

### CHAPTER 3 — THE MEANING OF CIVILIZATION

The word civilization comes from the Latin *civis*, a citizen. Its original meaning is, the matter or condition in which men live together as citizens. Now the relations of the citizen to other citizens, which are in their conception peaceable and friendly, involving mutual obligations, mutual rights and mutual services, spring from the relation of each citizen to a whole of which each is an integral part. That whole, from membership in which proceeds a relationship of citizens to each other, is the body politic, or political community, which we name the state, and which, struck by the analogy between it and the human body, Hobbes likened to a larger and stronger man made up by the integration of individual men, and called Leviathan.

Yet it is not this political relation, but a relation like it, that is suggested in this word civilization — a relation deeper, wider and closer than the relation of the citizen to the state, and prior to it.

There is a relation between what we call a civilization and what we call a state, but in this civilization is the antecedent and the state is the subsequent. The appearance and development of the body politic, the organized state, is the mark of civilization already in existence. And in the same way the character of the state, the nature of the laws and institutions which it enacts and enforces, indicate the character of the underlying civilization. For while civilization is a general condition, we recognize individual differences in the characteristics of civilization. We speak of ancient civilization and modern civilization; of Asiatic civilization and European civilization; of the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Chinese civilizations, as separate things, having such general likeness to each other as men have to men, but each marked by such individual characteristics that distinguish one man from other men. And whether we consider

them in their grand divisions or in their minor divisions, the line between what we call civilizations is not the line of separation between bodies politic. The United States and Canada are separate bodies politic, yet their civilization is the same. The making of the Queen of Great Britain Empress of India does not substitute the English civilization for the Indian civilization in Bengal, nor the Indian civilization for the English civilization in Yorkshire or Kent. Change in allegiance involves change in citizenship, but in itself involves no change in the civilization. The civilization is evidently a relation which underlies the relations of the body politic as the unconscious motions of the body underlie the conscious motions.

It is this body economic, or body industrial, which grows up in the cooperation of men to supply their wants and satisfy their desires, that is the real thing constituting what we call civilization. This body economic, or Greater Leviathan, always precedes and always underlies the body politic or Leviathan. The body politic or state is really an outgrowth of the body economic, in fact one of its organs, the need for which and appearance of which arises from and with its own appearance and growth. And from this relation of dependence upon the body economic, the body politic can never become exempt.

Why, then, it may be asked, is it that we take for the greater and precedent a word drawn from the lesser and subsequent, and find in the word civilization, which expresses an analogy to the body politic, the word that serves us as a name for the body economic? The reason of this is worth noting, as it flows from an important principle in the growth of human knowledge. Things that come first in the natural order are not always first apprehended. As the human eye looks out, but not in, so the human mind as it scans the world is apt to observe what is of the superstructure of things before it observes what is of the foundation.

The body politic is more obvious to our eyes, and, so to speak, makes more noise in our ears, than the unseen and silent body economic, from which it proceeds and on which it depends. Thus, in the intellectual development of mankind, it and its relations are noticed sooner and receive names earlier than the body economic. But without at present pursuing further that record of the history of thought that lies in the meaning of words, let us endeavor to see whence comes the integration of man into a body economic and how it grows.