heretics of men taking wives and women marrying, for whom a new plague and pestilence must be led into the nuptial chamber. How, therefore, will an orthodox prince excuse himself to God if he himself does not take greater account of salvation and decree by a law enacted that, together with the sanctity of the sacrament and the indivisible bond of marriage, they join the truth of sincere and chaste religion--especially since only in the orthodox faith is the nuptial covenant contracted without the stain of fault?

§ 4. Other things also are connected with marriage: namely, that no one approach the laver of regeneration except according to the Catholic rite; that no one enjoy the right of godparents unless his sincerity in the faith has been ascertained;

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and that no one obtain the honor of ecclesiastical burial unless he has shared the sacraments of the Church with them.

§ 5. But if the souls of those who wander must be restored to the way gradually and by pious art, the propagators of perverse dogmas cannot be left alone. Let the orthodox magistrate apply himself to this: that their appointment, presentation, confirmation, and examination be entrusted to him. For thus he will bar every most harmful person; he will set over those synagogues men who are divided among themselves, incurious about controversial matters, and devoted to domestic affairs or even to the prince; and he will extinguish the heat of heresy. Nor will he remove the unlearned; for thus the error will be despised, and, because the unskilled are accustomed often to err, constancy will be taken away.

§ 6. He will nourish dissensions among the teachers who wander and bring it about that they confer often and accuse one another. For thus, when all understand that nothing certain is found among them, they will readily give their hands to truth. That discord is also useful for recognizing the morals of the most wicked human beings. For if anyone should wish to read the contentious books of the Lutherans against the Calvinists, or of the latter against the Lutherans, he will persuade himself that they are not invectives of human beings against human beings, but the furies and roarings of demons against demons. From these a just cause for change will be offered to the prince, and a cause for inquiring into the origin of such great evils; for if he discovers the things to be true, he will punish the guilty; if false, the calumniators. For he will bring the truth of the errors into public view.

§ 7. There are many other things which prudent charity and care for one's neighbor will of themselves dictate to a prince. All those things which conciliate love and veneration for the magistrate also avail to this end, that they readily embrace the prince's judgment in religion. Of this kind are remission of tributes and burdens; prompt aids when some part of the dominion has been disfigured by fires or collapses; and provision for the grain supply. For by these it is brought about that they hate whatever they think adverse to the magistrate. If the prince employs these together with divine grace and fervent prayers, within an altogether brief time he will extirpate heresies, although at the beginning they appear more powerful than the laws themselves and the magistrate.