

different powers, we can get clearer about how the powers differ by looking at the different relationships in which the man stands: as ruler of a commonwealth, father of a family, and captain of a galley.

3. So: I take **political power** to be a **right** to •make

laws—with the death penalty and consequently all lesser penalties—for regulating and preserving property, and to •employ the force of the community in enforcing such laws and defending the commonwealth from external attack; all this being only for the public good.

## Chapter 2: The state of nature

4. To understand political power correctly and derive it from its proper source, we must consider what state all men are *naturally* in. In this state men are perfectly free to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and themselves, in any way they like, without asking anyone's permission—subject only to limits set by the law of nature.

It is also a state of equality, in which no-one has more power and authority than anyone else; because it is simply obvious that creatures of the same species and status, all born to all the same advantages of nature and to the use of the same abilities, should also be equal—in other ways—with no-one being subjected to or subordinate to anyone else, unless •God•, the lord and master of them all, were to declare clearly and explicitly his wish that some one person be raised above the others and given an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty

5. The judicious •Richard• Hooker regards this natural equality of men as so obvious and unquestionable that he bases on it men's •obligation to love one another, on which he builds their •duties towards each other, from which •in turn• he derives the great •maxims of justice and charity.

Here are his words:

A similar natural inducement has led men to realize that they have as much duty to love others as to love themselves. Things that are equal must be measured by a single standard; so if I inevitably want to receive some good—indeed as much good from every man as any man can want for himself—how could I expect to have *any part* of my desire satisfied if I am not careful to satisfy the similar desires that other men, being all of the same nature, are bound to have? To offer them anything inconsistent with their desire will be to grieve them as much as •it would grieve• me; so that if I do harm I must expect to suffer, because there is no reason why others should show more love to me than I have shown to them. Thus, my desire to be loved as much as possible by my natural equals gives me a natural duty to act towards them with the same love. Everyone knows the rules and canons natural reason has laid down for the guidance of our lives on the basis of this relation of equality between ourselves and those who are like us.

6. But though this is a state of •liberty, it isn't a state of •licence in which there are *no* constraints on how people behave. A man in that state is absolutely free to dispose of himself or his possessions, but he isn't at liberty to *destroy* himself, or even to destroy any created thing in his possession unless its destruction is required for some nobler purpose. The state of nature is governed by a law that creates obligations for everyone. And reason, which *is* that law, teaches anyone who takes the trouble to consult it, that *because we are all equal and independent, no-one ought to harm anyone else in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.* This is because

- we are all the work of one omnipotent and infinitely wise maker;
- we are all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order to do his business;
- we are all the property of him who made us, and he made us to last as long as *he* chooses, not as long as *we* choose;
- we have the same abilities, and share in one common nature, so there can't be any rank-ordering that would authorize some of us to destroy others, as if we were made to be *used* by one another, as the lower kinds of creatures *are* made to be used by us.

Everyone is obliged to preserve himself and not opt out of life willfully, so for the same reason everyone ought, when his own survival isn't at stake, to do as much as he can to preserve the rest of mankind; and except when it's a matter of punishing an offender, no-one may take away or damage anything that contributes to the preservation of someone else's life, liberty, health, limb, or goods.

7. So that •all men may be held back from invading the rights of others and from harming one another, and so that •the law of nature that aims at the peace and preservation

of all mankind may be obeyed, the enforcement of that law of nature (in the state of nature) is in every man's hands, so that everyone has a right to punish law-breakers as severely as is needed to hinder the violation of the law. For the law of nature, like every law concerning men in this world, would be futile if no-one had power to enforce it and thereby preserve the innocent and restrain offenders. And in the state of nature if *anyone* may punish someone for something bad that he has done, then *everyone* may do so. . . .

8. That is how in a state of nature one man comes to have a •legitimate• power over another. It isn't an unconditional power, allowing him to use a captured criminal according to the hot frenzy or unbridled extremes of his own will; but only a power to punish him so far as calm reason and conscience say is proportionate to his crime, namely as much punishment as may serve for •reparation and •restraint—for •those two are the only reasons why one man may lawfully harm another, which is what we call 'punishment'. By breaking the law of nature, the offender declares himself to live by some rule other than that of reason and common fairness (which is the standard that God has set for the actions of men, for their mutual security); and so he becomes dangerous to mankind because he has disregarded and broken the tie that is meant to secure them from injury and violence. This is an offence against the whole •human• species, and against the peace and safety that the law of nature provides for the species. Now, every man, by the right he has to preserve mankind in general, may restrain and if necessary *destroy* things that are noxious to mankind; and so he can do to anyone who has transgressed that law as much harm as may make him repent having done it, and thereby deter him—and by his example deter others—from doing the same. So for this reason *every man has a right to enforce the law of nature and punish offenders.*