Government and politics

(a) Summa theologiae Ia 96: Concerning the dominion which belonged to man in the state of innocence

articulus 1: Whether men were equal in the state of innocence

It seems that all men were equal in the state of innocence.

objecio 1: For Gregory says: 'Where we do not sin, we are all equal.' But in the state of innocence there was no sin. Therefore all were equal.

objecio 2: Moreover, similarity and equality are the basis of mutual love, according to Ecclesiasticus 13:19: 'Every beast loveth its like; so also every man him that is nearest to himself.' Now in that state there was among men abundant love, which is the bond of peace. Therefore all were equal in the state of innocence.

objecio 3: Moreover, when the cause ceases, the effect ceases also. But the inequality which now exists among men seems to arise, on the side of God, from the fact that He rewards some and punishes others; and, on the side of nature, from the fact that some are born weak and disadvantaged by some defect of nature, whereas others are strong and perfect. But this would not have been so in the primitive state.

sed contra: It is said at Romans 13:1 that the things which come from God are ordered. But order seems to consist especially in disparity; for Augustine says: 'Order is the disposition of equal and unequal things in such a way as to give to each its proper place.' Therefore in the primitive

1 This question has four articles, the first two of which are: 'Whether man in the state of innocence was lord of the animals'; and 'Whether man was lord of all other creatures'.
2 I.e. would all men have been equal had the Fall not occurred?
3 De civitate Dei 14:3.
4 De civitate Dei 14:3.
state, in which everything was entirely proper, there would have been found disparity.

responsum: It is necessary to say that in the primitive state there would have been some disparity, at least as regards sex, because without diversity of sex there would be no generation; and similarly as regards age, for some would have been born of others; nor were those who mated sterile. Moreover, as regards the soul, there would have been diversity in the matter of righteousness and knowledge. For man worked not of necessity, but by the free will which equips the man who has it to apply his mind either more or less to the doing or willing or understanding of something. Hence some would have become more proficient in righteousness and knowledge than others.

There might have been bodily disparity also. For the human body was not so totally exempt from the laws of nature as not to receive from external sources varying degrees of advantage and help; for its life also was sustained by food. And so nothing prevents us from saying that, according to the different dispositions of the air and the different positions of the stars, some would have been born more robust in body than others, and greater and more beautiful and more fair; although even in those who were surpassed in these respects, there would have been no defect or sin either in soul or body.

ad 1: By these words Gregory intends to exclude the disparity which exists as between righteousness and sin from which it comes about that some persons are made subject to the coercion of others as a punishment.

ad 2: Equality is the cause of equality in mutual love. Yet there can be greater love between unequals than between equals, even if not an equal reciprocation. For a father naturally loves his son more than a brother loves his brother, although the son does not love his father as much as he is loved by him.

ad 3: The cause of disparity could lie on the side of God (even in the state of innocence): not, indeed, because He would punish some and reward others, but because He might exalt some above others, so that the beauty of order might shine forth all the more brightly among men. Disparity might arise also on the side of nature in the manner

1 i.e. he does not mean to say that where there is no sin there is no inequality, but that such inequality as there is is not penal.

2

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described in the body of the article, without there being any defect of nature.

articulus 4: Whether in the state of innocence man would have had dominion over man.

It seems that in the state of innocence man would not have had dominion over man.

objecio 1: For Augustine says at De civitate Dei 19: 'God did not intend that His rational creature, made in His own image, should have lordship over any but irrational creatures: not man over man, but man over the beasts.'

objecio 2: Moreover, that which was introduced as a punishment for sin would not have existed in the state of innocence. But the fact that man is subject to man was introduced as a punishment for sin. For after sin it was said to the woman (Genesis 3:16): 'Thou shalt be under thy husband's power.' Therefore in the state of innocence man would not have been subject to man.

objecio 3: Moreover, subjection is opposed to liberty. But liberty is one of the foremost blessings, and would not have been lacking in the state of innocence, where, as Augustine says at De civitate Dei 14, 'nothing was absent that a good will might seek.' Therefore man would not have had dominion over man in the state of innocence.

sed contra: The condition of man in the state of innocence was not more exalted than the condition of the angels. But among the angels some have dominion over others, and so one order is called 'Dominations.' Therefore it was not contrary to the dignity of the state of innocence that one man should be ruled by another.

responsum: 'Dominion' is understood in two ways. In one way, it is contrasted with servitude; and so a master [dominus] in this sense is one to whom someone is subject as a slave. In another way, dominion is understood as referring in a general way to [the rule of] any kind of subject

De civitate Dei 19:15.

2 De civitate Dei 14:10.

3 Cf. Colossians 2:16; Ephesians 1:21. The earliest and most influential Christian treatise on the 'orders' of the angels is P. Irenaeus, Deiei katharaka (PG 5); and see Porphyry Dionysius: the Complete Works, ed. and trans. C. Luethbli et al. (New York, 1975). For St Thomas's discussion of the angelic orders see IIa Idf. 86.
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whichever; and in this sense even he who has the office of governing and directing free men can be called a master. In the first sense, therefore, one man could not have had dominion over other men in the state of innocence; but, in the second sense, one man could have had dominion over others even in the state of innocence. The reason for this is that a slave differs from a free man in that the latter 'exists for his own sake', as is said at the beginning of the Metaphysics, whereas a slave is subordinated to another. One man is therefore the master of another as his slave when he treats the one whose master he is as a means to his own — that is, to the master's — advantage. And since every man's proper good is desirable to himself, and, consequently, it is a sorrowful thing to anyone to cede to another a good which ought to be his own, therefore such dominion cannot exist without pain on the part of the subject; and so such dominion could not have existed in the state of innocence as between one man and another.

On the other hand, one man is the master of another as a free subject when he directs him either towards his own good, or towards the common good. And such dominion would have existed in the state of innocence between man and man, for two reasons. First, because man is by nature a social animal, and so in the state of innocence would have lived a social life. But there cannot be social life among a multitude of people save under the direction of someone who is to look to the common good; for many, as such, seek many things, whereas one attends only to one. And so the philosopher says at the beginning of the Politics that wherever many things are directed to one end, there is always found one at the head, directing them. Second, if one man were pre-eminent over all the others in knowledge and righteousness, it would be inconsistent with the idea of moral pre-eminence for such pre-eminence not to be directed to the benefit of others, according to 1 Peter 4:10: 'As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another.' Hence Augustine says at De Civitate Dei 19: 'For it is not out of any desire for mastery that just men command; rather they do so from a dutiful concern for others.' And: 'This is prescribed by the order of nature: it is thus that God created man.'

By this are shown the replies to all the objections which proceeded from the first mode of dominion.

De regimine principum

(b) The treatise 'De regimine principum' or 'De regno'

Preface

The author sets forth his intention in writing to the king of Cyprus. As I considered with myself what I should undertake that would be worthy of royal majesty and in keeping with my calling and office, it occurred to me that what I might offer a king above all would be a book written on the subject of kingship, in which I should, to the best of my powers, diligently draw out both the origin of a kingdom and what pertains to the king's office, according to the authority of Divine scripture, the teachings of the philosophers, and the examples given by those who praise princes, relying for the beginning, progression and completion of the work upon the aid of Him Who is King of kings and Lord of lords, by Whom kings reign; the Lord, 'a great God, and a great King above all gods' (Psalm 95:3).

Book 1

Chapter 1: That it is necessary for men who live together to be subject to diligent rule by someone

To fulfill this intention, we must begin by explaining how the title 'king' is to be understood. Now in all cases where things are directed towards some end but it is possible to proceed in more than one way, it is necessary for there to be some guiding principle, so that the due end may be properly achieved. For example, a ship is driven in different directions according to the force of different winds, and it will not reach its final destination except by the industry of the steersman who guides it into port. Now man has a certain end towards which the whole of his life and activity is directed; for a creature who acts by intelligence, it is clearly his nature to work towards some end. But men can proceed towards that end in different ways, and the very diversity of human efforts and activities shows. Man therefore needs something to guide him towards his end.

Now each man is imbued by nature with the light of reason, and he is directed towards his end by its action within him. If it were proper for man to live in solitude, as many animals do, he would need no other guide towards his end; for each man would then be a king unto himself, under God, the supreme King, and would direct his own actions by the light of reason divinely given to him. But man is by nature a social and
political animal, who lives in a community (in multitudine vivens).\textsuperscript{17} More so, indeed, than all other animals; and natural necessity shows why this is so. For other animals are furnished by nature with food, with a covering of hair, and with the means of defence, such as teeth, horns or at any rate speed in flight. But man is supplied with none of these things by nature. Rather, in place of all of them reason was given to him, by which he might be able to provide all things for himself, by the work of his own hands.\textsuperscript{18}

One man, however, is not able to equip himself with all these things, for one man cannot live a self-sufficient life. It is therefore natural for man to live in fellowship with many others. Moreover, other animals are endowed with a natural awareness of everything which is useful or harmful to them. For example, the sheep naturally judges the wolf to be an enemy. Some animals even have a natural awareness which enables them to recognise certain medicinal plants and other things as being necessary to their lives. Man, however, has a natural understanding of the things necessary to his life only in a general way, and it is by the use of reason that he passes from universal principles to an understanding of the particular things which are necessary to human life. But it is not possible for one man to apprehend all such things by reason. It is therefore necessary for man to live in a community, so that each man may devote his reason to some particular branch of learning: one to medicine, another to something else, another to something else again. And this is shown especially by the fact that only man has the capacity to use speech, by means of which one man can reveal the whole content of his mind to another.\textsuperscript{19} Other animals express their feelings to each other in a general way, as when a dog shows his anger by barking and the other animals show their feelings in various ways; but one man is more able to communicate with another than any other animal is, even those which are seen to be Gregarious, such as cranes, ants and bees.\textsuperscript{20} Solomon, therefore, is thinking of this at Ecclesiastes 4:9 where he says: "Two are better than one, because they have the reward of mutual companionship."

\textsuperscript{17} Aristotle, Politics 1.2 (1223a). St Thomas’ ‘man is by nature a social and political animal’ – Naturale animae est bonum in animae sociali et politicae – is taken from William of Murchesh’s Latin translation of the Politics. On the whole it conveys the meaning of Aristotel’s δυνατοσ γίνεσαι πάντων γαρ τον καλότερον την λογικήν ‘political animal’ would. See above, n. 4. ‘Community’ is probably as close as one can get to what St Thomas usually means by multitude.

\textsuperscript{18} Aristotle, De partibus animae 4.10 (692a25).

\textsuperscript{19} Aristotle, Politics 1.2 (1223a).

\textsuperscript{20} Aristotle, Historie animalium 11:2 (881a10).
members of the body there is one ruling part, either the heart or the head, which moves all the others. 45 It is fitting, therefore, that in every multitude there should be some ruling principle. 46

Chapter II: The various forms of leadership or government

But where matters are directed towards some end, there may be one way of proceeding which is right and another which is not right; and so we find that the government of a community can be directed both rightly and not rightly. 47 Now something is directed rightly when it is led to its proper end, and not rightly when it is led to an end which is not proper to it. But the end proper to a community of free men is different from that of slaves. For a free man is one who is the master of his own actions, whereas a slave, insofar as he is a slave, is the property of another. 48 If, therefore, a community of free men is ordered by a ruler in such a way as to secure the common good, such rule will be right and just inasmuch as it is suitable to free men. If, however, the government is directed not towards the common good but towards the private good of the ruler, rule of this kind will be unjust and perverted; 49 and such rulers are warned by the Lord at Ezekiel 34:2, where He says: 'Woe to the shepherds that do feed themselves—because they seek only gain for themselves...'. Should not the shepherds feed the flock? Shepherds must seek the good of their flock, and all rulers the good of the community subject to them.

If, therefore, government is exercised unjustly by one man alone, who, in ruling, seeks gain for himself and not the good of the community subject to him, such a ruler is called a tyrant, a name derived from [the Greek word τυράννος, which means] 'force', because he oppresses with power, and does not rule with justice. 50 Hence, among the ancients all men of power were called 'tyrants'. 51 If, however, unjust government is exercised not by one but by several, when this is done by a few it is called 'oligarchy', that is, 'rule by the few'; and this comes about when, by reason of their wealth, the few oppress the people, and it differs from tyranny only with respect to number. Again, if wrongful government is exercised by the many, this is named 'democracy', that is, 'rule by the people'; and this comes about when the common people oppress the rich by force of numbers. In this way the whole people will be like a single tyrant. Similarly, it is proper to distinguish the various kinds of just government. For if the administration is in the hands of a certain section of the community [oligarchia], as when the military class [multitude felix] governs a city or province, this is commonly called polity. If, again, administration is in the hands of a few but virtuous men, rule of this kind is called aristocracy: that is, 'the best rule', or 'rule of the best men' [politeia], who for this reason are called aristocrats [optimates]. And if just government belongs to one man alone, he is properly called a king. Hence the Lord, at Ezekiel 37:24, says: 'And David my servant shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd.' It is clearly shown by this verse that it is the nature of kingship that there should be one who rules, and that he should be a shepherd who seeks the common good and not his own gain. 52

Now since it is fitting for man to live in a community because he would not be able to provide all the necessities of life for himself were he to remain alone, it must be that a society of many men will be perfect to the extent that it is self-sufficient in the necessities of life. The self-sufficient life is certainly present to some extent in the family of one household, with respect, that is, to the natural activities of nourishment and the procreation of children and other things of this kind; and one locality may be sufficient in all those things belonging to a particular trade; and a city, which is a perfect [i.e. a complete] community, is sufficient in all the necessities of life. 53

45 Aristotle, Metaphysics 5.17 (1023b).
46 Cf. John of Salisbury, Poliorcetes 1.2.
47 Aristotle, Politics 1.6 (1219a1).
48 Aristotle, Metaphysics 11.2 (1070a1).
49 Aristotle, Politics 3.7 (1279a15); Plato, Laws 8.510c.
50 Aristotle, Politics 3.7 (1279a23); Plato, Laws 8.510d.
51 Baldov of Seville, Etymologiarum 9.3 (PL 83:424); although, like many medieval etymologies, this one is not correct.
52 Augustine, De civitate Dei 5.19.
53 This sentence does not lend itself to exact translation. In the context, I cannot use what oligarchia, 'a certain multitude', can mean other than 'a section of the community'. 'The military class' is a pretty free translation of multitude felix, but I could not think of a better way of conveying what St Thomas seems to mean. Aristotle's use of the word 'polity' is ambiguous, and Aquinas has inherited this ambiguity with the term. Aristotle's chief meaning seems to be rule by a fairly numerous middle class, because he thinks that a constitution midway between rule by the few and rule by the many will be most stable (cf. Politics 3.7 (1279a15); 6.5 (1293a5)); 7.11 (1293a5)). St Thomas here seems to be remembering the passage at Politics 3.7 (1279a15), where Aristotle says that the shared excellence of good government by the many is likely to be military and that the franchise will be related to the bearing of arms. One cannot help feeling that St Thomas has rather missed the point. That he refers to polity again at the beginning of ch. 8, as the good form of rule by the many.
54 The threshold classification of good and bad constitutional forms given here and in the preceding paragraph is derived from Aristotle's Politics 3.7 (1279a23).
55 Aristotle, Politics 1.2 (1212a26).
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But this is all the more true of a single province, because of the need for common defence and mutual assistance against enemies. Hence, he who rules a perfect community, that is, a city or province, is properly called a king; but he who rules a household is not a king, but the father of a family.

He does, however, bear a certain resemblance to a king, and for this reason kings are sometimes called the ‘fathers’ of their people.

From what we have said, therefore, it is clear that a king is one who rules over the community of a city or province, and for the common good.

Hence Solomon, in Ecclesiastes 5:8, says: “The king commands all the lands subject to him.”

Chapter ii: That it is more beneficial for a community of men living together to be ruled by one than by many. Having said these things, we must next ask whether it is more suitable for a province or city to be ruled by many or by one. This can be answered by considering the end of government itself. For it must be the task of anyone who exercises rule to secure the wellbeing of whatever it is that he rules. For example, it is the task of the steersman to preserve the ship from the perils of the sea and to guide it into a safe harbour. But the good and wellbeing of a community united in fellowship lies in the preservation of its unity. This is called peace, and when it is removed and the community is divided against itself, social life loses its advantage and instead becomes a burden. It is for this end, therefore, that the ruler of a community ought especially to strive: to procure the unity of peace. Nor may it be rightly wonder whether he ought to bring about peace in the community subject to him, any more than the physician should wonder whether he ought to heal the sick entrusted to him: for no one ought to deliberate about an end for which he must strive, but only about the means to that end. Thus the Apostle, commending the unity of the faithful people, says at Ephesians 4:3: ‘Be ye solicitous for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’ The more effectively government preserves the unity of peace, therefore, the more beneficial it is; for we call something ‘more beneficial’ when it leads more effectively to its end. Clearly, however, something which is itself one can bring about unity more effectively than something which is many can, just as the most

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effective cause of heat is that which is itself hot. Government by one is therefore more advantageous than government by several.

Moreover, it is clear that a plurality of rulers will in no way preserve a community if they are wholly at odds with one another. Some kind of unity is required as between a plurality of individuals if they are to govern anything whatsoever, just as a group of men in a boat cannot pull together as one unit unless they are in some measure united. But a plurality is said to be united to the degree that it approaches to one. It is therefore better for one to rule than many, who only approach to one.

Again, those things are best which are most natural, for in every case nature operates for the best; and in nature government is always by one. Among the multitude of the body’s members there is one part which moves all the others, namely, the heart; and among the parts of the soul there is one force, namely the reason, which Chiefly rules; also, there is one king of the bees, and in the whole universe one God is the Maker and Ruler of all. And this accords with reason, for every multitude is derived from unity. Thus, if those things which come about through art do so by imitation of those which exist in nature, and if a work of art is better to the degree that it achieves a likeness to what is in nature, it is necessarily true in the case of human affairs that that community is best which is ruled by one.

This appears also to be borne out by experience. For provinces or cities which are not ruled by one man are under dissensions and are tossed about without peace, so that the complaint which the Lord made through the prophet (Jeremiah 12:16) may be seen to be fulfilled: ‘Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard.’ By contrast, provinces and cities governed by a single king rejoice in peace, flourish in justice and are gladdened by an abundance of things. Hence the Lord promises His people through the prophets that, as a great gift, He will put them under one head and that there will be one prince in the midst of them.

Chapter vi: That just as the rule of one is the best when it is just, so its opposite is the worst; and this is proved by many reasons and arguments. But just as the rule of a king is the best, so the rule of a tyrant is the worst. Now
democracy is the opposite of polity, since, as is apparent from what has been said, rule is in each case exercised by the many; and oligarchy is the opposite of aristocracy, since in each case it is exercised by the few; and tyranny of kingship, since in each case it is exercised by one. But it has been shown already that kingship is the best form of government.⁴⁴ If, therefore, that which is the opposite of the best is the worst, tyranny is necessarily the worst.⁴⁵

Again, a power which is united is more efficient at bringing about its purposes than one which is dispersed or divided. For many men united at the same time can pull what no one of them would be able to pull if the group were divided into its individual parts. Therefore, just as it is more beneficial for a power which produces good to be more united, because in this way it is able to produce more good, so is it more harmful for a power which produces evil to be united than divided. But the power of an unjust ruler produces evil for the community inasmuch as it replaces the good of the community with a good peculiar to himself. Therefore, just as, in the case of good government, rule is more beneficial to the extent that the ruling power is more nearly one, so that kingship is better than aristocracy and aristocracy than polity; so the converse will be true in the case of unjust rule: that is, it will be more harmful to the extent that the ruling power is more nearly one. Tyranny is therefore more harmful than oligarchy and oligarchy than democracy.

Again, what renders government unjust is the fact that the private good of the ruler is sought at the expense of the good of the community. The further it departs from the common good, therefore, the more unjust will the government be. But there is a greater departure from the common good in an oligarchy, where the good of the few is sought, than in a democracy, where the good of the many is sought, and there is a still greater departure from the common good in a tyranny, where the good of only one is sought. A large number comes closer to the whole than a small one, and a small one closer than only one. Tyranny, therefore, is the most unjust form of government.

The same thing becomes clear from a consideration of the order of Divine providence, which disposes all things for the best. For goodness arises in things from one perfect cause, as from the working together of everything that can assist in the production of good; whereas evil arises

⁴⁴ Ch. iv and see n. 31.
⁴⁵ Ch. m.
⁴⁶ Aristotle, Ethic 8:10 (1660a).

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singly, from individual defects.⁴⁶ For there is no beauty in a body unless all its members are properly disposed, and ugliness arises when even one member is improperly so. And so ugliness arises for many reasons and from a variety of causes, whereas beauty does so in one way and from one perfect cause; and this is true in all cases of good and evil, as if it were by the providence of God that good should be the stronger because coming from a single cause, while evil should be the weaker because coming from many. It is fitting, therefore, that just government should be exercised by one man alone, so that it may for this reason be stronger. But if the government should fall away into injustice, it is more fitting that it should belong to many so that it may be weaker, and so that they may hinder one another. Among the forms of unjust rule, therefore, democracy is the most tolerable and tyranny is the worst.

The same conclusion is especially apparent if one considers the evils which arise from tyranny. For when the tyrant, despising the common good, seeks his own private good, the consequence is that he oppresses his subjects in a variety of ways, according to the different passions to which he is subject as he tries to secure whatever goods he desires. For one who is in the grip of the passion of greed will seize the property his subjects; hence Solomon says at Proverbs 29:4: 'The just king makes rich the earth, but the greedy man destroys it.' If he is subject to the passion of wrath, he will shed blood for no reason; hence it is said at Ezekiel 22:27: 'Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves raving their prey, to shed blood.' The wise man admonishes us that such rule is to be shunned, saying (Ecclesiasticus 4:13), 'Keep thee far from the man that hath power to kill': that is, because he kills not for the sake of justice, but through power and from the lust of his own will. There will, therefore, be no security, but all things uncertain, when the law is forsaken; nor will it be possible for any trust to be placed in that which depends upon the will, not to say the lust, of another. Nor does such rule oppress its subjects in bodily matters only, but it impedes them with respect to their spiritual goods also; for those who desire to rule their subjects rather than benefit them put every obstacle in the way of their progress, being suspicious of any excellence in their subjects that might threaten their own wicked rule. Tyrants 'suspect good men rather than bad, and are always afraid of another's virtue.'⁴⁷ Tyrants therefore endeavour to
poor people.' And so it is that men remove themselves from a tyrant as from cruel beasts, and to be subject to a tyrant seems the same as to be mated by a ferocious animal.

Chapter v: How varied the forms of government were among the Romans; and that their commonwealth sometimes prospered under the government of many. Because both the best and the worst can occur in a monarchy— that is, under government by one— the evil of tyranny has rendered the dignity of kingship odious to many. For sometimes those who desire to be ruled by a king fail victim instead to the savagery of tyrants, and a great many rulers have exerted tyrannical sway under the pretext of royal dignity. Clear examples of this appear in the case of the Roman commonwealth. For the kings were expelled by the Roman people when they could no longer bear the burden of their rule, or, rather, of their tyranny. They then instituted for themselves consuls and other magistrates by whom they commenced to be ruled and guided, wishing to exchange kingship for aristocracy; and, as Sallust remarks, ‘It is incredible to recall how swiftly the city of Rome grew once she had achieved her liberty.’ For it often happens that men living under a king are reluctant to exert themselves for the common good, no doubt supposing that whatever they do for the common good will not benefit them but someone else who is seen to have the goods of the community under his own power. But if no one person is seen to have such power, they no longer regard the common good as if it belonged to someone else, but each now regards it as his own experience therefore seems to show that a single city governed by rulers who hold office for one year only can sometimes accomplish more than a king can even if he has three or four cities, and that small services exacted by kings bear more heavily than great burdens imposed on itself by a community of citizens. This principle was exemplified during the emergence of the Roman commonwealth; for the common people were enlisted into the army and paid wages for military service, and when the common treasury was not sufficient to pay the wages, private wealth was put to public use to such an extent that not even the senators retained anything made of gold for themselves apart from one gold ring and one seal each, which were the insignia of their rank. Presently, however, the Romans became exhausted by the continual quarrels which eventually grew into civil wars, and the liberty which they had so striven to attain was then snatched from

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4. C. Ariado, Politeia 571 (112930).
5. Felix 13.5 (99900); 32.8 (111958).
6. Treadwell 3214.
their hands by those civil wars, and they began to be under the power of the emperors: who at first would not allow themselves to be called kings, because the name of king was odious to the Romans. Some of these emperors faithfully pursued the common good, as kings should, and the Roman commonwealth was increased and preserved by their efforts. Most of them, however, were tyrants to their subjects and weak and ineffective in the face of their enemies, and these brought the Roman commonwealth to naught.

A similar process occurred in the case of the people of the Hebrews. At first, while they were ruled by judges they were plundered on all sides by their enemies, for each man did only what was good in his own eyes. Then, at their own request, kings were divinely given to them, but because of the wickedness of the kings they fell away from the worship of the one God and finally were led away into captivity. Peril lurks on either side, therefore: either the best form of government, kingship, may be shunned because tyranny is feared, or, if the risk is considered worthwhile, royal power may change into a wicked tyranny.

Chapter vii: That tyrannical government more often arises from the rule of many than from that of one; and so government by one is better. Now when it is necessary to choose between two alternatives both of which involve danger, one should certainly choose that which is accompanied by the lesser danger. But if monarchy is changed into tyranny, less evil flows from this [change of change] than when the government of a number of the best men becomes corrupt. For the duration which often follows government by several persons is contrary to the good of peace, which is the foremost goal of any social community; but this is a good which is not taken away by tyranny, for the tyrant only takes away some of the goods of individual men—unless the tyranny is so excessive that it ravages the whole community. The rule of one is therefore to be preferred to that of many, though perils flow from each.

Again, it seems clear that we ought to avoid that alternative from which great danger is more likely to follow. But the greatest dangers to a community more often follow from the rule of many than from the rule of one. For where there are many it is likelier that one of them will fail to be concerned with the common good than where there is only one. And whenever one out of a number of governors ceases to labour for the common good, there arises a danger of disunion in the community of their subjects, for where

14 Judges 2:16; Samuel 12:16.

there is dissension among princes, a consequence of this is that dissension in the community may ensue. If, however, one man rules, he will more often attend to the common good, or, if he turns aside from the task of securing the common good, it does not immediately follow that he will set about oppressing his subjects and become an extreme tyrant, which, as we have shown above, is the worst kind of bad government. The perils which arise out of government by many are therefore more to be avoided than those which arise out of government by one.

Again, the rule of many turns into tyranny more rather than less frequently than that of one. For when dissension arises under the rule of several persons, it often happens that one man rises superior to the others and usurps to himself sole dominion over the community. This can plainly be seen to have happened from time to time, for in almost every case government by many has ended in tyranny, and this appears very clearly in the example of the Roman commonwealth. For when it had long been administered by several magistrates, there arose plots, dissensions and civil wars, and it fell victim to the most cruel tyrants. Indeed, if one gives diligent attention both to what has been done in the past and to what is being done now, it will be found universally that tyranny has been exercised more often in lands governed by many than in those governed by one. If, therefore, kingship, which is the best form of government, seems to be worthy of avoidance mainly because of the danger of tyranny, and if tyranny tends to arise not less but more often under the government of several, the straightforward conclusion remains that it is more advantageous to live under one king than under the rule of several persons.

Chapter viii: The conclusion is that the rule of one man is the best simply. It is shown how a community should conduct itself in relation to him as to remove the opportunity of his becoming a tyrant, but that even tyranny is to be tolerated for the sake of avoiding a greater evil. It is clear from what we have said, therefore, that the rule of one, which is the best, is to be preferred, but that it can turn into a tyranny, which is the worst. It is therefore necessary to labour with diligent care to provide the community with a king who is of such a kind that it will not fall victim to a tyrant. First, then, it is necessary that the character of the man elevated to kingship by those to whom the duty of doing this belongs should be such that it is not

15 Ch. iv. 16 Aristotle, Politics 5:10 (1310b14).
probable that he will decline into tyranny. Hence Samuel, commending God's providence in appointing a king, says, at 1 Samuel 13:14: "The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart." Next, once the king has been appointed, the government of the kingdom should be so arranged as to remove from the king the opportunity of becoming a tyrant; and, at the same time, his power should be restricted so that he will not easily be able to fall into tyranny. How these things can be done will have to be discussed in subsequent chapters. If, however, we must consider what should be done if the king does become a tyrant.

If, however, the tyranny is not excessive, it is more advantageous to tolerate a degree of tyranny for the time being than to take action against the tyrant and so incur many perils more grievous than the tyranny itself. For it may happen that those who take such action prove unable to prevail against the tyrant, and succeed only in provoking the tyrant to even greater savagery. Even when those who take action against a tyrant are able to overthrow him, this fact may in itself give rise to many very grave dissensions in the populace, either during the rebellion against the tyrant or because, after the tyrant has been removed, the community is divided into factions over the question of what the new ruling order should be. Again, it sometimes happens that a community expels a tyrant with the help of some other ruler who, having achieved power, snatches at tyranny himself and, fearing to suffer at the hands of another what he has himself done to another, forces his subjects into a slavery even more grievous than before. It is often true in cases of tyranny that a subsequent tyrant proves to be worse than his predecessor; for, while not undoing any of the troubles inflicted by his predecessor, he devises new ones of his own, out of the malice of his own heart. Thus, at a time when all the people of Syracuse desired the death of Dionysius, a certain old woman continually prayed that he would remain safe and sound and might outlive her. When the tyrant came to know of this, he asked her why she did it. She said to him: 'When I was a girl, we suffered the oppression of a tyrant, and I longed for his death. Then he was slain, but his successor was even harsher, and I thought it a great thing when his rule came to an end. But then we began to have a third ruler who was even more savage: you. And if you were to be taken from us, someone still worse would come instead.'

11 Sir Thomas discontinued the treatise before coming to any such discussion. His thoughts on this subject are given at lib. III (p. 327f below).

If, however, a tyranny were so extreme as to be intolerable, it has seemed to some that it would be an act consistent with virtue if the mightier men were to slay the tyrant, exposing themselves even to the peril of death in order to liberate the community. Indeed, we have an example of such a thing in the Old Testament. For a certain Eudal slew Egnol, king of Moab, with a dagger "fastened to his thigh," because he oppressed the people of God with a harsh bondage; and for this deed Eudal was made a judge of the people. But this is not consistent with apostolic doctrine. For Peter teaches us to be subject with all fear not only to good and gentle masters, but also to those who are ill disposed, 'For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully' (1 Peter 2:18f). Thus, when many Roman emperors tyrannically persecuted the faith of Christ, a great part of the community, both nobles and ordinary people, were converted to the faith and are now praised because, offering no resistance, they suffered death for Christ with patience and courage, as appears clearly in the case of the holy legion of Thessalonica. Moreover, Eudal should be adjudged to have slain an enemy of the people rather than a ruler, albeit a tyrannical one; and so also we read in the Old Testament that those who slew Josah the king of Judah were themselves slain (although their children were spared, according to the teaching of the law) even though he had turned aside from the worship of God. For it would be a perilous thing, both for a community and its rulers, if anyone could attempt to slay even tyrannical rulers simply on his own private presumption. Indeed, the wicked expose themselves to such peril more often than good men do. For the lordship of a just king is usually no less a burden to the wicked than that of a tyrant; for, according to the saying of Solomon at Proverbs 20:26: 'A wise king scattereth the wicked.' What is more likely to come of such presumption, therefore, is peril to the community through the loss of a king than relief through the removal of a tyrant.

It seems, then, that steps are to be taken against the scourge of tyranny not by the private presumption of any persons, but through public

12 I.e. the Roman legion consisting of 6,000 Christian soldiers martyred 22 Sept. 408 by the emperor Maxentius when they followed the example of their leader St Martin in refusing to sacrifice to idols. The legend is found at Aedas sanctae, Sept. vii. 896. It is preserved in a number of versions, the best known of which is that of St Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons (419-509). See NCE 14, 21: 'Theban Legion'.
13 a Kings 14:5f.
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First, of all, in cases where it belongs by right to a community to provide a ruler for itself, that community can without injustice depose or restrain a king whom it has appointed, if he should abuse royal power tyrannically. Nor should such a community be thought disloyal if it acts to depose a tyrant even if the community has already pledged itself to him in perpetuity; for the tyrant who has failed to govern the community faithfully, as the office of king requires, has deserved to be treated in this way. Thus the Romans who had accepted Tarquin the Proud as their king, then ejected him from the kingship because of his and his sons’ tyranny, and substituted a lesser power, that is, the consulate. So also Domitian, who succeeded the mildest of emperors, Vespasian, his father, and Titus, his brother, was slain by the Roman Senate when he exercised tyrannical power, and all the wicked things that he had inflicted upon the Romans were justly and wholesomey revokd and made void by decree of the Senate. Thus it came about that Blessed John the Evangelist, the beloved disciple of God, who had been sent away into exile on the island of Patmos by Domitian, was brought back to Ephesus by special senatorial decree.

If, however, the right to provide a community with a king belongs to some superior, then a remedy against the wickedness of a tyrant must be sought from him. Thus when Archelaus, who began to reign in Judea in place of his father Herod, imitated the wickedness of his father, the Jews made complaint against him to Augustus Caesar, by whom his power was at reduced, the title of king being removed from him and half his kingdom divided between his two brothers; then, when this did not keep his tyrannical behaviour in check, he was banished into exile by Tiberius Caesar to Lyons, a city of Gaul.

If, however, there can be no human aid at all against a tyrant, recourse must be had to God, the King of all, who is 'a refuge in time of trouble' (Psalm 9:9). For it is within His power to turn the heart of the cruel tyrant towards gentleness, according to what Solomon says at Proverbs 21:1: 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; He turneth it whithersoever He will.' He it was Who turned the cruelty of the king of the Assyrians to gentleness when he was preparing death for the Jews. He it was Who changed the cruel King Nebuchadnezzar so effectively that he became a proclaimer of the Divine might: 'Now,' he said, 'I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all Whose works are truth, and His ways judgement; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase' (Daniel 4:37). As for those tyrants whom He deems unworthy to be converted, He can remove them from our midst or reduce them to a lowly condition, according to what the wise man says (Ecclesiasticus 10:14): 'The Lord hath cast down the thrones of proud princes, and set up the meek in their stead.' He it is Who, seeing the affliction of His people in Egypt and hearing their cries, cast down the tyrant Pharaoh and his army into the sea. Not only did He eject the proud Nebuchadnezzar whom we have just mentioned from his kingdom, but He also drove him out from the company of men like a beast. Nor, indeed, is His hand now so weakened that He cannot set His people free from a tyrant. For He promised His people through Isaiah (14:3) that He would give them rest from their labour and confusion and from the harsh bondag in which they were served. And through Ezekiel (34:10) He said: 'I will deliver my flock from their mouth'—that is, from these shepherds who feed only themselves. But if men are to deserve such benefit from God they must cease from sin, because it is as a punishment for their sin that ungodly men are given power over them. For the Lord says through Hosea (13:11): 'I gave thee a king in mine anger'; and at Job 34:30 it is said that 'He maketh a man who is an hypocrite to rule because of the people's sins.' Guilt, therefore, must first be taken away, so that the scourge of tyranny may cease.

Chapter viii. The holy Doctor here asks whether honour or glory above all ought to animate a king in ruling; and he presents opinions as to what view should be held on this question. Since, then, according to what we have now said, it is the king’s task to seek the good of the community, and since the king’s duty would seem unshakably onerous if some good personal to himself were not provided in return, we must now consider what a suitable reward for a good king might be.

64 Cf. Hillel 42:2 ad 3 (p. 239, below); and Sicca super libros testamentorum I 244:24 (p. 72, below); and see Introduction, p. xxi.
66 Josephus, Bell. Judaica 1:6. But Josephus says that it was Augustus, not Tiberius, who exiled Archelaus, and that he was exiled to Vienne, not Lyons. St Thomas gets his—rather garbled—information here second-hand, from the Gnome ordinariae in Matthew 2:23 (PL 11:379). See Biographical Glossary, s. v. 'Archelaus'.
67 Daniel 4:8.
68 Esther 1:31.
69 Esther 1:31. 4:15, 4.
70 Daniel 4:8.
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It has seemed to some that this reward is nothing else than honour and glory. Hence Cicero asserts that "the ruler of a city should be flattered with glory." The reason for this seems to be indicated by Aristotle in the book Ethics: 'A ruler for whom honour and glory are not sufficient will in consequence become a tyrant.' For the desire to seek their own good is present in the souls of all men. If, therefore, the prince were not content with honour and glory, he would seek pleasure and riches, and so would fall to plundering and injuring his subjects.

If we accept this view, however, a number of unwelcome consequences follow. First, it would be too weighty a burden if kings were to undergo such great labour and anxiety for so fragile a reward. For there seems to be nothing in human affairs more fragile than the honour and glory bestowed by the favour of men, because these things depend upon human opinion, and there is nothing more changeable in the life of mankind. Thus it is that the prophet Isaiah (40:6) calls such glory "the flower of the field." Next, the desire for human glory takes away greatness of soul, for he who seeks the favour of men must necessarily subserve their wishes in everything that he says or does, and so, for as long as he strives to please men, he becomes the servant of each of them. For this reason the same Cicero in the book De officiis says that we should beware of the desire for glory, for it destroys that liberty of spirit which ought above all to be the goal of the great-souled man; and nothing is more fitting to a prince who is appointed to accomplish high and sacred purposes than greatness of soul. Human glory is therefore an unsuitable reward for the office of king.

Also, if such a reward is set before princes, this is at the same time harmful to the community. For it belongs to the duty of the good man to hold glory and other temporal goods in contempt. A man of virtue and strength of soul ought to despise glory, and indeed life itself, for the sake of justice; and hence arises the remarkable conclusion that, while glory follows virtuous acts, it is in itself a virtuous act to despise glory, and that a man is rendered more glorious by his contempt for glory, according to the opinion of Fabius, who says: 'He shall find true glory who despises it;' and Sallust said of Cato: 'The less he sought glory the more it followed him;' and, again, the disciples of Christ showed themselves

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to be ministers of God in both glory and shame, in disgrace and good reputation alike. That glory which good men despise is therefore not a suitable reward for the good man. If, then, it were the only reward appointed for good princes, it would follow that good men would not allow themselves to be made princes or, if they did, would do so unrewarded.

Moreover, dangerous evils arise from the desire for glory. For many have brought the liberty of their fatherland under the power of an enemy when they have sought inordinate glory in the commerce of war and have perished along with their army. Hence Torquatus, a prince of Rome, wishing to show how important it is to avoid such danger, slew his own son who, even though he had triumphed over an enemy, had in the ardour of youth been goaded into fighting against orders. He did this lest more evil should come from the example of disobedience than benefit from the glory of slaying an enemy. There is another vice closely related to the desire for glory, namely, dissimulation. For it is difficult to pursue those true virtues to which alone honour is due, and few manage to do so; but, desiring glory, many pretend to be virtuous. In this way, as Sallust says, 'Ambition has made many a mortal false. They have one thing shut up in their bosom, but another ready on their tongue, and they have more appearance than prowess.' But our Saviour Himself calls such people hypocrites, that is, dissimulators, who do good that they may be seen by men. Therefore, just as it is perilous for the community if the prince should seek pleasure and wealth as his rewards and so become predatory and overbearing, so also is it perilous when the love of glory has him in its grip and he therefore becomes presumptuous and deceitful.

As to the sayings of the wise, therefore, it is clear that they wish to suggest not that honour and glory are the reward of the prince as if these things were to be sought as the chief goal of the good king, but that it is at all events more tolerable for him to seek glory than to desire riches or pursue pleasure. For this vice is closer to virtue because, as Augustine says, the glory which men desire is nothing more than the judgment of men when they think well of their fellows. The desire for glory therefore has some vestige of virtue about it, inasmuch as it does at any rate seek to

11 Augustine, De civitate Dei 5:12.
12 De officiis 5:790; Augustine, De civitate Dei 5:13.
14 De officiis 1:1061.
15 Livy 51:23.
16 Sallust, Bellum Gallicum 54; Augustine, De civitate Dei 5:12.
17 Augustine, De civitate Dei 5:18.
18 Bellum Gallicum 105.
19 Matthew 6:5.
20 I.e. the statements of Cicero and Aristotle quoted in the second paragraph of this chapter.
21 De civitate Dei 5:12.
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win the approval of good men and to avoid displeasing them. Given that so few achieve true virtue, therefore, it would seem more tolerable to choose as a ruler one who is at least restrained from overt wrongdoing by his fear of the judgment of men. For one who desires glory either exerts himself to follow the true path of virtuous action so as to secure the approval of men, or at any rate tries to secure it even if only by fraud and artifice. But one who wishes to dominate merely, if he lacks the desire for glory and is not afraid to displease men of right judgment, will more often seek to obtain what he loves through open crimes, surpassing even the beasts in the vices of cruelty and luxury. This is clear in the case of Nero Caesar, whose love of pleasure was so great, as Augustine says, that one would have thought him capable of no manly act, and whose cruelty was such that one would have supposed him incapable of any kindness. Again, the matter is expressed clearly enough by what Aristotle says in the Ethics about the great-souled man: that he does not seek honour and glory as something great, as if they were a sufficient reward for virtue, yet he is content to receive nothing more from men. For all earthly rewards the highest seems to be the testimony rendered to a man for his virtue by other men.

Chapter 12: The Doctor here shows what is the true end of a king, which ought to motivate him to rule well. Since, therefore, worldly honour and the glory of men are not a sufficient reward for the anxieties of royal office, it remains to inquire what a sufficient reward might be. Now it is fitting that the king should look to God for his reward; for a minister looks to his lord for the reward of his ministry, and a king governing his people is a minister of God, as the Apostle says at Romans 13:1 and 4: that there is no power but of the Lord God, and that he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil; and in the Book of Wisdom (6:3) kings are described as the ministers of Kings, therefore, must look to God for the reward of their ministry. Now God does occasionally reward kings for their ministry with temporal goods; but such rewards are common to good and wicked kings alike, and so the Lord says at Ezekiel 29:18: ‘Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyre: yet he had no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service

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cannot have served against it’—that is, for that service in respect of which, according to the Apostle, the power is ‘the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil’. As to the reward, he then adds: ‘Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her spoil, and it shall be the wages of his army.’ If, therefore, wicked kings, who fight against the enemies of God without intending to serve God but only out of hatred and greed, are repaid by the Lord with a reward so great that he gives them victory over their foes, places kingdoms beneath them and sea plunders before them to bear away, what will He do for good kings who rule the people of God with pious intent, and repulse his enemies? He promises them not an earthly reward merely, but an eternal one; nor is this found anywhere but in Himself, as Peter says to the shepherds of the people of God at 1 Peter 5:2ff: ‘Feed the flock of God which is among you, and when the chief Shepherd— that is, the King of kings, Christ — shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away’. And of this Isaiah says (26:5): ‘The Lord shall be a garment of exultation and a crown of glory for His people.’

Again, this is shown by reason. For there is implanted in the minds of all who have the use of reason the understanding that blessedness is the reward of virtue. For virtue in anything whatsoever is described as that which makes that which has it good, and renders what it does good; moreover, everyone, in acting well, is striving to achieve what he most desires, and that is to be happy: something that it is not possible not to wish for. We may properly suppose, therefore, that the reward of virtue is that which makes a man blessed. But if the task of virtue is to act well, and it is the king’s duty to rule his subjects well, the reward of the king will also be that which causes him to be blessed. And we must now consider what this may be. Now we say that blessedness is the ultimate end of desire; for the motion of desire does not continue into infinity: if it did, desire would by its very nature be futile, for it would not be possible to traverse infinities. Also, because an intellectual nature desires that it is universally [i.e. wholly] good, it will be able to be made truly happy only by a good such that, once it is achieved, no good remains which might be the object of any further desire. Hence blessedness is called the perfect

38 De civitate Dei 5:24.
39 Ethics 4:1112a60b.
40 Augustine, De civitate Dei 18.
41 Aristotle, Ethics 2:6 (1104a11).
42 It should be noted that, in this discussion, St Thomas is using the words ‘blessed’ (beata) and ‘happy’ (satis) as synonyms. The synonymy is more natural in Latin than in English.
43 Cf. SNC 3:427a.
good, as comprehending all desirable things in itself. But no earthly
good can do this. For those who have riches will desire to have more, and
the same is clearly true of all other things. Even if more things are not
sought, men will at any rate want what they have to be permanent (or to
be succeeded in due course by other things; for nothing permanent is to
be found among earthly things). No earthly thing, therefore, can be that
which pacifies desire. Nor, then, can any earthly thing cause the king to
be blessed and so a suitable reward for him.

Moreover, the final perfection and complete good of anything depends
upon something superior to itself. For instance, bodies are rendered bet-
ter by the addition of something better, and worse by being mixed with
something worse. If silver is mixed with gold, the silver becomes better,
whereas it is made impure by the admixture of lead. Now it is clear that
every earthly thing is inferior to the human mind and that blessedness is
the final perfection and complete good of man, at which all men desire to
arrive. There is therefore nothing earthly by which a man may be made
blessed; nor, then, is there anything earthly which is a sufficient reward
for a king. For, as Augustine says, we do not call Christian princes happy
because they ruled for a longer time, or because they died in peace and
left behind sons to rule as emperors, or because they subdued the enemies
of the commonwealth, or because they were able to avoid and suppress
uprisings against them by the citizens. Rather, we say that they are happy
if they rule justly, or if they prefer to govern wicked desires more than any
people whatsoever; if they do these things not out of craving for empty
glory, but from love of eternal felicity. We say that, for the time being,
such Christian emperors are happy in hope and that, in time to come,
when that to which we now look forward has arrived, they will be so in
possession. Nor is there any other created thing which could make a
man blessed and which could be singled out as the king's reward. For the
desire which is present in anything whatsoever leads it back always to its
source: to the cause from which it derives its being. But the cause of the
human mind is nothing but God, Who made it in His own image. God
alone, therefore, can satisfy the desire which is in a man and make a man
blessed, and so be a suitable reward for a king.

8 Aristotle, Ethics 1.1 (1094a10).
88 Paraphrased from Augustine, De civitate Dei 5.24.
89 CT. 12:35:10; Augustine, Confessiones 6.1.

Chapter 5: The holy Doctor here declares that the reward of kings and princes
is the highest degree of heavenly blessedness; and this is shown by many reasons and examples. It remains to consider further the excellence of that degree
of heavenly blessedness which is obtained by those who discharge the

18 Ephesians 2:10.
w Kings 10:23.
duties of kingship worthy and laudably. For if blessedness is the reward of virtue, it follows that a greater degree of blessedness will be owed to greater virtue. Now that virtue is especially great by which a man is able to direct not only himself, but others also;9 and such virtue will be greater in proportion to the number of those who are to be governed. For as, in the case of bodily strength, someone is deemed stronger by reason of the number of men he can defeat or the amount of weight he can lift, so too greater virtue is required to regulate a household establishment than to govern oneself, and much greater still to rule a city and a kingdom. To discharge the duty of kingship well therefore requires outstanding virtue, and so an outstanding degree of blessedness ought to be its reward.

Again, in all arts and powers, those who can direct others well are more deserving of praise than are those who conduct themselves well under the direction of another. In the speculative sciences it is a greater thing to pass the truth on to others by teaching than it is to be able to understand what is taught by others. In the practical arts too, the architect who designs a building is regarded more highly and retained at a higher fee than is the builder who works with his hands according to the architect’s direction. And in the commerce of war the glory of victory more readily attends the prudence of the general than the courage of the soldier. And what is true of the teacher in relation to the sciences and the architect in relation to building and the general in relation to war is true also of the ruler of a community in relation to the virtuous acts of its individual members. The king is therefore worthy of a greater reward if he governs his subjects well than any one of his subjects is if he conducts himself well under the king.

Moreover, if virtue is that quality by which a man’s work is rendered good, it seems that a greater degree of virtue will be needed to secure a greater amount of good. But the good of a community is greater and more Divine than the good of one man.10 This is why harm to one person may sometimes be tolerated if it contributes to the good of the community, as when a thief is put to death in order to secure the community’s peace. God Himself would not permit there to be evil in the world if He did not bring forth good from it, for the benefit and beauty of the universe.11 And it belongs to the office of a king studiously to procure the good of the whole community. A greater reward, therefore, is due to the king for good rule than to a subject for good behaviour.

10Aristotle, Ethik 11.3 (1129b57). cf. SOC 22172.
11Cf. SOC 2172; Augustine, Enchirodis 23 96.

This will become even clearer if we consider some more particular aspects of the matter. For a private person is praised by men and considered worthy of reward by God if he sustains the needy; if he brings peace to those who are quarrelling; if he rescues the oppressed from the strong: if, in short, he contributes to the welfare of anyone by some help or counsel. How much more, therefore, is he to be praised by men and rewarded by God who gladdens a whole province with peace, restrains the violent, preserves justice, and dispenses the actions of men by means of his laws and precepts? Also, the magnitude of the king’s virtue appears from the great likeness which it bears to that of God, since he does in his kingdom what God does in the world. Hence, at Exodus 22:28 the judges of the community are called gods. Among the Romans too the emperors were called gods. But something is more acceptable to God the closer it comes to imitating him, which is why the Apostle admonishes us in Ephesians 5:1: ‘Be ye therefore imitators of God, as dear children.’ But if, according to the opinion of the wise man (Ecclesiasticus 13:15), ‘every beast loves his like’, then, according to the principle that causes have a certain likeness to that which they cause, it follows that good kings are most acceptable to God and worthy of the greatest rewards from Him. At the same time again, to use the words of Gregory: What is a tempest upon the sea if not also a tempest in the mind? For when the sea is calm, even one who is unskilled can steer a ship rightly; but when the sea is disturbed by the waves of a tempest, even the skilled sailor may come to grief. Hence also it is often true in the occupation of government, that the practice of a good work is lost, which was preserved in times of peace.12 For, as Augustine says, it is very difficult for rulers not to be lifted up by the tongues of those who accord them sublime honours or pay court to them with an excessive humility, and to remember that they are but men.13 We read at Ecclesiasticus 31:80: ‘Blessed is the man that hath not gone after gold nor put his trust in money nor in treasures; who might offend, and hath not offended, or done evil, and hath not done it.’ It is in this way that the faithful man is found: tried, as it were, by the virtue of his own works. Hence, according to the proverb of Bias, ‘Power shows the man.’14 For many who seemed virtuous while they were in a lowly station have fallen away from virtue as soon as they have reached the summit of power.

9Paraphrased from Gregory, Regula pastorali 19 (P3, 772a).
10De civitate Dei 6 24.
11Quoted in Aristotle, Ethik 1.1 (1108a11).
12Paraphrased from Gregory, Regula pastorali 19 (P3, 772a).
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It is, then, the very difficulty which confronts princes in acting well that makes them worthy of greater reward and renders them more excusable in the sight of men and more easily deserving of forgiveness from God if they sometimes sin through weakness: provided only, as Augustine says, that they do not neglect to offer to the true God the sacrifice of humility and contrition and prayer for their sins. In this matter we have the example of Ahaz, King of Israel, whose sins were many, yet of whom the Lord said to Elijah (1 Kings, 21:29): 'Because he humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days.'

But it is not only by reason that it is shown that kings should receive an outstanding reward. This is also confirmed by Divine authority. For it is said at Zechariah 12 that in the day of blessedness, when 'the Lord shall defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem'—that is, the vision of eternal peace—shall come, all houses shall be like unto the house of David, for all will be kings and will reign with Christ, as members with the Head. But 'the house of David shall be as of God', because by his faithful rule he performed the office of God among the people; so that as his reward he shall draw nigh unto God and cleave to Him. This was also foreseen by the gentiles, as in a dream, inasmuch as they believed that the rulers and preservers of their cities were transformed into gods.

Chapter 35: That the king and prince should strive after good government because this is good and useful for himself, and that the opposite attends the rule of the tyrant. The reward of heavenly blessedness set before kings if they acquit themselves well in governing is so splendid that they must keep diligent watch over themselves to ensure that they do not turn into tyrants. For nothing should be more desirable to them than to be carried over from the state of royal honour in which they are lifted up on earth into the glory of the heavenly kingdom. Tyrants err indeed who forsake justice for the sake of some earthly advantage: who deprive themselves of the great reward which they might have obtained by ruling justly. No one, no matter how stupid or unbelieving, can fail to see how foolish it is to lose such great and eternal goods for the sake of such small and temporal ones.

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We must add also that the temporal advantages for the sake of which tyrants forsake justice come much more readily to kings who preserve justice. First, indeed, it would seem that, among worldly things, there is nothing worthier to be preferred than friendship; for it is friendship which, by bringing virtuous men together as one, preserves and promotes virtue. All men, no matter what their walk of life, have need of a friendship which neither forces itself insolently upon them in time of plenty nor deserts them in adversity. It is friendship which brings the greatest pleasures: so much so that, without friends, even the most delightful things are made tedious. Love makes troublesome things easy and almost turns them into nothing; nor is any tyrant so cruel that he is not delighted by friendship. For when Dionysius, the former tyrant of Syracuse, was about to slay one of the two friends called Damox and Pythias, the one who was to be slain asked for a delay so that he might go home and put his affairs in order, and the other one of the friends gave himself up to the tyrant as a pledge of his return. As the appointed day approached and the other did not return, everyone reproached the hostage for his folly; yet he declared that he had no fears at all as to the constancy of his friend, and at the very hour when he was to be slain, his friend returned. Full of admiration at the spirit of the two men, the tyrant revoked the punishment because of the steadfastness of their friendship, asking moreover that he might be received as a third member of that friendship. But no matter how much they may desire it, tyrants cannot secure this good of friendship. For when they do not seek the common good but their own, there is little or no communion between them and their subjects. Such communion is cemented more firmly by friendship than by anything else. For whether men are brought together by natural origin, or by similarity of custom, or by any other kind of common fellowship, we see that all are united by the bond of friendship. The friendship between a tyrant and his subjects, however, is small, or, rather, it does not exist at all. For the subjects, oppressed by the injustice of tyranny and aware that they are not loved, but despised, certainly do not themselves love; nor have tyrants any reason to complain if they are not loved by their subjects, for they do not exhibit towards them the kind of behaviour for which anyone deserves to be loved.

But good kings, who work studiously to achieve the common benefit and who understand that it is their task to secure greater advantages for their subjects, are loved by most of their subjects because they themselves have
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shown love for them. There is no malice in a community greater than that which arises when hatred is shown to friends, and benefactors are repaid with evil for good. But from this love comes the fact that the kingdoms of good kings are stable; for their subjects do not refuse to expose themselves to any peril whatsoever for their sake. An instance of this appears in the case of Julius Caesar, of whom Suetonius tells us that his regard for his soldiers was so great that, hearing of the death of some of them, he cut neither his hair nor his beard until he had avenged them.\textsuperscript{64} Such gestures made the soldiers so exceptionally devoted to him and so strenuous in his service that when some of them were made prisoners and it was put to them that they might save their lives by taking up arms against Caesar, they refused to do so. Octavian Augustus also, who was most modest in his use of authority, was so highly regarded by his subjects that, when he was dying, many of them gave instructions that the victims which they had set aside for their own sacrifices should be offered so that he might be allowed to remain alive.\textsuperscript{65}

It is not easy, therefore, for the dominion of a prince whom the people are so greatly united in loving to be disturbed; which is why Solomon says at Proverbs 29:14: 'The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.' The dominion of a tyrant, however, cannot endure for long, because it is hated by the community; for it is not possible to preserve for any length of time that which is repugnant to the wishes of so many. Men seldom come to the end of this present life without suffering some adversity; but, in time of adversity, there can be no lack of opportunity to rise up against a tyrant, and where the occasion is present, there will be no lack of someone out of the many to make use of the opportunity. Moreover, the people will willingly support the rebel; nor will one who has achieved the favour of the community easily fail to accomplish his task. It can seldom happen, therefore, that the dominion of a tyrant is prolonged for any great length of time.

This is shown even more clearly if one considers how the lordship of a tyrant is preserved. For it cannot be preserved through love, since, as is clear from what we have noted already, the community subject to him has little or no affection for a tyrant. Nor can a tyrant count on the loyalty of his subjects; for we find that most people are not so much restrained by the virtue of loyalty that they will not throw off the yoke of undeserved

\textsuperscript{64} Suetonius, \textit{Caesar} 69f. \textsuperscript{65} Suetonius, \textit{Augustus} 59.
does not permit tyrants to reign for long; rather, after the tempest brought down upon the people by them, He restores calm by their overthrow. Hence it is said at Ecclesiasticus 101:14: 'The Lord hath cast down the thrones of proud princes, and set up the neck in their stead.'

Still more clearly does it appear from experience that kings acquire greater riches through justice than tyrants do by robbery. For the dominion of tyrants dispises the whole multitude subject to them, and so the tyrant has need of many attendants to give him protection against his subjects; and it is necessary for him to spend more on these than he can wring from his subjects.106 The dominion of a king, however, because it is pleasing to his subjects, has all the subjects as its guardians, who protect it, and there is no need to spend anything on them. On the contrary, in times of necessity they will give freely to kings more than tyrants would be able to exact; and thus is fulfilled what Solomon says at Proverbs 13:24: 'Some'—kings, that is—'divide their own goods for the benefit of their subjects, and grow rich; others'—that is, tyrants—'seize what is not their own, and are always in want.' Similarly again, it comes about through the just judgment of God that those who heap up riches spend them to no good purpose; or, indeed, they are justly taken from them. For as Solomon says at Ecclesiastes 5:9: 'A covetous man shall not be satisfied with money; and he that loveth riches shall receive no fruit from them.' Again, he says at Proverbs 1:15:7: 'He that is greedy of gain troubles his own house.' To kings who seek justice, on the other hand, riches are added by God, as to Solomon who, when he sought wisdom to discern judgment, received the promise of abundant riches.106

It would seem superfluous to speak of fame. For who would doubt that good kings, not only during life, but more so after death, in a certain sense live in the praises of men, and are grieved for by them; whereas the name of evil men is forgotten at once or, if they have been outstanding in their wickedness, they are remembered with hatred? Hence Solomon says at Proverbs 10:7: 'The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall not: for it is either forgotten or remains only as a stench.

Chapter 129: That even such worldly goods as riches, power, honour and fame come more readily to kings than to tyrants; and of the all which tyrants incur even in this life. From what we have said, therefore, it is clear that

goods come to kings in abundance, and a state of surpassing blessedness is prepared for them by God, whereas tyrants who long for many temporal goods are frustrated and are subject moreover to many perils and, what is worse, are deprived of eternal goods and marked out for the most grievous punishments: those who assume the duty of ruling must strive vehemently to show themselves as kings to their subjects, not tyrants.

We have, then, now said enough to show what a king is, that it is advantageous for a community to have a king, and, moreover, that it is advantageous to him to show the community subject to him that he is a king, not a tyrant.

Chapter xiii: He proceeds to show what the duties of a king are; he shows also that, according to the way of nature, the king in his kingdom is like the soul in the body and God in the world. Following on from what we have said, it is necessary now to consider what the duty of the king is and what sort of person the king should be. And because it is true that art imitates nature, and that it is from natural things that we learn how to act according to reason, it would seem best to infer the duties of a king from the forms of government which occur in nature.

Now among natural things there is found both a universal and a particular form of government. The universal form is that according to which all things are contained under the government of God, Who governs all things by His providence. The particular form of government is very similar to the Divine government, and it is found within man, who for this reason may be called a lesser world, because within him is found an example of universal government. For just as all corporeal creatures and all spiritual powers are contained under the Divine rule, so also the members of the body and the other powers of the soul are ruled by reason; and so the place of reason in man is, in a certain sense, like the relation of God to the world. But because, as we have shown above, man is by nature a social animal who lives in community, this similarity with Divine rule is found in man not only inasmuch as the individual man is ruled by reason, but also inasmuch as a community is ruled by the reason of an individual man; for it is this which belongs especially to the duty of the king. Something similar is found in the case of certain animals who live

130 Aristotelis, Physica xia (194a2-3).
131 Aristotelis, Physica Xxi (218a24), Gregory, Homilia in evangelia xii (PL 96:1132b).
132 Ch. 1.

socially, such as bees, among whom there is said to be a king, but rule of this kind does not come about through reason, but through an instinct of nature implanted in them by the Supreme Ruler.

Let the king understand, therefore, that he has received the duty of being to his kingdom what the soul is to the body and what God is to the world. If he reflects diligently upon this, he will on the one hand be fired with zeal for justice when he considers that he has been appointed to exercise judgment in his kingdom in the place of God; and, on the other, he will acquire kindness and clemency, for he will look upon all those subject to his government as though they were his own members.

Chapter xiv: From the similarity between Divine and human government, it follows that the king should act towards his subjects in his kingdom in the way that God does in distinguishing each thing according to its proper order and activity, and in the way that the soul does in relation to the body. It is, therefore, necessary to consider what God does in the world; for in this way it will become clear what the king should do. Now God's work in relation to the world must be considered under two general aspects. First, He made the world; second, He governs the world that He has made. Again, the soul has two functions in relation to the body; for, first, the power of the soul gives form to the body, and, second, the body is ruled and moved by the soul. Now it is the second of these activities which more properly belongs to the duty of the king, for the task of governing pertains to all kings, and the title 'king' [rex] is derived from the fact that he directs the government [a gubernatorum regime]. But the first activity does not belong to all kings, for not every king founds the city in which he reigns, many carry on the activity of ruling in a kingdom or city which has been founded already. It must be borne in mind, however, that if there had not been someone in the beginning to found a city or a kingdom, there would be no place in the world for royal government. The founding of a city or kingdom must therefore also be considered as falling within the duty of the king. For some have founded the cities in which they ruled, as Ninus did Nineveh and Romulus Rome. Similarly again, it pertains to the duty of government to protect what is governed and to make use of it for the purpose for which it was established. But the ruler will not be able to
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understand the duties of government fully if he does not know the reason why it was instituted.

Now the reason for the foundation of a kingdom can be inferred from the example of the creation of the world. In this connection, we must first consider the creation of things themselves; then the orderly distribution of the parts of the world; then we see how the different species of things are distributed in the various parts of the world: the stars in the heaven, birds in the air, fish in the waters, animals on the earth; and finally we see how abundantly Divine providence gives to each of them whatever it needs. Moses has expressed this rational order of creation subtly and with care. For he first considers the creation of things, saying: 'In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth' (Genesis 1:1). He then describes how all things were distinguished by the Divine command according to their proper order: that is to say, day from night, the heights from the depths, the sea from dry land. Next he describes how the heavens were adorned with stars, the sea with fish, and the earth with animals; and, finally, dominion over the earth and its creatures was assigned to man; and the use of plants, he says, was given by the Divine providence to mankind and animals alike.

Now the founder of a city cannot create men and dwelling-places and all the other things necessary to support life out of nothing; rather, it is necessary for him to make use of things which already exist in nature, just as the other arts and trades which they work from nature: smiths making use of iron and the builder of wood and stone. One who wishes to found a city or a kingdom must therefore first of all choose a place suitable to the preservation of the health of the inhabitants; fertile enough to provide them with sufficient food; pleasant enough to give them enjoyment; and well defended enough to afford them protection against enemies. Even if some of these advantages are absent, the place will be suitable in proportion as the foregoing conditions, or at any rate the most necessary of them, are fulfilled. Then, having chosen the site, it is necessary for the founder of a city or a kingdom to divide it up in such a way as to supply all the needs which must be met if the kingdom is to be complete. For example, if a kingdom is to be founded, it will be necessary to provide locations suitable for the establishment of towns, farms and castles, and centres will need to be set up for the pursuit of learning, the training of soldiers and the conduct of commerce; and so on with the other

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things which the perfecting of a kingdom requires. Again, if a city is to be established, it will be necessary to provide places suitable for worship, for the administration of justice and for the pursuit of the various trades. Then, it will be necessary to group men together in suitable locations in the city according to their various occupations. Finally, it will be necessary for the needs of each man to be supplied in a fashion appropriate to his condition and standing: otherwise neither city nor kingdom could endure for long.

Stated briefly, then, these are the things which pertain to the duty of a king in founding a city or kingdom, arrived at by analogy with the creation of the world.

Chapter xv: That the government of a king is like the Divine government, and that such government may be compared to the steering of a ship. Also, a comparison is here made between priestly and royal dominion. Just as the foundation of a city or kingdom can fittingly be inferred from the example of the creation of the world, so also can the proper government of the former be inferred from the government of the latter. First of all, however, it must be noted that to govern is to guide what is governed in a suitable fashion to its proper end. Thus a ship is said to be governed when it is steered on its right course to port by the industry of the sailors. If, therefore, something is directed towards an end external to itself, as a ship is to harbour, the duty of its governor will be not only to preserve the thing itself, but also to guide it towards its final end; whereas if there were something with no end outside itself, then the sole task belonging to the ruler would be the preservation of the thing itself in perfect condition.

But nothing of the latter kind [i.e. nothing with no end outside itself] is found in the world [in rebus] apart from God, Who is the end of all things; and the care of that which is directed towards an end outside itself is beset with a number of difficulties. For perhaps there is one person whose responsibility it is to preserve the thing itself and another whose task is to lead it towards a higher perfection, as in the case of the ship, from which we have drawn an example of government. For the carpenter has the task of repairing any damage which the ship has sustained, whereas the mariner bears the responsibility for guiding the ship to port. And so it happens also in the case of a man. For the physician has the task of preserving a man's life in a healthy condition; the steward has to supply him with the necessities of life; the task of the teacher is to see to it that he understands the truth; and that of the moral counsellor is to ensure
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that he lives according to reason. And if man were not directed towards some good external to himself, the foregoing forms of care would suffice.

But there is a certain extraneous good which awaits man after he has lived this mortal life: namely, the final blessedness to which he looks forward in the enjoyment of God after death. For as the Apostle says (2 Corinthians 5:6): 'While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord.' The Christian man, then, for whom that blessedness has been won by the blood of Christ, and for the attainment of which he has received the earnest of the Holy Spirit, has need of another, spiritual, care by which he is guided towards the harbour of eternal salvation. And this is the kind of care shown to the faithful by the ministers of the Church of Christ.

We must make the same judgment in regard to the end of the whole community as we do of one person. If the end of man were some good existing only in himself, therefore, the final end of government would similarly be to acquire and preserve that good for the whole community. Thus if that ultimate end, whether of one man or of a community, were the life and health of the body, the physicians would have the duty of governing. And if the final end were abundant wealth, the steward would be king of the community. And if the good were that the community might achieve knowledge of the truth, the king would have the duty of a teacher.

But it seems that the end for which a community is brought together is to live according to virtue; for men come together so that they may live well in a way that would not be possible for each of them living singly. For the good is life according to virtue, and so the end of human association is a virtuous life.

An indication of this lies in the fact that only those who share with one another in the task of living well are deemed to be parts of a community. For if men came together for the sake of life merely, both animals and slaves would have a part in civil society; if for the sake of acquiring wealth, all those engaged in commerce together would belong to one city. But we see that only those are counted as members of a community who are guided in living well under the same laws and by the same government. But because the man who lives according to virtue is also directed towards a further end, which, as we have already said above, consists in the enjoyment of the Divine, the end of the whole community of mankind must therefore be the same as it is for one man. The final end of a multitude

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united in society, therefore, will not be to live according to virtue, but through virtuous living to attain to the enjoyment of the Divine. Now if it were possible to achieve this end through natural human virtue alone, it would necessarily belong to the king's duty to guide men to this end; for, as we suppose, it is to the king that the supreme ruling power in human affaires is entrusted, and government is of a higher order according to the finality of the end to which it is directed. For we find that it is always the one who has responsibility for the final end who directs those who carry out the tasks leading to the final end. For example, the captain whose responsibility it is to direct the navigation of the ship commands him who constructs the ship to make the kind of ship most suitable for his purposes; and the citizen who makes use of arms gives orders to the blacksmith as to what kind of arms he is to forge. But because the enjoyment of Divinity is an end which a man cannot attain through human virtue alone, but only through Divine virtue, according to the Apostle at Romans 6:23: 'The grace of God is eternal life,' it is not human but Divine rule that will lead us to this end. And government of this kind belongs only to that King Who is not only man, but also God: that is, to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who by making men sons of God, has led them to the glory of heaven.

This, then, is the government given to Him, which shall not pass away and be reason of which He is called in Holy Scripture not only priest but king. As Jeremiah says (25:3): 'A king shall reign and be wise.' Hence a royal priesthood is derived from Him; and, what is more, all who believe in Christ, insofar as they are His members, are called kings and priests.

The administration of this kingdom, therefore, is entrusted not to earthly kings, but to priests, so that spiritual and earthly things may be kept distinct; and in particular to the Supreme Priest, the successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the Roman Pontiff, to whom all the kings of the Christian people should be subject, as if to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For those who are responsible for intermediate ends should be subject to one who is responsible for the ultimate end, and be directed by his command. Since the priesthood of the gentiles and the worship of their gods existed only for the sake of acquiring those temporal goods which are entirely directed to the good of the community and which it is therefore the duty of kings to secure, it was suitable that the priests of the gentiles should be subject

113 Aristotle, Politics 12:1 (1342a41; 1342b31).
114 Aristotle, Ethics 11: (1198b21; 1198b35).
115 Aristotle, Politics 12:1 (1269b23; 339 (1268b35).
116 Aristotle, Politics 11: (1269b23).
117 1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 2:18. 118 Be medieval authors in general, St Thomas tends to use 'gentile' to mean 'heathen' rather than 'non-Jewish'.

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to their kings. Again, under the old law, those who embraced the true religion were promised temporal goods not by demons, but by God; and so we read that, under the old law, priests were subject to kings. But under the new law there is a higher priesthood, by which men are conducted towards heavenly goods; and so, under the law of Christ, kings must be subject to priests.

For this reason it came about by the wondrous dispensation of Divine providence that in the city of Rome, which God foresaw would be the principal seat of the Christian people in time to come, the custom gradually grew up that the rulers of the city should be subject to the priests. For as Valerius Maximus declares:

Even in matters relating to the dignity of the highest majesty, our city has always affirmed that all things should be placed after religion. For this reason, holders of secular authority have never doubted that they ought to serve sacred authority, thereby showing their belief that the government of human affairs will be properly conducted only by those who are good and constant servants of the Divine power.

Again, because it was to come to pass also that the religion of the Christian priesthood would flourish with particular vigour in Gaul, Divine providence permitted that the gentle priests of the Gauls, who were called Druids, should be the interpreters of the law throughout Gaul, as Caesar relates in the book which he wrote on the Gallic war.

Chapter xvi: That the king should govern his subjects in such a way that they live according to virtue in their pursuit of both their final and intermediate ends. Also, an account is here given of those things which promote living well and of those which impede it, and of what remedy the king is to apply to such impediments. Just as the life that men live here, when they live well, is directed, as to its end, towards the blessed life in heaven for which we hope, so all the particular goods which men obtain, whether wealth or profit or health or skill or learning, are directed, as to their end, to the good of the community. If, therefore, as we have said, he who is responsible for a final end must govern those who are responsible for the things directed towards that end and must direct them by his command, it is clear that the king, just as he must be subject to the lordship and
governance administered by the priestly office, must rule over all human occupations and direct them by his own command and rule.

Now whoever has the task of bringing to completion something which is directed towards an end must make sure that his work is suited to that end. For example, the smith forges the kind of sword that is fit to fight with, and the builder lays out the kind of house that is suitable for living in. And because the end of our living well at this present time is the blessedness of heaven, the king’s duty is therefore to secure the good life for the community in such a way as to ensure that it is led to the blessedness of heaven: that is, by commanding those things which conduces to the blessedness of heaven and forbidding, as far as it is possible to do so, those which are contrary to it. But we learn the way to true blessedness, and the obstacles to it, from the Divine law, the duty of teaching which belongs to the priests, according to Malachi 2:7: “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.” And so the Lord commands at Deuteronomy 17:18–19:

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests of the tribe of Levi, and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein, all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them.

The king, therefore, being instructed in the Divine law, must strive with special care to ensure that the community subject to him lives well; and this task may be divided into three parts. First, he must establish the good life in the community subject to him; second, he must preserve it once it is established; third, having preserved it, he must strive to improve it. But the good life for each man requires two things. The first and chief requirement is activity according to virtue, for virtue is that quality by which we live well. The other requirement is secondary and, as it were, instrumental: namely, a sufficiency of bodily goods, the use of which is necessary to virtuous conduct. Man himself is made a unity by natural causation; but the unity of a community, which is called peace, must be brought about by the industry of the ruler. So, then, to establish the good life for a community requires three things: first, that the community be established in the unity of peace; second, that the community united by

133 Valerius Maximus 1:39.
134 De bello Gallico 6:13.
135 Ch. xvi.
136 Augustine, De libero arbitrio 2:19.
137 Aristotle, Ethica 1:8 (309b1).
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the bond of peace be guided to act well— for just as a man cannot act well unless we presuppose the unity of his parts, so a multitude of men who are at odds with one another because they lack peace will be prevented from living well; and, third, it requires that, through the industry of the ruler, there be a plentiful supply of those things necessary to living well.

When, therefore, the good life has been established in the community by the duty of the king, he must next consider how to preserve it. Now there are three things detrimental to the permanence of the public good; and one of these arises from the nature of things. For the good of the community should not be established for a particular length of time only, but should be as it were perpetual. But men, because they are mortal, do not endure perpetually; nor, while they are alive, do they always have the same degree of vigour, for human life is subject to many changes, and men are not equally capable of fulfilling the same duties throughout the whole of life. Another obstacle to the preservation of the public good arises from within, and consists in perversity of will; for some people are negligent in carrying out the duties which the commonwealth requires, or even damage the peace of the community when they transgress against justice and disturb the peace of others. And the third obstacle to the preservation of the commonwealth comes from an external cause, when the peace is undone by the invasion of enemies, and sometimes the kingdom or city which has been founded is destroyed. In relation to the three foregoing causes, therefore, the task of the king has a threefold character. The first has to do with the succession of men: that is, with the replacement of those who preside over the various duties. For just as the Divine government ensures that corruptible things, which cannot remain the same for ever, are renewed by the production of others to replace them, and in this way preserves the integrity of the universe, so by the efforts of the king the good of the community subject to him will be preserved when he takes care to ensure that successors take the place of those who are faltering. Second, he should restrain the men subject to him from iniquity by means of laws and commands, penalties and rewards, and lead them to do virtuous works, taking his example from God, Who gave men a law, and Who rewards those who observe it and requites with punishment those who transgress it. Third, it is the king’s task to furnish the community subject to him with protection against enemies; for taking measures against internal perils will bring no benefit if it is not possible for it to be defended against external ones.

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So then, a third thing remains as belonging to the duty of the king if he is to ensure the good of the community: he must be careful to secure its improvement. This will be done in each of the ways mentioned above if he corrects what is disordered, if he supplies what is lacking, and if he strives to perfect whatever can be done better. Hence the Apostle, at 1 Corinthians 12:31, admonishes the faithful always to "covet earnestly the best gifts."

These, then, are the things which belong to the duty of a king; but it is necessary to treat of each of them more carefully.

Book II

Chapter 1: How it pertains to the king to found cities or castles in order to achieve glory: that he must choose temperate places for this purpose; and what advantages there are for kingdoms when this is done, and disadvantages when it is not. First, then, it is especially necessary to expose the king’s duty in relation to the founding of a kingdom or city. For as Vegetius says: ‘The mightiest nations and the most renowned princes could seek no greater glory than to found new cities or to broaden their sway by transferring those established by others into their own names’, which, indeed, accords with the teaching of sacred scripture, for it is said at Ecclesiastes 40:10 that ‘the building of a city will confirm a name’. The name of Romulus would be unknown today had he not founded Rome.

In founding a city or kingdom, a region must be selected which, if there is a choice, should be temperate; for those who dwell there will derive many benefits from the temperateness of the region. First, men derive soundness of body and length of life from the temperateness of a region. Because health consists in a certain temperateness of the humours, health will be preserved in a temperate place, since like is preserved by like. If, however, there is excessive heat or cold, the body will necessarily be changed by the quality of the air. Hence by a kind of natural impulse certain animals remove themselves to a warm place during a cold period and vice versa, in order to achieve a temperate condition from the disposition of each place at each time.

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Rei militaris institutum 4, prologue.

Arato, Physic. 7:123 (598b).

Arato, Historia animalium 7:11 (598b)
Again, since animal life is a matter of heat and moisture, if heat is intense natural moisture is soon dried up and life fails, just as a lamp is soon extinguished if the fuel poured into it is quickly consumed when the flame is too high. Hence in certain very hot regions of Ethiopia, men are not able to live for more than thirty years. But in regions which are excessively cold, natural moisture is easily frozen and natural heat soon extinguished.  

Next, the temperateness of a region gives many opportunities for success in war, by which human society is rendered secure. For as Vegetius remarks:

All nations which are close to the sun and dried up by the excessive heat are said to have more wisdom but less blood, and so they do not have the constancy and courage necessary for close combat, for those who know that they have little blood fear wounds. On the other hand, peoples of the north, who are removed from the heat of the sun, lack prudence but are overflowing with a great deal of blood, and so are very ready to go to war. But those who dwell in temperate regions are supplied with plenty of blood, and so are contemptuous of wounds and death; but they do not lack prudence, and this both preserves orderliness in the camp and promotes strategic thought in battle.  

Finally, a temperate region is of no little benefit to political life. For as Aristotle says in his Politics, those races who dwell in cold places are full of spirit, but are greatly deficient in intellect and art. For this reason they remain free, but they do not live politically, and cannot rule their neighbours because of their lack of prudence. Those who dwell in hot places are intellectual and accomplished in matters of learning, but they lack spirit, and so they become subjects and remain in a servile condition. But those who dwell in temperate places have both spirit and intellect, by reason of which they both remain free and are specially able to live politically, and they know how to rule others.  

A temperate region should therefore be chosen for the founding of a city or kingdom.

Chapter 6: Those kings and princes ought to choose places for the founding of cities or castles where the air is wholesome; and he shows how and by what signs

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such a place is to be known After the choice of region, it is necessary to choose a suitable place for building the city; and it seems that wholesome air is the first requirement here. For before any kind of social life comes natural life itself, and this is preserved by wholesome air.

As Vitruvius teaches, the healthiest place will be 'elevated, not foggy, not frosty, and facing regions of the heaven which are neither hot nor cold; finally, it should not be close to marshy ground'. 18 The elevation of a place usually confers wholeness upon the air, because a high place is exposed to the blowing of the winds, by which the air is rendered pure. Also, the vapours which are released from the earth and the waters by the power of the sun's rays are multiplied more in valleys and low-lying places than in high ones, so that in high places the air is found to be more refined. Moreover, such refinement of the air, which awaits greatly for free and pure breathing, is hindered by the fogs and fumes which usually abound in very damp places, so that places of this kind are found to be contrary to health. Also, because marshy places abound with excessive dampness, the place chosen for the building of a city ought to be far away from marshy ground.

For when the morning breezes arrive at that place when the sun rises, the fogs which arise from the swamps will be added to them and they will spread abroad the exhalations of the venoms marshland creatures mixed with the fogs, and so make the place pestilent. It is, however, reasonable to construct walls in places close to the sea, provided that they face north or thereabouts [and so are not exposed to extremes of temperature] and the marshes are more elevated than the sea shore; for if ditches are made the water will then be able to drain out to the shore, and when, in storms, the sea flows back into the marshes, it will not allow marsh animals to be born. And if certain animals come down from higher places, they will be killed by the uncustomed saltiness. 19

It is also necessary for the place intended for a city to be temperately disposed as regards heat and cold according to the various aspects which it presents to the regions of the heavens. 'For it will not be healthy if the walls, especially those built near the sea, face south.' For such places will be cold in the morning, because the sun does not shine on them, but at noon they will be very hot because of the sunshine. Places which face west are hot or even cold when the sun rises, but warm at noon and hot in

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18 De architectura 14. 19 Ibid.
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the evening because of the continuous heat and shining of the sun. Those which face east will be moderately warm in the morning, because the sun is directly opposite them; nor will the heat be much increased at noon, because the sun does not shine directly on them; but in the evening they will be cold because the rays of the sun will then be completely behind them. From the converse of what was said of those facing south, there will be the same or similar temperatures when the location of the city faces north. But we can learn from experience that it is unhealthy to move to a warmer place, for "bodies which are brought from cold regions into warm ones cannot endure, but are dissolved, because the heat dissolves their natural virtues by sucking up their moisture." Hence even in wholesome places, "summer renders bodies infirm."\textsuperscript{133}

Since suitable food is required for bodily health, it is necessary to investigate this aspect of the matter when considering the wholesomeness of the place chosen for the building of a city; for the condition of those born in a place can be discovered from the quality of their food. The ancients customarily explored this question by means of the animals nourished there. For since both men and other animals make common use of those things which the land produces as food, it follows that if the entrails of slaughtered animals are found to be in good condition, men too may be wholesomely nourished in the same place. But if the parts of slaughtered animals appear to be diseased, this can reasonably be taken to show that the place in question is not a healthy dwelling-place for men either.\textsuperscript{134}

As well as temperate air, wholesome water is required; for the health of the body depends especially upon those things which are used by men most often. Clearly, it is essential to life that we draw in air every day by breathing, which is why its wholesomeness will especially contribute to the body's health and wellbeing; and, by the same token, because, among the things that we take by way of nourishment, we use water most often, both as drink and food, nothing apart from the purity of the air is more pertinent to the healthfulness of a place than the wholesomeness of its water.

There are other signs that a place can be considered healthful: namely, if the faces of the men who live there appear to have a good colour; if their bodies are robust and their limbs well made; if their children are many and lively; and if there are many old people. Conversely, if men's faces

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appear deformed, if their bodies are weak, if their limbs are exhausted or diseased, if their children are few and ill, and if old people are few, it cannot be doubted that the place is deathly.

Chapter 16: That the king must construct the city to have a plentiful supply of food, for without this a city cannot be perfect; and he distinguishes two ways in which this may be done, of which the first is more to be commanded. Again, the place chosen for the building of a city should be one which not only preserves the health of those who dwell there, but suffices also for an abundant supply of food.\textsuperscript{135} For it is not possible for a community of men to dwell where there is not plenty of food. Hence, as Vitruvius records, when the most distinguished architect Xenocrates demonstrated to Alexander of Macedon that he could construct a city of elegant appearance on a certain mountain, Alexander asked him whether there were fields there able to provide that city with a plentiful supply of grain. When he found that these were lacking, he retorted that anyone who built a city in such a place would be worthy to be cursed; for 'Just as a newborn infant can be neither fed nor induced to grow without a nurse's milk, so a city cannot support a large populace without an abundance of food.'\textsuperscript{136}

Now there are two ways in which a city can be provided with a plentiful supply of things. One is through the fertility of the region, which produces an abundance of all the things necessary for human life. The other is through trade, by which the things necessary for life are brought in from various other parts. But it may be clearly established that the first way is more suitable. For the more excellent something is, the more it is found to be self-sufficient, since that which lacks something is shown to be deficient. But a city is more fully self-sufficient if its surrounding region is adequate to furnish it with the necessities of life, whereas a city which lacks something acquires these things through trade. For a city is more excellent if it has an abundance of things from its own territory than if it has such abundance through trade, since the first way seems to be more secure. For the transportation of food can easily be hindered by the events of war and the various hazards of the road, and so the city may be overcome through lack of food.

\textsuperscript{133} Vitruvius, De architectura 1.5.
\textsuperscript{134} Vitruvius, De architectura 2.11. According to Vitruvius the architect is Dinosocrates of Rhodes. The spelling Xenocrates is no doubt a scribe's error. See Bibliographical Glossary s.a.; 'Dinosocrates'.
\textsuperscript{135} Vitruvius, De architectura 1.5.
This [self-sufficiency] is also more beneficial to civic life. For a city which needs much trade to sustain it must also of necessity suffer continual contact with foreigners. But according to the teaching of Aristotle, association with foreigners commonly corrupts the morals of the citizens because men from foreign parts, nurtured on other laws and usages, inevitably behave differently in many ways from the customs of the citizens, and when their example influences the citizens to act in similar ways, civic life is disturbed.135

If the citizens themselves are devoted to trade, the way is thrown open to many vices. Because the practice of commerce especially involves the pursuit of gain, greed is introduced into the citizens’ hearts by commerce; and so it comes to pass that all things in the city are made venal.136 When good faith has departed the place is laid open to frauds; when the public good is despised, everyone pursues his own advantage, zeal for virtue ceases, and everyone puts profit before the honour of virtue. Hence in such a civic life will necessarily be corrupted.

Also, commerce is more at odds with military prowess than are most other occupations. Merchants rest in the shade without toil, and while they enjoy delights their spirits grow soft and their bodies are rendered weak and unfitted for military exertions.137 This is why, according to the civil law, knights are forbidden to engage in commerce.138

Finally, a city is usually more peaceful if its people come together only rarely and if few dwell within the city walls. When men frequently gather together, this gives occasion for disputes and provides the matter for seditions. According to what Aristotle teaches, it is more beneficial for people to be occupied outside the cities than to dwell always together within the city walls.139 But if the city is devoted to trade, it is then greatly necessary for the citizens to reside within the city and engage in trade there.

It is therefore better for a city to be plentifully supplied with food from its own fields than for it to be totally given over to commerce. It is not, however, fitting to exclude merchants from the city altogether, because a place cannot easily be found which so abound in all the things necessary for life that it does not have some things brought in from elsewhere. Also, when things are especially abundant in the same place, many people suffer less if they cannot be transported to another place through the activity of merchants. Hence it is fitting for the perfect city to practise trade in moderation.

Chapter 15: The region which the king chooses for a city or castle must be arranged in such a way as to have pleasant features: which the citizens should be encouraged to enjoy in moderation, however, since they are often a cause of disquietude, by which the kingdom is undermined. The place chosen for the building of cities should delight the inhabitants with its pleasantness. For a multitude of inhabitants will not readily forsake a pleasant place, nor will they readily flock to a place which lacks pleasantness, for no man can for long endure a life from which pleasure is absent. Broad fields in the plains, fruitful trees, mountains visible nearby, graceful groves and flowing water: all these things will contribute to such pleasantness. But too much in the way of pleasantness leads men to enjoy delights to excess, and this is harmful to cities in many ways. Thus, delights should be enjoyed in moderation, primarily because men devoted to delights become dull in their senses. Pleasure imures its souls in sensations, so that they cannot exercise free judgment with respect to delightful things; and so, according to the opinion of Aristotle, prudent judgments are corrupted by pleasure.140

Again, excessive pleasures cause one to fall away from honest virtue; for nothing leads more readily than pleasure to an immoderate increase by which the mean of virtue is corrupted.141 This is partly because it is the nature of pleasure to induce greed, so that one who has taken moderate pleasure is precipitated into the blunderships of disgraceful delights in the way that dry wood is kindled by a small flame. Partly also it is because pleasure does not satisfy the appetite; on the contrary, a pleasure once tasted produces a thirst for more. Hence it pertains to the office of virtue to see to it that men abstain from excessive pleasures, for by shunning excess one arrives more easily at the mean of virtue.

Consequently again, men excessively devoted to pleasure grow weak in spirit and become irresolute in confronting any hardship, in tolerating labour and in facing danger. Hence also delights greatly harm the conduct of war; for, as Vegetius says in the book De re militari: “They fear death less who knew that they had fewer delights in life.”142

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135 Aristotle, Politics 1.2 (1253b12); 3.6 (1329a3).
136 Aristotle, Politics 1.2 (1257b12).
137 Cf. Vegetius, Re libellis institutis 1.3.
138 Cicero, De legibus 1.24.54.
139 Politics 6.6 (1278b20).
140 Euhemer 6.3 (1140b3).
141 Euhemer 2.8 (1146b34).
142 Vegetius, De re militari 1.3.
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Those who are unrestrained in their enjoyment of delights eventually become slothful and, neglecting necessary studies and their proper business, care only for the pursuit of pleasure, in the course of which they lavish dissipate what others have previously gathered. Then, reduced to the condition of paupers, and because they cannot bear to be without their accustomed delights, they become thieves and robbers in order to have the means of satisfying their longing. It is, therefore, harmful for a city to abound in excessive delights, whether these arise from the disposition of the place or from some other cause.

Moderate pleasure, therefore, is appropriate to human association, as a kind of spice whereby the human spirit may be restored.\(^{135}\)

\(^{(c)}\) *Summa theologica IaIae 105.1: Concerning the reason for the judicial precepts [of the Old Testament]\(^{146}\)

artículus 1: Whether the old law enjoins suitable precepts concerning rulers

It seems that the old law did not enjoin suitable precepts concerning rulers.

*obiecit 1:* For, as the Philosopher says, ‘the ordering of a people depends for the most part upon the chief ruler.’\(^{147}\) But the law contains no precept concerning the appointment of a chief ruler, although we find prescriptions there concerning lesser rulers; for example (Exodus 18:21): ‘Provide out of all the people wise men’, etc.; and (Numbers 11:16): ‘Gather unto me seventy men of the ancients of Israel’, and (Deuteronomy 1:11): ‘Let me have from among you wise and understanding men’, etc. The law therefore did not provide sufficiently for the rulers of the people.

*obiecit 2:* Moreover, as Plato says: ‘The best gives the best.’\(^{148}\) But the best kind of order for a commonwealth or any nation is rule by a king, because this is the kind of government which most closely resembles the Divine government by which God has ruled the world from the beginning.\(^{149}\) Therefore the law should have set a king over the people, and they should have not been allowed any choice in the matter; although in fact they were given a choice (Deuteronomy 17:14ff): ‘When thou shalt say, I will set a king over me, thou shalt set him’, etc.

*obiecit 3:* Moreover, according to Matthew 22:25: ‘Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.’ This saying proved true in the case of the Jewish people, whose destruction was encompassed when the kingdom was divided. But the law should seek above all to secure the general welfare of the people. It should therefore have forbidden the division of the kingdom between two kings, nor should this arrangement have been introduced even by Divine authority; yet it is said to have been introduced by the authority of the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite (1 Kings 11:29ff).

*obiecit 4:* Moreover, just as priests are appointed for the benefit of the people in things pertaining to God, as stated at Hebrews 5:1, so rulers are established for the benefit of the people in human affairs. But certain things were set aside as means of support for the priests and Levites of the law, such as tithes and first-fruits and many similar things. In the same way, therefore, certain things should have been provided for the support of the rulers of the people, especially since they were forbidden to accept gifts, as is stated clearly at Exodus 23:8: ‘And thou shalt take no gift, for the gift blindeth the wise and perverteth the words of the righteous.’

*obiecit 5:* Moreover, just as kingship is the best form of government, so is tyranny the most corrupt.\(^{150}\) But when the Lord appointed a king, he established a tyrannical law; for it is said at 1 Samuel 8:11: ‘This will be the right of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons’, etc. The law therefore did not make suitable provision with regard to the appointment of rulers.

sed contra: The nation of Israel is congratulated on the beauty of its order (Numbers 24:3): ‘How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel.’ But the godly ordering of a nation depends upon the right establishment of its rulers. The law therefore made proper provision for the people with regard to its rulers.

*responsum:* Two things are to be considered with regard to the good ordering of government in a city or nation. The first is that all should

\(^{135}\) See Introduction, p. 31x.

\(^{146}\) This *Quaesio* has four articles. The other three are: ‘Whether the judicial precepts made suitable provision for living together’, ‘Whether the judicial precepts made suitable provision concerning foreigner’, and ‘Whether the old law established suitable precepts concerning household relations’.

\(^{147}\) *Politics* 3.6 (1291b9).

\(^{148}\) *Timaeus* 294d1.

\(^{149}\) Cf. p. 11, above.

\(^{150}\) See pp. 11ff, above.
have some share in the government; for an arrangement of this kind secures the peace of the people, and all men love and defend it, as is stated at Politics vi. 15. The other thing to be considered is the kind of rule, or the ordering of government. Of the different kinds of rule which the Philosopher discusses at Politics vi., the foremost are kingship, in which one man governs according to virtue, and aristocracy, that is, the power of the best men, in which a few govern according to virtue. Hence the best ordering of government in any city or kingdom is achieved when one man is chosen to preside over all according to virtue, when he has under him others who govern according to virtue; and when such government nonetheless belongs to all, both because all are eligible for election to it and because it is elected by all. Such a ‘polity’ is the best form of government inasmuch as it is a benign mixture of kingship, because there is one man who presides; of aristocracy, because it is the rule of several according to virtue; and of democracy, that is, popular power, because the rulers can be elected from the people and it belongs to the people to elect the rulers. 15

Now it was this form of government which was instituted according to the Divine law. For Moses and his successors governed the people in such a way that each of them was ruler over all. But they chose seventy-two elders according to their virtue. For it is said at Deuteronomy 1:15: ‘I took out of your tribes men wise and honourable, and appointed them rulers’, and this was aristocracy. But this arrangement was also democratic in that they were chosen from all the people. For it is said at Exodus 18:24: ‘Provide out of all the people wise men’, etc. Also, they were chosen by the people; for it is said at Deuteronomy 1:13: ‘Let me have from among you wise men.’ Hence it is clear that the [old] law provided for the best form of government.

ad 1: This people [i.e. the people of Israel] was ruled under the special protection of God; hence it is said at Deuteronomy 7:6: ‘The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself.’ This is why the Lord reserved to Himself the appointment of the chief ruler. For this, too, did Moses pray (Numbers 27:16): ‘May the Lord the God of the spirits of all the flesh provide a man that may be over this multitude.’ Thus, by the command of God Joshua was set over them to succeed Moses; and it is said of each of the judges who came after Joshua that God ‘raised up a saviour’

for the people, and that ‘the Spirit of the Lord’ was in them (Judges 3:9, 10, 13). Hence the Lord did not leave the choice of a king to the people, but reserved it to Himself, as appears from Deuteronomy 17:14: ‘Thou shalt set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose.’

ad 2: Kingship is the best form of government for a people as long as it does not become corrupt. But because the power granted to a king is so great, it is easy for kingship to degenerate into tyranny unless he to whom such power is granted is a man of perfect virtue; for, as the Philosopher says at Ethics iv., ‘No one but the virtuous man can bear himself well in good fortune.’ But perfect virtue is found only in a few, and the Jews in particular were prone to cruelty and avarice, which vices above all cause men to become tyrants. And so the Lord did not at first institute for them kings having supreme power, but a judge and governor to protect them. Later, however, at the request of the people, he gave them a king, as though in anger, as is clear from what He said to Samuel at 1 Samuel 8:7: ‘They have not rejected thee, but me, that I should not reign over them.’ Nonetheless, as regards the institution of kingship, He did lay down the manner of election from the beginning (Deuteronomy 17:14f.), and in doing so He made two provisions: that is, in that making their choice they should look to the Lord’s judgment and not make a man of another nation their king (vs. 15), because such kings usually have little love for the people over whom they rule, and consequently do not care for them. And, second, He ordained how kings should conduct themselves when appointed: that is (vs. 16f.), that they should not multiply chariots and horses or wives or great riches, because it is through greed for such things that princes fall away into tyranny and forsake justice. He also laid down how they should conduct themselves towards God: that is (vs. 19), that they should always read and think upon the law of God, and live always in the fear and obedience of God. He also laid down how they should conduct themselves in relation to their subjects: that is (vs. 20), that they should not proudly despise them or oppress them or turn aside from justice.

ad 3: The division of the kingdom and the number of the kings was a punishment inflicted upon the people for their many rebellions, especially against the just rule of David, rather than a benefit conferred upon them for their advantage. Hence it is said at Hosea 13:17: ‘I will give you a king
in my wrath'; and at Hosea 8:4: 'They have reigned, but not by me; they have been princes, and I knew it not.'

Ad 4: The priestly office was handed down in succession from father to son so that it might be held in greater esteem than it would have enjoyed if the priesthood could be held simply by any member of the populace; for honour was to be given to the priests out of reverence for the Divine worship. Hence it was necessary to put certain things aside for them, in the form of both tithes and first fruits, and also obligations and sacrifices, so that they might be provided with a means of support. Rulers, on the other hand, were chosen from among the people, as stated above; and so they had their own possessions as a means of support: all the more so since the Lord forbade even a king to have excessive wealth or to make too great a show of magnificence, partly because [otherwise] he could hardly avoid the excesses of pride and tyranny arising from such things, and partly because, if the rulers were not unduly wealthy, and if their office involved much toil and care, the ambition of the common people would not be tempted by it and a cause of sedition would not arise.

Ad 5: This was not a right given to the king by Divine institution; rather, it was foretold that kings would usurp that right by degenerating into tyrants and oppressing their subjects. This is shown by the words which follow (vs. 17): 'And ye shall be his servants.' This signifies tyranny, for a tyrant rules his subjects as though they were his servants. Samuel spoke these words to discourage the people from asking for a king; but, as the passage goes on (vs. 10): 'the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel.' It may happen, however, that even a good king may take away the sons of his subjects and make them tribunes and centurions, and may take many other things for the sake of the common welfare, without thereby becoming a tyrant.

Obedience

(a) Summa theologiae Halle 104: On obedience

We come next to obedience; and here there are six things to consider:

1. Whether one man is bound to obey another
2. Whether obedience is a specific virtue
3. How it relates to other virtues
4. Whether God is to be obeyed in all things
5. Whether subjects are bound to obey their rulers in all things
6. Whether the faithful are bound to obey the secular powers

Articulus 1: Whether one man is bound to obey another

It seems that one man is not bound to obey another.

Objection 1: For nothing should be done contrary to Divine ordinance. But it is a Divine ordinance that man should be ruled by his own counsel, according to Ecclesiasticus 15:14: 'God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel.' Therefore one man is not bound to obey another.

Objection 2: Moreover, if someone were bound to obey another, the will of the one commanding him would be the rule of his conduct. But the only rule of human conduct is the Divine will, which is always right. Therefore man is bound to obey no one except God.

Objection 3: Moreover, the more freely service is given, the more acceptable it is. But what a man does out of duty is not freely given. Therefore if a man were bound by duty to obey others in performing good works, his good works would be rendered less acceptable by the fact that they were done under obedience. Therefore one man is not bound to obey another.