

tremendous changes, where they all began, you will see that she is an open country without any dikes or ditches. If she were protected by forces of proper valor [*virtù*], as are Germany, Spain, and France,<sup>9</sup> either this flood would never have wrought such destruction as it has, or it might not even have occurred at all. And let this much suffice on the general topic of opposing Fortune.

But coming now to the particulars, let me observe that we see a prince flourishing today and ruined tomorrow, and yet no change has taken place in his nature or any of his qualities. I think this happens, primarily, for the reasons discussed at length above, that is, that a prince who depends entirely on Fortune comes to grief immediately she changes. I believe further that a prince will be fortunate who adjusts his behavior to the temper of the times, and on the other hand will be unfortunate when his behavior is not well attuned to the times.<sup>1</sup> Anyone can see that men take different paths in their search for the common goals of glory and riches; one goes cautiously, another boldly; one by violence, another by stealth; one by patience, another in the contrary way; yet any one of these different methods may be successful. Of two cautious men, one will succeed in his design the other not; so too, a rash man and a cautious man may both succeed, though their approaches are so different. And this stems from nothing but the temper of the times, which does or does not accord with their method of operating. Hence two men proceeding in different ways may, as I have said, produce the same effect; while two men proceeding in the same way will vary in their effectiveness, one failing, one succeeding. This too explains the variation in what is good; for if a prince conducts himself with patience and caution, and the times and circumstances are favorable to those qualities, he will flourish; but if times and circumstances change, he will come to ruin unless he changes his method of proceeding. No man, however prudent, can adjust to such radical changes, not only because we cannot go against the inclination of nature, but also because when one has always prospered by following a particular course, he cannot be persuaded to leave it. Thus the cautious man, when it is time to act boldly, does not know how, and comes to grief; if he could only change his nature with times and circumstances, his fortune would not change.

In everything he undertook, Pope Julius proceeded boldly; and he found the times and circumstances of his life so favorable to this sort of procedure, that he always came off well. Consider his first campaign

9. Machiavelli had previously (chapter IV) described France as easy to take though hard to hold precisely because it was divided by political dikes and dams. What he seems to envisage as ideal is a political arrangement combining local loyalties and traditions with an overall central authority. It is interesting that he does not distinguish Germany, in this respect, from

France and Spain—though, as late as the nineteenth century, Germany would be legendary for the divisions of its petty principedoms.

1. See *Discorsi* 3.8 (pp. 114–16) and the letter to Piero Soderini (pp. 124–26) for a further statement of Machiavelli's truly cynical view that success in government is a matter of adapting oneself to circumstances.

against Bologna, when Messer Giovanni Bentivogli was still alive.<sup>2</sup> The Venetians were unhappy with it, and so was the king of Spain; he held conversations about it with the French; but Julius, with his usual assurance and energy, directed the expedition in person. His activity kept the Spanish and the Venetians uneasy and inactive; the former were afraid, and the latter thought they saw a chance to recover the entire kingdom of Naples. Finally, the pope drew the king of France into his enterprise, because when the king saw what he was doing, and realized that he needed the pope's friendship to put down the Venetians, he judged that he could not deny the support of his troops without openly offending him.<sup>3</sup> Thus Julius carried off, in his rash and adventurous way, an enterprise that no other pope, even one who exercised the greatest human prudence, could successfully have performed. If he had waited before leaving Rome till all the diplomatic formalities were concluded, as any other pope would have done, he would never have succeeded. The king of France would have found a thousand excuses, and the other powers would have given him a thousand reasons to be afraid. His other actions can be omitted, as they were all like this one, and all turned out well. The shortness of his life prevented him from having the opposite experience; but in fact if circumstances had ever required him to act cautiously, he would have been ruined at once; he could never have varied from the style to which nature inclined him.

I conclude, then, that so long as Fortune varies and men stand still, they will prosper while they suit the times, and fail when they do not.

12 But I do feel this: that it is better to be rash than timid, for Fortune is a woman, and the man who wants to hold her down must beat and bully her.<sup>4</sup> We see that she yields more often to men of this stripe than to those who come coldly toward her. Like a woman, too, she is always a friend of the young, because they are less timid, more brutal, and take charge of her more recklessly.

gender politics

## XXVI

## AN EXHORTATION TO RESTORE ITALY TO LIBERTY AND FREE HER FROM THE BARBARIANS

Considering, therefore, the matters discussed above, I ask myself whether at present the hour is ripe to hail a new prince in Italy, if there is material here that a careful, able [virtuoso] leader could mold into a

2. Writing at the time (1506), Machiavelli was very conscious of Pope Julius's rashness in gambling on French support. His reports from the field, collected as *Legazione seconda alla corte di Roma* compare well with his historical hindsight, as in *Discorsi* 3.44.

3. Pope Julius took to the field against the Baglioni of Perugia and the Bentivogli of Bologna, on August 26, 1506; he took Perugia on September 13, and Bologna on November 11.

During most of Julius's campaign, Machiavelli was with the papal court as Florentine legate, and could thus observe at first hand the diplomatic indecision of the Spaniards and Venetians.

4. The ninth story of Boccaccio's ninth day begins with a little lecture by the queen for the day; her theme is the ancient traditional theme of masculine "wisdom," "Good wife and bad wife both need the stick."



## *Free Will and Predestination*

JOHN CALVIN

1537

SINCE we have seen that the domination of sin, from the time of its subjugation of the first man, not only extends over the whole race, but also exclusively possesses every soul; it now remains to be more closely investigated, whether we are despoiled of all freedom, and, if any particle of it yet remain, how far its power extends. But that we may the more easily discover the truth of this question, I will first set up by the way a mark, by which our whole course must be regulated. The best method of guarding against error is to consider the dangers which threaten us on every side. For when man is declared to be destitute of all rectitude, he immediately makes it an occasion of slothfulness; and because he is said to have no power of himself for the pursuit of righteousness, he totally neglects it, as though it did not at all concern him. On the other hand, he cannot arrogate anything to himself, be it ever so little, without God being robbed of His honour, and himself being endangered by presumptuous temerity. Therefore to avoid striking on either of these rocks, this will be the course to be pursued: that man, being taught that he has nothing good left in his possession, and being surrounded on every side with the most miserable necessity, should nevertheless be instructed to aspire to the good of which he is destitute, and to the liberty of which he is deprived; and should be roused from

indolence with more earnestness than if he were supposed to be possessed of the greatest strength. The necessity of the latter is obvious to everyone. The former, I perceive, is doubted by more than it ought to be. For this being placed beyond all controversy, that man must not be deprived of anything that properly belongs to him, it ought also to be manifest how important it is that he should be prevented from false boasting. For if he was not even then permitted to glory in himself, when by the divine beneficence he was decorated with the noblest ornaments, how much ought he now to be humbled, when on account of his ingratitude he has been hurled from the summit of glory to the abyss of ignominy? At that time, I say, when he was exalted to the most honourable eminence, the Scripture attributes nothing to him, but that he was created after the image of God; which certainly implies that his happiness consisted not in any goodness of his own, but in a participation of God. What then remains for him now, deprived of all glory, but that he acknowledge God, to whose beneficence he could not be thankful when he abounded in the riches of His favour? and that he now at least by a confession of his poverty glorify Him, whom he glorified not by an acknowledgment of His blessings? It is also no less conducive to our interest than to the divine glory that all the praise of wisdom and strength be taken away from us; so that they join sacrilege to our fall, who ascribe to us anything more than truly belongs to us. For what else is the consequence, when we are taught to contend in our own strength, but that we are lifted into the air on a reed, which being soon broken, we fall to the ground. Though our strength is placed in too favourable a point of view, when it is compared to a reed. For it is nothing but smoke, whatever vain men have imagined and pre-

tend concerning it. Wherefore it is not without reason that that remarkable sentence is so frequently repeated by Augustine, that free will is rather overthrown than established even by its own advocates. It was necessary to premise these things for the sake of some who, when they hear that human power is completely subverted in order that the power of God may be established in man, inveterately hate this whole argument, as dangerous and unprofitable: which yet appears to be highly useful to us, and essential to true religion. . . .

Now when I assert that the will, being deprived of its liberty, is necessarily drawn or led into evil, I should wonder if anyone considered it as a harsh expression, since it has nothing in it absurd, nor is it unsanctioned by the custom of good men. It offends those who know not how to distinguish between necessity and compulsion. But if anyone should ask them whether God is not necessarily good, and whether the devil is not necessarily evil, what answer will they make? For there is such a close connection between the goodness of God and His divinity that His deity is not more necessary than His goodness. But the devil is by his fall so alienated from communion with all that is good that he can do nothing but what is evil. But if anyone should sacrilegiously object that little praise is due to God for His goodness, which He is constrained to preserve, shall we not readily reply that His inability to do evil arises from His infinite goodness and not from the impulse of violence? Therefore if a necessity of doing well impairs not the liberty of the divine will in doing well; if the devil, who cannot but do evil, nevertheless sins voluntarily; who then will assert that man sins less voluntarily, because he is under a necessity of sinning? This necessity Augustine everywhere maintains, and even when he was pressed with the cavils of Celestius, who

tried to throw an odium on this doctrine, he confidently expressed himself in these terms: "By means of liberty it came to pass that man fell into sin; but now the penal depravity consequent on it, instead of liberty, has introduced necessity." And whenever the mention of this subject occurs, he hesitates not to speak in this manner of the necessary servitude of sin. We must therefore observe this grand point of distinction, that man, having been corrupted by his fall, sins voluntarily, not with reluctance or constraint; with the strongest propensity of disposition, not with violent coercion; with the bias of his own passions, and not with external compulsion: yet such is the pravity of his nature that he cannot be excited and biased to anything but what is evil. . . . From these passages the reader clearly perceives that I am teaching no novel doctrine, but what was long ago advanced by Augustine with the universal consent of pious men, and which for nearly a thousand years after was confined to the cloisters of monks. But [Peter] Lombard, for want of knowing how to distinguish necessity from coaction, gave rise to a pernicious error. . . .

It has now, I apprehend, been sufficiently proved that man is so enslaved by sin as to be of his own nature incapable of an effort or even an aspiration towards that which is good. We have also laid down a distinction between coaction and necessity, from which it appears that while he sins necessarily, he nevertheless sins voluntarily. But since, while he is devoted to the servitude of the devil, he seems to be actuated by his will rather than by his own, it remains for us to explain the nature of both kinds of influence. There is also this question to be resolved, whether anything is to be attributed to God in evil actions, in which the Scripture intimates that some influence of His is concerned. Augustine somewhere compares the human will to a horse, obedient

to the direction of his rider: and God and the devil he compares to riders. "If God rides it, He, like a sober and skilful rider, manages it in a graceful manner: stimulates its tardiness, restrains its immoderate celerity, represses its wantonness and wildness, tames its perverseness, and conducts it into the right way. But if the devil has taken possession of it, he, like a foolish and wanton rider, forces it through pathless places, hurries it into ditches, drives it down over precipices, and excites it to obstinacy and ferocity." With this similitude, as no better occurs, we will at present be content. When the will of a natural man is said to be subject to the power of the devil, so as to be directed by it, the meaning is, not that it resists and is compelled to a reluctant submission, as masters compel slaves to an unwilling performance of their commands; but that, being fascinated by the fallacies of Satan, it necessarily submits itself to all his directions. For those whom the Lord does not favour with the government of His Spirit, He abandons in righteous judgment to the influence of Satan. . . .

The covenant of life not being equally preached to all, and among those to whom it is preached not always finding the same reception, this diversity discovers the wonderful depth of the divine judgment. Nor is it to be doubted that this variety also follows, subject to the decision of God's eternal election. If it be evidently the result of the divine will that salvation is freely offered to some and others are prevented from attaining it, this immediately gives rise to important and difficult questions, which are incapable of any other explication than by the establishment of pious minds in what ought to be received concerning election and predestination: a question, in the opinion of many, full of perplexity; for they consider nothing more unreasonable than that of the common mass of mankind some should be predesti-

nated to salvation and others to destruction. But how unreasonably they perplex themselves will afterwards appear from the sequel of our discourse. Besides, the very obscurity which excites such dread not only displays the utility of this doctrine, but shows it to be productive of the most delightful benefit. We shall never be clearly convinced as we ought to be, that our salvation flows from the fountain of God's free mercy, till we are acquainted with his eternal election, which illustrates the grace of God by this comparison, that He adopts not all promiscuously to the hope of salvation, but gives to some what He refuses to others. Ignorance of this principle evidently detracts from the divine glory and diminishes real humility. But, according to Paul, what is so necessary to be known never can be known, unless God, without any regard to works, chooses those whom He has decreed. "At this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise, work is no more work." If we need to be recalled to the origin of election to prove that we obtain salvation from no other source than the mere goodness of God, they who desire to extinguish this principle do all they can to obscure what ought to be magnificently and loudly celebrated, and to pluck up humility by the roots. In ascribing the salvation of the remnant of the people to the election of grace, Paul clearly testifies that it is then only known that God saves whom He will of His mere good pleasure, and does not dispense a reward to which there can be no claim. They who shut the gates to prevent anyone from presuming to approach and taste this doctrine do no less injury to man than to God; for nothing else will be sufficient to produce in us suitable humility,

or to impress us with a due sense of our great obligations to God. Nor is there any other basis for solid confidence, even according to the authority of Christ, who, to deliver us from all fear, and render us invincible amidst so many dangers, snares, and deadly conflicts, promises to preserve in safety all whom the Father hath committed to His care. Whence we infer that they who know not themselves to be God's peculiar people will be tortured with continual anxiety; and therefore that the interest of all the faithful, as well as their own, is very badly consulted by those who, blind to the three advantages we have remarked, would wholly remove the foundation of our salvation. And hence the Church rises to our view; which otherwise, as Bernard justly observes, could neither be discovered nor recognized among creatures, being in two respects wonderfully concealed in the bosom of a blessed predestination, and in the mass of a miserable damnation. But before I enter on the subject itself, I must address some preliminary observations to two sorts of persons. The discussion of predestination, a subject of itself rather intricate, is made very perplexed, and therefore dangerous, by human curiosity, which no barriers can restrain from wandering into forbidden labyrinths and soaring beyond its sphere, as if determined to leave none of the divine secrets unscrutinized or unexplored. As we see multitudes everywhere guilty of this arrogance and presumption, and among them some who are not censurable in other respects, it is proper to admonish them of the bounds of their duty on this subject. First, then: let them remember that when they inquire into predestination they penetrate the inmost recesses of divine wisdom, where the careless and confident intruder will obtain no satisfaction to his curiosity, but will enter a labyrinth from which he will find no way to depart.

For it is unreasonable that man should scrutinize with impunity those things which the Lord hath determined to be hidden in Himself; and investigate, even from eternity, that sublimity of wisdom which God would have us to adore and not comprehend, to promote our admiration of His glory. The secrets of His will which He determined to reveal to us He discovers in His Word; and these are all that He foresaw would concern us, or conduce to our advantage. . . .

Predestination, by which God adopts some to the hope of life and adjudges others to eternal death, no one, desirous of the credit of piety, dares absolutely to deny. But it is involved in many cavils, especially by those who make foreknowledge the cause of it. We maintain that both belong to God; but it is preposterous to represent one as dependent on the other. When we attribute foreknowledge to God, we mean that all things have ever been, and perpetually remain, before His eyes, so that to His knowledge nothing is future or past, but all things are present: and present in such a manner that He does not merely conceive of them from ideas formed in His mind, as things remembered by us appear present to our minds, but really beholds and sees them as if actually placed before Him. And this foreknowledge extends to the whole world and to all the creatures. Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which He hath determined in Himself what He would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestinated either to life or to death.

*From Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. John Allen (New Haven, 1816).*

fail in his attempt than fail to save himself. What followed afterward showed this. For he was so dazed and intoxicated at the thought of so exalted an execution that he lost his head and completely confused his wits in both managing his flight and managing his tongue when answering questions.

What did he have to do but to run back to his friends across a river? This is a means to which I have resorted in lesser dangers, and which I consider of little risk, however wide the crossing, provided your horse finds an easy place to go in and that you can count on an easy landing place on the other side in relation to the current. The other man, when his horrible sentence was pronounced to him, said: "I was prepared for this; I will astonish you by my endurance."

<sup>c</sup>The Assassins, a people dependent on Phoenicia, are considered among the Mohammedans as being of supreme devoutness and purity of morals. They hold that the most certain way to deserve Paradise is to kill someone of a different religion. Since they scorn all personal dangers in order to carry out so useful a mission, there have been many instances in which they presented themselves, singly or in pairs, to assassinate (we have borrowed that word from their name) their enemy in the midst of his forces. Thus was our Count Raymond of Tripoli killed in his city.

## 30 *Of a monstrous child*

<sup>A</sup>This story will go its way simply, for I leave it to the doctors to discuss it. The day before yesterday I saw a child that two men and a nurse, who said they were the father, uncle, and aunt, were leading about to get a penny or so from showing him, because of his strangeness. In all other respects he was of ordinary shape; he could stand on his feet, walk, and prattle, about like others of the same age. He had not yet been willing to take any other nourishment than from his nurse's breast; and what they tried to put in his mouth in my presence he chewed on a little and spat it out without swallowing. There seemed indeed to be something peculiar about his cries. He was just fourteen months old.

Below the breast he was fastened and stuck to another child, without a head, and with his spinal canal stopped up, the rest of his body being entire. For indeed one arm was shorter, but it had been broken by accident at their birth. They were joined face to face, and as if a smaller child were trying to embrace a bigger one around the neck. The juncture and the space where they held together was only four fingers' breadth or thereabouts, so that if you turned the imperfect child over and up, you saw the other's navel below; thus the connection was in between the nipples and the navel. The navel of the imperfect child

could not be seen, but all the rest of his belly could. In this way all of this imperfect child that was not attached, as the arms, buttocks, thighs, and legs, remained hanging and dangling on the other and might reach halfway down his legs. The nurse also told us that he urinated from both places. Moreover the limbs of this other were nourished and living and in the same condition as his own, except that they were smaller and thinner.

This double body and these several limbs, connected with a single head, might well furnish a favorable prognostic to the king that he will maintain under the union of his laws these various parts and factions of our state. But for fear the event should belie it, it is better to let it go its way, for there is nothing like divining about things past. <sup>c</sup>*So that, when things have happened, by some interpretation they are found to have been prophesied* [Cicero]. <sup>b</sup>As they said of Epimenides that he prophesied backward.

I have just seen a shepherd in Médoc, thirty years old or thereabouts, who has no sign of genital parts. He has three holes by which he continually makes water. He is bearded, has desire, and likes to touch women.

<sup>c</sup>What we call monsters are not so to God, who sees in the immensity of his work the infinity of forms that he has comprised in it; and it is for us to believe that this figure that astonishes us is related and linked to some other figure of the same kind unknown to man. From his infinite wisdom there proceeds nothing but that is good and ordinary and regular; but we do not see its arrangement and relationship. *What he sees often, he does not wonder at, even if he does not know why it is. If something happens which he has not seen before, he thinks it is a prodigy* [Cicero].

We call contrary to nature what happens contrary to custom; nothing is anything but according to nature, whatever it may be. Let this universal and natural reason drive out of us the error and astonishment that novelty brings us.

## 31 Of anger

<sup>a</sup>Plutarch is admirable throughout, but especially where he judges human actions. We may see the fine things that he says in the comparison of Lycurgus and Numa, apropos of our great foolishness in abandoning children to the government and responsibility of their fathers.

<sup>c</sup>Most of our states, as Aristotle says, leave to each man, in the manner of the Cyclopes, the guidance of their wives and children according to his own foolish and thoughtless fancy; and the Lacedaemonian and Cretan are almost the only ones which have committed the education of children to the laws. <sup>a</sup>Who does not see that in a state everything