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# *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*

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# *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| 1st | First (unauthorized) edition of Hobbes's *Of Liberty and Necessity* (1654) |
| AV | Authorized Version (of the Bible) |
| *Def.* | First edition of Bramhall's *A Defence of True Liberty* (1655) |
| *DNB* | *Dictionary of National Biography* |
| ed. | Editor (of this volume) |
| *EW4* | Volume 4 of *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, edited by William Molesworth (1840) |
| *EW5* | Volume 5 of *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, edited by William Molesworth (1841) |
| MS | Harleian Manuscript of Hobbes's *Of Liberty and Necessity* |
| *ODEE* | *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* |
| *OED* | *Oxford English Dictionary* |
| *Ques.* | First edition of Hobbes's *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* (1656) |
| *W1* | First edition of Bramhall's Works (1676) |
| *W3* | Third edition of Bramhall's Works (1842–4) |

# Introduction

In 1645 the Marquess of Newcastle invited two of his acquaintances, Thomas Hobbes and John Bramhall, to have a philosophical discussion at his house in Paris. The three men were Englishmen, forced to live abroad by the Civil War at home; all three were prominent supporters of the by-then losing Royalist cause. Newcastle had been a commander in the Royalist army; Bramhall was not only a bishop in the Anglican Church but a forceful advocate of the King's position on matters of church governance; and Hobbes was a well-known political theorist whose recently published *De cive* was widely read as a defence of the English monarchy.

The subject set for the discussion was human freedom, on which the Marquess knew his guests had sharply different views; the discussion in fact became a debate between the two. After the event, Newcastle asked them to send him written statements setting forth their positions. Bramhall responded with a 'discourse' on liberty and necessity; and he must have sent a copy to Hobbes as well, for the latter's 'treatise' *Of Liberty and Necessity* followed Bramhall's work point for point, criticizing it in addition to presenting and defending his own views.[1] Bramhall responded in turn with *A Vindication of True Liberty from Antecedent and Extrinsical Necessity*, which was both a point-by-point defence of his original position against Hobbes's criticisms and a critical attack on Hobbes's position.

This might have been the end of the Hobbes–Bramhall debate on freedom but for a later event that none of the participants foresaw. Neither author had intended his written statement to be published. But a French friend of Hobbes's asked for a copy of his manuscript so that he might read it. This

[1] I call these two works Bramhall's 'discourse' and Hobbes's 'treatise' for convenience. Their authors did sometimes so refer to them, but these labels were not part of their titles.

friend knew no English, so he asked a young Englishman, apparently with Hobbes's permission, to translate it for him. This young man, one John Davies of Kidwelly, made a copy of the manuscript for himself, without Hobbes's permission; and several years later, in 1654, he published the work, with a polemical preface praising Hobbes and excoriating 'priests, jesuits, and ministers'. Bramhall, who was of course a priest, felt betrayed, sure as he was that Hobbes must at least have known his treatise was to be published. So Bramhall responded by publishing his earlier *Vindication*, with the title *A Defence of True Liberty from Antecedent and Extrinsical Necessity* (1655). Hobbes then responded with *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* (1656), and Bramhall in turn with his *Castigations of Mr Hobbes* (1658). Hobbes at that point chose not to answer back again; but even so, the original debate between the two authors had become an extended controversy.

This volume presents a major portion of that controversy. It contains the complete texts of Bramhall's original discourse and Hobbes's treatise, together with substantial selections from Bramhall's *Defence* and Hobbes's *Questions*. It also includes a few excerpts from four of Hobbes's other works: *The Elements of Law*, *Leviathan*, *De corpore*, and *De homine*.

The Hobbes–Bramhall controversy over freedom is a striking episode in the history of early modern philosophy. Both authors speak and argue with force and ingenuity; each has a knack for making his own position seem attractive and the other's not; and their opposition to one another is unyielding. Furthermore the subject of their dispute is of central importance, not only for our understanding of ourselves but for the conduct of our lives. Narrowly construed, the question between Hobbes and Bramhall concerns the nature of human freedom – the freedom with which, they both agree, human beings sometimes act. But the answer to that question depends upon our own nature, and the nature of the world within which we act – and also, at least for these two authors and for nearly all of their contemporaries, upon the nature of God and of our relation to him.[2] And on the other hand, our view of human freedom has implications for our conception and practice of morality and politics. Nor is this a question of merely historical interest. Philosophers, theologians, and scientists today are still very much concerned with it, to a significant

[2] Hobbes as well as Bramhall takes the Bible to be an important source of evidence or authority in deciding not only ethical and political issues but also metaphysical ones such as that concerning the nature of freedom and whether human beings have it.

extent in the same terms as those in which Hobbes and Bramhall confronted it.

Neither Hobbes's nor Bramhall's view of human freedom is wholly original. Hobbes is a determinist: he thinks that everything that happens, including every human action, is the necessary effect of antecedent causes. Bramhall, by contrast, thinks that some human actions are not necessitated by antecedent factors; these are the free actions we perform. Hobbes agrees that there are free actions; but he conceives freedom in such wise that it is logically consistent with necessity: his position is that which philosophers today call compatibilism. Freedom in Bramhall's view, however, is inconsistent with necessitation; he is an incompatibilist. An incompatibilist has two alternatives: accept necessity and forgo freedom or keep freedom and reject necessity. Since it is the latter that Bramhall opts for, his position is called libertarianism.[3]

But Hobbes was hardly the first determinist, or the first compatibilist, in the history of philosophy; nor was Bramhall the first libertarian. Positions of both these kinds had frequently been held by ancient and medieval philosophers, and both were being advocated by other thinkers in the early modern period, theologians as well as philosophers. Hobbes's view of freedom and necessity was quite similar to that of the Protestant Reformers, Luther and Calvin among others. And Bramhall's view was close to that of the most influential Catholic thinkers of the day, namely the Jesuits, who followed Molina and Suarez. It must not be thought that all Protestants were determinists and all Catholics libertarians. On the Catholic side, for example, there were the Jansenists, implacable opponents of the Jesuits on the matter of human freedom and necessity. And among Protestants, the followers of James Arminius had rejected the determinism of the orthodox Calvinists in Holland and developed a view of freedom that was much like that of the Jesuits. This Arminian position had also become influential in Stuart England, especially among the clergy. Bramhall himself was often identified as an Arminian.

Hobbes, of course, was more than merely a determinist, and Bramhall more than a libertarian, even in the works comprising their controversy

[3] Actually, an incompatibilist has a third alternative, since he may reject both freedom and necessity. And similarly, a compatibilist need not be a determinist, and need not allow freedom. For compatibilism and incompatibilism are views about the logical relationship of freedom and necessity; whether everything is necessary or whether there is freedom is another question. As a matter of historical fact, it is true that most compatibilists have been determinists and have believed in freedom, as Hobbes does; and that most incompatibilists have been libertarians, as Bramhall is.

over freedom. Each set his view of liberty, necessity, and their relation to one another within a comprehensive psychology and cosmology, and related it to distinctive ethical, political, and theological theories, though both Hobbes and Bramhall sought to stay within a broadly Christian, indeed Protestant, framework. And it is in these surrounding areas that some of the sharpest differences between Hobbes's and Bramhall's thinking are to be found – and also where their most original ideas emerge.

There are not, to be sure, very many original ideas to be found anywhere in Bramhall's thinking. His philosophical views in general are traditional and orthodox, replicating to a large extent the Aristotelian Scholasticism of the High Middle Ages, though sometimes with modifications introduced in the sixteenth century. Even Bramhall's theological views were largely those of the Scholastics – except where those had been rejected by the Protestant Reformers, for Bramhall was a fierce critic of 'Papism' in his writings and sermons. One valuable feature of Bramhall's contributions to the controversy with Hobbes, especially for modern readers, is their explanations of Scholastic ideas and terms, often done more simply and clearly than those of the Scholastics themselves.

There is more originality in Hobbes's contributions. For one thing Hobbes was a metaphysical materialist. Whereas most of his contemporaries acknowledged the existence of immaterial as well as material beings, Hobbes thought to reduce all things, including human minds, to matter. Such a position was no novelty in ancient times, but few thinkers in the mid seventeenth century maintained it, and virtually no Christian did. Being a materialist required Hobbes to develop a whole new psychology, since on the prevailing view the human mind or soul is an immaterial substance with special powers that can only be exemplified in such a substance. This is a task to which Hobbes devoted considerable effort. And apart from his materialism, Hobbes had already constructed a distinctive political philosophy, quite different from the views prevailing at the time; and some of these come into play in his treatise as well.

The most important part of Hobbes's materialist psychology for his view of human freedom concerns desire (or appetite) and will. These are the powers that have traditionally been taken to be most closely involved in the motivation of action: people perform actions because they will to perform them, and they will to perform the actions they do because they desire (or want) the things they think those actions will bring them. In the traditional psychology, maintained by the Scholastics and by Bramhall, desire and will

are sharply differentiated from one another. Desire is a power of the sensitive soul, which may well be purely material and is found in brute animals as well as in human beings. But will can only be ascribed to a soul that is rational, and a rational soul, because it must be immaterial, is only found in human beings.[4] For Hobbes, however, there are no immaterial beings, souls or anything else; and whatever powers human beings have are powers of material things. Hobbes concludes that there is no such thing as will as the Scholastics conceived it, and that the only factors motivating actions are desires, or species of desire. Hobbes does, however, give the word 'will' a place in his psychological vocabulary. Typically, when an agent is ready to act, he will have many different desires competing among themselves, so to speak, to produce the action that will be performed: this is the situation of a person deliberating about what to do. The one desire that wins this competition, the one that actually motivates the agent to act as he does, is what Hobbes calls the agent's 'will' with respect to the action performed. Thus, although there are wills for Hobbes, a will is not a distinctive kind of mental operation, different from a desire; wills rather constitute a subclass of desires.

There is much in Hobbes's ethical and political theory that is original as well. This is the area in which Hobbes worked most extensively throughout his life, and for his contributions to which he is best known. Baldly stated, his central view is that right and wrong, whether moral or legal, are defined in terms of laws arbitrarily decreed by some authoritative lawmaker, either the political sovereign within a civil society or, behind and in addition to that, God himself. Connected with this central premise is the claim that there is no independent standard of right apart from the lawmaker's will, no antecedent principle which determines or even influences his decrees. And from this Hobbes concludes that what God or the sovereign decrees to be right *is* right, just because he does decree it. This is tantamount to saying that might is right, since right is created by might – God's or the sovereign's power.

Hobbes brings these moral and political ideas into his debate with Bramhall in response to the latter's claim that if all actions are necessitated in advance, it follows that both the civil laws and God himself are unjust, because they condemn and punish men for doing wrongs they cannot help but do. Hobbes's answer to this is that God and the laws cannot be unjust,

[4] Among mortal creatures, that is. For angels also have – or rather are – immaterial souls, and angels have will and other rational powers accordingly.

by definition, and that justice requires not that a malefactor have been able to avoid his evil action but merely that he have done it voluntarily, in response to his own will. And this is perfectly consistent, Hobbes says, with the agent's having been necessitated to perform that action. As for punishment, the purpose of it in Hobbes's view is not vengeance or recompense for bad actions done in the past, but to prevent bad actions from being done in the future. On that understanding, punishment is justifiable even if the malefactor could not have avoided the action for which he is punished. Bramhall of course is repelled by all of these doctrines: Hobbes's voluntaristic account of right and of God's action and his utilitarian account of punishment are in direct conflict with the traditionally sanctioned ethical and theological views he holds.

Let us now take a closer look at the central issues in the Hobbes–Bramhall controversy and at the positions each author takes on them. These are the issues that directly concern the nature of freedom and of necessity.

For Bramhall, a free action is one that is not necessitated by 'antecedent and extrinsical' causes. He does not claim that free actions have no causes, only that their causes do not make it necessary that they occur. Nor does he deny that things other than human free actions are necessitated by their causes; on the contrary, he thinks that the vast majority of natural events – the things that happen in the natural world – do have causes that antecedently and extrinsically necessitate their occurrence. What differentiates free actions from natural events for Bramhall is that they are caused (or partly caused) by volitions, and that volitions themselves have no causes, or at least no causes either antecedent to their occurrence or extrinsic to themselves. A volition as Bramhall understands the term is an act of willing, an exercise of the rational faculty or power of willing, which power Bramhall calls the will; the actions volitions cause he calls voluntary.[5]

How is it then that volitions come about for Bramhall, if they are not caused (or fully caused) to do so? His answer is that they 'take [their] beginning from the faculty of the will' (*Defence*, § 30), that is, from the faculty or power of willing, acting independently and on its own. For the will is a

[5] Bramhall does not actually use the term 'volition' very often in his exchanges with Hobbes; he rather speaks of 'acts of the will' or 'acts of willing'. But 'volition' and 'act of the will' are synonymous in Scholastic usage, and Bramhall himself uses them as such in his *Defence*; see §27. Bramhall also makes 'election' and 'choice' acts of the will, but these terms are not synonymous with 'volition'. For although every (act of) election and every (act of) choice is a volition, the converse does not hold: there are volitions other than these, those namely whereby what is willed is a final end and not a means to some end.

special sort of power, unlike any other: it has, as Bramhall says, 'dominion . . . over itself' and also, thereby, 'dominion over its own acts to will or nill without extrinsical necessitation' (ibid., §§ 7, 32). Or, as he also puts it, the will 'has the power to move itself'; it 'determines itself' (ibid., §§ 20, 17). This does not mean that the will is not subject to external and antecedent influences; it means that no set of such influences suffices to make it act. Whether it produces a volition at all, or which volition it produces – whether one to perform or one not to perform a given action – is ultimately up to it.

An autonomous power of the sort the will is is a free power, in Bramhall's view, because its operation is not necessitated by causes other than itself. Since the products of the will's operations, that is, its volitions, are not caused, and hence not necessitated, by anything other than the will itself, these volitions are free as well. As for the voluntary actions to which free volitions in turn give rise, they are free because their causes – that is, these volitions – are free. Bramhall, in common with many metaphysicians of his time, held to the principle that if the cause of an event is necessary then the event is necessary too. But Bramhall also held the converse principle, that if the cause of an event is free then the event is free as well. Thus a voluntary action inherits its freedom or necessity from the volition that gives rise to it.[6]

Hobbes objects to Bramhall's account of freedom on several grounds. First, although he agrees that voluntary actions are those caused by volitions, he denies that these volitions are the exercises of a special kind of rational faculty or power, one uniquely possessed by human beings: there is no such power as 'the will' for Hobbes.[7] This denial is dictated by Hobbes's materialistic psychology, as we have seen. But secondly, and independently of that, Hobbes argues that no power of any being could have the properties that Bramhall attributes to it. Bramhall speaks of the will as performing actions and as suspending its act, as commanding and moving things, as being advised by the understanding, and so forth. These are

[6] It must be noted that although Bramhall's view of freedom (which is also the view of the Dutch Arminians) is Scholastic, in the sense that several Scholastic philosophers – Suarez, Molina, and Bellarmino, and perhaps Scotus too, among others – defended it, not every Scholastic philosopher did so. Thomas Aquinas did not, for one; some commentators have held that Aquinas was in fact a compatibilist with respect to freedom and necessity, and may even have been a kind of determinist: see e.g. James Petrik, 'Freedom as Self-Determination in the *Summa Theologiae*', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 27 (1989), 87–100.

[7] Hobbes, like Bramhall, rarely uses the term 'volition'; nor does he often speak of 'acts of the will', presumably because this term suggests a contrast with 'the will itself' or 'power of willing'. In his own vocabulary, Hobbes most often refers to volitions simply as 'wills', a will being a datable event or state occurring in the course of an agent's process of deliberation.

properties that logically require an agent, or at least a substance, for their subject; but powers themselves are properties of agents or substances, and one property cannot intelligibly be attributed to another. Hence Bramhall's very concept of the will is incoherent, according to Hobbes. It embodies what Gilbert Ryle would later call 'a category mistake'.

Finally, Hobbes attacks the idea that a being of any kind, whether power or agent or substance, should move or determine itself. For Hobbes it is a fundamental principle that 'nothing takes beginning from itself, but from the action of some other immediate agent without itself' (Treatise, § 30); and he maintains that a self-causing being is explicitly ruled out by this principle. Bramhall seeks to meet this objection by distinguishing beginning to be from beginning to act. He says he accepts Hobbes's principle with respect to the former but not with respect to the latter, and that it is only beginnings of action that he holds the will to 'take from itself' (*Defence*, § 33). Hobbes responds, however, that whenever something begins to act, there also is something that begins to be, namely an action; and he contends that Bramhall ends up 'contradicting what he had said but in the line before' (*Questions*, § 33).

What view of freedom, then, does Hobbes put forward as an alternative to Bramhall's? One essential feature of Hobbesian freedom is that it is logically compatible with necessity; so let us begin by considering how Hobbes conceives of necessity.

Hobbes defines 'necessary' as 'that which is impossible to be otherwise, or that which cannot possibly otherwise come to pass' (*Questions*, § 1). But this is unhelpful: any question we might have about the meaning of 'necessary' will apply equally to that of 'possible' and 'impossible'. More revealing is the connection that Hobbes sees between necessity and causation. A cause, he holds, is something that necessitates its effect, that makes it necessary for the effect to occur. Although Hobbes often speaks of necessary causes, suggesting that he might recognize causes other than necessary, this term is in fact a pleonasm for him: every cause is a necessary cause. Note that by 'necessary cause' Hobbes does not mean 'cause which itself must occur' but rather 'cause whose effect must occur'; a necessary cause is a cause that necessitates, not one that is necessitated. Nor does 'necessary cause' mean 'cause whose occurrence is necessary for the occurrence of its effect', as opposed to 'cause whose occurrence is sufficient therefor'. Indeed, Hobbes explicitly argues that a sufficient cause of an effect must be a necessary cause of it too (Treatise, § 31).

But what is the nature of the necessity that Hobbes thinks attaches to the causal relation? Modern philosophers (since Leibniz at least) distinguish two different species or kinds of necessity, 'logical' or 'analytic' on the one hand, 'synthetic' or 'natural' or 'physical' on the other. The one kind of necessity depends upon the logical relations that hold among concepts, or perhaps among the meanings of words. The other depends upon the laws according to which nature or the physical world actually operates. So one thing it would be helpful to know about Hobbes's view of necessity is whether he conceives it to be logical or physical. This is not a question, unfortunately, that he himself explicitly addresses; but there is a passage in his *De corpore* in which he says that when a cause is 'supposed to be present, it cannot be understood but that the effect is produced' (II.ix.3). This suggests that a cause not followed by its effect is inconceivable, a violation of the laws not merely of nature but of thought. And if so then Hobbes's view is that effects follow their causes with logical and not merely with physical necessity – the same view that was explicitly put forward later on in the seventeenth century by Spinoza.

Another indication that the necessity Hobbes has in mind is logical necessity is that he presents an argument in which the necessity in question is unmistakably logical. The argument is that (premise) it is necessary that a proposition of the form '*P* or not-*P*' is true; therefore (conclusion) either it is necessary that *P* is true, or it is necessary that not-*P* is true (Treatise, § 34). This is a blatantly fallacious argument, and Bramhall rightly calls Hobbes on it – an exchange that shows both that Hobbes is capable of bad reasoning and that Bramhall is capable of sound and penetrating criticism. But the point is that Hobbes intends this argument to establish something about the necessity that he is concerned with. And that necessity can only be logical: a proposition of the form '*P* or not-*P*' is true of necessity because it is a logical truth.

Hobbes holds that everything that is or happens has a necessary cause. It is important to note that he does not take the necessary cause of a particular being or action to be another particular being or action. He acknowledges that we may sometimes call a single particular event a cause: thus 'the last feather' may be said to 'break the horse's back' (Treatise, § 11). But this is really only part of the cause as a whole: the 'last cause' yet not the 'whole cause'. For Hobbes, the 'cause simply' or the 'entire cause' of any action, that which, he says, 'necessitates and determinates' it, 'is the sum of all things which . . . conduce and concur to [its] production' (ibid.). Furthermore,

since every member of such a 'concourse' of (partial) causes is itself 'determined to be such as it is by a like concourse of former causes', each of which is in its turn determined by another such concourse, and so on, and since all these causes were 'set and ordered by the eternal cause of all things, God Almighty', it follows that the entire cause of every present action is a vast series of collections of partial causes extending back to and including the original action by which God created all things. So God himself, or more precisely the will of God, though not the whole cause, is nonetheless a partial cause of everything that happens in the world.

Armed now with some understanding of Hobbes's conception of necessity, let us turn to the freedom that he holds to be compatible with it. In several texts he defines freedom (or liberty – the two terms are equivalent for him) as the absence of impediments to action, or more specifically, as the absence of external impediments, meaning those 'that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent' (Treatise, § 29; cf. *De cive* ix.9; *Leviathan* I.xiv). As he notes, even inanimate beings are free by this definition, so that water, for example, 'is said to descend freely, or to have liberty to descend, by the channel of the river, because there is no impediment that way; but not across, because the banks are impediments' (Treatise, § 29). But in his characterizations of the freedom of animate creatures – those which have appetites and thus are voluntary agents – Hobbes includes a reference to their wills, that is, to their acts of willing. Thus 'a *free man* is he, that in those things which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has a will to'; and the liberty of such a man 'consists in this, that he finds no stop in doing what he has the will . . . to do' (*Leviathan* I.xxi). More simply, 'a free agent is he that can do if he will, and forbear if he will' (Treatise, § 33).

Some commentators have been misled by this last statement; they think (understandably, it must be admitted) that Hobbes is saying an agent must be able both to do something and not to do that same thing, whichever he wills, in order to be free. But that is not Hobbes's position. An agent for him is free only with respect to particular actions, and doing *x* and not doing *x* are distinct particular actions, even though we say (loosely) that the *x* done and the *x* not done are 'the same action'. What Hobbes should have said is that 'a free agent is he that can do *x* if he wills to do *x*, or forbear doing *x* if he wills to forbear'. An even better way of stating his position would be: 'an agent is free with respect to a particular performance or forbearance only if he is able to carry out or accomplish that performance

or forbearance should he will to do so' – with the proviso, of course, that 'is able to accomplish' means not 'has the natural capacity or power to accomplish' but 'is not externally impeded from accomplishing'.[8]

It follows from Hobbes's account of freedom that every voluntary action that is actually performed is a free action, or as he puts it, that 'all voluntary acts are free' (he also takes the converse to be true) (*Questions*, § 28). For if a man wills to do something, and then actually does it, he must be able to do what he does, by the principle that what is actual is possible. And if he wills to do something, and then is prevented from doing it by some external impediment, he performs, not a voluntary action that is not free, but no action at all, and *a fortiori* no voluntary action.

All free human actions are voluntary for Hobbes, and all voluntary actions free. The question arises: what sorts of human actions are there besides those that are voluntary and free? What factors or conditions suffice in Hobbes's view to make an action non-voluntary or unfree? Necessity is not such a factor, since necessity is perfectly compatible with freedom as well as voluntariness – this is Hobbes's compatibilism – and indeed all free and voluntary actions are necessary – this is his determinism. Hobbes considers three sorts of actions that have traditionally been held to be unfree or non-voluntary: first, actions that are too trivial or habitual or sudden to be thought about before being performed; second, actions an agent is forced to do by some agent other than himself; and third, actions an agent is compelled to do by threats or dangers or other such external circumstances.

Actions of the first kind have usually been thought to be indeliberate, that is, not preceded by deliberation. And philosophers since Aristotle have made deliberation a precondition of will: an act of willing occurs only at the end of a deliberative process. Since sudden actions are supposed to happen too quickly for deliberation, and trivial actions not to need deliberation, such actions are held not to be preceded by volitions and hence not voluntary. Hobbes's treatment of such cases is curious. He does not deny that a voluntary action must be deliberate, or that an act of willing must be preceded by deliberation – indeed, he defines an act of willing as the last desire occurring in a process of deliberation. Rather, what he claims is that such

[8] Hobbes's position here is thus different from Locke's, for whom it is *true* that an agent must be able both to do something and not to do that same thing, whichever he wills, in order to be free (see *Essay concerning Human Understanding* II.xxi). Some commentators have misconstrued Locke's position too; and some, because they have misunderstood Locke, or Hobbes, or both, have mistaken the relation between Locke's and Hobbes's views of freedom.

actions are not really indeliberate. An agent who does something suddenly or automatically, Hobbes says, though he may not deliberate about that very action at that very moment, nonetheless had time or occasion 'to deliberate all the precedent time of his life whether he should do that kind of action or not' (Treatise, § 25). So such actions are voluntary after all.

An action that is forced, by contrast, is not voluntary for Hobbes; indeed, it is involuntary, an action done against the agent's will. So force seems to be a factor that does keep an action from being voluntary, and hence free. In one place Hobbes maintains, however, that it is not proper to attribute forced actions to their nominal agents; they are really the actions of the agents who do the forcing. Thus 'when a man by force, seizing on another man's limbs, moves them as himself, not as the other man pleases . . . the action so done [is not] the action of him that suffers, but of him that uses the force' (*Questions*, § 19). It is not clear whether Hobbes means to generalize this judgement, to make it apply to all cases of forced action. But if he does, then such actions are not involuntary either. For they are voluntary actions on the part of their true agents, the agents who use the force.

As for actions that are compelled, these Hobbes regards as simply and straightforwardly voluntary. Compulsion is effective in causing an action only to the extent that it works upon the will of the agent; and when it does it is the agent's will that immediately causes his action. A man, Hobbes says, 'is then only said to be compelled when fear makes him willing to [do something], as when a man willingly throws his goods into the sea to save himself, or submits to his enemy for fear of being killed' (Treatise, § 19). Hobbes acknowledges that compulsion is sometimes confused with force. People say that circumstances 'force' them to do things that it is in their power to forbear doing, and on the other hand that (Bramhall's example) 'a Christian [drawn] by plain force to the idol's temple' is 'compelled' to go there. But these ways of speaking, Hobbes thinks, violate 'the propriety of the English tongue' (*Questions*, § 19). Properly speaking, force does and compulsion does not preclude voluntariness and freedom.

Bramhall is vehemently opposed to Hobbes's view of freedom, as he is to most other parts of the Hobbesian philosophy. Sometimes the criticisms that he aims at particular points about freedom, however, are really directed to the broader psychological and metaphysical doctrines from which these points follow. Thus Bramhall ridicules the idea that freedom should be possessed by brute animals such 'as bees and spiders' (*Defence*, § 3). But

this is just a consequence of Hobbes's reduction of will to sensitive appetite – a dictum of his general psychology. Sometimes Bramhall's objections rest upon a different understanding of crucial terms, including the terms 'free' and 'liberty' themselves. Thus he charges that Hobbes, by making liberty depend upon the absence solely of external impediments, 'cuts [it] off . . . from inward impediments also, as if a hawk were at liberty to fly when her wings are plucked, but not when they are tied' (*Defence*, § 33). Hobbes, in responding, pleads guilty to the charge, but counters that 'to say, when her wings are plucked, that [the hawk] wanted the liberty to fly, were to speak improperly and absurdly' (*Questions*, § 33). This move is typical for Hobbes: in such terminological disputes he regularly claims that his usage conforms with that of 'the common people, on whose arbitration depends the signification of words in common use', whether the tongue be English or Latin or Greek (*Questions*, § 8).

Another charge that Bramhall makes against Hobbes's account of liberty is that it is refuted by certain passages in Holy Scripture, and he lists several of these (Discourse, §§ 6–12). But Hobbes argues in each case that the passage in question does not actually say – or at least need not be interpreted as saying – what Bramhall takes it to do. And indeed Hobbes beats Bramhall at his own game in appealing to the Bible. For in his *Questions* (in a long discussion not included in this volume) Hobbes lists all the 'places of scripture' which he takes to bear in any way upon the nature of freedom. These he divides into three 'sorts': (1) those 'that make for me', (2) those 'that make equally for the Bishop and me', and (3) 'those which seem to make against me'. He then undertakes to show one by one that no passage of the third sort really does weigh against him (*Questions*, pp. 6–15 in *EW5*). As might be expected, Bramhall has more to say about the interpretation of these passages in his *Castigations of Mr Hobbes*.

Bramhall does put his finger on one point that appears to be a genuine difficulty for Hobbes's account. The official definition of liberty is that it is the absence of external impediments – impediments which keep one from doing what he wills to do in the case of an animate agent. But in more than one passage Hobbes characterizes a voluntary free agent as one who has not yet stopped deliberating – as if such an agent is not free once he does stop deliberating (Treatise, § 28; *Questions*, § 25; *The Elements of Law* xii.1; *Leviathan* I.vi). Not only does this suggest a different account of freedom; it suggests one that seems to be in conflict with the official definition. Bramhall indeed proposes a pair of counter-examples: 'There may be outward

impediments even whilst [an agent] is deliberating, as a man deliberates whether he shall play at tennis, and at the same time the door of the tennis court is fast locked against him. And after a man has ceased to deliberate, there may be no outward impediments, as when a man resolves not to play at tennis because he finds himself ill-disposed, or because he will not hazard his money. So the same person, at the same time, should be free and not free, not free and free' (*Defence*, § 25). Hobbes's response does not really dispose of the difficulty. The Bishop is deceived, he writes, in thinking that 'there may be outward impediments even whilst [an agent] is deliberating. For though [the agent] may deliberate of that which is impossible for him to do, as in the example he alleges of him that deliberates whether he shall play at tennis, not knowing that the door of the tennis-court is shut against him; yet it is no impediment to him that the door is shut till he have a will to play, which he has not till he has done deliberating whether he shall play or not' (*Questions*, § 25). There may be some way of resolving this difficulty;[9] but even if so, it is misleading of Hobbes to have introduced this alternative characterization of a free agent into his account.[10]

On the central and fundamental issues concerning the nature of freedom, Bramhall is often reduced, in responding to Hobbes, simply to asserting his own contrary position. And this may be the best and most effective response he could make. For despite all its intricacy and alleged incoherencies, Bramhall's libertarianism is founded on two powerful intuitions. One is an intuition regarding the logical relation between necessity and freedom; it is perhaps an intuition, ultimately, about the meanings of the terms 'free' and 'necessary' as they are applied to human behaviour and to natural events. It is on this intuition that Bramhall's incompatibilism is based; and he is hardly alone among thinkers in having felt its power. The other intuition is the one that, given incompatibilism, drives Bramhall to opt for freedom rather than universal necessitation. This is an intuition regarding the implications of morality, and in particular the preconditions of justice and moral responsibility. Many thinkers for many centuries have joined with Bramhall in holding that an agent cannot do wrong or right, practise justice or injustice, or be accountable for anything done, unless he or she is

[9] I have proposed one myself in my article in the *Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, pp. 1223–5.

[10] He may have done so on etymological grounds, for in *The Elements of Law* xii.1 he writes 'that deliberation signifies the taking away of our own liberty' (cf. *Leviathan* I.vi). But Hobbes was wrong about the etymology of 'deliberation'. According to the *ODEE*, the word is derived from the Latin *librare*, meaning 'to weigh', and not from *liberare*, meaning 'to free'.

a free agent, free not merely in the compatibilist's sense of being able to act in accordance with his or her will but in the sense of being able to avoid doing what she or he does, of being able to do something other than that.

As for Hobbes's position vis-à-vis these two intuitions, just as Bramhall ultimately simply accepts them, so Hobbes ultimately simply rejects them. Many thinkers have joined Hobbes in rejecting the first: compatibilism has been a popular position in the history of philosophy. But only a few have been with him in rejecting the second. It is true that Hobbes goes to some lengths – more than most others have done – to provide an account of morality that looks consistent with compatibilist freedom. But this account is typically given short shrift – as it is by Bramhall in his controversy with Hobbes – by those thinkers who are antecedently committed to the libertarian understanding of freedom – the very understanding that the Hobbesian moral theorist is seeking to undermine.

On the other hand, there is a fundamental positive intuition underlying the Hobbesian position. This is that everything that happens is dependent on other things that have already happened, the conviction that everything has a cause. If this intuition is taken as primary, as it is by Hobbes and his determinist followers, then the only way to make room for freedom is to conceive it in the compatibilist's manner. For few thinkers have been willing baldly to deny that there is any kind of freedom that human beings possess. Perhaps this conviction too, that humans have some kind of freedom, has the status of an intuition, but it is clear that compatibilism itself does not. That position is widely seen to be one that a thinker is led to adopt by more fundamental considerations.

Because the positions of Bramhall and Hobbes are, each of them, so firmly rooted in convictions which seem so compelling, and yet are so radically opposed to one another, some thinkers have thought it futile to argue about them. And yet argue about them we do. The questions at issue continue to provoke and to fascinate us, and each of the positions themselves continues to find fervent supporters. And so the discussion of liberty and necessity, not begun but powerfully advanced by Bramhall and Hobbes, goes on, even into our own day – or rather especially into our own day. For the free-will problem, as it is now apt to be called, is one of the most actively debated topics among contemporary philosophers, both in classrooms and in professional journals. The Further Reading section below lists several sources designed to help readers learn more about these current heirs to the Hobbes–Bramhall debate.

# Chronology

Most recent scholars agree on most of the information given below. Where they differ, I follow, for Hobbes's dates, Richard Tuck in the revised version of his edition of *Leviathan* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); and, for Bramhall's dates, the Bramhall article in the *DNB*.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1588 | Hobbes born at Malmesbury in Wiltshire |
| 1594 | Bramhall born at Pontefract in Yorkshire |
| 1602 | Hobbes enters Magdalen Hall, Oxford |
| 1603 | Queen Elizabeth dies; James VI of Scotland becomes King James I of England |
| 1608 | Hobbes graduates BA; appointed tutor to the son (also named William) of William Cavendish, Baron Hardwick; goes to live with the Cavendish family at Hardwick Hall and Chatsworth in Derbyshire and Devonshire House in London |
| 1609 | Bramhall enters Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge |
| 1612 | Bramhall graduates BA |
| 1614 | Hobbes begins tour of France and Italy with Lord Cavendish's son |
| 1615 | Hobbes back in England |
| 1616 | Bramhall takes MA and enters holy orders; given church positions in Yorkshire |
| 1618 | Lord Cavendish created first Earl of Devonshire |
| 1619–23 | Hobbes serves as amanuensis to Francis Bacon (at some time during this period) |
| 1623 | Bramhall takes BD |
| 1625 | James I dies; Charles I succeeds to the throne |

1626 First Earl of Devonshire dies; his son (Hobbes's former pupil) becomes second Earl

1628 Second Earl of Devonshire dies; his son (also named William) becomes third Earl

Bramhall appointed subdean of Ripon

1628 Hobbes leaves the service of the Cavendish family

1629 Hobbes's translation of Thucydides' history published at London

Hobbes goes to live with the family of Sir Gervase Clifton in Nottinghamshire

1630 Bramhall takes DD

Hobbes begins tour of France and Geneva with Clifton's son; returns to England, rejoins the Cavendish family; begins association with William Cavendish, first Earl (later Marquess, later Duke) of Newcastle, nephew of the first Earl of Devonshire, at Welbeck in Nottinghamshire

1633 Bramhall becomes chaplain to Thomas Wentworth, Lord Deputy of Ireland

1634 Bramhall appointed Bishop of Derry in Ireland

Hobbes begins tour of France and Italy with the third Earl of Devonshire

1635 Hobbes associates with Mersenne, Gassendi, and other French thinkers in Paris

1636 Hobbes visits Galileo in Florence; returns to England

1640 Hobbes completes manuscript of *The Elements of Law* (published in two parts 1650); flees England, settles in Paris

1641 Bramhall accused of high treason by the Irish House of Commons, imprisoned in Dublin

Hobbes writes Objections to Descartes' *Meditations*

1642 English civil war begins

Bramhall released from prison; moves back to Yorkshire, where he associates with the Marquess of Newcastle

Hobbes's *De cive* published at Paris

1644 Bramhall flees Britain with Newcastle after the battle of Marston Moor, settles first in Hamburg and then in various cities in Belgium and Holland

1645 Bramhall and Hobbes discuss liberty and necessity at the house of Newcastle in Paris; each then states his position in writing;

Bramhall writes his *A Vindication of True Liberty* (published 1655 as *A Defence of True Liberty*) in response to Hobbes's statement

1646 English civil war ends
Hobbes appointed reader in mathematics to the Prince of Wales (the future Charles II) in Paris

1647 Hobbes seriously ill

1648 Bramhall returns briefly to Ireland, but after several 'dangers and difficulties' is forced to flee again to the Continent; he spends the next several years residing for brief periods at several Dutch and Belgian cities

1649 Charles I beheaded in London; English monarchy abolished; Commonwealth established

1651 Hobbes's *Leviathan* published at London

1652 Hobbes returns to England, resumes service with the Cavendish family

1653 Protectorate established; Cromwell becomes Lord Protector of England

1654 Hobbes's *Of Liberty and Necessity* published at London by John Davies of Kidwelly

1655 Bramhall's *A Defence of True Liberty* published at London
Hobbes's *De corpore* published at London

1656 Hobbes's *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* published at London

1658 Cromwell dies
Hobbes's *De homine* published at London
Bramhall's *Castigations of Mr Hobbes* (with *The Catching of Leviathan* as an appendix) published at London

1660 English monarchy restored, with Charles II as King
Bramhall returns to England
Hobbes's *Examinatio et emendatio mathematicae hodiernae* published at London

1661 Bramhall made Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of Ireland; elected Speaker of the Irish House of Lords
Hobbes's *Dialogus physicus, sive de natura aeris* published at London

1662 Hobbes's *Problemata physica* published at London

| | |
|---|---|
| 1663 | Bramhall dies in Dublin |
| 1666 | Hobbes's *De principiis et ratiocinatione geometrarum* published at London |
| | Hobbes writes *A Dialogue between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England* (published 1681) |
| 1668 | Hobbes writes *An Answer to ... 'The Catching of Leviathan'* (published 1682) |
| | Hobbes's *Opera philosophica* published at Amsterdam |
| 1669 | Hobbes's *Quadratura circuli* published at London |
| 1670 | Hobbes writes *Behemoth* (published 1679) |
| 1676 | Bramhall's *Works* published at Dublin |
| 1678 | Hobbes's *Decameron physiologicum* published at London |
| 1679 | Hobbes dies at Hardwick |

# Further reading

Hobbes's treatise *Of Liberty and Necessity* was first published at London in 1654. This was followed by Bramhall's *A Defence of True Liberty from Antecedent and Extrinsical Necessity* (1655), Hobbes's *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* (1656), and Bramhall's *Castigations of Mr Hobbes his last Animadversions* (1658). Bramhall's *Defence* has been reprinted by Garland (New York, 1977), and a French translation of Hobbes's treatise, *De la liberté et de la nécessité*, with excellent introduction and notes by Franck Lessay, was recently published at Paris (Vrin, 1993). Otherwise, these works have not been reissued in separate editions (except for Hobbes's treatise once or twice), but they have been included in various collections.

The most comprehensive collection of Hobbes's works is that published in two series by Sir William Molesworth at London in 1839–45: *The English Works* in eleven volumes, and *Opera philosophica quae latine scripsit* in five. A large selection from the former is included in the Past Masters series of electronic texts edited by Mark Rooks and published by InteLex (Charlottesville, VA, 1992). A new critical edition of Hobbes's works was started in the 1980s by Oxford University Press, but so far only two works have been published: *De cive*, edited by Howard Warrender (1983); and Hobbes's extant *Correspondence*, edited in two volumes by Noel Malcolm. Malcolm's notes to this edition contain a great deal of useful information about Hobbes's life and times.

Bramhall's collected works were first published in two similar editions at Dublin in 1676 and 1677. A new edition in five volumes was published at Oxford in 1842–5; this is still the standard edition.

Among the other works that Hobbes himself published, the most important are *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* (London, 1650); *De cive*

(Paris, 1642) (translated as *Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Society* and published at London in 1651); *Leviathan* (London, 1651); and *De corpore* (London, 1655).

A critical edition of *The Elements of Law*, edited by Ferdinand Tönnies, was published at London in 1889. The text of this edition is also included in Rooks's electronic collection of Hobbes's works; and it has been reprinted in a recent Oxford World's Classics edition prepared by G. C. A. Gaskin (1994).

The *Philosophical Rudiments* is one of two works contained in a useful volume edited by Bernard Gert: *Hobbes: Man and Citizen* (Garden City, NY, 1972; reprinted by Hackett (Indianapolis, IN, 1991)). The other work in this volume is a translation (the first ever into English) of the first part of *De homine* by Charles T. Wood, T. S. K. Scott-Craig, and Bernard Gert.

*Leviathan* is currently available in several editions. The best are those edited by Richard Tuck (Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Edwin Curley (Hackett, 1994). Also worthy of note is the electronic text established by Rooks in his Past Masters series.

Useful research tools for the study of Hobbes include the recent *Hobbes Dictionary* by A. P. Martinich (Oxford, Blackwell, 1995) and two bibliographies. *Thomas Hobbes: A Bibliography*, by Hugh Macdonald and Mary Hargreaves (London, 1952) lists editions of Hobbes's works and collections thereof; and William Sacksteder's *Hobbes Studies: A Bibliography* (Bowling Green, OH, Philosophy Documentation Center, 1982) covers the secondary literature up to 1980.

An illuminating commentary on the Hobbes–Bramhall controversy was written by Leibniz in the early eighteenth century. This was originally published as an appendix to *Essais de théodicée* (Amsterdam, 1710). An English version of this work is included in the English *Theodicy* translated by E. M. Huggard and edited by Austin Farrar (London, 1951; reprinted by Open Court (La Salle, IL, 1985)).

Recent articles on Hobbes's views on liberty and necessary (for little has been written on Bramhall's) include M. M. Goldsmith, 'Hobbes on Liberty', *Hobbes Studies*, 2 (1989), 23–39; F. C. Hood, 'The Change in Hobbes's Definition of Liberty', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 17 (1967), 150–63; Graeme Hunter, 'The Fate of Thomas Hobbes', *Studia Leibnitiana*, 21 (1989), 5–20; Cees Leijenhorst, 'Hobbes's Theory of Causality', *Monist*, 79 (1996), 426–47; Quentin Skinner, 'Thomas Hobbes on the Proper Signification of Liberty', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, ser. 5, 40 (1990), 121–51; and A. G. Wernham, 'Liberty and Obligation in

Hobbes', in *Hobbes Studies*, edited by K. C. Brown (Oxford, Blackwell, 1965), 117–39.

The best introduction to Hobbes's life, times, and thought in general is Richard Tuck's *Hobbes* (Oxford University Press, 1989). Other good introductory studies are Richard Peters, *Hobbes* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1956), and D. D. Raphael, *Hobbes: Morals and Politics* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1977). More advanced works include G. C. Robertson, *Hobbes* (Edinburgh, 1886); S. I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan* (Cambridge University Press, 1962); Tom Sorell, *Hobbes* (London, Routledge, 1986); and *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, edited by Sorell (Cambridge University Press, 1996). For historical and philosophical background, respectively, see Christopher Hill's *The Century of Revolution 1603–1714* (Edinburgh, 1961; reprinted New York, Norton, 1966) and *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, edited by Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

There is a huge recent literature on the topics of the Hobbes–Bramhall debate, much of it in the form of journal articles. Good collections of such articles are *Free Will*, edited by Gary Watson (Oxford University Press, 1982); *Moral Responsibility*, edited by John Martin Fischer (Cornell University Press, 1986); *Causation*, edited by Ernest Sosa and Michael Tooley (Oxford University Press, 1993); and *The Philosophy of Action*, edited by Alfred R. Mele (Oxford University Press, 1997). For initial orientation, the following books should be helpful: Anthony Kenny's *Will, Freedom and Power* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1975); Jennifer Trusted's *Free Will and Responsibility* (Oxford University Press, 1984); Ted Honderich's *How Free Are You? The Determinism Problem* (Oxford University Press, 1993); and Peter Van Inwagen's *An Essay on Free Will* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983). The first three of these are especially suitable for beginners in philosophy.

# Note on the text

The works and selections contained in this volume have all been newly edited. As copy texts I have, with three exceptions, used the versions included in Molesworth's edition of *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* (abbreviated *EW* followed by an arabic numeral to indicate the volume thereof) and reissued in electronic form by Mark Rooks in the Past Masters series published by InteLex. The three exceptions are Hobbes's *The Elements of Law*, *Leviathan*, and *De homine*. Here my copy texts were taken, in the first case, from the 1889 edition by Ferdinand Tönnies (also reissued by Rooks); in the second, from Rooks's own text based on the 1651 first edition; and in the third, from the English translation in Bernard Gert's *Hobbes: Man and Citizen*. Fuller information about these sources is provided in the Further Reading section.

When Bramhall responded to Hobbes's treatise in his *Defence of True Liberty*, he included not only the passages by Hobbes to which he was replying, but also the passages from his original discourse which Hobbes discussed in his treatise. The *Defence* consists, therefore, of three different works printed together. Hobbes followed the same pattern in his *Questions*, with his 'Animadversions' to Bramhall's replies adding a fourth work to the three in Bramhall's book.

Thus it is that Molesworth's (and Rooks's) version of Hobbes's *Questions* could serve as a copy text for Bramhall's discourse and *Defence*, as well as for the Animadversions by Hobbes that it alone contains. Since Bramhall's discourse was not published by itself, I have simply extracted the text of it from the Molesworth–Rooks text of Hobbes's *Questions*. I have checked this against (a) the original 1654 edition of the *Defence* (abbreviated *Def.*), (b) the first edition of Bramhall's *Works* (*W1*), and (c) the third edition of

these *Works* (*W3*). I have departed from Molesworth's text in only nine instances; in four of these I follow *Def.* and in four *W1*, and in these eight cases my emendation is silent. In the remaining one case I have made my own emendation, going against *Def.*, *W1*, and *W3*, as well as *EW5*; this case is recorded in note 45.

For Hobbes's treatise I have taken the Molesworth–Rooks text of it in *EW4*, which is based upon the 1654 first edition published by Davies, as copy text, and checked it against (a) the first edition itself (abbreviated 1st), (b) the 1655 first edition of Bramhall's *Defence* (which apparently was based, not upon the first edition of Hobbes's work, but upon the copy of his manuscript that he had given to Bramhall in 1645), and (c) the 1656 first edition of Hobbes's *Questions* (*Ques.*). There is also a manuscript of Hobbes's treatise (complete but for a missing last page), part of the Harley collection now in the British Library; and a recent French translation of it done, with extensive introduction and notes, by Franck Lessay. I have checked the *EW4* text against (d) this manuscript (MS) and compared it with (e) the Lessay translation and textual notes. As a result I have emended the Molesworth–Rooks text in more than 250 instances, following MS in approximately 130 of these and *Def.* in approximately 90. In the remaining cases my emendation is based either on 1st, from which Molesworth's text occasionally diverges, or on *Ques.*, or on my own judgement. I have made most of these emendations silently; in only about 30 cases have I recorded the variant readings in footnotes.

I have drawn my selections from Bramhall's *Defence* from the Molesworth–Rooks *EW5* text of Hobbes's *Questions*. I have compared this text with *Def.* and with the texts of this work included in *W1* and *W3*, and have made a few (mostly silent) emendations on the basis of these or my own judgement.

My selections from Hobbes's *Questions* are also drawn from Molesworth's and Rooks's *EW5* text; I have compared this with *Ques.*, and again made a few emendations on the basis thereof or on my own.

The selections from Hobbes's *The Elements of Law*, *De corpore*, and *De homine* are based entirely on the Tönnies–Rooks, the Molesworth–Rooks, and the Gert texts, respectively. In the case of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, I have compared Rooks's text with that of Richard Tuck in his 1991 edition. I have made only a few emendations in these selected texts, all but two of them silently.

In all the works included here I have altered spelling and punctuation

and the use of capitals and italics, in an effort to make them more accessible to contemporary readers. In a few cases, I have added or deleted paragraph breaks to make clearer the structure of the work in question.

A '+' at the end of a passage in Hobbes's treatise indicates that Bramhall's response to that passage in his *Defence* is included in the selections from that work that are contained in this volume. The same sign at the end of a passage in Bramhall's *Defence* means that Hobbes's response to that passage in his *Questions* is included in the selections from that work that are contained here.

Hobbes and Bramhall each cite one another's words in the works they are criticizing, sometimes quoting them exactly but more often merely paraphrasing them. In his editions, Molesworth often enclosed these cited words in inverted commas, without distinguishing between paraphrases and exact quotations. In my version of Hobbes's treatise and in my selections from Bramhall's *Defence* and Hobbes's *Questions* I have followed Molesworth's practice. But readers are hereby warned: sometimes the words that Bramhall and Hobbes attribute to one another in these works, even though enclosed in inverted commas, do not appear exactly as they occur in the other's text.

Hobbes and Bramhall both refer to and quote from the Bible. Their source is the authorized or King James version [AV], but they do not always quote it with perfect accuracy. I have not altered inaccurate quotations in the text, but have provided correct versions in notes.

They also cite a number of classical, medieval, and early modern works. I have checked their references to classical works against the Loeb Classical Library editions thereof, but without identifying these editions individually. Their references to medieval and early modern works I have checked against standard editions of these works. In these citations I have not included page numbers, only letters and numbers marking books, chapters, sections, or lines, which are constant across editions.

Non-English words and phrases are set in italics and followed by an English translation in square brackets. Translations are usually mine, but are often based on those of the Loeb or other standard translations consulted.

Bramhall numbered the sections of his discourse and of Hobbes's treatise in his *Defence*, and Hobbes used the same numbers (occasionally placing them somewhat differently) in his *Questions*. I have added these numbers to the text of Bramhall's original discourse and to Hobbes's treatise as well.

Note that not all of the sections numbered in Bramhall's *Defence* have counterparts in his discourse and Hobbes's treatise, so some numbers are missing in these works as printed here.

# Bramhall's discourse of liberty and necessity

**§ 3** Either I am free to write this discourse for liberty against necessity, or I am not free. If I be free, then I have obtained the cause, and ought not to suffer for the truth. If I be not free, yet I ought not to be blamed, since I do it not out of any voluntary election, but out of an inevitable necessity.

**§ 4** And so to fall in hand with the question without any further proems or prefaces, by liberty I do understand neither a liberty from sin, nor a liberty from misery, nor a liberty from servitude, nor a liberty from violence. But I understand a liberty from necessity, or rather from necessitation, that is, a universal immunity from all inevitability and determination to one, whether it be of exercise only, which the Schools call a liberty of contradiction and is found in God and in the good and bad angels, that is, not a liberty to do both good and evil, but a liberty to do or not to do this or that good, this or that evil, respectively; or whether it be a liberty of specification and exercise also, which the Schools call liberty of contrariety and is found in men endowed with reason and understanding, that is, a liberty to do and not to do good and evil, this or that.[1]

**§ 5** Thus the coast being cleared, the next thing to be done is to draw out our forces against the enemy. And because they are divided into two squadrons, the one of Christians, the other of heathen philosophers, it will be best to dispose ours also into two bodies, the former drawn from Scripture, the latter from reason.

[1] Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I–II.ix.1, I–II.x.2; Bellarmino, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* III.iii.

## Proofs of liberty out of Scripture

§ **6** First, whosoever have power of election have true liberty, for the proper act of liberty is election. A spontaneity may consist with determination to one, as we see in children, fools, madmen, brute beasts, whose fancies are determined to those things which they act spontaneously, as the bees make honey, the spiders webs. But none of these have a liberty of election, which is an act of judgment and understanding, and cannot possibly consist with a determination to one. He that is determined by something before himself or without himself cannot be said to choose or elect, unless it be as the junior of the mess chooses in Cambridge, whether he will have the least part or nothing. And scarcely so much.

But men have liberty of election. This is plain: if a wife make a vow it is left to her husband's choice either to establish it or to make it void.[2] And: 'Choose you this day whom you will serve, . . . But I and my house will serve the Lord.'[3] He makes his own choice and leaves them to the liberty of their election. And: 'I offer thee three things: choose thee which of them I shall do.'[4] If one of these three things was necessarily determined, and the other two impossible, how was it left to him to choose what should be done? Therefore we have true liberty.

§ **9** Secondly, they who might have done, and may do, many things which they leave undone; and they who leave undone many things which they might do, are neither compelled nor necessitated to do what they do, but have true liberty. But we might do many things which we do not, and we do many things which we might leave undone, as is plain: 'Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies.'[5] God gave Solomon his choice. He might have asked riches, but then he had not asked wisdom, which he did ask. He did ask wisdom, but he might have asked riches, which yet he did not ask. And: 'After it was sold, was it not in thine own power?'[6] It was in his own power to give it, and it was in his own power to retain it. Yet if he did give it, he could not retain it; and if he did retain

[2] Numbers 30:13. The AV reads: 'Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her [sc. a wife's] husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.'

[3] Joshua 24:15. The AV reads: 'choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord'.

[4] 2 Samuel 24:12. The AV reads: 'I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.'

[5] 1 Kings 3:11. [6] Acts 5:4.

it, he could not give it. Therefore we may do what we do not, and we do not what we might do. That is, we have true liberty from necessity.

§ **10** Thirdly, if there be no true liberty, but all things come to pass by inevitable necessity, then what are all those interrogations and objurgations and reprehensions and expostulations which we find so frequently in holy Scriptures (be it spoken with all due respect) but feigned and hypocritical exaggerations? 'Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded that thou shouldst not eat?'[7] And he said to Eve, 'Why hast thou done this?'[8] And to Cain, 'Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance cast down?'[9] And: 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?'[10] Does God command him[11] openly not to eat, and yet secretly by himself or by the second causes necessitate him to eat? Does he reprehend him for doing that which he has antecedently determined that he must do? Does he propose things under impossible conditions? Or were not this plain mockery and derision? Does a loving master chide his servant because he does not come at his call, and yet knows that the poor servant is chained and fettered so as he cannot move, by the master's own order, without the servant's default or consent? They who talk here of a twofold will of God, secret and revealed, and the one opposite to the other, understand not what they say. These two wills concern several persons. The secret will of God is what he will do himself; the revealed will of God is what he would have us to do. It may be the secret will of God to take away the life of the father, yet it is God's revealed will that his son should wish his life and pray for his life. Here is no contradiction, where the agents are distinct. But for the same person to command one thing, and yet to necessitate him that is commanded to do another thing; to chide a man for doing that, which he has determined inevitably and irresistibly that he must do; this were (I am afraid to utter what they are not afraid to assert) the highest dissimulation. God's chiding proves man's liberty.

§ **11** Fourthly, if either the decree of God or the foreknowledge of God or the influence of the stars or the concatenation of causes or the physical or moral efficacy of objects or the last dictate of the understanding do take away true liberty, then Adam before his fall had no true liberty. For he was

[7] Genesis 3:11. The AV reads: 'Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?'

[8] Genesis 3:13. The AV reads: 'What is this that thou hast done?'

[9] Genesis 3:6. The AV reads: 'Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?'

[10] Ezekiel 18:31. [11] command him: ed.; command: *Def.*, *Ques.*, *W1*, *W3*.

subjected to the same decrees, the same prescience, the same constellations, the same causes, the same objects, the same dictates of the understanding. But *quicquid ostendes mihi sic, incredulus odi* [Whatever you show me so, I disbelieve and I hate].[12] The greatest opposers of our liberty are as earnest maintainers of the liberty of Adam. Therefore none of these supposed impediments take away true liberty.

§ **12** Fifthly, if there be no liberty, there shall be no day of doom, no last judgment, no rewards nor punishments after death. A man can never make himself a criminal if he be not left at liberty to commit a crime. No man can be justly punished for doing that which was not in his power to shun. To take away liberty hazards heaven, but undoubtedly it leaves no hell.

## Proofs of liberty drawn from reason

§ **13** The first argument is *Herculeum* or *Baculinum* [the stick], drawn from that pleasant passage between Zeno and his man.[13] The servant had committed some petty larceny, and the master was cudgelling him well for it. The servant thinks to creep under his master's blind side, and pleads for himself that the necessity of destiny did compel him to steal. The master answers, 'The same necessity of destiny compels me to beat you.' He that denies liberty is fitter to be refuted with rods than with arguments, until he confess that it is free for him that beats him either to continue striking or to give over, that is, to have true liberty.

§ **14** Secondly, this very persuasion that there is no true liberty is able to overthrow all societies and commonwealths in the world. The laws are unjust which prohibit that which a man cannot possibly shun. All consultations are vain if everything be either necessary or impossible. Who ever deliberated whether the sun should rise tomorrow, or whether he should sail over mountains? It is to no more purpose to admonish men of understanding than fools, children, or madmen if all things be necessary. Praises and dispraises, rewards and punishments, are as vain as they are undeserved if there be no liberty. All counsels, arts, arms, books, instruments are superfluous and foolish if there be no liberty. In vain we labour, in vain we study, in vain we take physic, in vain we have tutors to instruct us, if all things

[12] Horace, *Ars poetica* 188. Bramhall misquotes; the original reads: *quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi*.

[13] Reported by Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* VII.23.

come to pass alike, whether we sleep or wake, whether we be idle or industrious, by unalterable necessity. But it is said, that though future events be certain, yet they are unknown to us; and therefore we prohibit, deliberate, admonish, praise, dispraise, reward, punish, study, labour, and use means. Alas! How should our not knowing of the event be a sufficient motive to us to use the means, so long as we believe the event is already certainly determined and can no more be changed by all our endeavours than we can stay the course of heaven with our finger or add a cubit to our stature? Suppose it be unknown, yet it is certain. We cannot hope to alter the course of things by our labours. Let the necessary causes do their work, we have no remedy but patience, and shrug up the shoulders. Either allow liberty or destroy all societies.

§ **15** Thirdly, let this opinion be once radicated in the minds of men, that there is no true liberty and that all things come to pass inevitably, and it will utterly destroy the study of piety. Who will bewail his sins with tears? What will become of that grief, that zeal, that indignation, that holy revenge, which the Apostle speaks of, if men be once thoroughly persuaded that they could not shun what they did? A man may grieve for that which he could not help; but he will never be brought to bewail that as his own fault which flowed not from his own error but from an antecedent necessity. Who will be careful or solicitous to perform obedience, that believes there are inevitable bounds and limits set to all his devotions, which he can neither go beyond nor come short of? To what end shall he pray God to avert those evils which are inevitable, or to confer those favours which are impossible? We indeed know not what good or evil shall happen to us; but this we know, that if all things be necessary, our devotions and endeavours cannot alter that which must be. In a word, the only reason why those persons who tread in this path of fatal destiny do sometimes pray, or repent, or serve God, is because the light of nature and the strength of reason and the evidence of Scripture do for that present transport them from their ill-chosen grounds, and expel those stoical fancies out of their heads. A complete Stoic can neither pray, nor repent, nor serve God to any purpose. Either allow liberty or destroy Church as well as commonwealth, religion as well as policy.

§ **16** Fourthly, the order, beauty, and perfection of the world does require that in the universe should be agents of all sorts, some necessary, some free, some contingent. He that shall make either all things necessary, guided by destiny, or all things free, governed by election, or all things contingent,

happening by chance, does overthrow the beauty and the perfection of the world.

§ **17** Fifthly, take away liberty and you take away the very nature of evil and the formal reason of sin. If the hand of the painter were the law of painting, or the hand of the writer the law of writing, whatsoever the one did write, or the other paint, must infallibly be good. Seeing therefore that the first cause is the rule and law of goodness, if it do necessitate the will or the person to evil, either by itself immediately or mediately by necessary flux of second causes, it will no longer be evil. The essence of sin consists in this, that one commit that which he might avoid. If there be no liberty to produce sin, there is no such thing as sin in the world. Therefore it appears, both from Scripture and reason, that there is true liberty.

§ **18** But the patrons of necessity, being driven out of the plain field with reason, have certain retreats of distinctions which they fly unto for refuge. First, they distinguish between Stoical necessity and Christian necessity, between which they make a threefold difference.[14]

First, say they, the Stoics did subject Jupiter to destiny, but we subject destiny to God. I answer that the Stoical and Christian destiny are one and the same: *Fatum quasi effatum Jovis* [Fate is as it were the decree of God].[15] Hear Seneca: 'Destiny is the necessity of all things and actions, depending upon the disposition of Jupiter'.[16] I add that the Stoics left a greater liberty to Jupiter over destiny than these stoical Christians do to God over his decrees, either for the beginnings of things, as Euripides,[17] or for the progress of them, as Chrysippus,[18] or at least of the circumstances of time and place, as all of them generally. So Virgil: *Sed trahere et moras ducere, etc.* [But to stretch out and bring delay, etc.].[19] So Osiris in Apuleius promises him to prolong his life, *ultra fato constituta tempora*, beyond the times set down by the destinies.[20]

[14] Cf. Lipsius, *De constantia* I.xx; Calvin, *Institutio religionis christianae* I.xvi.8.

[15] Lipsius, *De constantia* I.xix.

[16] Bramhall may have drawn these words from *Naturales quaestiones* II.xxxvi.1. Only the first clause, however, is an actual quotation from this text, which reads: *Existimo* [*fatum*] *necessitatem rerum omnium actionumque, quam nulla vis rumpat* [I consider [fate] to be the necessity of all things and actions, which no force may break]. Cf. *De beneficiis* IV.vii.2.

[17] Euripides, *Suppliants* 734–6. [18] As reported by Aulus Gellius, *Noctes atticae* VII.ii.

[19] Virgil, *Aeneid* VII: 315. Bramhall misquotes; the original reads: *at trahere atque moras tantis licet addere rebus* [But to stretch out and bring delay to such great issues – that I may do].

[20] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* XI.vi. Here Bramhall paraphrases rather than quotes; the text actually reads: *scies ultra statuta fato tuo spatia vitam quoque tibi prorogare mihi tantum licere* [you shall know that I alone can prolong your life beyond the limits determined by your fate]. Also, Bramhall's 'Osiris' is a mistake; it is Isis who speaks these words.

Next, they say that the Stoics did hold an eternal flux and necessary connection of causes; but they believed that God does act *praeter et contra naturam*, besides and against nature.[21] I answer that it is not much material whether they attribute necessity to God or to the stars or to a connection of causes, so as they establish necessity. The former reasons do not only condemn the ground or foundation of necessity, but much more necessity itself upon what ground soever. Either they must run into this absurdity, that the effect is determined, the cause remaining undetermined; or else hold such a necessary connection of causes as the Stoics did.

Lastly, they say, the Stoics did take away liberty and contingence, but they admit it. I answer, what liberty or contingence is it they admit but a titular liberty and an empty shadow of contingence, who do profess stiffly that all actions and events which either are or shall be cannot but be, nor can be otherwise, after any other manner, in any other place, time, number, order, measure, nor to any other end, than they are, and that in respect of God determining them to one? What a poor ridiculous liberty or contingence is this!

Secondly, they distinguish between the first cause and the second causes. They say that in respect of the second causes many things are free, but in respect of the first cause all things are necessary.[22] This answer may be taken away two ways.

First, so contraries shall be true together: the same thing at the same time shall be determined to one and not determined to one; the same thing at the same time must necessarily be and yet may not be. Perhaps they will say, not in the same respect. But that which strikes at the root of this question is this, if all the causes were only collateral, this exception might have some colour. But where all the causes, being joined together and subordinate one to another, do make but one total cause, if any one cause (much more the first) in the whole series or subordination of causes be necessary, it determines the rest, and without doubt makes the effect necessary. Necessity or liberty is not to be esteemed from one cause, but from all the causes joined together. If one link in a chain be fast, it fastens all the rest.

Secondly, I would have them tell me whether the second causes be predetermined by the first cause or not. If they be determined, then the effect is necessary, even in respect of the second causes. If the second cause be not determined, how is the effect determined, the second cause remaining undetermined? Nothing can give that to another which it has not itself.

[21] Lipsius, *De constantia* I.xx. [22] Cf. Lipsius, *De constantia* I.xix.

But, say they, nevertheless the power or faculty remains free. True, but not in order to the act, if it be once determined. It is free *in sensu diviso* [in the divided sense], but not *in sensu composito* [in the composite sense].[23] When a man holds a bird fast in his hand, is she therefore free to fly where she will because she has wings? Or a man imprisoned or fettered, is he therefore free to walk where he will because he has feet and a locomotive faculty? Judge without prejudice; what a miserable subterfuge is this, which many men confide so much in.

§ **19** Thirdly, they distinguish between liberty from compulsion and liberty from necessitation.[24] The will, say they, is free from compulsion but not free from necessitation. And this they fortify with two reasons. First, because it is granted by all divines that hypothetical necessity, or necessity upon a supposition, may consist with liberty.[25] Secondly, because God and the good angels do good necessarily, and yet are more free than we. To the first reason, I confess that necessity upon a supposition may sometimes consist with true liberty, as when it signifies only an infallible certitude of the understanding in that which it knows to be, or that it shall be. But if the

[23] In their standard use by medieval logicians, the terms *in sensu diviso* and *in sensu composito* refer to two ways of construing conditional sentences containing modal operators, i.e. such sentences as 'If God knows that Adam sinned then necessarily Adam sinned.' Understood in the composite sense, this means, 'It is a necessary truth that if God knows that Adam sinned then Adam sinned', which most such logicians, as well as Bramhall (and Hobbes), would have taken to be true. Understood in the divided sense, however, the sentence means 'If God knows that Adam sinned, then it is a necessary truth that Adam sinned', and most of these same logicians would have taken this to be false, as would Bramhall (though not Hobbes). Bramhall's use of the distinction in this passage, however, is not the standard one. He seems to be considering, not a conditional sentence which is ambiguous as a whole, but a conjunction whose ambiguity lies in its second clause alone. The sentence is this: 'The cause is necessitated and the effect is free.' The second clause, 'the effect is free', is ambiguous because it may mean either, 'the effect, considered apart from its cause, is capable of not occurring', or, 'the effect, given that its cause occurs, is necessitated to occur'. Bramhall then says that, not the compound sentence as a whole, but the second clause by itself, is understood in the divided sense when it is given the former meaning, in which case it is true; and in the composite sense when it is given the latter meaning, in which case it is false. For further explanation and examples, see Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I.xiv.13 ad 3; *Summa contra gentiles* II.xxv.23–4.; and *De veritate* ii.2 ad 4.

[24] Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I.lxxxii.1.

[25] Strictly speaking, hypothetical necessity is a property of propositions, so what Bramhall means here is something like the following: the hypothetical necessity of something's occurring (i.e. its being hypothetically necessary that it occurs) is consistent with its occurring freely (i.e. its being true that it occurs freely). To say that a proposition is hypothetically necessary is to say that it is the consequent of a conditional proposition that is necessary non-hypothetically or absolutely. Such a conditional is necessary *in sensu composito* (see n. 23 above), but if its consequent alone is not necessary absolutely or in its own right, then the conditional is not necessary *in sensu divisu*. The same point is sometimes made by saying that the conditional is necessary by the necessity of the consequence, but not necessary by the necessity of the consequent. The whole matter is nicely explained by Aquinas in *Summa contra gentiles* I.lxvii.10. In his treatise (§ 19), Hobbes gives his own explanation of hypothetical necessity.

supposition be not in the agent's power, nor depend upon anything that is in his power; if there be an exterior antecedent cause which does necessitate the effect, to call this free is to be mad with reason.[26]

To the second reason, I confess that God and the good angels are more free than we are, that is, intensively in the degree of freedom but not extensively in the latitude of the object; according to a liberty of exercise but not of specification. A liberty of exercise, that is, to do or not to do, may consist well with a necessity of specification, or a determination to the doing of good. But a liberty of exercise and a necessity of exercise, a liberty of specification and a necessity of specification, are not compatible, nor can consist together. He that is antecedently necessitated to do evil is not free to do good. So this instance is nothing at all to the purpose.

§ **20** Now to the distinction itself, I say, first, that the proper act of liberty is election, and election is opposed not only to coaction but also to coarctation, or determination to one. Necessitation or determination to one may consist with spontaneity but not with election or liberty, as has been showed.[27] The very Stoics did acknowledge a spontaneity. So our adversaries are not yet gone out of the confines of the Stoics.

Secondly, to rip up the bottom of this business, this I take to be the clear resolution of the Schools. There is a double act of the will, the one more remote, called *imperatus*, that is, in truth the act of some inferior faculty subject to the command of the will, as to open or shut one's eyes; without doubt these actions may be compelled. The other act is nearer, called *actus elicitus*, an act drawn out of the will, as to will, to choose, to elect.[28] This may be stopped or hindered by the intervening impediment of the understanding, as a stone lying on a table is kept from its natural motion; otherwise the will should have a kind of omnipotence. But the will cannot be compelled to an act repugnant to its inclination, as when a stone is thrown upwards into the air; for that is both to incline and not to incline to the same object at the same time, which implies a contradiction. Therefore to say the will is necessitated is to say the will is compelled so far as the will is capable of compulsion. If a strong man, holding the hand of a weaker, should therewith kill a third person, *haec quidem vis est*, this is violence; the weaker did not willingly perpetrate the fact because he was compelled. But now suppose this strong man had the will of the weaker in his power as well as the hand,

[26] Cf. Terence, *Eunuchus* I: 63: *ut cum ratione insanias*.
[27] See § 6 above. [28] Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II.vi.4.

and should not only incline but determine it secretly and insensibly to commit this act: is not the case the same? Whether one ravish Lucretia by force, as Tarquin,[29] or by amatory potions and magical incantations not only allure her but necessitate her to satisfy his lust and incline her effectually and draw her inevitably and irresistibly to follow him spontaneously, Lucretia in both these conditions is to be pitied. But the latter person is more guilty and deserves greater punishment, who endeavours also, so much as in him lies, to make Lucretia irresistibly partake of his crime. I dare not apply it but thus only: take heed how we defend those secret and invincible necessitations to evil, though spontaneous and free from coaction.

These are their fastnesses.

§ **21** The rest are umbrages quickly dispelled. First, the astrologer steps up and subjects liberty to the motions of heaven, to the aspects and ascensions of the stars:

> *plus etenim fati valet hora benigni*
> *quam si nos Veneris commendet epistula Marti.*
>
> [for an hour of favourable fate is worth more
> than a letter from Venus commending us to Mars.][30]

I stand not much upon them who cannot see the fishes swimming beside them in the rivers, yet believe they see those which are in heaven; who promise great treasures to others, and beg a groat for themselves. The stars at the most do but incline, they cannot necessitate.

Secondly, the physician subjects liberty to the complexion and temperature of the body. But yet this comes not home to a necessity. Socrates and many others, by assiduous care, have corrected the pernicious propensions which flowed from their temperatures.

§ **22** Thirdly, the moral philosopher tells us how we are haled hither and thither with outward objects. To this I answer, first, that the power which outward objects have over us is for the most part by our own default, because of those vicious habits which we have contracted. Therefore though the actions seem to have a kind of violence in them, yet they were

[29] According to legend, Lucretia was the wife of Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, grand-nephew of one of the traditional nine kings of Rome, in the sixth century B.C.E. She was raped by Sextus Tarquinius, son of a later king, and in consequence committed suicide, stabbing herself in the breast with a dagger. The story is recounted by Livy in his history of Rome, *Ab urbe condita* I.lviii.

[30] Juvenal, *Satires* XVI: 4–5.

free and voluntary in their first originals. As a paralytic man, to use Aristotle's comparison, shedding the liquor deserves to be punished, for though his act be unwilling, yet his intemperance was willing, whereby he contracted this infirmity.[31]

Secondly I answer, that concupiscence and custom and bad company and outward objects do indeed make a proclivity, but not a necessity. By prayers, tears, meditations, vows, watchings, fastings, humi-cubations, a man may get a contrary habit and gain the victory, not only over outward objects but also over his own corruptions, and become the king of the little world of himself.

> *si metuis, si prava cupis, si duceris ira,*
> *servitii patiere iugum; tolerabis iniquas*
> *interius leges. tunc omnia iure tenebis,*
> *cum poteris rex esse tui.*
>
> [If you are afraid, if you have evil desires, if you are moved by anger,
> you will bear the yoke of slavery; you will be subject within yourself to
> tyrannical rule. When you are able to be king of yourself,
> then you will have rightful authority over everything.][32]

Thirdly, a resolved mind, which weighs all things judiciously and provides for all occurrences, is not so easily surprised with outward objects. Only Ulysses wept not at the meeting with his wife and son.[33] I would beat you, said the philosopher, but that I am angry.[34] One spoke lowest when he was most moved.[35] Another poured out the water then he was thirsty.[36] Another made a covenant with his eyes.[37] Neither opportunity nor enticement could prevail with Joseph.[38] Nor the music nor the fire with the three children.[39] It is not the strength of the wind but the lightness of the chaff, which causes it to be blown away. Outward objects do not impose a moral, much less a physical necessity; they may be dangerous, but cannot be destructive to true liberty.

[31] Bramhall must be referring to Aristotle's comment, not about a paralytic man but about a blind one, at *Nicomachean Ethics* III.v.15: 1114a25–8: 'Everyone would pity rather than reproach someone if he were blind by nature or because of a disease or a wound, but would censure him if his heavy drinking or some other form of intemperance made him blind.'

[32] Claudian, *De quarto consulatu Honorii Augusti* 259–62.

[33] Homer, *Odyssey* XIX: 209–12.

[34] The philosopher referred to is Plato. The story is reported by Diogenes Laertius in *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* III.39.

[35] Reference unknown. [36] Reference unknown. [37] See Job 21:1. [38] See Genesis 39.

[39] See Daniel 3.

§ **23** Fourthly, the natural philosopher does teach that the will does necessarily follow the last dictate of the understanding. It is true indeed the will should follow the direction of the understanding; but I am not satisfied that it does evermore follow it. Sometimes this saying has place: *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor* [I see and approve the better, but I follow the worse].[40] As that great Roman said of two suitors, that the one produced the better reasons but the other must have the office.[41] So reason often lies dejected at the feet of affection. Things nearer to the senses move more powerfully. Do what a man can, he shall sorrow more for the death of his child than for the sin of his soul; yet appreciatively in the estimation of judgment, he accounts the offence of God a greater evil than any temporal loss.

Next, I do not believe that a man is bound to weigh the expedience or inexpedience of every ordinary trivial action to the least grain in the balance of his understanding; or to run up into his watch-tower with his perspective[42] to take notice of every jackdaw that flies by, for fear of some hidden danger. This seems to me to be a prostitution of reason to petty observations as concerning every rag that a man wears, each drop of drink, each morsel of bread that he eats, each pace that he walks. Thus many steps must he go, not one more nor one less, under pain of mortal sin. What is this but a rack and a gibbet to the conscience? But God leaves many things indifferent, though man be so curious he will not. A good architect will be sure to provide sufficient materials for his building; but what particular number of stones or trees, he troubles not his head. And suppose he should weigh each action thus, yet he does not. So still there is liberty.

Thirdly, I conceive it is possible, in this mist and weakness of human apprehension, for two actions to be so equally circumstantiated that no discernible difference can appear between them upon discussion. As suppose a chirurgeon should give two plaisters to his patient and bid him apply either of them to his wound; what can induce his reason more to the one than to the other, but that he may refer it to chance whether he will use?

But leaving these probable speculations, which I submit to better judgments, I answer the philosopher briefly thus. Admitting that the will did

[40] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII: 20–1.

[41] The great Roman referred to is Julius Caesar. The story is recounted by Plutarch in his *Life of Brutus* vii.3.

[42] 'Perspective' is a 17th-century word for 'telescope'.

necessarily follow the last dictate of the understanding, as certainly in many things it does, yet, first, this is no extrinsical determination from without, and a man's own resolution is not destructive to his own liberty, but depends upon it. So the person is still free. Secondly, this determination is not antecedent but joined with the action. The understanding and the will are not different agents, but distinct faculties of the same soul. Here is an infallibility, or a hypothetical necessity as we say, *quicquid est, quando est, necesse est esse* [whatsoever is, when it is, necessarily is as it is]:[43] a necessity of consequence, but not a necessity of consequent.[44] Though an agent have certainly determined, and so the action[45] become infallible, yet if the agent did determine freely the action likewise is free.

§ **24** Fifthly and lastly, the divine labours to find out a way how liberty may consist with the prescience and decrees of God. But of this I had not very long since occasion to write a full discourse, in answer to a treatise against the prescience of things contingent.[46] I shall for the present only repeat these two things. First, we ought not to desert a certain truth because we are not able to comprehend the certain manner.[47] God should be but a poor God if we were able perfectly to comprehend all his actions and attributes. Secondly, in my poor judgment (which I ever do and ever shall submit to better), the readiest way to reconcile contingence and liberty with the decrees and prescience of God, and most remote from the altercations of these times, is to subject future contingents to the aspect of God, according to that presentiality which they have in eternity. Not that things future, which are not yet existent, are co-existent with God; but because the infinite knowledge of God, incircling all times in the point of eternity, does attain to their future being, from whence proceeds their objective and intelligible being. The main impediment which keeps men from subscribing to this way is because they conceive eternity to be an everlasting succession, and not one indivisible point. But if they consider that whatsoever is in God is God; that there are no accidents in him (for that which is infinitely perfect cannot be further perfected); that

[43] Cf. Aristotle, *De interpretatione* IX: 19a24–5. [44] See n. 25 above.

[45] action: ed.; action be: *Def.*, *Ques.*, *W1*, *W3*.

[46] The discourse in question, Bramhall informs us in his *Defence* (§ 24), was written 'in way of examination of a French Treatise' shown to him at York by Lord Newcastle's brother, Sir Charles Cavendish. This discourse appears not to have been published by Bramhall, nor is it included in any of the three editions of his *Works* which appeared after his death.

[47] The truth Bramhall means here, as he tells us in his *Defence* (§ 24), is 'that the will of man in ordinary actions is free from extrinsical determinations'.

as God is not wise but wisdom itself, not just but justice itself, so he is not eternal but eternity itself; they must needs conclude that therefore this eternity is indivisible because God is indivisible, and therefore not successive but altogether an infinite point, comprehending all times within itself.

# Hobbes's treatise *Of Liberty and Necessity*

Right honourable,[1]

§ **1** I had once resolved to answer my Lord Bishop's objections to my book *De cive* in the first place,[2] as that which concerns me most, and afterwards to examine his discourse of liberty and necessity which, because I had never uttered my opinion of it, concerned me the less. But seeing it was both your Lordship's and my Lord Bishop's desire I should begin with the latter, I was contented so to do, and here I present and submit it to your Lordship's judgment.

§ **2** And first I assure your Lordship I find in it no new argument, neither from Scripture nor from reason, that I have not often heard before, which is as much as to say that I am not surprised.

§ **3** The preface is a handsome one, but it appears even in that that he has mistaken the question. For whereas he says thus, 'If I be free to write this discourse, I have obtained the cause', I deny that to be true. For it is enough to his freedom of writing that he had not written it unless he would himself. If he will obtain the cause, he must prove that before he wrote it,

[1] Hobbes's treatise is written in the form of a letter to the Marquess of Newcastle, whom Hobbes addresses in the body of the work as 'your Lordship' or 'my Lord'. Since his opponent Bramhall was a bishop, and so also had noble rank, Hobbes refers to him as 'his Lordship' or 'my Lord Bishop' or simply 'my Lord'.

[2] Bramhall, as he says in his *Defence* (Epistle to the Reader), had given Hobbes 'about sixty exceptions' to the latter's book *De cive*, published in 1642, some time before the two had their discussion of liberty and necessity in 1645. Hobbes never did respond to these exceptions; in his *Questions* he says that he thought the Bishop's objections 'would by the clearness of my method [sc. in *Leviathan*, published in 1651] fall off without an answer' – in which thought, however, he proved to be mistaken, since Bramhall subsequently wrote a much longer work criticizing *Leviathan*: this was *The Catching of Leviathan*, published as an appendix to his *Castigations of Mr Hobbes* in 1658.

it was not necessary he should write[3] it afterward. It may be his Lordship thinks it all one to say, 'I was free to write it' and, 'It was not necessary I should write it.' But I think otherwise. For he is free to do a thing, that may do it if he have the will to do it, and may forbear if he have the will to forbear. And yet if there be a necessity that he shall have the will to do it, the action is necessarily to follow; and if there be a necessity that he shall have the will to forbear, the forbearing also will be necessary. The question therefore is not whether a man be a free agent, that is to say, whether he can write or forbear, speak or be silent, according to his will; but whether the will to write and the will to forbear come upon him according to his will, or according to anything else in his power. I acknowledge this liberty, that I can do if I will; but to say I can will if I will, I take to be an absurd speech. Wherefore I cannot grant my Lord the cause upon this preface. +

§ 4 In the next place, he makes certain distinctions of liberty and says he means not liberty from sin, nor from servitude, nor from violence, but from necessity, necessitation, inevitability, and determination to one. It had been better to define liberty than thus to distinguish. For I understand never the more what he means by liberty; and though he says he means liberty from necessitation, yet I understand not how such a liberty can be, and it is a taking of the question without proof. For what else is the question between us but whether such a liberty be possible or not?

There are in the same place other distinctions, as a liberty of exercise only, which he calls a liberty of contradiction, namely of doing not good or evil simply, but of doing this or that good or this or that evil respectively; and a liberty of specification and exercise also, which he calls a liberty of contrariety, namely a liberty not only to do or not to do[4] good or evil, but also to do or not to[5] do this or that good or evil.[6] And with these distinctions his Lordship says he clears the coast, whereas in truth he darkens his meaning, not only with the jargon of exercise only, specification also, contradiction, contrariety, but also with pretending distinction where none is. For how is it possible that the liberty of doing or not doing this or that good or evil can consist, as he says it does in God and angels, without a liberty of doing good or evil?

[3] write: *Def.*; prove: 1st. [4] do or not to do: *Ques.*; do or not do: MS, *Def.*; do: 1st.
[5] not to: *Ques.*; not: 1st, *Def.*
[6] Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II.ix.1, x.2; Bellarmino, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* III.iii.

§ **5** The next thing his Lordship does after the clearing of the coast is the dividing of his forces, as he calls them, into two squadrons, one of places of Scripture, the other of reasons, which allegory he uses, I suppose, because he addresses the discourse to your Lordship, who is a military man. All that I have to say touching this is that I observe a great part of those his forces do look and march another way, and some of them fight amongst themselves.

§ **6** And the first place of Scripture, taken from *Numbers* xxx.13, is one of those that look another way. The words are, 'If a wife make a vow, it is left to her husband's choice either to establish it or make it void.'[7] For it proves no more but that the husband is a free and voluntary agent, but not that his choice therein is not necessitated or not determined to what he shall choose by precedent necessary causes. For if there come into the husband's mind greater good by establishing than by abrogating such a vow, the establishing will follow necessarily; and if the evil that will follow thereon in the husband's opinion outweigh the good, the contrary must needs follow. And yet in this following of one's hopes and fears consists the nature of election. So that a man may both choose this and cannot but choose this, and consequently choosing and necessity are joined together.

§ **7**[8] The second place of Scripture is *Joshua* xxiv.15,[9] the third is 2 *Samuel* xxiv.12,[10] whereby it is clearly proved that there is election in man, but not proved that such election was not necessitated by the hopes and fears and considerations of good and bad to follow, which depend not on the will nor are subject to election. And therefore one answer serves all such places, if there were a thousand. +

§ **8** His Lordship supposing, it seems, I might answer as I have done, that necessity and election might stand together, and instance in the actions of children, fools, and brute beasts, whose fancies, I might say, are necessitated and determined to one; before these his proofs out of Scripture he desires to prevent that instance, and therefore says that the actions of

[7] These are actually the words of Bramhall, who in his discourse paraphrased rather than quoted from Numbers 30: 13. The AV reads: 'Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her [sc. a wife's] husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.'

[8] § 7: ed.; *Def.* places this section number two sentences earlier.

[9] The AV reads: 'choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord'.

[10] The AV reads: 'I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.'

children, fools, madmen, and beasts, are indeed determined, but that they proceed not from election, nor from free, but from spontaneous agents. As for example, that the bee, when it makes honey, does it spontaneously; and when the spider makes his web, he does it spontaneously and not by election. Though I never meant to ground any answer upon the experience of what children, madmen, fools, and beasts do; yet that your Lordship may understand what can be meant by spontaneous, and how it differs from voluntary, I will answer that distinction, and show that it fights against its fellow arguments.

Your Lordship therefore is to consider, that all voluntary actions, where the thing that induces the will is not fear, are called also spontaneous, and said to be done by a man's own accord. As when a man gives money voluntarily to another for merchandise or out of affection, he is said to do it of his own accord, which in Latin is *sponte*, and therefore the action is spontaneous; though to give one's money willingly to a thief to avoid killing, or to throw it into the sea to avoid drowning,[11] where the motive is fear, be not called spontaneous. But every spontaneous action is not therefore voluntary, for voluntary presupposes some precedent deliberation, that is to say, some consideration and meditation of what is likely to follow, both upon the doing and abstaining from the action deliberated of; whereas many actions are done of our own accord and are therefore spontaneous, of which nevertheless, as my Lord thinks, we never consulted nor deliberated of in ourselves. As when making no question nor any the least doubt in the world but that the thing we are about is good, we eat or walk or in anger strike or revile, which my Lord thinks spontaneous but not voluntary nor elective actions; and with such kind of actions he says necessitation may stand, but not with such as are voluntary and proceed upon election and deliberation. Now if I make it appear to your Lordship that even those actions which he says proceed from spontaneity, and which he ascribes only to fools, children, madmen, and beasts, proceed from deliberation and election; and that actions inconsiderate, rash, and spontaneous are ordinarily found in those that are by themselves and many more thought as wise or wiser than ordinary men are; then my Lord Bishop's argument concludes that necessity and election may stand together, which is contrary to that which he intends by all the rest of his arguments to prove.

[11] The example is taken from Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III.i.5: 1110a9, but Hobbes somewhat distorts it. It is not money but property, in the form of cargo, that Aristotle's man throws into the sea. Cf. § 19 below, where Hobbes correctly states the same example.

And first your Lordship's own experience furnishes you with proof enough that horses, dogs, and other brute beasts do demur oftentimes upon the way they are to take, the horse retiring from some strange figure he sees, and coming on again to avoid the spur. And what else does a man that deliberates but one while proceed toward action, another while retire from it, as the hope of greater good draws him, or the fear of greater evil drives him. A child may be so young as to do what it does without all deliberation, but it is but till it chance to be hurt by doing somewhat, or till it be of age to understand the rod. For the actions wherein he has once had a check shall be deliberated on the second time. Fools and madmen manifestly deliberate no less than the wisest men, though they make not so good a choice, the images of things being by diseases altered. For bees and spiders, if my Lord Bishop had had so little to do as to be a spectator of their actions, he would have confessed not only election but also art, prudence, and policy in them very near equal to that of mankind. Of bees, Aristotle says their life is civil.[12]

His Lordship is deceived if he think any spontaneous action, after once being checked in it, differs from an action voluntary and elective. For even the setting of a man's foot in the posture for walking, and the action of ordinary eating, was once deliberated how and when it should be done. And though it afterward became easy and habitual, so as to be done without forethought; yet that does not hinder but that the act is voluntary and proceeds from election. So also are the rashest actions of choleric persons voluntary and upon deliberation. For who is it but very young children that has not considered when and how far he ought, or safely may, strike or revile? Seeing then his Lordship agrees with me that such actions are necessitated, and the fancy of those that do them is determined to the actions they do, it follows out of his Lordship's own doctrine that the liberty of election does not take away the necessity of electing this or that individual thing. And thus one of his arguments fights against another. +

**§ 9** The second argument from Scripture consists in histories of men that did one thing when if they would they might have done another. The places are two. One is in the *1 Kings* iii.11, where the history says God was pleased that Solomon, who might if he would have asked riches or revenge, did nevertheless ask wisdom at God's hands. The other is the words of Saint Peter to Ananias, *Acts* v.4: 'After it was sold, was it not in thine own power?'

[12] Aristotle, *History of Animals* 1.i: 488a8–10.

To which the answer is the same with that I answered to the former places, that they prove there is election but do not disprove the necessity, which I maintain, of what they so elect.

§ **10** To the third and fifth arguments I shall make but one answer.[13]

§ **11** The fourth argument[14] is to this effect. If the decree of God, or his foreknowledge, or the influence of the stars, or the concatenation of causes, or the physical or moral efficacy of causes, or the last dictate of the understanding, or whatsoever it be, do take away true liberty, then Adam before his fall had no true liberty. *Quicquid ostendes mihi sic, incredulus odi* [Whatever you show me so, I disbelieve and hate].[15]

That which I say necessitates and determinates every action, that his Lordship may no longer doubt of my meaning, is the sum of all those things which, being now existent, conduce and concur to the production of that action hereafter, whereof if any one thing now were wanting, the effect could not be produced. This concourse of causes, whereof every one is determined to be such as it is by a like concourse of former causes, may well be called (in respect they were all set and ordered by the eternal cause of all things, God Almighty) the decree of God.

But that the foreknowledge of God should be a cause of anything cannot be truly said, seeing foreknowledge is knowledge, and knowledge depends on the existence of the things known, and not they on it.

The influence of the stars is but a small part of the whole cause, consisting of the concourse of all agents.

Nor does the concourse of all causes make one simple chain or concatenation, but an innumerable number of chains joined together, not in all parts, but in the first link God Almighty; and consequently the whole cause of an event does not always depend on one single chain, but on many together.

Natural efficacy of objects does determine voluntary agents, and necessitates the will, and consequently the action; but for moral efficacy, I understand not what he means by it. +

The last dictate of the judgment, concerning the good or bad that may follow on any action, is not properly the whole cause, but the last part of it; and yet may be said to produce the effect necessarily, in such manner as the

[13] To the . . . answer.: *Def.*; this whole section is missing in MS and in 1st.

[14] argument: *Def.*; argument (for to the third and fifth I shall make but one answer): 1st.

[15] Horace, *Ars poetica* 188. Hobbes repeats the text given by Bramhall in his discourse, but the latter had misquoted it. The original reads: *quodcumque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi*.

last feather may be said to break a horse's back, when there were so many laid on before as there wanted but that to do it.

Now for his argument, that if the concourse of all the causes necessitate the effect, then it follows Adam had no true liberty. I deny the consequence; for I make not only the effect but also the election of that particular effect to be necessary, inasmuch as the will itself, and each propension of a man during his deliberation, is as much necessitated and depends on a sufficient cause as anything else whatsoever. As for example, it is no more necessary that fire should burn than that a man or other creature, whose limbs be moved by fancy, should have election, that is liberty, to do what he has a fancy to do, though it be not in his will or power to choose his fancy, or choose his election or will.

This doctrine, because my Lord Bishop says he hates, I doubt had better been suppressed, as it should have been if both your Lordship and he had not pressed me to an answer.

§ **12** The arguments of greatest consequence are the third and the fifth, and they fall both into one, namely: If there be a necessity of all events, that it will follow that praise and reprehension and reward and punishment are all vain and unjust; and that if God should openly forbid and secretly necessitate the same action, punishing men for what they could not avoid, there would be no belief among them of heaven or hell.

To oppose hereunto I must borrow an answer from Saint Paul, *Romans* ix. From the eleventh verse of the chapter to the eighteenth is laid down the very same objection in these words: 'When they [meaning Esau and Jacob] were yet unborn, and had done neither good nor evil, that the purpose of God according to election, not by works, but by him that calls, might remain firm, it was said unto her [viz. Rebecca] that the elder shall serve the younger, . . . What then shall we say? Is there injustice with God? God forbid. It is not therefore in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that showeth mercy. For the Scripture saith to Pharaoh, I have stirred thee up that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be set forth in all the earth. Therefore whom God willeth, he hath mercy on, and whom he willeth he hardeneth.'[16] Thus you see the case

[16] Romans 9:11–18. The AV reads: '(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that

put by Saint Paul is the same with that of my Lord Bishop, and the same objection in these words following: 'Thou wilt ask me then, why does God yet complain, for who hath resisted his will?'[17]

To this therefore the Apostle answers, not by denying it was God's will, or that the decree of God concerning Esau was not before he had sinned, or that Esau was not necessitated to do what he did, but thus: 'Who art thou, O man, that interrogatest God? Shall the work say to the workman, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same stuff to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?'[18] According therefore to this answer of Saint Paul, I answer my Lord's objection and say, the power of God alone without other help is sufficient justification of any action he does. That which men make amongst themselves here by pacts and covenants and call by the name of justice, and according whereunto men are counted and termed rightly just or unjust, is not that by which God Almighty's actions are to be measured or called just, no more than his counsels are to be measured by human wisdom. That which he does is made just by his doing it: just, I say, in him, not always just in us by the example.[19] For a man that shall command a thing openly and plot secretly the hindrance of the same, if he punish him he so commands for not doing it, is unjust. So also his counsels[20] are not in vain, because they be his, whether we see the use of them or not. When God afflicted Job, he did object no sin unto him, but[21] justified that afflicting him by telling him of his power: 'Hast thou [says God] an arm like mine?'[22] 'Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?'[23] and the like. So our Saviour, concerning the man that was born blind, said it was not for his sin, nor for his parents' sin, but that the power of God might be shown in him.[24] Beasts are subject to death and torment, yet they cannot sin: it was God's will it should be so. Power irresistible justifies all actions, really and properly, in whomsoever it be found; less power does not, and because such power

sheweth mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.'

17 Romans 9:19. The AV reads: 'Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?'

18 Romans 9:20–1. The AV reads: 'Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hath thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?'

19 us by the example: MS; us: 1st. 20 I.e. God's counsels. 21 him, but: *Def.*, *EW4*; him: 1st.

22 Job 40:9. The AV reads: 'Hast thou an arm like God?' 23 Job 38:4.

24 John 9:3. The AV reads: 'Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.'

is in God only, he must needs be just in all his actions, and we that, not comprehending his counsels, call him to the bar, commit injustice in it. +

I am not ignorant of the usual reply to this answer, by distinguishing between will and permission, as that God Almighty does indeed sometimes permit sin, and that he also foreknows that the sin he permits shall be committed, but does not will it nor necessitate it. I know also they distinguish the action from the sin of the action, saying that God Almighty does indeed cause the action, whatsoever action it be, but not the sinfulness or irregularity of it, that is, the discordance between the action and the law.[25] Such distinctions as these dazzle my understanding. I find no difference between the will to have a thing done and the permission to do it, when he that permits can hinder it and knows it will be done unless he hinder it. + Nor find I any difference between an action that is against the law[26] and the sin of that action, as, for example, between the killing of Uriah and the sin of David in killing Uriah;[27] nor when one is cause both of the action and the law, how another can be cause of the disagreement between them, no more than how one man making a longer and a shorter garment, another can make the inequality that is between them. This I know: God cannot sin, because his doing a thing makes it just and consequently no sin; and because whatsoever can sin is subject to another's law, which God is not. And therefore it is blasphemy to say God can sin; but to say that God can so order the world as a sin may be necessarily caused thereby in a man, I do not see how it is any dishonour to him. + Howsoever, if such or other distinctions can make it clear that Saint Paul did not think Esau's or Pharaoh's actions proceed from the will and purpose of God, or that, proceeding from his will, could not therefore without injustice be blamed or punished, I will, as soon as I understand them, turn unto my Lord's opinion. For I now hold nothing in all this question between us but what seems to me, not obscurely, but most expressly said in this place by Saint Paul. And thus much in answer to his places of Scripture.

## To the arguments from reason

**§ 13** Of the arguments from reason, the first is that which his Lordship says is drawn from Zeno's beating of his man, which is therefore called *Argumentum Baculinum* [the stick argument], that is to say, a wooden argument.

[25] Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II.lxxix.2. [26] action that is against the law: MS; action: 1st.
[27] See 2 Samuel 11 for the story.

The story is this. Zeno held that all actions were necessary; his man therefore being for some fault beaten, excused himself upon the necessity of it; to avoid this excuse, his master pleaded likewise the necessity of beating him.[28] So that not he that maintained but he that derided the necessity of things was beaten, contrary to that his Lordship would infer. And the argument was rather withdrawn than drawn from the story.

§ **14** The second argument is taken from certain inconveniences which his Lordship thinks would follow such an opinion. It is true that ill use might be made of it, and therefore your Lordship and my Lord Bishop ought, at my request, to keep private what I say here of it. But the inconveniences are indeed none, and what use soever be made of truth, yet truth is truth, and now the question is not what is fit to be preached but what is true.

The first inconvenience, he says, is this, that laws which prohibit any action are then unjust. The second, that all consultations are vain. The third, that admonitions to men of understanding are of no more use than to fools, children, and madmen. The fourth, that praise, dispraise, reward, and punishment are in vain. The fifth and sixth,[29] that counsels, arts, arms, books, instruments, study, tutors, medicines, are in vain.

To which argument his Lordship expecting I should answer by saying that the ignorance of the event were enough to make us use means, he adds, as it were a reply to my answer foreseen, these words: 'Alas, how should our not knowing of the event be a sufficient motive to make us use the means?' Wherein his Lordship says right, but my answer is not that which he expects.

I answer therefore, first, that the necessity of an action does not make the laws that prohibit it unjust. To let pass that not the necessity but the will to break the law makes the action unjust, because the law regards the will and no other precedent causes of action. And to let pass that no law can possibly be unjust, inasmuch as every man makes, by his consent, the law he is bound to keep, and which consequently must be just, unless a man can be unjust to himself. I say, what necessary cause soever precede an action, yet if the action be forbidden, he that does it willingly may justly be punished. For instance, suppose the law on pain of death prohibit stealing, and there be a man who by the strength of temptation is necessitated to steal and is thereupon put to death; does not this punishment deter others? Is it

[28] Reported by Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* VII.23.
[29] The fifth and sixth,: ed.; 5.6.: 1st; 5.: MS; The fifth,: *Def.*

not a cause that others steal not? Does it not frame and make their wills to justice? To make the law is therefore to make a cause of justice and to necessitate justice; and consequently it is no injustice to make such a law. +

The intention of the law is not to grieve the delinquent for that which is past and not to be undone, but to make him and others just that else would not be so; and respects not the evil act past but the good to come, insomuch as without this good intention of the future, no past act of a delinquent could justify his killing in the sight of God. But you will say, how is it just to kill one man to amend another if what were done were necessary? To this I answer that men are justly killed, not for that their actions are not necessitated, but because they are noxious, and those which are not noxious[30] are spared and preserved.[31] For where there is no law, there no killing nor anything else can be unjust; and by the right of nature we destroy, without being unjust, all that is noxious, both beasts and men. And for beasts we kill them justly when we do it in order to our own preservation, and yet my Lord himself confesses that their actions, as being only spontaneous and not free, are all necessitated and determined to that one thing which they shall do. For men, when we make societies or commonwealths, we lay[32] down our right to kill, excepting in certain cases, as murder, theft, or other offensive actions; so that the right which the commonwealth has to put a man to death for crimes is not created by the law, but remains from the first right of nature which every man has to preserve himself; for that the law does not take away the right in the case of criminals, who were by the law excepted. Men are not therefore put to death or punished for that their theft proceeds from election, but because it was noxious and contrary to men's preservation; and the punishment conducing to the preservation of the rest, inasmuch as to punish those that do voluntary hurt, and none else, frames and makes men's wills such as men would have them. And thus it is plain that from the necessity of a voluntary action cannot be inferred the injustice of the law that forbids it, or of the magistrate that punishes it. +

Secondly, I deny that it makes consultations to be in vain. It is the consultation that causes a man and necessitates him to choose to do one thing rather than another, so that unless a man say that cause to be in vain which necessitates the effect, he cannot infer the superfluousness of consultation out of the necessity of the election proceeding from it. But it

[30] those which are not noxious: MS; they: 1st.
[31] preserved.: MS; preserved whose actions are not noxious: 1st. [32] lay: *Def.*; lay not: MS, 1st.

seems his Lordship reasons thus: If I must do this rather than that, then I shall do this rather than that, though I consult not at all; which is a false proposition and a false consequence, and no better than this: If I shall live till tomorrow, I shall live till tomorrow, though I run myself through with a sword today. If there be a necessity that an action shall be done or that any effect shall be brought to pass, it does not therefore follow that there is nothing necessarily required as a means to bring it to pass. And therefore when it is determined that one thing shall be chosen before another, it is determined also for what cause it shall be chosen, which cause, for the most part, is deliberation or consultation. And therefore consultation is not in vain, and indeed the less in vain by how much the election is more necessitated, if more and less had place in necessity.

The same answer is to be given to the third supposed inconvenience, namely, that admonitions are in vain. For admonitions are parts of consultation, the admonitor being a counsellor for the time to him that is admonished.

The fourth pretended inconvenience is that praise and dispraise, reward and punishment will be in vain. To which I answer, that for praise and dispraise, they depend not at all on the necessity of the action praised or dispraised. For what is it else to praise but to say a thing is good? Good, I say, for me, or for somebody else, or for the state and commonwealth? And what is it to say an action is good but to say it is as I would wish, or as another would have it, or according to the will of the state, that is to say, according to the law? Does my Lord think that no action can please me or him or the commonwealth that should proceed from necessity? Things may be therefore necessary and yet praiseworthy, as also necessary and yet dispraised, and neither of both in vain, because praise and dispraise, and likewise reward and punishment, do by example make and conform the will to good or evil. It was a very great praise, in my opinion, that Velleius Paterculus gives Cato, where he says that he was good by nature: *et quia aliter esse non potuit* [and because he could not be otherwise].[33]

To the fifth and sixth inconveniences, that counsels, arts, arms, books, instruments, study, medicines, and the like would be superfluous, the same answer serves as to the former; that is to say, that this consequence, if the effect shall necessarily come to pass then it shall come to pass without its causes, is a false one, and those things named counsels, arts, arms, etc. are the causes of these effects.

[33] *Historia romana* II.xxxv.2. Hobbes misquotes; the original reads: *sed quia aliter facere non potuerat* [but because he could not have done otherwise].

§ **15** His Lordship's third argument consists in other inconveniences which he says will follow, namely, impiety and negligence of religious duties, as repentance and zeal to God's service. To which I answer, as to the rest, that they follow not. I must confess, if we consider the greatest part of mankind not as they should be but as they are, that is, as men whom either the study of acquiring wealth or preferment, or whom the appetite of sensual delights or the impatience of meditating or the rash embracing of wrong principles have made unapt to discuss the truth of things, that the dispute of this question will rather hurt than help their piety. And therefore if his Lordship had not desired this answer, I should not have written it, nor do I write it but in hopes your Lordship and his will keep it private. Nevertheless in very truth, the necessity of events does not of itself draw with it any impiety at all. For piety consists only in two things: one, that we honour God in our hearts, which is that we think as highly of his power as we can (for to honour anything is nothing else but to think it to be of great power); the other is that we signify that honour and esteem by our words and actions, which is called *cultus* or worship of God. He therefore that thinks that all things proceed from God's eternal will and consequently are necessary, does he not think God omnipotent, does he not esteem of his power as highly as is possible? – which is to honour God as much as may be in his heart. Again, he that thinks so, is he not more apt by external acts and words to acknowledge it than he that thinks otherwise? Yet is this external acknowledgment the same thing which we call worship. So that this opinion fortifies piety in both kinds, internal and external, and therefore is far from destroying it.

And for repentance, which is nothing else but a glad returning into the right way after the grief of being out of the way, though the cause that made him go astray were necessary, yet there is no reason why he should not grieve. And again, though the cause why he returned into the way were necessary, there remained still the causes of joy. So that the necessity of the actions takes away neither of those parts of repentance, grief for the error nor joy for the returning. And for prayer, whereas he says that the necessity of things destroys prayer, I deny it. For though prayer be none of the causes that move God's will, his will being unchangeable, yet since we find in God's word, he will not give his blessings but to those that ask them, the motive of prayer is the same. Prayer is the gift of God no less than the blessing, and the prayer is decreed together in the same decree wherein the blessing is decreed. It is manifest that thanksgiving is no cause of the

blessing past, and that which is past is sure and necessary. Yet even amongst men thanks is in use as an acknowledgment of the benefit past, though we should expect no new benefit for our gratitude. And prayer to God Almighty is but thanksgiving for God's blessings in general; and though it precede the particular thing we ask, yet it is not a cause or means of it but a signification that we expect nothing but from God, in such manner as he, not as we, will. And our Saviour by word of mouth bids us pray: 'Thy will', not our will, 'be done';[34] and by example teaches us the same; for he prayed thus: 'Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass, . . .'[35] The end of prayer, as of thanksgiving, is not to move but to honour God Almighty, in acknowledging that what we ask can be effected by him only.

§ **16** The fourth argument from reason is this: the order, beauty, and perfection of the world requires that in the universe there should be agents of all sorts: some necessary, some free, some contingent. He that shall make all things necessary, or all things free, or all things contingent, does overthrow the beauty and perfection of the world.

In which argument I observe, first, a contradiction. For seeing he that makes anything, in that he makes it, makes it to be necessary, it follows that he that makes all things makes all things necessarily to be; as if a workman make a garment, the garment must necessarily be. So if God make everything, everything must necessarily be. Perhaps the beauty of the world requires, though we know it not, that some agents should work without deliberation (which his lordship calls necessary agents), and some agents with deliberation (and those both he and I call free agents), and that some agents should work and we not know how (and their effects we both call contingent). But this hinders not but that he that elects may have his election necessarily determined to one by former causes, and that which is contingent and imputed to fortune be nevertheless necessary and depend on precedent necessary causes. For by contingent, men do not mean that which has no cause, but that which has not for cause anything that we perceive; as, for example, when a traveller meets with a shower, the journey had a cause, and the rain had a cause sufficient to produce it; but because the journey caused not the rain, nor the rain the journey, we say they were contingent one to another. And thus you see that though there be three sorts of events, necessary, contingent, and free, yet these may be all necessary without destruction of the beauty or perfection of the universe.

[34] Matthew 6:10. [35] Luke 22:42. The AV reads: 'Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me.'

§ **17** To the fifth[36] argument from reason, which is that if liberty be taken away, the nature and formal reason of sin is taken away, I answer by denying the consequence. The nature of sin consists in this, that the action done proceed from our will and be against the law. A judge in judging whether it be sin or not, which is done against the law, looks at no higher cause of the action than the will of the doer. Now when I say the action was necessary, I do not say it was done against the will of the doer, but with his will, and so necessarily, because man's will, and every volition or act of the will and purpose of man, had a sufficient and therefore a necessary cause; and consequently every voluntary action was necessitated. An action therefore may be voluntary and a sin and nevertheless be necessary; and because God may afflict by a right derived from his omnipotence, though sin were not, and that the example of punishment on voluntary sinners is the cause that produces justice and makes sin less frequent, for God to punish such sinners, as I have said before, is no injustice. And thus you have my answer to his Lordship's objections both out of Scripture and from reason.

## Certain distinctions, which his Lordship supposing may be brought to evade his arguments, are by him removed

§ **18** He says a man may perhaps answer that the necessity of things held by him is not a Stoical necessity but a Christian necessity, etc. But this distinction I have not used nor indeed ever heard before,[37] nor could I think any man could make Stoical and Christian two kinds of necessity, though they may be two kinds of doctrine. Nor have I drawn my answer to his Lordship's arguments from the authority of any sect, but from the nature of the things themselves.

But here I must take notice of certain words of his Lordship's in this place, as making against his own tenet. 'Where all the causes', says he, 'being joined together and subordinate one to another, do make but one total cause, if any one cause (much more the first) in the whole series or subordination of causes be necessary, it determines the rest, and without doubt makes the effect necessary.' For that which I call the necessary cause of any effect is the joining together of all causes subordinate to the first into one

[36] fifth: MS; first: 1st.

[37] Hobbes must be bluffing here. It is unlikely that he was unfamiliar with the *De constantia* of Justus Lipsius, which was one of the main sources of the view Bramhall's criticizes in § 18 of his discourse. Indeed, Hobbes had himself quoted, in the introduction to his translation of Thucydides (published in 1629), a remark made by Lipsius in another of his books, the *Politicorum, sive civilis doctrinae*.

total cause. If any of these, says he, especially the first, produce its effect necessarily, then all the rest are determined, and the effect also necessary.[38] Now it is manifest that the first cause is a necessary cause of all the effects that are next and immediate to it, and therefore by his Lordship's own reason all effects are necessary.

Nor is that distinction of necessary in respect of the first cause and necessary in respect of second causes mine. It does, as his Lordship well notes, imply a contradiction.

§ **19** But the distinction of free into free from compulsion and free from necessitation I acknowledge. For to be free from compulsion is to do a thing so as terror be not the cause of his will to do it. For a man is then only said to be compelled when fear makes him willing to it, as when a man willingly throws his goods into the sea to save himself, or submits to his enemy for fear of being killed. Thus all men that do anything for love or revenge or lust are free from compulsion, and yet their actions may be as necessary as those which are done by compulsion; for sometimes other passions work as forcibly as fear. But free from necessitation, I say, no man can be; and it is that which his Lordship undertook to disprove. +

This distinction, his Lordship says, uses to be fortified by two reasons, but they are not mine. The first, he says, is that it is granted by all divines that a hypothetical necessity, or necessity upon supposition, may stand with liberty. That you may understand this, I will give you an example of hypothetical necessity: if I shall live I shall eat. This is a hypothetical necessity. Indeed it is a necessary proposition, that is to say, it is necessary that that proposition should be true whensoever uttered. But it is not the necessity of the thing, nor is it therefore necessary that the man shall live or that the man shall eat. I do not use to fortify my distinctions with such reasons; let his Lordship confute them how he will, it contents me. But I would have your Lordship take notice hereby, how an easy and plain thing (but withal false), with the grave usage of such terms as hypothetical necessity and necessity upon supposition and such like terms of Schoolmen, may be obscured and made to seem profound learning.

The second reason that may confirm the distinction of free from compulsion and free from necessitation, he says, is that God and good angels do good necessarily, and yet are more free than we. This reason, though I had no need of, yet I think it so far forth good, as it is true that God and

[38] determined, and the effect also necessary: MS; determined: 1st.

good angels do good necessarily and yet are free. But because I find not in the articles of our faith, nor in the decrees of our church, set down in what manner I am to conceive God and good angels to work by necessity, or in what sense they work freely, I suspend my sentence in that point, and am content that there may be a freedom from compulsion and yet no freedom from necessitation, as has been proved, in that a man may be necessitated to some action without threats or without fear of danger. But how my Lord can avoid the consisting together of freedom and necessity, supposing God and good angels are freer than men and yet do good necessarily, that we must examine.

'I confess', says he, 'that God and good angels are more free than we, that is, intensively in degree of freedom, not extensively in the latitude of the object, according to a liberty of exercise not of specification.' Again, we have here two distinctions that are no distinctions, but made to seem so by terms invented by I know not whom to cover ignorance and blind the understanding of the reader. For it cannot be conceived that there is any liberty greater than for a man to do what he will. One heat may be more intensive than another but not one liberty than another. He that can do what he will has all liberty possible, and he that cannot has none at all. Also liberty (as his Lordship says the Schools call it) of exercise, which is, as I have said before, a liberty to do or not to do, cannot be without a liberty (which they call) of specification, that is to say, a liberty to do or not to do this or that in particular.[39] For how can a man conceive he has liberty to do anything that has not liberty to do this or that or somewhat in particular? If a man be forbidden in Lent to eat this and that and every other particular kind of flesh, how can he be understood to have a liberty to eat flesh, more than he that has no licence at all?

You may by this again see the vanity of distinctions used in the Schools; and I do not doubt but that the imposing of them, by the authority of doctors in the Church, has been a great cause that men have laboured, though by sedition and evil courses, to shake them off. For nothing is more apt to beget hatred than the tyrannizing over men's reason and understanding, especially when it is done, not by the Scriptures, but by the pretence of learning, and more judgment than that of other men. +

**§ 20** In the next place his Lordship brings two arguments against distinguishing between free from compulsion and free from necessitation. The

[39] See § 4 above.

first is that election is opposite not only to coaction or compulsion, but also to necessitation or determination to one. This is it he was to prove from the beginning, and therefore brings no new argument to prove it; and to those brought formerly I have already answered. And in this place I deny again that election is opposite to either; for when a man is compelled, for example, to subject himself to his enemy or to die, he has still election left him, and a deliberation to think which of the two he can best endure. And he that is led to prison by force has election, and may deliberate whether he will be haled and trained on the ground or make use of his own feet. Likewise when there is no compulsion, but the strength of temptation to do an evil action being greater than the motives to abstain, it necessarily determines him to the doing of it; yet he deliberates while sometimes the motives to do, sometimes the motives to forbear, are working on him, and consequently he elects which he will. But commonly when we see and know the strength that moves us, we acknowledge necessity; but when we see not, or mark not, the force that moves us, we then think there is none, and that it is not causes but liberty that produces the action. Hence it is that they think he does not choose this that of necessity chooses it; but they might as well say fire does not burn, because it burns of necessity. +

The second argument is not so much an argument as a distinction, to show in what sense it may be said that voluntary actions are necessitated and in what sense not. And therefore his Lordship alleges, as from the authority of the Schools (and that which 'rips up the bottom' of the question), that there is a double act of the will. The one, he says, is *actus imperatus*, an act done at the command of the will by some inferior faculty of the soul, as to open or shut one's eyes; and this act may be compelled. The other, he says, is *actus elicitus*, an act allured or drawn forth by allurement out of the will, as to will, to choose, to elect; this he says cannot be compelled.[40] Wherein, letting pass that metaphorical speech of attributing command and subjection to the faculties of the soul, as if they made a commonwealth or family among themselves and could speak one to another, which is very improper in searching the truth of a question; you may observe, first, that to compel a voluntary act is nothing else but to will it. For it is all one to say my will commands the shutting of my eyes, or the doing of any other action; as to say I have the will to shut my eyes. So that *actus imperatus* here might as easily have been said in English, a voluntary action, but that they that invented the term understood not anything it signified. Secondly, you may

[40] Cf. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I–II.vi.4.

observe that *actus elicitus* is exemplified by those words, to will, to elect, to choose, which are all one, and so to will is here made an act of the will. And indeed as the will is a faculty or power of a man's soul, so to will is an act of it according to that power. But as it is absurdly said, that to dance is an act allured or drawn by fair means out of the ability to dance; so is it also to say, that to will is an act allured or drawn out of the power to will, which power is commonly called the will. Howsoever it be, the sum of his Lordship's distinction is that a voluntary act may be done on compulsion, that is to say, by foul means; but to will that, or any act, cannot be but by allurement or fair means. Now seeing fair means, allurements, and enticements produce the action which they do produce as necessarily as threatening and foul means, it follows that to will may be made as necessary as anything that is done by compulsion. So that the distinction of *actus imperatus* and *actus elicitus* are but words, and of no effect against necessity. +

§ **21** His Lordship in the rest of his discourse reckons up the opinions of certain professions of men touching the causes wherein the necessity of things, which they maintain, consists. And first, he says the astrologer derives his necessity from the stars; secondly, that the physician attributes it to the temper of the body. For my part, I am not of their opinion, because neither the stars alone nor the temperature of the patient alone is able to produce any effect, without the concurrence of all other agents. For there is hardly any one action, how casual soever it seem, to the causing whereof concur not whatsoever is *in rerum natura* [in the nature of things], which because it is a great paradox and depends on many antecedent speculations I do not press in this place.

§ **22** Thirdly, he disputes against the opinion of them that say external objects, presented to men of such and such temperatures, do make their actions necessary; and says the power such objects[41] have over us proceeds from our own fault. But that is nothing to the purpose if such fault of ours proceeds from causes not in our own power, and therefore that opinion may hold true for all this answer.

Further, he says, prayer, fasting, etc. may alter our habits. It is true, but when they do so they are causes of the contrary habit and make it necessary, as the former habit had been necessary if prayer, fasting, etc. had not been. Besides, we are not moved or disposed to prayer or any other action but by outward objects, as pious company, godly preachers, or something equivalent.

[41] objects: MS; objections: 1st.

Thirdly,[42] he says a resolved mind is not easily surprised, as the mind of Ulysses, who when others wept alone wept not;[43] and of the philosopher that abstained from striking because he found himself angry;[44] and of him that poured out the water when he was thirsty;[45] and the like. Such things I confess have or may have been done, and do prove only that it was not necessary for Ulysses then to weep, nor for that philosopher to strike, nor for that other man to drink. But it does not prove that it was not necessary for Ulysses then to abstain (as he did) from weeping, nor for the philosopher to abstain (as he did) from striking, nor for the other man to forbear drinking. And yet that was the thing his Lordship ought to have proved.

Lastly his Lordship confesses that the disposition of objects may be dangerous to liberty but cannot be destructive. To which I answer, it is impossible. For liberty is never in any other danger than to be lost; and if it cannot be lost, which he confesses, I may infer it can be in no danger at all.

§ **23** The fourth opinion his Lordship rejects is of them that make the will necessarily to follow the last dictate of the understanding. But it seems his Lordship understands that tenet otherwise than I do. For he speaks as if they that held it did suppose men must dispute the sequel of every action they do, great and small, to the least grain; which is a thing his Lordship, with reason, thinks untrue. But I understand it to signify that the will follows the last opinion or judgment immediately preceding the action, concerning whether it be good to do it or not, whether he have weighed it long before or not at all; and that I take to be the meaning of them that hold it. As for example, when a man strikes, his will to strike follows necessarily that thought which he had of the sequel of his blow immediately before the lifting of his hand. Now if it be understood in that sense, the last dictate of the understanding does necessitate the action, though not as the whole cause, yet as the last cause, as the last feather necessitates the breaking of a horse's back, when there are so many laid on before as there needed but the addition of one to make the weight sufficient.

That which his Lordship alleges against this is, first, out of a poet, who in the person of Medea says, *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor* [I see and approve the better, but I follow the worse].[46] But that saying, as pretty as it is, is not true. For though Medea saw many reasons to forbear killing

[42] Thirdly: *Def.*; Fourthly: 1st. [43] Homer, *Odyssey* XIX: 209–12.
[44] The philosopher referred to is Plato. The story is reported by Diogenes Laertius in *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* III.39.
[45] Reference unknown. [46] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII: 20–1.

her children, yet the last dictate of her judgment was that the present revenge on her husband outweighed them all, and thereupon the wicked action necessarily followed. Then, the story of the Roman that, of two competitors, said one had the better reason but the other must have the office.[47] This also makes against his Lordship, for the last dictate of his judgment that had the bestowing of the office was this, that it was better to take a great bribe than reward a great merit.[48] Thirdly, he objects that things nearer the sense move more powerfully than reason. What follows thence but this, that the sense of the present good is commonly more immediate to the action than the foresight of the evil consequence to come? Fourthly, whereas his Lordship says that do what a man can he shall sorrow more for the death of his son than the sin of his soul, it makes nothing against the last dictate of the understanding. But it argues plainly that sorrow for sin is not voluntary, and by consequence that repentance proceeds from causes.

**§ 24** The last part of this discourse contains his Lordship's opinion about reconciling liberty with the prescience and decrees of God, otherwise than some divines have done, against whom, he says, he had formerly written a treatise,[49] out of which he repeats only two things. One is, that we ought not to desert a certain truth for not being able to comprehend the certain manner of it. And I say the same, as for example that his Lordship ought not to desert this certain truth, that there are certain and necessary causes which make every man to will what he wills, though he do not yet conceive in what manner the will of man is caused. And yet I think the manner of it is not very hard to conceive, seeing that we see daily that praise, dispraise, reward, and punishment, good and evil sequels of men's actions retained in memory, do frame and make us to the election of whatsoever it be that we do elect; and that the memory of such things proceeds from the senses, and sense from the operation of the objects of sense, which are external to us and governed only by God Almighty. And by consequence all actions, even of free and voluntary agents, are necessary.

[47] The great Roman referred to is Julius Caesar. The story is recounted by Plutarch in his *Life of Brutus* vii.3.

[48] Hobbes attributes the wrong motive to Caesar, as least as Plutarch tells the story. According to Plutarch, the reason Caesar gave the post to Brutus was not that he had been bribed to do so but on the basis of the latter's 'fair fame' and 'virtue'. Caesar may also have had a sentimental motive for favouring Brutus, with whose mother he had once had a love affair (see Plutarch, *Life of Brutus* v.2).

[49] The treatise in question, Bramhall informs us in his *Defence* (§ 24), 'was not written against any divines, but in way of examination of a French Treatise' shown to him at York by Lord Newcastle's brother, Sir Charles Cavendish. This treatise appears not to have been published by Bramhall, nor is it included in any of the three editions of his *Works* which appeared after his death.

The other thing that he repeats is that the best way to reconcile contingency and liberty with the prescience and the decrees of God is to subject future contingents[50] to the aspect of God. The same is also my opinion, but contrary to what his Lordship has all this while laboured to prove. For hitherto he held liberty and necessity, that is to say, liberty and the decrees of God, irreconcilable, unless the aspect of God (which word appears now the first time in this discourse) signify somewhat else besides God's will and decree, which I cannot understand. But he adds that we must subject them according to that presentiality which they have in eternity, which he says cannot be done by them that conceive eternity to be an everlasting succession, but only by them that conceive it as an indivisible point. To this I answer that as soon as I can conceive eternity to be an indivisible point, or anything but an everlasting succession, I will renounce all that I have written on this subject. I know Saint Thomas Aquinas calls eternity *nunc stans*, an ever-abiding now;[51] which is easy enough to say, but though I fain would, I never could conceive it: they that can are more happy than I. But in the meantime his Lordship allows all men to be of my opinion, save only those that can conceive in their minds a *nunc stans*, which I think are none. I understand as little how it can be true, as[52] his Lordship says, that God is not just but justice itself, not wise but wisdom itself, not eternal but eternity itself, nor how he concludes thence that eternity is a point indivisible and not a succession, nor in what sense it can be said that an infinite point, and wherein is no succession, can comprehend all time, though time be successive. These phrases I find not in the Scripture. I wonder therefore what was the design of the Schoolmen to bring them up, unless they thought a man could not be a true Christian unless his understanding be first strangled with such hard sayings.

And thus much for answer to his Lordship's discourse, wherein I think not only his squadrons of arguments but also his reserves of distinctions are defeated. And now your Lordship shall have my doctrine concerning the same question, with my reasons for it, positively and as briefly as I can, without any terms of art, in plain English.

## My opinion about liberty and necessity

§ **25** First, I conceive that when it comes into a man's mind to do or not to do some certain action, if he have no time to deliberate, the doing it or

[50] contingents: *Def.*; contingencies: 1st. [51] See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I.x.2.
[52] true, as his Lordship says,: ed.; true his Lordship says,: MS, 1st; true,: *Def.*

abstaining necessarily follows the present thought he has of the good or evil consequence thereof to himself. As, for example, in sudden anger the action shall follow the thought of revenge, in sudden fear the thought of escape. Also when a man has time to deliberate but deliberates not, because never anything appeared that could make him doubt of the consequence, the action follows his opinion of the goodness or harm of it. These actions I call *voluntary*; my Lord, if I understand him aright, calls them *spontaneous*. I call them voluntary because those actions that follow immediately the last appetite are voluntary, and here where there is one only appetite that one is the last. Besides, I see it is reasonable to punish a rash action, which could not be justly done by man to man unless the same were voluntary. For no action of a man can be said to be without deliberation, though never so sudden, because it is supposed he had time to deliberate all the precedent time of his life whether he should do that kind of action or not. And hence it is that he that kills in a sudden passion of anger shall nevertheless be justly put to death, because all the time, wherein he was able to consider whether to kill were good or evil, shall be held for one continual deliberation; and consequently the killing shall be adjudged to proceed from election. +

§ **26** Secondly, I conceive when a man deliberates whether he shall do a thing or not do it, that he does nothing else but consider whether it be better for himself to do it or not to do it. And to consider an action is to imagine the consequences of it, both good and evil. From whence is to be inferred, that deliberation is nothing but alternate imagination of the good and evil sequels of an action, or, which is the same thing, alternate hope and fear or alternate appetite to do or quit the action of which he deliberates. +

§ **27** Thirdly, I conceive that in all deliberations, that is to say, in all alternate succession of contrary appetites, the last is that which we call the will, and is immediately next before the doing of the action, or next before the doing of it become impossible. All other appetites to do and to quit that come upon a man during his deliberation are usually[53] called intentions and inclinations, but not wills; there being but one will, which also in this case may be called the last will, though the intention change often. +

§ **28** Fourthly, that those actions which a man is said to do upon deliberation are said to be voluntary and done upon choice and election, so that

[53] deliberation are usually: MS; deliberations are: 1st.

voluntary action and action proceeding from election is the same thing; and that of a voluntary agent it is all one to say he is free, and to say he has not made an end of deliberating. +

§ **29** Fifthly, I conceive liberty to be rightly defined in this manner: Liberty is the absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent. As, for example, the water is said to descend freely, or to have liberty to descend, by the channel of the river, because there is no impediment that way; but not across, because the banks are impediments. And though the water cannot ascend, yet men never say it wants the liberty to ascend, but the faculty or power, because the impediment is in the nature of the water and intrinsical. So also we say he that is tied wants the liberty to go, because the impediment is not in him but in his bands; whereas we say not so of him that is sick or lame, because the impediment is in himself.

§ **30** Sixthly, I conceive that nothing takes beginning from itself, but from the action of some other immediate agent without itself. And that, therefore, when first a man has an appetite or will to something, to which immediately before he had no appetite nor will, the cause of his will is not the will itself, but something else not in his own disposing. So that whereas it is out of controversy that of voluntary actions the will is the necessary cause, and by this which is said the will is also caused by other things whereof it disposes not, it follows that voluntary actions have all of them necessary causes and therefore are necessitated. +

§ **31** Seventhly, I hold that to be a sufficient cause to which nothing is wanting that is needful to the producing of the effect. The same also is a necessary cause. For if it be possible that a sufficient cause shall not bring forth the effect, then there wants somewhat which was needful to the producing of it, and so the cause was not sufficient. But if it be impossible that a sufficient cause should not produce the effect, then is a sufficient cause a necessary cause, for that is said to produce an effect necessarily that cannot but produce it. Hence it is manifest that whatsoever is produced is produced necessarily, for whatsoever is produced has a sufficient cause to produce it, or else it had not been; and therefore also voluntary actions are necessitated.

§ **32** Lastly, I hold that ordinary definition of a free agent, namely that a free agent is that which, when all things are present which are needful to

produce the effect, can nevertheless not produce it,[54] implies a contradiction and is nonsense; being as much as to say the cause may be sufficient, that is necessary, and yet the effect shall not follow. +

## My reasons

**§ 33** For the first five points, where it is explicated, first, what spontaneity is, secondly, what deliberation is, thirdly, what will, propension, and appetite are, fourthly, what a free agent is, fifthly, what liberty is; there can no other proof be offered but every man's own experience, by reflection on himself and remembering what he uses to have[55] in his mind; that is, what he himself means when he says an action is spontaneous, a man deliberates, such is his will, that action or that agent is free. Now he that so reflects on himself cannot but be satisfied that deliberation is the consideration of the good and evil sequels of an action to come; that by spontaneity is meant inconsiderate proceeding[56] (or else nothing is meant by it); that will is the last act of our deliberation; that a free agent is he that can do if he will and forbear if he will; and that liberty is the absence of external impediments. But to those that out of custom speak not what they conceive but what they hear, and are not able or will not take the pains to consider what they think when they hear such words, no argument can be sufficient, because experience and matter of fact are not verified by other men's arguments but by every man's own sense and memory. For example, how can it be proved that to love a thing and to think it good are all one to a man that does not mark his own meaning by those words? Or how can it be proved that eternity is not *nunc stans* to a man that says those words by custom, and never considers how he can conceive the thing itself in his mind? +

Also the sixth point, that a man cannot imagine anything to begin without a cause, can no other way be made known but by trying how he can imagine it. But if he try, he shall find as much reason, if there be no cause of the thing, to conceive it should begin at one time as at another, that is, he has equal reason to think it should begin at all times; which is impossible, and therefore he must think there was some special cause why

[54] This definition, which was indeed very commonly given by libertarians (Jesuits and Arminians) in Hobbes's time, was apparently first formulated by Molina; see his *Liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione concordia* (ad xiv.13) 1.ii.3: *illud agens liberum dicitur quod positis omnibus requisitis ad agendum potest agere et non agere* [that agent is said to be free that, all things required for acting having been posited, is able either to act or not to act].

[55] uses to have: MS; uses: 1st. [56] proceeding: MS; action: 1st.

it began then rather than sooner or later; or else that it began never, but was eternal. +

§ **34** For the seventh point, which is that all events have necessary causes, it is there proved in that they have sufficient causes. Further let us in this place suppose any event never so casual, as, for example, the throwing ambs-ace upon a pair of dice,[57] and see if it must not have been necessary before it was thrown. For seeing it was thrown, it had a beginning, and consequently a sufficient cause to produce it, consisting partly in the dice, partly in outward things, as the posture of the parts of the hand, the measure of force applied by the caster, the posture of the parts of the table, and the like. In sum, there was nothing wanting which was necessarily required to the producing of that particular cast, and consequently the cast was necessarily thrown. For if it had not been thrown, there had wanted somewhat requisite to the throwing of it, and so the cause had not been sufficient. In the like manner it may be proved that every other accident, how contingent soever it seem or how voluntary soever it be, is produced necessarily, which is that that my Lord Bishop disputes against. The same also may be proved in this manner. Let the case be put, for example, of the weather. It is necessary that tomorrow it shall rain or not rain. If therefore it be not necessary it shall rain, it is necessary it shall not rain; otherwise there is no necessity that the proposition, it shall rain or not rain, should be true. I know there be some that say, it may necessarily be true that one of the two shall come to pass, but not singly that it shall rain or that it shall not rain, which is as much as to say, one of them is necessary yet neither of them is necessary. And therefore to seem to avoid that absurdity, they make a distinction, that neither of them is true *determinate* [determinately], but *indeterminate* [indeterminately]; which distinction either signifies no more but this, one of them is true but we know not which, and so the necessity remains though we know it not; or if the meaning of the distinction be not that, it has no meaning, and they might as well have said, one of them is true *Tityrice* but neither of them *Tupatulice*.[58] +

[57] I.e. two aces, the lowest possible throw.

[58] No doubt Hobbes means to be derisive here, but his precise point remains obscure. The words *Tityrice* and *Tupatulice* (*sic* in the MS; *Titirice* and *Tu patulice* in the 1st edition) are evidently taken from the first line of Virgil's first *Eclogue*: 1.i: 1: *Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi* [You, Tityre, reclining under the cover of a wide-spreading beech tree]. And the word 'tityre-tu' was used in Hobbes's time to designate a member of a 'group of well-to-do ruffians who infested London streets in the 17th century' (*OED*). Lessay has some interesting speculations on what Hobbes may have had in mind here; see the introduction to his translation of Hobbes's treatise, p. 114 n. 1.

**§ 35** The last thing, in which also consists the whole controversy, namely that there is no such thing as an agent which, when all things requisite to action are present, can nevertheless forbear to produce it; or, which is all one, that there is no such thing as freedom from necessity; is easily inferred from that which before has been alleged. For if it be an agent, it can work; and if it work, there is nothing wanting of what is requisite to produce the action, and consequently the cause of the action is sufficient; and if sufficient, then also necessary, as has been proved before.

**§ 36** And thus you see how the inconveniences, which his Lordship objects must follow upon the holding of necessity, are avoided, and the necessity itself demonstratively proved. To which I could add, if I thought it good logic, the inconvenience of denying necessity, as that it destroys both the decrees and the prescience of God Almighty. For whatsoever God has purposed to bring to pass[59] by man as an instrument, or foresees shall come to pass, a man, if he have liberty (such as his Lordship affirms) from necessitation, might frustrate and make not to come to pass; and God should either not foreknow it and not decree it, or he should foreknow such things shall be as shall never be, and decree that which shall never come to pass.

**§ 37** This is all that has come into my mind touching this question since I last considered it. And I humbly beseech your Lordship to communicate it only to my Lord Bishop. And so, praying God to prosper your Lordship in all your designs, I take leave, and am, My most noble and most obliging Lord,

Your most humble servant,

Rouen, August 20, 1645.[60] Thomas Hobbes.

**§ 38** Postscript.[61] Arguments seldom work on men of wit and learning when they have once engaged themselves in a contrary opinion. If anything do

[59] This is the point at which the Harley manuscript stops; its last page has apparently been lost.

[60] 1645: ed.; 1652: 1st., *EW4*. Molesworth adds a note here: 'In the edition of 1654, this date is 1646.' But Molesworth is wrong; the date printed was indeed 1652. And 1652 is not the right date in any case. Hobbes tells us in the preamble to his *Questions* that his treatise was written in 1646; but that isn't right either, according to Lessay, pp. 31–8. Lessay makes a convincing case that the actual date of composition was August 1645, and I accept his conclusion.

[61] This postscript was not included in the first (unauthorized) edition, nor therefore was it printed by Molesworth in *EW4*. It was first published by Bramhall in his *Defence*, the text of which was incorporated by Hobbes into his *Questions* (in Molesworth's edition of which in *EW5* it does appear). The text followed here is that of Bramhall's *Defence* and Hobbes's *Questions*: the two are virtually identical.

it, it is the showing of them the causes of their errors, which is this. Pious men attribute to God Almighty, for honour sake, whatsoever they see is honourable in the world, as seeing, hearing, willing, knowing, justice, wisdom, etc.; but deny him such poor things as eyes, ears, brains, and other organs, without which we worms neither have nor can conceive such faculties to be. And so far they do well. But when they dispute of God's actions philosophically, then they consider them again as if he had such faculties, and in that manner as we have them. This is not well; and thence it is they fall into so many difficulties. We ought not to dispute of God's nature; he is no fit subject of our philosophy. True religion consists in obedience to Christ's lieutenants, and in giving God such honour, both in attributes and actions, as they in their several lieutenancies shall ordain.

## Selections from Bramhall, *A Defence of True Liberty*

§ **3** . . . (a)[1] Thus much I will maintain, that that is no true necessity which he calls necessity, nor that liberty which he calls liberty, nor that the question which he makes the question.

First for liberty: that which he calls liberty is no true liberty.

For the clearing whereof, it behoves us to know the difference between these three: necessity, spontaneity, and liberty.

Necessity and spontaneity may sometimes meet together; so may spontaneity and liberty; but real necessity and true liberty can never meet together. Some things are necessary and not voluntary or spontaneous; some things are both necessary and voluntary; some things are voluntary and not free; some things are both voluntary and free; but those things which are truly necessary can never be free, and those things which are truly free can never be necessary. Necessity consists in an antecedent determination to one; spontaneity consists in a conformity of the appetite, either intellectual or sensitive, to the object; true liberty consists in the elective power of the rational will. That which is determined without my concurrence may nevertheless agree well enough with my fancy or desires, and obtain my subsequent consent; but that which is determined without my concurrence or consent cannot be the object of my election. I may like that which is inevitably imposed upon me by another, but if it be inevitably imposed upon me by extrinsical causes, it is both folly for me to deliberate, and impossible for me to choose, whether I shall undergo it or not. Reason is the root, the fountain, the original of true liberty, which judges and represents

[1] Letters such as this were not used in the original edition of Bramhall's *Defence*. But Hobbes used them in his *Questions* to mark subsections both of Bramhall's work and of his own 'Animadversions' thereupon. I have included them to facilitate comparison of the two works.

to the will whether this or that be convenient, whether this or that be more convenient. Judge then what a pretty kind of liberty it is which is maintained by T.H.:[2] such a liberty as is in little children before they have the use of reason, before they can consult or deliberate of anything. Is not this a childish liberty? And such a liberty as is in brute beasts, as bees and spiders, which do not learn their faculties as we do our trades, by experience and consideration. This is a brutish liberty: such a liberty as a bird has to fly when her wings are clipped; or, to use his own comparison, such a liberty as a lame man, who has lost the use of his limbs, has to walk. Is not this a ridiculous liberty? Lastly (which is worse than all these), such a liberty as a river has to descend down the channel. What? Will he ascribe liberty to inanimate creatures also, which have neither reason, nor spontaneity, nor so much as sensitive appetite? Such is T.H.'s liberty.

(b) His necessity is just such another, a necessity upon supposition, arising from the concourse of all the causes, including the last dictate of the understanding in reasonable creatures. The adequate cause and the effect are together in time, and when all the concurrent causes are determined, the effect is determined also, and is become so necessary that it is actually in being. But there is a great difference between determining and being determined. If all the collateral causes concurring to the production of an effect were antecedently determined, what they must of necessity produce and when they must produce it, then there is no doubt but the effect is necessary. (c) But if these causes did operate freely or contingently, if they might have suspended or denied their concurrence, or have concurred after another manner, then the effect was not truly and antecedently necessary, but either free or contingent. ... So T.H.'s necessity is no absolute, no antecedent, extrinsical necessity, but merely a necessity upon supposition.

(d) Thirdly, that which T.H. makes the question is not the question. 'The question is not', says he, 'whether a man may write if he will and forbear if he will, but whether the will to write or the will to forbear come upon him according to his will, or according to anything else in his own power.' Here is a distinction without a difference. If his will do not come upon him according to his will, then he is not a free, nor yet so much as a voluntary agent, which is T.H.'s liberty. Certainly all the freedom of the agent is from the freedom of the will. If the will have no power over itself, the agent is no more free than a staff in a man's hand. Secondly, he makes but an empty show of a power in the will, either to write or not to write. (e) If it be

[2] This is Bramhall's standard way of referring to Hobbes in his *Defence*.

precisely and inevitably determined, in all occurrences whatsoever, what a man shall will and what he shall not will, what he shall write and what he shall not write, to what purpose is this power? God and nature never made anything in vain; but vain and frustraneous is that power which never was and never shall be deduced into act. Either the agent is determined before he acts, what he shall will and what he shall not will, what he shall act and what he shall not act; and then he is no more free to act than he is to will. Or else he is not determined; and then there is no necessity. No effect can exceed the virtue of its cause. If the action be free to write or to forbear, the power or faculty to will or nill must of necessity be more free. . . . If the will be determined, the writing or not writing is likewise determined; and then he should not say, 'He may write or he may forbear', but 'He must write or he must forbear.' . . . Most truly said Saint Austin, 'Our will should not be a will at all, if it were not in our power.'[3] (f) This is the belief of all mankind, which we have not learned from our tutors, but is imprinted in our hearts by nature.[4] We need not turn over any obscure books to find out this truth. + . . .

(i) The question then is not whether a man be necessitated to will or nill, yet free to act or forbear. But leaving[5] the ambiguous acceptions of the word 'free', the question is plainly this, whether all agents and all events, natural, civil, moral . . ., be predetermined extrinsically and inevitably without their own concurrence in the determination; so as all actions and events, which either are or shall be, cannot but be, nor can be otherwise, after any other manner, or in any other place, time, number, measure, order, nor to any other end, than they are. And all this in respect of the supreme cause, or a concourse of extrinsical causes, determining them to one. + . . .

**§ 7** (a) There is nothing said with more show of reason in this cause by the patrons of necessity and adversaries of true liberty than this, that the will does perpetually and infallibly follow the last dictate of the understanding, or the last judgment of right reason. And in this, and this only, I confess T.H. has good seconds. Yet the common and approved opinion is contrary, and justly. +

For first, this very act of the understanding is an effect of the will, and a testimony of its power and liberty. It is the will which, affecting some particular good, does engage and command the understanding to consult

[3] Saint Austin is Augustine; the sentence quoted occurs in *De libero arbitrio* III.iii.8.

[4] This statement echoes a passage in Cicero's *Pro milone* iv.10, as Hobbes points out in his *Questions*, § 14 (h).

[5] leaving: *W3*; having: *Def.*; saving: *EW5*.

and deliberate what means are convenient for attaining that end. And though the will itself be blind, yet its object is good in general, which is the end of all human actions. Therefore it belongs to the will, as to the general of an army, to move the other powers of the soul to their acts, and among the rest the understanding also, by applying it and reducing its power into act. So as, whatsoever obligation the understanding does put upon the will, is by the consent of the will, and derived from the power of the will, which was not necessitated to move the understanding to consult. So the will is the lady and mistress of human actions; the understanding is her trusty counsellor, which gives no advice but when it is required by the will. And if the first consultation or deliberation be not sufficient, the will may move a review, and require the understanding to inform itself better and take advice of others, from whence many times the judgment of the understanding does receive alteration. +

Secondly, for the manner how the understanding does determine the will, it is not naturally but morally. The will is moved by the understanding, not as by an efficient, having a causal influence into the effect, but only by proposing and representing the object. And therefore, as it were ridiculous to say that the object of the sight is the cause of seeing, so it is to say that the proposing of the object by the understanding to the will is the cause of willing. And therefore the understanding has no place in that concourse of causes which, according to T.H., do necessitate the will.

Thirdly, the judgment of the understanding is not always *practicè practicum* [practically practical], nor of such a nature in itself as to oblige and determine the will to one. Sometimes the understanding proposes two or three means equally available to the attaining of one and the same end. Sometimes it dictates that this or that particular good is eligible or fit to be chosen, but not that it is necessarily eligible or that it must be chosen. It may judge this or that to be a fit means, but not the only means, to attain the desired end. In these cases, no man can doubt but that the will may choose or not choose, this or that, indifferently. Yea, though the understanding shall judge one of these means to be more expedient than another, yet forasmuch as in the less expedient there is found the reason of good, the will, in respect of that dominion which it has over itself, may accept that which the understanding judges to be less expedient, and refuse that which it judges to be more expedient.

Fourthly, sometimes the will does not will the end so efficaciously but that it may be, and often is, deterred from the prosecution of it by

the difficulty of the means. And notwithstanding the judgment of the understanding, the will may still suspend its own act.

Fifthly, supposing, but not granting, that the will did necessarily follow the last dictate of the understanding, yet this proves no antecedent necessity, but coexistent with the act; no extrinsical necessity, the will and the understanding being but two faculties of the same soul; no absolute necessity, but merely upon supposition. And therefore the same authors who maintain that the judgment of the understanding does necessarily determine the will, do yet much more earnestly oppugn T.H.'s absolute necessity of all occurrences. Suppose the will shall apply the understanding to deliberate, and not require a review. Suppose the dictate of the understanding shall be absolute, not this or that indifferently, nor this rather than that comparatively, but this positively; not[6] this freely, but this necessarily. And suppose the will do will efficaciously, and do not suspend its own act. Then here is a necessity indeed, but neither absolute nor extrinsical nor antecedent, flowing from a concourse of causes without ourselves, but a necessity upon supposition, which we do readily grant. So far T.H. is wide from the truth, whilst he maintains, either that the apprehension of a greater good does necessitate the will, or that this is an absolute necessity. . . .

§ 8 We have partly seen before how T.H. has coined a new kind of liberty, a new kind of necessity, a new kind of election; and now in this section a new kind of spontaneity and a new kind of voluntary actions. . . . (a) The first thing that I offer is how often he mistakes my meaning in this one section. First, I make voluntary and spontaneous actions to be one and the same; he says I distinguish them, so as spontaneous actions may be necessary, but voluntary actions cannot. Secondly, (b) I distinguish between free acts and voluntary acts. The former are always deliberate, the latter may be indeliberate; all free acts are voluntary, but all voluntary acts are not free. But he says I confound them and make them the same. (c) Thirdly, he says I ascribe spontaneity only to fools, children, madmen, and beasts. But I acknowledge spontaneity has place in rational men, both as it is comprehended in liberty and as it is distinguished from liberty. + . . .

For the clearer understanding of these things, and to know what spontaneity is, let us consult awhile with the Schools about the distinct order of voluntary or involuntary actions. Some acts proceed wholly from an extrinsical cause, as the throwing of a stone upwards, a rape, or the

[6] not: *Def.*, *W3*; nor: *EW5*.

drawing of a Christian by plain force to the idol's temple: these are called violent acts. Secondly, some proceed from an intrinsical cause, but without any manner of knowledge of the end, as the falling of a stone downwards: these are called natural acts. Thirdly, some proceed from an internal principle, with an imperfect knowledge of the end, where there is an appetite to the object but no deliberation nor election, as the acts of fools, children, beasts, and the inconsiderate acts of men of judgment. These are called voluntary or spontaneous acts. Fourthly, some proceed from an intrinsical cause, with a more perfect knowledge of the end, which are elected upon deliberation. These are called free acts. So then the formal reason of liberty is election. The necessary requisite to election is deliberation. Deliberation implies the actual use of reason. But deliberation and election cannot possibly subsist with an extrinsical predetermination to one. How should a man deliberate or choose which way to go, who knows that all ways are shut against him, and made impossible to him, but only one? This is the genuine sense of these words 'voluntary' and 'spontaneous' in this question. Though they were taken twenty other ways vulgarly or metaphorically, as we say 'spontaneous ulcers', where there is no appetite at all, yet it were nothing to this controversy, which is not about words but about things; not what the words 'voluntary' or 'free' do or may signify, but whether all things be extrinsically predetermined to one. + . . .

§ 11 . . . (b) But I admire that T.H., who is so versed in this question, should here confess that he understands not the difference between physical or natural and moral efficacy. And much more, that he should affirm that outward objects do determine voluntary agents by a natural efficacy. No object, no second agent, angel or devil, can determine the will of man naturally, but God alone, in respect of his supreme dominion over all things. Then the will is determined naturally when God Almighty, besides his general influence (whereupon all second causes do depend, as well for their being as for their acting), does moreover at some times, when it pleases him in cases extraordinary, concur by a special influence, and infuse something into the will in the nature of an act or a habit, whereby the will is moved and excited and applied to will or choose this or that. Then the will is determined morally when some object is proposed to it with persuasive reasons and arguments to induce it to will. Where the determination is natural, the liberty to suspend its act is taken away from the will; but not so where the determination is moral. In the former case, the will is determined

extrinsically, in the latter case intrinsically; the former produces an absolute necessity, the latter only a necessity of supposition. If the will do not suspend but assent, then the act is necessary; but because the will may suspend and not assent, therefore it is not absolutely necessary. In the former case, the will is moved necessarily and determinately; in the latter, freely and indeterminately. The former excitation is immediate; the latter is mediate *mediante intellectu* [by means of the understanding], and requires the help of the understanding. In a word, so great a difference there is between natural and moral efficacy as there is between his opinion and mine in this question. . . .

§ **12** . . . (b) Yet I do acknowledge that which T.H. says to be commonly true, that he who does permit anything to be done which it is in his power to hinder, knowing that if he do not hinder it, it will be done, does in some sort will it. I say in some sort: that is, either by an antecedent will or by a consequent will, either by an operative will or by a permissive will, or he is willing to let it be done but not willing to do it. Sometimes an antecedent engagement does cause a man to suffer that to be done which otherwise he would not suffer. So Darius suffered Daniel to be cast into the lion's den to make good his rash decree;[7] so Herod suffered John Baptist to be beheaded to make good his rash oath.[8] How much more may the immutable rule of justice in God, and his fidelity in keeping his word, draw from him the punishment of obstinate sinners, though antecedently he wills their conversion? He loves all his creatures well, but his own justice better. Again, sometimes a man suffers that to be done which he does not will directly in itself, but indirectly for some other end, or for the producing of some greater good; as a man wills that a putrid member be cut off from his body to save the life of the whole. Or as a judge, being desirous to save a malefactor's life and having power to reprieve him, does yet condemn him for example's sake, that by the death of one he may save the lives of many. Marvel not, then, if God suffer some creatures to take such courses as tend to their own ruin, so long as their sufferings do make for the greater manifestation of his glory, and for the greater benefit of his faithful servants. This is a most certain truth, that God would not suffer evil to be in the world unless he knew how to draw good out of evil. Yet this ought not to be understood as if we made any priority or posteriority of time in the acts of God, but only of nature. Nor do we make the antecedent and consequent

[7] Daniel 6:4–17. [8] Matthew 14:9.

will to be contrary one to another; because the one respects man pure and uncorrupted, the other respects him as he is lapsed. The objects are the same, but considered after a diverse manner. Nor yet do we make these wills to be distinct in God; for they are the same with the divine essence, which is one. But the distinction is in order to the objects or things willed. Nor, lastly, do we make this permission to be a naked or a mere permission. God causes all good, permits all evil, disposes all things, both good and evil. + ...

(d) Wherefore T.H. is mightily mistaken, to make the particular and determinate act of killing Uriah to be from God. The general power to act is from God, but the specification of this general and good power to murder, or to any particular evil, is not from God but from the free-will of man. So T.H. may see clearly, if he will, how one may be the cause of the law and likewise of the action in some sort, that is, by general influence; and yet another cause, concurring by special influence and determining this general and good power, may make itself the true cause of the anomy or the irregularity. + ...

(f) But his greatest error is ... to make justice to be the proper result of power. Power does not measure and regulate justice, but justice measures and regulates power. The will of God, and the eternal law which is in God himself, is properly the rule and measure of justice. As all goodness, whether natural or moral, is a participation of divine goodness, and all created rectitude is but a participation of divine rectitude; so all laws are but participations of the eternal law, from whence they derive their power. The rule of justice then is the same both in God and us; but it is in God as in him that does regulate and measure, in us as in those who are regulated and measured. As the will of God is immutable, always willing what is just and right and good; so his justice likewise is immutable. And that individual action which is justly punished as sinful in us, cannot possibly proceed from the special influence and determinative power of a just cause. See then how grossly T.H. does understand that old and true principle, that the will of God is the rule of justice; as if by willing things in themselves unjust, he did render them just, by reason of his absolute dominion and irresistible power, as fire does assimilate other things to itself and convert them into the nature of fire. This were to make the eternal law a Lesbian rule.[9] Sin is

[9] I.e. a flexible rule, prescribing different things in different cirumstances. The term is derived from a device used by stoneworkers in ancient Lesbos to measure curved mouldings; cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* v.x.7: 1137b29–34.

defined to be 'that which is done, or said, or thought, contrary to the eternal law'.[10] But by this doctrine nothing is done, nor said, nor thought, contrary to the will of God. . . . We use to say that right springs from law and fact, as in this syllogism: 'Every thief ought to be punished', there is the law; 'But such a one is a thief', there is the fact; 'Therefore he ought to be punished', there is the right. But this opinion of T.H. grounds the right to be punished neither upon law nor upon fact, but upon the irresistible power of God. Yea, it overturns, as much as in it lies, all law: first, the eternal law, which is the ordination of divine wisdom, by which all creatures are directed to that end which is convenient for them, that is, not to necessitate them to eternal flames; then, the law participated, which is the ordination of right reason, instituted for the common good, to show unto man what he ought to do and what he ought not to do. To what purpose is it to show the right way to him who is drawn and haled a contrary way by adamantine bonds of inevitable necessity? . . .

§ **14** . . . (d) But his chiefest answer is that 'an action forbidden, though it proceed from necessary causes, yet if it were done willingly, it may be justly punished'; which, according to his custom, he proves by an instance. 'A man necessitated to steal by the strength of temptation, yet if he steal willingly, is justly put to death.' Here are two things, and both of them untrue.

First, he fails in his assertion. Indeed we suffer justly for those necessities which we ourselves have contracted by our own fault; but not for extrinsical antecedent necessities, which were imposed upon us without our fault. If that law do not oblige to punishment which is not intimated, because the subject is invincibly ignorant of it, how much less that law which prescribes absolute impossibilities; unless perhaps invincible necessity be not as strong a plea as invincible ignorance. That which he adds, 'if it were done willingly', though it be of great moment if it be rightly understood; yet in his sense, that is, if a man's 'will be not in his own disposition' and 'if his willing do not come upon him according to his will, nor according to anything else in his power', it weighs not half so much as the least feather in all his horse-load. For if that law be unjust and tyrannical which commands a man to do that which is impossible for him to do, then that law is likewise unjust and tyrannical which commands him to will that which is impossible for him to will.

[10] This definition, first given by Augustine in his *Contra faustum* XXII.XXVII, was widely cited by medieval and early modern writers.

Secondly, his instance supposes an untruth, and is a plain begging of the question. No man is extrinsically, antecedently, and irresistibly necessitated by temptation to steal. The devil may solicit us, but he cannot necessitate us. He has a faculty of persuading, but not a power of compelling. . . . And if Satan, who can both propose the object and choose out the fittest times and places to work upon our frailties, and can suggest reasons, yet cannot necessitate the will (which is most certain), then much less can outward objects do it alone. They have no natural efficacy to determine the will. Well may they be occasions, but they cannot be causes of evil. The sensitive appetite may engender a proclivity to steal, but not a necessity to steal. And if it should produce a kind of necessity, yet it is but moral, not natural; hypothetical, not absolute; coexistent, not antecedent; from ourselves, not[11] extrinsical. This necessity, or rather proclivity, was free in its causes; we ourselves, by our own negligence in not opposing our passions when we should and might, have freely given it a kind of dominion over us. I admit[12] that some sudden passions may and do extraordinarily surprise us; and therefore we say, *motus primo primi*, the first motions,[13] are not always in our power; neither are they free. Yet this is but very rarely, and it is our own fault that they do surprise us. Neither does the law punish the first motion to theft, but the advised act of stealing. The intention makes the thief. + . . .

(f) He adds that 'the sufferings imposed by the law upon delinquents respect not the evil act past, but the good to come; and that the putting of a delinquent to death by the magistrate, for any crime whatsoever, cannot be justified before God, except there be a real intention to benefit others by his example'. The truth is, the punishing of delinquents by law respects both the evil act past and the good to come. The ground of it is the evil act past, the scope or end of it is the good to come. The end without the ground cannot justify the act. A bad intention may make a good action bad, but a good intention cannot make a bad action good. It is not lawful to do evil that good may come of it, nor to punish an innocent person for the admonition of others; that is to fall into a certain crime for fear of an uncertain. Again, though there were no other end of penalties inflicted, neither probatory nor castigatory nor exemplary, but only vindicatory, to satisfy the law out of a zeal of justice by giving to every one his own; yet the action is just and warrantable. Killing, as it is considered in itself, without all undue

[11] not: *W3*; nor: *Def.*, *EW5*. [12] I admit: ed.; Admit: *Def.*, *W3*, *EW5*.
[13] I.e. the first sensations of passion or desire.

circumstances, was never prohibited to the lawful magistrate, who is the vicegerent or lieutenant of God, from whom he derives his power of life and death. . . .

(g) . . . The sum of it is this: 'that where there is no law, there no killing or anything else can be unjust; that before the constitution of commonwealths, every man had power to kill another if he conceived him to be hurtful to him; that at the constitution of commonwealths, particular men lay down this right in part, and in part reserve it to themselves, as in case of theft or murder; that the right which the commonwealth has to put a malefactor to death is not created by the law, but remains from the first right of nature which every man has to preserve himself; that the killing of men in this case is as the killing of beasts in order to our own preservation'. This may well be called stringing of paradoxes.

But first, (h) there never was any such time when mankind was without governors and laws and societies. Paternal government was in the world from the beginning, and the law of nature. There might be sometimes a root of such barbarous thievish brigands, in some rocks or deserts or odd corners of the world; but it was an abuse and a degeneration from the nature of man, who is a political creature. This savage opinion reflects too much upon the honour of mankind.

Secondly, there never was a time when it was lawful, ordinarily, for private men to kill one another for their own preservation. If God would have had men live like wild beasts, as lions, bears, or tigers, he would have armed them with horns or tusks or talons or pricks. But of all creatures man is born most naked, without any weapon to defend himself, because God had provided a better means of security for him, that is, the magistrate.

Thirdly, that right which private men have to preserve themselves, though it be with the killing of another, when they are set upon to be murdered or robbed, is not a remainder or a reserve of some greater power which they have resigned, but a privilege which God has given them, in case of extreme danger and invincible necessity, that when they cannot possibly have recourse to the ordinary remedy, that is, the magistrate, every man becomes a magistrate to himself.

Fourthly, nothing can give that which it never had. The people, whilst they were a dispersed rabble (which in some odd cases might happen to be), never had justly the power of life and death, and therefore they could not give it by their election. All that they do is to prepare the matter, but it is God Almighty that infuses the soul of power. + . . .

§ **19** . . . (a) This proposition, 'The will is free', may be understood in two senses: either that the will is not compelled, or that the will is not always necessitated. For if it be ordinarily, or at any time, free from necessitation, my assertion is true, that there is freedom from necessity. The former sense, that the will is not compelled, is acknowledged by all the world as a truth undeniable: *voluntas non cogitur* [the will is not compelled]. For if the will may be compelled, then it may both will and not will the same thing at the same time, under the same notion; but this implies a contradiction. Yet this author . . . holds that true compulsion and fear may make a man will that which he does not will, that is, in his sense may compel the will, 'as when a man willingly throws his goods into the sea to save himself, or submits to his enemy for fear of being killed'. I answer that T.H. mistakes sundry ways in this discourse. +

(b) First, he errs in this, to think that actions proceeding from fear are properly compulsory actions; which in truth are not only voluntary but free actions, neither compelled nor so much as physically necessitated. Another man, at the same time, in the same ship, in the same storm, may choose, and the same individual man otherwise advised might choose not, to throw his goods overboard. It is the man himself who chooses freely this means to preserve his life. It is true, that if he were not in such a condition, or if he were freed from the grounds of his present fears, he would not choose either the casting of his goods into the sea or the submitting to his enemy. But considering the present exigence of his affairs, reason dictates to him, that of two inconveniences the less is to be chosen, as a comparative good. Neither does he will this course as the end or direct object of his desires, but as the means to attain his end. And what fear does in these cases, love, hope, hatred, etc. may do in other cases; that is, may occasion a man to elect those means to obtain his willed end which otherwise he would not elect. . . . Passions may be so violent that they may necessitate the will, that is, when they prevent deliberations; but this is rarely, and then the will is not free. But they never properly compel it. That which is compelled is against the will; and that which is against the will is not willed. +

(c) Secondly, T.H. errs in this also, where he says that 'a man is then only said to be compelled when fear makes him willing to an action'; as if force were not more prevalent with a man than fear. We must know, therefore, that this word 'compelled' is taken two ways: sometimes improperly, that is, when a man is moved or occasioned by threats or fear, or any passion, to do that which he would not have done if those threats or that passion had

not been. Sometimes it is taken properly, when we do anything against our own inclination, moved by an external cause, the will not consenting nor concurring, but resisting as much as it can. . . . This is that compulsion which is understood when we say the will may be letted, or changed, or necessitated, or that the imperate actions of the will (that is, the actions of the inferior faculties which are ordinarily moved by the will) may be compelled; but that the immanent actions of the will (that is, to will, to choose) cannot be compelled, because it is the nature of an action properly compelled to be done by an extrinsical cause, without the concurrence of the will. + . . .

(g) And here he falls into another invective against distinctions and Scholastical expressions and the 'doctors of the Church, who by this means tyrannized over the understandings of other men'. What a presumption is this, for one private man, who will not allow human liberty to others, to assume to himself such a licence to control so magistrally, and to censure of gross ignorance and tyrannizing over men's judgments, yea, as causes of the troubles and tumults which are in the world, the doctors of the Church in general, who have flourished in all ages and all places, only for a few necessary and innocent distinctions. . . . (h) What, then? Must the logicians lay aside their first and second intentions, their abstracts and concretes, their subjects and predicates, their modes and figures, their method synthetic and analytic, their fallacies of composition and division, etc.? . . . Must the mathematician, the metaphysician, and the divine, relinquish all their terms of art and proper idiotisms because they do not relish with T.H.'s palate? But, he will say, they are obscure expressions. What marvel is it, when the things themselves are more obscure? Let him put them into as plain English as he can, and they shall be never a whit the better understood by those who want all grounds of learning. Nothing is clearer than mathematical demonstration; yet let one who is altogether ignorant in mathematics hear it, and he will hold it to be, as T.H. terms these distinctions, plain fustian or jargon. Every art or profession has its proper mysteries and expressions which are well known to the sons of art, not so to strangers. . . . No, no: it is not the School divines, but innovators and seditious orators, who are the true causes of the present troubles of Europe. . . .

§ **20** . . . (h) He talks much of the 'motives to do and the motives to forbear, how they work upon and determine a man', as if a reasonable man were no

more than a tennis-ball, to be tossed to and fro by the rackets of the second causes; as if the will had no power to move itself, but were merely passive, like an artificial popinjay removed hither and thither by the bolts of the archers who shoot on this side and on that. What are motives but reasons or discourses framed by the understanding and freely moved by the will? What are the will and the understanding but faculties of the same soul? And what is liberty but a power resulting from them both? To say that the will is determined by these motives is as much as to say that the agent is determined by himself. If there be no necessitation before the judgment of right reason does dictate to the will, then there is no antecedent, no extrinsical necessitation at all. (i) All the world knows that when the agent is determined by himself, then the effect is determined likewise in its cause. But if he determined himself freely, then the effect is free. Motives determine not naturally but morally, which kind of determination may consist with true liberty. But if T.H.'s opinion were true, that the will were naturally determined by the physical and special influence of extrinsical causes, not only motives were vain, but reason itself and deliberation were vain. No, says he, they are not vain because they are the means. Yes, if the means be superfluous they are vain. What needed such a circuit of deliberation to advise what is fit to be done, when it is already determined extrinsically what must be done? + . . .

(m) Two things are required to make an effect necessary: first, that it be produced by a necessary cause, such as fire is; secondly, that it be necessarily produced. Protagoras, an atheist, began his book thus: 'Concerning the Gods, I have nothing to say, whether they be or they be not'; for which his book was condemned by the Athenians to be burned.[14] The fire was a necessary agent, but the sentence or the application of the fire to the book was a free act; and therefore the burning of his book was free. Much more the rational will is free, which is both a voluntary agent and acts voluntarily. +

(n) My second reason against this distinction of liberty from compulsion but not from necessitation is new, and demonstrates clearly that to necessitate the will by a physical necessity is to compel the will so far as the will is capable of compulsion; and that he who does necessitate the will to evil after that manner is the true cause of evil, and ought rather to be blamed than the will itself. But T.H. . . . can be contented upon better advice to steal by all this in silence. And to hide this tergiversation from the eyes of the

[14] See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* IX.51–2.

reader, he makes an empty show of braving against that famous and most necessary distinction between the elicit and imperate acts of the will, first because the terms are improper, secondly because they are obscure. . . . But why are the terms improper? 'Because', says he, 'it attributes command and subjection to the faculties of the soul, as if they made a commonwealth or family among themselves and could speak one to another.' Therefore, he says, (o) 'they who invented this term of *actus imperatus* [commanded act] understood not anything what it signified'. No? Why not? It seems to me they understood it better than those who except against it. They knew there are mental terms, which are only conceived in the mind, as well as vocal terms, which are expressed with the tongue. They knew that howsoever a superior do intimate a direction to his inferior, it is still a command. Tarquin commanded his son by only striking off the tops of the poppies, and was by him both understood and obeyed.[15] Though there be no formal commonwealth or family either in the body or in the soul of man, yet there is a subordination in the body of the inferior members to the head; there is a subordination in the soul of the inferior faculties to the rational will. Far be it from a reasonable man so far to dishonour his own nature as to equal fancy with understanding, or the sensitive appetite with the reasonable will. A power of command there is, without all question, though there be some doubt in what faculty this command does principally reside, whether in the will or in the understanding. The true resolution is that the directive command or[16] counsel is in the understanding, and the applicative command, or empire, for putting in execution of what is directed, is in the will. The same answer serves for his second impropriety, about the word 'elicit'. For, says he, 'as it is absurdly said that to dance is an act allured, or drawn by fair means, out of the ability to dance; so is it absurdly said that to will or choose is an act drawn out of the power to will'. His objection is yet more improper than the expression. The art of dancing rather resembles the understanding than the will. That drawing which the Schools intend is clearly[17] of another nature from that which he conceives. By elicitation he understands a persuading or enticing with flattering words, or sweet alluring insinuations, to choose this or that. But that elicitation which the Schools intend is a deducing of the power of the will into act; that drawing which they mention is merely from the appetibility of the object or of the end. As a man draws a child after him with the sight of a fair apple, or a

[15] Livy tells the story in his history of Rome, *Ab urbe condita* I.liv.
[16] or: *EW5*; for: *Def.*, *W3*. [17] clearly: *W3*; clear: *Def.*, *EW5*.

shepherd draws his sheep after him with the sight of a green bough, so the end draws the will to it by a metaphorical motion. What he understands here by an ability to dance is more than I know, or any man else, until he express himself in more proper terms: whether he understand the locomotive faculty alone, or the art or acquired habit of dancing alone, or both of these jointly. It may be said aptly, without any absurdity, that the act of dancing is drawn out (*elicitur*) of the locomotive faculty helped by the acquired habit. He who is so scrupulous about the received phrases of the Schools should not have let so many improper expressions have dropped from his pen; as in this very passage he confounds the compelling of a voluntary action with the commanding of a voluntary action, and willing with electing, which, he says, 'are all one'. Yet to will properly respects the end, to elect the means. +

(p) His other objection against this distinction of the acts of the will into elicit and imperate is obscurity. 'Might it not', says he, 'have been as easily said in English, "a voluntary action"?' Yes, it might have been said as easily, but not as truly or properly. Whatsoever has its original from the will, whether immediately or mediately, whether it be a proper act of the will itself (as to elect), or an act of the understanding (as to deliberate), or an act of the inferior faculties or of the members, is a voluntary action. But neither the act of reason, nor of the senses, nor of the sensitive appetite, nor of the members, are the proper acts of the will, nor drawn immediately out of the will itself; but the members and faculties are applied to their proper and respective acts by the power of the will. . . .

§ **25** This part of T.H.'s discourse hangs together like a sick man's dreams. (a) Even now he tells us that 'a man may have time to deliberate, yet not deliberate'. By and by he says that 'no action of a man, though never so sudden, can be said to be without deliberation'. He tells us (§ 33) that 'the scope of this section is to show what is spontaneous'. Howbeit he shows only what is voluntary, (b) so making voluntary and spontaneous to be all one; whereas before he had told us that 'every spontaneous action is not voluntary, because indeliberate, nor every voluntary action spontaneous, if it proceed from fear'. (c) Now he tells us that 'those actions which follow the last appetite are voluntary, and where there is one only appetite, that is the last'. But before he told us that 'voluntary presupposes some precedent deliberation and meditation of what is likely to follow, both upon the doing and abstaining from the action'. (d) He defines liberty (§ 29) to be 'the

absence of all extrinsical impediments to action'. And yet in his whole discourse he labours to make good that whatsoever is not done is therefore not done because the agent was necessitated by extrinsical causes not to do it. Are not extrinsical causes, which determine him not to do it, extrinsical impediments to action? So no man shall be free to do anything but that which he does actually. He defines a free agent to be 'him who has not made an end of deliberating' (§ 28), and yet defines liberty to be 'an absence of outward impediments'. There may be outward impediments even whilst he is deliberating, as a man deliberates whether he shall play at tennis, and at the same time the door of the tennis court is fast locked against him. And after a man has ceased to deliberate, there may be no outward impediments, as when a man resolves not to play at tennis because he finds himself ill-disposed, or because he will not hazard his money. So the same person, at the same time, should be free and not free, not free and free. And as he is not firm to his own grounds, so he confounds all things, the mind and the will, the estimative faculty and the understanding, imagination with deliberation, the end with the means, human will with the sensitive appetite, rational hope or fear with irrational passions, inclinations with intentions, a beginning of being with a beginning of working, sufficiency with efficiency. So as the greatest difficulty is to find out what he aims at. + ...

§ **26** (a) If I did not know what deliberation was, I should be little relieved in my knowledge by this description. Sometimes he makes it to be a consideration, or an act of the understanding; sometimes an imagination, or an act of the fancy; sometimes he makes it to be an alternation of passions, hope and fear; sometimes he makes it concern the end, sometimes to concern the means. So he makes it I know not what. The truth is this in brief: 'Deliberation is an inquiry made by reason, whether this or that (definitely considered) be a good and fit means, or (indefinitely) what are good and fit means to be chosen for attaining some wished end.'[18] +

§ **27** (a) Still here is nothing but confusion: he confounds the faculty of the will with the act of volition; he makes the will to be the last part of deliberation; he makes the intention, which is a most proper and elicit act of the will, or a willing of the end as it is to be attained by certain means, to be no willing at all, but only some antecedaneous inclination or propension.

[18] This definition is based, albeit somewhat loosely, on Aristotle's account of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.iii.11–12: 1112b12–25.

He might as well say that the uncertain agitation of the needle hither and thither to find out the pole, and the resting or fixing of itself directly towards the pole, were both the same thing. But the grossest mistake is that he will acknowledge no act of man's will to be his will, but only the last act, which he calls the last will. If the first were no will, how comes this to be the last will? According to this[19] doctrine, the will of a man should be as unchangeable as the will of God, at least so long as there is a possibility to effect it. + ...

§ **28** (a) This short section might pass without an animadversion, but for two things. The one is that he confounds a voluntary act with a free act. A free act is only that which proceeds from the free election of the rational will after deliberation; but every act that proceeds from the sensitive appetite of man or beast, without deliberation or election, is truly voluntary. (b) The other thing observable is his conclusion that 'it is all one to say a man is free and to say he has not made an end of deliberating'; which confession of his overturns his whole structure of absolute necessity. For if every agent be necessitated to act what he does act by a necessary and natural flux of extrinsical causes, then he is no more free before he deliberates, or whilst he deliberates, than he is after. But by T.H.'s confession here, he is more free whilst he deliberates than he is after. And so after all his flourishes for an absolute or extrinsical necessity, he is glad to sit[20] himself down and rest contented with a hypothetical necessity (which no man ever denied or doubted of), ascribing the necessitation of a man in free acts to his own deliberation, and in indeliberate acts to his last thought (§ 25). What is this to a natural and special influence of extrinsical causes? (c) Again, 'liberty', says he, 'is an absence of extrinsical impediments'; but deliberation does produce no new extrinsical impediment; therefore (let him choose which part he will) either he is free after deliberation, by his own doctrine, or he was not free before. Our own deliberation, and the direction of our own understanding, and the election of our own will, do produce a hypothetical necessity that the event be such as the understanding has directed and the will elected. But forasmuch as the understanding might have directed otherwise, and the will have elected otherwise, this is far from an absolute necessity. Neither does liberty respect only future acts, but present acts also. Otherwise God did not freely create the world. In the same instant wherein the will elects it is free, according to a priority of

[19] this: *Def.*, *W3*; his: *EW5*. [20] sit: *Def.*, *W3*; set: *EW5*.

nature, though not of time, to elect otherwise. And so in a divided sense the will is free, even whilst it acts, though in a compounded sense it be not free. Certainly, deliberation does constitute, not destroy liberty. +

§ **30** This sixth point does not consist in explicating of terms, as the former, but in two proofs that voluntary actions are necessitated. (a) The former proof stands thus: 'Nothing takes beginning from itself, but from some agent without itself, which is not in its own disposing; therefore', etc. *Concedo omnia*, I grant all he says. The will does not take beginning from itself. Whether he understand by 'will' the faculty of the will, which is a power of the reasonable soul, it takes not beginning from itself but from God, who created and infused the soul into man and endowed it with this power. Or whether he understand by 'will' the act of willing, it takes not beginning from itself but from the faculty or from the power of willing, which is in the soul. This is certain: finite . . . things cannot be from themselves, nor be produced by themselves. What would he conclude from hence? That therefore the act of willing takes not its beginning from the faculty of the will? Or that the faculty is always determined antecedently, extrinsically, to will that which it does will? He may as soon draw water out of a pumice as draw any such conclusion out of these premises. Secondly, for his 'taking a beginning', either he understands a beginning of being or a beginning of working and acting. If he understand a beginning of being, he says most truly, that nothing has a beginning of being in time from itself. But this is nothing to his purpose; the question is not between us whether the soul of man or the will of man be eternal. But if he understand a beginning of working or moving actually, it is a gross error. All men know that when a stone descends, or fire ascends, or when water that has been heated returns to its former temper, the beginning or reason is intrinsical, and one and the same thing does move and is moved in a diverse respect. It moves in respect of the form and it is moved in respect of the matter. Much more man, who has a perfect knowledge and prenotion of the end, is most properly said to move himself. Yet I do not deny but that there are other beginnings of human actions which do concur with the will: some outward, as the first cause by general influence (which is evermore requisite), angels or men by persuading, evil spirits by tempting, the object or end by its appetibility, the understanding by directing; some inward, as passions[21] and acquired habits. But I deny that any of these do necessitate or can

[21] directing; some inward, as passions: *W3*; directing. So passions: *Def.*, *EW5*.

necessitate the will of man by determining it physically to one, except God alone, who does it rarely, in extraordinary cases. And where there is no antecedent determination to one, there is no absolute necessity, but true liberty. +

(b) His second argument is *ex concessis* [from a concession]: 'It is out of controversy', says he, 'that of voluntary actions the will is a necessary cause.' The argument may be thus reduced: Necessary causes produce necessary effects; but the will is a necessary cause of voluntary actions. I might deny his major: necessary causes do not always produce necessary effects except they be also necessarily produced, as I have showed before in the burning of Protagoras's book.[22] But I answer clearly to the minor, that the will is not a necessary cause of what it wills in particular actions. It is without controversy indeed, for it is without all probability. That it wills when it wills is necessary; but that it wills this or that, now or then, is free. More expressly, the act of the will may be considered three ways: either in respect of its nature, or in respect of its exercise, or in respect of its object. First, for the nature of the act: that which the will wills is necessarily voluntary, because the will cannot be compelled; and in this sense 'it is out of controversy that the will is a necessary cause of voluntary actions'. Secondly, for the exercise of its acts: that is not necessary; the will may either will or suspend its act. Thirdly, for the object: that is not necessary but free; the will is not extrinsically determined to its objects. As for example, the cardinals meet in the conclave to choose a Pope. Whom they choose, he is necessarily Pope. But it is not necessary that they shall choose this or that day: before they were assembled, they might defer their assembling; when they are assembled, they may suspend their election for a day or a week. Lastly, for the person whom they will choose, it is freely in their own power; otherwise, if the election were not free it were void, and no election at all. So that which takes its beginning from the will is necessarily voluntary. But it is not necessary that the will shall will this or that in particular, as it was necessary that the person freely elected should be Pope. But it was not necessary either that the election should be at this time, or that this man should be elected. And therefore voluntary acts in particular have not necessary causes, that is, they are not necessitated. +

§ **32** . . . 'Lastly, I hold', says he, . . . 'that the ordinary definition of a free agent implies a contradiction, and is nonsense.' That which he calls the

[22] § 20 (m) above.

'ordinary definition' of liberty is the very definition which is given by the much greater part of philosophers and Schoolmen. And does he think that all these spoke nonsense, or had no more judgment than to contradict themselves in a definition? He might much better suspect himself than censure so many. Let us see the definition itself: 'A free agent is that which, when all things are present that are needful to produce the effect, can nevertheless not produce it.' I acknowledge the old definition of liberty, with little variation. But I cannot see this nonsense nor discover this contradiction. For (a) in these words, 'all things needful' or 'all things requisite', the actual determination of the will is not included. But by 'all things needful or requisite', all necessary power either operative or elective, all necessary instruments and adjuments[23] extrinsical and intrinsical, and all conditions, are intended. As he that has pen and ink and paper, a table, a desk, and leisure, the art of writing, and the free use of his hand, has all things requisite to write if he will; and yet he may forbear if he will. . . . (b) And indeed if the will were (as he conceives it is) necessitated extrinsically to every act of willing, if it had no power to forbear willing what it does will, nor to will what it does not will, then if the will were wanting, something requisite to the producing of the effect was wanting. But now when science and conscience, reason and religion, our own and other men's experience, do teach us that the will has a dominion over its own acts, to will or nill without extrinsical necessitation, if the power to will be present *in actu primo* [as a first actuality],[24] determinable by ourselves, then there is no necessary power wanting in this respect to the producing of the effect. +

Secondly, these words, 'to act or not to act, to work or not to work, to produce or not to produce', have reference to the effect, not as a thing which is already done or doing, but as a thing to be done. They imply not the actual production but the producibility of the effect. But when once the will has actually concurred with all other causes and conditions and circumstances, then the effect is no more possible nor producible, but it is in being and actually produced. Thus he takes away the subject of the question. The question is whether effects producible be free from necessity. He shuffles out 'effects producible', and thrusts in their places

[23] I.e. helps.

[24] Bramhall here invokes the Aristotelian distinction between different levels or degrees of actuality. A first actuality is a particular disposition to perform a specific kind of action, as opposed to (a) the exercise of such a disposition or the performance of an action of that kind (this is a second actuality) and (b) a general capacity to form such dispositions or to perform actions of some broader kind (this is a mere potentiality). See Aristotle, *De anima* II.1: 412a22–8.

'effects produced', or 'which are in the act of production'. Wherefore I conclude that it is neither nonsense nor contradiction to say that a free agent, when all things requisite to produce the effect are present, may nevertheless not produce it. +

§ 33 Now at length he comes to his main proofs . . . He argues thus: 'That which a man conceives in his mind by these words, "spontaneity", "deliberation", etc., that they are.' This is his proposition, which I deny. (a) The true natures of things are not to be judged by the private ideas or conceptions of men, but by their causes and formal reasons. Ask an ordinary person what 'upwards' signifies, and whether our antipodes have their heads upwards or downwards, and he will not stick to tell you that if his head be upwards, theirs must needs be downwards. And this is because he knows not the formal reason thereof: that the heavens encircle the earth, and what is towards heaven is upwards. . . . I might give a hundred such like instances. He who leaves the conduct of his understanding to follow vulgar notions shall plunge himself into a thousand errors, like him who leaves a certain guide to follow an *ignis fatuus* [foolish fire, i.e. deceptive light] or a will-with-the-wisp. So his proposition is false. + . . .

(c) Then for his assumption, it is as defective as his proposition, that by those words 'spontaneity', etc., men do understand as he conceives. No rational man does conceive a spontaneous action and an indeliberate action to be all one. Every indeliberate action is not spontaneous; the fire considers not whether it should burn, yet the burning of it is not spontaneous. Neither is every spontaneous action indeliberate; a man may deliberate what he will eat and yet eat it spontaneously. (d) Neither does 'deliberation' properly signify the considering of the good and evil sequels of an action to come, but the considering whether this be a good and fit means, or the best and fittest means, for obtaining such an end. The physician does not deliberate whether he should cure his patient, but by what means he should cure him. Deliberation is of the means, not of the end. (e) Much less does any man conceive with T.H. that deliberation is an imagination, or an act of fancy, not of reason, common to men of discretion with madmen and natural fools and children and brute beasts. + (f) Thirdly, neither does any understanding man conceive, or can conceive, either[25] that 'the will is an act of[26] deliberation' (the understanding and the will are two distinct faculties), or that 'only the last appetite is to be called our will'. So no

[25] conceive, either: *Def.*, *W3*; conceive: *EW5*. [26] of *W3*; of our: *Def.*, *EW5*.

man should be able to say, 'This is my will', because he knows not whether he shall persevere in it or not. + (g) Concerning the fourth point we agree, that 'he is a free agent that can do if he will and forbear if he will'. But I wonder how this dropped from his pen. What is now become of his absolute necessity of all things, if a man be free to do and to forbear anything? Will he make himself guilty of the nonsense of the Schoolmen, and run with them into contradictions for company? It may be he will say, 'he can do if he will and forbear if he will, but he cannot will if he will'. This will not serve his turn. For if the cause of a free action, that is, the will to do it, be determined, then the effect or the action itself is likewise determined. A determined cause cannot produce an undetermined effect; either the agent can will and forbear to will, or else he cannot do and forbear to do. + (h) But we differ wholly about the fifth point. He who conceives liberty aright conceives both a liberty in the subject to will or not to will, and a liberty to the object to will this or that, and a liberty from impediments. T.H. by a new way of his own cuts off the liberty of the subject, as if a stone was free to ascend or descend because it has no outward impediment; and the liberty towards the object, as if the needle touched with the loadstone were free to point either towards the north or towards the south because there is not a barricado in its way to hinder it. Yea, he cuts off the liberty from inward impediments also, as if a hawk were at liberty to fly when her wings are plucked, but not when they are tied. And so he makes liberty from extrinsical impediments to be complete liberty; so he ascribes liberty to brute beasts and liberty to rivers, and by consequence makes beasts and rivers to be capable of sin and punishment. + ...

(i) The reason for the sixth point is like the former, a fantastical or imaginative reason. 'How can a man imagine anything to begin without a cause? Or if it should begin without a cause, why it should begin at this time rather than at that time?' He says truly: nothing can begin without a cause, that is, to *be*. But it may begin to *act* of itself without any other cause. Nothing can begin without a cause; but many things may begin, and do begin, without necessary causes. A free cause may as well choose his time when he will begin, as a necessary cause be determined extrinsically when it must begin. And although free effects cannot be foretold, because they are not certainly predetermined in their causes, yet when the free causes do determine themselves, they are of as great certainty as the other. + ...

§ **34** . . . (e) Secondly, our dispute is about absolute necessity; his proofs extend only to hypothetical necessity. Our question is whether the concurrence and determination of the causes were necessary before they did concur or were determined. He proves that the effect is necessary after the causes have concurred and are determined. The freest actions of God or man are necessary by such a necessity of supposition . . . So his proof looks another way from his proposition. His proposition is 'that the casting of ambs-ace was necessary before it was thrown'. His proof is that it was necessary when it was thrown. Examine all his causes over and over and they will not afford him one grain of antecedent necessity. The first cause is in the dice: true, if they be false dice there may be something in it, but then his contingency is destroyed . . . His second cause is 'the posture of the party's hand': but what necessity was there that he should put his hands into such a posture? None at all. The third cause is 'the measure of the force applied by the caster'. Now for the credit of his cause let him but name, I will not say a convincing reason nor so much as a probable reason but even any pretence of reason, how the caster was necessitated from without himself to apply just so much force and neither more nor less. If he cannot, his cause is desperate, and he may hold his peace forever. His last cause is the posture of the table. But tell us in good earnest, what necessity there was why the caster must throw into that table rather than the other, or that the dice must fall just upon that part of the table before the cast was thrown. He that makes these to be necessary causes, I do not wonder if he make all effects necessary effects. If any one of these causes be contingent, it is sufficient to render the cast contingent; and now that they are all so contingent, yet he will needs have the effect to be necessary. And so it is when the cast is thrown, but not before the cast was thrown, which he undertook to prove. Who can blame him for being so angry with the Schoolmen and their distinctions of necessity into absolute and hypothetical, seeing they touch his freehold so nearly? +

But though his instance of raining tomorrow be impertinent, as being no free action, yet because he triumphs so much in his argument, I will not stick to go a little out of my way to meet a friend. For I confess the validity of the reason had been the same if he had made it of a free action, as thus: 'Either I shall finish this reply tomorrow or I shall not finish this reply tomorrow' is a necessary proposition. But because he shall not complain of any disadvantage in the alteration of his terms, I will for once adventure upon his shower of rain. And first, I readily admit his major, that this

proposition, 'Either it will rain tomorrow or it will not rain tomorrow', is necessarily true. For of two contradictory propositions, the one must of necessity be true, because no third can be given. But his minor, that 'It could not be necessarily true, except one of the members were necessarily true', is most false. And so is his proof likewise, that 'If neither the one nor the other of the members be necessarily true, it cannot be affirmed that either the one or the other is true.' A conjunct proposition may have both parts false and yet the proposition be true, as 'If the sun shine it is day' is a true proposition at midnight. And T.H. confesses as much (§ 19): ' "If I shall live I shall eat" is a necessary proposition, that is to say, it is necessary that that proposition should be true whensoever uttered. But it is not the necessity of the thing, nor is it therefore necessary that the man shall live or that the man shall eat'. And so T.H. proceeds: 'I do not use to fortify my distinctions with such reasons.' But it seems he has forgotten himself, and is contented with such poor fortifications. And though both parts of a disjunctive proposition cannot be false, because if it be a right disjunction the members are repugnant, whereof one part is infallibly true; yet vary but the proposition a little to abate the edge of the disjunctions, and you shall find[27] that which T.H. says to be true, that it is not the necessity of the thing which makes the proposition to be true. As for example, vary it thus: 'I know that either it will rain tomorrow or that it will not rain tomorrow' is a true proposition. But it is not true that I know it will rain tomorrow; neither is it true that I know it will not rain tomorrow; wherefore the certain truth of the proposition does not prove that either of the members is determinately true in present. . . .

(g) If all this will not satisfy him, I will give one of his own kind of proofs, that is, an instance. That which necessitates all things, according to T.H. (§ 11), is the decree of God, or that order which is set to all things by the eternal cause. Now God himself, who made this necessitating decree, was not subjected to it in the making thereof; neither was there any former order to oblige the first cause necessarily to make such a decree. Therefore this decree, being an act *ad extra* [gratuitous], was freely made by God, without any necessitation. Yet nevertheless this disjunctive proposition is necessarily true: 'Either God did make such a decree or he did not make such a decree.' Again, though T.H.'s opinion were true, that all events are necessary and that the whole Christian world are deceived who believe that some events are free from necessity, yet he will not deny, but if it had been

[27] find: *Def.*, *W3*; find in: *EW5*.

the good pleasure of God, he might have made some causes free from necessity, seeing that it neither argues any imperfection nor implies any contradiction. Supposing therefore that God had made some second causes free from any such antecedent determination to one, yet the former disjunction would be necessarily true: 'Either this free undetermined cause will act after this manner or it will not act after this manner.' Wherefore the necessary truth of such a disjunctive proposition does not prove that either of the members of the disjunction, singly considered, is determinately true in present, but only that the one of them will be determinately true tomorrow. +

# Selections from Hobbes, *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance*

## To the reader

You shall find in this little volume the questions concerning necessity, freedom, and chance, which in all ages have perplexed the minds of curious men, largely and clearly discussed, and the arguments on all sides, drawn from the authority of Scripture, from the doctrine of the Schools, from natural reason, and from the consequences pertaining to common life, truly alleged and severally weighed between two persons who both maintain that men are free to do as they will and to forbear as they will. The things they dissent in are that the one holds that it is not in a man's power now to choose the will he shall have anon; that chance produces nothing; that all events and actions have their necessary causes; that the will of God makes the necessity of all things. The other, on the contrary, maintains that not only the man is free to choose what he will do, but the will also to choose what it shall will; that when a man wills a good action, God's will concurs with his, else not; that the will may choose whether it will will or not; that many things come to pass without necessity, by chance; that though God foreknow a thing shall be, yet it is not necessary that that thing shall be, inasmuch as God sees not the future as in its causes but as present. In sum, they adhere both of them to the Scripture, but one of them is a learned School-divine, the other a man that does not much admire that kind of learning.

This is enough to acquaint you withal in the beginning, which also shall be more particularly explained by and by in the stating of the question, and dividing of the arguments into their several heads. The rest

you shall understand from the persons themselves when they enter. Fare ye well.

T.H.

## The occasion of the controversy

Whether whatsoever comes to pass proceed from necessity, or some things from chance, has been a question disputed amongst the old philosophers long time before the incarnation of our Saviour, without drawing into argument on either side the almighty power of the Deity. But the third way of bringing things to pass, distinct from necessity and chance, namely, free-will, is a thing that never was mentioned amongst them, nor by the Christians in the beginning of Christianity. For Saint Paul, that disputes that question largely and purposely, never uses the term of 'free-will'; nor did he hold any doctrine equivalent to that which is now called the doctrine of free-will, but derives all actions from the irresistible will of God, and nothing from the will of him that runs or wills. But for some ages past, the doctors of the Roman Church have exempted from this dominion of God's will the will of man, and brought in a doctrine that not only man but also his will is free, and determined to this or that action not by the will of God, nor necessary causes, but by the power of the will itself. And though by the reformed Churches instructed by Luther, Calvin, and others, this opinion was cast out; yet not many years since it began again to be reduced by Arminius and his followers, and became the readiest way to ecclesiastical promotion; and by discontenting those that held the contrary, was in some part the cause of the following troubles; which troubles were the occasion of my meeting with the Bishop of Derry at Paris,[1] where we discoursed together of the argument now in hand; from which discourse we carried away each of us his own opinion, and for aught I remember, without any offensive words, as 'blasphemous', 'atheistical', or the like, passing between us; either for that the Bishop was not then in passion or suppressed his passion, being then in the presence of my Lord of Newcastle.

But afterwards the Bishop sent to his Lordship his opinion concerning the question in writing, and desired him to persuade me to send an answer thereunto likewise in writing. There were some reasons for which I thought

[1] The 'troubles' Hobbes refers to are the events which led to the Civil War in England. It was because of these troubles that both he and Bramhall had left England during the 1640s. For more about the 'occasion' of their meeting, see the editor's introduction and the two introductions by Franck Lessay to his translation of Hobbes's treatise.

it might be inconvenient to let my answer go abroad; yet the many obligations wherein I was obliged to him, prevailed with me to write this answer, which was afterwards, not only without my knowledge but also against my will, published by one that found means to get a copy of it surreptitiously.[2] And thus you have the occasion of this controversy.

## The state of the question

The question in general is stated by the Bishop himself (towards the end of § 3) in these words: 'Whether all events, natural, civil, moral, . . . be predetermined extrinsically and inevitably, without their own concurrence, so as all the actions and events which either are or shall be, cannot but be, nor can be otherwise, after any other manner or in any other place, time, number, measure, order, nor to any other end than they are. And all this in respect of the supreme cause, or a concourse of extrinsical causes, determining them to one.'

Which though drawn up to his advantage, with as much caution as he would do a lease, yet (excepting that which is not intelligible) I am content to admit. Not intelligible is . . . 'without their own concurrence'. [For these words] are insignificant, unless he mean that the events themselves should concur to their production, as that fire does not necessarily burn without the concurrence of burning, as the words properly import, or at least without concurrence of the fuel. Th[is] clause . . . left out, I agree with him in the state of the question as it is put universally. But when the question is put of the necessity of any particular event, as of the will to write or the like, then it is the stating of that particular question. But it is decided in the decision of the question universal.

He states the same question again in another place thus: 'This is the very question where the water sticks between us, whether there be such a liberty free from necessitation and extrinsical determination to one or not.'[3] And I allow it also for well stated so.

Again he says, 'In a word, so great difference there is between natural and moral efficacy as there is between his opinion and mine in this question.'[4] So that the state of the question is reduced to this, 'Whether there be a moral efficacy which is not natural?' I say there is not; he says there is. . . .

[2] See Introduction for an account of the publication of Hobbes's treatise.
[3] *Defence*, § 4. [4] *Defence*, § 11 (b).

Again, he often uses such words as these: 'The will wills; the will suspends its act (i.e., the will wills not); the understanding proposes; the understanding understands.' Herein also lies the whole question. If they be true I am,[5] if false he is in error. . . .

Again the whole question of free-will is included in this, 'Whether the will determine itself?' . . .

Lastly, there be two questions: one, whether a man be free in such things as are within his power to do what he will; another, whether he be free to will. Which is as much as to say (because will is appetite), it is one question whether he be free to eat that has an appetite, and another whether he be free to have an appetite. In the former, whether a man be free to do what he will, I agree with the Bishop. In the latter, whether he be free to will, I dissent from him. And therefore, all the places of Scripture that he alleges to prove that a man has liberty to do what he will, are impertinent to the question. If he has not been able to distinguish between these two questions, he has not done well to meddle with either; if he has understood them, to bring arguments to prove that a man is free to do if he will is to deal uningenuously and fraudulently with his readers. And thus much for the state of the question. . . .

§ 1 . . . (c) . . . [The Bishop] thinks [that] to will is to have dominion over [one's] own actions, and actually to determine [one's] own will. But no man can determine his own will. For the will is appetite; nor can a man more determine his will than any other appetite, that is, more than he can determine when he shall be hungry and when not. When a man is hungry, it is in his choice to eat or not eat; this is the liberty of the man. But to be hungry or not hungry, which is that which I hold to proceed from necessity, is not in his choice. Besides, these words, 'dominion over his own actions' and 'determination of himself', so far as they are significant, make against him. For over whatsoever things there is dominion, those things are not free, and therefore a man's actions are not free. And if a man determine himself, the question will still remain, what determined him to determine himself in that manner. . . .

(e) If the bishop think that I hold no other necessity than that which is expressed in that old foolish rule [sc. 'whatsoever is, when it is, is necessarily so as it is'],[6] he neither understands me nor what the word 'necessary'

[5] I am: ed.; *Ques.*, *EW5*.

[6] First formulated, apparently, by Aristotle: see *De interpretatione* IX: 19a24–5. Bramhall quotes the rule in Latin in his discourse, § 23.

signifies. Necessary is that which is impossible to be otherwise, or that which cannot possibly otherwise come to pass. Therefore necessary, possible, and impossible have no signification in reference to time past or time present, but only time to come. His necessary, and his *in sensu composito* [in the composite sense], signify nothing; my necessary is a necessary from all eternity, and yet not inconsistent with true liberty, which does not consist in determining itself but in doing what the will is determined unto. This 'dominion over itself' and this *sensus compositus* and this 'determining itself' and this 'necessarily is when it is' are confused and empty words. . . .

§ **3** . . . (d) 'Thirdly, that which T.H. makes the question is not the question', etc.

He has very little reason to say this. He requested me to tell him my opinion in writing concerning free-will. Which I did, and did let him know a man was free, in those things that were in his power, to follow his will, but that he was not free to will, that is, that his will did not follow his will; which I expressed in these words: 'The question is whether the will to write, or the will to forbear, come upon a man according to his will, or according to anything else in his own power.' He that cannot understand the difference between free to do if he will, and free to will, is not fit, as I have said in the stating of the question, to hear this controversy disputed, much less to be a writer in it. His consequence, 'If a man be not free to will he is not a free nor a voluntary agent', and his saying, 'The freedom of the agent is from the freedom of the will', is put here without proof; nor is there any considerable proof of it through the whole book hereafter offered. For why? He never before had heard, I believe, of any distinction between free to do and free to will; which makes him also say, 'If the will have not power over itself, the agent is no more free than a staff in a man's hand.' As if it were not freedom enough for a man to do what he will, unless his will also have power over his will; and that his will be not the power itself, but must have another power within it to do all voluntary acts. . . .

§ **7** (a) 'There is nothing said with more show of reason in this cause by the patrons of necessity than this, "that the will does perpetually and infallibly follow the last dictate of the understanding, or the last judgment of right reason", etc. Yet the common and approved opinion is contrary . . .'

I note here, first, that the Bishop is mistaken in saying that I or any other patron of necessity are of opinion that the will follows always the last judgment of right reason. For it follows as well the judgment of an erroneous as

of a true reasoning; and the truth in general is that it follows the last opinion of the goodness or evilness of the object, be the opinion true or false.

Secondly, I note that in making the understanding to be an effect of the will, he thinks a man may have a will to that which he not so much as thinks on. And in saying that 'it is the will which, affecting some particular good, does engage and command the understanding to consult', etc., that he not only thinks the will affects a particular good before the man understands it to be good; but also he thinks that these words, 'does command the understanding', and these, 'for it belongs to the will, as to the general of an army, to move the other powers of the soul to their acts', and a great many more that follow, are sense, which they are not, but mere confusion and emptiness . . .

§ 8 (a) 'The first thing that I offer is, how often he mistakes my meaning in this one section. First, I make voluntary and spontaneous actions to be one and the same. He says I distinguish them', etc.

It is very possible I may have mistaken him; for neither he nor I understand him. If they be one, why did he without need bring in this strange word 'spontaneous'? Or rather, why did the Schoolmen bring it in, if not merely to shift off the difficulty of maintaining their tenet of free-will? . . .

(c) 'Thirdly, he says I ascribe spontaneity only to fools, children, madmen, and beasts. But I acknowledge spontaneity has place in rational men', etc.

I resolve to have no more to do with spontaneity. But I desire the reader to take notice that the common people, on whose arbitration depends the signification of words in common use, among the Latins and Greeks, did call all actions and motions whereof they did perceive no cause, spontaneous and αυτοματα [automatic]. I say, not those actions which had no causes, for all actions have their causes, but those actions whose causes they did not perceive. So that 'spontaneous', as a general name, comprehended many actions and motions of inanimate creatures, as the falling of heavy things downwards, which they thought spontaneous, and that if they were not hindered they would descend of their own accord. It comprehended also all animal motion, as beginning from the will or appetite; because the causes of the will and appetite, being not perceived, they supposed, as the Bishop does, that they were the causes of themselves. So that which in general is called spontaneous, being applied to men and beasts in special is

called voluntary. Yet the will and appetite, though the very same thing, use to be distinguished in certain occasions. For in the public conversation of men, where they are to judge of one another's will and of the regularity and irregularity of one another's actions, not every appetite, but the last, is esteemed in the public judgment for the will; nor every action proceeding from appetite, but that only to which there had preceded or ought to have preceded some deliberation. And this I say is so when one man is to judge of another's will. For every man in himself knows that what he desires or has an appetite to, the same he has a will to, though his will may be changed before he has obtained his desire. The Bishop, understanding nothing of this, might, if it had pleased him, have called it jargon. . . .

§ **12** . . . (b) 'Yet I do acknowledge that which T.H. says, "that he who does permit anything to be done which it is in his power to hinder, knowing that if he do not hinder it it will be done, does in some sort will it". I say in some sort: that is, either by an antecedent will or by a consequent will; either by an operative will or by a permissive will; or he is willing to let it be done but not willing to do it.'

Whether it be called antecedent or consequent, or operative or permissive, it is enough for the necessity of the thing that the heart of Pharaoh should be hardened; and if God were not willing to do it, I cannot conceive how it could be done without him. . . .

(d) 'Wherefore T.H. is mightily mistaken, to make the particular and determinate act of killing Uriah to be from God. . . .'

But why am I so mightily mistaken? Did not God foreknow that Uriah in particular should be murdered by David in particular? And what God foreknows shall come to pass, can that possibly not come[7] to pass? And that which cannot possibly not come to pass, does not that necessarily come to pass? And is not all necessity from God? I cannot see this great mistake. 'The general power', says he, 'to act is from God, but the specification to do this act upon Uriah is not from God but from free-will.' Very learnedly. As if there were a power that were not the power to do some particular act, or a power to kill and yet to kill nobody in particular. If the power be to kill, it is to kill that which shall be by that power killed, whether it be Uriah or any other; and the giving of that power is the application of it to the act. Nor does power signify anything actually but those motions and present acts from which the act that is not now, but shall be hereafter, necessarily proceeds. . . .

[7] come: *Ques.*: come so: *EW5*.

§ **14** (d) 'But his chiefest answer is that an action forbidden, though it proceed from necessary causes, yet if it were done willingly, may be justly punished', etc.

This the Bishop also understands not, and therefore denies it. He would have the judge condemn no man for a crime if it were necessitated; as if the judge could know what acts are necessary, unless he knew all that has anteceded, both visible and invisible, and what both everything in itself and altogether can effect. It is enough to the judge that the act he condemns be voluntary. The punishment whereof may, if not capital, reform the will of the offender; if capital, the will of others by example. For heat in one body does not more create heat in another than the terror of an example creates fear in another, who otherwise were inclined to commit injustice. . . .

Not many lines after, for a reason why a man may not be justly punished when his crime is voluntary, he offers this: 'that law is unjust and tyrannical which commands a man to will that which is impossible for him to will'. Whereby it appears he is of opinion that a law may be made to command the will. The style of a law is 'Do this' or 'Do not this', or 'If you do this you shall suffer this.' But no law runs thus, 'Will this' or 'Will not this', or 'If you have a will to this you shall suffer this.' He objects further that I beg the question, because no man's will is necessitated. Wherein he mistakes; for I say no more in that place but that he that does evil willingly, whether he be necessarily willing or not necessarily, may be justly punished. And upon this mistake he runs over again his former and already answered nonsense, saying 'we ourselves, by our own negligence in not opposing our passions when we should and might, have freely given them a kind of dominion over us'; and again, '*motus primo primi*, the first motions, are not always in our power'. Which *motus primo primi* signifies nothing; and 'our negligence in not opposing our passions' is the same with 'our want of will to oppose our will', which is absurd; and 'that we have given them a kind of dominion over us' either signifies nothing, or that we have a dominion over our wills or our wills a dominion over us, and consequently either we or our wills are not free. . . .

(h) 'There was never any time when mankind was without governors, laws, and societies.'

It is very likely to be true, that since the creation there never was a time in which mankind was totally without society. If a part of it were without laws and governors, some other parts might be commonwealths. He saw there was paternal government in Adam; which he might do easily, as being

no deep consideration. But in those places where there is a civil war at any time, at the same time there is neither laws nor commonwealth nor society, but only a temporal league, which every discontented soldier may depart from when he pleases, as being entered into by each man for his private interest, without any obligation of conscience. There are therefore almost at all times multitudes of lawless men; but this was a little too remote from his understanding to perceive. Again, he denies that ever there was a time when one private man might lawfully kill another for his own preservation, and has forgotten that these words of his (§ 3), 'This is the belief of all mankind, which we have not learned from our tutors, but is imprinted in our hearts by nature; we need not turn over any obscure books to find out this truth', etc., which are the words of Cicero in the defence of Milo[8] and, translated by the Bishop to the defence of free-will, were used by Cicero to prove this very thing, that it is and has been always lawful for one private man to kill another for his own preservation. But where he says it is not lawful 'ordinarily', he should have shown some particular case wherein it is unlawful. For seeing it is a 'belief imprinted in our hearts', not only I but many more are apt to think it is the law of nature, and consequently universal and eternal. And where he says this right of defence, where it is, 'is not a remainder of some greater power which they have resigned, but a privilege which God has given them in case of extreme danger and invincible necessity', etc.; I also say it is a privilege which God has given them. But we differ in the manner how, which to me seems this, that God does not account such killing sin. . . . Against the resigning of this our general power of killing our enemies, he argues thus: 'Nothing can give that which it never had. The people, whilst they were a dispersed rabble (which in some odd cases might happen to be) never had justly the power of life and death, and therefore they could not give it by their election', etc. Needs there much acuteness to understand, what number of men soever there be, though not united into government, that every one of them in particular, having a right to destroy whatsoever he thinks can annoy him, may not resign the same right and give it to whom he please, when he thinks it conducible to his preservation? And yet it seems he has not understood it. . . .

§ **19** (a) 'This proposition, "The will is free", may be understood in two senses: either that the will is not compelled, or that the will is not always

[8] The words Hobbes has in mind occur in *Pro Milone* iv.10, but Bramhall's words are only roughly similar to them; it is not at all clear that he intended to allude to Cicero here.

necessitated, etc. . . .' I never said the will is compelled, but do agree with the rest of the world in granting that it is not compelled. It is an absurd speech to say it is compelled, but not to say it is necessitated, or a necessary effect of some cause. When the fire heats, it does not compel heat; so likewise when some cause makes the will to anything, it does not compel it. Many things may compel a man to do an action in producing the will; but that is not a compelling of the will, but of the man. That which I call necessitation is the effecting and creating of that will which was not before, not a compelling of a will already existent. The necessitation or creation of the will is the same thing with the compulsion of the man, saving that we commonly use the word 'compulsion' in those actions which proceed from terror. And therefore this distinction is of no use; and that raving which follows immediately after it is nothing to the question whether the will be free, though it be to the question whether the man be free.

(b) 'First he errs in this, to think that actions proceeding from fear are properly compulsory actions, which in truth are not only voluntary but free actions.' I never said nor doubted but such actions were both voluntary and free. For he that does anything for fear, though he say truly he was compelled to it, yet we deny not that he had election to do or not to do, and consequently that he was a voluntary and free agent. But this hinders not but that the terror might be a necessary cause of his election of that which otherwise he would not have elected, unless some other potent cause made it necessary he should elect the contrary. And therefore in the same ship, in the same storm, one man may be necessitated to throw his goods overboard, and another man to keep them within the ship; and the same man in a like storm be otherwise advised, if all the causes be not like. But that the same individual man, as the Bishop says, that chose to throw his goods overboard, might choose not to throw his goods overboard, I cannot conceive; unless a man can choose to throw overboard and not to throw overboard, or be so advised and otherwise advised, all at once.

(c) 'Secondly, T.H. errs in this also, where he says that "a man is then only said to be compelled when fear makes him willing to an action". As if force were not more prevalent with a man than fear', etc. When I said fear, I think no man can doubt but the fear of force was understood. I cannot see therefore what quarrel he could justly take at saying that a man is compelled by fear only; unless he think it may be called compulsion when a man by force, seizing on another man's limbs, moves them as himself, not as the other man pleases. But this is not the meaning of compulsion: neither is the

action so done the action of him that suffers, but of him that uses the force. But this, as if it were a question of the propriety of the English tongue, the Bishop denies, and says when a man is moved by fear, it is improperly said he is compelled. But when a man is moved by an external cause, the will resisting as much as it can, then he says he is properly said to be compelled; as in a rape, or when a Christian is drawn or carried by violence to the idol's temple. Insomuch as by this distinction it were very proper English to say that a stone were compelled when it is thrown, or a man when he is carried in a cart. For my part, I understand compulsion to be used rightly of living creatures only, which are moved only by their own animal motion, in such manner as they would not be moved without the fear. But of this dispute the English and well-bred reader is the proper judge. . . .

§ **20** . . . (h) 'He talks much of the motives to do and the motives to forbear, how they work upon and determine a man . . .' etc. . . . But the Bishop can never be driven from this, that the will has power to move itself; but says it is all one to say that an agent can determine itself, and that the will is not[9] determined by motives extrinsical. He adds that 'if there be no necessitation before the judgment of right reason does dictate to the will, then there is no antecedent nor extrinsical necessitation at all'. I say, indeed, the effect is not produced before the last dictate of the understanding; but I say not that the necessity was not before; he knows I say it is from eternity. When a cannon is planted against a wall, though the battery be not made till the bullet arrive, yet the necessity was present all the while the bullet was going to it, if the wall stood still; and if it slipped away, the hitting of somewhat else was necessary, and that antecedently. . . .

(m) 'Two things are required to make an effect necessary. First, that it be produced by a necessary cause, etc.; secondly, that it be necessarily produced', etc. To this I say nothing but that I understand not how a cause can be necessary, and the effect not be necessarily produced.

(n) . . . But my braving against that famous and most necessary distinction between the elicit and imperate acts of the will, he says was only to hide from the eyes of the reader a tergiversation in not answering this argument of his: 'He who does necessitate the will to evil is the true cause of evil; But God is not the cause of evil; Therefore he does not necessitate the will to evil.' This argument is not to be found in this § 20, to which I here answered; nor had I ever said that the will was compelled. But he, taking

[9] is not: ed.; is: *Ques.*, *EW5*.

all necessitation for compulsion, does now in this place, from necessitation simply, bring in this inference concerning the cause of evil, and thinks he shall force me to say that God is the cause of sin. I shall say only what is said in the Scripture, *Non est malum, quod ego non feci* [That is not evil which I have not made].[10] . . . I say further, that to cause sin is not always sin, nor can be sin in him that is not subject to some higher power; but to use so unseemly a phrase as to say that God is the cause of sin, because it sounds so like to saying that God sins, I can never be forced by so weak an argument as this of his. Luther says, 'We act necessarily, necessarily by necessity of immutability, not by necessity of constraint';[11] that is, in plain English, necessarily but not against our wills. . . . Calvin: 'And thus shall man be said to have free will, not because he has equal freedom to do good and evil, but because he does the evil he does, not by constraint, but willingly.'[12] . . . And the Synod of Dort: 'Liberty is not opposite to all kinds of necessity and determination. It is indeed opposite to the necessity of constraint, but stands well enough with the necessity of infallibility.'[13] I could add more, for all the famous doctors of the Reformed Churches, and with them Saint Augustine, are of the same opinion. None of these denied that God is the cause of all motion and action, or that God is the cause of all laws; and yet they were never forced to say that God is the cause of sin.

§ **25** . . . (d) 'He defines liberty (§ 29) to be "the absence of all extrinsical impediments to action". . . .' This definition of liberty, that it is 'the absence of all extrinsical impediments to action', he thinks he has sufficiently confuted by asking whether the extrinsical causes, which determine a man not to do an action, be not extrinsical impediments to action. It seems by his question he makes no doubt but they are, but is deceived by a too shallow consideration of what the word 'impediment' signifies. For 'impediment' or 'hindrance' signifies an opposition to endeavour. And therefore if a man be necessitated by extrinsical causes not to endeavour an action, those causes do not oppose his endeavour to do it, because he has no such endeavour to be opposed. And consequently extrinsical causes that take away endeavour

[10] These words do not occur in the Vulgate, which is the Latin Bible that Hobbes is most likely to have used. He may have had in mind Isaiah 45:7, where God speaks of creating evil: *faciens pacem et creans malum ego Dominus faciens omnia haec*.

[11] Luther, *De servo arbitrio* I. [12] Calvin, *Institutio religionis christianae* II.ii.7.

[13] The Synod of Dort was a conclave of Reformed Church divines held in 1618–19 in the Dutch town of Dort. Its purpose was to demonstrate and condemn the errors of the Arminians (also called Remonstrants).

are not to be called impediments; nor can any man be said to be hindered from doing that which he had no purpose at all to do. So that this objection of his proceeds only from this, that he understands not sufficiently the English tongue. From the same proceeds also that he thinks it a contradiction to call a free agent him that has not yet made an end of deliberating, and to call liberty an absence of outward impediments. 'For', says he, 'there may be outward impediments even while he is deliberating.' Wherein he is deceived. For though he may deliberate of that which is impossible for him to do, as in the example he alleges of him that deliberates whether he shall play at tennis, not knowing that the door of the tennis-court is shut against him; yet it is no impediment to him that the door is shut till he have a will to play, which he has not till he has done deliberating whether he shall play or not. That which follows of my confounding 'mind' and 'will'; the 'estimative faculty' and the 'understanding'; . . . I do not find in anything that I have written any impropriety in the use of these or any other English words. Nor do I doubt but an English reader, who has not lost himself in School-divinity, will very easily conceive what I have said. But this I am sure, that I never confounded 'beginning of being' with 'beginning of working', nor 'sufficiency' with 'efficiency'; nor ever used these words, 'sensitive appetite', 'rational hope' or 'rational fear', or 'irrational passions'. It is therefore impossible I should confound them. But the Bishop is either mistaken, or else he makes no scruple to say that which he knows to be false, when he thinks it will serve his turn. . . .

§ **26** (a) 'If I did not know what deliberation was, I should be little relieved in my knowledge by this description. . . .' If the Bishop had observed what he does himself when he deliberates, reasons, understands, or imagines, he would have known what to make of all that I have said in this section. He would have known that consideration, understanding, reason, and all the passions of the mind, are imaginations. That to consider a thing is to imagine it; that to understand a thing is to imagine it; that to hope and fear are to imagine the things hoped for and feared. The difference between them is that when we imagine the consequence of anything, we are said to consider that thing; and when we have imagined anything from a sign, and especially from those signs we call names, we are said to understand his meaning that makes the sign; and when we reason, we imagine the consequence of affirmations and negations joined together; and when we hope or fear, we imagine things good or hurtful to ourselves: insomuch as

all these are but imaginations diversely named from different circumstances, as any man may perceive as easily as he can look into his own thoughts. . . . But how is deliberation defined by him? It is, says he, 'an inquiry made by reason . . .' If it were not his custom to say the understanding understands, the will wills, and so of the rest of the faculties, I should have believed that when he says deliberation is an inquiry made by reason, he means an inquiry made by the man that reasons; for so it will be sense. But the reason which a man uses in deliberation, being the same thing that is called deliberation, his definition that deliberation is an inquiry made by reason, is no more than if he had said, 'Deliberation is an inquiry made by deliberation': a definition good enough to be made by a Schoolman. Nor is the rest of the definition altogether as it should be; for there is no such thing as an 'indefinite consideration of what are good and fit means'; but a man imagining first one thing, then another, considers them successively and singly each one, whether it conduces to his ends or not.

§ **27** (a) 'Still here is nothing but confusion: he confounds the faculty of the will with the act of volition . . .' To confound the faculty of the will with the will were to confound a will with no will; for the faculty of the will is no will; the act only, which he calls volition, is the will. As a man that sleeps has the power of seeing and sees not, nor has for that time any sight; so also he has the power of willing but wills nothing, nor has for that time any will. I must therefore have departed very much from my own principles if I have confounded the faculty of the will with the act of volition. He should have done well to have shown where I confounded them. It is true, I make the will to be the last part of deliberation. But it is that will which makes the action voluntary, and therefore needs must be the last. But for the preceding variations of the will to do and not to do, though they be so many several wills, contrary to and destroying one another, they usually are called intentions; and therefore they are nothing to the will (of which we dispute) that makes an action voluntary. And though a man have in every long deliberation a great many wills and nills, they use to be called inclinations, and the last only will, which is immediately followed by the voluntary action. But nevertheless, both he that has those intentions and God that sees them reckon them for so many wills. . . .

§ **28** (a) '. . . he confounds a voluntary act with a free act.' I do indeed take all voluntary acts to be free, and all free acts to be voluntary; but withal that

all acts, whether free or voluntary, if they be acts, were necessary before they were acts. But where is the error? 'A free act', says he, 'is only that which proceeds from the free election of the rational will after deliberation; but every act that proceeds from the sensitive appetite of man or beast, without deliberation or election, is truly voluntary.' So that my error lies in this, that I distinguish not between a rational will and a sensitive appetite in the same man. As if the appetite and will in man or beast were not the same thing, or that sensual men and beasts did not deliberate, and choose one thing before another, in the same manner that wise men do. Nor can it be said of wills, that one is rational the other sensitive, but of men. And if it be granted that deliberation is always (as it is not) rational, there were no cause to call men rational more than beasts. For it is manifest by continual experience that beasts do deliberate. . . .

**§ 30** I had said that nothing takes beginning from itself, and that the cause of the will is not the will itself, but something else which it disposes not of. Answering to this, he endeavours to show us the cause of the will.

(a) 'I grant', says he, 'that the will does not take beginning from itself . . . This is certain: finite . . . things cannot be from themselves, nor be produced by themselves. . . .' It is well that he grants finite things . . . cannot be produced by themselves. For out of this I can conclude that the act of willing is not produced by the faculty of willing. He that has the faculty of willing has the faculty of willing something in particular. And at the same time he has the faculty of nilling the same. If therefore the faculty of willing be the cause he wills anything whatsoever, for the same reason the faculty of nilling will be the cause at the same time of nilling it; and so he shall will and nill the same thing at the same time, which is absurd. . . .

(b) 'His second argument is *ex concessis* [from a concession]: . . . I might deny his major: necessary causes do not always produce necessary effects, except they be also necessarily produced.' He has reduced the argument to nonsense by saying necessary causes produce not necessary effects. For necessary effects, unless he mean such effects as shall necessarily be produced, is insignificant. Let him consider therefore with what grace he can say, necessary causes do not always produce their effects, except those effects be also necessarily produced. But his answer is chiefly to the minor, and denies that the will is[14] a necessary cause of what it wills in particular actions. That it wills when it wills, says he, is necessary; but that it wills this

[14] is: ed.; is not: *Ques.*, *EW5*.

or that is free. Is it possible for any man to conceive that he that wills can will anything but this or that particular thing? It is therefore manifest, that either the will is a necessary cause of this or that or any other particular action, or not the necessary cause of any voluntary action at all. For universal actions there be none. In that which follows, he undertakes to make his doctrine more expressly understood by considering the act of the will three ways: 'in respect of its nature, in respect of its exercise, and in respect of its object'. For the nature of the act, he says that 'that which the will wills is necessarily voluntary'; and that in this sense he grants it is out of controversy that the will is a necessary cause of voluntary actions. Instead of 'that which the will wills', to make it sense, read 'that which the man wills'; and then if the man's will be, as he confesses, a necessary cause of voluntary actions, it is no less a necessary cause that they are actions than that they are voluntary. For the exercise of the act, he says that 'the will may either will or suspend its act'. This is the old canting, which has already been sufficiently detected. But to make it somewhat, let us read it thus: 'the man that wills may either will or suspend his will'; and thus it is intelligible but false. For how can he that wills at the same time suspend his will? And for the object, he says that 'it is not necessary but free', etc. His reason is because, he says, it was not necessary, for example, in choosing a Pope, to choose him this or that day, or to choose this or that man. I would be glad to know by what argument he can prove the election not to have been necessitated. For it is not enough for him to say, 'I perceive no necessity in it'; nor to say, 'they might have chosen another', because he knows not whether they might or not; nor to say, 'if he had not been freely elected, the election had been void or none'. For though that be true, it does not follow that the election was not necessary; for there is no repugnance to necessity, either in election or in freedom. And whereas he concludes, 'Therefore voluntary acts in particular are not necessitated', I would have been glad he had set down what voluntary acts there are, not particular, which by his restricting of voluntary acts he grants to be necessitated.

§ **32** The question is here whether these words, 'a free agent is that which, when all things needful to the production of the effect are present, can nevertheless not produce it', imply a contradiction, as I say it does. To make it appear no contradiction, he says: (a) 'in these words, "all things needful" or "all things requisite", the actual determination of the will is not included'; as if the will were not needful nor requisite to the producing of

a voluntary action. For to the production of any act whatsoever, there is needful, not only those things which proceed from the agent, but also those that consist in the disposition of the patient. And to use his own instance, it is necessary to writing, not only that there be pen, ink, paper, etc., but also a will to write. He that has the former has all things requisite to write if he will, but not all things necessary to writing. And so in his other instances . . . And therefore 'all things requisite' is a term ill defined by him.

(b) . . . These words, 'the will has power to forbear willing what it does will'; and these, 'the will has a dominion over its own acts'; and these, 'the power to will is present *in actu primo* [as a first actuality], determinable by ourselves', are as wild as ever were any spoken within the walls of Bedlam; and if science, conscience, reason, and religion teach us to speak thus, they make us mad. And that which follows is false: 'to act or not to act, to work or not to work, to produce or not to produce, have reference to the effect, not as a thing which is already done or doing, but as a thing to be done'. For to act, to work, to produce, are the same thing with to be doing. It is not the act but the power that has reference to the future; for act and power differ in nothing but in this, that the former signifies the time present, the latter the time to come. And whereas he adds that I shuffle out effects producible, and thrust into their places effects produced, I must take it for an untruth, till he cite the place wherein I have done so.

**§ 33** I have said in the beginning of this section that to define what spontaneity is, what deliberation is, what will, propension, appetite, a free agent, and liberty are, and to prove they are well defined, there can be no other proof offered but every man's own experience and memory of what he means by such words. For definitions, being the beginning of all demonstration, cannot themselves be demonstrated, that is, proved to another man. All that can be done is either to put him in mind what those words signify commonly in the matter whereof they treat, or if the words be unusual, to make the definitions of them true by mutual consent in their signification. And though this be manifestly true, yet there is nothing of it amongst the Schoolmen, who use to argue not by rule, but as fencers teach to handle weapons, by quickness only of the hand and eye. The Bishop therefore boggles at this kind of proof and says (a) 'the true natures of things are not to be judged by the private ideas or conceptions of men, but by their causes and formal reasons. Ask an ordinary person what upwards signifies', etc. But what will he answer if I should ask him how he will judge of the causes

of things whereof he has no idea or conception in his own mind? It is therefore impossible to give a true definition of any word without the idea of the thing which that word signifies, or not according to that idea or conception. . . . And where he bids us ask an ordinary person what upwards signifies, I dare answer for that ordinary person, he will tell us as significantly as any scholar, and say it is towards heaven; and as soon as he knows the earth is round, makes no scruple to believe there are antipodes, being wiser in that point than were those which he says to have been of more than ordinary capacities. . . . 'I might give', he says, 'a hundred such like instances.' That is true; a man may give a thousand foolish and impertinent instances of men ignorant in such questions of philosophy concerning emptiness, body, upwards, and downwards, and the like. But the question is not whether such and such tenets be true, but whether such and such words can be well defined without thinking upon the things they signify,[15] as the Bishop thinks they may when he concludes with these words, 'So his proposition is false.' . . .

(e) 'Much less does any man conceive with T.H. that "deliberation is an act of fancy", not of reason, common to men of discretion with madmen, natural fools, children, and brute beasts.' I do indeed conceive that deliberation is an act of imagination or fancy; nay more, that reason and understanding also are acts of the imagination, that is to say, they are imaginations. I find it so by considering my own ratiocination; and he might find it so in his if he did consider his own thoughts, and not speak as he does by rote: by rote, I say, when he disputes; not by rote when he is about those trifles he calls business. Then when he speaks, he thinks of, that is to say, he imagines, his business; but here he thinks only upon the words of other men that have gone before him in this question, transcribing their conclusions and arguments, not his own thoughts.

(f) 'Thirdly, neither does any understanding man conceive, or can conceive, either "that the will is an act of our deliberation" (the understanding and the will are two distinct faculties); or "that only the last appetite is to be called our will".' Though the understanding and the will were two distinct faculties, yet follows it not that the will and the deliberation are two distinct faculties. For the whole deliberation is nothing else but so many wills alternatively changed, according as a man understands or fancies the good and evil sequels of the thing concerning which he deliberates, whether he shall pursue it; or of the means, whether they conduce or not to that end,

[15] signify: *Ques.*; signified: *EW5*.

whatsoever it be, he seeks to obtain. So that in deliberation there be many wills, whereof not any is the cause of a voluntary action but the last . . .

(g) . . . [He] now again brings another argument to prove a man is free to will, which is this: 'Either the agent can will and forbear to will, or else he cannot do and forbear to do.' There is no doubt a man can will one thing or other, and forbear to will it. For men, if they be awake, are always willing one thing or other. But put the case, a man has a will today to do a certain action tomorrow: is he sure to have the same will tomorrow when he is to do it? Is he free today to choose tomorrow's will? This is it that is now in question, and this argument makes nothing for the affirmative or negative. . . .

(h) . . . And whereas he says that, according to my definition of liberty, 'a hawk were at liberty to fly when her wings are plucked, but not when they are tied', I answer that she is not at liberty to fly when her wings are tied. But to say, when her wings are plucked, that she wanted the liberty to fly, were to speak improperly and absurdly; for in that case, men that speak English use to say she cannot fly. And for his reprehension of my attributing liberty to brute beasts and rivers, I would be glad to know whether it be improper language to say a bird or beast may be set at liberty from the cage wherein they were imprisoned, or to say that a river which was stopped has recovered its free course; and how it follows that a beast or river recovering this freedom must needs therefore 'be capable of sin and punishment'?

(i) '. . . He says truly, nothing can begin without a cause, that is to be; but it may begin to act of itself without any other cause. . . .' He grants nothing can begin without a cause; and he has granted formerly that nothing can cause itself. And now he says it may begin to act of itself. The action therefore begins to be without any cause, which he said nothing could do, contradicting what he had said but in the line before. . . .

§ **34** . . . (e) . . . Another reason, he says, why my instances are impertinent is because 'they extend only to a hypothetical necessity', that is, that the necessity is not in the antecedent causes; and thereupon challenges me for the credit of my cause to name some reason 'how the caster was necessitated from without himself to apply just so much force to the cast, and neither more nor less . . .' Here again, from our ignorance of the particular causes that concurring make the necessity, he infers that there was no such necessity at all; which indeed is that which has in all this question deceived him, and all other men that attribute events to fortune. But I suppose he

will not deny that event to be necessary, where all the causes of the cast, and their concurrence, and the cause of that concurrence, are foreknown, and might be told him, though I cannot tell him. Seeing therefore God foreknows them all, the cast was necessary, and that from antecedent causes from eternity, which is no hypothetical necessity. . . .

(g) 'If all this will not satisfy him, I will give him one of his own kinds of proof: that is, an instance. That which necessitates all things, according to T.H., is the decree of God', etc. His instance is 'that God himself made this necessitating decree, and therefore this decree, being an act *ad extra* [gratuitous], was freely made by God, without any necessitation'. I do believe the Bishop himself believes that all the decrees of God have been from all eternity, and therefore he will not stand to this, that God's decrees were ever made; for whatsoever has been made has had a beginning. Besides, God's decree is his will, and the Bishop has said formerly that the will of God is God, the justice of God, God, etc. If therefore God made a decree, according to the Bishop's opinion, God made himself. By which we may see what fine stuff it is that proceeds from disputing of incomprehensibles. Again he says, 'If it had been the good pleasure of God, he might have made some causes free from necessity, seeing that it neither argues any imperfection, nor implies any contradiction.' If God had made either causes or effects free from necessity, he had made them free from his own prescience, which had been imperfection. Perhaps he will say that in these words of his, 'the decree, being an act *ad extra*, was freely made by God', I take no notice of that act *ad extra*, as being too hot for my fingers. Therefore now I take notice of it, and say that it is neither Latin, nor English, nor sense.

§ **38** . . . But to make an end, I shall briefly draw up the sum of what we have both said. That which I have maintained is that no man has his future will in his own present power. That it may be changed by others, and by the change of things without him; and when it is changed, it is not changed nor determined to anything by itself; and that when it is undetermined, it is no will, because everyone that wills wills something in particular. That deliberation is common to men with beasts, as being alternate appetite and not ratiocination; and the last act or appetite therein, and which is immediately followed by the action, is the only will that can be taken notice of by others, and which only makes an action in public judgment voluntary. That to be free is no more than to do if a man will, and if he will to forbear;

and consequently that this freedom is the freedom of the man, and not of the will. That the will is not free, but subject to change by the operation of external causes. That all external causes depend necessarily on the first eternal cause, God Almighty, who works in us, both to will and to do, by the mediation of second causes. That seeing neither man nor anything else can work upon itself, it is impossible that any man in the framing of his own will should concur with God, either as an actor or as an instrument. That there is nothing brought to pass by fortune as by a cause, nor anything without a cause, or concurrence of causes, sufficient to bring it so to pass; and that every such cause, and their concurrence, do proceed from the providence, good pleasure, and working of God; and consequently, though I do with others call many events contingent and say they happen, yet because they had every of them their several sufficient causes, and those causes again their former causes, I say they happen necessarily. And though we perceive not what they are, yet there are of the most contingent events as necessary causes as of those events whose causes we perceive; or else they could not possibly be foreknown, as they are by him that foreknows all things. On the contrary, the Bishop maintains that the will is free from necessitation, and in order thereto that the judgment of the understanding is not always *practicè practicum* [practically practical], nor of such a nature in itself as to oblige and determine the will to one, though it be true that spontaneity and determination to one may consist together. That the will determines itself, and that external things, when they change the will, do work upon it not naturally but morally, not by natural motion but by moral and metaphorical motion. That when the will is determined naturally, it is not by God's general influence, whereon depend all second causes, but by special influence, God concurring and pouring something into the will. That the will, when it suspends not its act, makes the act necessary; but because it may suspend and not assent, it is not absolutely necessary. That sinful acts proceed not from God's will, but are willed by him by a permissive will, not an operative will, and that he hardens the heart of man by a negative obduration. That man's will is in his own power, but his *motus primo primi* [first motions] are not[16] in his own power, nor necessary save only by a hypothetical necessity. That the will to change is not always a change of will. That not all things which are produced are produced from sufficient, but some things from deficient, causes. That if the power of the will be present *in actu primo* [as a first actuality], then there is nothing wanting to the production of the

[16] *primi* . . . are not: ed.; *primi* . . . not: *Ques*., *EW5*.

effect. That a cause may be sufficient for the production of an effect, though it want something necessary to the production thereof, because the will may be wanting. That a necessary cause does not always necessarily produce its effect, but only then when the effect is necessarily produced. He proves also that the will is free by that universal notion which the world has of election; for when of the six Electors the votes are divided equally, the King of Bohemia has a casting voice. That the prescience of God supposes no necessity of the future existence of the things foreknown, because God is not eternal but eternity, and eternity is a standing now without succession of time; and therefore God foresees all things intuitively by the presentiality they have in *nunc stans* [standing now], which comprehends in it all time, past, present, and to come, not formally but eminently and virtually. That the will is free even then when it acts, but that is in a compounded, not in a divided sense. That to be made and to be eternal do consist together, because God's decrees are made and are nevertheless eternal. That the order, beauty, and perfection of the world does require that in the universe there should be agents of all sorts, some necessary, some free, some contingent. That though it be true that tomorrow it shall rain or not rain, yet neither of them is true *determinatè* [determinately]. That the doctrine of necessity is a blasphemous, desperate, and destructive doctrine. That it were better to be an Atheist than to hold it, and he that maintains it is fitter to be refuted with rods than with arguments. And now whether this his doctrine or mine be the more intelligible, more rational, or more conformable to God's word, I leave it to the judgment of the reader. . . .

# Selections from Hobbes's other works

## *The Elements of Law*

### *Chapter XII. How by deliberation from passions proceed men's actions*

1. It has been declared already how external objects cause conceptions, and conceptions appetite and fear, which are the first unperceived beginnings of our actions. For either the action immediately follows the first appetite, as when we do anything upon a sudden; or else to our first appetite there succeeds some conception of evil to happen unto us by such actions, which is fear, and withholds us from proceeding. And to that fear may succeed a new appetite, and to that appetite another fear, alternately, till the action be either done, or some accident come between to make it impossible, and so this alternate appetite and fear ceases. This alternate succession of appetite and fear, during all the time the action is in our power to do or not to do, is that we call *deliberation*, which name has been given it for that part of the definition wherein it is said that it lasts so long as the action whereof we deliberate is in our power. For so long we have liberty to do or not to do, and deliberation signifies the taking away of our own liberty.

2. Deliberation therefore requires in the action deliberated two conditions: one that it be future; the other that there be hope of doing it or possibility of not doing it. For appetite and fear are expectations of the future; and there is no expectation of good without hope, nor of evil without possibility. Of necessaries therefore there is no deliberation. In deliberation the last appetite, as also the last fear, is called will: namely, the last appetite will to do, the last fear will not to do, or will to omit. It is all one therefore to say 'will' and 'last will'. For though a man express his present inclination and appetite concerning the disposing of his goods by word or writing; yet

shall it not be accounted his will, because he has liberty still to dispose of them otherwise. But when death takes away that liberty, then it is his will.

3. *Voluntary* actions and omissions are such as have beginning in the will; all others[1] are *involuntary* or *mixed*. Voluntary such as a man does upon appetite or fear; involuntary such as he does by necessity of nature, as when he is pushed, or falls, and thereby does good or hurt to another; mixed such as participate of both, as when a man is carried to prison he is pulled on against his will, and yet goes upright voluntarily, for fear of being trailed along the ground: insomuch that in going to prison, going is voluntary; to the prison, involuntary. The example of him that throws his goods out of a ship into the sea to save his person is of an action altogether voluntary. For there is nothing there involuntary but the hardness of the choice, which is not his action but the action of the winds. What he himself does is no more against his will than to fly from danger is against the will of him that sees no other means to preserve himself.

4. Voluntary also are the actions that proceed from sudden anger, or other sudden appetite, in such men as can discern of good and evil; for in them the time precedent is to be judged deliberation. For then also he deliberates in what cases it is good to strike, deride, or do any other action proceeding from anger or other such sudden passion.

5. Appetite, fear, hope, and the rest of the passions are not called voluntary. For they proceed not from, but are the will; and the will is not voluntary. For a man can no more say he will will than he will will will, and so make an infinite repetition of the word 'will'; which is absurd and insignificant.

6. Forasmuch as will to do is appetite, and will to omit, fear, the causes of appetite and of fear are the causes also of our will. But the propounding of benefits and of harms, that is to say, of reward and punishment, is the cause of our appetite and of our fears, and therefore also of our wills, so far forth as we believe that such rewards and benefits as are propounded shall arrive unto us. And consequently our wills follow our opinions, as our actions follow our wills. In which sense they say truly and properly that say the world is governed by opinion. . . .

9. In deliberations interrupted, as they may be by diversion to other business or by sleep, the last appetite of such part of the deliberation is called *intention* or purpose.

[1] others: ed.; other: Tönnies.

## *Leviathan*

### *Chapter V. Of reason, and science*

. . . And therefore if a man should talk to me of a *round quadrangle*, or *accidents of bread in cheese*, or *immaterial substances*, or of *a free subject*, *a free will*, or any *free* but free from being hindered by opposition, I should not say he were in an error, but that his words were without meaning, that is to say, absurd. . . .

### *Chapter VI. Of the interiour beginnings of voluntary motions . . .*

. . . When in the mind of man, appetites and aversions, hopes and fears, concerning one and the same thing, arise alternately; and diverse good and evil consequences of the doing or omitting the thing propounded come successively into our thoughts; so that sometimes we have an appetite to it, sometimes an aversion from it, sometimes hope to be able to do it, sometimes despair or fear to attempt it; the whole sum of desires, aversions, hopes, and fears, continued till the thing be either done or thought impossible, is that we call *deliberation*.

Therefore of things past there is no deliberation, because manifestly impossible to be changed; nor of things known to be impossible or thought so, because men know or think such deliberation vain. But of things impossible which we think possible, we may deliberate, not knowing it is in vain. And it is called deliberation because it is a putting an end to the liberty we had of doing or omitting, according to our own appetite or aversion.

This alternate succession of appetites, aversions, hopes, and fears is no less in other living creatures than in man, and therefore beasts also deliberate.

Every deliberation is then said to end when that whereof they deliberate is either done or thought impossible, because till then we retain the liberty of doing or omitting, according to our appetite or aversion.

In deliberation, the last appetite or aversion immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof, is that we call the *will*: the act (not the faculty) of willing. And beasts that have deliberation must necessarily also have will. The definition of the will given commonly by the Schools, that it is a rational appetite, is not good. For if it were, then could there be no voluntary act against reason. For a voluntary act is that which proceeds

from the will, and no other. But if instead of a rational appetite, we shall say an appetite resulting from a precedent deliberation, then the definition is the same that I have given here. Will therefore is the last appetite in deliberating. And though we say, in common discourse, a man had a will once to do a thing that nevertheless he forbore to do; yet that is properly but an inclination, which makes no action voluntary, because the action depends not of it but of the last inclination or appetite. For if the intervenient appetites make any action voluntary, then by the same reason all intervenient aversions should make the same action involuntary; and so one and the same action should be both voluntary and involuntary.

By this it is manifest that not only actions that have their beginning from covetousness, ambition, lust, or other appetites to the thing propounded, but also those that have their beginning from aversion, or fear of those consequences that follow the omission, are voluntary actions. . . .

And because, in deliberation, the appetites and aversions are raised by foresight of the good and evil consequences and sequels of the action whereof we deliberate, the good or evil effect thereof depends on the foresight of a long chain of consequences, of which very seldom any man is able to see to the end. . . .

### *Chapter XIV. Of the first and second natural laws, and of contracts*

. . . By liberty is understood, according to the proper signification of the word, the absence of external impediments, which impediments may oft take away part of a man's power to do what he would, but cannot hinder him from using the power left him, according as his judgment and reason shall dictate to him. . . .

### *Chapter XXI. Of the liberty of subjects*

*Liberty* or *freedom* signifies (properly) the absence of opposition (by opposition I mean external impediments of motion), and may be applied no less to irrational and inanimate creatures than to rational. For whatsoever is so tied or environed as it cannot move but within a certain space, which space is determined by the opposition of some external body, we say it has not liberty to go further. And so of all living creatures, whilst they are imprisoned or restrained with walls or chains; and of the water, whilst it is kept in by banks or vessels, that otherwise would spread itself into a larger space;

we use to say they are not at liberty to move in such manner as without those external impediments they would. But when the impediment of motion is in the constitution of the thing itself, we use not to say it wants the liberty but the power to move, as when a stone lies still or a man is fastened to his bed by sickness.

And according to this proper and generally received meaning of the word, a *free man* is he that, in those things which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has a will to. But when the words 'free' and 'liberty' are applied to anything but bodies, they are abused. For that which is not subject to motion is not subject to impediment; and therefore, when it is said (for example), 'the way is free', no liberty of the way is signified, but of those that walk in it without stop. And when we say a gift is free, there is not meant any liberty of the gift but of the giver, that was not bound by any law or covenant to give it. So when we speak freely, it is not the liberty of voice or pronunciation but of the man, whom no law has obliged to speak otherwise than he did. Lastly, from the use of the word 'free-will', no liberty can be inferred of the will, desire, or inclination, but the liberty of the man, which consists in this, that he finds no stop in doing what he has the will, desire, or inclination to do.

Fear and liberty are consistent; as when a man throws his goods into the sea for fear the ship should sink, he does it nevertheless very willingly, and may refuse to do it if he will; it is therefore the action of one that was free. So a man sometimes pays his debt only for fear of imprisonment, which, because nobody hindered him from detaining, was the action of a man at liberty. And generally, all actions which men do in commonwealths for fear of the law are actions which the doers had liberty to omit.

Liberty and necessity are consistent: as in the water that has not only liberty, but a necessity of descending by the channel; so likewise in the actions which men voluntarily do, which, because they proceed from their will, proceed from liberty. And yet, because every act of man's will, and every desire and inclination, proceeds from some cause, and that from another cause in a continual chain (whose first link is in the hand of God, the first of all causes), they proceed from necessity. So that to him that could see the connection of those causes, the necessity of all men's voluntary actions would appear manifest. And therefore God, that sees and disposes all things, sees also that the liberty of man in doing what he will, is accompanied with the necessity of doing that which God will, and no more nor less. For though men may do many things which God does not

command, nor is therefore author of them; yet they can have no passion nor appetite to anything of which appetite God's will is not the cause. And did not his will assure the necessity of man's will, and consequently of all that on man's will depends, the liberty of men would be a contradiction, and an[2] impediment to the omnipotence and liberty of God. And this shall suffice (as to the matter in hand) of that natural liberty, which only is properly called liberty. . . .

## *De corpore*

### *Chapter XXV. Of sense and animal motion*

. . . 13. The considerations of appetites and aversions are diverse. For seeing living creatures have sometimes appetite and sometimes aversion to the same thing, as they think it will either be for their good or their hurt; while that vicissitude of appetites and aversions remains in them, they have that series of thoughts which is called *deliberation*, which lasts as long as they have it in their power to obtain that which pleases or to avoid that which displeases them. Appetite, therefore, and aversion are simply so called as long as they follow not deliberation. But if deliberation have gone before, then the last act of it, if it be appetite, is called *will*; if aversion, *unwillingness*. So that the same thing is called both will and appetite; but the consideration of them, namely, before and after deliberation, is diverse. Nor is that which is done within a man whilst he wills anything, different from that which is done in other living creatures whilst, deliberation having preceded, they have appetite.

Neither is the freedom of willing or not willing greater in man than in other living creatures. For where there is appetite, the entire cause of appetite has preceded, and consequently the act of appetite could not choose but follow, that is, has of necessity followed . . . And therefore such a liberty as is free from necessity is not to be found in the will either of men or beasts. But if by liberty we understand the faculty or power, not of willing, but of doing what they will, then certainly that liberty is to be allowed to both, and both may equally have it, whensoever it is to be had. . . .

[2] and an: Tuck; and: *EW3*.

## *De homine*

### *Chapter XI. Of appetite and aversion, pleasure and displeasure and their causes*

1. Appetite and aversion do not differ from delight and annoyance otherwise than desire from satisfaction of desire, that is, than the future differs from the present. For appetite is delight, and aversion, annoyance; but the former differs from pleasure, the latter from displeasure, as being not yet present, but foreseen or expected. Moreover, delight and annoyance, although they are not called senses, nevertheless differ only in this: that the sense of an object, as external, comes from the reaction or resistance that is made by an organ; and hence it consists in the endeavour of an organ to push outward; delight, however, consists in the passion made by the action of an object, and is an endeavour inwards.

2. Therefore the causes, as of sense, so of appetite and aversion, delight and annoyance, are these same objects of the senses. From this it can be understood that neither our appetite nor our aversion causes us to desire or shun this or that; that is, we do not desire because we will. For will itself is an appetite; and we do not shun something because we will not to do it, but because now appetite, then aversion, is generated by those things desired or shunned, and a preconception of future pleasure and displeasure necessarily follows from those same objects. What then: Do we desire food and the other necessities of nature because we will? Are hunger, thirst, and desires voluntary? When desiring, one can, in truth, be free to *act*; one cannot, however, be free to *desire*; a fact that is made so obvious to anyone by his own experience that I cannot but be amazed that there are so many people who do not understand how this can be. Whenever we say that someone has free-will to do this or that, or not to do it, it must always be understood with this necessary condition: *if he wills*. For to talk of having free-will to do this or that whether one wills or not is absurd.

Whenever it is asked of someone whether he ought to do a certain proposed thing or to let it pass, he is said to *deliberate*, that is, he has the liberty of putting aside either choice. In this deliberation, accordingly as advantages and disadvantages show themselves this way and that, so appetite and aversion will alternate, until the thing demands that a decision be made. The last appetite (either of doing or omitting), the one that leads immediately to action or omission, is properly called the *will*. . . .

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