ETHICS AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

We considered in our last discourse the gradual breakdown of theological sanctions and authority which marks the transition from mediaeval to modern culture: the demand for the recognition of man's right to free investigation, the vindication of the importance of human nature in its present environment, in a word, the spirit of secularism. I used the term secularism rather than the term worldliness, which a theologian might well have employed in describing this movement in civilization; for the expression worldliness does more than describe; it also piously condemns.

And yet there is a decided worldliness in the Renaissance: an easy contentment with the immediate satisfactions of sense, an alleged practical spirit bent on ambition and achievement here and now, a neglect of conscience and indeed an impatience with any appeal to sovereign principle. Laws are as you make them, we are told; duty and obligation are referred to power. Ought I to do this or that, means, must I do it, that is, is there any one who can make me do it? In place of the mediaeval burden of sin weighing down a humbly penitent soul, here is man conscious of long missed opportunities, lusts and ambitions ungratified, unspent powers. Must he be hampered by so many scruples, must he carry these other more obvious burdens, and can't he find other shoulders on which he can quite safely unload or else shake them off altogether? In a word, it is an age of dissolution of standards and an uprising of impulse, an age sensual, scep-
tical, sardonic: the age of Boccaccio, of Rabelais, of Montaigne, of Machiavelli. But, in all fairness, it is likewise an age of a deliberate demand for a new secular basis of law, for a ground of political and moral obligation to replace the theological authority which had been eclipsed: a demand for the first principles of social order, resting not on supernatural fiat but on the knowledge of the essential nature of man. Confidence in the reality of these principles inspires the researches and speculations of Jean Bodin and Hugo Grotius; an absorbing interest in the cause of social order dictates also the thought of Thomas Hobbes. These men differ in their views of human nature and in their social-ethical conclusions, but they all agree in perceiving the close relation of social culture and moral character: the moral problem arises in man's dealing with other men. What is this problem essentially and in detail, and what is its adequate solution?

Here, and also in the subsequent course of modern ethical thought, progress in definition of fundamental principles has resulted from the shock of radical doctrine and the vigorous critical reaction. This is, of course, a commonplace of the history of philosophy. The Sophist declares that the human mind is pursuing will o’ the wisps and that there is no real knowledge to be had: Socrates' vigorous reply to this anarchy inaugurates the classic period of Greek philosophy. David Hume's empiricism, upsetting the basic scientific confidence in the realm of causation and the uniformity of nature, rouses Kant from his dogmatic slumber and initiates the great modern period of Critical philosophy. Even so, modern social-political theory was stirred to action by Machiavelli's Prince, and modern critical ethics by Hobbes' Leviathan. Some of these sharp stimuli and as sharp and energetic reactions I should like to consider with you.
Observe the state of affairs in Italy during the Renaissance. The greater Italian cities had risen to prosperity, wealth, and culture. Venice, Genoa, Milan were centers of trade, rich, proud, and intensely political. Florence was a second Athens of intellectual and artistic culture. But for all her wealth and pride and glory, Italy lacked security. The Italian cities were the prey of foreign invaders, the prey also of the mercenaries that were their supposed protectors, and forever engaged in various strife, of church against state, city against city, Italian versus foreigner. How was peace and security to be attained in Italy? Long years of diplomatic service had not strengthened the rather precarious moral fibre of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), but they had sharpened his keen intellect and made him an astute if somewhat unscrupulous man of the world.

What does Italy need to become united and safe? A strong man equal to any emergency. Such a strong man Machiavelli found in Cesare Borgia, the son of the Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, better known, though not known as any better, by the name of Pope Alexander the Sixth. Machiavelli’s attitude towards Cesare Borgia is an epitome of his social philosophy. He does not himself share Borgia’s tyrannical purposes, nor does he approve of his unscrupulous and often unspeakable methods, but he is swept away by the Duke’s consummate political sagacity, his genius for strategy, tactics, and execution. The main question for Machiavelli is not, what kind of government is best or most righteous, but rather this, how can one govern most effectively, how grow in power most assuredly and with least risk? His book, *The Prince*, is a manual for rulers. Effective sagacious government is what he hoped for his native Florence, and he dedicated his book to Lorenzo dei Medici, duke of Urbino, from whom he expected much.
Before a state can be secure it must be well ruled. To rule a state well, understanding of human nature is required, and no illusions about men. Men, are, generally speaking, of only negative worth: ungrateful, unreliable, untruthful, ungenerous, and unheroic. This is a fivefold moral lack of man; the ruler must turn it all to his profit. The ruler's virtue is, by relying on men's vices, to achieve and maintain mastery over them. This mastery, to be lasting, must rest on ever-expanding power; for growth is as essential to states as to individuals, and a state which does not extend its boundaries stagnates and decays within them. Do not, therefore, shun or seek to evade war: on the contrary, pick out your enemy, anticipate him, strike first. But to strike successfully, you must have soldiers for whom defeat on the battlefield would be a disaster at home, that is to say, native troops, not mercenaries. Money cannot get you good soldiers, but with good soldiers you can get money. This is, then, the most important matter: raise your subjects into a good standing army. The state's foundations are two, good laws and good arms: but if your army is weak, your laws are of no avail; so Machiavelli neglects the discussion of good laws and concerns himself with the main chance, with the army that is to make a state strong and stable.

The business of the prince is war. To preserve his power, he must outwit his rivals, he must strengthen his hold on his own subjects, and this again requires knowledge of the frailties of human nature and how they can be exploited to one's own advantage. It is better to be feared than to be loved, but it is still better to pretend to love while actually inspiring fear. Having a reputation for keeping one's word is a fine thing; it may put your enemy off his guard, and by all means, if it suits your convenience, observe your treaties and promises. But do not let any sentimental honor hamper your
cause: a contract is to be kept or broken depending upon which side your advantage lies. Perhaps you say that this is ruinous to morality and justice and fair play? Nay, Machiavelli would answer, many a state has been ruined by such superstitions about justice and honor. "Where the safety of one's country is at stake there must be no consideration of what is just or unjust, merciful or cruel, glorious or shameful; on the contrary, everything must be disregarded except that course which will save her life and maintain her independence."

Here, then, is a frank espousal of a principle which even today finds its champions in low places and in high. Necessity knows no law, war is war, politics is politics. But even those who would denounce any such ruthless nationalism may well be living their lives on a similar principle: for instance, that business is business. Thus early in modern thought was the challenge thrown to morality which we have not yet met: the challenge that there are no basic principles of right and wrong which interest or emergency may not readily brush aside. Against this challenge the best conscience of Europe and America is a standing but still ineffective reply: that only upon respect for justice can any stable human structure be built, whether individual or social; that it is not cunning or power but righteousness which exalts a nation.

Machiavelli's nationalism is a modern trait which the last four centuries have served only to accentuate. His emphasis on conflict and aggressiveness, his historical method, his striking portrayal of the actual policy of tyrants and of tyrannous nations: all this was a profit; men had a glance into hell and proceeded to draw a moral, but have not drawn it far enough. He dissociated public from private morality, and limited public morality within state-boundaries. His ethics and politics thus strangely combine distinctively mod-
ern ideas with barbaric and indeed savage ideals of clan-morality. If the truth be told, for all our fine professions, our modern practice in many ways would still justify a Machiavellian description. But even in the sixteenth century men perceived the need of different ideals. Bodin and Grotius represent a twofold effort to abandon the worship of mere overmastering power and to seek, beyond cunning or compulsion, for the principles of right and law which men and nations must recognize and on which they can rely in peace and in war.

The most ambitious treatise on politics in almost a thousand years after Aristotle, Bodin's famous *Republic* (1576) discloses a spirit erudite but nowise servile to authority, combining moral severity with a perception of the empirical and environmental basis of morals and a recognition of the necessity of historical method in politics which anticipate Montesquieu. He demands objectivity and stability of principles, but just on that account is critical of tradition no matter how firmly established.

Bodin agrees with Aristotle in regarding morals and politics as complementary. The end of society is the moral perfection of its members, and its fruition their lasting welfare. The state is not an external bond that links essentially discrete individuals; it normally finds its basis in the family, itself the most normal and indispensable of human institutions. Families are to the state as organs to the body: if these are well-ordered and well-related, the body politic fares well. Accordingly Bodin resists vigorously Plato's communism and the Platonic tendency to depreciate intermediate institutions between the individual and the state. Beginning with his recognition of the family as the foundation of all political society, Bodin emphasizes the importance of community associations, political, economic, and social. The state is a
system of systems, the community organizations serving as knots that lend strength to the political texture.

Politics thus becomes, in Bodin's hands, social science in the fullest sense of the term. Sexual morality and domestic relations are to his mind no mere individual concern; but, while on the one hand his demands in this respect disclose almost Puritanical severity, his very concern for domestic ills and the social catastrophes which they may portend makes him an advocate of easier divorce. When the family bond has actually been torn, recognize the fact openly; do not make the individual the helpless victim of an institution, lest you plunge him into more desperate extremes. This same respect for human dignity and its rights is shown in Bodin's explicit opposition to slavery or serfdom; yet he would safeguard the individual, and thus society, from the dangers of the emancipation which he demands for him. Wholesale loosing of bonds may only serve to release a mob of untrained and unmanageable vagabonds: before emancipating landless men, Bodin advises, teach them some handicraft. His recognition that labor should not be oppressed demands motivation: why should it not be oppressed and exploited? In thus raising the question of the rights of man, Bodin imposes the modern problem of methodology in jurisprudence and ethics alike, but himself is not very clear about his ultimate basis or guiding principle. Advocating tyrannicide while expressing horror at the very idea of regicide, Bodin complicates interpretation, since for the assassin the prince is always a tyrant. This very confusion, however, suggests Bodin's double aim, well-expressed by Baudrillart: "to blend in one word the fidelity of the subject and the rights of the citizen." A similar balancing of judgment is manifest in his distinction between sovereignty and government, particularly in his espousal of popular sovereignty combined with his op-
position to popular government, and in his entire treatment of revolutions, with his proposed remedy for them: make reforms, but always very gradually! He respects human character, but it is to him nothing occult—quite sublunar in fact: he observes its dependence on climate and on environment generally. He also calls attention to the transformation which nurture and culture have produced in the Germanic nature. He respects law, but is not awed by its abstract sanctity. He would hold kings and princes to their word and reminds them that God himself is bound by his promises; laws, however, are sacred because essential to the people's welfare; that is their ultimate justification and the basis of their sanction. It is to the interest of the people to have the law prevail. Here he anticipates Bentham and the modern utilitarians.

The demand of the modern spirit for emancipation of moral-political principles from theological vassalage was intensified in the case of Hugo Grotius by calamitous experience individual and national, directly due to sectarian fanaticism. Incredibly precocious alike in erudition and intellectual power, his early fame and the important posts with which he was entrusted in his native Holland involved him, while still a young man, in the modern struggle of ideas. At the University of Leyden a dispute arose between two professors of theology, Arminius and Gomarus, over the question of divine grace: is man in any sense an active contributor to his own salvation? The revival of this Augustinian discussion, which in the course of the century was to find a Catholic-Jansenist version in France and a classical record in Pascal's Provinciales, assumed in the Netherlands the form of a struggle between rigid and even fanatical popular Calvinism and the more enlightened and liberal thought of the day which the Arminian party championed. The dispute
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passed beyond the frame of theological argument, or rather the theological dispute served to accentuate intellectual and social-political animosities which flamed up, confusing issues and principles, and giving free rein to fanaticism and demagoguery. Maurice of Nassau's exploitation of the struggle to advance his own personal ambitions, the shameful trial and execution of the liberal leader Oldenbarneveld, the imprisonment of Grotius and his later expatriation were all calamities due to unrestrained sectarianism. Thus moved by temperament, training, and personal experiences alike, Grotius, learned, tolerant, peace-loving, sought a basis of law whose essential validity all men could be brought to recognize and, respecting it, live intelligently and in peace.

His masterpiece, *De jure belli et pacis*, written in Paris after his escape from the Louvenstein prison and dedicated to Louis XIII, develops ideas suggested in some of his earlier writings and is epoch-making in the history of international law. For the foundation of his system of jurisprudence, the principles which theology supplies seem to him inadequate, for theology rests explicitly on special divine revelation, and, while Grotius nowise questions the truth or authority of divine revelation, he points out that the laws which God has willed to reveal to a certain chosen people are obviously not binding on other peoples, since "a law cannot oblige those to whom it has not been given." Accordingly the Mosaic law is not authoritative for Gentiles, and even the laws of the Christian dispensation are imperative only for those who have adequately recognized them. Whether Grotius would be prepared to say that the Christian law should, and with God's help ultimately shall be universally recognized and thus valid for all men, cannot be affirmed. His broadly Christian loyalty is as real as his resistance to sectarian bias, and between the two motives he is not able to
articulate with explicit clearness a purely secular jurisprudence and ethics. But his resolution to find non-sectarian universally valid law is indubitable.

In distinction from the "voluntary divine law" and from the "voluntary human law" which is even more obviously of limited application and warrant, Grotius maintains that there is a "natural law," grounded in the essential character of men wherever found and thus universally authoritative. This natural law, Grotius agrees with Aristotle, rests in the essentially social nature of man. Man's social sense is more than mere animal gregariousness. Our reason transforms what otherwise would have remained mere gregarious impulse into a distinctive sense of law, of right and obligation. Man's conviction of the "duty to respect another's property, to return that which, without belonging to him, is in his possession, and whatever profit he may have gained from it, the obligation to fulfil his promises, to repair all damage caused through his fault, and the distribution of merited punishment among men:" all these are manifestations of the same social principle which does not derive from any special convention or promulgation human or divine, but rests on the very constitution of human nature.

The reason why God sanctions this law is because itself is the expression of sound universal reason. What thus accords with the demands of our essentially social nature is for Grotius morally necessary and has proper juridical warrant. It has, but it does not depend on, divine sanction. Not even God's will can alter it, any more than God can will that twice two be other than four.

Grotius distinguishes two sorts of proof of the system of law. The first, more abstract, proceeds _a priori_ from "the necessary harmony or disagreement of a thing with the rational and social nature of man;" the other, more popular,
is a posteriori, concluding the probable validity of a law from its general acceptance by all nations or by the most civilized. He thus seeks to combine the more popular reliance of the consensus gentium with a stricter method of rationalism.

Grotius has been criticized for his insufficient recognition of the organic character of the state, of which the individuals are but members and in which they find their fulfilment. He is characteristically concerned with the individuals and, while recognizing their essentially social nature, yet thinks of society or of the state as an assembly, a sum of individuals rather than as an organic, unitary system. Perhaps we have already here the beginnings of the political radicalism which in the course of the next century was to yield the modern systems of democracy with their exaltation of the individual. Or perhaps in Grotius' mind the political theorist and the jurist have not quite eclipsed the moralist. Assuredly he insists on keeping clear the spirit behind the letter, the moral temper and flavor of a human situation. So he opposes vicarious punishment; in his treatment of the interpretation of promises and treaties, he attacks literalism to defend the spirit and real intent of an assumed obligation; he opposes subterfuges, tacit reservations or any jesuitical trickery, and champions integrity and straightforwardness even in time of war. He is no utopian and faces the actualities of human life which involve men and states in conflict, but his heart is bent on advancing the cause of peace by leading men to recognize, beyond the social and political or sectarian differences which separate and oppose them to each other, their common humanity, and by consistently urging respect for the rights that are each man's by nature.

Both Bodin and Grotius were subject to a radical criticism: however admirable the conceptions of individual obligation and social order which they espoused, these lacked demon-
strative validity. They were ideals commended to our attention, not established as necessary consequences of the facts of nature and human nature. Modern philosophy demanded an integration of ethical theory with physics and metaphysics. Now it was the boast of Thomas Hobbes that he had given social philosophy precisely such a scientific basis. To this most ambitious enterprise in social-ethical philosophy in the seventeenth century let us now turn.

During the years in which Bacon, after his degradation from office in 1621, was living in retirement at Gorhambury, a number of younger men attended him to profit from his philosophical conversation. Among them no one was quicker to catch an idea accurately or keener to perceive its drift than Thomas Hobbes. But though Hobbes worked in the light of Bacon's empiricism, his own mind preferred deduction and demonstration to inductive methods. Mere description and empirical assembling of data did not meet his requirements; even brutes can have experience of fact, and a parrot may speak the truth, yet not know it. For knowledge is not mere experience, but reasoned, demonstrated conclusion. Observation may suggest our starting points, and our choice of the latter is in a measure contingent and even arbitrary; the merit of our thinking lies in the logical rigor with which we develop the implications of our axioms and in the coherence and character of the resulting scientific-philosophical structure. Not all our doctrines may be initially secured by demonstration; but if valid, they must be deducible from our first principles. So Hobbes' moral-political theory may have been, and very likely was, originally the result of other than metaphysical meditation, but he claimed merit for it as the logical consequence of his mechanistic cosmology.

Hobbes is a mind as self-reliant as rigorous. He is conscious of little dependence and no obligation. Bacon's name
is mentioned but once in his works in connection with some petty experiment, and he was readier to dispute with Descartes than to expound him. For ancient wisdom he has no relish, and scornfully calls the philosophy of the universities Aristotelity. If he had read as many books as other men, he opined, he should have continued still as ignorant as others. Euclid, whose acquaintance he made after the age of forty, taught him the excellence of the geometrical method, and this method he undertook to extend to all philosophy: not only the method but also that which he conceived as its central principle. For as geometry deals with abstract motion, so motions of bodies constitute the whole field of physical science, and likewise motions in head and heart are the ideas and passions of men. So Hobbes' entire account of nature and human nature is to be of a piece logically and cosmologically: the progressive exhibition of the nature and range of motion.

Bacon and others, even while seeking the emancipation of philosophy from theology, treated the latter with reverence. Hobbes dismisses bluntly the theologian's intellectual stock-in-trade. The knowledge of the material world requires rigorous thinking, but not revelation, while the knowledge of the spiritual or "ghostly" world is no knowledge at all. If we are not to indulge in arid speculation, we must needs recognize that the world we can know is always and simply a world of bodies-in-motion. "Incorporeal bodies" is "an absurdity in speech." All existence "is corporeal, that is to say, body; and hath the dimensions of magnitude, namely, length, breadth, and depth: also every part of body, is likewise body, and hath the like dimensions; and consequently every part of the universe, is body, and that which is not body, is no part of the universe: and because the universe is all, that which is no part of it, is nothing; and consequently nowhere." How-
ever we regard Hobbes' professions of religious piety, or his amazing exploitation of Scriptural texts to clinch an argument or confuse an ecclesiastical opponent, there is no mistaking his harsh dismissal of theological speculation in science or philosophy. Priest and bishop are to live a holy life and perform their ministrations as ordered by the sovereign, and beyond that, as far as concern science and philosophy, to hold their peace.

Hobbes thus pursues the course of unwavering materialism. All that exists is matter in motion. Knowledge of the real is causal knowledge, thus knowledge of bodies in motion. Sense-perception itself has its source in cerebro-neural motions stirred by motions of outside bodies. All experience, just as all existence, involves contact and collision of material particles or masses. The heart is but a spring; the nerves, so many strings; the joints, wheels; apparition of light is concussion or motion of the optic nerve: dilation, contraction, requiring change to maintain consciousness, for "to be always sensible of one and the same thing is almost the same as not to be sensible at all of anything."

Emotion is likewise simply motion. The motions in the head which we call ideas do not stop there but proceed to the heart, there either helping or hindering the vital motion, provoking us either to draw near or to retire from the bodies thus perceived. So arise appetite, desire, fear and aversion, the first beginnings of our actions. The action may follow the first appetite, or else, counteracting emotions of fear and desire may keep us deliberating, and then our course of action will depend on which set of motions prevails. The last appetite or motion that sweeps over the others in deliberation is what we call the will, and the resulting action or omission to act is styled voluntary.

This entire process of experience and behavior is mechani-
cal and involves strict necessity. In his long controversy with Bishop Bramhall, Hobbes upholds unqualified determinism. Freedom of the will is a meaningless sophism. The will, as we have just seen, is simply the prevailing motion in deliberation. All admissible freedom is freedom of action: unobstructed motion toward the pursued object. Am I or am I not free to do this or that, means: Can I do it, or am I prevented from doing it? “Liberty is the absence of all the impediments to action that are not contained in the nature and intrinsical quality of the agent.” Whether I will or do not will to do anything, however, is not a matter of spontaneous freedom of indifference but the outcome of the counteraction of motions in the heart. This counteraction is nothing free or arbitrary, but is one with the rest of the mechanics of nature. Whether this particular man will or will not act thus or so on this or that occasion, is a question of exactly the same sort as, for instance, whether this or that candle can or cannot be lighted or, if lighted, will or will not continue to burn indoors or outdoors in the wind, as the case may be.

Our very existence is bound up with the motions essential to our organism, and we necessarily expend our energy in reaching the object of our desire. A hungry man grasps after food just as a board thrown into a swift river is swept along by the current. Despite the rapid flood the board may be stopped by a sufficiently firm barrier; so the man may be diverted from his quest of food by a stronger countermotive. The mechanics of motion obtain throughout and determine the outcome, not only the action but our passion in the action.

Hobbes’ theory of the passions is thus thoroughly naturalistic and anticipates, as it also very likely influenced, Spinoza’s more famous doctrine. Our nature is never at rest, but dynamic: though the motions are not always perceptible, the
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impulse to them, or the small beginnings of motion are always there. This ever set alertness or readiness of man to move or act is what Hobbes calls *endeavor*. When it is directed towards the object causing it, this endeavor is appetite, be it hunger or thirst or, more generally, desire; when it is fromward something, it is aversion. The agitation of the heart, if the desire is after an object, is called the love of that object; or more accurately we desire that which, as it is attained, we love; so contrariwise with aversion and hate. What we neither desire nor hate we are said to contempt, thus resisting active motion toward or from the object in question.

Just as color or sound are the appearance, to sight and hearing, of motions in external objects communicated to our body, so the appearance or sense of these motions in the heart which we have called desire or aversion is delight or trouble of mind, pleasure or displeasure. Be these variously either sensual or mental: lusts, delights or pains, joys or griefs, and modified by the opinion men may have of the likelihood of attaining or avoiding the objects of desire or aversion, or of their consideration of other men in relation to the objects of desire or aversion, and thus manifest as the many varieties of passion, they yet have all the same source and ground in the endeavor and ceaseless agitation of the heart.

Spinoza was to find the actual essence of anything in its endeavor to persist in its own being. Hobbes finds in all men a natural and insatiate self-assertion, a restless desire of power after power, and a desire for the clear recognition of it by others, for honor. The desire and delight of man is to be foremost; this is manifest in the joy of gloriation and the dejection of humility; it determines as it were the flavor of the several passions, and it makes human life a race of boundless rivalry, each man seeking to be ahead of his fel-
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In it: to endeavour, is appetite. To be remiss, is sensuality. To consider them behind, is glory. To consider them before, is humility. To lose ground with looking back, vain glory. To be holden, hatred. To turn back, repentance. To be in breath, hope. To be weary, despair. To endeavour to overtake the next, emulation. To supplant or overthrow, envy. To resolve to break through a stop foreseen, courage. To break through a sudden stop, anger. To break through with ease, magnanimity. To lose ground by little hindrances, pusillanimity. To fall on the sudden, is disposition to weep. To see another fall, is disposition to laugh. To see one outgone whom we would not, is pity. To see one out-go whom we would not, is indignation. To hold fast by another, is to love. To carry him on that so holdeth, is charity. To hurt oneself for haste, is shame. Continually to be outgone, is misery. Continually to out-go the next before, is felicity. And to forsake the course, is to die.”

Inherently and in the original state of human nature, good and evil in the moral sense of these terms have no meaning whatever. To be sure, a man calls the object of his desire, good; the object of his hate and aversion, evil; of his contempt, vile and inconsiderable. The good or evil may be in the promise (fair, beautiful or ugly, foul, deformed); in effect (delightful or unpleasant); or in the means (useful or unprofitable, hurtful). But there is nothing absolute or universal and binding here: “Because the constitution of a man’s body is in continual mutation, it is impossible that all the same things should always cause in him the same appetites, and aversions: much less can all men consent, in the desire of almost any one and the same object.” Motives are merely animal motions in the human organism, and natural impulses are of necessity self-directed and egoistic. In contrast to Aristotle and Grotius, Hobbes rejects the idea of the inher-
ently social nature of man and his natural rationality and sense of justice. Man's restless desire for power makes him a rival and a foe of his fellows. Here force and fraud are operative; the terms right and wrong, justice and injustice are here out of place, and so likewise property or mine or thine distinct.

Men's natural equality contributes to accentuate their contentiousness. The differences of men in bodily strength or skill or mental keenness are inconsiderable. No one is so strong but a weaker man may yet kill him; men may consider other men to have better fortune but not better inherent capacity, and regard others as more learned but scarcely wiser; each man in his heart believes himself as good as his fellows, and better too; and, while he is greedy to possess the goods of his rival or even change places with him, he insists on remaining himself.

To the natural equality of men corresponds a natural harmony: each man equally agreeing with all others in his boundless desire and endeavor. As a king of France once said of a king of Spain: "My kinsman and I are in perfect accord: we both desire the city of Milan." It is this equality and harmony that breed war: "If any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their end, which is principally their own conservation, and sometimes their delectation only, endeavor to destroy, or subdue one another."

Thus the natural state of man is a state of war: each man seeking his own personal aggrandizement and advantage. In this state each man is to every other man a wolf—or a lamb: an enemy or an obstacle, or else a tool and possible victim. The strong is the master and the exploiter of the weak; the weak submits if he must, but ever bides his chance; on every level of human endeavor is the keenest rivalry for
the possession of the goods of life. The principal causes converting this rivalry into war are competition, diffidence, and glory. Men go to war for gain, for safety, for reputation. But rampant or impending, the conflict is ever real: "For WAR, consisteth not in battle only, or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time, wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known: . . . as the nature of foul weather, lieth not in a shower or two of rain; but in an inclination thereto of many days together: so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary."

This account of human nature, presented in Hobbes' blunt style, was calculated to shock his contemporaries. But, Hobbes argues, why are you outraged? Test the truth of my account in your own everyday experience. When you take a journey, do you not arm yourself, and seek to go well-accompanied; when going to sleep, do you not lock your doors; in your own house, do you not lock your chests; and this when you know there are laws, and public officers armed to revenge all injuries that may be done you. What opinion do you have of your fellow-subjects, when you ride armed; of your fellow-citizens, when you lock your doors; of your children and servants, when you lock your chests? Do you not as much accuse mankind by your actions, as I by my words? "But neither of us accuse man's nature in it. The desires, and other passions of man, are in themselves no sin. No more are the actions, that proceed from those passions, till they know a law that forbids them: which till laws be made they cannot know: nor can any law be made, till they have agreed upon the person that shall make it."

For in this state of nature, where each man seeks to grasp all and thus makes everyone else his enemy, nobody has a
chance of lasting success. Unlimited desire here precludes security, yields man no dependable profit, and involves constant risk of complete loss. "In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts, no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

Greed, vanity, and anger may lead men to war, but there are also factors which incline them to peace. In the state of nature every man "hath a most entire, but unfruitful liberty." Reason counsels a course of action that leads to security: if men's constant fear of each other obstructs the realization of their desires, why not limit one's anarchical freedom, provided thereby a more limited gain can be definitely assured? Man desires to increase his holdings, but even more he insists on keeping what he has. So it is that the fear of death, men's desire for such things as make for commodious living, and the hope to obtain and retain them for themselves lead them to turn their backs on anarchy: they choose self-suppression for the sake of a more effective self-assertion.

No genuine social motive urges this self-subordination of the individual to a social order. "We do not . . . by nature seek society for its own sake, but that we may receive some honour or profit from it." Hobbes' savages make use of society for strictly selfish ends: a considered egoism counselling self-limitation: by reducing the range of my desires I increase my chances of assured gratification. But to have this assurance for any one, all must agree to submit: anarchical
aggressive freedom must be utterly surrendered before the security-within-limits can be attained. So it is that men come together, cancel their insecurity by mutually renouncing their anarchical strivings after power, and vesting all their wills in one supreme authority, Leviathan, constituting him their lawgiver, sovereign and plenipotentiary irrevocable. The state of war of all against all is thus ended and the state of law and order instituted: and with the social order and its laws, obedience or disobedience, and so right and wrong, justice and injustice, moral good and evil.

It would be easy to challenge Hobbes to cite documentary evidence for his report of the foundation of society: equally easy to pick flaws in his political mythology. Where was Leviathan when the articles of the covenant were being drawn by his future subjects? Who selected him and how was he chosen? Apparently a unanimous vote was not required but only the consent of a multitudinous, overpowering majority, every one, however, agreeing in advance to abide by the covenant and by the choice when made. These objections are not all petty, but they need not embarrass seriously Hobbes' account of the organization of society. For this account is not meant as a historical chronicle. It is rather an analytical statement of the necessary conditions and prerequisites of lasting peace and security. Man being by nature what he is, an insatiate brute, how can he attain security and peace? Only by universal submission to a system of irrevocable authority. This is then the logical, not the genealogical account of Leviathan.

The foundations of the state in human nature upholding and also outlining the authority of Leviathan are examined by Hobbes in his list of Laws of Nature. The basic right of nature is each man's liberty to preserve himself: and thus the first and fundamental law of nature forbids man's self-de-
construction. Thus man is to seek peace and follow it, but, peace failing, by all the means he can, to defend himself. From this a second law is derived: give up your unlimited rights, and be content with so much liberty against others as you would allow them liberty against yourself. This negative reciprocity Hobbes considers identical with the Golden Rule. The third main law of nature follows from this transfer of rights. The benefits of this transfer can be assured only if the covenant is inviolable. Accordingly men are to keep their covenants under all conditions, so far only as no repudiation is involved of the first law of self-preservation. Sixteen other laws of nature are based on these three main principles. The list is not definitive; it presents in the form of laws the conditions which Hobbes considers indispensable to the maintenance of that state of mutual limitation of anarchic aggression, which limitation alone has made society possible.

The social contract is a free choice of anarchical man: even so the first principles of science and philosophy are axiomatic, affirmations transcending proof. But once adopted, this covenant has the logical imperativeness of a first principle. It is inviolable. The only sort of government that Hobbes admits is absolutism in which the sovereign is the unqualified lord of his subjects and nowise accountable to them. The sovereign need not be a single human individual; Hobbes admits democracy or aristocracy as available alternatives, even though he presses the superior claims of monarchy. But the main point is that whoever exercises authority in the state should exercise it absolutely. The sovereign is to be both legislator and executive. Parliament may be supreme, and the so-called king merely its agent; or the king may be supreme and parliament only his functionaries; but under no conditions must a division of power be admitted. Divided authority is a political contradiction in terms and a breeder
of anarchy. "In the kingdom of God, there may be three persons independent, without breach of unity in God that reigneth; but where men reign, that be subject to diversity, it cannot be so."

We can hear in this theory echoes of the political turmoil of seventeenth century England. Hobbes' *Leviathan* is a weighty tract for the times. If peace and stability are to be secured, the sovereign authority must not be subject to any revision or control, and never subject to challenge. The ultimate political sin is rebellion, for it is the repudiation of the social contract, the very essence of which consists in its inviolability. The mere assertion of the right to rebel is incipient anarchy, and the worst sort of government is preferable to rebellion.

A chief cause of sedition and of the dissolution of states is the heresy of private moral judgment. God's first command to man, Hobbes reminds us, was not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Hobbes insists that what a man believes depends on how the world strikes *him* and thus cannot be ordered by another, be he even Leviathan: but freedom of belief in this sense does not mean acting in accordance with one's private conscience. "Whatsoever is done contrary to private conscience, is then a sin, where the laws have left him to his own liberty, and never else." A subject in society has no private conscience; his conscience is his view of what should and should not be done, and is determined for him by his covenanted obedience to the social order of Leviathan.

The sovereign power must then be supreme authority in all social relations. Accordingly Hobbes repudiates the temporal power of the Church. Ecclesiastic authority is subordinate to the political, or rather Leviathan is the real head of the Church. Priest and bishop officiate and minister
by his leave and at his direction. Religious orthodoxy should therefore be simplified; its fundamentals are reduced to the belief that Jesus is the Christ; all the rest of theological doctrine is ecclesiastic machination for lordship over the parishioners, and is to be repudiated except as coming from the Crown. The entire life of the individual, his comings and goings, his social relations, profession, trade, farming, domestic life, education, worship, all are to be under the absolute sway of the sovereign power.

This whole doctrine Hobbes had put pictorially on his title-page. On a rolling plain is a walled city with its high-spired church, its towers and fortresses rising above the houses. Beyond the walls country houses and castles stretch up the rising hills, and above the mountain range towers the overpowering figure of a giant whose body is made of the bodies of countless human beings with faces uplifted towards the giant’s face surmounted by a crown. In his hands he holds a sword and a crozier, and below these two, in two columns flanking the title-panel of Leviathan, are figures symbolic of the double power wielded by this “mortal god”: fortress and church, crown and mitre, cannon and thunderbolt anathemas, weapons of war temporal and spiritual, a battle and a church-conclave. The whole impression is one of irresistible might, and is countersigned by the verse from the forty-first chapter of the Book of Job, which is engraved above Leviathan’s head: *Non est potestas super terram quae comparetur ei*: “Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.”

Despite all this proclamation of absolute authority, the sovereignty of Leviathan is subject to very decided limitations, expressed in Hobbes’ first Law of Self-Preservation. Men have banded themselves into a society, have covenanted with each other to cancel mutually their anarchical freedom
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and to vest their individual wills in the one will of Leviathan. Why? All for the sake of more effective self-preservation. It is this supreme aim which governs their submission and conditions their fidelity; submission and fidelity to sovereign protecting power, sovereign because effectively protective. If it prove no longer effective, by the sovereign’s surrender to an enemy, for instance, the subject’s obligation obviously ceases. Would it not cease equally if Leviathan could not withstand organized resistance within the state? Hobbes denies the right to rebel, but “right” in his philosophy ultimately rests on power. Sedition breeds anarchy and is assuredly to be condemned, if unequal to the task of successfully replacing a state which flouts the subjects’ interests by a state which effectively safeguards them. But if a coup d’état were to accomplish precisely this end, how on Hobbist grounds could it be denounced? When Hobbes pronounces his social covenant inviolable, he may mean that it cannot be violated, but how can he mean that it ought not to be violated? As T. H. Green expresses it: “The notion of an obligation to observe this covenant, as distinct from a compulsion, is inconsistent with the supposition that there is no right other than power prior to the act by which the sovereign power is established.”

If we accept Hobbes’ description of human nature as essentially anarchical, what reason is there to assume that men experience miraculous change of heart in the formation of the social contract, that they come to feel loyalty as distinct from submission to Leviathan, whom they invest with sovereign power; and that he, in turn, (himself not even party to the contract) is so transfigured when invested with sovereign power as to lose his anarchical greed, and as it were by the very magic of satiety of might, acquire
over-individual regard for the preservation of his subjects, and thus become capable author of laws that can intelligently be styled just? Hobbes pleases himself to scorn Aristotle, but Aristotle had made an important distinction in his *Politics* between governments pure and corrupt, be they governments of one, of a few, or of the many: that is to say, between governments in which the ruler rules in the interests of the subjects and governments in which the ruler rules for his own advantage: for instance, between a monarchy and a tyranny. Aristotle recognized in human nature factors that make for corruption, but also factors which make society and the sense of social responsibility normally human. On Hobbes' conception of human character, every man in the state of nature is an aspiring tyrant over all others. Fear of each other may lead these would-be tyrants to frame articles of peace, but where in Hobbes' creation can they find a monarch who will not be a tyrant to them, and how in any case can their own attitude towards him and towards each other be truly social, the attitude of citizens whose allegiance is more than fear and recognition of effective compulsion?

All these objections concern Hobbes' doctrine of the basis and nature of morality. According to him, the contract which establishes society likewise inaugurates morals. Man is by nature a tissue of impulses; like all else in nature, he may be forced this way or that by effective motions; in the state of nature, however, he has no moral preferences, no consciousness of moral obligation, since his acts are the acts of an anarchic will. His behavior may be predicted, but only as the behavior of a beast or a plant or a bar of iron; or else it may show individual variation depending on individual peculiarity of circumstances, but his life in the state of nature exhibits no recognition of or respect for moral
principles. Only when the absolute power of Leviathan is
instituted and expressed in a code of laws and system of
social behavior, does man's conduct, as it thus becomes either
obedient or resistant to law, become also just or unjust,
good or bad in the moral sense. But once more, obedience
or resistance here, while following or transgressing Levia-
than's authority, yet rest ultimately on the sense of power:
anarchically exercised in the state of nature, duly acquiescent
in society, always for the sake of peace and security from
attack under the rule of Leviathan. Is the subject's actual
obedience to Leviathan's laws aught but submissive consent:
acquiescence rather than genuine moral respect? The
natural state of man being non-moral, how can a moral
nature be extracted from it? Hobbes calls the social state
artificial, in the sense of covenanted or ordered by reason;
but reason here is only regard for more effective security
against rival destructive power: are not both society and
morals in Hobbes' system arbitrary, then, and artificial in
the more usual and damaging sense of the term?

These considerations may indicate how precarious is the
stability of the political absolutism which, above all things,
was Hobbes' desideratum, but, further and more important,
they may also suggest the basic reasons, in Hobbes' concep-
tion of human nature, which make even his view of human
life in society disclose no genuinely moral character. Matter-
in-motion, explicitly specified as mere matter-in-motion, can
yield but contacts, concussions, and the like. How can it
be the matrix of moral activity? The ruthless logic of which
Hobbes boasted in his speculations prevents him from re-
vising his materialism to comprehend distinctively moral
human conduct, and leaves him content with a view of
society in which an alleged orderly régime barely hides the
riot of muzzled but unregenerate bipeds.
Such a theory of morals and politics was bound to stir the most violent opposition. British ethics of the period is a series of attempts to demolish Hobbism. He had reduced the moral laws to the jurisdiction of Leviathan; the Cambridge Platonists sought to show that moral laws are eternal and immutable, grounded in the very essence of human nature. He had pictured man as a natural insatiate egoist; his critics undertook to vindicate benevolence as a normal human attribute and once more to prove the truth of Aristotle's conception of the inherently social character of man. He had conceived of human life, whether anarchic or social, wholly in terms of passions and animal motions, satisfactions of desire; against this narrow hedonism, British philosophy undertakes likewise to seek for a recognition of the morally sovereign sense of conscience and duty.

Hobbes' major importance is to be sought in this challenging stimulus of his doctrine: in undertaking to confute him, modern philosophy perfected the elements of a critical ethics. Out of this conflict, begun with acrimony and abuse and happily growing more profitably critical, emerges a vindication, but also a repudiation of Hobbes. Time has vindicated his keen perception of the essentially social character of morality, but it has repudiated his view of social and moral character as derivative and artificial and as it were engrafted on human nature. In his ethics and social philosophy Hobbes had undertaken to pursue to the bitter end the logical consequences of his materialism: which is perhaps one of several reasons why this sort of cosmology, the first to receive systematic exposition in British philosophy, finds in Britain no other eminent support.

The first lecture in this course was largely historical, and had for its object to trace in outline the shift from the mediaeval to the modern outlook on human life and its
values. This second lecture has been mainly expository, a statement of several attempts to relate ethical thought to social-political theory. The next and concluding discourse will be almost entirely critical and I hope also constructive, in dealing with the search for the moral standard which engaged early modern thought and which still concerns us. What is the objective criterion to which we can appeal in testing the worth of our moral judgments? What justifies us in approving or condemning any act? What constitutes any act morally good or bad?