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Moreover God hath ordained man in this world, as it were the very image of himself, to the intent, that he, as it were a god on earth, should provide for the wealth of all creatures. And this thing the very brute beasts do also perceive, for we may see, that not only the tame beasts, but also the leopards, lions, and other more fierce and wild, when they be in any great jeopardy, they flee to man for succour. So man is, when all things fail, the last refuge to all manner of creatures. He is unto them all the very assured altar and sanctuary.

I have here painted out to you the image of man as well as I can. On the other side (if it like [10] you) against the figure of Man, let us portray the fashion and shape of War.

Now, then, imagine in thy mind, that thou dost behold two hosts of barbarous people, of whom the look is fierce and cruel, and the voice horrible; the terrible and fearful rustling and glistening of their harness and weapons; the unlovely murmur of so huge a multitude; the eyes sternly menacing; the bloody blasts and terrible sounds of trumpets and clarions; the thundering of the guns, no less fearful than thunder indeed, but much more hurtful; the frenzied cry and clamour, the furious and mad running together, the outrageous slaughter, the cruel chances of them that flee and of those that are stricken down and slain, the heaps of slaughters, the fields overflowed with blood, the rivers dyed red with man's blood. And it chanceth oftentimes, that the brother fighteth with the brother, one kinsman with another, friend against friend; and in that common furious desire oftentimes one thrusteth his weapon quite through the body of another that never gave him so much as a foul word. Verily, this tragedy containeth so many mischiefs, that it would abhor any man's heart to speak thereof. I will let pass to speak of the hurts which are in comparison of the other but light and common, as the treading down and destroying of the corn all about, the burning of towns, the villages fired, the driving away of cattle, the ravishing of maidens, the old men led [11] forth in captivity, the robbing of churches, and all things confounded and full of thefts, pillages, and violence. Neither I will not speak now of those things which are wont to follow the most happy and most just war of all.

The poor commons pillaged, the nobles overcharged; so many old men of their children bereaved, yea, and slain also in the slaughter of their children; so many old women destitute, whom sorrow more cruelly slayeth than the weapon itself; so many honest wives become widows, so many children fatherless, so many lamentable houses, so many rich men brought to extreme poverty. And what needeth it here to speak of the destruction of good manners, since there is no man but knoweth right well that the universal pestilence of all mischievous living proceedeth at once from war. Thereof cometh despising of virtue and godly living; thereof cometh, that the laws are neglected and not regarded; thereof cometh a prompt and a ready stomach, boldly to do every mischievous deed. Out of this fountain spring so huge great companies of thieves, robbers, sacrilegers, and murderers. And what is most grievous



of all, this mischievous pestilence cannot keep herself within her bounds; but after it is begun in some one corner, it doth not only (as a contagious disease) spread abroad and infect the countries near adjoining to it, but also it draweth into that common tumult and troublous business [12] the countries that be very far off, either for need, or by reason of affinity, or else by occasion of some league made. Yea and moreover, one war springeth of another: of a dissembled war there cometh war indeed, and of a very small, a right great war hath risen. Nor it chanceth oftentimes none otherwise in these things than it is feigned of the monster, which lay in the lake or pond called Lerna.

For these causes, I trow, the old poets, the which most sagely perceived the power and nature of things, and with most meet feignings covertly shadowed the same, have left in writing, that war was sent out of hell: nor every one of the Furies was not meet and convenient to bring about this business, but the most pestilent and mischievous of them all was chosen out for the nonce, which hath a thousand names, and a thousand crafts to do hurt. She being armed with a thousand serpents, bloweth before her her fiendish trumpet. Pan with furious ruffling encumbereth every place. Bellona shaketh her furious flail. And then the wicked furiousness himself, when he hath undone all knots and broken all bonds, rusheth out with bloody mouth horrible to behold.

The grammarians perceived right well these things, of the which some will, that war have his name by contrary meaning of the word Bellum, that is to say fair, because it hath nothing good nor fair. Nor bellum, that is for to say war, is none [13] otherwise called Bellum, that is to say fair, than the furies are called Eumenides, that is to say meek, because they are wilful and contrary to all meekness. And some grammarians think rather, that bellum, war, should be derived out of this word Belva, that is for to say, a brute beast: forasmuch as it belongeth to brute beasts, and not unto men, to run together, each to destroy each other. But it seemeth to me far to pass all wild and all brute beastliness, to fight together with weapons.

First, for there are many of the brute beasts, each in his kind, that agree and live in a gentle fashion together, and they go together in herds and flocks, and each helpeth to defend the other. Nor is it the nature of all wild beasts to fight, for some are harmless, as does and hares. But they that are the most fierce of all, as lions, wolves, and tigers, do not make war among themselves as we do. One dog eateth not another. The lions, though they be fierce and cruel, yet they fight not among themselves. One dragon is in peace with another. And there is agreement among poisonous serpents. But unto man there is no wild or cruel beast more hurtful than man.

Again, when the brute beasts fight, they fight with their own natural armour: we men, above nature, to the destruction of men, arm ourselves with armour, invented by craft of the devil. Nor the wild beasts are not cruel for every cause; but either when hunger maketh them fierce, or else [14] when they perceive themselves to be hunted and pursued to the death, or else when they fear lest their younglings should take any harm or be stolen from them. But (O good Lord) for what trifling causes what tragedies of war do we stir up? For most vain titles, for childish wrath, for a wench, yea, and for causes much more scornful than these, we be inflamed to fight.

Moreover, when the brute beasts fight, then war is one for one, yea, and that is very short. And when the battle is sorest fought, yet is there not past one or two, that goeth away sore wounded. When was it ever heard that an hundred thousand brute beasts were slain at one time fighting and tearing one another: which thing men do full oft and in many places? And besides this, whereas some wild beasts have natural debate with some other that be of a contrary kind, so again there be some with which they lovingly agree in a sure amity. But man with man, and each with other, have among them continual war; nor is there league sure enough among any men. So that whatsoever it be, that hath gone out of kind, it hath gone out

of kind into a worse fashion, than if Nature herself had engendered therein a malice at the beginning.

Will ye see how beastly, how foul, and how unworthy a thing war is for man? Did ye never behold a lion let loose unto a bear? What gapings, what roarings, what grisly gnashing, what tearing [15] of their flesh, is there? He trembleth that beholdeth them, yea, though he stand sure and safe enough from them. But how much more grisly a sight is it, how much more outrageous and cruel, to behold man to fight with man, arrayed with so much armour, and with so many weapons? I beseech you, who would believe that they were men, if it were not because war is a thing so much in custom that no man marvelleth at it? Their eyes glow like fire, their faces be pale, their marching forth is like men in a fury, their voice screeching and grunting, their cry and frenzied clamour; all is iron, their harness and weapons jingling and clattering, and the guns thundering. It might have been better suffered, if man, for lack of meat and drink, should have fought with man, to the intent he might devour his flesh and drink his blood: albeit, it is come also now to that pass, that some there be that do it more of hatred than either for hunger or for thirst. But now this same thing is done more cruelly, with weapons envenomed, and with devilish engines. So that nowhere may be perceived any token of man. Trow ye that Nature could here know it was the same thing, that she sometime had wrought with her own hands? And if any man would inform her, that it were man that she beheld in such array, might she not well, with great wondering, say these words?

“What new manner of pageant is this that I behold? What devil of hell hath brought us forth [16] this monster. There be some that call me a stepmother, because that among so great heaps of things of my making I have brought forth some venomous things (and yet have I ordained the selfsame venomous things for man’s behoof); and because I have made some beasts very fierce and perilous: and yet is there no beast so wild nor so perilous, but that by craft and diligence he may be made tame and gentle. By man’s diligent labour the lions have been made tame, the dragons meek, and the bears obedient. But what is this, that worse is than any stepmother, which hath brought us forth this new unreasonable brute beast, the pestilence and mischief of all this world? One beast alone I brought forth wholly dedicate to be benevolent, pleasant, friendly, and wholesome to all other. What hath chanced, that this creature is changed into such a brute beast? I perceive nothing of the creature man, which I myself made. What evil spirit hath thus defiled my work? What witch hath bewitched the mind of man, and transformed it into such brutishness? What sorceress hath thus turned him out of his kindly shape? I command and would that the wretched creature should behold himself in a glass. But, alas, what shall the eyes see, where the mind is away? Yet behold thyself (if thou canst), thou furious warrior, and see if thou mayst by any means recover thyself again. From whence hast thou that threatening crest upon thy head? From whence hast thou [17] that shining helmet? From whence are those iron horns? Whence cometh it, that thine elbows are so sharp and piked? Where hadst thou those scales? Where hadst thou those brazen teeth? Of whence are those hard plates? Whence are those deadly weapons? From whence cometh to thee this voice more horrible than of a wild beast? What a look and countenance hast thou more terrible than of a brute beast? Where hast thou gotten this thunder and lightning, both more fearful and hurtful than is the very thunder and lightning itself? I formed thee a goodly creature; what came into thy mind, that thou wouldst thus transform thyself into so cruel and so beastly fashion, that there is no brute beast so unreasonable in comparison unto man?”

These words, and many other such like, I suppose, the Dame Nature, the worker of all things, would say. Then since man is such as is showed before that he is, and that war is such a thing, like as too oft we have felt and known, it seemeth to me no small wonder, what ill spirit, what disease, or what mishap, first put into man’s mind, that he would bathe his mortal weapon in the blood of man. It must needs be, that men mounted up to so great madness by

divers degrees. For there was never man yet (as Juvenal saith) that was suddenly most graceless of all. And always things the worst have crept in among men's manners of living, under the shadow and shape of [18] goodness. For some time those men that were in the beginning of the world led their lives in woods; they went naked, they had no walled towns, nor houses to put their heads in: it happened otherwhile that they were sore grieved and destroyed with wild beasts. Wherefore with them first of all, men made war, and he was esteemed a mighty strong man, and a captain, that could best defend mankind from the violence of wild beasts. Yea, and it seemed to them a thing most equable to strangle the stranglers, and to slay the slayers, namely, when the wild beast, not provoked by us for any hurt to them done, would wilfully set upon us. And so by reason that this was counted a thing most worthy of praise (for hereof it rose that Hercules was made a god), the lusty-stomached young men began all about to hunt and chase the wild beasts, and as a token of their valiant victory the skins of such beasts as they slew were set up in such places as the people might behold them. Besides this they were not contented to slay the wild beasts, but they used to wear their skins to keep them from the cold in winter. These were the first slaughters that men used: these were their spoils and robberies. After this, they went so farforth, that they were bold to do a thing which Pythagoras thought to be very wicked; and it might seem to us also a thing monstrous, if custom were not, which hath so great strength in every place: that by custom it was reputed in [19] some countries a much charitable deed if a man would, when his father was very old, first sore beat him, and after thrust him headlong into a pit, and so bereave him of his life, by whom it chanced him to have the gift of life. It was counted a holy thing for a man to feed on the flesh of his own kinsmen and friends. They thought it a goodly thing, that a virgin should be made common to the people in the temple of Venus. And many other things, more abominable than these: of which if a man should now but only speak, every man would abhor to hear him. Surely there is nothing so ungracious, nor nothing so cruel, but men will hold therewith, if it be once approved by custom. Then will ye hear, what a deed they durst at the last do? They were not abashed to eat the carcasses of the wild beasts that were slain, to tear the unsavoury flesh with their teeth, to drink the blood, to suck out the matter of them, and (as Ovid saith) to hide the beasts' bowels within their own. And although at that time it seemed to be an outrageous deed unto them that were of a more mild and gentle courage: yet was it generally allowed, and all by reason of custom and commodity. Yet were they not so content. For they went from the slaying of noisome wild beasts, to kill the harmless beasts, and such as did no hurt at all. They waxed cruel everywhere upon the poor sheep, a beast without fraud or guile. They slew the hare, for none other offence, but [20] because he was a good fat dish of meat to feed upon. Nor they forbore not to kill the tame ox, which had a long season, with his sore labour, nourished the unkind household. They spared no kind of beasts, of fowls, nor of fishes. Yea, and the tyranny of gluttony went so farforth that there was no beast anywhere that could be sure from the cruelty of man. Yea, and custom persuaded this also, that it seemed no cruelty at all to slay any manner of beast, whatsoever it was, so they abstained from manslaughter. Now peradventure it lieth in our power to keep out vices, that they enter not upon the manners of men, in like manner as it lieth in our power to keep out the sea, that it break not in upon us; but when the sea is once broken in, it passeth our power to restrain it within any bounds. So either of them both once let in, they will not be ruled, as we would, but run forth headlong whithersoever their own rage carrieth them. And so after that men had been exercised with such beginnings to slaughter, wrath anon enticed man to set upon man, either with staff, or with stone, or else with his fist. For as yet, I think they used no other weapons. And now had they learned by the killing of beasts, that man also might soon and easily be slain with little labour. But this cruelty remained betwixt singular persons, so that yet there was no great number of men that fought together, but as it chanced one man against another. And besides this, there [21] was no small colour of equity, if a man slew his enemy; yea, and shortly after, it was a great praise to a man to slay a violent and a mischievous man, and to rid him out of the world, such

devilish and cruel caitiffs, as men say Cacus and Busiris were. For we see plainly, that for such causes, Hercules was greatly praised. And in process of time, many assembled to take part together, either as affinity, or as neighbourhood, or kindred bound them. And what is now robbery was then war. And they fought then with stones, or with stakes, a little burned at the ends. A little river, a rock, or such other like thing, chancing to be between them, made an end of their battle.

In the mean season, while fierceness by use increaseth, while wrath is grown great, and ambition hot and vehement, by ingenious craft they arm their furious violence. They devise harness, such as it is, to fence them with. They invent weapons to destroy their enemies with. Thus now by few and few, now with greater company, and now armed they begin to fight. Nor to this manifest madness they forget not to give honour. For they call it Bellum, that is to say, a fair thing; yea, and they repute it a virtuous deed, if a man, with the jeopardy of his own life, manly resist and defend from the violence of his enemies, his wife, children, beasts, and household. And by little and little, malice grew so great, with the high esteeming of other things, that one city began to send [22] defiance and make war to another, country against country, and realm against realm. And though the thing of itself was then most cruel, yet all this while there remained in them certain tokens, whereby they might be known for men: for such goods as by violence were taken away were asked and required again by an herald at arms; the gods were called to witness; yea, and when they were ranged in battle, they would reason the matter ere they fought. And in the battle they used but homely weapons, nor they used neither guile nor deceit, but only strength. It was not lawful for a man to strike his enemy till the sign of battle was given; nor was it not lawful to fight after the sounding of the retreat. And for conclusion, they fought more to show their manliness and for praise, than they coveted to slay. Nor all this while they armed them not, but against strangers, the which they called hostes, as they had been hospites, their guests. Of this rose empires, of the which there was never none yet in any nation, but it was gotten with the great shedding of man's blood. And since that time there hath followed continual course of war, while one eftsoons laboureth to put another out of his empire, and to set himself in. After all this, when the empires came once into their hands that were most ungracious of all other, they made war upon whosoever pleased them; nor were they not in greatest peril and danger of war that had most deserved [23] to be punished, but they that by fortune had gotten great riches. And now they made not war to get praise and fame, but to get the vile muck of the world, or else some other thing far worse than that.

I think not the contrary, but that the great, wise man Pythagoras meant these things when he by a proper device of philosophy frightened the unlearned multitude of people from the slaying of silly beasts. For he perceived, it should at length come to pass, that he which (by no injury provoked) was accustomed to spill the blood of a harmless beast, would in his anger, being provoked by injury, not fear to slay a man.

War, what other thing else is it than a common manslaughter of many men together, and a robbery, the which, the farther it sprawleth abroad, the more mischievous it is? But many gross gentlemen nowadays laugh merrily at these things, as though they were the dreams and dotings of schoolmen, the which, saving the shape, have no point of manhood, yet seem they in their own conceit to be gods. And yet of those beginnings, we see we be run so far in madness, that we do naught else all our life-days. We war continually, city with city, prince with prince, people with people, yea, and (it that the heathen people confess to be a wicked thing) cousin with cousin, alliance with alliance, brother with brother, the son with the father, yea, and that I esteem more cruel [24] than all these things, a Christian man against another man; and yet furthermore, I will say that I am very loath to do, which is a thing most cruel of all, one Christian man with another Christian man. Oh, blindness of man's mind! at those things no man marvelleth, no man abhorreth them. There be some that rejoyce at them, and

praise them above the moon: and the thing which is more than devilish, they call a holy thing. Old men, crooked for age, make war, priests make war, monks go forth to war; yea, and with a thing so devilish we mingle Christ. The battles ranged, they encounter the one the other, bearing before them the sign of the Cross, which thing alone might at the leastwise admonish us by what means it should become Christian men to overcome.

But we run headlong each to destroy other, even from that heavenly sacrifice of the altar, whereby is represented that perfect and ineffable knitting together of all Christian men. And of so wicked a thing, we make Christ both author and witness. Where is the kingdom of the devil, if it be not in war? Why draw we Christ into war, with whom a brothel-house agreeth more than war? Saint Paul disdaineth, that there should be any so great discord among Christian men, that they should need any judge to discuss the matter between them. What if he should come and behold us now through all the world, warring for every light and trifling cause, striving more [25] cruelly than ever did any heathen people, and more cruelly than any barbarous people? Yea, and ye shall see it done by the authority, exhortations, and furtherings of those that represent Christ, the prince of peace and very bishop that all things knitteth together by peace and of those that salute the people with good luck of peace. Nor is it not unknown to me what these unlearned people say (a good while since) against me in this matter, whose winnings arise of the common evils. They say thus: We make war against our wills: for we be constrained by the ungracious deeds of other. We make war but for our right. And if there come any hurt thereof, thank them that be causers of it. But let these men hold their tongues awhile, and I shall after, in place convenient, avoid all their cavillations, and pluck off that false visor wherewith we hide all our malice.

But first as I have above compared man with war, that is to say, the creature most demure with a thing most outrageous, to the intent that cruelty might the better be perceived: so will I compare war and peace together, the thing most wretched, and most mischievous, with the best and most wealthy thing that is. And so at last shall appear, how great madness it is, with so great tumult, with so great labours, with such intolerable expenses, with so many calamities, affectionately to desire war: whereas agreement might be bought with a far less price.

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First of all, what in all this world is more sweet or better than amity or love? Truly nothing. And I pray you, what other thing is peace than amity and love among men, like as war on the other side is naught else but dissension and debate of many men together? And surely the property of good things is such, that the broader they be spread, the more profit and commodity cometh of them. Farther, if the love of one singular person with another be so sweet and delectable, how great should the felicity be if realm with realm, and nation with nation, were coupled together, with the band of amity and love? On the other side, the nature of evil things is such, that the farther they sprawl abroad, the more worthy they are to be called evil, as they be indeed. Then if it be a wretched thing, if it be an ungracious thing, that one man armed should fight with another, how much more miserable, how much more mischievous is it, that the selfsame thing should be done with so many thousands together? By love and peace the small things increase and wax great, by discord and debate the great things decay and come to naught. Peace is the mother and nurse of all good things. War suddenly and at once overthroweth, destroyeth, and utterly fordoeth everything that is pleasant and fair, and bringeth in among men a monster of all mischievous things.

In the time of peace (none otherwise than as if [27] the lusty springtime should show and shine in men's businesses) the fields are tilled, the gardens and orchards freshly flourish, the beasts pasture merrily; gay manours in the country are edified, the towns are builded, where as need is reparations are done, the buildings are heightened and augmented, riches increase,

pleasures are nourished, the laws are executed, the common wealth flourisheth, religion is fervent, right reigneth, gentleness is used, craftsmen are busily exercised, the poor men's gain is more plentiful, the wealthiness of the rich men is more gay and goodly, the studies of most honest learnings flourish, youth is well taught, the aged folks have quiet and rest, maidens are luckily married, mothers are praised for bringing forth of children like to their progenitors, the good men prosper and do well, and the evil men do less offence.

But as soon as the cruel tempest of war cometh on us, good Lord, how great a flood of mischiefs occupieth, overfloweth, and drowneth all together. The fair herds of beasts are driven away, the goodly corn is trodden down and destroyed, the good husbandmen are slain, the villages are burned up, the most wealthy cities, that have flourished so many winters, with that one storm are overthrown, destroyed, and brought to naught: so much readier and prompter men are to do hurt than good. The good citizens are robbed and spoiled of their goods by cursed [28] thieves and murderers. Every place is full of fear, of wailing, complaining, and lamenting. The craftsmen stand idle; the poor men must either die for hunger, or fall to stealing. The rich men either stand and sorrow for their goods, that be plucked and snatched from them, or else they stand in great doubt to lose such goods as they have left them: so that they be on every side woebegone. The maidens, either they be not married at all, or else if they be married, their marriages are sorrowful and lamentable. Wives, being destitute of their husbands, lie at home without any fruit of children, the laws are laid aside, gentleness is laughed to scorn, right is clean exiled, religion is set at naught, hallowed and unhallowed things all are one, youth is corrupted with all manner of vices, the old folk wail and weep, and wish themselves out of the world, there is no honour given unto the study of good letters. Finally, there is no tongue can tell the harm and mischief that we feel in war.

Perchance war might be the better suffered, if it made us but only wretched and needy; but it maketh us ungracious, and also full of unhappiness. And I think Peace likewise should be much made of, if it were but only because it maketh us more wealthy and better in our living. Alas, there be too many already, yea, and more than too many mischiefs and evils, with the which the wretched life of man (whether he will or no) is [29] continually vexed, tormented, and utterly consumed.

It is near hand two thousand years since the physicians had knowledge of three hundred divers notable sicknesses by name, besides other small sicknesses and new, as daily spring among us, and besides age also, which is of itself a sickness inevitable.

We read that in one place whole cities have been destroyed with earthquakes. We read, also, that in another place there have been cities altogether burnt with lightning; how in another place whole regions have been swallowed up with opening of the earth, towns by undermining have fallen to the ground; so that I need not here to remember what a great multitude of men are daily destroyed by divers chances, which be not regarded because they happen so often: as sudden breaking out of the sea and of great floods, falling down of hills and houses, poison, wild beasts, meat, drink, and sleep. One hath been strangled with drinking of a hair in a draught of milk, another hath been choked with a little grapestone, another with a fishbone sticking in his throat. There hath been, that sudden joy hath killed out of hand: for it is less wonder of them that die for vehement sorrow. Besides all this, what mortal pestilence see we in every place. There is no part of the world, that is not subject to peril and danger of man's life, which life of itself also is most [30] fugitive. So manifold mischances and evils assail man on every side that not without cause Homer did say: Man was the most wretched of all creatures living.

But forasmuch these mischances cannot lightly be eschewed, nor they happen not through our fault, they make us but only wretched, and not ungracious withal. What pleasure is it then for them that be subject already to so many miserable chances, willingly to seek and procure themselves another mischief more than they had before, as though they yet wanted misery? Yea, they procure not a light evil, but such an evil that is worse than all the others, so mischievous, that it alone passeth all the others; so abundant, that in itself alone is comprehended all ungraciousness; so pestilent, that it maketh us all alike wicked as wretched, it maketh us full of all misery, and yet not worthy to be pitied.

Now go farther, and with all these things consider, that the commodities of Peace spread themselves most far and wide, and pertain unto many men. In war if there happen anything luckily (but, O good Lord, what may we say happeneth well and luckily in war?), it pertaineth to very few, and to them that are unworthy to have it. The prosperity of one is the destruction of another. The enriching of one is the spoil and robbing of another. The triumph of one is the lamentable mourning of another, so that as the infelicity [31] is bitter and sharp, the felicity is cruel and bloody. Howbeit otherwhile both parties wept according to the proverb, *Victoria Cadmaea, Cadmus victorie*, where both parties repented. And I wot not whether it came ever so happily to pass in war, that he that had victory did not repent him of his enterprise, if he were a good man.

Then seeing Peace is the thing above all other most best and most pleasant, and, contrariwise, war the thing most ungracious and wretched of all other, shall we think those men to be in their right minds, the which when they may obtain Peace with little business and labour will rather procure war with so great labour and most difficulty?

First of all consider, how loathly a thing the rumour of war is, when it is first spoken of. Then how envious a thing it is unto a prince, while with often tithes and taxes he pillageth his subjects. What a business hath he to make and entertain friends to help him? what a business to procure bands of strangers and to hire soldiers?

What expenses and labours must he make in setting forth his navy of ships, in building and repairing of castles and fortresses, in preparing and apparelling of his tents and pavilions, in framing, making, and carrying of engines, guns, armour, weapons, baggage, carts, and victual? What great labour is spent in making of bulwarks, in casting of ditches, in digging of mines, in keeping of watches, in keeping of arrays, and in exercising [32] of weapons? I pass over the fear they be in; I speak not of the imminent danger and peril that hangeth over their heads: for what thing in war is not to be feared? What is he that can reckon all the incommodious life that the most foolish soldiers suffer in the field? And for that worthy to endure worse, in that they will suffer it willingly. Their meat is so ill that an ox of Cyprus would be loath to eat it; they have but little sleep, nor yet that at their own pleasure. Their tents on every side are open on the wind. What, a tent? No, no; they must all the day long, be it hot or cold, wet or dry, stand in the open air, sleep on the bare ground, stand in their harness. They must suffer hunger, thirst, cold, heat, dust, showers; they must be obedient to their captains; sometimes they be clapped on the pate with a warder or a truncheon: so that there is no bondage so vile as the bondage of soldiers.

Besides all this, at the sorrowful sign given to fight, they must run headlong to death: for either they must slay cruelly, or be slain wretchedly. So many sorrowful labours must they take in hand, that they may bring to pass that thing which is most wretched of all other. With so many great miseries we must first afflict and grieve our own self, that we may afflict and grieve other!

Now if we would call this matter to account, and justly reckon how much war will cost, and how much peace, surely we shall find that peace [33] may be got and obtained with the tenth part of the cares, labours, griefs, perils, expenses, and spilling of blood, with which the war is procured. So great a company of men, to their extreme perils, ye lead out of the realm to overthrow and destroy some one town: and with the labour of the selfsame men, and without any peril at all, another town, much more noble and goodly, might be new edified and builded. But you say, you will hurt and grieve your enemy: so even that doing is against humanity. Nevertheless, this I would ye should consider, that ye cannot hurt and grieve your enemies, but ye must first greatly hurt your own people. And it seemeth a point of a madman, to enterprise where he is sure and certain of so great hurt and damage, and is uncertain which way the chance of war will turn.

But admit, that either foolishness, or wrath, or ambition, or covetousness, or outrageous cruelty, or else (which I think more like) the furies sent from hell, should ravish and draw the heathen people to this madness. Yet from whence cometh it into our minds, that one Christian man should draw his weapon to bathe it in another Christian man's blood? It is called parricide, if the one brother slay the other. And yet is a Christian man nearer joined to another than is one brother to another: except the bonds of nature be stronger than the bonds of Christ. What abominable thing, then, is it to see them almost continually fighting [34] among themselves, the which are the inhabitants of one house the Church, which rejoice and say, that they all be the members of one body, and that have one head, which truly is Christ; they have all one Father in heaven; they are all taught and comforted by one Holy Spirit; they profess the religion of Christ all under one manner; they are all redeemed with Christ's blood; they are all newborn at the holy font; they use alike sacraments; they be all soldiers under one captain; they are all fed with one heavenly bread; they drink all of one spiritual cup; they have one common enemy the devil; finally, they be all called to one inheritance. Where be they so many sacraments of perfect concord? Where be the innumerable teachings of peace? There is one special precept, which Christ called his, that is, Charity. And what thing is so repugnant to charity as war? Christ saluted his disciples with the blessed luck of peace. Unto his disciples he gave nothing save peace, saving peace he left them nothing. In those holy prayers, he specially prayed the Father of heaven, that in like manner as he was one with the Father, so all his, that is to say, Christian men, should be one with him. Lo, here you may perceive a thing more than peace, more than amity, more than concord.

Solomon bare the figure of Christ: for Solomon in the Hebrew tongue signifieth peaceable or peaceful. Him God would have to build his temple. [35] At the birth of Christ the angels proclaimed neither war nor triumphs, but peace they sang. And before his birth the prophet David prophesied thus of him: Et factus est in pace locus ejus, that is to say, His dwelling place is made in peace. Search all the whole life of Christ, and ye shall never find thing that breathes not of peace, that signifieth not amity, that savoureth not of charity. And because he perceived peace could not well be kept, except men would utterly despise all those things for which the world so greedily fighteth, he commanded that we should of him learn to be meek. He calleth them blessed and happy that setteth naught by riches, for those he calleth poor in spirit. Blessed be they that despise the pleasures of this world, the which he calleth mourners. And them blessed he calleth that patiently suffer themselves, to be put out of their possessions, knowing that here in this world they are but as outlaws; and the very true country and possession of godly creatures is in heaven. He calleth them blessed which, deserving well of all men, are wrongfully blamed and ill afflicted. He forbade that any man should resist evil. Briefly, as all his doctrine commandeth sufferance and love, so all his life teacheth nothing else but meekness. So he reigned, so he warred, so he overcame, so he triumphed.



Now the apostles, that had sucked into them the pure spirit of Christ, and were blessedly drunk [36] with that new must of the Holy Ghost, preached nothing but meekness and peace. What do all the epistles of Paul sound in every place but peace, but long-suffering, but charity? What speaketh Saint John, what rehearseth he so oft, but love? What other thing did Peter? What other thing did all the true Christian writers? From whence then cometh all this tumult of wars amongst the children of peace? Think ye it a fable, that Christ calleth himself a vine tree, and his own the branches? Who did ever see one branch fight with another? Is it in vain that Paul so oft wrote, The Church to be none other thing, than one body compact together of divers members, cleaving to one head, Christ? Whoever saw the eye fight with the hand, or the belly with the foot? In this universal body, compact of all those unlike things, there is agreement. In the body of a beast, one member is in peace with another, and each member useth not the property thereto given for itself alone, but for the profit of all the other members. So that if there come any good to any one member alone, it helpeth all the whole body. And may the compaction or knitting of Nature do more in the body of a beast, that shortly must perish, than the coupling of the Holy Ghost in the mystical and immortal body of the Church? Do we to no purpose pray as taught by Christ: Good Lord, even as thy will is fulfilled in heaven, so let it be fulfilled in the earth? In that city of heaven is concord and [37] peace most perfect. And Christ would have his Church to be none other than a heavenly people in earth, as near as might be after the manner of them that are in heaven, ever labouring and making haste to go thither, and always having their mind thereon.

Now go to, let us imagine, that there should come some new guest out of the lunar cities, where Empedocles dwelleth, or else out of the innumerable worlds, that Democritus fabricated, into this world, desiring to know what the inhabitants do here. And when he was instructed of everything, it should at last be told him that, besides all other, there is one creature marvellously mingled, of body like to brute beasts and of soul like unto God. And it should also be told him, that this creature is so noble, that though he be here an outlaw out of his own country, yet are all other beasts at his commandment, the which creature through his heavenly beginning inclineth alway to things heavenly and immortal. And that God eternal loved this creature so well, that whereas he could neither by the gifts of nature, nor by the strong reasons of philosophy attain unto that which he so fervently desired, he sent hither his only begotten son, to the intent to teach this creature a new kind of learning. Then as soon as this new guest had perceived well the whole manner of Christ's life and precepts, would desire to stand in some high place, from whence he [38] might behold that which he had heard. And when he should see all other creatures soberly live according to their kind, and, being led by the laws and course of nature, desire nothing but even as Nature would; and should see this one special creature man given riotously to tavern haunting, to vile lucre, to buying and selling, chopping and changing, to brawling and fighting one with another, trow ye that he would not think that any of the other creatures were man, of whom he heard so much of before, rather than he that is indeed man? Then if he that had instructed him afore would show him which creature is man, now would he look about to see if he could spy the Christian flock and company, the which, following the ordinance of that heavenly teacher Christ, should exhibit to him a figure or shape of the evangelical city. Think ye he would not rather judge Christians to dwell in any other place than in those countries, wherein we see so great superfluity, riot, voluptuousness, pride, tyranny, discord, brawlings, fightings, wars, tumults, yea, and briefly to speak, a greater puddle of all those things that Christ reproveth than among Turks or Saracens? From whence, then, creepeth this pestilence in among Christian people? Doubtless this mischief also is come in by little and little, like as many more other be, ere men be aware of them. For truly every mischief creepeth by little and little upon the good manners of men, or else [39] under the colour of goodness it is suddenly received.

So then first of all, learning and cunning crept in as a thing very meet to confound heretics, which defend their opinions with the doctrine of philosophers, poets, and orators. And surely at the beginning of our faith, Christian men did not learn those things; but such as peradventure had learned them, before they knew what Christ meant, they turned the thing that they had learned already, into good use.

Eloquence of tongue was at the beginning dissembled more than despised, but at length it was openly approved. After that, under colour of confounding heretics, came in an ambitious pleasure of brawling disputations, which hath brought into the Church of Christ no small mischief. At length the matter went so farforth that Aristotle was altogether received into the middle of divinity, and so received, that his authority is almost reputed holier than the authority of Christ. For if Christ spake anything that did little agree with our life, by interpretation of Aristotle it was lawful to make it serve their purpose. But if any do never so little repugn against the high divinity of Aristotle, he is quickly with clapping of hands driven out of the place. For of him we have learned, that the felicity of man is imperfect, except he have both the good gifts of body and of fortune. Of him we have learned, that no commonweal [40] may flourish, in which all things are common. And we endeavour ourselves to glue fast together the decrees of this man and the doctrine of Christ—which is as likely a thing as to mingle fire and water together. And a gobbet we have received of the civil laws, because of the equity that seemeth to be in them. And to the end they should the better serve our purpose, we have, as near as may be, writhed and plied the doctrine of the gospel to them. Now by the civil law it is lawful for a man to defend violence with violence, and each to pursue for his right. Those laws approve buying and selling; they allow usury, so it be measurable; they praise war as a noble thing, so, it be just. Finally all the doctrine of Christ is so defiled with the learning of logicians, sophisters, astronomers, orators, poets, philosophers, lawyers, and gentles, that a man shall spend the most part of his life, ere he may have any leisure to search holy scripture, to the which when a man at last cometh, he must come infected with so many worldly opinions, that either he must be offended with Christ's doctrines, or else he must apply them to the mind and of them that he hath learned before. And this thing is so much approved, that it is now a heinous deed, if a man presume to study holy scripture, which hath not buried himself up to the hard ears in those trifles, or rather sophistries of Aristotle. As though Christ's doctrine were such, that it were not lawful for [41] all men to know it, or else that it could by any means agree with the wisdom of philosophers. Besides this we admitted at the beginning of our faith some honour, which afterward we claimed as of duty. Then we received riches, but that was to distribute to relieve poor men, which afterwards we turned to our own use. And why not, since we have learned by the law civil, that the very order of charity is, that every man must first provide for himself? Nor lack there colours to cloak this mischief: first it is a good deed to provide for our children, and it is right that we foresee how to live in age; finally, why should we, say they, give our goods away, if we come by them without fraud? By these degrees it is by little and little come to pass, that he is taken for the best man that hath most riches: nor never was there more honour given to riches among the heathen people, than is at this day among the Christian people. For what thing is there, either spiritual or temporal, that is not done with great show of riches? And it seemed a thing agreeable with those ornaments, if Christian men had some great jurisdiction under them. Nor there wanted not such as gladly submitted themselves. Albeit at the beginning it was against their wills, and scanty would they receive it. And yet with much work, they received it so, that they were content with the name and title only: the profit thereof they gladly gave unto other men. At the last, little by [42] little it came to pass, that a bishop thought himself no bishop, except he had some temporal lordship withal; an abbot thought himself of small authority, if he had not wherewith to play the lordly sire. And in conclusion, we blushed never a deal at the matter, we wiped away all shamefastness, and shoved aside all the bars of comeliness. And whatever abuse was used among the heathen people, were it covetousness, ambition, riot, pomp, or pride, or tyranny,

the same we follow, in the same we match them, yea, and far pass them. And to pass over the lighter things for the while, I pray you, was there ever war among the heathen people so long continually, or more cruelly, than among Christian people? What stormy rumblings, what violent brays of war, what tearing of leagues, and what piteous slaughters of men have we seen ourselves within these few years? What nation hath not fought and skirmished with another? And then we go and curse the Turk; and what can be a more pleasant sight to the Turks, than to behold us daily each slaying other?

Xerxes doted, when he led out of his own country that huge multitude of people to make war upon the Greeks. Trow ye, was he not mad, when he wrote letters to the mountain called Athos, threatening that the hill should repent except it obeyed his lust? And the same Xerxes commanded also the sea to be beaten, because [43] it was somewhat rough when he should have sailed over.

Who will deny but Alexander the Great was mad also? He, the young god, wished that there were many worlds, the which he might conquer—so great a fever of vainglory had embraced his young lusty courage. And yet these same men, the which Seneca doubted not to call mad thieves, warred after a gentler fashion than we do; they were more faithful of their promise in war, nor they used not so mischievous engines in war, nor such crafts and subtleties, nor they warred not for so light causes as we Christian men do. They rejoiced to advance and enrich such provinces as they had conquered by war; and the rude people, that lived like wild beasts without laws, learning, or good manners, they taught them both civil conditions and crafts, whereby they might live like men. In countries that were not inhabited with people, they builded cities, and made them both fair and profitable. And the places that were not very sure, they fenced, for safeguard of the people, with bridges, banks, bulwarks; and with a thousand other such commodities they helped the life of man. So that then it was right expedient to be overcome. Yea, and how many things read we, that were either wisely done, or soberly spoken of them in the midst of their wars. As for those things that are done in Christian men's wars they are more filthy and cruel than is convenient [44] here to rehearse. Moreover, look what was worst in the heathen peoples' wars, in that we follow them, yea, we pass them.

But now it is worth while to hear, by what means we maintain this our so great madness. Thus they reason: If it had not been lawful by no means to make war, surely God would never have been the author to the Jews to make war against their enemies. Well said, but we must add hereunto, that the Jews never made war among themselves, but against strangers and wicked men. We, Christian men, fight with Christian men. Diversity of religion caused the Jews to fight against their enemies: for their enemies worshipped not God as they did. We make war oftentimes for a little childish anger, or for hunger of money, or for thirst of glory, or else for filthy meed. The Jews fought by the commandment of God; we make war to avenge the grief and displeasure of our mind. And nevertheless if men will so much lean to the example of the Jews, why do we not then in like manner use circumcision? Why do we not sacrifice with the blood of sheep and other beasts? Why do we not abstain from swine's flesh? Why doth not each of us wed many wives? Since we abhor those things, why doth the example of war please us so much? Why do we here follow the bare letter that killeth? It was permitted the Jews to make war, but so likewise as they were suffered to depart from their wives, doubtless because of their hard and [45] froward manners. But after Christ commanded the sword to be put up, it is unlawful for Christian men to make any other war but that which is the fairest war of all, with the most eager and fierce enemies of the Church, with affection of money, with wrath, with ambition, with dread of death. These be our Philistines, these be our Nabuchodonosors, these be our Moabites and Ammonites, with the which it behooveth us to have no truce. With these we must continually fight, until (our enemies being utterly vanquished) we may be in quiet, for except we may overcome them,

there is no man that may attain to any true peace, neither with himself, nor yet with no other. For this war alone is cause of true peace. He that overcometh in this battle, will make war with no man living. Nor I regard not the interpretation that some men make of the two swords, to signify either power spiritual or temporal. When Christ suffered Peter to err purposely, yea, after he was commanded to put up his sword, no man should doubt but that war was forbidden, which before seemed to be lawful. But Peter (say they) fought. True it is, Peter fought; he was yet but a Jew, and had not the spirit of a very Christian man. He fought not for his lands, or for any such titles of lands as we do, nor yet for his own life, but for his Master's life. And finally, he fought, the which within a while after forsook his Master. Now if men will needs follow the example of Peter that [46] fought, why might they not as well follow the example of him forsaking his Master? And though Peter through simple affection erred, yet did his Master rebuke him. For else, if Christ did allow such manner of defence, as some most foolishly do interpret, why doth both all the life and doctrine of Christ preach no other thing but sufferance? Why sent he forth his disciples against tyrants, armed with nothing else but with a walking-staff and a scrip? If that sword, which Christ commanded his disciples to sell their coats to buy, be moderate defence against persecutors, like as some men do not only wickedly but also blindly interpret, why did the martyrs never use that defence? But (say they) the law of nature commandeth, it is approved by the laws, and allowed by custom, that we ought to put off from us violence by violence, and that each of us should defend his life, and eke his money, when the money (as Hesiod saith) is as lief as the life. All this I grant, but yet grace, the law of Christ, that is of more effect than all these things, commandeth us, that we should not speak ill to them that speak shrewdly to us; that we should do well to them that do ill to us, and to them that take away part of our possessions, we should give the whole; and that we should also pray for them that imagine our death. But these things (say they) appertain to the apostles; yea, they appertain to the universal people of Christ, and to the whole body of [47] Christ's Church, that must needs be a whole and a perfect body, although in its gifts one member is more excellent than another. To them the doctrine of Christ appertaineth not, that hope not to have reward with Christ. Let them fight for money and for lordships, that laugh to scorn the saying of Christ: Blessed be the poor men in spirit; that is to say, be they poor or rich, blessed be they that covet no riches in this world. They that put all their felicity in these riches, they fight gladly to defend their life; but they be those that understand not this life to be rather a death, nor they perceive not that everlasting life is prepared for good men. Now they lay against us divers bishops of Rome, the which have been both authors and abettors of warring. True it is, some such there have been, but they were of late, and in such time as the doctrine of Christ waxed cold. Yea, and they be very few in comparison of the holy fathers that were before them, which with their writings persuade us to flee war. Why are these few examples most in mind? Why turn we our eyes from Christ to men? And why had we rather follow the uncertain examples, than the authority that is sure and certain? For doubtless the bishops of Rome were men. And it may be right well, that they were either fools or ungracious caitiffs. And yet we find not that any of them approved that we should still continually war after this fashion as we do, which thing I could [48] with arguments prove, if I listed to digress and tarry thereupon.

Saint Bernard praised warriors, but he so praised them, that he condemned all the manner of our warfare. And yet why should the saying of Saint Bernard, or the disputation of Thomas the Alquine, move me rather than the doctrine of Christ, which commandeth, that we should in no wise resist evil, specially under such manner as the common people do resist.

But it is lawful (say they) that a transgressor be punished and put to death according to the laws: then is it not lawful for a whole country or city to be revenged by war? What may be answered in this place, is longer than is convenient to reply. But this much will I say, there is a great difference. For the evil-doer, found faulty and convicted, is by authority of the laws put to death. In war there is neither part without fault. Whereas one singular man doth offend,

the punishment falleth only on himself; and the example of the punishment doth good unto all others. In war the most part of the punishment and harm falls upon them that least deserve to be punished; that is, upon husbandmen, old men, honest wives, young children, and virgins. But if there may any commodity at all be gathered of this most mischievous thing, that altogether goeth to the behoof of certain most vengeable thieves, hired soldiers, and strong robbers, and perhaps to a few captains, by whose craft [49] war was raised for that intent, and with which the matter goeth never better than when the commonweal is in most high jeopardy and peril to be lost. Whereas one is for his offence grievously punished, it is the wealthy warning of all other: but in war to the end to revenge the quarrel of one, or else peradventure of a few, we cruelly afflict and grieve many thousands of them that nothing deserved. It were better to leave the offence of a few unpunished than while we seek occasion to punish one or two, to bring into assured peril and danger, both our neighbours and innocent enemies (we call them our enemies, though they never did us hurt); and yet are we uncertain, whether it shall fall on them or not, that we would have punished. It is better to let a wound alone, that cannot be cured without grievous hurt and danger of all the whole body, than go about to heal it.

Now if any man will cry out and say: It were against all right, that he that offendeth should not be punished; hereunto I answer, that it is much more against all right and reason, that so many thousands of innocents should be brought into extreme calamity and mischief without deserving. Albeit nowadays we see, that almost all wars spring up I cannot tell of what titles, and of leagues between princes, that while they go about to subdue to their dominion some one town, they put in jeopardy all their whole empire. And yet [50] within a while after, they sell or give away the same town again, that they got with shedding of so much blood.

Peradventure some man will say: Wouldst not have princes fight for their right? I know right well, it is not meet for such a man as I am, to dispute overboldly of princes' matters, and though I might do it without any danger, yet is it longer than is convenient for this place. But this much will I say: If each whatsoever title be a cause convenient to go in hand with war, there is no man that in so great alterations of men's affairs, and in so great variety and changes, can want a title. What nation is there that hath not sometime been put out of their own country, and also have put other out? How oft have people gone from one country to another? How oft have whole empires been translated from one to another either by chance or by league. Let the citizens of Padua claim now again in God's name the country of Troy for theirs, because Antenor was sometime a Trojan. Let the Romans now hardly claim again Africa and Spain, because those provinces were sometime under the Romans. We call that a dominion, which is but an administration. The power and authority over men, which be free by Nature, and over brute beasts, is not all one. What power and sovereignty soever you have, you have it by the consent of the people. And if I be not deceived, he that hath authority to give, hath authority to [51] take away again. Will ye see how small a matter it is that we make all this tumult for? The strife is not, whether this city or that should be obeisant to a good prince, and not in bondage of a tyrant; but whether Ferdinand or Sigismund hath the better title to it, whether that city ought to pay tribute to Philip or to King Louis. This is that noble right, for the which all the world is thus vexed and troubled with wars and manslaughter.

Yet go to, suppose that this right or title be as strong and of as great authority as may be; suppose also there be no difference between a private field and a whole city; and admit there be no difference between the beasts that you have bought with your money and men, which be not only free, but also true Christians: yet is it a point for a wise man to cast in his mind, whether the thing that you will war for, be of so great value, that it will recompense the exceedingly great harms and loss of your own people. If ye cannot do in every point as

becometh a prince, yet at the leastways do as the merchantman doeth: he setteth naught by that loss, which he well perceiveth cannot be avoided without a greater loss, and he reckoneth it a winning, that fortune hath been against him with his so little loss. Or else at the leastwise follow him, of whom there is a merry tale commonly told.

There were two kinsmen at variance about dividing of certain goods, and when they could by [52] no means agree, they must go to law together, that in conclusion the matter might be ended by sentence of the judges. They got them attorneys, the pleas were drawn, men of law had the matter in hand, they came before the judges, the complaint was entered, the cause was pleaded, and so was the war begun between them. Anon one of them remembering himself, called aside his adversary to him and said on this wise: "First it were a great shame, that a little money should dissever us twain, whom Nature hath knit so near together. Secondly, the end of our strife is uncertain, no less than of war. It is in our hands to begin when we will, but not to make an end. All our strife is but for an hundred crowns, and we shall spend the double thereof upon notaries, upon promoters, upon advocates, upon attorneys, upon judges, and upon judges' friends, if we try the law to the uttermost. We must wait upon these men, we must flatter and speak them fair, we must give them rewards. And yet I speak not of the care and thought, nor of the great labour and travail, that we must take to run about here and there to make friends; and which of us two that winneth the victory, shall be sure of more incommodity than profit. Wherefore if we be wise, let us rather see to our own profit, and the money that shall be evil bestowed upon these bribers, let us divide it between us twain. And forgive you the half of that ye think should be your due, and I will [53] forgive as much of mine. And so shall we keep and preserve our friendship, which else is like to perish, and we shall also eschew this great business, cost, and charge. If you be not content to forgo anything of your part, I commit the whole matter into your own hands; do with it as you will. For I had liefer my friend had this money, than those insatiable thieves. Methinks I have gained enough, if I may save my good name, keep my friend, and avoid this unquiet and chargeable business." Thus partly the telling of the truth, and partly the merry conceit of his kinsman, moved the other man to agree. So they ended the matter between themselves, to the great displeasure of the judges and servants, for they, like a sort of gaping ravens, were deluded and put beside their prey.

Let a prince therefore follow the wisdom of these two men, specially in a matter of much more danger. Nor let him not regard what thing it is that he would obtain, but what great loss of good things he shall have, in what great jeopardies he shall be, and what miseries he must endure, to come thereby. Now if a man will weigh, as it were in a pair of balances, the commodities of war on the one side and the incommodities on the other side, he shall find that unjust peace is far better than righteous war. Why had we rather have war than peace? Who but a madman will angle with a golden fish-hook? If ye see that the charges and [54] expenses shall amount far above your gain, yea, though all things go according to your mind, is it not better that ye forgo part of your right than to buy so little commodity with so innumerable mischiefs? I had liefer that any other man had the title, than I should win it with so great effusion of Christian men's blood. He (whosoever he be) hath now been many years in possession; he is accustomed to rule, his subjects know him, he behaveth him like a prince; and one shall come forth, who, finding an old title in some histories or in some blind evidence, will turn clean upside down the quiet state and good order of that commonweal. What availeth it with so great troubling to change any title, which in short space by one chance or other must go to another man? Specially since we might see, that no things in this world continue still in one state, but at the scornful pleasure of fortune they roll to and fro, as the waves of the sea. Finally, if Christian men cannot despise and set at naught these so light things, yet whereto need they by and by to run to arms? Since there be so many bishops, men of great gravity and learning; since there be so many venerable abbots; since there be so many noble men of great age, whom long use and experience of things hath made right wise:

why are not these trifling and childish quarrels of princes pacified and set in order by the wisdom and discretion of these men? But they seem to make a very honest [55] reason of war, which pretend as they would defend the Church: as though the people were not the Church, or as though the Church of Christ was begun, augmented, and stablished with wars and slaughters, and not rather in spilling of the blood of martyrs, sufferance, and despising of this life, or as though the whole dignity of the Church rested in the riches of the priests. Nor to me truly it seemeth not so allowable, that we should so oft make war upon the Turks. Doubtless it were not well with the Christian religion, if the only safeguard thereof should depend on such succours. Nor it is not likely, that they should be good Christians, that by these means are brought thereto at the first. For that thing that is got by war, is again in another time lost by war. Will ye bring the Turks to the faith of Christ? Let us not make a show of our gay riches, nor of our great number of soldiers, nor of our great strength. Let them see in us none of these solemn titles, but the assured tokens of Christian men: a pure, innocent life; a fervent desire to do well, yea, to our very enemies; the despising of money, the neglecting of glory, a poor simple life. Let them hear the heavenly doctrine agreeable to such a manner of life. These are the best armours to subdue the Turks to Christ. Now oftentimes we, being ill, fight with the evil. Yea, and I shall say another thing (which I would to God were more boldly spoken than truly), if we set aside the title and sign [56] of the Cross, we fight Turks against Turks. If our religion were first stablished by the might and strength of men of war, if it were confirmed by dint of sword, if it were augmented by war, then let us maintain it by the same means and ways. But if all things in our faith were brought to pass by other means, why do we, then (as we mistrusted the help of Christ), seek such succour as the heathen people use? But why should we not (say they) kill them that would kill us? So think they it a great dishonour, if other should be more mischievous than they. Why do ye not, then, rob those that have robbed you before? Why do ye not scold and chide at them that rail at you? Why do ye not hate them that hate you? Trow ye it is a good Christian man's deed to slay a Turk? For be the Turks never so wicked, yet they are men, for whose salvation Christ suffered death. And killing Turks we offer to the devil most pleasant sacrifice, and with that one deed we please our enemy, the devil, twice: first because a man is slain, and again, because a Christian man slew him. There be many, which desiring to seem good Christian men, study to hurt and grieve the Turks all that ever they may; and where they be not able to do anything, they curse and ban, and bid a mischief upon them. Now by the same one point a man may perceive, that they be far from good Christian men. Succour the Turks, and where they be wicked, make them good if ye can; if ye [57] cannot, wish and desire of God they may have grace to turn to goodness. And he that thus doeth, I will say doeth like a Christian man. But of all these things I shall entreat more largely, when I set forth my book entitled Antipolemus, which whilom when I was at Rome I wrote to Julius, bishop of Rome, the second of that name, at the same time, when he was counselled to make war on the Venetians.

But there is one thing which is more to be lamented then reasoned: That if a man would diligently discuss the matter, he shall find that all the wars among us Christian men do spring either of foolishness, or else of malice. Some young men without experience, inflamed with the evil examples of their forefathers, that they find by reading of histories, written of some foolish authors (and besides this being moved with the exhortations of flatterers, with the instigation of lawyers, and assenting thereto of the divines, the bishops winking thereat, or peradventure enticing thereunto), have rather of foolhardiness than of malice, gone in hand with war; and with the great hurt and damage of all this world they learn, that war is a thing that should be by all means and ways fled and eschewed. Some other are moved by privy hatred, ambition causeth some, and some are stirred by fierceness of mind to make war. For truly there is almost now no other thing in our cities and commonweals than is [58] contained in Homer's work Iliad, The wrath of indiscreet princes and people.

There be those who for no other cause stir up war but to the intent they may by that means the more easily exercise tyranny on their subjects. For in the time of peace, the authority of the council, the dignity of the rulers, the vigour and strength of the laws, do somewhat hinder, that a prince cannot do all that him listeth; but as soon as war is once begun, now all the handling of matters resteth in the pleasure of a few persons. They that the prince favoureth are lifted up aloft, and they that be in his displeasure, go down. They exact as much money as pleaseth them. What need many words? Then they think themselves, that they be the greatest princes of the world. In the meantime the captains sport and play together, till they have gnawed the poor people to the hard bones. And think ye that it will grieve them, that be of this mind, to enter lightly into war, when any cause is offered? Besides all this, it is worth while to see by what means we colour our fault. I pretend the defence of our religion, but my mind is to get the great riches that the Turk hath. Under colour to defend the Church's right, I purpose to revenge the hatred that I have in my stomach. I incline to ambition, I follow my wrath; my cruel, fierce and unbridled mind compelleth me; and yet will I find a cavillation and say, the league is not kept, or friendship is broken, or something [59] (I wot not what myself) concerning the laws of matrimony is omitted. And it is a wonder to speak, how they never obtain the very thing that they so greatly desire. And while they foolishly labour to eschew this mischief or that, they fall into another much worse, or else deeper into the same. And surely if desire of glory causeth them thus to do, it is a thing much more magnificent and glorious to save than to destroy; much more gay and goodly to build a city than to overthrow and destroy a city.

Furthermore admit that the victory in battle is got most prosperously, yet how small a portion of the glory shall go unto the prince: the commons will claim a great part of it, by the help of whose money the deed was done; foreign soldiers, that are hired for money, will challenge much more than the commons; the captains look to have very much of that glory; and fortune has the most of all, which striking a great stroke in every matter, in war may do most of all. If it come of a noble courage or stout stomach, that you be moved to make war: see, I pray you, how far wide ye be from your purpose. For while ye will not be seen to bow to one man, as to a prince your neighbour, peradventure of your alliance, who may by fortune have done you good: how much more abjectly must ye bow yourself, what time ye seek aid and help of barbarous people; yea, and, what is more unworthy, of such men as are [60] defiled with all mischievous deeds, if we must needs call such kind of monsters men? Meanwhile ye go about to allure unto you with fair words and promises, ravishers of virgins and of religious women, men-killers, stout robbers and rovers (for these be thy special men of war). And while you labour to be somewhat cruel and superior over your equal, you are constrained to submit yourselves to the very dregs of all men living. And while ye go about to drive your neighbour out of his land, ye must needs first bring into your own land the most pestilent puddle of unthrifts that can be. You mistrust a prince of your own alliance, and will you commit yourself wholly to an armed multitude? How much surer were it to commit yourself to concord!

If ye will make war because of lucre, take your counters and cast. And I will say, it is better to have war than peace, if ye find not, that not only less, but also uncertain winning is got with inestimable costs.

Ye say ye make war for the safeguard of the commonweal, yea, but noway sooner nor more unthriftily may the commonweal perish than by war. For before ye enter into the field, ye have already hurt more your country than ye can do good getting the victory. Ye waste the citizens' goods, ye fill the houses with lamentation, ye fill all the country with thieves, robbers, and ravishers. For these are the relics of war. And whereas [61] before ye might have enjoyed all France, ye shut yourselves from many regions thereof. If ye love your own subjects truly, why revolve you not in mind these words: Why shall I put so many, in their



lusty, flourishing youth, in all mischiefs and perils? Why shall I depart so many honest wives and their husbands, and make so many fatherless children? Why shall I claim a title I know not, and a doubtful right, with spilling of my subjects' blood? We have seen in our time, that in war made under colour of defence of the Church, the priests have been so often pillaged with contributions, that no enemy might do more. So that while we go about foolishly to escape falling in the ditch, while we cannot suffer a light injury, we afflict ourselves with most grievous despites. While we be ashamed of gentleness to bow to a prince, we be fain to please people most base. While we indiscreetly covet liberty, we entangle ourselves in most grievous bondage. While we hunt after a little lucre, we grieve ourselves and ours with inestimable harness. It had been a point of a prudent Christian man (if he be a true Christian man) by all manner of means to have fled, to have shunned, and by prayer to have withstood so fiendish a thing, and so far both from the life and doctrine of Christ. But if it can by no means be eschewed, by reason of the ungraciousness of many men, when ye have essayed every way, and that ye have for peace sake left no stone unturned, then [62] the next way is, that ye do your diligence that so ill a thing may be gested and done by them that be evil, and that it be achieved with as little effusion of man's blood as can be.

Now if we endeavour to be the selfsame thing that we hear ourselves called,—that is, good Christian men,—we shall little esteem any worldly thing, nor yet ambitiously covet anything of this world. For if we set all our mind, that we may lightly and purely part hence; if we incline wholly to heavenly things; if we pitch all our felicity in Christ alone; if we believe all that is truly good, truly gay and glorious, truly joyful, to remain in Christ alone; if we thoroughly think that a godly man can of no man be hurt; if we ponder how vain and vanishing are the scornful things of this world; if we inwardly behold how hard a thing it is for a man to be in a manner transformed into a god, and so here, with continual and indefatigable meditation, to be purged from all infections of this world, that within a while the husk of this body being cast off, it may pass hence to the company of angels; finally, if we surely have these three things, without which none is worthy of the name of a Christian man, —Innocency, that we may be pure from all vices; Charity, that we may do good, as near as we can, to every man; Patience, that we may suffer them that do us ill, and, if we can, with good deeds overcome wrongs to us done: I pray you, what war can there be among [63] us for trifles? If it be but a tale that is told of Christ, why do we not openly put him out of our company? Why should we glory in his title? But if he be, as he is in very deed, the true way, the very truth, and the very life, why doth all the manner of our living differ so far asunder from the true example of him? If we acknowledge and take Christ for our author, which is very Charity, and neither taught nor gave other thing but charity and peace, then go to, let us not in titles and signs, but in our deeds and living, plainly express him. Let us have in our hearts a fervent desire of peace, that Christ may again know us for his. To this intent the princes, the prelates, and the cities and commonalties should apply their counsels. There hath been hitherto enough spilt of Christian man's blood. We have showed pleasure enough to the enemies of the Christian religion. And if the common people, as they are wont, make any disturbance, let the princes bridle and quail them, which princes ought to be the selfsame thing in the commonweal that the eye is in the body, and the reason in the soul. Again, if the princes make any trouble, it is the part of good prelates by their wisdom and gravity to pacify and assuage such commotion. Or else, at the least, we being satiate with continual wars, let the desire of peace a little move us. The bishop exhorteth us (if ever any bishop did Leo the Tenth doth, which occupieth the room of our peaceable Solomon, for all his [64] desire, all his intent and labour, is for this intent) that they whom one common faith hath coupled together, should be joined in one common concord. He laboureth that the Church of Christ should flourish, not in riches or lordships, but in her own proper virtues. Surely this is a right goodly act, and well beseeming a man descended of such a noble lineage as the Medici: by whose civil prudence the noble city of Florence most freshly flourished in long-continued peace; whose house of Medici hath been a help unto all good letters. Leo himself, having

always a sober and a gentle wit, giving himself from his tender youth to good letters of humanity, was ever brought up, as it were, in the lap of the Muses, among men most highly learned. He so faultless led his life, that even in the city of Rome, where is most liberty of vice, was of him no evil rumour, and so governing himself came to the dignity to be bishop there, which dignity he never coveted, but was chosen thereto when he least thought thereon, by the provision of God to help to redress things in great decay by long wars. Let Julius the bishop have his glory of war, victories, and of his great triumphs, the which how evil they beseem a Christian bishop, it is not for such a one as I am to declare. I will this say, his glory, whatsoever it be, was mixed with the great destruction and grievous sorrow of many a creature. But by peace restored now to the world, Leo shall get more true [65] glory than Julius won by so many wars that he either boldly begun, or prosperously fought and achieved.

But they that had liefer hear of proverbs, than either of peace or of war, will think that I have tarried longer about this digression than is meet for the declaration of a proverb.

**FINIS**

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