

more to hold it up than is done by any opinion the faithful have about the sanctity, wisdom, or honesty of their teachers! So I can attribute all the changes of religion in the world to the very same single cause, namely *unpleasing priests*—not

only among Catholics but even in the church that has most presumptuously claimed to be reformed. [Curley suggests that this is aimed at the Presbyterians.]

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

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

As for •the faculties of the mind: I find that men are even more equal in these than they are in bodily strength. (In this discussion I set aside skills based on words, and especially the skill—known as 'science'—of being guided by general and infallible rules. Very few people have this, and even they don't have it with respect to many things. I am setting it aside because it isn't a natural faculty that we are born with, nor is it something that we acquire—as we acquire prudence—while looking for something else.) Prudence is simply experience; and men will get an equal amount of

*that* in an equal period of time spent on things that they equally apply themselves to. What may make such equality incredible is really just one's vain sense of one's own wisdom, which •most men think they have more of than the common herd—that is, more than anyone else except for a few others whom they value because of their fame or because their agreement with •them. It's just a fact about human nature that however much a man may acknowledge many others to be more •witty, or more •eloquent, or more •learned than he is, he won't easily believe that many men are as •wise as he is; for he sees his own wisdom close up, and other men's at a distance. This, however, shows the equality of men rather than their inequality. For ordinarily there is no greater sign that something is equally distributed than that every man is contented with his share!

•*Competition*•: This equality of ability produces equality of hope for the attaining of our goals. So if any two men want a single thing which they can't both enjoy, they become enemies; and each of them on the way to his goal (which is principally his own survival, though sometimes merely his

delight) tries to destroy or subdue the other. And so it comes about that when someone has through farming and building come to possess a pleasant estate, if an invader would have nothing to fear but that one man's individual power, there will probably *be* an invader—someone who comes with united forces to deprive him not only of the fruit of his labour but also of his life or liberty. And the ·successful· invader will then be in similar danger from someone else.

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

·*Glory*·: Every man wants his associates to value him as highly as he values himself; and any sign that he is disregarded or undervalued naturally leads a man to try, as far as he dares, to raise his value in the eyes of others. For those who have disregarded him, he does this by violence; for others, by example. I say 'as far as he dares'; but when there is no common power to keep them at peace, 'as far as he dares' is far enough to make them destroy each other. That is why men don't get pleasure (and indeed do get much grief) from being in the company of other men without there being a power that can over-awe them all.

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

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

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

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

no place for hard work, because there is no assurance that it will yield results; and consequently no cultivation of the earth, no navigation or use of materials that can be imported by sea, no construction of large

buildings, no machines for moving things that require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no practical skills, no literature or scholarship, no society; and—worst of all—continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

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

It may be thought that there has never been such a time, such a condition of war as this; and I believe it was never generally like this all over the world. Still, there are many

places where people live like that even now. For the savage people in many parts of America have no government at all except for the government of small families, whose harmony depends on natural lust. Those savages live right now in the brutish manner I have described. Anyway, we can see what way of life there *would be* if there *were* no common power to fear, from the degenerate way of life into which civil war has led men who had formerly lived under a peaceful government.

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

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

*mine* and *thine*. Rather, anything that a man can get is his for as long as he can keep it.

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

The passions that incline men to peace are •fear of death,

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

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

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

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

A LAW OF NATURE (*lex naturalis*) is a command or general rule, discovered by reason, which forbids a man to •do anything that is destructive of his life or takes away his means for preserving his life, and forbids him to •omit

anything by which he thinks his life can best be preserved. For although those who speak of this subject commonly run together right and law (*jus* and *lex*), they ought to be distinguished. RIGHT consists in the liberty to do or not do ·as one chooses·, whereas LAW picks on one of them—either doing or not doing—and commands it. So law differs from right as much as obligation differs from liberty—which ·are so different that· it would be *inconsistent* to suppose that a person had both liberty and an obligation in respect of the same action.

As I said in chapter 13, the condition of man is a condition of war of everyone against everyone, so that everyone is governed by *his own* reason and can make use of anything he likes that might help him to preserve his life against his enemies. From this it follows that in such a condition every man has a right to everything—even to someone else’s body. As long as this continues, therefore—that is, as long as every