THE STATE IN SOCIETY

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FOREWORD

ADAM SMITH was a professor of moral philosophy. Unjustly attacked today as the apostle of *laissez faire* (a phrase coined by Colbert, the arch advocate of economic nationalism, and consequently of monopoly and interventionism in the processes of production and distribution of wealth) he produced a comprehensive and integrated view of the social problems of his time and exercised a profound influence on the formulation of a public policy which, among other things, was destined to make of the nineteenth century the Golden Age of peace and plenty in modern history. He wove the strands of observable fact and interpretation of social, economic, political and moral phenomena into a stout fabric and embroidered on it a pattern which the Western world was to observe for more than three-quarters of a century, only at a later date to be twisted by others into a design of public and private restrictions.

Isolationism in the curriculum, so incompatible with the comprehensive view of Adam Smith, has had the same disintegrating and narrowing effects on scholarship and teaching in the social studies as economic nationalism, so inconsistent with the substance of the *Wealth of Nations*, has produced in the arena of national and international affairs. Indeed, the latter may in some measure at least be but the product of the former.

Hence it was the purpose of this series of lectures to recapture a sense of the eternal unity of the social problem, to crash through and to batter down the barriers that for more than fifty years have been steadily growing between spuriously created autonomous divisions in the area of the social studies, and thus to cut across the intellectual boundaries of scholastic separatism.

To those who came here as our guests, McGill University extends its appreciation and its gratitude. And once more it acknowledges its indebtedness to The Visitor.

L. W. DOUGLAS.

McGill University,
December 1, 1939.

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ROBERT WARREN

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I. THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY

Make for yourself a . . . description of the thing under consideration, so as to see distinctly what kind of thing it is, in its substance, in its bareness, in its complete entirety, and tell yourself the proper name, and the names of the things of which it is composed, and into which it may be resolved. For nothing is so productive of elevation of mind as to be able to examine methodically and candidly every object presented in life, and always to look at things to see at the same time what kind of world this is, and what use everything performs in it, and what value everything has in relation to the whole, and what with reference to the individual . . .; what each thing is, of what it is composed, and how long it is in the nature of this thing to endure.

THIS quotation is a fitting introduction to this series of discussions on the structure of our society and on the position of the state in that society. For Marcus Aurelius was a statesman who answered Plato's dream of the ruler who should be a philosopher and the philosopher, a ruler; who rivalled Solomon in wisdom and St. Louis of France in kindness of heart. Yet even as he wrote those lines, the twilight was falling on Rome, and when he died the glory had departed.

From the nature of the subject, the examination "into what kind of world this is, and what use everything has in it, and what value each has with reference to the whole and to the individual" must be tentative interpretation, qualified by the time and circumstance of the interpreter. The mathematician may state with finality that two plus two not only equals four today, but equalled four yesterday and will equal four tomorrow. The physicist knows that the specific gravity of gold today is precisely what it was to Archimedes, and that it will remain unchanged when Archimedes is forgotten. The chemist knows that a molecule of water is, has been, and will be composed of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen; and that under no circumstance will this relation be changed.

But in the social sciences one can speak with no such finality. Man has an intellect and a will, and society represents the composite of the intellects and wills of mankind. "The proper study of mankind is man," but the results of that study yield neither laws nor formulae; all of you will

recall that Socrates in his Dialogues on the study of mankind never stated a conclusion in more positive terms than "it seems to me." The speakers in this discussion cannot offer you eternal verities, nor any "open Sesame" that will unlock the portals of a perfect world. They can only offer a reasoned opinion, a personal interpretation of what kind of society this is, and what value each part has with relation to the whole and to the individual. I do not think I shall be misquoting my colleagues in saying that we offer our opinions and our interpretations not with the idea of persuading you that we as individuals have discovered ultimate truth, but in the hope that our effort will be of mutual assistance in forming opinion and interpretation of "what kind of world this is, and what use everything performs in it, and what value things have in relation to the whole, and what with reference to the individual; what each thing is, of what it is composed, and how long it is in the nature of this thing to endure."

Society, as I see it, is characteristically composed of four component elements, and the individual, as a member of society, is commonly a quadruplicate personality, with membership in, and a specific set of relations or responsibilities to each of the four. These four elements are the family, the church, the economy and the state. At a given time, and disposed in a certain relation to each other they form the structure of society. To us as individuals, the structure of society with which we are familiar appears to be the proper, or ultimate structure of society; and deviation or variation from it, queer at best and offensive at worst. Yet a moment's reflection will remind us that there is no such thing as a normal structure of society; that mankind has experimented with many structures in the course of history.

Curiously enough, there is little evidence that man as an individual has changed in historic time. There is no reason to suppose that a Chaldean merchant could not conduct a modern system of chain stores; that Joseph would not make an admirable W.P.A. administrator; that the Olympic charioteer could not be a motor car racer, or that Pericles could not become Prime Minister of England. But while man as an individual has not changed much (except as to his costume) the structure of society has changed repeatedly; and although the four elements of that society—the family, the church, the economy (or business organization) and the state—are recognizable and traceable from the first syllable of recorded

time, their particular character, and their relation to each other—their molecular structure and their specific gravity, to borrow the phraseology of the natural sciences—have changed repeatedly. Sometimes these elements are quite distinct; sometimes they merge into one another. For example, in the nomadic tribes of the Arabian desert, the state and the family and the business organization are so united, that the head of the family is at once the father of the household, the dispenser of patriarchal justice, the military leader, and the business executive of a pastoral organization. In early Roman society, the head of a family was the high priest of the *lares* and *penates*, and the *patria potestas* included a great deal of what we should call civil authority. As recently as a generation ago, when I lived in Turkey, I was told that certain offences, such as apostasy from Islam, were punishable by death by the responsible head of the family; and today in France the *conseil de famille* has a civil status intermediate between the individual and the state—an entity quite unknown to American practice. Punishment by attainder, under which the offences of an individual could be visited on blood relatives is sufficiently modern to be specifically proscribed in the American constitution. The history of the church—by which I mean any form of organized religion—shows how inextricably it has usually been woven into the structure of society. Among the African tribes, the medicine man is not a priest of ethical precept or the pastor charged with the moral guidance of his flock. He is the economic adviser of the business community; it is his function to tell the hunters where to look for game, the fisherman when and where to cast his net, and the farmer when and under what circumstances to plant his corn; and, generally speaking, among those whom we call savages, it is the function of organized religion not merely to bless, but actually to direct the economic activity. Today, in our society, the boundary which marks the respective jurisdictions of church and state relative to the family in the matter of marriage remains disputed; one encounters the paradox that most persons wish to have their marriage solemnized by the church even among those groups that concede to the state the exclusive power of dissolving the pact.

From the beginnings of the race, then, these four forms have constituted the elements of organized society, and, having a certain recognized relationship, constitute the

national structure or culture. We have become so accustomed to thinking of nationality as a purely political concept, that we forget that such a definition is of relatively recent origin and application. Nationality is a cultural concept. Referring again to Turkey of a generation ago, the status of non-Ottoman subjects of the Turkish Empire was based on an identity of nationality and religion,—Greek, Armenian, Jewish, etc. The nationalities represented distinct cultures; the respective communities (millets) were bound by a common language and a common church; nationality, language and church were presumed identical for all members of the community. These communities were also to a considerable extent economic—that is, boatmen and shopkeepers were likely to be Greek, jewelers and craftsmen Armenian, etc. Relations between the millet and the imperial state were canalized not through a secular political representative, but through the head of the church, whether Patriarch or Grand Rabbi. The communities were *imperia in imperio*; but the differentiation was essentially based on the church as the focal point. The status of foreigners, under extra-territoriality, readily fell into this organization. The foreigner was presumed to be a Christian by church, and to carry his nationality with him, for example in his family life. That is, mere residence in Turkey was not presumed to carry a right of bigamy, although for the Turks the bigamous family was legal and normal. The maintenance of national differentiation extended to costume—it was regarded as outrageous for a Turkish subject, Ottoman or Christian, not to wear a fez and for a resident alien to wear one.

Such a social organization as I have described in the Ottoman Empire of a generation ago, far from being peculiar, is historically common. The individual was presumed to be a part of an integrated social structure, and to carry this structure with him wherever he went—his relation to a family, a church, and a state; for as a resident alien, under extra-territorial capitulation, I carried my state with me; and had I murdered a fellow countryman, I should have been tried in a consular court under the forms of American law. Yet in that Ottoman society, there were the four elements with which we are familiar—the family, organized religion or the church, a state whose points of tangency and channels of contacts with the life of the individual were very different from those that we know, and a business organization arranged on a very

different basis. In that society, the term family, church, business and state meant each something entirely different from what it meant in contemporary America; and their relations to each other and to the individual were entirely different.

That structure of society, old as it was, has been altered in my lifetime. There is in Turkey today the family, the church, the business organization and the state, but they are each quite unlike what they were a generation ago, both in themselves and in their relations to each other.

I have cited this somewhat bizarre example to emphasize the fact that these four components of society, although of the utmost antiquity, are continuously changing within themselves, that they are continuously changing relationships with each other, and that the composite of these relationships which form a national social structure or culture are never identical in two countries at one time, nor in any one country at two different times. Society is always seeking new forms and new combinations of old forms, sometimes as a free explorer, like Tennyson's Ulysses; more often, it seems to me, as a fugitive from past failures.

In a given country a particular description of the family, the church, the business organization and the state may hold good for decades, but rarely for centuries. There are periods when several national cultures may closely resemble each other; and other periods when each differs widely from the others. We are all familiar with the way in which within that geographical area called Europe the boundaries of states are changed from decade to decade on the map. We often forget that within that human area called society, the boundaries of the family, the church, the business organization and the state are continuously changing; and that as they change, the equilibrium of society—the balance of power, if you please, within the social structure—is changed with them.

Sometimes these changes are so gentle and gradual that they scarcely affect the life of the individual; at other times they are abrupt and shattering. The initiating force, or dynamic catalyst, may appear in any one of the four components. For example, it has long been recognized that the impact of the Christian Church on the Roman State revolutionized the Roman world. When Christianity first appeared in Rome, it seemed to be no more than one of the many cults that had flowed, as Juvenal says, from the Orontes into the

Tiber. To the Roman of the first century, it must have been just another of those foreign "isms," like Mithraism, or the cult of Isis or Cybele. The rock on which the Roman Empire stood was the cult of the god-emperor—that cult, more than the legions, bound the empire together; and when this rock was shattered by another Rock, the whole structure of Roman society was broken.

The family was a powerful component of the structure of the Roman republic—the oligarchical republic of the patricians—but it was weak under the empire. On the disintegration of the empire it remained weak. But in the social structure that emerged in Europe after the invasions, we can trace the dynamic rise of the family to its flowering in feudalism. Save only for the church, the family and the concept of the family dominated and determined the social structure of the feudal world. In an economy based on land, family determined the relation of the individual to the state and to all other individuals. A man was born a soldier, or a statesman, born a tradesman or an artisan, born a serf or a yeoman. In what we call "the accident of birth," feudal society saw the direct intervention of God, appointing the new-born babe to his place in the social structure. The (to us) meaningless dynastic wars of medieval Europe were to their participants invested with the character of divine missions when they involved the rights of heredity. The duty owed by the subject of a "rightful" King, was a duty to God for the support of His will on earth made manifest through the mystery of birth. This idea of the family permeated and dominated the social structure from top to bottom, save in the Church. So powerful and general was this theory of the relation of the family to society that, had it not been for the celibacy of the priesthood, the doctrine of heredity might have been fastened on the church; and society might have taken on the rigidity which characterized the social structure of Egypt through so many centuries, and which has dominated the history of India, where the concept of the family, elaborated into the concept of caste, still determines the structure of society.

For its members, the structure of feudal society must have seemed immutable. It was logical beyond the imagination of Aristotle. The position of every individual was established; the responsibility of every individual to the social order was precisely prescribed. The organization of family, church,

business and state was clearly defined, and their relation to each other determined and recognized. Logical, orderly, controlled, nothing was left to chance. And, strongest argument for perpetuity, its structural scheme was believed implicitly to represent the will of God, continuously made manifest by birth.

> The rich man in his castle
> The poor man at his gate
> God made them high and lowly
> And ordered their estate.

Yet hardly had this structure of society attained perfection, when it was shattered by the impact of dynamic change from an unexpected quarter. The age of discovery suddenly gave an importance to the business organization which it had not known for centuries, if indeed ever; and this, followed by the industrial revolution, utterly shattered not merely the former frame (mercantilism), but the very structure of the economy. The rich man in his castle, whose sole wealth was in land, could and often did become poor. The poor man at the gate might follow Morgan to Panama and become a wealthy and respected buccaneer (retired). Or he might trade with the Indies and Muscovy; or he might go into the new industries, and Lazarus, suddenly translated into a coach and four, splash mud upon his erstwhile landlord Dives, who, if very lucky, might obtain a seat upon Lazarus' Board of Directors.

The examples given are only a few of those that might be selected to illustrate structural changes in society caused initially by the appearance of some galvanic or fermenting force in one of the four components of society, and causing that particular component to burst its bounds and to force a rearrangement of the whole structure.

Usually, it seems to me, the origin of these forces may be described as accidental. That is, the change is not inherent in the existing structure. One could hardly say that the Christian Church evolved out of the structure of society of imperial Rome, even though the existence of the Pax Romana facilitated the spread of the new force. One could hardly have guessed that the force that would do so much to bring order out of the chaos of the Dark Ages in a society of roving freebooters who acknowledged no principle but the sword, would be the dominance of the family concept of heredity.

Certainly Ferdinand and Isabella, in authorizing the voyage of Columbus, had no intent of destroying the feudal system.

The question of whether or not society is rational is not germane to the subject of this paper. The fact of its capacity to rationalize its changes is relevant to it. Whatever be the structure of society, anytime, anywhere, it is dear to its members, and to them it is so satisfactory that any idea of change is honestly repugnant. And it is, I think, at once honorable and pathetic, that whatever the structure of society, man always strives to assure himself that it represents the will of God—whatever god, I may say in all reverence, he at that particular time has been able to apprehend.

But next to this natural and instinctive resistance to change, there is nothing more remarkable than the rapidity with which a new structure becomes the established order. The dynamic force reaches its new boundaries, the new balance of relationships is determined, and with the passing years, almost with the passing months, nostalgia for the "good old days" becomes the peculiar and tolerated foible of the older generation.

The social structure, as it existed in Western Europe and America in the nineteenth century, is historically familiar to us. The nineteenth century was acquainted with the idea of structural change in society; for it was aware of the preceding structures. Medieval society had completely rationalized its structure, and by this rationalization had become convinced that its world, and the value of everything in it with reference to the whole and to the individual, was an expression of final, discoverable and discovered, natural law. In the same way, the nineteenth century, while it was aware of the structural changes of the past, rationalized its conviction that it had realized or at least clearly apprehended the final structure of society. And just as the medieval mind had turned to metaphysics for confirmation of its opinion, so the nineteenth century turned to the physical sciences for rationalizing its belief. Aristotle was the prophet of medieval society, and Darwin the prophet of the nineteenth century. The medieval thinkers tried to interpret social and physical phenomena in terms of the metaphysical while the nineteenth century mind endeavored to interpret social and metaphysical phenomena in terms of the physical. Without in any way raising the question of the validity of the theory of evolution, we must recognize that as a general doctrine (and the doctrine was, of course, generalized as soon as stated), it was the

ultimate in flattery and consolation to the human race. The theory that the lower form evolves into the higher implied that in society progress was inevitable and continuous; and that all change represented progress. The mere passage of time assured that today's society must be better than yesterday's; and that tomorrow's would be superior to today's, for such was the law of evolution; and the laws of evolution, like the law of gravity or any other law or proposition of the natural sciences, were immutable and discoverable. Of course, in giving it this interpretation, the nineteenth century out-Darwined Darwin, for Darwin never, I think, ascribed moral qualities to his doctrine. Evolution to him meant primarily adaptation to circumstantial environment, among creatures that had little or no capacity to change that environment. Man has within limits capacity to change himself to fit his environment, or his environment to fit himself, by the exercise of a will, individual or collective, under the influence of a mind, individual or collective, which, while not without its lucid intervals, is, from the record, erratic and circumscribed. Just as the medieval world believed it had reached the ultimate in social structure, because that structure was in accordance with the "natural law" as understood by a metaphysical mind, so the nineteenth century was convinced that it had achieved the ultimate, or at least the penultimate in social structure, because that structure was in accordance with "natural law" as understood by a physical mind. I say that the nineteenth century considered it had achieved the penultimate in social structure, for under its own doctrine of perpetual progress, further betterment was anticipated, as indeed inevitable.

But the betterments envisaged were mere modifications of, not changes in, the social structure. The Western World so persuaded itself that it had discovered, subject to a few minor and prescribed ameliorations, the final structure of society that it energetically undertook to disseminate its social philosophy throughout the world. When it encountered different social structures, it felt constrained to offer or impose its own, by persuasion if possible, by the sword, if the beneficiaries proved stubborn or recalcitrant. Nothing could be more illuminating of its conviction of rightness than its missionary zeal. Missionary zeal has commonly been a phenomenon of religion; but in the nineteenth century economics and politics were likewise the theme of missionary

zeal. The missionaries of the nineteenth century included apostles of the Cross; but they were accompanied by apostles of the industrial revolution, of the credit system, of representative, elective government—of an integral structure of the society, the established order, which to its members represented civilization exclusively. Civilization even had a distinguishing costume, and the progress of backward nations was measured (and measurable to the naked eye) by the rapidity with which populations adopted the garb worn by the inhabitants of the enlightened regions. The familiar caricature of the cannibal chief, garbed in fig-leaves, but crowned with the so-called silk or plug hat, is a lampoon, not on the cannibal, but on the society which had taken up the white man's burden to extend its blessings to "lesser breeds without the law" and believed that garb was the first evidence of conversion, not to a faith in a particular religious creed, but to faith in a whole body of economic, political and social doctrines—in short, to a particular structure of society.

This structure of nineteenth century society was a well-integrated composite of the four forms so often enumerated in this discourse; but it was, I should say, utterly unlike any the world had seen before. Previous structures had been more or less unitary (or to use the current term, totalitarian)—that is, the family, the church, the business organization and the state were merged and blended; often with the family and the church dominant, with every business organization under the protection of a patron divinity or a patron saint, and with the state as the secular arm of the church. The social structure of the nineteenth century was compartmented. Its doctrine prescribed the separation of church and state; and the separation of the state from the business organization, under the doctrine of *laisser faire*. The family concept which had dominated feudal society became relatively unimportant—birth was no longer the direct appointment of God, but an "accident"; and the traditional functional association of an individual with his relatives was discredited as "nepotism". The individual took status as an individual, not from the family relationship, as father, son, wife. In medieval, as in oriental society, woman could scarcely be said to have had status as an individual; her status derived almost entirely from her relation, as daughter, wife, mother, widow, to the family group. And as the individual had waxed, the family had waned.

The separation of Church and State was one of the most conspicuous features of the nineteenth century, even when that separation was less than formal, as in England, contrasted with the formal separation in the United States and eventually in France. Commonly in history, Church and State have been closely identified. As we said earlier, the cult of the God-Emperor was the keystone of the Roman State; and Constantine was the first emperor not to be deified in life or death. But several emperors after Constantine held the title of Pontifex Maximus or High Priest, which had descended with the imperial office from Julius Caesar. In our own time, the Kalifate was hereditary in the royal family of Turkey, and the Sultan was not merely the secular head of the Empire, but as Commander of the Faithful, was spiritual head of all Islam. We are so habituated to the more or less complete separation of Church and State, that we forget that such titles as Defender of the Faith, inherent in the British Crown, or as The Shadow of God on Earth, borne by the Sultanate, once had profound social and political significance. The separation of Church and State, so characteristic not merely factually but ideologically, of the social structure of the nineteenth century, on the whole, weakened the state and strengthened the church, in their general relation to the structure of society. For the nineteenth century church, largely relieved of political entanglements, could command the devotion of, and exert an influence on the moral sentiments of society, with a singleness impossible when those claims and influences are intermingled with primarily secular considerations. On the other hand, the identification of Church and State in Russia, involved the church in the ruin of the state. The State, completely separated from the Church, lost at least some of its moral prestige, some of its hold upon popular emotion by that separation.

But the outstanding phenomenon of the nineteenth century social structure was the predominant role of the business organization. In a century of material change and expansion, the business organization, whether manifested in manufacturing, trade or transportation, completely overshadowed the family, the church, and the state. The men who made history in the nineteenth century were business men—not statesmen or clerics. Under mercantilism, business had been man and the state master; under *laisser faire* business was master. It will be understood that I am not implying