Dialogue on the Foundations of the Modern

1. “The century after 1600 has been designated by many names: the age of power, the age of expansion, the age of revolution. The list goes on; and taken separately, each of these designations points out some important trend or “truth” about the seventeenth century as reflected in one of its various facets. Taken together, however, these names suggest a greater theme, one which transcends each particular view and brings them all into coherent relationship. This theme, which we may call the urge towards absolutism, concerns the accelerated drive by strong-willed and powerful men to achieve integral power and full control over society in its political, economic, and general cultural aspects.” Gentrain Syllabus
2. “Second law: that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far forth as for peace and defense of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself. For as long as every man holdeth this right, of doing anything he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of war. But if other men will not lay down their right, as well as he, then there is no reason for anyone to divest himself of his: for that were to expose himself to prey, which no man is bound to, rather than to dispose himself to peace… The mutual transferring of right is that which men call contract.” Hobbes Chapter 14
3. Man is only a reed, the weakest in nature; but he is a thinking reed. There is no need for the whole universe to take up arms to crush him: a vapor, a drop of water is enough to kill him. But even if the universe were to crush him, man would still be nobler than his slayer, because he knows that he is dying and the advantage the universe has over him. The universe knows nothing of this.  Pascal
4. I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect, has intended us to forgo their use. (Galileo)