

Chapter 12 outline

1. The 'natural seeds' of religion (§§1-11)
 - a. Religion unique to human beings. (§1) Three things unique to humans that seem relevant. (1) curiosity about causes (§2), (2) in particular, search for the beginnings of things (§3), people want to find *all* the causes (other animals don't care so long as they are comfortable), so people are prone to false causal beliefs, attributing causes to their "fancy" or accepting authority uncritically (§4).
 - b. Anxiety about the future (§5) coupled with the felt need to find causes leads people to believe in invisible causes (when they can't find the real ones) (§6). NB: this explanation only applies to religion of the Gentiles. Christian belief explained by a more rational line of thought, leading to God as the first cause of the universe (§6). *Comment: that distinction between the religion of the Gentiles and Christianity looks fishy.*
 - c. Four causes of religious belief (see §§11): (1) Opinion of ghosts: confuse mental images with real things, should say God is incomprehensible (§7). (2) Ignorance of second causes: leads to superstition, false generalizations: e.g. no Scipio has lost a battle in Africa (§8). (3) Devotion/worship of what we fear: see earlier analysis of honor and power (§9). Belief in omens (§10).
2. Development of different religions: the "natural seed of *religion* ... hath grown up into ceremonies so different that those which are used by one man are for the most part ridiculous to another" (§11).
 - a. Two branches: religion of Gentiles (the seeds nourished "according to their own invention", "part of human politics") and Abraham-Moses-Jesus ("by

God's commandment and direction", "divine politics"). Both develop religion for political purposes, "to make those men that relied on them the more apt to obedience, laws, peace, charity, and civil society." (§12)

- b. How the religion of Gentiles illustrates Hobbes's claim that there are four causes of religious belief. (1) Invisible powers: examples of things the Gentiles thought were inhabited by spirits (§§13-16). (2) Ignorance of causes: attribute events to the gods (§17). (3) Worship: Gentiles anthropomorphize their gods, stories describe them as doing things powerful people would do ("fraud, theft, adultery, sodomy, and any vice that may be taken for an effect of power, or cause of pleasure, and all such vices as amongst men are taken to be against law, rather than against honor.") (§18). (4) Omens: oracle at Delphi, e.g. Note one of the "foretelling events" is "the aspect of the stars at their nativity" (§19).
 - c. How the Gentiles used religion for political purposes. (1-2) Convinced subjects the laws come from a supernatural source. (3) Ceremonies designed to appease the gods to bring about desired effects on earth, e.g. success in war, avoiding sickness, earthquakes. When misfortune strikes, blame it on inadequate compliance with rules of worship. (§20) It worked! Roman example: tolerate any religion that would support the state. (§21)
3. Changes in religion, the "resolution" of religious belief, going back down from the culturally distinctive religious practices to the original "seeds" of religion that "can never so be abolished out of human nature": belief in a deity and powers invisible. (§23).
 - a. Happens when religious authorities lose marks of divine favor (§24). (1) Lost reputation for wisdom, e.g. asserting contradictions (§25). (2) Lost reputation for sincerity, e.g. hypocrisy, scandals (§26). (3) Lost reputation of love: corruption, personal gain (§27). (4) Inability to perform miracles or issue prophecies, things that could only be done with supernatural assistance (§28).
 - b. Examples. Israelites worshiped the golden calf, Baal when memories of leaders' miracles lapsed (§29). Corruption in Samuel's sons; Israelites ask

for a human king, ending God's first kingdom on earth (¶30). Growth of christianity in the Roman empire due to corruption of Gentile priests, Protestant reformation due to corruption in Catholic church (¶31). Self-serving nature of Catholic doctrines: only make sense as props to the Pope's power (¶32).

- c. The kicker: "so that I may attribute all changes of religion in the world to one and the same cause, and that is, unpleasing priests, and those not only among the Catholics, but even in that Church that hath presumed most of reformation." (¶32) Is that about the Anglican Church (i.e. the Church of England) or the Presbyterians? See Curley's note 20.

