III

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF GOOD CITIZENSHIP WHICH SOCIAL SCIENCE DEVELOPS AND APPLIES

OUR undertaking in this course of lectures is very modest. We are introducing a subject of study. We are trying to indicate the spirit and the method of enquiry which are most likely to reward research in the region of man's social life, the least known and the best worth knowing of all his dominions. In the first lecture we considered some of the opinions which tend to break the spirit of enquiry in social matters, and in the second we considered some of the assumptions which stultify enquiry, even when it is serious and persistent.

We admitted that social facts are much more complex than physical facts. They are the foci of more elements, and the elements are more intimately intertwined. The relations of men to one another in society are more subtle and more numerous than any others. But over and above the difficulties that arise from this intricacy of social phenomena, there is no other reason why we should not know them with as much precision and certainty as we know physical phenomena. The same mental apparatus lies to our hand, and the facts have the same fundamental character of inviting the intelligence to interpret them. They proffer the truths that are in them, awakening the senses and exciting man's intelligent interests. And, on the other hand, they obstruct error, by refusing to work on false theories or
by bringing unexpected and undesired consequences. It cannot be insisted too often that the whole realm of what is objectively real, apart from the interpreting intelligence, lacks all the means of attaining itself. It is like wealth which cannot be used. It is "Plenty" seeking for "Penia or Poverty," to endow her with his riches. Out of their union spring Truth and Good and all the Arts of Beauty.

As to the uses of the knowledge of social truth, it is not to be doubted that none are greater. The practical stakes are highest in this field. Ignorance of himself, false views of his relations to other men, are more dangerous far than any other blindness or error. Mankind's deeper tragedies never were merely, or even primarily, physical. On the other hand, all that stands between the devastated, hungering, distrustful world of to-day and the "kingdom" which is "to come" is just the unillumined mind and the unchanged will.

If I were asked whose wounds hurt man most deeply in these times, I should not name the criminal whose outrages we abhor: I should name the individual or the institution, whether sacred or secular, which discourages the use of reason on the matters of moral, social and religious life.

Turning to the errors of method, we may say of those which have gone so far in the past to disappoint enquiry and foster distrust of reason, that they spring almost wholly from a wrong hypothesis, or presupposition, as to the nature of social phenomena. Perhaps I should use a more general, if more indefinite term, and call it a wrong "attitude of mind." We described it at the close of the last lecture. Its essence is that it separates where it is justified in only distinguishing. It represents differences as mutually destructive, when they are possible only through and by means of each other, and within a unity.
We are slow to learn the lesson that the starry heavens, in their motion, hint to us. Are the planets alone poised and stable and safe on their circling ways, because they at once attract and repel one another and are held to the centre from which they would ever fly? Or may not this be a parable full of meaning, a symbol of the supreme law of man's spiritual life, which gains itself by giving itself, finds perfect liberty in perfect obedience, mastery in service, self-realization in self-sacrifice, life in death? Can our "plain," "practical" "business" man who looks at things with his "common sense," and runs for us the economic and the political world, deeming himself free from all theoretic extravagancies,—can he be living, as regards all these matters of our social life, at the Pre-Copernican stage? The evidence all points that way. He does not hesitate to assign complete independence of one another to all the elements of his social world. Individual rights are individual, he maintains, whether the individual be a man or a community or a political state. What is mine is not yours, and what is yours is not mine. Rights are held to be by their nature private and exclusive. Duties are the same: your duties are never mine, nor mine yours. And everyone's duties to himself are deemed distinct and separate from his "duties to others." Property is not less private than the personality to which it belongs. It is, in fact, an element of personality, which without it could have no foothold in the outer world. Deprived of all individual rights, a citizen of no state, member of no community, and enjoying none of the rights of a state or community, he could not find a place to sit or stand except on some island over which no flag has ever flown. You may find it wise not to assert your rights in all their extent, but no doubt is entertained as to their sacredness or privacy, whether between nations or between
men, or between a political state and its citizens. Most men do exercise moderation; while maintaining that they can "do as they like with their own," they on the whole pay some regard to the views of their neighbours. But if they refrain from running amok, it is out of their benevolence. "What is mine is mine, what is yours is yours; and both you and I can carry his prey into his own den and share it with his cubs." Such, on the whole, is the theory of the natural law in the economic world. The modern world's practice, in so far as it is not consonant with the theory, throws the bones outside for the hungry jackals, such as charitable and educational institutions. No doubt the individualist struggle is less wolfish in many ways. It is fought in business offices and cabinet councils, and not in the forests amidst wintry snows; and the losers are not slain or starved, except indirectly and quite slowly. Moreover, a wider outlook and clearer foresight bring a certain moderation. The selfishness becomes enlightened. The "sensible man" would not only live but let live; and we hear a moderated Egoism advocated as the safest kind. Nay, "compromise" may be made the rule of the better life—a midway course between "Altruism and Egoism," as Herbert Spencer taught, a prudent mixture of "Individualism and Socialism," an alternation and balance of the rights of self and the rights of others, of our duties to ourselves and our duties to others, a mean between the extremes of selfishness and generosity. But the mean or compromise is always at the expense of each of the opposites. They are not reconciled or harmonized in a nobler purpose. The business man who is also a good citizen will go to church on the Sabbath day, and listen not without feelings of comfort and complacency to doctrines about the utter devotion of the self and all its energies, and their unrestrained dedi-
cation to an objective good which is as impersonal as it is imperishable. It is all approved as good in its own place, as an ideal to be put into practice in the next life. But business is business. The practically true theory, to be carried out in the place of business, demands that he should put off these notions, and instead of the flowing robes of charity, put on the business armour of hard and cold steel. It is not as a practical man of business that he can carry out the doctrines which he enjoyed in the church, and which in his own home, with his father and mother and brothers and sisters and wife and children, he does carry out, finding therein his greatest happiness.

You will ask, what then can be said against this view, except what is Utopian? Is the practical life of men and women in this workaday world possible on any other theory? Are rights not sacred? Are they not exclusive? Is property not intrinsically private? Are duties not also intensely personal? Would you melt individuals down into a sort of social slush by weakening their rights and generalizing their obligations? What value has a sentimental generosity that does not recognize the rights of others and exact the observance of one's own?

I would answer these questions by admitting freely that in their proper context they are true. I should accord to individuals every item claimed for them, in the way of privacy, sacredness, independence and inviolability. I would even extend their rights. But I should point out that all these rights that we attribute to persons exist only on a certain condition. And that condition appears to be the exact opposite of their private and individual character. They must be recognized as not less social than they are individual—nay! that they are individual, private, personal, because in the first place they are social. Rights are social
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institutions. Society creates them and maintains them. Indeed, all genuinely and directly rational characters and possessions are particularized or individually appropriated universals. I am not indulging in paradox: I am trying to express plainly a fact that is too often overlooked. The truth which an individual knows is not like an error he may entertain, a peculiar conviction, but a universal truth. That twice two makes four is true always for everyone. The just or loving act, in a similar way, is an application of a law that is universal; or rather it is the embodiment or realization of a universal in a particular circumstance by a particular volition. Every volition is unique, and yet every willing of that which is right is the willing of a good that is ultimate, universal, a constituent of the nature of things.

Rights and obligations are thus the conceptions that, in the degree in which they are carried into practice, found and maintain a free society. They are bonds which liberate. And we create and maintain them for one another; never in virtue merely of our own enactments. My rights are mine because they are accorded to me by the society of which I am a member. Yours are yours not in virtue of your assertion of them, but because the social system to which you belong grants and sustains them. If your rights are violated you appeal to your community. Your country takes your part because it is its duty, which it owes to itself, to protect its grants and maintain its own institutions. No extent or degree of sheer affirmation by either an individual or an Empire will create rights. Both alike can and do make claims, and a State may support its claims by force; but it is not by that method that rights are created or acquire sacredness. That which is right in itself, as only "the good" can be, must be their essential meaning and substance. Claims can collide. Rights cannot; they strengthen each
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other. A society which extends to its citizens genuine rights, thereby widening the compass of their private effective wills and enlarging the significance of their personality, knits them together the more closely and establishes its own powers the more firmly by the same act. On the other hand, he who violates or weakens an individual's rights, reducing his personal stature, so to speak, injures the social system at the same time.

We must conclude then that the view of the plain man, who naturally insists on the privacy of individuality, is abstract. He entertains it naturally, almost inevitably. He has had to hold his own all his life; and he knows his desires, aims and volitions as his own, and his actions as their result. He traces the springs of his actions no further. He attributes the same kind of separate individuality to others; and he has no option except to regard society as a result of their coming out of their isolation and entering into relations which are more or less stable. He does not realize that he is, by such a theory, constructing a system by means of centrifugal forces!

Nor does the economic world, seen on the surface, tend to correct his error. It appears to be the scene of an unmitigated "struggle for existence." The ruling purposes which are the active forces are undisguisedly self-referent. Business may be just, and it may even pay to be just, but it cannot be altruistic. You serve society best by prospering in your business as an individual, especially if you prosper fairly. Out of business hours you may be generous, but as a business man you can have no other aim than that of the success of the concern for which you act. Such is the usual view, as we have seen.

But it also is abstract: it is oblivious of the deeper forces which, fortunately, always operate. And these are
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all corrective of self-seeking egoism. They prevent the results of business from terminating with the business man's projects, and make him a better builder than he intends. The economic world continues to exist because, in spite of the egoistic motives of the constituents, it is a sphere of mutual services. Whether men want to benefit one another or not in their producing and consuming, their selling and buying, they must appear to, and in the long run they must actually do so. Men seek one another because, apart from one another, they are incomplete. And society lives because no member of it can live for himself alone, however narrow and selfish his aims. It will prosper, and the course of its life will be smooth, in the degree in which the members which constitute it adopt its tendencies as their own aims. In order to do so they need not deny themselves anything worth owning. They may and should continue to hold their own, and in every sense maintain the sacred inviolability of their persons and rights. They will protect and preserve the station they occupy and the calling by which they live; but they will dedicate it, and rejoice in it as means of social service. Nor will they be the worse "business men" for the inner change.

May it not be the ultimate aim of the study which we are introducing to-day to bring this change about? Your economic community, and my own in Great Britain, would find their industrial and commercial ventures all the more safe and prosperous, and human history would find the seas less tempestuous and the shores less strewn with wrecks, were they taught to read the nature of man and the nature of human society more accurately.

The true social theory is thus neither Individualistic nor Socialistic nor a mixture or compound of these. Neither the individual nor society comes first, nor can either have a
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Preponderating significance at any stage of their evolution. Their interrelation is too deep and intimate. Priority of all kinds is as impossible for either, as it is for the convex or concave side of a circle. That there cannot be human society until there are men and women, is more obvious than the opposite; but it is not more true. Society comes to be an articulated system only when, and in so far as, it breaks out into individuals which are more or less independent within it. They are its issue, and at the same time it is in them that it is actualized. The relation of the individual to society, or rather to the world into which he is born, is like that of the unborn child to its mother. Of himself the child performs no function. Its vital functions are simply the processes of the mother's life. They pulsate at every instant and at every stage of the formation of its elements and organs. But all the while he is being prepared for independent activities. The day comes when he himself draws his breath, and his own heart sends the blood racing through his arteries. He still suckles his mother's breasts, and is carried around in her arms. But the means of independence grow further; and another day comes when the dependence is on the mother's part, and the provision and protection are the joyous activities of the manhood of her son.

Such in truth is the relation of man's mind to its environment, or of the individual to society. He has no intellectual life of his own at first. He entertains no opinions, either true or false, and forms no judgments. He has not distinguished between himself and other beings or other things, and there is for him neither outer nor inner, subjective nor objective. He has sensations, or rather is himself an undifferentiated confusion of undistinguished sensations. He is "simply a mass of feelings," as we say. The outer world
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plays upon him, like sunshine on a meadow, preparing him by nature's marvellous ways for producing some kind of harvest. By and by he somehow learns to distinguish and select. That is, he reacts. But of purpose there is none at first. There is no conception of a self to be satisfied, or of that which will bring satisfaction. His cries are as automatic as the pulsation of his heart, except for the subtle potencies that somehow lie hidden behind them. But the possibilities of intelligent activities are there, and they issue in the discovery of a self and a not-self, and in a growing acquaintance with their meaning. Ultimately there appears a self which, as mind, makes him who was the means and medium of the forces of the world, their master. He "has the world at his feet" so far as his interpretation is true. The environment is there to serve his soul, and to acquire value in the service.

It is for the Psychologist to give, or rather to guess at, this history; and to do so, if he can, without pulverizing and petrifying the mind into a collection of instincts, faculties and other fictitious parts. Our interest begins with the more or less recognized relations of the citizen to the community. But the analogy helps. It shows the opinions, the beliefs, the purposes and therefore the wants and even the desires of the community circulating in the soul of the citizen, even as the mother's blood beats in the arteries of her unborn child. He selects, it is true, and values things, and makes a choice. But he selects within a provided material, and according to standards of value which, like all the rest of his possessions, he has borrowed. Of independence there is not one jot or tittle in the sense of employing any powers which are his own make, or upon any material which is not gifted to him.

The critic of his environment and censor of the social life
of his day is not merely using gifts he inherited earlier in his life, but he is the organ of his environment in the very act of blaming it. His responsibility is shared by his community, and so are the consequences of his view. His country errrs, suffers, acquires and prospers in his actions even as a tree does in its leaves. In a word, his good and ill and his country’s are ideally incapable of being sundered. And so far is his individuality from being diminished by the intimacy of his relationship to his community, that it is in truth increased thereby. The significance and value of personal life depend upon the nature and breadth of its purposes. The petty life has petty and secluded interests. The interest of his neighbourhood, his city, his country, thud in the arteries of the good man. The life of the best man we know was not only a benefaction to his age, he lived and died not only for his own times or his own people, but for mankind. Men call such a personality “divine.” No one need fear that he will obscure or obliterate his individuality by deepening and extending the range of his services as a citizen and identifying himself with his community.

To demonstrate and to bring about the general recognition of this truth is a practical concern of the deepest importance to a people. It is the essence of your new enterprise and you cannot overestimate its significance. “Ideas have hands and feet,” and conceptions which appear remote from the world’s ways of life may change their direction. At first sight one would say that nothing could appear to concern the practical life of the plain man less than the views of the Astronomer. What can the right or the wrong understanding of the size, distance, shape and motion of the stars and planets do for him, as he earns his daily bread? The flatness or the roundness of the earth has no appreciable effect on the surface of the field he is plough-
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ing. The recondite researches of science have always, and most naturally, been a puzzle and amazement to the plain man in the past. How could "common sense" approve of Newton making bubbles? But the natural sciences have proved their practical power. We distrust them no longer.

Similar questions and doubts readily arise round the study you are instituting here to-day. To answer them you will require the same passion for truth and the same heedlessness of immediate results as have been shown by the devotees of physical knowledge. But you will require more persistence. There are difficulties to overcome in addition to those which spring from the complexity of the elements and the subtlety of their interaction in human society. These of themselves are sufficiently great. Even if you simplified your problem and regarded the state as a machine, you would have to recognize that in "the social machine" which we call the United States of America or the British Empire, there are millions of parts; and that every part has its own wants, desires, passions, fancies and free will! Verily it is not easy either to comprehend or to run.

But the greatest obstacle that the social sciences have to meet never confronted the physical sciences. If there was inability, owing to previous prejudice, to accept the physical truth when it was declared, nevertheless there was no aversion to it. The "natural man" has no objection to the three angles of a triangle being together equal to two right angles, nor are his desires ranged against the view that Saturn has rings. But it is quite otherwise with the science of social life. It seems to tamper with man's individuality, and to threaten to merge it in society. It seems to explain him away. It dispossesses him of all the furniture of his soul. It proves beyond denial that the very language he speaks is not his own but his country's: he has never invented one word.
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"Deprived of this single gift, he would stand mute and helpless amongst his fellows, understanding and understood of no one. Would he be an intelligent being?" (But let me refer you on this matter to my "Principles of Citizenship," p. 94.) The least investigation will show that the tissue of the individual's soul is social in every fibre. The mind with which he thinks, the tools with which he works, the material on which he uses them, the ways and methods of his workshop, the materials of his home, the customs and the practical creed of his hearth, and his wife's ways amongst his children,—they are all the endowments of the same beneficent donor. The dependence of a child upon his mother, bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh as he is, is not more absolute than that of the individual upon society.

But all kinds of influences conspire against the acceptance of this obvious truth, and accentuate the independence and uniqueness of our individuality. In the first place, there is an intellectual propensity in this direction. We necessarily endow every object of our thought and perception with a "thisness." An object is in some respect or another unique, a something with its own qualities, occupying a particular place in time and space. The intelligence can have no object which is not a more or less consistent system or a unity of differences, a thing apart. So that the world seems to be a collection of separate objects, every one of them to some degree independent. In the next place, the physical needs which man feels first and seeks to satisfy are relatively discrete, and the life of feeling and sensation is comparatively a flux of fleeting particulars. This means that primitive man lives in and for the moment. He has no long views. His world is very narrow and its constituents are loosely related: he has little knowledge of the laws that govern and unite them. Moreover, the means whereby he
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satisfies his needs are scanty. The stores of the savage are very small. And they are, or may be at any instant, a gage of battle. Everything is insecure. There is little property, or sense of it. In a word, his perpetual condition is that of war, either with the intruder, who is always an enemy, or with the nature which scants his necessities. How can he avoid being self-assertive, pitted against his world? From such circumstances the growth of a "social" spirit must necessarily be difficult. And there is one more circumstance I must mention in passing, which still further increases the difficulty. The functions exercised by society when it does acquire any standing and strength, appear to be inhibitive; and they are so the more completely the more primitive the society. To the ethically crude man social laws and customs are undesirable restraints. Society can make hardly any demands except negative ones upon rudimentary citizens. They are like little children on the hearth, incapable as yet of positive or constructive action. It is only when the citizens of the State can do much for themselves that the State can undertake positive measures. For the history of the development of States is like that of the living organism: it is a process which both "differentiates and integrates"; it increases the power and independence both of the separate organs and of the organism as a whole. "It is possible," as I have said elsewhere,¹ "that the State grows in power even as its citizens acquire freedom; and that the more free and enterprising the citizens, the more secure the order and the more extensive the operations of the State. The antagonism of the State and the citizen is one of those things taken for granted without being examined, which have done vast mischief in social matters."

The essential mission of this lectureship is to expel this single error, and to establish the single, opposite truth. Everything would follow from this Copernican change. The Social Sciences as a whole have in the last resort this one function, namely, that of tracing the positive ways in which the destiny of the citizen and his State, and the destiny of different States, are mutually implicated; as only those things can be which are ultimately nothing but different manifestations of one self-revealing, self-realizing spirit,—the spirit of man, a spirit far more divine than man has known as yet. To fulfil this function were, I believe, to extract the ethical essence and last meaning of human history. It were to trace a process by which man escapes from the isolation of ignorance and selfishness, which shut him out of the world and deny him all its treasures, and becomes its heir.

There is no doubt as to the self-referent beginnings of man's life, nor as to the difficulties of expanding the significance of the self to which reference is made. It is only very reluctantly, as well as slowly, that we learn how the greatness and goodness of the rational self, all its reality, truth and value, come from what it shuts in rather than shuts out, from what it comprehends as the essential substance of its own well-being. I doubt if we ever would learn this truth were it not for the pains and penalties of the cloistered life of selfishness.

The natural difficulties are great enough, as we have seen. Possibly the pursuit of the true and the earnest seeking after goodness are such splendid ways of occupying the soul of man as to compensate for the fact that neither the true nor the good lies on the surface, ready-made. For it cannot be denied, that, in ordinary consciousness, we take shadows for realities and realities for shadows. We are equally blind
to our own natures and to the nature of the things around us. The beginning of wisdom for us, therefore, is to renounce all that from this false point of view we seem to know. So universally and persistently has this doctrine of renunciation been taught hitherto, that it has become the key-note of the moral and religious life. Our greatest moral and religious teachers have made the strait way straiter still. They have made "self-sacrifice" the substance, instead of the shadow, of the good life: and they have turned the greatest social reformer which the world has ever known and the most triumphantly peaceful optimist into a "Man of Sorrows."

The moral life of the world has yet to be led out into the sunshine. For what is it, after all, that the bad man or the selfish citizen is asked to renounce; or when have we seen the renunciation of selfishness bring unhappiness, or the doing of the right thing bring sorrow? We are still living in the shadow of an ancient dualism which has represented Nature and Spirit, not as aspects of one reality, not as implying and needing and fulfilling each other, not as one moving and ever self-enriching splendour, but as mutual antagonists. And the ethical and social dualism which infects the thought and practice of citizens of the same State, and of States in relation to one another, is one of the consequences of the wider error.

Were the falsity of this dualism exposed in our Universities and Colleges, the Churches and Schools would follow their example. Let the former prove, as the natural sciences prove their hypotheses, that the individual owes to society all that he has and is, all that the child owes to its mother (and even more, according to Plato), then surely something of his social ingratitude will cease. The falsity of individualism, the abstractness of the economic view, the
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shallowness of a social doctrine and practice that are competitive, and of a theory of values that is materialistic—herein is another ample field in which true social philosophy may labour. And are there not new ways of social service which the new spirit of social enquiry might discover? And will not the old and well-worn services acquire new values?

I can imagine that the industrial leader, in command of vast material and human resources which he now employs mainly to secure his own profit, might find new happiness in his work, and a fresh spring of inspiration and energy in the thought that he is standing at his station and to its duties for his country. He would value his triumphs as the general values his victories; they are the triumphs of his country. And I am prepared to believe that the working man, whether he toils in a trade or in a profession, will find his labour sweetened by the knowledge that its fruits are for the object of his devotion, his larger self, his country; which is there in turn for his good, its life and welfare being one and the same with his own.

But I must pursue this vision no further. The nature of your quest is quite plain. You are, in this University, taking a part in bringing about practical belief in an ethical social truth: the coercing conviction of a far-reaching principle demonstrated in detail by the careful methods of science, demonstrated so plainly as to leave those who cling to the old error no excuse. You will show how amply it is illustrated in the vast laboratory of human history, as the ultimate cause of its continuity and progress. And the reward of successful labour in this domain will be the peace within the State and between the States for which the world yearns. I can speak of it as Plotinus spoke of a still deeper source of peace:

"It is our true aim and centre. We are always gathered
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around it. We may compare ourselves to a Chorus which is placed around a Choragus, but which sings out of tune so long as it directs its attention away from him . . . but when it turns to him, it sings in perfect harmony, deriving its inspiration from him. So it is with us. We are always gathered round the divine (may I say the social?) centre of our being; and, indeed, if we could withdraw from it, our being would at once be dissolved away and we should cease to exist at all. But near as it is to us, often we do not direct our eyes to it. When, however, we do so direct our gaze, we attain to the end of our desires and to the rest of our souls, and our song is no more a discord, but circling round our centre we pour forth a divinely inspired chorale.”

After all, there is only one way of serving God: it is by serving one another.

HENRY JONES.