to this one error. Thus, you may say that they sought nothing but a den of abominations when they made a sacrament out of marriage. For when they once obtained this, they took over the bearing of matrimonial cases, as it was a spiritual matter, it was not to be handled by secular judges. Then they passed laws by which they strengthened their tyranny, laws in part openly impious toward God, in part most unfair toward men. Such are these: That marriages between minors contracted without parental consent should remain firm and valid. That marriages between kindred, even to the seventh degree, are not lawful, and that contracted, must be dissolved. They forge the very degrees, against the laws of all nations and also against the ordinance of Moses [Lev. 18:6-8].

They are to take another; that godparents may not be coupled in matrimony; that marriages may not be celebrated from the octave of Easter, and in the three weeks before the nativity of John, and from Advent to Epiphany; and innumerable like regulations which would take too long to recount. At length, we must extricate ourselves from their mire, in which our discourse has already sunk longer, and I should have liked. Still, I believe that I have accomplished something in that I have partly pulled the lion’s skin from these asses.

Lombard holds such marriages invalid for boys under fourteen and spin under twelve, but if they come together after the beginning of puberty, they are not to be separated [Sentences IV, xxxvi, 4; MPP 135, 951]. On the pro

ution of marriage within the seventh degree, see Sentences IV, al MPP

[1871] J. Friedelberg 1. 197].

These regulations appear in Lombard, Sentences IV, xii, 17; IV, xiii;

[1874] 5; IV, xiv [MPP 136, 952]; L. 98, 140-141]; Gratian, DeverFUNCII, III, xxi, 5; II, xxix, 4; MPP 187; 135, 951; 101, 949; 941.


Part III, ch. iii and v.

III. xix, 2; “duplex in homine regimen.” Chapter xii is linked with the one on “Christian Freedom” (IV, xxv), which, in substance, formed the first part of ch. vi in the 1558 edition (CH, i, 294-296) and was followed in the same long chapter by a section on ecclesiastical power and one bearing the title of the present chapter and essentially of the same content. Subsequent tracts widely separated these parts of the original ch. vi, but IV, xx is in reality a continuation of III, xix.

IV, iii-iv.
to set them against the rule of God himself. Unless both these evils are checked, purity of faith will perish. Besides, it is of no slight importance to us to know how lovingly God has provided in this respect for mankind, that greater zeal for piety may flourish in us to attest our gratefulness.

First, before we enter into the matter itself, we must keep in mind that distinction which we previously laid down so that we do not (as commonly happens) unwisely mingle these two, which have a completely different nature. For certain men, when they hear that the gospel promises a freedom that acknowledges no king and no magistrate among men, but looks to Christ alone, think that they cannot benefit by their freedom so long as they see any power set up over them. They therefore think that nothing will be safe unless the whole world is reshaped to a new form, where there are neither courts, nor laws, nor magistrates, nor anything which in their opinion restricts their freedom. But whoever knows how to distinguish between body and soul, between this present fleeting life and that future eternal life, will without difficulty know that Christ's spiritual Kingdom and the civil jurisdiction are things completely distinct. Since, then, it is a Jewish vanity to seek and entice Christ's Kingdom within the elements of this world, let us rather ponder that what Scripture clearly teaches is a spiritual fruit, which we gather from Christ's grace and let us remember to keep within its own limits all that freedom which is promised and offered to us in him. For why is it that the same apostle who bids us stand and not submit to the "yoke of bondage" [Gal. 5:1] elsewhere forbids slaves to be anxious about their state [1 Cor. 7:21], unless it be that spiritual freedom can perfectly well exist along with civil bondage? These statements of his must also be taken in the same sense: In the Kingdom of God "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, neither slave nor free" [Gal. 3:28; Vg.: order changed]. And again, "there is not Jew nor Greek, uncircumcised and circumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman; but Christ is all in all" [Col. 3:11]. By these statements he means that it makes no difference what your condition among men may be or under which nation's laws you live, since the Kingdom of Christ does not at all consist in these things.

These sentences (1559) evidently refer to the Anabaptists on the one hand, and on the other to Mahomet, whose ItalianJJ Principe was only in 1553 translated into Latin (O. V. 425) Calvin may also have in mind the more-erects of antiquity.

II. x. xii. 16; IV. x. 3-6.

* Cf. II. x. 10-19.
see that their depravity can go scot-free—when no power can force them to cease from doing evil.

(Necessity and divine sanction of civil government, 3-7)

3. The chief tasks and burdens of civil government

But there will be a more appropriate place to speak of the practice of civil governments. Now we only wish it to be understood that to think of doing away with it is outrageous barbarity. Its function among men is no less than that of bread, water, sun, and air; indeed, its place of honor is far more excellent. For it does not merely see to it, as all these serve to do, that men breathe, eat, drink, and are kept warm, even though it merely embraces all these activities when it provides for their living together. It does not, I repeat, look to this only, but also prevents idolatry, sacrilege against God's name, blasphemies against his truth, and other public offenses against religion from arising and spreading among the people; it prevents the public peace from being disturbed; it provides that each man may keep his property safe and sound; that men may carry on blameless intercourse among themselves; that honesty and modesty may be preserved among men. In short, it provides that a public manifestation of religion may exist among Christians, and that humanity be maintained among men.

Let no man be disturbed that I now commit to civil government the duty of rightly establishing religion, which I seem above to have put outside of human decision. For, when I approve of a civil administration that aims to prevent the true religion which is contained in God's law from being openly and with public sacrilege violated and defiled with impunity, I do not here, any more than before, allow men to make laws according to their own decision concerning religion and the worship of God.

But my readers, assisted by the very clarity of the arrangement, will better understand what is to be thought of the whole subject of civil government if we discuss its parts separately. These are three: the magistrate, who is the protector and guardian of the laws; the laws, according to which he governs; the people, who are governed by the laws and obey the magistrate.

4. The magistracy is ordained by God

The Lord has not only testified that the office of magistrate is approved by and acceptable to him, but he also sets out its dignity with the most honorable titles and marvelously commends it to us. To mention a few: Since those who serve as magistrate are called "gods" [Ex. 22:8; Vg.; Ps. 82:1, 6], let no one think that their being so-called is of slight importance. For it signifies that they have a mandate from God, have been invested with divine authority, and are wholly God's representatives, in a manner, acting as his viceroyers. This is no subtility of mine, but Christ's explanation. "If Scripture," he says, "called them gods to whom the word of God came..." [John 10:35]. What is this, except that God has entrusted to them the business of serving him in their office, and (as Moses and Jeshophat said to the judges whom they appointed in every city of Judah) of exercising judgment not for man but for God [Deut. 1:16-17; II Chron. 19:8]? To the same purpose is what God's wisdom affirms through Solomon's mouth, that it is his doing "that kings reign, and counselors decrees what is just, that princes exercise dominion, and all benevolent judges of the earth" [Prov. 8:14-16]. This amounts to the same thing as to say: it has not come about by human perversity that the authority over all things on earth is in the hands of kings and other rulers, but by divine providence and holy ordinance. For God was pleased so to rule the affairs of men, insomuch as he is present with them and also presides over the making of laws and the exercising of equity in courts of justice.

Paul also plainly teaches this when he licks "ruling" among God's gifts [Rom. 12:8, KJV or RV]. which, variously distributed according to the diversity of grace, ought to be used by Christ's servants for the upbuilding of the church. For even though Paul is there speaking specifically of a council of sober men, who were appointed in the primitive church to preside over the ordering of public discipline (which office is called in the letter to the...
of Paul where, admonishing Timothy that prayers be offered for kings in public assembly, he immediately adds the reason: "That we may lead a peaceable life under them with all godliness and honesty." [I Tim. 2:1]. By these words he entrusts the condition of the church to their protection and care.

6. Magistrates should be faithful as God's deputies*

This consideration ought continually to occupy the magistrates themselves, since it can greatly spur them to exercise their office and bring them remarkable comfort to mitigate the difficulties of their task, which are indeed many and burdensome. For what great zeal for uprightness, for prudence, gentleness, self-control, and for innocence ought to be required of themselves by those who know that they have been ordained ministers of divine justice? How will they have the brazenness to admit injustice to their judgment seat, which they are told is the throne of the living God? How will they have the boldness to pronounce an unjust sentence, by that mouth which they know has been appointed an instrument of divine truth? With what conscience will they sign wicked decrees by that hand which they know has been appointed to record the acts of God? To sum up, if they remember that they are vicars of God, they should watch with all care, earnestness, and diligence, to represent in themselves to men some image of divine providence, protection, goodness, benevolence, and justice. And they should perpetually set before themselves the thought that "if all are cursed who carry out in deceit the work of God's vengeance" [Ezek. 48:10 p.], "much more gravely cursed are they who deceitfully conduct themselves in a righteous calling. Therefore, when Moses and Joshua wished to urge their judges to do their duty, they had nothing more effective to persuade them than what we have previously mentioned [Deut. 1:18]."13 Consider what you do, for you exercise judgment not only for men but for the Lord; since he is beside you in giving judgment. Now then, let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Take heed what you do, for there is no perversity with the Lord our God." [II Chron. 19:6-7 p.]. And in another place it is said: "God stood in the assembly of the gods, and holds judgment in the midst of the gods." [Ps. 82:1]. This is to heapen them for their task when they learn that they are deputies of God, to whom they must hereafter render account of the administration of their charge. And this admonition deserves to have great weight with them. For if they commit some fault, they are not only wrong doers to men whom they wickedly trouble, but are also insulting...

---


15 Vgi. "Cerum qui viderentur que les hommes evaquissent bien mole comme rais en paillie": "those who would have men live pell-mell, like rais in twine." Cf. IV, xx, 7. "Scrum historia inter vita anacheckan ponti."

16 Cf. Zwingli's refutation of this Anabaptist opinion. CR Zwingli III. 875.
toward God himself, whose most holy judgments they detest [cf. Isa. 5:14-15]. Again, they have the means to comfort themselves greatly when they ponder in themselves that they are occupied not with profane affairs or those alien to a servant of God, but with a most holy office, since they are serving as God's deputies.

7. The coercive character of magistracy does not hinder its recognition

"Those who, unmoved by so many testimonies of Scripture, dare call against this holy ministry a thing abhorrent to Christian religion and pious—what else do they but revile God himself, whose ministry cannot be reproached without dishonor to himself? And these fools, do not just reject the magistrates among themselves, but cast off God that he may not reign over them. For if the Lord truly said this of the people of Israel because they refused Samuel's rule [1 Sam. 8:7], why will it less truly be said today of these who let themselves rage against all governments ordained by God? The Lord said to his disciples that the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over Gentiles, but it is not so among the disciples, where he who is first ought to become the least [Luke 22:25-26]; by this saying, they tell us, all Christians are forbidden to take kingdoms or governments. O skillful interpreters! There arose a contention among the disciples over which one would excel the others. To silence this vain ambition, the Lord taught them that their ministry is not like kingdoms, in which one is pre-eminent above the rest. What dishonor, I ask you, does this comparison do to kingly dignity? Indeed, what does it prove at all, except that the kingly office is not the ministry of an apostle? Moreover, among magistrates themselves, although there is a variety of forms, there is no difference in this respect, that we must regard all of them as ordained of God. For Paul also lumped them all together when he says that there is no power except from God [Rom. 13:1]. And that which is the least pleasant of all has been especially commended above the rest, that is, the power of one. This, because it brings with it the common bondage of all (except that one man to whom will it subjects all things), in ancient times could not be acceptable to heroic and noble natures. But to forestall their unjust judgments, Scripture expressly affirms that it is the providence of God's wisdom that kings..."
may be a number of censors and masters to restrain his willfulness. This has both been proved by experience, and also the Lord confirmed it by his authority when he ordained among the Israelites and aristocracy bordering on democracy, since he willed to keep them in best condition [Ex. 18:13-26; Deut. 17:9-15] until he should bring forward the image of Christ in David. And, as I freely admit that no kind of government is more happy than one where freedom is regulated with becoming moderation and is properly established on a durable basis, so also I reckon most happy those permitted to enjoy this state; and if they stably and constantly labor to preserve and retain it, I grant that they are doing nothing alien to this office. Indeed, the magistrates ought to apply themselves with the highest diligence to prevent the freedom (whose guardians they have been appointed) from being in any respect diminished, far less be violated. If they are not sufficiently alert and careful, they are faithless in office, and traitors to their country.

But if those to whom the Lord has appointed another form of government should transfer this very function to themselves, being moved to desire a change of government—even to think of such a move will not only be foolish and superfluous, but altogether harmful. However, as you will surely find if you fix your eyes not on one city alone, but look around and glance at the world as a whole, or at least cast your sight upon regions farther off, divine providence has wisely arranged that various countries should be ruled by various kinds of government. For as elements cohere only in unequal proportion, so countries are best held together according to their own particular inequality. However, all these things are needlessly spoken to those for whom the will of the Lord is enough. For if it has seemed good to him to set kings over kingdoms, states or municipal officers22 over free cities, it is our duty to show ourselves compliant and obedient to whomever he sets over the places where we live.

9. Concern for both Tables of the Law

Now in this place we ought to explain in passing the office of the magistrates, how it is described in the Word of God and the things in which it consists. If Scripture did not teach that it extends to both Tables of the Law, we could learn this from secular writers: for no one has discussed the office of magistrates, the making of laws, and public welfare, without beginning at religion and divine worship. And thus all have confessed that no government can be happily established unless piety is the first concern; and that those laws are preposterous which neglect God's right and provide only for men. Since, therefore, among all philosophers religion takes first place, and since this fact has always been observed by universal consent of all nations, let Christian princes and magistrates be ashamed of their negligence if they do not apply themselves to this concern. And we have already shown that these duties are especially enjoined upon them by God; and it is fitting that they should labor to protect and assert the honor of him whose representatives they are, and by whose grace they govern.

Also, holy kings are greatly praised in Scripture because they restored the worship of God when it was corrupted or destroyed, or took care of religion that under them it might flourish pure and unblemished. But on the contrary, the Sacred History places anachronies among things evil: because there was no king in Israel, each man did as he pleased [Judg. 21:15].

This proves the folly of those who would neglect the concern for God and would give attention only to rendering justice among men. As if God appointed rulers in his name to decide earthly controversies but overlooked what was of far greater importance—that he himself should be purely worshiped according to the prescription of his law. But the passion to alter everything with impunity drives turbulent men to the point of wanting all vindicators of violated piety removed from their midst.

As far as the Second Table is concerned, Jeremiah admonishes kings to "do justice and righteousness," to "deliver him who has

22 Calvin is primarily concerned for secure and ordered liberty as opposed to both tyranny and anarchy. "Nothing is more desirable than liberty," he writes of Joseph in Egypt (Comm. Gen. 50:17). In the Homilies on 1 Samuel, he twice calls liberty "an inestimable good" (CR XXIX. 54: XIX. 185), and again in Comm. Jer. 36:13-26. He elsewhere speaks of it as "more than the food of life" (CR XXVII. 556). Paul, he says, is careful not to disdain liberty (Comm. I Cor. 10:19). God desired the Jews to have more liberty than their neighbors who were ruled by kings, and so gave them liberty to choose judges (CR XXVII. 410).


24 This bears a resemblance to Thomas More's Utopia II, in "On the Religions of Ungna" (see Ralph Rosenbloom's translation [1518], ed. I. G. Collins, pp. 105). The Basel edition of 1518 may have been used by Calvin (II. 140 f.). Note here Calvin's concern for the preservation of "piety," and cf. sec. 50, below.
Justice grows cold in the minds of many, unless due honor has been prepared for virtue; and the lust of wicked men cannot be restrained except by severity and the infliction of penalties. And the prophet has included these two functions, when he bids kings and other rulers execute judgment and justice [Jer. 22:13; cf. ch. 21:12]. Justice, indeed, is to receive into safekeeping, to embrace, to protect, vindicate, and free the innocent. But judgment is to withstand the boldness of the impious, to repress their violence, to punish their misdeeds.

20. The magistrates’ exercise of force is compatible with piety.

*But here a seemingly hard and difficult question arises: if the law of God forbids all Christians to kill [Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17; Matt. 5:21], and the prophet prophesies concerning God’s holy mountain (the church) that in it men shall not afflict or hurt [Isa. 11:9; 57:25]—how can magistrates be pious men and shedders of blood at the same time? Yet if we understand that the magistrate in administering punishments does nothing by himself, but carries out the very judgments of God, we shall not be hampered by this scruple. The law of the Lord forbids killing; but, that murderers may not go unpunished, the Lawgiver himself puts into the hands of his ministers a sword to be drawn against all murderers. It is not for the pious to afflict and hurt; yet to avenge, at the Lord’s command, the affections of the pious is not to hurt or to afflict. Would that this were ever before our minds—that nothing is done here from men’s rashness, but all things are done on the authority of God who commands it: and while his authority goes before us, we never wander from the straight path! Unless perhaps restraint is laid upon God’s justice, that it may not punish misdeeds. But if it is not right to impose any law upon him, why should we try to reproach his ministers? They do not hear the word in vain, says Paul, for they are ministers of God to execute his wrath, avengers of wrongdoers [Rom. 13:4]. Therefore, if princes and other rulers recognize that nothing is more acceptable to the Lord than their obedience, let them apply themselves to this ministry, if, indeed, they are intent on having their piety, righteousness, and uprightness approved of God [cf. II Tim. 2:15].

Moses was impelled by this desire when, realizing that he had been destined by the Lord’s power to be liberator of his people, he laid his hand upon the Egyptian [Ex. 2:11; Acts 7:24]. This was the case again, when, by slaying three thousand men in one day, he took vengeance upon the people’s sacrilege [Ex. 32:25].

But since they cannot perform this unless they defend good men from the wrongs of the wicked, and give aid and protection to the oppressed, they have also been armed with power with which severely to coerce the open malefactors and criminals by whose wickedness the public peace is troubled or disturbed [cf. Rom. 13:3]. For from experience we thoroughly agree with the statement of Solon that all commonwealths are maintained by reward and punishment; take these away and the whole discipline of cities collapses and is dissolved. For the care of equity and peace...
27-38]. David also, when at the end of his life he ordered his son Solomon to kill Joab and Shimei [1 Kings 2:5-6, 8-9]. Accordingly, he also includes this among kingly virtues: to destroy the wicked of the land, that all evildoers may be driven out of the city of God [Ps. 101:8]. To this also pertains the praise which is given to Solomon: "You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity." [Ps. 45:7; 44:8, 45:8].

How does Moses' gentle and peaceable nature flare up into such savagery that, sprinkled and dripping with the blood of his brethren, he dashes through the camp to new carnage? How can David, a man of such great gentleness throughout life, as he breathes his last, make that bloody testament, that his son should not allow the hoary heads of Joab and Shimhi to go in peace to the grave [1 Kings 2:5-6, 8-9]? But both men, by executing the vengeance ordained of God, felled by cruelly their hands, which by sparing they would have defiled: "It is an abomination among kings," says Solomon, "to do iniquity, for the throne is established in righteousness." [Prov. 16:12]. Again: "A king who sits on the throne of judgment casts his eyes upon every evildoer" [Prov. 20:8]. Again: "A wise king scatters the evildoers and turns them upon the wheel" [Prov. 20:26]. Again: "Remove the dross from the silver, and a vessel will come forth to the metal caster; remove the impious from the king's sight, and his throne will be established in righteousness" [Prov. 25:4-5, cf. Geneva]. Again: "He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord" [Prov. 17:15]. Again: "A rebel seeks evil for himself, and a cruel messenger is sent to him" [Prov. 17:11]. Again: "He who says to the wicked, 'You are righteous,' will be cursed by peoples . . . and nations" [Prov. 24:21]. Now if their true righteousness is to pursue the guilty and the impious with drawn sword, should they sheathe their sword and keep their hands clean of blood, while abandoned men wickedly range about with slaughter and massacre, they will become guilty of the greatest impiety, far indeed from winning praise for their goodness and righteousness thereby.

Begone, now, with that abrupt and savage harshness, and that tribunal which is rightly called the reef of accused men! For I am not one either to favor undue cruelty or think that a fair judgment can be pronounced unless clemency, that best counselor of kings and surest keeper of the kingly throne (as

Solomon declares) [Prov. 20:28] is always present—clemency, which by a certain writer of antiquity was truly called the chief gift of princes. Yet it is necessary for the magistrate to pay attention to both, lest by excessive severity he either harm more than heal; or, by superstitious affectation of clemency, fall into the cruelest gentleness, if he should (with a soft and disjointed kindness) abandon many to their destruction. For during the reign of Nerva it was not without reason said: it is indeed bad to live under a prince with whom nothing is permitted; but much worse under one by whom everything is allowed.  

2. On the right of the government to wage war  

But kings and people must sometimes take up arms to execute such public vengeance. On this basis we may judge wars lawful which are so undertaken. For if power has been given them to preserve the tranquillity of their dominion, to restrain the seditions stirring of restless men, to help those forcibly oppressed, to punish evil deeds—can they use it more opportunely than to check the fury of one who disturbs both the repose of private individuals and the common tranquillity of all, who raises seditions tumults, and by whom violent oppressions and vile misdeeds are perpetrated? If they ought to be the guardians and defenders of the laws, they should also overthrow the efforts of all whose offenses corrupt the discipline of the laws. Indeed, if they rightly punish those robbers whose harmful acts have affected only a few, will they allow a whole country to be afflicted and devastated by robberies with impunity? For it makes no difference whether it be a king or the lowest of the common folk who invades a foreign country in which he has no right, and harasses it as an enemy. All such must, equally, be considered as robbers and punished accordingly. Therefore, both natural equity and the nature of the office dictate that princes must be armed not only to restrain the misdeeds of private individuals by judicial punishment, but also to defend by war the dominions entrusted to their safekeeping; if at any time they are under enemy attack. And

Seneca, De Clementia I. 1. 3 (LCL Seneca, Moral Essays I. 356 f.); cf. Calvin, Comm. Senec. On Clemency I. 1. 3 (GR V. 21). See I. 3. 5, note 11; II. 1. 15, note 56; IV. 18, 8, note 16; and see sec. 24, note 41, below; for other references in this edition to Seneca's De clementia, on which Calvin as a young scholar wrote a notable commentary. On the place of this commentary in Calvin's spiritual development, see A. M. Hugel, Calvin en Seneca.

Pv. Canus. Neron. Epitome of Book (viii. 3 (LCL Roman History VIII. 361 f.).
the Holy Spirit declares such wars to be lawful by many testimonies of Scripture.\[^9\]

12. Restraint and humanity in war\[^a\]*

*But if anyone object against me that in the New Testament there exists no testimony or example which teaches that war is a thing lawful for Christians, I answer first that the reason for waging war which existed of old still persists today: and that, on the other hand, there is no reason that bars magistrates from defending their subjects. Secondly, I say that an express declaration of this matter is not to be sought in the writings of the apostles; for their purpose is not to fashion a civil government, but to establish the spiritual Kingdom of Christ. Finally, that it is there shown in passing that Christ by his coming has changed nothing in this respect. For if Christian doctrine (to use Augustine’s words) condemned all wars, the soldiers asking counsel concerning salvation should rather have been advised to cast away their weapons and withdraw completely from military service. But they were told: *“Strike no man, do no man wrong, be content with your wages”* [Luke 3:14]. When he taught them to be content with their wages, he certainly did not forbid them to bear arms.*

*But it is the duty of all magistrates here to guard particularly against giving vent to their passions even in the slightest degree. Rather, if they have to punish, let them not be carried away with headlong anger, or be seized with hatred, or burn with impicable severity. Let them also (as Augustine says) have pity on the common nature in the one whose special fault they are punishing.*\[^3\] Or, if they must arm themselves against the enemy, that is, the armed robber, let them not lightly seek occasion to do so; indeed, let them not accept the occasion when offered, unless they are driven to it by extreme necessity. For if we must perform much more than the heathen philosopher required when he wanted war to seem a seeking of peace,\[^2\] surely everything else he wanted war to seem a seeking of peace, whether it arises from sedition or invasion. The fourth part of the article of Schonheitz had denied this. Cf. IV. I. 1, 8, note 35. (Mosonwici Quarterly Review XIX (1915) 241ff.) See also Balthasar Holm, *On the Sword* (1647) (tr. H. L. Veddé, Balthasar Holmster: pp. 374–390). The whole treatment of the Christian attitude to magistrates and to law and litigation (sections 4–33) reflects Calvin’s apprehension of anarchy from the Anabaptist rejection of the state.

\[^8\]* Secs. 11 and 12 are directed against Anabaptist positions, and offer a comic rationale of the resort to war by rulers under necessity to defend their nobility from violence, whether it arises from sedition or invasion. The fourth part of the article of Schonheitz had denied this. Cf. IV. I. 1, 8, note 35. (Mosonwici Quarterly Review XIX (1915) 241ff.) See also Balthasar Holm, *On the Sword* (1647) (tr. H. L. Veddé, Balthasar Holmster: pp. 374–390). The whole treatment of the Christian attitude to magistrates and to law and litigation (sections 4–33) reflects Calvin’s apprehension of anarchy from the Anabaptist rejection of the state.

\[^9\]* Augustine, *Letter* xxxviii. 2. 15-16. MUL. 35. 491 f. 493 f. 4. FC. xvi. 47 f. FC. xi. 906; *Cincinnati* xiii. 3. p. 804. 8. 4 (MUL. 35. 116f. 1.)

\[^a\]* Cicero, *On Duties* I. xxiii. 379. 1. xi. 35 (LCL edition, pp. 80 L. 95 f.).

\[^b\]* "*Teum pneu eie papali xwvmer.*" VG omits “almost.” Cf. A. Bolier, *La Poussée économique et sociale Calvin*, p. 255. In this section Calvin epitomized a Christian philosophy of taxation, indicating the mutual obligations of rulers and people.
cupidity, already too much kindled of itself. But as it is very necessary that, whatever they venture, they should venture with a pure conscience before God, they must be taught how much is lawful for them, that they may not in impious self-confidence come under God's displeasure. And this doctrine is not superfluous for private individuals in order that they should not let themselves rashly and shamelessly decay any expenses of princes, even if these exceed the common expenditures of the citizens.

(Public law and judicial procedures, as related to Christian duty, 14-21

14. Old Testament law and the laws of nations

"Next to the magistracy in the civil state come the laws, stoutest sinews of the commonwealth, or, as Ciceron, after Plato, calls them, the souls, without which the magistracy cannot stand, even as they themselves have no force apart from the magistracy. Accordingly, nothing truer could be said than that the law is a silent magistrate; the magistrate, a living law."

But because I have unlettered to say what laws a Christian state ought to be governed, this is no reason why anyone should expect a long discourse concerning the best kind of laws. This would be endless and would not pertain to the present purpose and place. I shall in but a few words, and as in passing, note what laws can piously be used before God, and be rightly administered among men.

I would have preferred to pass over this matter in utter silence if I were not aware that here many dangerously go astray. For there are some who deny that a commonwealth is duly framed which neglects the political system of Moses, and is ruled by the common laws of nations. Let other men consider how perilous and sedulous this notion is; it will be enough for me to have proved it false and foolish.

We must bear in mind that common division of the whole law of God published by Moses into moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws. And we must consider each of these parts, that we may understand what there is in them that pertains to us, and what does not. In the meantime, let no one be concerned over the small

14 Cf. IV, xii, 17: "Discipline pro norme est." On serv. 13-16, cf. II, xii, 16.
16 Those who, below Calvin wholly rejects the notion of a theocracy based on the judicial laws of the Old Testament.
rent not only to all justice, but also to all humanity and gentleness.

16. Unity and diversity of laws

"What I have said will become plain if in all laws we examine, as we should, these two things: the constitution of the law, and the equity on which its constitution is itself founded and rests. Equity, because it is natural, cannot but be the same for all, and therefore, this same purpose ought to apply to all laws, whatever their object. Constitutions have certain circumstances upon which they in part depend. It therefore does not matter that they are different, provided all equally press toward the same goal of equity. It is a fact that the law of God which we call the moral law is nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that conscience which God has engraven upon the minds of men. Consequently, the entire scheme of this equity of which we are now speaking has been prescribed in it. Hence, this equity alone must be the goal and rule and limit of all laws.

Whatever laws shall be framed to that rule, directed to that goal, bound by that limit, there is no reason why we should disapprove of them, however they may differ from the Jewish law, or among themselves.

God's law forbids stealing. The penalties meted out to thieves in the Jewish state are to be seen in Exodus [Ex. 22:1-4]. The very ancient laws of other nations punished theft with double restitution: the laws which followed these distinguished between theft, manifest and not manifest. Some proceeded to banishment, others to flogging, others finally to capital punishment. False testimony was punished by damages similar and equal to injuries among the Jews [Deut. 19:18-41]; elsewhere, only by deep disgrace; in some nations, by hanging; in others, by the cross. All codes equally average murder with blood, but with different kinds of death. Against adulterers some nations levy severer, others lighter punishments. Yet we see how, with such diversity, all laws tend to the same end. For, together with one voice, they 26


17. Christians may use the law courts, but without hatred and revenge

17. Christians may use the law courts, but without hatred and revenge.

It now remains for us to examine what we had set in the last place: what uselessness the laws, judgments, and magistrates

have for the common society of Christians. Our topic is also joined another question: how much deference private individuals ought to yield to their magistrates, and how far their obedience ought to go. To very many the office of magistrate seems super-

26 Cf. sec. 14, note 36, above. The present section emphasizes the point that positive law rightly relies on natural law and equity, and requires penalties adapted to nations and conditions, without dependence on Old Testament legislation.

27 In this and following sections, Calvin’s familiarity with legal procedures reflects his early legal training. Cf. Cadiot, Institution IV, 67.
fluous among Christians, because they cannot piously call upon them for help, inasmuch as it is forbidden to them to take venge, to sue before a court, or to go to law. But Paul clearly testifies to the contrary that the magistrate is minister of God for our good [Rom. 13:4]. By this we understand that he has been so ordained of God, that, defended by his hand and upheld against the wrongdoing and injustices of evil men, we may live a quiet and serene life [1 Tim. 2:2]. But if it is to no purpose that he has been given by the Lord for our defense unless we are allowed to enjoy such benefit, it is clear enough that the magistrate may without impiety be called upon and also appealed to.

But here I have to deal with two kinds of men. There are very many who so bemoi with a rage for litigation that they are never at peace with themselves unless they are quarreling with others. And they carry on their lawsuits with bitter and deadly hatred, and an insane passion to revenge and hurt, and they pursue them with implacable obstinacy even to the ruin of their adversaries. Meanwhile, to avoid being thought of as doing something wrong, they defend such perversity on the pretense of legal procedure. But if one is permitted to go to law with a brother, one is not therewith allowed to hate him, or be seized with a mad desire to harm him, or hound him relentlessly.

18. The Christian's motives in litigation*

*Such men should therefore understand that lawsuits are permissible if rightly used. There is right use, both for the plaintiff in suing and for the accused in defending himself, if the defendant presents himself on the appointed day and with such exception, as he can, defends himself without bitterness, but only with this intent, to defend what is his by right, and if on the other hand, the plaintiff, undeservedly oppressed either in his person or in his property, puts himself in the care of the magistrate, makes his complaint, and seeks what is fair and good. But he should be far from all passion to harm or take revenge, far from harshness and hatred, far from burning desire for contention.

He should rather be prepared to yield his own and suffer anything than be carried away with enmity toward his adversary. On the other hand, where hearts are filled with malice, corrupted by envy, inflamed with wrath, burning revenge, finally so inflamed with desire for contention, that love is somewhat impaired in them, the whole court action of even the most just cause.

19. Against the rejection of the judicial process

*As for those who strictly condemn all legal contentions, let them realize that they therewith repudiate God's holy ordinance, and one of the class of gifts that can be clean to the clean [Titus 1:15]; unless, perchance, they wish to accuse Paul a shameful act, since he both repelled the slanders of his accusers, exposing at the same time their craft and malice [Acts 24:14 ff.], and in court claimed for himself the privilege of Roman citizenship [Acts 16:37; 22:25], and, when there was need, appealed from the unjust judge to the judgment seat of Caesar [Acts 25:10-12].

This does not contradict the fact that all Christians are forbidden to desire revenge, which we banish far away from Christian courts [Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:39; Deut. 19:25; Rom. 12:19]. For if it is a civil case, a man does not take the right path unless he commits his cause, with innocent simplicity, to the judge as public protector, and he should think not at all of returning evil for evil [Rom. 12:17], which is the passion for revenge. If, however, the action is brought for some capital or serious offense, we require that the accuser be one who comes into court without a burning desire for revenge or resentment over private injury, but having in mind only to prevent the efforts of a destructive man from doing harm to society. For if you remove a venomous mind, that command which forbids revenge to Christians is not broken.

But, some will object, not only are they forbidden to desire revenge, but they are also bidden to wait upon the hand of the Lord, who promises that he will be present to avenge the oppressed and afflicted [Rom. 12:19], while those who seek aid from the magistrate, either for themselves or for others, anticipate all the vengeance of the Heavenly Protector. Not at all! For we
must consider that the magistrate’s revenge is not man’s but God’s, which he extends and exercises, as Paul says [Rom. 13:4], through the ministry of man for our good.

20. The Christian endures insults, but with unity and equity defends the public interest*. We are not in any more disagreement with Christ’s words in which he forbids us to resist evil, and commands us to turn the right cheek to him who has struck the left, and to give our cloak to him who has taken away our coat [Matt. 5:39–40]. He indeed wills that the hearts of his people so utterly recoil from any desire to retaliate that they should rather allow double injury to be done them than desire to pay it back. And we are not leading them away from this forbearance. For truly, Christians ought to be a kind of men born to bear slanders and injuries open to the malice, deceits, and mockeries of wicked men. And not only that, but they ought to bear patiently all those evils. That is, they should have such complete spiritual compunction that, having received one offense, they make ready for another, promising themselves throughout life nothing but the bearing of a perpetual cross. Meanwhile, let them also do good to those who do them harm, and bless those who curse them [Luke 6:28; d. Matt. 5:44]; and (this is their only victory) strive to conquer evil with good [Rom. 12:21]. So minded, they will not seek an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, as the Pharisees taught their disciples to desire revenge, but, as we are instructed by Christ, they will so suffer their body to be maltreated, and their possessions to be maliciously seized, that they will forgive and voluntarily pardon those wrongs as soon as they have been inflicted upon them [Matt. 5:38 ff].

Yet this equity and moderation of their minds will not prevent them from using the help of the magistrate in preserving their own possessions, while maintaining friendliness toward their enemies; or zealous for public welfare, from demanding the punishment of a guilty and pesilent man, who, they know, can be changed only by death. For Augustine truly interprets the purpose of all these precepts. The righteous and godly man should be ready patiently to bear the malice of those whom he desires to become good, in order to increase the number of good men—not to add himself to the number of the bad by a malice like theirs. Secondly, these precepts pertain more to the preparation of the heart which is within than to the work which is done in


22. Paul condemns a litigious spirit, but not all litigation*. But the usual objection—that Paul has condemned lawsuits altogether—is also false [1 Cor. 6:5–8]. It can easily be understood from his words that there was an immoderate rage for litigation in the church of the Corinthians—enven to the point that they exposed to the scoffing and evil-speaking of the impious the gospel of Christ and the whole religion they professed. Paul first criticized them for disgracing the gospel among believers by the inordinate love of the quarrels. Secondly, he rebuked them also for contending in this way among themselves, brethren with brethren. For they were so far from bearing wrongs that they greedily painted after one another’s possessions, and without cause awaited and inflicted loss upon one another. Therefore, Paul inveighs against that mad lust to go to law, not simply against all controversies.

But he brands it a fault or weakness for them not to accept the loss of their goods, rather than to endeavor to keep them, even to the point of strife. That is, when they were so easily aroused by every loss, and dashed to the court and to lawsuits over the least causes, he speaks of this as proof that their minds are too prone to anger, and not enough disposed to patience. Christians ought indeed so to conduct themselves that they always prefer to yield their own right rather than go into a court, from which they can scarcely get away without a heart stirred and kindled to hatred of their brother. But when any man sees that without loss of love he can defend his own property, the loss of which would be a heavy expense to him, he does not offend against this statement of Paul, if he has recourse to law. To sum up (as we said at the beginning), love will give every man the best counsel. Everything undertaken apart from love and all disputes that go beyond it, we regard as incontrovertibly unjust and impious.

*(Obedience, with reverence, due even unjust rulers, 22–29)*

22. Defiance* The first duty of subjects toward their magistrates is to think most honorably of their office, which they recognize as a juris-

* Augustine, Letters cxxxviii. 2. 12–13 (MPL 39. 390 tr. FC 20. 44 ff.).

Sec. 18, above.

* Cf. Cicero, Laws III. ii. 5 (LCL edition, pp. 461 f.).
diction bestowed by God, and on that account to esteem and reverence them as ministers and representatives of God. For you may find some who very respectfully yield themselves to their magistrates and desire somebody whom they can obey, because they know that such is expedient for public welfare; nevertheless, they regard magistrates only as a kind of necessary evil. But Peter requires something more of us when he commands that the king be honored [1 Peter 2:17]: as does Solomon when he teaches that God and king are to be feared [Prov. 24:21]. For Peter, in the word "to honor" includes a sincere and candid opinion of the king. Solomon, yoking the king with God, shows that the king is full of a holy reverence and dignity. There is also that famous saying in Paul: that we should obey "not only because of wrath, but because of conscience" [Rom. 13:5, cf. Vg.]. By this he means that subjects should be led not by fear alone of princes and rulers to remain in subjection under them (as they commonly yield to an armed enemy who sees that vengeance is promptly taken if they resist), but because they are showing obedience to God himself when they give it to them; since the rulers' power is from God.

I am not discussing the men themselves, as if a mask of dignity covered foolishness, or sloth, or cruelty, as well as wicked morals full of infamous deeds, and thus acquired for virtues the praise of virtues; but I say that the order itself is worthy of such honor and reverence that those who are rulers are esteemed among us, and receive reverence out of respect for their lordship.

23. Obedience

"From this also something else follows: that, with hearts inclined to reverence their rulers, the subjects should prove their obedience toward them, whether by obeying their proclamations, or by paying taxes, or by undertaking public offices and burdens which pertain to the common defense, or by executing any other commands of theirs. "Let every soul," says Paul, "be subject to the higher powers. . . . For he who resists authority, resists what God has ordained." [Rom. 13:1-2, Vg.]" Remind them," he writes to Titus, "to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready for every good work." [Titus 3:1, cf. Vg.]

And Peter says, "Be subject to every human creature as to the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors who are sent through him to punish evil doers, but to praise doers of good." [1 Peter 2:13-14] Now, in order that they may prove that they are not pretending submission, but are sincerely and heartily subjects, Paul adds that they should commend to God the safety and prosperity of those under whom they live. "I urge," he says, "that applications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings, and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, with all godliness and honesty." [1 Tim. 2:1-2, cf. Vg.]

Let no man deceive himself here. For since the magistrate cannot be resisted without God being resisted at the same time, even though it seems that an unarmed magistrate can be despised with impunity, still God is armed to avenge mightily this contumacy toward himself.

Moreover, under this obedience I include the restraint which private citizens ought to bind themselves to keep in public, that they may not deliberately intrude in public affairs, or pointlessly invade the magistrate's office, or undertake anything at all politically. If anything in a public ordinance requires amendment, let them not raise a tumult, or put their hands to the task—all of them ought to keep their hands bound in this respect—but let them commit the matter to the judgment of the magistrate, whose hand alone here is free. I mean, let them not venture on anything without a command. For when the ruler gives his command, private citizens receive public authority. For as the counselors are commonly called the ears and eyes of the prince, so may one reasonably speak of those whom he has appointed by his command to do things, as the hands of the prince.

24. Obedience is also due the unjust magistrate

"But since we have so far been describing a magistrate who truly is what he is called, that is, a father of his country, and as the poet expresses it, shepherd of his people, guardian of peace, protector of righteousness, and avenger of innocence—he is Calvin's rendering here of 1 Peter 2:13-14 differs considerably from Vg. and in less degree from his own Latin text in the Commentary on 1 Peter. Cf. Geneva Bible and KJV.

Xenophon, Cyropedia. VIII. ii. 20 [LCL. edition. II. 296 f.]:

Homer, Odyssey ii. 413: Odysseus is "gentle as a father to his people" (LCL. Odyssey 2, 24 f., Secunda uses the expression pater patriae in De clementia I. xiv. 7 [LCL. edition, pp. 398 f.]; Calvin, Comm. Sermo De clementia I. xiv (CR V. 246).

Homer, Iliad ii. 245: Agamemnon is "a shepherd of his people" (LCL. Iliad I. 68 f.); Cicero, Pro Sexto xxx. 63 (LCL. edition, pp. 172 f.). Quintilian, in Institutes of Oratory VIII. vii. 17. 18 (LCL. Quinctilian III. 314 f.), cautions against this trite metaphor in pleading a cause.
who does not approve of such government must rightly be regarded as insane.

But it is the example of nearly all ages that some princes are careless about all those things to which they ought to have given heed, and, far from all care, lazily take their pleasure. Others, intent upon their own business, put up for sale laws, privileges, judgments, and letters of favor. Others drain the common people of their money, and afterward lavish it on insane largesse. Still others exercise sleek robbery, plundering houses, raping virgins and matrons, and slaughtering the innocent.

Consequently, many cannot be persuaded that they ought to recognize these as princes and to obey their authority as far as possible. For in such great disgrace, and among such crimes, as alien to the office not only of a magistrate but also of a man, they discern no appearance of the image of God which ought to have alone in the magistrate: while they see no trace of that minister of God, who had been appointed to give the good, and to punish evil [cf. 1 Peter 2:14, 15]. Thus, they also do not recognize as ruler him whose dignity and authority Scripture commends to us. Indeed, this inborn feeling has always been in the minds of men to hate and curse tyrants as much as to love and venerate lawful kings.

25. The wicked ruler a judgment of God*

But if we look to God's Word, it will lead us farther. We are not only subject to the authority of princes who perform their office toward us uprightly and faithfully as they ought, but also to the authority of all who, by whatever means, have got control of affairs, even though they perform not a whit of the princes' office. For despite the Lord's testimony that the magistrate's office is the highest gift of his beneficence to preserve the safety of men, and despite his appointment of bounds to the magistrates—he still declares at the same time that whoever they may be, they have their authority solely from him. Indeed, he says that those who rule for the public benefit are true pattern and evidences of this beneficence of his; that they who rule unjustly and incompetently have been raised up by him to punish the wickedness of the people; that all equally have been endowed with that holy majesty with which he has invested lawful power.

I shall proceed no farther until I have added some sure testimonies of this thing. Yet, we need not labor to prove that a wicked king is the Lord's wrath upon the earth [Job 34:30, Vg. Hos. 13:11; Isa. 31:4; 10:5; Deut. 28:29], for I believe no man will contradict me; and thus nothing more would be said of a king than of a robber who seizes your possessions, of an adulterer who pollutes your marriage bed, or of a murderer who seeks to kill you. For Scripture reckons all such calamities among God's curses.

But let us, rather, pause here to prove this, which does not so easily settle in men's minds. In a very wicked man utterly unworthy of all honor, provided he has the public power in his hands, that noble and divine power resides which the Lord has by his Word given to the ministers of his justice and judgment. Accordingly, he should be held in the same reverence and esteem by his subjects, in so far as public obedience is concerned, in which they would hold the best of kings if he were given to them.

36. Obedience to bad kings required in Scripture*

“First, I should like my readers to note and carefully observe that providence of God, which the Scriptures with good reason so often recall to us, and its special operation in distributing kingdoms and appointing what kings he pleases. In Daniel, the Lord changes times and succession of times, removes kings and sets them up [Dan. 2:21, 27]. Likewise: “to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will” [Dan. 4:17; cf. ch. 4:14, Vg.]. Although Scripture everywhere abounds with such passages, this prophecy particularly swarms with them. Now it is well enough known what kind of king Nebuchadnezzar was, who conquered Jerusalem—a strong invader and destroyer of others. Nevertheless, the Lord declares in Ezekiel that He has given him the land of Egypt for the service he had done him in devastating it [Ezek. 19:9–20]. And Daniel said to him: “You, O king, are a king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, powerful, mighty, and glorious; to you, I say, he has given also all lands where the sons of men dwell, beasts of the forest and birds of the air: these he has given into your hand and made you rule over them” [Dan. 2:37–38, cf. Vg.]. Again, Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar’s son Belshazzar: “The Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar, your father, kingship and magnificence, honor and glory: and because of the magnificence that he gave him, all peoples, tribes, and tongues trembled and feared before him” [Dan. 5:18–19, cf. Vg.]. When we hear that a king has been ordained by God, let us at once call to mind those heavenly edicts with regard to honoring and fearing a king: then we shall not hesitate to hold a most wicked tyrant in the place where the Lord
that it is unfair that we should show ourselves subjects to him who, on his part, does not show himself a king to us.\textsuperscript{30}

28. General testimonies of Scripture on the sanctity of the royal person

"It is vain for anyone to object that that command was peculiar to the Israelis. For we must note with what reason the Lord confirms it: "I have given," he says, "the kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar." [Jer. 27:6, cf. Vg.]. "Therefore, serve him and live." [Jer. 27:17, cf. Vg.]. Let us not doubt that we ought to serve him to whom it is evident that the kingdom has been given. And when once the Lord advances any man to kingly rank, he attests to us his determination that he would have him reign. For there are general testimonies of Scripture concerning this, Solomon, in the twenty-eighth chapter of The Proverbs, says: "Because of the iniquity of the land there are many princes." [Prov. 28:2 p.]. Likewise, the twelfth chapter of Job: "He takes away subjection from kings, and girds them again with a girdle." [Job 12:18 p.]. Once this has been admitted, nothing remains but that we should serve and live.

In Jeremiah the prophet, there is also another command of the Lord by which he enjoins his people to seek the peace of Babylon, where they have been sent as captives, and to pray for the Lord on its behalf, for in its peace will be their peace [Jer. 29:7]. Behold, the Israelites, divested of all their possessions, driven from their homes, led away into exile, and cast into piti- able bondage, are commanded to pray for the prosperity of their conqueror—not as we are commanded in other passages to pray for our persecutors [cf. Matt. 5:44], but in order that his kingdom may be preserved safe and peaceful, that under him they too may prosper. So David, already designated king by God's ordination and anointed with his holy oil, when he was persecuted by Saul without deserving it, still regarded the head of his assailant as inviolable, because the Lord had sanctified it with the honor of the kingdom. "The Lord forbid," he said, "that I should do this thing before the face of the Lord, my God, and the king's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, since he is the Lord's anointed." [I Sam. 24:6, cf. Vg.]. Again: "My soul has spared you; and I have said, I shall not put forth my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed." [I Sam. 25:11, cf. Vg.]. Again: "Who will

\textsuperscript{30}Zwingli, Auslegung und Gründe der Schlaussauren (1525), art. xiii (CR Zwingli II. 541 f.); cf. H. Strohl, "Le Droit à la résistance d'après les conceptions protestantes," Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses X (1900), 129–144.
put forth his hand against the anointed of the Lord and be inno-
cent? ... The Lord lives; unless the Lord strike him, or the day
come for him to die, or he fall in battle, the Lord forbid that I
should put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed” [1 Sam. 15:9-11, cf. Vg].

29. It is not the part of subjects but of God to vindicate the
right.*

*We owe this attitude of reverence and therefore of piety to
ward all our rulers in the highest degree, whatever they may be
like. I therefore the more often repeat this: that we should learn
not to examine the men themselves, but take it as enough that
they bear, by the Lord's will, a character upon which he has
imprinted and engraved an inviolable majesty.

But (you will say) rulers owe responsibilities in turn to their
subjects. This I have already admitted. But if you conclude from
this that service ought to be rendered only to just governors, you
are reasoning foolishly. For husbands are also bound to their
wives, and parents to their children, by mutuel responsibilities.
Suppose parents and husbands depart from their duty. Suppose
parents show themselves so hard and intractable to their children,
whom they are forbidden to provoke to anger [Eph. 6:4], that by
their rigor they tire them beyond measure. Suppose husbands
most despitably use their wives, whom they are commanded to love
[Eph. 5:25] and to spare as weaker vessels [1 Peter 3:7]. Shall
either children be less obedient to their parents or wives to their
husbands? They are still subject even to those who are wicked and
unrightful.

Indeed, all ought to try not to “look at the bag hanging from
their back,”* that is, not to inquire about another's duties, but
every man should keep in mind that one duty which is his own.
This ought particularly to apply to those who have been put
under the power of others. Therefore, if we are cruelly tormented
by a savage prince, if we are greedily despoiled by one who is
avaricious or wanton, if we are neglected by a slothful one, if
finally we are vexed for piety's sake by one who is impius and
sacrilegious, let us first be mindful of our own misdeeds, which
without doubt are chastised by such whips of the Lord [cf. Dan.
9:7]. By this, humility will restrain our impatience. *Let us then
also call this thought to mind, that it is not for us to remedy such

* Cf. Caesius xxii. 31: “Sed non viderimus sanctae quodd in tergo est” (LCL.
reflecting Asopus's fable of the two wallets, the one in view containing the
gifts of others, the one unseen, our own.

30. When God intervenes, it is sometimes by unavailing agents.*

*Here are revealed his goodness, his power, and his providence.
For sometimes he raises up open avengers from among his serv-
ts and arms them with his command to punish the wicked
and deliver his people, oppressed in unjust ways, from miserable calamities. Sometimes he directs to this end the rage of men who intend one thing and undertake another. Thus he delivered the people of Israel from the tyranny of Pharaoh through Moses [Ex. 5:7-10], from the violence of Chusan, king of Syria, through Othniel [Judg. 3:9], and from other scourges through other kings or judges. But thus he tamed the pride of Tyre by the Egyptians, the insolence of the Egyptians by the Assyrians, the fierceness of the Assyrians by the Chaldeans; the arrogance of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, after Cyrus had already subjugated the Medes. The ungratefulness of the kings of
Judah and Israel and their impious obstinacy toward his
many benefits, he sometimes by the Assyrians, sometimes by the
Babylonians, crushed and afflicted—although not all in the same
way.

For the first kind of men, when they had been sent by God's
lawful calling to carry out such acts, in taking up arms against
kings, did not at all violate that majesty which is implanted in
kings by God's ordination; but, armed from heaven, they sub-
ded the lesser power with the greater, just as it is lawful for
kings to punish their subalternates. But the latter kind of men,
although they were directed by God's hand whither he pleased,
and executed his work unwittingly, yet planned in their minds
to do nothing but an evil act.

* To this point Calvin has recommended to those under bad rulers only pa-
tience and prayer. The previous sentences evidently reflect conditions in
France at the time of writing (1555). The hope of relief, from divine inter-
tension and human agency, will now find vigorous expression.
31. Constitutional defenders of the people's freedom

But however these deeds of men are judged in themselves, still he broke the bloody scepters of arrogant kings and when he opened turned intolerable governments. Let the princes hear and fear.

But we must, in the meantime, be very careful not to despise or violate that authority of magistrates, full of venerable majesty, which God has established by the weakest decrees, even through it may reside with the most unwise men, who define it as much as they can with their own wickedness. For, if the correction of unbridled disposition is the Lord's to avenge, let us not at once think that it is entrusted to us, to whom no command has been given except to obey and suffer.

"Audiant principes, et teerrorere"—a startling and powerful phrase: but it does not threaten revolution. It is God that princes are to fear.

This pakced sentence, which was to prove powerfully influential, deserved close attention. See especially Dacier's, Calvin's letters, and comments, chap. pp. 477–495. It is of interest that Zwilling, in his treatise Der Hut (The Hat) (1343), states that as the Spartans had their ephors, the Romans their tribunes, and the German towns their guild masters, with authority to check the higher rulers, so God has provided pastors to stand on guard for the people (CR Zwilling III. 36). This passage may have been known to Calvin, though indirectly, since it was in German. From his reiterated warnings against tyranny to tyrants by "private persons," Calvin turns here with startling abruptness to approve, and solemnly urge, action by a constituted magistracy to protect the liberties of the people. As historical examples of such a "proper magistracy," he cites, with some justification, the ephors of Sparta, the tribunes of Rome, and the demarches of Athens, who were all elected to office by annual popular vote. See, especially, M. D. "Videm manus opulitios status populi creavit omnium subjugas pastoris." Kingship by hereditary right does not seem to be in accordance with liberty; a well-ordered government is one derived from the general vote, "omnium omnium subjugas" (CR XLI. 37). Perhaps, he says here, there is a parallel in the three existes of modern nations. The "perhaps" is natural for his own France where, when he wrote this, the estates had not met for thirty years, and had still not met when he repeated it in 1539. He must have been aware that nearly all other national governments, from Spain to Norway, had representative bodies or parliaments more or less effective and regularly functioning, capable of acting to restrain monarchal absolutism of any tyranny. Calvin seems to be summoning them to assume the duty of caring for the people's interests, and preserving to the people the "inevitable bond of the estates" (1554: XXV. 283, M. D. "Magnis, The Democratic Element in Calvin's Thought," Church History XVII (1946), pp. 165–196, and the studies there cited. The demand for a meeting of the estates of France became characteristic of Huguenot political writings such as the Frures-Galles of Calvin's friend, Francis Homann (1577, tr. Lord Mote, ad ed., 1742), the Defence Against the Prince (1559) by "Tenuis Bonstati"—probably a joint work of Hubert Languet and Philipp du Plessis-Mornier.

I am speaking all the while of private individuals. For if there are now any magistrates of the people, appointed to restrain the willfulness of kings (as in ancient times the ephors were set against the Spartan kings, or the tribunes of the people against the Roman consuls, or the demarches against the senate of the Athenians; and perhaps, as things now are, such power as the three estates exercise in every realm when they hold their chief assemblies), I am so far from forbidding them to withstand, in accordance with their duty, the fierce licentiousness of kings, that, if they wink at kings who violently fall upon and assault the lowly common folk, I declare that their dictatorship involves nefarious perils, because they dishonestly betray the freedom of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by God's ordinance.

(English edition, ed. H. Laski), and Pierre Judin's Sights of Enslaved France aspiring Toward Liberty (1889–1899). The influence of this passage can also be traced in John Milton's radical Short Treatise of Politic Power (1650, see W. S. Hudson's edition in George Buchanan's De rege regni scotici Politicis methodibus digitorum, 1630), develops the main political conceptions of Calvin; see especially the Harvard lectures of P. S. Gerthausen, National and International Stability: Athens, Geneva, Van Fleet House. The position of John Knox is well illustrated in his History of the Reformation in Scotland in the account of his debate with Lethington, 1564, in which Knox cited the Magdeburg Union ("Apologie of Amstoy") issued in its resistance to a ruler who violates the law of God. The Dominican thesis, which Craig had heard successfully defended at the University of Bologna, in more feudal terms declares that "all rulers, whether supreme or inferior, ought to be reformed or deposed" when they violate their own promises to their subjects. Knox, in using the Magdeburg document, was in effect reaffirming a uncompromising doctrine of resistance that had been expressed in his pamphlets On the Monarchical Regimen of Women (1558). Elizabeth I came to the throne when this fiery pamphlet was newly published, and it was a cause of her alienation from Geneva. Calvin's embarrassment over this incident is shown in his letter to Cecil (winter, 1559) in which he disapproves the pamphlet and disclaims any prior knowledge of it (Oeuvres Leters, 32, pp. 104–105), and M. D. in his book, "Le Droit à la résistance," pp. 135 et seq. In general, Calvin carefully guards against any endorsement of popular revolutionary action, but in some instances his language is less guarded. See, for example, his Comm. Daniel (1579), lecture xxx, on Ben. 5:24, where he says: "For earthly princes lay aside their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy to be reckoned among the number of mankind. We ought, rather, surely, to defy them [commune in ipsum capitum, &c., "to spit on their heads"] than to obey them." (CR XIII, 96).
32. Obedience to man must not become disobedience to God.

But in that obedience which we have shown to be due to the authority of rulers, we are always to make this exception, indeed, to observe it as primary, that such obedience is never to lead us away from obedience to him, to whose will the desires of all kings ought to be subject, to whose decrees all their commands ought to yield, to whose majesty their scepters ought to be submitted. And how absurd would it be in satisfying men you should incur the displeasure of him for whose sake you obey them themselves! The Lord, therefore, is the King of Kings, who, when he has opened his sacred mouth, must alone be heard, before all and above all men; next to him we are subject to those men who are in authority over us, but only in him. If they command anything against him, let it go unheeded. And here let us not be concerned about all that dignity which the magistrates possess; for no harm is done to it when it is humbled before that singular and truly supreme power of God. On this consideration, Daniel denies that he has committed any offense against the king when he has not obeyed his impious edict [Dan. 6:22-25, Vg.]. For the king had exceeded his limits, and had not only been a wrongdoer against men, but, in lifting up his horns against God, had himself abrogated his power. Conversely, the Israelites are condemned because they were too obedient to the wicked proclamation of the king [Hos. 5:13]. For when Jeroboam molded the golden calves, they, to please him, forsook God's Temple and turned to new superstitions [I Kings 12:30]. With the same readiness, their descendants complied with the decrees of their kings. The prophet sharply reproaches them for embracing the king's edicts [Hos. 5:11]. Far, indeed, is the pretense of modesty from deserving praise, a false modesty with which the court flatters themselves and deceive the simple, while they deny that it is lawful for them to refuse anything imposed by their kings. As if God had made over his right to mortal men, giving them the rule over mankind! Or as if earthly power were diminished when it is subjected to its Author, in whose presence even the heavenly powers tremble as suppliants! I know with what great and present peril this constancy is menaced, because kings bear

1520 INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION BOOK II

CH. XX MEANS OF GRACE: HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH 1521

defiance with the greatest displeasure, whose "wrath is a messenger of death" [Prov. 16:14], says Solomon. But since this edict has been proclaimed by the heavenly herald, Peter—"We must obey God rather than men" [Acts 5:29]—let us comfort ourselves with the thought that we are rendering that obedience which the Lord requires when we suffer anything rather than turn aside from piety. And that our courage may not grow faint, Paul pricks us with another goal: That we have been redeemed by Christ at so great a price as our redemption cost him, so that we should not enslave ourselves to the wicked desires of men—much less be subject to their impiety [I Cor. 7:23].

GOD BE PRaised