

quiet the greed of the electors, some compensation with regard to the affairs and liberties of the empire should be made to them. The modern king and future emperor should agree and should promise an annual aid to the Holy Land, as long as it will be in need of it, of a great number of fighting men, whom he will send to the seaports at his own expense, sufficiently armed and prepared. . . .

Just as, moreover, it is necessary and expedient that the harmonious and united temporal resources of the whole commonwealth of Catholics should be brought together for so great a recovery and preservation, so it will be necessary, by the devout prayers of the universal Church, to seek and obtain this great blessing of the recovery and maintenance of so great a peace, from Him from whom all good proceeds, who is God and the Lord of armies, who alone is the cause of peace and victory. For if the leaders of warfare and the fighting men entrusted to them should be confident in their own strength, and should think that this strength suffices to obtain and keep so great a victory, and to resist the evil spirits fighting against them, with their persuasions and temptations . . . it will not be possible in this way to recover and keep the Holy Land. For this reason, it seems expedient that the council should seek to reform and improve the condition of the Church Universal, so that the prelates both greater and lesser may abstain from that which is forbidden by the holy fathers; that they may guard their precepts, commandments, and counsels, as they are understood, according to the saying of the prophet, "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it." And then, when the true peace of the heart has been attained, all Catholic prelates, with all the clergy and people committed to their care, should form one spiritual commonwealth, in order to approach what the apostle says, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." . . .

If, indeed, it will seem good to strengthen the bonds of universal peace in the manner prescribed, it should be resolved, by agreement of the council of prelates and princes, that all prelates, of whatever rank, and also the secular knights in their own ranks, will firmly swear that they will observe, with all their strength, the covenants of this peace with its penalties, and that they will take care that it is observed, in every way in which they can. Thus anyone who will scorn or neglect to fulfil this oath, because of this, by the apostolic authority and that of the sacred council, will *ipso facto* incur sentence of major excommunication. Thus anyone who assails this covenant of peace in the future will be strongly attacked by all those knights of the spiritual and temporal army, with all their strength, so that he will not be able to resist. . . .

Then for the joy that she had and the sweetness that she felt in the conversation of our Lord, she was on the point of falling off her ass, for she could not bear the sweetness and grace that God wrought in her soul. Then two German pilgrims went up to her and kept her from falling—one of them was a priest, and he put spices in her mouth to comfort her, thinking she was ill. And so they helped her onwards to Jerusalem, and when she arrived there she said, 'Sirs, I beg you, don't be annoyed though I weep bitterly in this holy place where our Lord Jesus Christ lived and died.'

Then they went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem,⁴ and they were let in on the one day at evensong time, and remained until evensong time on the next day.⁵ Then the friars lifted up a cross and led the pilgrims about from one place to another where our Lord had suffered his pains and his Passion, every man and woman carrying a wax candle in one hand.⁶ And the friars always, as they went about, told them what our Lord suffered in every place. And this creature wept and sobbed as plenteously as though she had seen our Lord with her bodily eyes suffering his Passion at that time. Before her in her soul she saw him in truth by contemplation, and that caused her to have compassion. And when they came up on to the Mount of Calvary, she fell down because she could not stand or kneel, but writhed and wrestled with her body, spreading her arms out wide, and cried with a loud voice as though her heart would have burst apart, for in the city of her soul she saw truly and freshly how our Lord was crucified. Before her face she heard and saw in her spiritual sight the mourning of our Lady, of St John and Mary Magdalene, and of many others that loved our Lord.⁷

And she had such great compassion and such great pain to see our Lord's pain, that she could not keep herself from crying and roaring though she should have died for it. And this was the first crying that she ever cried in any contemplation.⁸ And this kind of crying lasted for many years after this time, despite anything that anyone might do, and she suffered much contempt and much reproof for it. The crying was so loud and so amazing that it astounded people, unless they had heard it before, or else knew the reason for the cryings. And she had them so often that they made her very weak in her bodily strength, and specially if she heard of our Lord's Passion.⁹

And sometimes, when she saw the crucifix, or if she saw a man had a wound, or a beast, whichever it were, or if a man beat a child before her or hit a horse or other beast with a whip, if she saw or heard it, she thought she saw our Lord being beaten or wounded, just as she saw it in

MONASTIC DECADENCE

exposé of what he saw as the hypocritical luxury and decadence of older Benedictine institutions. The chief target of Bernard's attack was the great monastery of Cluny, whose "black monks" (so-called from the color of their robes) were the wealthiest and most venerated in all of Christendom. The present selection demonstrates the force and vigor of Bernard's writing even as it presents a picture—albeit a deliberately exaggerated one—of twelfth century monastic life.

AGAINST SUPERFLUITY

VII. 16 It is said, and quite rightly, that the Cluniac way of life was instituted by holy Fathers; anxious that more might find salvation through it, they tempered the Rule to the weak without weakening the Rule. Far be it from me to believe that they recommended or allowed such an array of vanities or superfluities as I see in many religious houses. I wonder indeed how such intemperance in food and drink, in clothing and bedding, in horses and buildings can implant itself among monks. And it is the houses that pursue this course with thoroughgoing zeal, with full-blown lavishness, that are reputed the most pious and the most observant. They go so far as to count frugality avarice, and sobriety austerity, while silence is reputed gloom. Conversely, slackness is called discretion, extravagance liberality, chattering becomes affability, guffawing cheerfulness, soft clothing and rich caparisons are the requirements of simple decency, luxurious bedding is a matter of hygiene, and lavishing these things on one another goes by the name of charity. By such charity is charity destroyed, and this discretion mocks the very word. It is a cruel mercy that kills the soul while cherishing the body. And what sort of charity is it that cares for the flesh and neglects the spirit? What kind of discretion that gives all to the body and nothing to the soul? What kind of mercy that restores the servant and destroys the mistress? Let no one who has shown that sort of mercy hope to obtain the mercy promised in the Gospel by him who is the truth: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.' On the contrary, he can expect the sure and certain

Mt. 5:7

MONASTIC DECADENCE

IX. 19 Who would have dreamed, in the far beginnings of the monastic order, that monks would have slid into such slackness? What a way we have come from the monks who lived in Anthony's day! When one of them paid on occasion a brotherly call on another, both were so avid for the spiritual nourishment they gained from the encounter that they forgot their physical hunger and would commonly pass the whole day with empty stomachs but with minds replete. And this was the right order of precedence—to give priority to what is nobler in man's make-up; this was real discretion—making greater provision for the more important part; this indeed true charity—to tend with loving care the souls for love of whom Christ died.

As for us, when we come together, to use the Apostle's words, it is not to eat the Lord's supper. There is none who asks for heavenly bread and none who offers it. Never a word about Scripture or salvation. Flippancy, laughter and words on the wind are all we hear. At table our ears are as full of gossip as our mouths of festive fare, and all intent on the former we quite forget to restrain our appetite.

1 Cor. 11:20

ON MEALS

20 Meanwhile course after course is brought in. To offset the lack of meat—the only abstinence—the laden fish dishes are doubled. The first selection may have been more than enough for you, but you have only to start on the second to think you have never tasted fish before. Such are the skill and art with which the cooks prepare it all that one can down four or five courses without the first spoiling one's enjoyment of the last, or fullness blunting the appetite. Tickle the palate with unaccustomed seasonings and the familiar start to pall, but exotic relishes will restore it even to its preprandial sharpness; and since variety takes away the sense of surfeit, one is not aware that one's stomach is overburdened. Foodstuffs in their pure and unadulterated state have no appeal, so we mix ingredients pell-mell, scorning the natural nutriments God gave us,

and use outlandish savours to stimulate our appetite. That way we can eat far more than we need and still enjoy it.

To give but one example: who could itemize all the ways in which eggs are maltreated? Or describe the pains that are taken to toss them and turn them, soften and harden them, botch them and scotch them, and finally serve them up fried, baked and stuffed by turns, in conjunction with other foods or on their own? What is the purpose of all this unless it be to titillate a jaded palate? Attention is also lavished on the outward appearance of a dish, which must please the eye as much as it gratifies the taste buds, for though a belching stomach may announce that it has had enough, curiosity is never sated. Poor stomach! the eyes feast on colour, the palate on flavour, yet the wretched stomach, indifferent to both but forced to accept the lot, is more often oppressed than refreshed as a result.

ON DRINK

- 21 What can I say about the drinking of water when even watering one's wine is inadmissible? Naturally all of us, as monks, suffer from a weak stomach, which is why we pay good heed to Paul's advice to use a little wine. It is just that the word *little* gets overlooked, I can't think why. And if only we were content with drinking it plain, albeit undiluted. There are things it is embarrassing to say, though it should be more embarrassing still to do them. If hearing about them brings a blush, it will cost you none to put them right. The fact is that three or four times during the same meal you might see a half-filled cup brought in, so that different wines may be not drunk or drained so much as carried to the nose and lips. The expert palate is quick to discriminate between them and pick out the most potent. And what of the monasteries—and there are said to be some—which regularly serve spiced and honeyed wine in the refectory on major feasts? We are surely not going to say that this is done to nurse weak stomachs? The only reason for it that I can see is to allow deeper drinking, or keener pleasure. But once the wine is flowing through the veins and the

1 Tim. 5:23

whole head is throbbing with it, what else can they do when they get up from table but go and sleep it off? And if you force a monk to get up for vigils before he has digested, you will set him groaning rather than intoning. Having got to bed, it's not the sin of drunkenness they regret if questioned, but not being able to face their food.

*ON THOSE WHO TAKE THEIR EASE IN THE
INFIRMARY WITHOUT BEING ILL*

- 22 I have heard a laughable story—laughable, that is, if it is true—from a number of people who claim to be certain of the facts, and I see no reason not to repeat it here. I am told that healthy and strong young men are opting out of the common life and taking up quarters in the infirmary without being in any way infirm; and this to enjoy the meat that the Rule in its wisdom allows to the genuinely weak and ailing in order to build up their strength.¹ In this case, of course, the purpose is not to restore a body weakened by illness but to satisfy the wanton whims of the flesh.

I ask you, is it a sensible strategy, when the flashing spears of a furious enemy are all about you and their darts are flying on every side, to throw down your arms as though the war were already over and won, and either embark on a protracted lunch or snuggle down unarmed in a soft bed? Is this not cowardice, my brave warriors? While your comrades mill around in gore and carnage, you are enjoying the finest fare or catching up on your morning sleep. Others keep watch round the clock, anxious to redeem the time because the days are evil, while you sleep the long nights through and pass your days in idle chatter. Are you perhaps crying 'Peace', when there is no peace? How can you feel no shame at the fierce reproach in the Apostle's words: 'You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood'? Can you not even rouse yourselves at the thunder of his fearful threat: 'When people say, "There is peace and security", then sudden destruction will come upon them as travail comes upon a woman with child, and there will be no escape.'

Eph. 5:16

Ez. 13:10

Heb. 12:4

1 Thess. 5:3

RENÉ DESCARTES

A Method for Thinking Clearly and Distinctly

Commonly viewed as the father of early modern philosophy, René Descartes (1596–1650) was born in France at La Haye (now Descartes) near the city of Tours and educated at the Jesuit college of La Flèche in the usual curriculum of humanities and Aristotelian philosophy. At the age of nineteen, he left the college for the University of Poitiers, where he studied law and graduated in 1616. Rather than pursue a legal career, Descartes enrolled as a soldier and served in the Netherlands, Bohemia, and Hungary. Leaving the army in 1621, he gave himself over to the study of science and philosophy, and spent the rest of his life mostly in the Netherlands (1628–49), where he worked in seclusion. During this period, Descartes supported himself through his own or his family's means and published his most important works, including his *Discourse on Method* (1637), the *Meditations* (1641), the *Principles of Philosophy* (1644), and the *Passions of the Soul* (1649). At the same time, he corresponded widely with other philosophers across Europe. In late 1649 he accepted an invitation to tutor Queen Christina of Sweden in philosophy. His health then rapidly deteriorated, and he died in Stockholm of pneumonia in early 1650, at the age of fifty-three.

Although indebted in some respects to Aristotelian philosophy, Descartes's major goal was to rebuild the system of philosophy from the ground up. Of special importance to his enterprise was the questioning of all preconceived notions with exception of the self and God, and his adoption of the mathematical model in the hope of achieving conclusions that were not only probable, but certain. Thus, Descartes's epistemological method and metaphysics play a central role in his system, and influence his views of natural and moral philosophy. Descartes was not only a philosopher, but a figure of importance in the field of experimental science. Indeed, Descartes conducted research in the fields of optics, geometry, astronomy, and physiology. On account of these accomplishments, Descartes is regarded as a leading philosophical figure of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries whose thought marks a turning point in the process of discarding the fundamental

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A METHOD FOR THINKING CLEARLY AND DISTINCTLY

assumptions of traditional Aristotelian philosophy in favor of a new, recognizably modern, philosophical system.

Descartes's most famous work is his Discourse on Method, in which he announced his philosophical approach. Published in French in 1637, this piece was his first published work and was designed as a preface to three of Descartes's essays, the Dioptrics, Meteors and Geometry. In his Discourse, Descartes did not attempt to explain his scientific method in full, and his reluctance to do so can partly be explained by Galileo's fate only three years earlier. Nor did the investigative method described in the Discourse have much to do with his explanation of results as contained in those three essays. Furthermore, Descartes included other kinds of material, such as matters of physiology, that seem to have been meant to whet his readers' appetites for future publications. Despite these qualifications, the Discourse soon seized the attention of the learned world and became the object of controversy. This is hardly surprising, in view of the work's ambitious attempt to recast the foundations for scientific knowledge. In the course of some fifty years, Cartesianism itself became a new orthodoxy, even in the most traditional universities, and significantly influenced the development of new scientific theories.

In the present selection, taken from the second section of the Discourse, Descartes gave the main rules of his method. He recounted his decision to devise an epistemological method for himself because of his experience of the diversity of opinions and customs in the world. Although he wanted to use a method with the advantages of logic, geometrical analysis, and algebra, he did not want their disadvantages; he thus presented his methodological rules and stressed his dependence in philosophy on the method followed by geometers and mathematicians.

[F]rom the time I was in college I learned that there is nothing one could imagine which is so strange and incredible that it was not said by some philosopher; and since that time, I have recognized through my travels that all those whose views are different from our own are not necessarily, for that reason, barbarians or savages, but that many of them use their reason either as much as or even more than we do. I also considered how the same person, with the same mind, who was brought up from infancy either among the French or the Germans, becomes different from what they would have been if they had always lived among the Chinese or among cannibals, and how, even in our clothes fashions, the very thing that we liked ten years ago, and that we may like again within the next ten years, appears extravagant and ridiculous to us today. Thus our convictions result from custom and example very

much more than from any knowledge that is certain. However, a majority of votes has no validity as a proof for truths that are a little difficult to discover, because it is much more likely that such truths will be discovered by an individual rather than a whole people. Thus, I was unable to choose someone whose views seemed to me to be preferable to those of others, and I found myself forced to take on the task of guiding myself.

But, like someone who walks alone in the dark, I decided to go slowly and to be so careful about everything that, even if I made very little progress, I would at least prevent myself from falling. I did not even wish to begin rejecting completely any of the views that may have slipped among my beliefs previously without having been introduced there by reason, until I had first taken enough time to plan the project that I was undertaking and to search for the correct method for acquiring knowledge of all the things that my mind would be capable of knowing.

When I was younger, I had studied a little logic as part of philosophy and, in mathematics, I had studied geometrical analysis and algebra—three arts or sciences that seemed as if they ought to contribute something to my project. But when I studied them I noticed that, in the case of logic, its syllogisms and most of its other rules are more useful for explaining to someone else what one already knows or even, in the Lullian art, for speaking uncritically about things that one does not know, than for learning them. But even if logic includes many rules that are very true and very good, there are so many others mixed in with them which are either harmful or superfluous that it is almost as difficult to separate them as to extract a Diana or Minerva from a block of marble that is not even roughly hewn. As regards the analysis of the ancients or the algebra of the moderns, apart from the fact that they apply only to very abstract questions which seem to have no use, the former is always so tied to the discussion of shapes that it cannot exercise the understanding without greatly tiring the imagination; and in the latter, one is so constrained by certain rules and symbols that it has become a confused and obscure art that hinders the mind, rather than a science that assists it. That is why I thought I ought to look for another method which would include the benefits of these three, but would be free from their defects. And since a proliferation of laws often provides an excuse for vice, because a state is governed much better when it has only very few laws that are observed very strictly, I believed that, instead of the multiplicity of rules that comprise logic, I would have enough in the following four, as long as I made a firm and steadfast resolution never to fail to observe them.