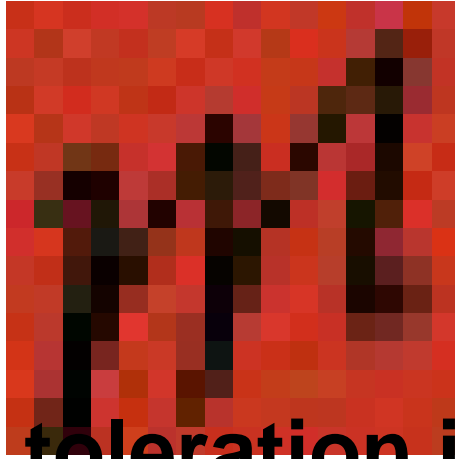


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XXV.9 On toleration in point of religion

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXV. On laws in their relation with the establishment of religion and its external policy -

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XXV.9 On toleration in point of religion

We are being political and not theological here, and even for theologians there is a big difference between tolerating a religion and approving of it.

When the laws of a state have thought it best to allow multiple religions, they must also oblige them to tolerate each other. It is a principle that every religion which is repressed itself becomes repressive : for as soon as it can by some happenstance come out from under oppression, it attacks the religion which has repressed it, not as a religion but as a tyranny.

Therefore the laws must require of these various religions not only that they not disturb the state, but also that they not disturb each other. A citizen does not satisfy the laws by being content not to stir up the body of the state ; he must also avoid disturbing any citizen at all.