Comte, like the ethic of Jesus which it embodies and supplements, may and will be adopted and practised by thousands to whom his philosophy will remain for ever a sealed book. "Better be a poor ploughman who serves God than a proud philosopher who knows the courses of the stars and cares not how he lives." So says the author of the *Imitation*, one of the choicest of Comte's choice books,[1] and so have said, each in his or her own dialect, all sane men and women from the foundation of the world. None the less true is it that the proud philosopher may give to his fellows something more rare and precious even than the ploughman's wheat; for man does not live by bread alone. And if the school of thought, feeling, and action to which we give the name of Positivism is to continue as an operative force during the twentieth and succeeding centuries, it is needful that there should be a sufficient number of men within that school who have trained themselves with some adequacy in the manner which I have attempted to describe; that is to say, who are prepared to ascend and descend the ladder of the sciences from Mathematics to Ethics with the steadiness and precision necessary to keep them in touch with the general current of intellectual progress in their time.

In physics, in biology, in sociology, the field remaining untilled is inconceivably vast, and division of labour in working it is carried to an extent that defeats its own object. Yet what Positivism has here to do is not blindly to decry and discourage the numberless researches that are being made by specialists. The work of Positivists is what Comte set forth in the opening lecture of that immortal course of lectures on Positive Philosophy to which men like Humboldt, Fourier, and Blainville listened with admiring sympathy. What was needed, he said, was that to the long list of bewildering specialities which enrich but which often fatally distract the intellect of our time, one more speciality should be added, consisting of systematic and continuous effort to bring new truths into harmonious relation with truths already reached; regard being always had to the proportionate importance of each in the education of the intellect for the highest service of man.[2] That speculations as to the origin of the universe and of life would be discouraged by such a scheme is true; not because some might consider them useless, but because they violate every canon of

[1] *The Imitation of Christ* is included in the last section of the Positivist Library.—ED.

[2] See *The Fundamental Principles of the Positive Philosophy*, pt. i, § 42.—ED.

scientific method. They are excluded on the grounds which exclude theological speculation, and on no other. They dissipate intellectual energy, of which the world has none too large a stock.

If any still fear that a body of teachers organized on the Positivist model might work in too narrow a groove, let them be reassured by another consideration. It formed no part of Comte's ideal that philosophy should be even in the most distant future the dominant factor in human affairs. The practical life of man, be it war or industry, will always absorb the larger part of his thoughts. Men will occupy themselves in the future far more systematically than in the past with the development of the physical resources of our planet. No one who has followed the recent course of chemical and electrical discovery can be in the least alarmed lest insufficient attention should be given to the scientific researches needed for the manipulation of the earth's elements, for the conservation of its mechanical energies, or for the rooting out of pestilent diseases. The fear is rather that, amidst the engrossing care for all that serves man's material progress, the studies that minister to his social and moral welfare should be thrown into the shade. What Positivists have to do is to see that in an age occupied, and rightly occupied, with the arts of Commerce and Industry, sufficient prominence shall be given to the Art of Life.

II

MR. SPENCER'S THEORY OF EVOLUTION[1]

THE principle which permeates Mr. Spencer's philosophical treatise, and on which its claim to be called a "Synthesis" is founded, is the process called "Evolution." Not in living bodies only, but throughout the entire universe, this principle is, according to him, in constant operation. The first volume of the *Synthetic Philosophy* is in great part occupied with the proof of its universality. It seems worth while to examine the foundation on which so vast a superstructure has been imposed.

What is Evolution? According to Mr. Spencer, it is reducible to two elementary principles—1. The Persistence of Force; 2. The Instability of the Homogeneous. Of the first of these I will say little in this paper, merely remarking that under it are embraced

[1] November, 1895.

two things not usually associated—(1) the generalization reached by observation and induction of the conservation of energy; and (2) the fact that objects occupy a certain space—the fact spoken of by older writers as the impenetrability of matter. It is the second principle—the Instability of the Homogeneous—which will be here considered. In Evolution "matter passes," says Mr. Spencer, "from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity."[1] Of the principle that the condition of homogeneity is one of unstable equilibrium several illustrations are given. Scales, however evenly poised, tend after a time to lose their balance. A mass of matter heated to a given temperature tends to cool unequally. A lump of metal exposed to air oxidizes. Certain rock-formations show in their interior successive coats indicating weather-action. The atoms of a precipitate diffuse themselves unequally throughout the liquid from which they have been precipitated. Shellac varnish poured out on a sheet of paper soon exhibits a form of structure of a cellular kind. The stars are unequally distributed throughout space; in the Milky Way there are more than in the rest of the sky. In one part of the heavens there are more nebulæ; red stars are more numerous in another part, blue stars in a third. As the earth cools from the state of primordial vapour, chemical compounds show increasing heterogeneity. (This last illustration is, of course, highly conjectural.) Such, in the inorganic world, are some of the instances of this principle. Passing to the organic world, we find it exemplified in the whole course of its development. A tree, consisting originally of a few simple cells, unfolds itself into branches, roots, leaves, and clusters of flowers. Hardly any structure can be discerned in a fertilized egg, yet it passes into the form of full-grown bird or beast.

Nevertheless, in view of the immense importance attached to this principle in Mr. Spencer's system, it seems well to ask whether it really holds good of the vast mass of natural phenomena. Is it a universal or even a general truth that "the condition of homogeneity is a condition of unstable equilibrium"?[2] It would seem that some of Mr. Spencer's instances hardly go to prove his case. When a surface of metal oxidizes under exposure to air, we have instability, not of the homogeneous, but of the heterogeneous. At the points where contact between two dissimilar bodies, air and metal, takes place we find instability and change. The interior

[1] *First Principles*, § 145.—ED.

[2] *Ibid.*, § 149.—ED.

of the metallic mass remains homogeneous and stable. Similarly the shellac, while enclosed in its vessel, fails to exhibit the changes which exposure to the air induces. It is the complicating circumstances of mechanical division and atmospheric action which develop the cellular structure. Take, again, the case of a nebula that may be supposed to have condensed into a meteorite. Its internal motion is dissipated; its temperature has fallen to absolute zero. Its composition we may suppose to be iron, or a mixture of iron and nickel. In that condition it may remain aeon after aeon. The equilibrium of its molecules will be disturbed by incident forces, as by radiant heat from the sun and stars falling unequally on various portions of its surface; but the equilibrium is stable, not unstable. After disturbance it is restored. In such a condition, apparently, the moon is now, has been for countless ages, and will remain, so far as we can see, for millenniums to come.

If we were asked to specify an instance of homogeneous matter, we could hardly do wrong in taking a sample of gold. Gold ornaments were dug out by Dr. Schliemann from the plains of Troy. Into the quartz rock or alluvial deposit whence the old miners took the metal we cannot go back; but from that time onwards how numerous and diverse have been the incident forces that have played upon it. The hammer and file of the primitive goldsmiths, the bodily temperature of those who wore the bracelets, the torchlight of Priam's palace, the heat of burning Troy, the forces of heat and moisture which have acted on them underground for three thousand years—all these things have disturbed the equilibrium of its molecules. But the equilibrium has been stable. The ornaments remain pure gold still, just as the lump of platinum, ordered by Act of Parliament to be deposited in the office of the Exchequer as the standard of a pound weight, remains a pound still. The crust of the earth consists of aggregates of matter, not absolutely, but relatively, homogeneous. Most of them are comparatively simple compounds of two elements, as in the case of silica, or of three, as carbonate of lime, and the like. Now, supposing that the St. Gothard mountain had been pierced by the ancient Romans or by the earliest races of pre-glacial man, is there any reason to think that the borings so extracted would have differed from those removed from the tunnel a few years ago? Passing from the earth's crust to its gaseous and liquid envelopes, we find two substances not absolutely homogeneous, but still of extremely simple composition and of uniform structure, which

have been exposed for countless ages to the play of very varied forces—gravity, heat, light, electricity, and the like. Yet here also the conclusion is the same. There is no reason to suppose the constitution of the atmosphere or of the sea to have materially altered during the time that man has lived upon the earth.

It thus appears extremely doubtful whether the doctrine of the Instability of the Homogeneous, one of the two pillars by which the philosophy of Evolution is supported, be a true one. That the equilibrium of homogeneous matter is subject to continual disturbance is, of course, certain. Every incident force disturbs it. But that the equilibrium is unstable is a far more disputable thesis. It would be hard to show that masses of heterogeneous matter are more stable than masses of homogeneous matter. Many facts could be adduced to the contrary. Contact of dissimilar substances gives rise to disturbances that would not have taken place had the substances been similar. Though some alloys are extremely stable, yet many metallic mixtures are far less stable than the metals composing them would be if left unmixed. It might be maintained, with considerable weight of evidence, that masses of matter are stable in proportion to their homogeneity, and inversely as their heterogeneity. But it is not needful, for the purpose in view, to advance any contrary thesis of this kind. The view here expressed is one of scepticism as to the possibility of summing up the facts of the cosmos in any single formula whatsoever. The vast superstructure raised by Mr. Spencer on so very slender a foundation has made it worth while to examine this foundation. It turns out to be not only slender, but unsound.

The aim of the *Synthetic Philosophy* is somewhat ambitious. Its final problem, in the words of its author, is "to seek a law of composition of phenomena, co-extensive with the laws of their components."[1] "We want," he says, "the law of the continuous redistribution of matter and motion,"[2] the "history of the appearance of things out of the imperceptible, and of their disappearance into the imperceptible."[3] "We have not acquired all the information within the grasp of our intelligence until we can, in some way or other, express the whole past and the whole future of each object and the aggregate of objects."[4]

Again we ask the question, Is this aim attainable? Does it lie within the scope of human faculty to write the story of the sum of things, from the beginning to the end? In other words,

[1] *First Principles*, § 92.
[2] *Ibid.*, § 92.
[3] *Ibid.*, § 93.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2nd ed., § 93.

is an Objective Synthesis possible? To a student of the history of thought the rise, progress, decline, and fall of Cartesianism supply the answer. Descartes, two centuries and a half ago, attempted to construct the law of the "continuous redistribution of matter and motion." He tried to tell the "history of the appearance of things out of the imperceptible, and of their disappearance into the imperceptible." Like Mr. Spencer, he began by conceiving a homogeneous medium pervading space. He introduced the finger of God to implant a single simple motion within this medium. This given, he sought to prove that by a process of evolution, by the play of natural forces, all the phenomena of nature, from the solar system to the conformation of plants, animals, and men, would follow in due course. During the middle of the seventeenth century this conception reigned supreme, and it supplied an extraordinary stimulus to mathematical and physical discovery. Then came Newton's great discovery, which broke up the unity of the synthesis. The force of gravitation, and the demonstration of the way in which planetary motions were governed by it, would not fit into the Cartesian hypothesis. The progress of physics and chemistry during the eighteenth century made it more and more clear that each department of science had its own distinct methods, requiring its own observations and inductions, and was not to be spun out in a philosopher's study by any monistic principles. Some labour was expended by Laplace in bringing the facts of chemical attraction within the range of the law of gravitation. But the effort failed utterly. In chemistry we have to study separately seventy different kinds of matter, availing ourselves, no doubt, not merely of directly chemical methods of research, but of the biological methods of comparison which in recent years have thrown light on chemical science.[1] But vague principles like the Instability of the Homogeneous do not help us forward an inch. So far as we know, all the seventy elements are stable. Some are more ready to enter into combination than others; some are more indifferent. But, so far as we know, they have remained the same throughout the earth's history. The qualities of each one of them have to be determined by special researches. No convenient generalization will dispense us from this duty.

[1] Dr. Bridges refers to the work of Newlands, L. Meyer, and Mendeléeff on the natural classification of the elements.—ED.

Remarks of Mr. Spencer on the Foregoing Paper[1]

Dr. Bridges says that, "according to Mr. Spencer, Evolution is reducible to two elementary principles"—"the persistence of force" and "the instability of the homogeneous."

1. The persistence of force is not represented by me as an elementary principle of Evolution, but as an elementary principle underlying all physical changes whatever—Dissolution just as much as Evolution.

2. Among several *derivative* principles which determine the order of physical changes, there are two which are directly concerned with Evolution—the Instability of the Homogeneous and the Multiplication of Effects, the last of which Dr. Bridges does not mention.

3. But neither of these is the primary principle of Evolution, as will be seen on reading the definition given on p. 396 of *First Principles*[2]: "*Evolution is an integration of matter, and concomitant dissipation of motion;* during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation." The first clause of this definition, marked by italics, which is ignored by Dr. Bridges, is that which expresses the primary and universal trait of Evolution; while the remaining clauses express secondary traits, which, though extremely general, are, for reasons shown, not universal. In the chapters on "Evolution and Dissolution" and "Simple and Compound Evolution" this truth is variously set forth.

4. The definition states that the change (not from homogeneity to heterogeneity, but from *indefinite* homogeneity to *definite* heterogeneity—an all-important distinction) is one which takes place "*during*" the integration of matter and dissipation of motion. No other increase of heterogeneity than that which accompanies progressive integration is said to be a part of Evolution; other increases of heterogeneity (always *in*definite, however) often form a part of Dissolution (pp. 362–4).

5. In the chapter on "Equilibration" it is shown that the process of Evolution, as above defined, ends in equilibrium, and that an evolving aggregate, having reached this state, thereafter continues without further change until there is set up the counter-process of Dissolution; which may commence in a few days, as in an

[1] *Positivist Review* of January, 1896.—Ed.

[2] Second edition.—Ed.

organic body, or may be postponed for millions of years, as in the inorganic components of the earth's crust (p. 526), or may be postponed, as in the case of celestial bodies, for probably billions of years, if we accept the views of Lord Kelvin and others. But, in any case, the hypothesis implies that, when the transformations accompanying the integration of matter and dissipation of motion have been gone through, no further changes of structure are to be looked for till Dissolution commences.

The objections raised by Dr. Bridges result from overlooking one or other of these propositions set forth in *First Principles*.

Reply to Mr. Spencer[1]

It was no part of my purpose to deal *in extenso* with the complete theory of Evolution propounded in Mr. Spencer's philosophical treatise. Such an attempt would have been futile within the limits of a paper, or of a series of papers, in this *Review*. I had been dealing, not with Mr. Spencer's general theory of Evolution, but with that special part of it designated as the "Instability of the Homogeneous." This Mr. Spencer speaks of as one "among several *derivative* principles which determine the order of physical changes," and one of "two which are directly concerned with Evolution." I am not quite clear in what sense this principle is called "derivative." But it is certain that much is derived from it. Readers of *First Principles* are well aware of the prominent position which it occupies. The purport of my paper was to inquire how far this principle can be regarded as well founded. It must rest, like every other physical law, upon inductions from facts. It appeared to me, and still appears, that facts do not support it. The whole science of chemistry seems to me to show that heterogeneous matter is, on the whole, less stable than homogeneous. Binary compounds are less stable than elements, and more stable than quaternary compounds. So complex a substance as albumen, consisting of some hundreds of atoms, is even more unstable.

To inferences from such facts as these an answer is suggested by Mr. Spencer. The stable substances of which I spoke may be regarded as having arrived at a state of equilibrium. "An evolving aggregate, having reached this state, thereafter continues without further change until there is set up the counter-process of Dissolution." In the case of the inorganic components of the earth's

[1] *I.e.*, Dr. Bridges' reply to Mr. Spencer's criticism of his paper.—Ed.

crust, this latter process may be postponed, Mr. Spencer goes on to say, for millions of years. But does not this way of looking at the matter remove the question altogether from the domain of scientific observation? Our knowledge of what may have happened millions of years ago, of what may happen millions of years hence, is not likely to be other than shadowy. We can only examine to any fruitful purpose matter as known to us within the few thousand years of man's recorded experience. To say of homogeneous matter, when shown to be stable, that this is because it is in a state of equilibrium, strikes me as little more than a verbal escape from the controversy. We can only speak of matter as presented to us within the range of man's knowledge. Is the homogeneous matter which we see around us more or less unstable than the heterogeneous matter? That, and that only, was the question to which I attempted a reply.

Consideration of this question suggests a further and a larger one —How far is the process of Evolution rightly attributed to the inorganic world? The hypothesis of Descartes, that at some time a homogeneous medium filled space, and that from this medium the universe as we know it has been gradually evolved, has been put into mathematical shape, at any rate so far as the solar system is concerned, by Laplace;[1] but it remains a hypothesis still. It is not amenable to proof or disproof.

With the organic world, how striking is the contrast! There, in every animal born into the world, in every germinating seed, in every bud of every tree, the process can be watched and traced at all stages. Ontogeny, the growth of individuals, throws light on phylogeny, the succession of species. In one case, as in the other, the motive forces may remain long hidden from us, perhaps may never be fully revealed. The Newton of organic life may be long in coming. But the work done by Kepler for the solar system, the tracing of the path followed by life upon our planet, has already in great part been accomplished.

III

CLASSIFICATION OF THE SCIENCES

"A TRUE classification," says Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his well-

[1] In his nebular hypothesis.—ED.

known criticism of Comte's philosophy,[1] "includes in each class those objects which have more characteristics in common with one another than any of them have in common with any objects excluded from the class. Further, the characteristics possessed in common by the colligated objects, and not possessed by other objects, are more radical than any characteristics possessed in common with other objects; involve more numerous dependent characteristics."

Accepting Mr. Spencer's proposition as a starting-point, it seems worth while to examine whether the classification proposed by him fulfils the object in view more effectually than that set forth by Auguste Comte. Mr. Spencer arranges the sciences in three distinct groups. Group A includes Logic and Mathematics under the head of Abstract Science. Group B, termed Abstract-Concrete Science, takes in Mechanics, Chemistry, and Physics commonly so-called, including the sciences of Heat, Light, Electricity, and Magnetism. Group C, spoken of as Concrete Science, includes Astronomy, sidereal and solar, Mineralogy, solar and terrestrial, Biology, and Sociology. The science of Ethics finds no place. It will be seen that Astronomy is entirely separated both from Mechanics and Geometry, and is placed in the same group with Geology, Mineralogy, Biology, and Sociology; that Logic and Mathematics hold an equal rank in the first group, and that Geometry and Mechanics are placed in totally distinct groups. It seems questionable whether the canon of placing together those objects which have more characteristics in common with one another than they have with objects excluded from the class has been complied with.

In contrast with this scheme of classification we find that the method adopted by Comte is serial: the terms are consecutive, following each other on the principle of increasing complexity and diminishing generality.[2] In examining the series, therefore, we may begin at either end. And in the first place we may find it convenient to begin with the most special and complex term, that which is the final goal of our intellectual efforts, the study of the conduct of civilized man, commonly called Moral Science or Ethics. The advantage of beginning at this end is obvious. No object of research can possibly be so important to man as that which promises guidance to his life and action. Classification, let us always remember, is not knowledge; it is only an instrument

[1] *The Classification of the Sciences: to which are added Reasons for dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte;* 1864.—ED.

[2] See p. 162 (note 2).

helping the acquisition of knowledge. And be it further remembered that knowledge is not an end in itself. Right action is. Fixing our eyes in the first place on the summit to be reached, we shall be the better able to estimate the steps needed for reaching that summit.

Now, it is evident that Man, considered as a moral agent, is dependent on civilization which surrounds him, and which supplies the framework of his life. The land he lives in, the nation into which he is born, its laws, its habits, its religion, fix certain limits to his action which he cannot pass any more than he can jump off his own shadow. Within those limits he may act well or ill on the impulse of noble ideals or enslaving passions. So that Ethics is not a mere branch of Sociology; it has a sphere of its own. Man is not the *slave* of his surroundings. He is a free agent within the limits which those surroundings determine. But, though Ethics is distinct from Sociology, it is largely dependent on it. Our life and action is moulded for good and for evil by the life and action of the community to which we belong.

Sociology, containing the laws governing the collective action of human beings, is evidently something more than a branch of Biology. It has data and inductions of its own. It has in the first place to consider those elementary relations of family, of government, of property, of language, which render the simplest community possible and permanent. And, in the second place, it has to deal with the force exerted upon each generation by the accumulated actions of the generations which have gone before it. It is therefore a distinct science. On the other hand, the collective action of human beings cannot be adequately defined without preliminary knowledge of the constitution of the beings who are acting in common. Sociology is a higher mode of vitality dependent on the laws common to all vitality. Underlying the relations of man with man are the instincts, passions, capacities, and needs shared by man with other animal races. The social history of man depends on the natural history of man. Sociology rests on Biology.

Few words are needed to show that the laws governing organized beings are incomprehensible apart from knowledge of the inorganic world. Every act of a living body is a physical or chemical phenomenon. The very essence of life is the series of actions and reactions between organism and environment. Regarded as a series, it is entirely distinct from any sequence of actions seen in inorganic nature. It is therefore the subject of a distinct science. Nevertheless, till chemistry was founded by Lavoisier and his

contemporaries, till the composition of air and water was known and combustion became intelligible, no scientific study of life was possible. Biology is thus dependent on the sciences summed up in the word Cosmology; the laws of the inorganic forces in the earth around us, the arrangements of the solar system governing the distribution to the earth of pressure, of light, of temperature.

And finally the study of these forces is subordinate to the laws of number and space, which alone constitute complete knowledge. A law of nature, when perfectly determined, implies that the relation established by the law is defined with numerical precision. Given the height from which a body falls to any given point of the earth's surface, we are able to predict the precise duration of the fall. Given the diameter of a sphere, we can assert its area and its content.[1] Laws of this kind are types of ideal perfection in science, only to be reached when the phenomena between which the relation is established are of the simplest and most general kind. In other cases certainty is attainable, but precision is not. Biological laws are not inferior in certainty to those of solar astronomy. It is as certain that each one of us will die as that eclipses of the sun will occur as set down in the almanac. But the time of the eclipse can be predicted within three seconds; not so the time of our death.

To pass, as we have been doing, from the final and most complex term of this scientific series to its simplest initial term facilitates the reverse process by defining from the outset its directly human purpose. Following now the order from simple to complex, from general to special, we begin with the phenomena common to all objects without exception—those of number, space, and motion. We come next to the analysis of the facts of the world we live in, including the facts of our planetary system so far as they affect that world; each class of facts or properties becoming the subject of a distinct science. We pass finally to the facts peculiar to living inhabitants of the world. Beginning with those common to all living bodies, we pass to those distinctive of animal life, rising from the lowest grades of the scale to the highest; in this last, considering further the facts peculiar to combinations of lives,[2] and ending finally with the facts of individuals as moulded by collective life.[3]

In this serial arrangement of the sciences, the first point to be

[1] *Cf.* p. 170.—ED. [2] The facts of Sociology.—ED.
[3] The facts of Ethics.—ED.

noted is its orderly and homogeneous character, and the simplicity of the transition from each term to that which follows. The series is discontinuous; each science has inductions of its own, while each depends on the deductions received from that which precedes it in the scale. Especially in the transition from Cosmology to Biology is the discontinuity to be noted. No arrangement of inorganic forces that we can devise will produce life; though each act of life involves the play of one or more of these forces. A second and more important point to be noted is that the laws of which the arrangement is considered are abstract, not concrete. We are dealing not with objects, but with properties common to groups of objects. In the case of Mathematics this is obvious. Nor is it less so in the case of Physics. Here what is examined is not this or that mass of ice, this or that burning body, but the laws of heat; similarly in the case of weight, sound, electricity, chemical affinity. But we are met here by the objection that between Mathematics and Physics Comte interposes the science of Astronomy; the examination of bodies other than our earth. Evidently, if Geology, Mineralogy, Meteorology are concrete sciences, each of them dealing not with a single inorganic force, but with a complex result of many of them, the same must be the case with the natural history of the stars, their distribution in space, their evolution from an undifferentiated or slightly differentiated nebula to the complex of numerous chemical components of which we are beginning to have some vague and imperfect knowledge.

There would be no answer to this objection unless we made it quite clear what we understand as the content of the science of Astronomy. If we mean by it the study of all the bodies visible in the heavens, we are obviously embarking on a vast abyss of composite researches to which no limit can be assigned, and which leads to regions infinitely remote from human interests. But sidereal astronomy forms no part of the *scala intellectus*—the ladder of the sciences constructed by Comte as an instrument for bringing scientific method to bear upon human life. Considering that with regard to all but an infinitely small fraction of the stars visible through the telescope or through the far-reaching process of photography we have no adequate ground for asserting that their motions are regulated by the law of gravitation, it is plain truth to state that they lie beyond the scope of science. Nor can we conceive them brought within this scope except on the condition that the same scientific process which should achieve

such a triumph should, at the same time, reveal new series of worlds yet more numerous, remote, and inaccessible.

Astronomy, as understood in the Comtian scheme, is limited to the humble sphere of the solar system, in which those few celestial bodies which most nearly influence terrestrial life illustrate the laws of form and motion which we have learnt in mathematics, uncomplicated by the phenomena of temperature, atmospheric pressure, and the like, which in terrestrial physics render each problem so refractory to exact solution. Looked at from the mathematical side, astronomical laws form a series of illustrations of geometrical laws. Looked at from the human side, they throw indispensable light on the conditions of human existence, which any considerable change in the inclination of the earth's orbit, in the velocity of its rotation, or in the size and distance of its satellite, would modify or subvert.

In Mr. Spencer's classification laws of Motion are placed in one of his fundamental groups, laws of Physics in a second, Astronomy being ranged with Biology and Sociology in a third. It is difficult to see what purpose is served by such a scheme. To say that the sciences of the third group are concrete, those of the first being abstract, and those of the second partly abstract, partly concrete, is not satisfying. The Biology which in Comte's plan forms the link between the study of the World and the study of Man is abstract biology, not concrete. It is the study of life as found in all organisms, not the study of the life-history of any particular organism. Abstraction admits of degrees. Admit that the simplest fact of life implies the combined play of many physical forces, it remains none the less desirable to abstract the conception of life as found in all organisms from the study of a special form of life as seen in any one organism. In this sense Biology may be as abstract as Physics or Chemistry. The analysis, for instance, of organs into tissues implies the abstract consideration of the vitality of each tissue—an abstraction which corresponds to no concrete reality.

It is the same with Sociology. The complexity of the simplest social fact is far greater than anything met with in Biology. None the less is it possible to abstract from the phenomena presented by various actual communities the characteristics common to all in every phase of their evolution; and again, from studying the concrete evolution of many, to arrive at the abstract laws of evolution which all tend more or less completely to follow. Here, as in Biology, we have to analyse the organism, and make

a separate study of each tissue composing it. Family life, property, language, the rise of spiritual and temporal government, have all to be examined separately, though obviously they have no separate existence. The history of man or of any nation does not reveal the laws of evolution. All that it can do is to supply the material from which, by abstraction and generalization, these laws are to be inferred. To predict the action of any particular nation, or even to explain its past action, is a problem of vastly greater complexity usually transcending human powers. Considerations of race, climate, external circumstances, intervene, just as atmospheric resistance interferes with the prediction of the path of a cannon-ball.

At the summit of the scale[1] we find the meeting-point of abstraction and reality, of practice and theory, of art and science. It is only in a qualified sense that we can speak of the science of human conduct, although it is certain that, with every advance towards perfection, man's action becomes more and more capable of prediction. If we conceive as a Utopia a society of perfect men, conduct would at once become free and certain.

On the whole, then, it would seem that Comte's purpose in framing his classification of the sciences was not to present an explanation of the Universe, but the aim of rendering the sciences more and more amenable to the service of Man.

IV

THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMTE[2]

POSITIVISM is an attempt to systematize human life upon the basis of such knowledge as is available to Man. The Positive Philosophy presents that basis. The word *philosophy* implies the *ensemble* of the methods of inquiry, and of the most general of the results arrived at. Philosophy and science are not separate departments of thought. They are but different ways of regarding the same thing. The streets and houses of a city may either be regarded as separate objects or as parts of a whole. The former point of view corresponds to the scientific, the latter to the philosophic standpoint. Philosophy is an *ensemble* of scientific truths. What is

[1] Ethics.—ED.

[2] A posthumous paper read before the Aristotelian Society in 1881.—ED.

unscientific is *ipso facto* unphilosophic. A city is made up of streets, houses, and men, not of clouds, fogs, and haloes. Of discussions about the "*absolute ego*" it may be doubted whether they are entitled to the term philosophical, since they do not correspond to any scientific truth.

Positivism is then in the first place phenomenistic, as opposed to ontological. It deals with appearances; not merely with what appears to the eye, to the ear, or to the fingers, but with inward appearances also. A dream is an appearance; hunger is an appearance; a fit of anger is an appearance. These things form matter for scientific inquiry, therefore for philosophical discussion, no less than a flash of lightning, or a fossil skeleton, or a language. The order in which these appearances present themselves, the ways in which they coexist, or succeed one another, form the subject-matter of science, and therefore also the subject-matter of philosophy. For, to use my former simile, if houses are built of bricks and stones, so are cities.

Many schools of philosophy have said: These things are appearances, shadows of realities merely; your business is to go behind, and see the real things of which these are the shadows. Go still farther, Plato would have added, and see what the light is which casts the shadows.

To this the Positivist has but one answer: We have tried, we find we cannot; therefore we do not try any longer. Do not accuse us of denying the reality of these underlying things: we neither deny them nor assert them; we simply say that we have no means of finding out anything about them; this being the case, we think it an idle waste of words to talk about them. Our predecessors tried to find out something about the matter during a long course of centuries. It is for us to profit by the experience of their failure.

Other schools of philosophy say: We, like you, are Phenomenists. We give up the discussion of underlying substances. We, like you, limit ourselves to appearances. What causes these appearances may be God, or Force, or Will, or anything you choose to imagine. But we abandon the inquiry into these things because our powers are entirely insufficient to deal with them. In this respect you and we are at one.

But—they continue—these appearances, whether hunger, or thirst, or love, or anger on the one hand, or sticks and stones, trees and houses on the other, are reducible to feelings; to facts of consciousness. The business of the philosopher, then, is to analyse consciousness.

To this the reply of the Positivist is: Yes, certainly, provided only you can do it. But you must allow us to be somewhat sceptical on this point. There is a peculiar difficulty which meets us at the outset, which is this: It is hard to be at one and the same time the analyser and the thing analysed. If I devote the whole force of my mind to meditating on some difficult problem, I cannot at the same time be thinking how I am meditating. If I am to think how I am thinking, the subject-matter of my thoughts must be of the most elementary kind, as that two and two make four, or that the whole is greater than its parts. So that this self-analysis of thinking fails me just at the times when it is most wanted.

You are thrown back, therefore, on the memory of past processes of thought. And there can be no doubt that such memories, carefully recorded, like careful records of dreams, do form valuable material for scientific thought. But in the Positive Philosophy they occupy a somewhat secondary and subordinate place. The process of analysing, not consciousness, but memories of consciousness, has not shown itself so fruitful, so fertile in result, as to warrant the very high claims sometimes made for it. And one reason amongst others is that by far the larger part of mental processes are performed unconsciously. In very many great discoveries, in very many great poetic creations, in the strongest storms of passion, in the most strenuous exercise of will, there is no consciousness, therefore no memory of consciousness: therefore nothing to analyse.

Relegating, then, the criticism of consciousness to a subordinate place, Comte considered it more profitable to investigate the laws of Mind by examining the results which mind had achieved. And this is to be done, not by taking any individual mind, but by considering the whole procession of minds throughout history. Hence the frequent identification, which has puzzled so many of Comte's readers, of intellectual laws with sociological laws. An intellectual product, a scientific discovery of any kind, is a sociological fact. It is the result of slow evolution, of the working together of many minds in a sufficiently-adapted set of circumstances, throughout many generations. Taking a broad view of the facts presented by history, Comte was led to the conclusion that the mind dealing with the facts presented to it changed its point of view according to a definite law.

That law was the well-known law of the three stages: this tendency of the mind to resort in the first place to fictitious

explanations of phenomena derived from the attribution of its own internal emotions to outward objects; to limit itself in the last place to finding out laws, or general facts, of coexistence and succession; and, between the first stage and the last, to pass through a set of intermediate stages called by Comte metaphysical, in which abstractions and long, obscure words were made to do duty for facts and realities.[1]

Here, then, is an attempt at presenting a law of Mind: a law of the evolution followed by Mind. But observe that this law is only to be discovered in the collective mind of the race. In individual evolution it is only traceable after the evolution on the grander scale has opened our eyes. So that in the Comtian philosophy the study of mind is inseparably bound up with the study of the social evolution. It cannot be separated from it. Mind, in all its higher manifestations, is a social phenomenon.

To take another illustration. In attempting the problem which Gall had previously attacked with such very indifferent success, of defining the separate and distinct functions of the brain, the newest part of Comte's work was his description of the intellectual functions.[2] Of these Comte distinguished five. For my present purpose I will only mention two of these: the function of induction, or generalization; the function of deduction, or co-ordination.[3] To these, as to all other elementary brain functions, Comte allotted, provisionally and hypothetically, distinct regions of the brain as organs. Now, I am not about to discuss Comte's hypothesis of cerebral organs and functions. I pass it with the bare remark that recent discoveries of science tend rather to confirm than to invalidate the conception of a possible phrenology. But the point to which I wish to call attention is this: These two functions of induction and deduction are far too slightly marked in animals or in the great majority of individual men to be appreciated, at least in the first instance, in them. To discover and distinguish them we need the examination of the greatest intellectual work done by a long succession of great thinkers: we need to study the history of Discovery, as presented in a long series of generations.

Thus the conception of Humanity enters into the Comtian method of thought no less than it forms the centre of the Comtian theory and practice of social and moral life. The set of phenomena

[1] *Cf.* p. 90 (note 1).

[2] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. i, pp. 571-84.—ED.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 581.—ED.

which we call mental are to be studied in the collective organism with far greater profit than in the individual organism. To attempt a solution of the highest intellectual problems by analysing individual consciousness is like attempting to define the physical character of the Thames river basin by looking at a bottle of water filled at London Bridge.

This point of view disposes of one of the objections which I have heard made against Comte's philosophy—namely, that it is partial, that it is not sufficiently comprehensive. It devotes much consideration, the objector says, to one set of facts—the facts concerned with the collective evolution of mankind. But, important though these facts be, they form a very small fraction of the sum of things.

Certainly they do so. But I had supposed that the attempt to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the sum of things was generally abandoned by modern thinkers as chimerical. I am writing from the point of view of one who believes theology to be impossible, and also ontology to be impossible—that is to say, that we have no knowledge, and can have no knowledge, of the ultimate causes that have brought about the sum of things that we call the World and Life. We are reduced, then, to the study of Man and his Environment; and whether we study Man in the first place on the larger scale of Mankind, or whether we analyse the consciousness of an individual, in either case we are dealing with a small fraction of the sum of things. Outside the most distant star that sends a glimmering ray to man's retina there lie immeasurable universes—only we have no means of studying them.

To sum up these few remarks, which, of course, deal, and that in the most cursory way, with one or two leading aspects only of the Comtian philosophy. It is, as it has been often described, to this extent a completion of the Baconian philosophy, that it is an attempt, and it is the first systematic attempt ever made, to apply the inductive method to moral and intellectual phenomena. It is no less iconoclastic than Bacon was, of the four idols of the understanding: those of the Tribe, the Den, the Market, and the Theatre. Bacon's description of these in the first book of the *Novum Organum* forms perhaps the best introduction to the study of Positive Philosophy.[1]

As good an illustration as can be given of the spirit of Comte's

[1] *Cf.* pp. 45–46.—ED.

teaching in these matters is his way of regarding the principle of the uniformity of Nature—*i.e.*, of the existence of Law in every branch of phenomena from arithmetic to moral action. Now, Mr. Herbert Spencer attempts to deduce this uniformity from an *a priori* axiom, the contrary of which is unthinkable. That principle, with Mr. Spencer, is the Persistence of Force, including under the word *Force* space-occupying Force, or Body, as well as change-working Force, or Energy. "The sole truth," says Mr. Spencer, "which transcends experience by underlying it, is thus the persistence of Force. This, being the basis of experience, must be the basis of any scientific organization of experiences. To this an ultimate analysis brings us down, and on this a rational synthesis must build up."[1]

Now, Comte's mode of treating this principle of the uniformity of Nature is simply to regard it as an inductive generalization, slowly reached by the human mind after a long course of observation and meditation carried on for centuries, and only just reaching completion in our own time. We hardly realize how recent the conception really is. When I was a boy at Oxford, prayers for fine weather or for rain hardly moved a smile. The existence of Law in spiritual phenomena was being defended by a theological lecturer in the University pulpit; but the lectures caused considerable scandal through the University. Now, the thesis has become such a commonplace that the contrary of it, according to Mr. Spencer, is not thinkable. In this use of the word *thinkable* there lies the opposition between Mr. Spencer's philosophy and Comte's.

To the Positivist the contrary of the doctrine seems perfectly thinkable. And, indeed, the majority of the human race still think it. We are content to say that observation and induction, carried on through a long course of generations, show to us the existence of uniformity in every department of phenomena. We accordingly take it for one of our fundamental axioms.

Comte calls his work a Synthesis. Mr. Spencer calls his work a Synthetic Philosophy. The contrast between the two systems may be best understood by asking what is, in each philosophy, the keystone which holds the arch together? What is the unifying principle of the Synthesis?

With Mr. Spencer it is the Principle of Evolution and Dissolution. All things in the universe, from the smallest organism to the

[1] *First Principles*, 2nd ed., § 62.—ED.

vastest sidereal system, undergo a gradual change from indefinite homogeneity to definite heterogeneity. All things ultimately undergo the reverse process, and pass through a retrograde cycle of changes back again to primitive uniformity. Throughout the infinity of Time go on these successive alternations of Evolution and Dissolution. Such is the synthetic principle underlying and pervading Mr. Spencer's philosophical system.

The principle of Comte's Synthesis is, it need not be said, profoundly different. Abandoning all attempt to comprehend the sum of things as an effort wholly beyond our powers, it is content to regard human life in relation to its environment. But it maintains that human life can be best understood by study of the collective life of Humanity.

> Entre l'homme et le monde, il faut l'Humanité.[1]
> Between Man and the World, we need Humanity.

[1] See p. 104 (note 3).

CHAPTER III

THE POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY

I

THE MEANING OF THE WORD "POSITIVE"[1]

SURPRISE has been expressed that Comte should have used the word *Positive* to denote his doctrine. Would not *Humanist* have been a better choice? Indeed, almost any word would have been more suitable, it is thought, than one implying dry dogmatic assertion, or solid utilitarian comfort, rather than ideal aspirations for the good of mankind.

1. The paradox seems worth explaining. Let us begin by taking the more usual acceptations of the word, and let us see what follows from them. And first it will be clear that by *Positive* we mean what is *real* as opposed to what is imaginary or miraculous. "Real" comes from the Latin word for "thing," and it is used for all thoughts about things built up from material supplied from our own experience. If we are told of salamanders living in flame, or of a man being in two distinct places at the same moment, we say the tale is unreal. A man living in a hot climate, when told for the first time of solid water, thinks it a falsehood; he has no experience of such things. For him it is unreal till repeated testimony has supplied the place of experience. It may be said that a great part of our science deals with abstractions which are not real; such as length without breadth, length and breadth without depth, perfectly rigid bodies, perfect fluids, and so on. Here we take one phenomenon or fact from the bundle of facts in which we find it, and examine this fact and others like it so as to discover their laws or the properties which they hold in common—the laws of space, of weight, of heat, and so on. When we say that a

[1] This paper is an exposition of the seven meanings attached by Comte to the word *positive*. See the *Discourse on the Positive Spirit*, Eng. tr., pp. 65–70; also *Pos. Pol.*, vol. i, p. 45, or *General View*, pp. 41–42; and *Appeal to Conservatives*, p. 46.—ED.

straight line is the shortest distance between two points, or that two sides of a triangle are greater than the third, we are evidently talking of something real. Though a straight line, in the strict sense of the word, length without breadth or depth, has no independent existence, yet it is a real fact or phenomenon found associated with others, and taken away, or, as we say, abstracted from those others for the purpose of scientific research. If we took a brick and considered all its attributes at once—its length, breadth, and depth, its weight, hardness, colour, conductivity of heat and electricity, chemical composition, and so on—we should make no way at all. All these things, in turn, are objects of so many different branches of scientific speculation. Each of these branches deals with something real, though our plan of abstracting each in turn from the complex whole to which it belongs is an artifice rendered necessary by the feebleness of our intellectual powers.

On the other hand, many of our abstractions are unreal, and lead to much vain and frivolous expenditure of intellectual energy. This comes from the need of using symbols to describe them, and from having no image to give vividness to the symbol. In the case of the concrete object—the brick, for instance—the word we use is, of course, a mere sign or symbol; but along with the word goes a mental picture or image of the thing which keeps our thoughts from wandering away from it and from confounding it with slates, tiles, and other building materials. But no such image helps us with the abstraction. Here the symbol has to stand alone. We have no picture of its weight, its chemical composition, its cohesiveness, and other qualities. It is in dealing with symbols pure and simple that unreality creeps in. A few instances will make this clear. In English grammar, as taught in our elementary schools, the child is taught that in such a sentence as this, "The bird builds a nest," the word *nest* is in the *objective case*—an abstraction totally incomprehensible, not only by the child, but by any intelligent person. In an inflexional language like Latin or Greek the word for *nest* would have a special termination indicating to the reader or hearer that some action was being performed on it by the bird. This termination receives, very naturally, a name in such languages. It is called the accusative or objective case ("case" meaning "accident," something which happens to the word). But to extend this abstraction to an English sentence, where the word is left unchanged and nothing whatever happens to it, is an instance of an unreal abstraction, a symbol corresponding to nothing symbolized;

and it is a peculiarly mischievous instance because it is presented to very young children, and, along with many other equally glaring unrealities, it habituates them to use words without attaching any meaning to them.

Whenever we use symbols without images we are liable to lose hold of reality. Many philosophical discussions remind us of juggling with the shares of speculative mining companies on the Stock Exchange. The shares represent no silver or gold—nothing but the hope of selling them for a higher price than they were bought at. Many scholastic and theological debates, whether in the Middle Ages or in modern times, correspond to no realities whatever—are due simply to the hope of winning fame by triumphant dialectical skill. Certain algebraists of our own time, starting from the fact that an equation with three unknown quantities—x, y, and z—corresponds to the length, breadth, and depth of a portion of space that is being examined, bethought themselves of adding a fourth unknown quantity, and thus of discovering the properties of a new kind of space which was to have four, or indeed any number whatever, of dimensions. Unreal speculation could hardly be pushed farther. But the whole domain of theology and metaphysics abounds with similar examples. By *Positive*, then, we mean, in the first place, *real*.

2. The number of possible inquiries into truth being infinite, and human faculties being finite, we have to choose to which we shall devote our attention. Evidently some are more important than others. In the early ages of man this was too obvious to need thinking about, since every energy was absorbed in hunting for food and in attack or defence against foes. But as soon as the formation of capital made it possible for a leisured class to live at ease on the labour of others, without making any return for it, to avoid a life of this kind has been one of the first obligations of morality. A life of pure speculation, held by thinkers of antiquity to be the highest, implies that a certain number of hewers of wood and drawers of water spend their lives in supplying the philosopher with food, clothing, and lodging. To impose legal trammels on thought would be fatal to intellectual progress. But morally the thinker lies under the same obligations as any other citizen. His energies ought to be spent in such ways as will, in his judgment, promote, directly or indirectly, the welfare of man. Archimedes was called away from his geometrical speculations to invent military engines for the defence of Syracuse. This he did, but reverted as soon as possible to his proper work of measuring the sphere and parabola—work

which, though of no immediate practical application, was of momentous importance to future generations.[1]

It is clear that truths ascertainable by man are infinite, and that some are better worth ascertaining than others, some not worth it at all. To begin at the lowest end of the scale, no limits can be set to the number of possible problems in arithmetic and geometry. Who would maintain that they should all be solved? There are, perhaps, twenty or thirty million stars accessible, in some degree, to human observation. It would be absurd to say that each one of them should absorb an astronomer's lifetime. Every science offers the like examples of barren superfluity. Science aims at generalization, so as to predict things about a given object without directly observing it. But if everything is to be noted and recorded about each individual object, the occupation of science is gone. Elimination of superfluous truth is of the very essence of science. On it stands, for example, the whole fabric of the Differential Calculus. No one would have discovered the earth's shape except by leaving out of account the trivial irregularities of surface which yet, viewed from the geographer's standpoint, are important as mountain-chains. In biology the distinction between genus and species, between species and variety, is now known to be less absolute than was formerly supposed. As each individual is a variety, complete knowledge would mean a minute description of each living organism. I was told once by an eminent historian that before a perfect history of England could be written we should possess a monograph on the history of every English village. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of history. But enough of this. The second meaning of the word *Positive* is *useful.*

3. To deal with real things, and with important things, is not enough, unless we deal with them in the right way; unless we are able to say about them what is true and certain. We may have left off thinking about gods and fairies, or about the "universals" and "substantial forms" of the scholastics; we may be devoting our whole attention to the facts of human life and its surroundings; but we may not be able to understand these facts; we may be in a state of complete uncertainty about them. So far, then, the Positive stage of thought has not been reached. We have reached the point of believing, as the result of our experience, that things stand together or follow one another according to definite and

[1] See Dr. Bridges' biography of Archimedes in the *New Calendar of Great Men*, pp. 123–25.—ED.

ascertainable rules which we call laws of nature. But until we have established these laws in each department of inquiry we can make no statement which is certain. Prevision is the test of our scientific certainty. Knowledge of a law of nature—knowledge, that is, of the way in which one phenomenon depends upon another—enables us, when we observe one of these phenomena or facts, to foretell the second without direct observation of it. Knowing, for instance, in the case of falling bodies, the law connecting the space passed through with the time of transit, we are able to foretell the space if we know the time, or the time if we know the space.

In a very large number of questions relating to real things certainty, as we are here defining it, is denied us. Especially is this the case in all that relates to origins. We can explain wind, tide, the motion of the moon and planets, by gravitation. But on what fact does gravitation itself depend? The origin of the chemical elements, again, the origin even of the Greek race—these things, whether from the weakness of our faculties or from the destruction of evidence, are inaccessible to us, and are perhaps destined to remain for ever uncertain. Discussions about them can lead to no result. They are not within the range of Positive thought. The third meaning of *Positive* is *certain*.

4. A further feature distinguishing scientific knowledge from common knowledge is that it is not only certain, but also *precise*. The simplest instances of this contrast are supplied by the science of arithmetic. Of two armies or two flocks of sheep untrained observers may be certain that one is more numerous. A trained observer will tell more or less accurately the precise degree of excess. That this town is healthier than that may be a certainty reached by practical experience. Statisticians collect the death-rate, and change a rather vague assertion into a fact of number. Scientific progress consists to a large extent in changing assertions of quality into assertions of quantity. A biologist, for instance, is not satisfied with knowing that the blood is hotter at some times than at others, that vital action is accompanied by chemical change, that sensations travel quickly from the outward termination of a nerve to the brain. He defines the blood temperature by his thermometer; he finds out what chemical compounds are formed and dissolved, and how much of them; he ascertains at what number of feet per second sensation travels. Such inquiries may be followed up pedantically, and may sometimes accumulate unmeaning detail so as to obstruct progress. The true scientific spirit shows itself in knowing what to ignore as well as what to

attend to. There is a degree of precision attainable and appropriate in each inquiry, and this it is that the man of scientific genius aims at. Astronomers measuring the earth's shape ignore its mountain-ranges.

5. We have now discussed four meanings of the word *Positive—reality, utility, certainty, precision.* But we shall find that other meanings yet remain. One of these is that Positive teaching is *organic.* Organic is opposed on the one hand to what is destructive, disorganizing; and on the other to what is dead, motionless, insusceptible of change and growth.

If we review the political and religious movements of the last five or six centuries in the Western world, we find that a large proportion of the energy involved in them was directed towards the demolition of institutions or doctrines previously existing. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there were constant onslaughts against the Papacy, which had united the populations of the West under one spiritual government. The rivalry of the civil law with the canon law resulted in the ascendancy of the former. Kings gathered into their own hands many functions that had been held previously by bishops and popes. National spirit asserted itself, and refused to tolerate the intrusion of priests of alien race and language. Attacks were made on the central doctrine of Catholicism as embodied in the Eucharist. All this went on in a silent and unsystematic way until the times of Luther and Calvin, when revolt took definite shape, and the Western nations ranged themselves in the two rival camps of Catholic and Protestant. After an inordinate waste of social forces for more than a century a truce was effected by the Treaty of Westphalia.[1] But the destructive movement, instead of ceasing, was transferred to the Protestant camp itself. Bossuet's treatise on the *Variations of Protestantism*[2] describes vividly what took place. Efforts were made to replace priests by presbyters, a government in which clergymen were more or less controlled by laymen. Presbyterians were attacked by Independents. The infallibility of the Bible, which had been substituted for the infallibility of the Church and the Pope, became an object of criticism. Private judgment, systematized by the philosophy of Descartes, was carried to its natural conclusions by Hobbes and Spinoza. And thus, by the close of the seventeenth century, all was in readiness for the wide diffusion of scepticism in the eighteenth

[1] 1648

[2] *Histoire des variations des églises protestantes*, 1688. In the last section of the Positivist Library.—ED.

under the leadership of Voltaire. On the political disintegration that went side by side with the disintegration of religious belief it is needless to dwell. The Dutch revolt, the English Commonwealth, the American Republic, the French Revolution, are obviously links in the same chain. Other links have been added in the century that is now ending.[1] No article of any creed, no institution, however ancient, whether Christian or pre-Christian, has escaped assault.

It is not needful for our present purpose to expend either blame or praise upon this critical and destructive process. Looked at largely and apart from incidental aberrations, we can see that it was necessary in both the meanings of that word; it was fated to come, and it supplied a real want. What is to be observed is that the process by which the Positive doctrine has been built up stands wholly apart from this critical or revolutionary process, and is to be carefully distinguished from it. The Positive doctrine began when Thales and Pythagoras isolated the truths of geometry and arithmetic from the practical arts in which they were incorporated, and elevated them into distinct objects of speculation. This nucleus of Positive truth, enlarged by Aristotle, Archimedes, Hipparchus, and the Alexandrian school, and handed on by the schools of Bagdad and Toledo to Western thinkers of the thirteenth century, has been gradually growing amid the revolutionary turmoils of modern history, and has been surrounding itself with fresh departments of truth, until at last, under the influence of Comte and of those who preceded and followed him, the facts of man's social and moral life have been brought within its range. Silently, continuously, and without violence, this work has been going on. To say that its progress has not affected the work of revolutionary change would be an exaggeration; but it has gone on independently of that change, and not seldom in opposition to it.

In another sense also, allied to though distinct from the foregoing, Positive doctrine is *organic*. It is living, not dead, not stereotyped, not immutable. Contrast the body of truth of which any science consists with the Westminster Catechism[2] or the Articles of the Church of England. Of these it is the boast that they are handed down from age to age without the alteration of a syllable. The two little words[3] which divided the Greek Communion from the Roman in the early Middle Ages divide them still.

[1] Written in 1896.—ED.

[2] The standard Presbyterian catechism approved by Parliament in 1648.—ED.

[3] *Filioque*, "And the Son," added to the Nicene Creed by the Roman Church, and repudiated by the Eastern Church.—ED.

But scientific truth is in course of perpetual evolution. Not that growth interferes with continuity. Through the times of most startling and rapid change the earlier state is continuous with the later. Very few changes were made in the procedure of astronomical observatories by the discovery of the earth's rotation and movement round the sun. Naturalists, again, still go on speaking of new species of plants and animals, just as though Darwin had never speculated. And so in other fields of science we find this orderly growth, this organic change, contrasting alike with the endless oscillation of metaphysical controversy and with the silent stagnation of theological dogma. Cardinal Newman, indeed, made a bold attempt to apply the principle of development to Catholic doctrine.[1] He showed that for a few centuries it grew. But what of Catholicism since the Council of Trent?[2]

6. I pass to the sixth characteristic of Positive truth. It is *relative*, not *absolute*. We are taught this very early in our studies of arithmetic. One in relation to two is a very different thing from one in relation to four, to eight, and so on. If we go on increasing the second term of the relation without limit, the first term becomes infinitely small—equal, in fact, to nothing. In arithmetic nothing is small or great absolutely; all is relative. A high tower does not equal a low hill; a wide street would be but a narrow river. The distance from London to Melbourne is great as distances go between places on this island, small as compared with that between earth and moon; which, again, is trifling as compared with our distance from the sun; which, again, is but a small fraction of the space between the sun and the nearest star. Such words as *up* or *down* point for different populations to different regions of the sky. Astronomy brings all this forcibly before us in the case of motion, the only intelligible meaning of which is change of position in reference to some other object. On the deck of a ship sailing at four miles an hour, from south to north, a passenger walking at the same rate from north to south is at rest relatively to objects on the shore past which the ship is sailing. Absolutely, however, neither coast, ship, nor passenger is at rest. They share alike in the earth's rotation and orbital motion; not to speak of the proper motion of the sun, or of the motion of the central point round which, for aught we know, the sun may be moving.

In physics the word *force*, as indicating something absolute and

[1] In his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1845.—ED.
[2] This council sat at intervals between the years 1545–1563.—ED.

self-existing, is meaningless. We can only conceive of it in the action and reaction of two bodies. Gravitation, electricity, magnetism, heat, chemical affinity, all imply this. When we come to the science of living bodies the relativity of all the phenomena examined becomes even more obvious. Life is the mutual action and reaction of organism and environment. The blade of grass is unintelligible without knowledge of the light and air acting on its green cells, the water and alkaline salts with which the fibrils of its roots come into contact. The higher life of a bird or beast implies perception of far-off things and contractile organs for coming into close contact with them. The very term used by Bichat for describing this kind of life—the life of relation—brings into prominence the fact that absolute, self-dependent existence is but a logical figment.

When biology began to shed light on the secrets of human nature it was seen that our knowledge had its foundations in impressions made on special arrangements of nervous tissue; that it was relative to our physical organization; that of absolute reality we had no knowledge whatever. In Diderot's celebrated Letters on the Blind and the Deaf[1] it was shown that, on the supposition of sight and hearing being denied to us, the whole framework of our thoughts and our social life would be fundamentally changed. Following out this line of thought, it is easy to see that Positivism throughout its whole structure implies relativism; indeed, the two words are in many respects synonymous.

As we pass from individual life to the life of communities we come to see the significance of this conception of relativity more clearly. In judging of this or that historical action we have to take into account the stage of civilization reached by the statesman or the nation that performed it. Cæsar's conquest of Gaul, effected at a time when war was the principal occupation of man, is not to be judged by the standard applied to the attacks of the first Napoleon on Germany, or of England upon India or Africa, made at a time when peaceful industry is admitted to be the first condition of political progress. Ideal constitutions, again, such as the theorists of the French Revolution and of later times supposed applicable to every phase of society, have shown themselves to be mischievous abstractions. Liberian negroes or Sandwich Islanders will be none the better, and probably much the worse, for constitutions framed

[1] *Lettre sur les Aveugles* (1749), and *Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets* (1751). These were placed in the last section of the Positivist Library.—ED.

on the model of the United States. There is a definite relation between a given stage of civilization and the political institutions adapted to it; and to find this relation is the business of the practical statesman. Thus we see that in every department of thought Positive doctrine is *relative*, not *absolute*.

7. Aristotle told us long ago that all intellectual and moral activity ("every art and every method," to use his own words[1]) had some end in view which was aimed at as the chief good. We may ask, as he asked, What is the highest good, the highest form of happiness? And we shall find it hard to give a better answer than his own—a life of noble activity. In our perplexed world, with its strifes and rivalries, its bitter animosities and conflicting aims, how is such a life to be led? Of the conditions to be fulfilled two seem paramount. First, warlike activity resulting in conquest and despotic rule, on the one hand, subjection and slavery on the other, must give place to industrial activity; to peaceful development of the resources of our planet, in which some day men will be able to work together without conflict. Secondly, the convictions of men on all the highest subjects must rest not on supernatural revelations maintained by the precarious tenure of personal fascination or traditional prejudice, but on scientific demonstration finding its way spontaneously and surely into every sound intelligence. These two conditions work together and spring from the same root. By means of them the lives of men will become convergent and harmonious. It sounds strange and paradoxical to say, as Positivists say, that man's life tends as the world goes on to become more and more religious.[2] Yet it is true, if we give to the word *religion* its true meaning; if we mean by it the state in which man thinks and acts at peace with himself and at peace with his fellowmen; the state of Unity within and Union without.

What sort of scientific convictions can there be that have anything to do with the moral guidance of human life, and which can come into comparison with the primæval truths preached centuries ago by priests and prophets? Evidently those truths which deal with the structure of human nature itself. Theologians have told us that our nature is utterly corrupt. Positive science demonstrates the contrary. We have to thank the great sceptic Hume for being among the first to lay down the foundations of Positive morality in

[1] *Ethics*, bk. i, ch. i.—ED.

[2] "The general law of the human movement, whatever the point of view chosen, consists in the fact that man becomes more and more religious."—*Positivist Catechism*, 2nd Eng. ed., p. 259.—ED.

his proof that unselfish affection was a spontaneous element in human nature.[1] Georges Leroy confirmed this truth by showing that man shared these unselfish emotions with the higher animals.[2] Gall added yet further evidence, and distinguished in animals as in men the three distinct impulses of reverence, pity, and individual love.[3]

Henceforth a wholly new complexion was given to the character of Positive doctrine. It now presents itself not merely as a storehouse of solid and useful material; it points directly to the way in which man's activity, intellect, and feeling in private and public life can become convergent, every part of it tending to that ennobling energy which Aristotle had recognized as the supreme object of desire. In other words, all that we mean when we use such words as "art," "poetry," "religion," "aspiration towards a higher life for ourselves and for those around us," comes within the sphere of Positive doctrine. Striving to become more perfect, making efforts to subdue ourselves for the sake of others, are aims just as real, just as useful, are to be accomplished by means just as certain and definite, as the construction of a nautical almanac, a steamship, or a factory. They have even more to do with the building up of human life, they are more enduring, they can be more truly said *to be*. Who remembers the interminable series of petty wars and frivolous ambitions by which this or that self-seeking ruler has struggled to place and power? All that is gone; but the poems of Homer and Æschylus, the story of the Gospels, the sublime heroism of Jeanne d'Arc, the civic courage of Milton or Washington—these remain. Whether named or nameless, our life is built upon them. Positive doctrine, then, is not merely real, useful, and all the other things of which we have spoken. It is also *sympathetic*.[4] It lifts man above himself into communion with Humanity, through whom he lives, for whom he works.

[1] In the *Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751).—ED.
[2] See pp. 54, 80.
[3] See p. 80.
[4] This seventh meaning was given to the word by Comte in 1854. See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, p. 473.—ED.

II

THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF COMTE'S "POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY"[1]

HALF a century has passed since Miss Martineau undertook to present to English readers in a condensed form the six volumes of the *Philosophie Positive*. Her two volumes,[2] corresponding in bulk to between three and four of the original work, form the principal channel through which Comte's philosophical system has become known to the English-speaking world. Comte himself, in the last edition of his catalogue of the Positivist Library,[3] substituted Miss Martineau's condensation for his own work. A translation of it has appeared recently in French.

It was obvious from the first that the various sections of this great philosophical treatise differed in permanent value. The sections which dealt with fundamental principles, either of method or of doctrine, are distinguishable from the chapters which entered into the details of each of the six sciences considered. One of these sciences, Sociology, occupies half the work. Indeed, it was for the sake of this science that the previous volumes were written; for they may be looked on as a preparatory discipline for the study of social phenomena, a science of which Comte, without injustice to previous thinkers, may be regarded as the founder. In his treatment of Cosmology and Biology Comte worked upon the results of other men. These had already emerged from theology and metaphysics, and had attained, with some qualifications, the positive or scientific stage. What was wanting was to clear them from misconstructions, to indicate their historical importance, to present their leading principles in orderly succession, and to define the special methods of research to which they had given rise. In Sociology, on the other hand, the principles and the methods of research had themselves to be created.

Further, a distinction has to be made in Comte's treatment of the sciences grouped by him under the title of Cosmology. This

[1] *The Fundamental Principles of the Positive Philosophy: Being the first two chapters of the "Cours de Phil. Pos."* Tr. by P. Descours and H. Gordon Jones. With a biog. pref. by E. S. Beesly. Issued for the Rationalist Press Association by Watts & Co.; 1905.

[2] *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte.* Freely tr. and condensed by H. Martineau. 2 vols.; 1853 and 1875. With intr. by F. Harrison, 3 vols. (George Bell and Sons; 1896.)—ED.

[3] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, p. 486.

class included the Astronomy of the solar system, the various branches of Physics, and Chemistry. Astronomy was brought to something like perfection by Newton's investigation of gravitation, and by the labours of Clairaut, Lagrange, and other great mathematicians of the eighteenth century. But the same cannot be said of either Physics or Chemistry. Here far more remained to be done, and still remains. It must be obvious to every reader of the second half of the second volume of the *Philosophie* that the work done since that volume was written by such men as Faraday, Helmholtz, Maxwell, Lord Kelvin, Hertz, and many others that might be named, involves nothing less than a complete recasting of the group of sciences known as Physics, before its main principles can be presented in orderly and intelligible sequence.

Such a recast would not, however, involve any change in the fundamental principles of Comte's philosophy. The exposition of the successive states through which our conceptions of each department of knowledge have passed—known as the Law of the Three Stages—would remain unaltered. So, too, the distinction of sciences into abstract and concrete would be retained; and the Classification of the abstract sciences in accordance with their diminishing generality and increasing complexity would be unaffected. Progress through the three stages would still be seen to be more or less rapid as the degree of complexity varied. And, lastly, each science would be seen to make its own special contribution to the perfection of positive method.

Comte had himself suggested, in a letter quoted by Professor Beesly in the preface to the little volume here noticed, a selection to be made from the first three volumes of his work suitable for those who had little time for the specialities of science. In the first volume the two introductory chapters should be read;[1] then the chapter dealing with Mathematics as a whole, and the introductory chapters of each of the three great divisions of Mathematics—the Calculus, Geometry, and Rational Mechanics. In the second and third volumes he advised the study of the introductory chapters of Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. In the concluding half of the work, dealing with the new science of Sociology, no chapter could be spared. The chapters thus selected as essential amount to twenty-five out of the sixty of which the Treatise consists. It may be hoped that at no distant day all these chapters will be translated with the same care and accuracy as the two

[1] These are the two chapters tr. in the *Fundamental Principles*.—ED.

which we are now considering. Taken together, these present what the translators speak of as "The Fundamental Principles of the Positive Philosophy."

The leading feature of this translation is that it is not, like Miss Martineau's, a condensation or abridgment. It is, undoubtedly, much more than a literal rendering of each sentence; a procedure which, as the writer of the preface very truly remarks, would result in a version considerably less intelligible and attractive than the original. It is essential that a translator of Comte

> should not only be skilled in the art of turning the idioms of one language into those of another, but that he should have made a wide and careful study of Comte's other writings, so as to be competent to expand what is over-compressed, to condense what is verbose, and to substitute direct statements for indirect allusions. If this is done with judgment, the translation will be a boon to the English reader, even though he may not be unable to read the original.[1]

Mistakes are not numerous in Miss Martineau's version, but they are not entirely absent. A more serious defect is that "the omissions, necessarily extensive, often detract from the force and completeness of the reasoning."[2] A signal instant of this occurs in the celebrated passage in which Comte condemns the method of introspective psychology as a means of gaining insight into our intellectual functions. In the original, eight paragraphs[3] are occupied with this discussion. These, in Miss Martineau's version, are reduced to two,[4] with the result of seriously impairing the cogency of the argument. As the subject is one of very great philosophical importance, it may be worth while to place a part of the new translation and of Miss Martineau's version side by side:—

New Translation	Miss Martineau's Translation
As far as moral phenomena are concerned, it may be granted that it is possible for a man to observe the passions which animate him, for the anatomical reason that the organs which are their seat are distinct from those whose functions are devoted to	It may be said that a man's intellect may observe his passions, the seat of the reason being somewhat apart from that of the emotions in the brain; but there can be nothing like scientific observation of the passions except from without, as the stir of the

[1] Preface, p. 7.—Ed.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 8.—Ed.
[3] Ch. i, §§ 48–55.
[4] 1896 ed., vol. i, pp. 11–12.

NEW TRANSLATION

observation. Everyone has had occasion to notice this fact for himself. But such observations would evidently never possess much scientific value. The best way of knowing the passions will always be to observe them from the outside; for a person in any state of extreme passion —that is to say, in precisely the state which it is most essential to examine—would necessarily be incapacitated for observing himself. But in the case of intellectual phenomena, to observe them in this manner while they are taking place is clearly out of the question. The thinking individual cannot cut himself into two—one of the parts reasoning while the other is looking on. Since, in this case, the organ observed and the observing organ are identical, how could any observation be made?

The principle of this so-called psychological method is therefore quite worthless. Besides, consider to what thoroughly contradictory proceedings it immediately leads. On the one hand, you are recommended to isolate yourself as far as possible from the outer world, and you must especially give up all intellectual work: for if you were only engaged in making the simplest calculation, what would become of the *interior* observation?

On the other hand, after having, by means of due precautions, at last attained to this perfect state of intellectual slumber, you must

MISS MARTINEAU'S TRANSLATION

emotions disturbs the observing faculties more or less. It is yet more out of the question to make an intellectual observation of intellectual processes. The observed and observing organ are here the same, and its action cannot be pure and natural. In order to observe, your intellect must pause from activity; yet it is this very activity that you want to observe. If you cannot effect the pause, you cannot observe; if you do effect it, there is nothing to observe. The results of such a method are in proportion to its absurdity.[1]

[1] 1896 ed., vol. i, p. 12.—ED.

NEW TRANSLATION

then occupy yourself in contemplating the operations which will be taking place in a mind supposed to be blank! Our descendants will no doubt see such pretensions ridiculed on the stage some day.

The results of such a strange procedure are in thorough accordance with the principle.[1]

I will take another instance in which Miss Martineau has pushed condensation so far as to give an erroneous conception of Comte's meaning on a very important subject. It occurs in the second chapter, the chapter devoted to the Classification of the Sciences. In the first part of this chapter (§§ 7–24) Comte defines with great precision the boundaries of his subject, by distinguishing (*a*) speculative from practical knowledge, (*b*) the Abstract from the Concrete Sciences. He then proceeds to consider the two distinct modes of expounding the truths of a science: the historical method, in which the knowledge "is presented in the same order as that in which the human mind actually obtained it"; the dogmatic method, in which "the system of ideas is presented as it might be conceived of to-day by a single mind which, being placed at the right point of view and furnished with sufficient knowledge, should apply itself to the reconstruction of the science as a whole."[2] The plan of teaching a science by means of its history has much that is attractive. A science is not completely known, said Comte, if we are ignorant of its history. But the history of the various sciences cannot in reality be treated separately.

> When we consider in its entirety the actual development of the human mind, we see that the different sciences have, in fact, received improvement simultaneously, and from one another. We even see that there is an interdependence between the progress of the Sciences and that of the Arts, owing to their innumerable reciprocal influences; and, finally, that they have all been closely connected with the general development of human society. This vast interlacement is so real that, in order to understand how a scientific theory actually arose, it is often necessary to consider the improvement in some art which has no rational link with it, or even some

[1] Ch. i, §§ 52–54.—ED.

[2] Ch. ii, §§ 29–30.—ED.

> particular progress in social organization without which this discovery could never have taken place. We shall see numerous examples of this as we proceed. It follows from what has been said that we can only know the true history of each science—that is to say, the way in which the discoveries composing it were actually made—by making a direct study of the general history of humanity.[1]

Now, this clear recognition of the reciprocal action of the various departments of science, and of the way in which science has been affected by the growth of the arts and by the political and social circumstances of the time, exactly anticipates and meets one of the most serious criticisms directed by Herbert Spencer against Comte's Classification of the Sciences. Spencer, in his Essay on "The Genesis of Science,"[2] maintains that Comte, in his zeal to present the sciences in a linear series, ignored their reciprocal action on one another, and the influence upon them of social events and the arts of practical life. Our surprise that he should have made this mistake is lessened when we find that in Miss Martineau's version the passage here quoted is entirely omitted.

Several other instances of less important omissions might be quoted. The consideration of them makes it clear that, if a selection is to be made of the most important chapters of the *Philosophie*, these chapters should be translated with all the fullness of the original; due care, of course, being taken to make the translation vigorous and idiomatic, as well as exact. The two chapters here given, which present in germ the leading features of the whole work, form an excellent model for imitation.

III

COMTE'S "DISCOURSE ON THE POSITIVE SPIRIT"[3]

WHILE Comte was engaged in elaborating his *System of Positive Philosophy* between 1830 and 1842, he never lost sight of the social purpose which this philosophy was intended to serve. What was needed was that the leading principles of this philosophy should be made familiar to the European mind. This could not be done by the bare enunciation of a series of abstract propositions. The

[1] Ch. ii, § 38.

[2] 1854

[3] *A Discourse on the Positive Spirit*, by Auguste Comte. Translated, with explanatory notes, by E. S. Beesly. (London: William Reeves; 1903.)

Positive Spirit must be shown at work in organizing a special branch of knowledge—a branch intimately connected with man's life on the planet, and sufficiently elaborated to serve as a type for its application to other departments in which the facts to be dealt with were more complex, which were more liable to the disturbance of human passion, and in which, therefore, less progress had been made. Astronomy was the science selected for this purpose. It was the simplest of the physical sciences, in that the forces at work were few in number, and were susceptible of precise mathematical calculation. It served, therefore, as a type from which the other sciences—physical, chemical, biological, and sociological—fell far short, but towards which they might be expected, as the human mind advanced, gradually to approach more and more completely. Viewed historically, this science was specially bound up with the development of human thought and its liberation from theological trammels. It was an incidental but by no means unimportant advantage that it was a branch of knowledge unconnected with mercantile profit, contrasted in this respect with certain departments of physical and chemical science of which the industrial applications have offered constant stimulus to the desire of personal gain and advancement. A Paris workman would not attend lectures on astronomy with the hope of one day rising from the ranks and becoming a capitalist. To follow the exposition of astronomical science presented by Comte, a very moderate degree of mathematical attainment was required, such as any intelligent workman could easily provide for himself without the labour and expense of a scholastic career. Elementary geometry and trigonometry and elementary mechanics would suffice.

This course of lectures[1] was preceded by a Discourse intended to set forth the general character and the social purpose of the synthesis of which the science of astronomy was a component part. Comte's hearers were not invited to study astronomy with the purpose of either improving their material position in life, or of gratifying their intellectual curiosity. They were called on to take part in a great intellectual revolution destined to prepare them for the reorganization and regeneration of society. It was necessary, therefore, to explain the fundamental principles of this revolution. The Discourse thus divides itself into two nearly equal parts. In the first part, contained in pages 1 to 79 of this edition, the intellectual side of the Positive

[1] The course of lectures was published by Comte in 1844, as follows: *Traité philosophique d'astronomie populaire*. 2nd. ed. in 1893. The first 108 pages are occupied by the *Discours sur l'esprit positif*.—ED.

Synthesis is expounded. The second part explains the way in which the new philosophy will affect society.

Naturally, the Discourse opens with a full explanation of the law of Intellectual Evolution, the law of the three stages. The Positive mode of thought is the outcome of a long process of development. It is preceded by modes of thinking framed on entirely different lines. In the early periods of human life "all phenomena whatsoever were supposed to resemble those which we ourselves produce, and which for that reason seem to us at first sufficiently known through the direct intuition accompanying them."[1] This is the phase of thought called Fetishism. Gradually a great revolution takes place, one of the greatest which the human mind has ever experienced. "Life is no longer attributed to material objects themselves, but is mysteriously transferred to sundry fictitious beings, usually invisible, whose active interposition is thenceforth considered to be the direct cause of all external and even, as the theory gains ground, human phenomena."[2] Fetishism thus passes into Polytheism. This is the principal phase of theological belief. The concentration of all gods into one is the final and the feeblest form of theologism, largely brought about by the increasing growth of Positive knowledge. Meanwhile the gulf between the theological and positive conceptions was gradually filled by an intermediate process of thought, denoted by Comte metaphysical or ontological, in which phenomena were regarded as the result of underlying abstractions more or less personified. Underneath the impressions of sight, touch, and hearing was supposed to exist something permanent, a substance or *under-existence*, as their cause. Opium, to use Molière's illustration, had a dormitive influence, and this was supposed to explain its power of sending people to sleep. All such influences, innate properties, or essences were summed up in the one great abstraction called Nature. This phase of thought was absolutely necessary in the course of human development. It set men free from slavish subjection to divine terrors, made it easier to conceive of constant laws of phenomena, and kept alive the desire to apprehend the world as a whole, "until the spirit of generalization could find a better aliment."[3]

While these provisional modes of thought were working out their destiny, and gradually approaching their decline and fall, the foundations of a more fruitful and more permanent philosophy were being laid. From the earliest days of savagery the common sense

[1] *Discourse*, p. 3.—ED. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 5.—ED. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 16.—ED.

of mankind had grasped firmly many prominent facts, moral and physical, as to man and the world. Facts of character, facts of the revolving sky, facts of birth and death, of breeding and inheritance, are as well known to the savage as to ourselves, and practical action is based on such knowledge. Very late in the history of the human race men arose who grouped facts together, found certain permanent relations between them, and discovered laws by which many unseen facts could be predicted. Science arose, limited at first to the discovery of fixed relations—that is, of natural laws—in the simpler facts of geometry and astronomy made by Greek and Arabian inquirers, extended afterwards by Galileo and others to the more complex relations of forces operating on our planet, and conceived by Bacon as discoverable in the phenomena of human life. During the last three centuries Positive Philosophy has risen to be the rival of metaphysical philosophy and theological philosophy. What was needed was that its diversified efforts should be seen to converge to a centre, that centre being the Service of Man. With the creation of Sociology such a centre of convergence was supplied. The thinkers of the eighteenth century, of whom Hume, Diderot, and Condorcet may be taken as types, prepared the way. The genius of Comte built on their foundations. The new Synthesis, ranging the special sciences in due order round the science of Humanity, showed itself in the fullness of power. It deals with realities, not fictions; it aims at practical utility. Its conclusions are certain; they admit of precise measurement; they are constructive, not negative or critical; they claim to present not absolute truth, but truth in relation with man's faculties and needs. And, finally, this philosophy appeals to man's highest instincts of love and sympathy. *Real*, *useful*, *certain*, *precise*, *organic*, *relative*, and *sympathetic*—such are the distinctive features of the new Synthesis.

Let us pass from the intellectual to the social aspect.[1] Words are not needed to prove the influence of ideas and beliefs on social passions and antagonisms. From the days of Luther to the Peace of Westphalia Europe was plunged into bloodshed by disputes on transubstantiation and the authority of the Pope. Yet these were trifles compared with the causes of strife which wrought on men during the French Revolution. The question then, and for long afterwards, was between Church tradition and feudal law on the one side, and free thought and popular rights on the other. It was a strife between God and Humanity, between King and Republic, in

[1] *Discourse*, pp. 79–169.—ED.

which those who defended the cause destined ultimately to triumph were blind leaders of the blind, destroying their foe in the dark, but wholly unaware how to use their victory.

No solution is possible but one which shows political phenomena to be regulated by natural laws as certain as those which govern the motion of the planets, the play of electrical or calorific forces, and the evolution of vegetal and animal life. As in the study of life we distinguish the facts of organization and structure from the facts of growth, so in the study of sociology we contemplate first the conditions of Order, and secondly the conditions of Progress. Progress is the development of Order, as life is the development of structure. Political efforts which aim at Progress regardless of social structure are predestined to failure. How do we find the conditions of social order? By studying different societies, and, still more, by studying the same society in different stages of its growth. Those conditions which we find common to all stages we may assume to be permanent and necessary, and any attempts to upset them can only lead to death or decay. With Progress they are wholly incompatible. In a comprehensive survey of human society we find family life, we find the institution of property, we find government in its two forms—the control of acts, the organization of opinion. We conclude these things to be bound up with Social Order; respect for them, therefore, is indispensable to Progress.

The claim of Positivism to guide the Future rests upon its capacity for explaining the Past. Theological and metaphysical schools of thought cannot do this, because their standard is absolute, not relative. To the destructive thinkers of the eighteenth century mediæval Christianity seemed a degrading superstition. But mediæval Christianity passed an exactly similar judgment on the polytheistic beliefs which had gone before it.

> In the preceding and following periods each sees nothing but murky confusion and inexplicable disorder; nor can it suggest how its own short period can be connected with the great spectacle of history as a whole unless by miraculous intervention.....The Positive Spirit alone, in virtue of its eminently *relative* nature, can fairly represent all the great historic epochs as so many determinate phases of one and the same fundamental evolution, each phase resulting from that which preceded, and preparing the way for that which followed it, and this according to invariable laws which fix the share of each phase in the movement common to all.....We may assert with confidence at the present day that any doctrine which

> sufficiently explains the whole Past will, by the mere fact of satisfying that test, inevitably obtain the intellectual direction of the Future.[1]

Admitting that Positive doctrine lays down principles adequate to our political guidance, how far will it be capable of controlling and inspiring individual conduct? It was not till 1852, Professor Beesly remarks, that Comte "formally detached Ethics from Sociology as a seventh and crowning science. But he gets very near to doing so here."[2] Comte shows that under Polytheism Ethics was always subordinate to Politics. Its position of independence and, indeed, of superiority is due to mediæval Catholicism, and resulted from the separation of spiritual from temporal power, which was then, though imperfectly, established. Polytheistic Ethics consisted in direct and special precepts: to do this, or to refrain from that. Under Catholic Monotheism principles of conduct were laid down; the application of them to particular cases was left to human wisdom. As time went on the theological doctrine lost its power, the principles remained standing alone; and, though often impaired by the decay of the doctrines connected with them, they were not destroyed. The work now before us is to consolidate them on a human basis. "Morality must either be at last founded on the Positive knowledge of Humanity, or it must be left to rest on supernatural injunctions. Between these alternatives no durable basis can be found."[3] No question can be raised as to the efficacy of purely human enthusiasm. The freethinking Republican soldiers who saved France from a retrograde coalition showed at least as much devotion as the superstitious Vendeans "who, in the very bosom of their country, made common cause with the foreign invaders."[4] In no case can we accept as a solution the prevailing tendency to reserve emancipation for the so-called upper and instructed classes, under a disguise of collective hypocrisy retaining theological creeds as a useful mode of controlling the masses. Such a compromise, favoured nowadays as much by Protestants as by the Jesuits with whom it originated, is as needless as it is corrupting. The Positive theory of Humanity determining the real influence of each act, habit, or feeling will lay down rules of conduct for the guidance of men's lives as certain as the conclusions of geometry. The demonstration of such rules may be too hard for most men to follow. But so are the demonstrations of astronomy, which never-

[1] *Discourse*, pp. 97-98.—ED.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 98.—ED.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 105.—ED.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 107.—ED.

theless the sailor uses every day of his life with unfaltering conviction.

By appealing to Humanity as the groundwork of conduct the Positive doctrine touches social feeling directly and immediately; whereas theological and metaphysical teaching could only move it indirectly, the first by holding out hopes of future reward to those who acted uprightly, the second by expositions of enlightened self-interest. Such circuitous modes of arousing unselfish enthusiasm taint our generous sympathies with baser matter. The full force of such sympathies, when for the first time allowed free sway, will be seen in the Future.

Meantime it is essential that a solid groundwork of these convictions should be laid. All classes need it, and especially the great body of workmen, who are in many ways better prepared to receive it than the wealthy and lettered classes. For its full effect to be felt, Positive knowledge must be arranged in the order of increasing complexity and diminishing generality. Beginning with the simpler facts of mathematics and astronomy, we pass to the study of the physical and chemical forces of our planet; from this we proceed to the study of living beings, and thence to the final science of human nature, social and individual. The study of astronomy, involving as it does the fundamental truths of geometry, is here presented as the first step towards the Positive theory of Humanity.

In the foregoing pages a rapid sketch has been given of this truly remarkable work. A word must now be said of its presentation to the English reader. It has been a difficult task most successfully accomplished. The essay is a marvel of condensation and fullness. Every word tells, even those which to a rapid reader may seem superfluous; and every word finds its equivalent in idiomatic English. Though many sentences have been entirely recast, yet so completely has the error of diffuseness been avoided that, judging by the passages which I have specially examined, the number of French and English words is almost exactly identical.

Some features of the translation may be mentioned. First, the paragraphs are, for the first time, numbered. As editions of Comte's works multiply this enumeration will soon be recognized as essential; and, indeed, it should have been made long since. Again, footnotes have been added on almost every page. They are extremely brief; but attention to them will often show the reader that he was on the point of missing the full meaning of a sentence. For the benefit of readers unaccustomed to philosophical literature a lucid explanation is given of the very few technical terms which

Comte employed. Finally, an analytical table is supplied, in which the import of each of the seventy-nine paragraphs is summed up. A better introduction to the study of Comte could not have been devised than this English edition of the *Esprit Positif*.

IV

HUMANITY AND SCIENCE

On my last visit to Paris[1] I found a little paper circulating there which the Positivist Society had found useful in explaining to outside sympathizers what was meant by the word *Positivism*. It runs as follows :—

> Positivism is a scientific doctrine which aims at continuous increase of the material, intellectual, and moral well-being of all human societies, and in particular of the societies or nations of Europe. It seeks to effect this object by special modes of instruction and education. Positivism has three divisions :—
>
> 1. Philosophy of the Sciences, summed up in the conclusion that mankind must rely solely on its own exertions for the amelioration of its lot. The sciences co-ordinated in this Philosophy are :
>
> *Mathematics*, including the Calculus (arithmetic and algebra), Geometry, and Mechanics :
> *Cosmology*, including Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry :
> *Sociology*, including Biology, Sociology specially so-called, and Ethics. Founded on this Philosophy we have
>
> 2. Scientific Religion and Ethics. Positive religion has nothing to do with any supernatural or extra-terrestrial being ; it is the Religion of Humanity. The moral code of Positivism may be summed up thus : physical, intellectual, and moral amelioration with the view of becoming more and more fit for the service of others. By *Others* are understood three collective existences ranged in order of magnitude—the Family, the State, Humanity. Positivist Ethic deals with the relations of nations with each other ; and thus leads to
>
> 3. Positive Politics, aiming at the suppression of war and the formation of the Commonwealth of European States, or, as Auguste Comte called it, the Republic of the West. It invites nations to fraternal action with the view of developing in concert the resources of every kind presented by the planet in which we dwell.

[1] Written in 1900.—Ed.

"In this transformation of society Positivism repudiates all violent procedure. It acts by demonstration and persuasion, not by compulsion. Its device is:

Love the Principle; Order the Basis; Progress the End. Morally its formula is: Live for Others."

My reason for calling attention to this paper is not merely its simplicity and clearness of statement, but because it guards against a delusion from which some English utterances, especially of late, have not kept themselves entirely free; the delusion of supposing that the scientific side of Positivism may be for the present set aside as a negligible quantity, and that what is called the apostolate of the Religion of Humanity may be organized without regard to it. Comte began his career with the conviction that the social and moral doctrines of the future must be tested by scientific methods, and must rest on scientific foundations. So established, they would carry weight with the mass of practical people who had no time or leisure for tedious investigations; just as the results of astronomical science are accepted by navigators, or those of mechanics and electrology by working engineers. In a certain sense of the word, and a very true sense, man has been a Positivist from the beginning. Human life goes on whether science or theology has the shaping of it. Whatever men's faith may be, they do not leave off loving and hating, hoping and fearing, gathering and spending, acting and enduring. Settled grooves are hollowed out, beaten tracks are made, in which the course of human business runs quite irrespectively of theoretical beliefs and abstract principles. Men do not stop ploughing the fields or navigating the seas till a perfect theory of manures has been discovered, or till the resistance of waves to the lines of a ship's hull has been accurately measured. So with morals. Men and women who have no learning, no philosophical theories, no systematic doctrine, but who are endowed with generous instincts, good sense, and firm characters, teach morality to those around them, whether by word of mouth or by the more cogent method of example.

Is anything more than this wanted? In the ordinary conduct of life perhaps not; though even in private life complicated cases of conflicting duties will sometimes arise in which, after recourse has been had to parents and friends who see the details near at hand, it may be needful to call in some cooler adviser from the outside. But it is safe to prophesy that in the religion of the future there will be no place for the inordinate multitudes of priests, preachers, and ministers of all denominations who form at present

a real incubus upon every civilized country. In the religious organization of the future projected by Comte a tenth part of the number of religious teachers now existing would amply suffice. Those simple ceremonies which bring the life of the family into touch with the life of the State, consecrating the successive stages of each individual life—birth, marriage, death, and the like—being wholly dissociated from supernatural or mystical significance, will not need the intervention of any sacerdotal caste.[1] Each village community will supply men who have withdrawn from the engrossing activities of active life, to whom the presidency of such occasions would naturally belong. Duties of this kind which have hitherto been regarded as specially clerical will not be so regarded in the future. Nor will formal discourses on Positive doctrine be very frequent. "Positivism," says Comte, "is a doctrine which will rarely stand in need of systematic exposition. Utterances of a simpler and more spontaneous kind, coming either from women or from the working population, will be a better substitute. It is important to restrict the sacerdotal body within narrow limits for two reasons—avoidance of unnecessary expenditure and maintenance of the highest standard within the body."[2]

What, then, is the special function of this organized philosophic body, to the existence of which Comte attached such far-reaching and permanent importance? It falls under two heads—education of the young; continuous culture of sociological and ethical science. These, like other sciences, and indeed more emphatically than any other science, must be regarded as in a state of constant and progressive growth. The mere statement of this double duty is enough to show that the ordinary curriculum of literary culture that has been passed through by an intelligent journalist or by the average student of our universities is an entirely inadequate equipment for the task. To write fairly good English, to string sentences together freely, to display considerable powers of rhetoric and style, will go but a very little way. Nor will a vast accumulation of learning help much. A memory that could retain all the knowledge of the latest encyclopædia would be no qualification for the task. For what is the task? So to infuse the scientific spirit into the study of human affairs as to acquire the power of *prevision*, with a view to the wisest possible *provision*. He who would enter on work of this kind must begin by penetrating himself with the conviction

[1] Dr. Bridges refers to the Positivist Sacraments. See the paper on "Sacraments" in Part III.—ED.

[2] *Catéchisme Positiviste*, 3rd ed., p. 274; p. 211 of the Eng. tr.—ED.

that the scientific study of the facts of human life is at the least as difficult as the scientific study of mathematics, of electricity, or of chemistry.

Let us look at this matter more in detail. Begin with the central conception of Positive religion—Humanity. What precisely do we mean by Humanity? The entire mass of human beings now living on the earth? No; for the dead, whose inheritance has made us what we are, preponderate over the living, and our work is not for the present generation only, but for numberless generations yet unborn. And, further, among the dead as among the living, are many who set themselves in opposition to Humanity, who were traitors to her cause, who destroyed her treasures, who neutralized her noblest activities. Others again there were who did neither good nor harm, who led purely selfish lives, feeding on provision stored up by the labour of others, yielding nothing in return. These can lay no claim to be part of the great organism which we revere as the source of our spiritual life. Lives of this kind have "dissipated their energy"; are practically non-existent, are as though they had never been. Now, it is evident that this process of eliminating from Humanity elements that form no part of it is not a simple and easy matter that anyone can undertake without preparation. One of our greatest English writers, Thomas Carlyle, wrote a book on Hero-Worship.[1] Among his heroes he included Mohammed, Dante, Shakespeare, Cromwell, and others whom all revere. But among them also he placed one whom most men agree to reprobate; whose exceptional gifts were devoted to resistance to the best interests of Humanity, who did his utmost, and for a time with disastrous success, to turn progress backwards—Napoleon Bonaparte. It needs something more than generous sentiment, it needs a sound philosophy of history based on solid scientific culture, to eliminate the enemies of Humanity from her true servants, to choose the good and to reject the evil. In the political future of our race new problems will continually present themselves, in which similar disentanglement of what is hostile and obstructive from what is beneficent and progressive will be needed. In judging of such crises when they come, mistakes will assuredly be made even by the wisest. But this is no reason why wisdom should abdicate her judgment-seat. A body of qualified and carefully trained advisers specially devoted to the study of the laws of sociological change will, it is very certain, not be infallible. But they will form

[1] *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History;* 1841.—ED.

the surest guarantee that we can possess of avoiding fatal error, or of speedy extrication from it.

Attainment of scientific certainty, or such approximation to it as may be possible, in the complicated labyrinth of human affairs, is evidently not to be hoped for without systematic training in departments of science where the complication is less, and where, consequently, sure results are more accessible. Hence the importance of a sound philosophy of the sciences as the basis on which the whole structure of Positivism rests. Here we find a line of separation between the two principal schools of scientific philosophy —the school of Spencer and the school of Comte. The first school, starting from the truth that scientific method is one and indivisible, seeks for some single principle of which the truths of every science may be regarded as the outcome. It finds that principle in Evolution; the passage from a homogeneous, undefined medium pervading space to the state of definite co-ordination of differentiated parts, each with its own function to fulfil. To present a picture of the rise and progress of the Cosmos is the aim proposed by this class of thinkers.

But to Comte and to his school the purpose of a philosophy of the sciences is something entirely different. What they attempt is to range these great collections of natural laws in such an order that the mind can pass easily from one end of the series to the other, beginning with the most general and simple laws, and ending with the most special and complex.[1] The object is to frame what Lord Bacon called *scala intellectûs*, a ladder of the understanding; to range the sciences in such a series that the transition from any one of them to that which went before or came after may be simple and natural. Classification of the Sciences, like classification of other things, is a human artifice, framed for human purposes. Doubtless the order of diminishing generality and increasing complexity does correspond in a loose way to the order of growth. Geometry and astronomy were carried by the Greeks to a high degree of perfection, whereas their knowledge of chemistry and physiology remained very rudimentary. Physics, again, in the eighteenth century, had become a solid body of scientific truth; but the very conception of a science of social phenomena had as yet hardly dawned upon the world. Nevertheless, the order in which the sciences, to use Comte's expression, detached themselves from the common stock of knowledge is so complicated by the various ways in which they have acted and

[1] See p. 162 (note 2).

reacted on each other, and have been moulded by circumstances, that it cannot be taken as a guide to the logical order in which they should be presented to the mind. It ought always to be remembered, though it is often forgotten, that classification is not an external objective fact corresponding to something that exists in nature. It is an artifice for helping forward the business of thinking. It is not a natural product; it is a tool invented for the purpose of producing more effectively.

The Philosophy of the Sciences constructed by Comte is not an attempt to explain the Evolution of the Universe. It is a discipline framed for the purpose of enabling us to infuse the scientific spirit into the study of social and moral facts. For this purpose it is not the newest acquisitions of scientific investigators, but rather the oldest, that are the most effective; not the latest and therefore the most doubtful discoveries, but rather those as to which there can be no doubt. Popular attention is apt to concentrate itself on the last new speculations as to the constitution of the ether, as to the earliest and most elemental forms of life, as to the transition from invertebrate to vertebrate organization, as to the forms of matter which preceded the formation of hydrogen, as to the order in which the metals, as primeval gases cooled, were precipitated from protyle, and many other attractive conjectures of the same kind. These are the doubtful victories of science; her hazardous advances into the unknown from which she will often be driven back with temporary loss. Little will be gained from these sources for the discipline here spoken of. What is wanted for the purpose of infusing the scientific spirit into the study of political and moral action is something widely different from semi-scientific adventures of this kind. We want a series of types of certainty, ranged in order of increasing complexity. Mathematics offer the first, the simplest, and the most stable elements of this series. In its more advanced stages mathematics enables us to solve some of the less complicated problems presented in the physical world around us. Where the direct power of geometry falls short, it still remains indirectly of the greatest value as a type of certainty, clearness, and quantitative precision, which continues to inspire us in the more complex facts of Physics and Chemistry, where we have to rely upon observation and experiment. These sciences prepare us in the same way for the study of Life; and the study of Life for the study of Society and of Man.

Such is the social purpose of Science—a purpose which incorporates it into the Religion of Humanity. Without it that Religion fades away into the flimsiest of cloud-lands.

PART III

RELIGION

Chapter I

CATHOLICISM

I

LAFFITTE ON CATHOLICISM

Reference to our work on Comte's *Calendar*[1] will convince all candid readers of the generous appreciation accorded to the founders and builders of the Catholic Church. A yet closer study will show that the services of that Church to Humanity were never estimated even by its own disciples at their full value until they had been set forth by the Positive school. By the keen and brilliant thinkers of the eighteenth century, from whom Comte directly descended, they were wholly misunderstood. Five centuries of decay, and of the abuses inseparable from decay, had led men like Hume, Diderot, Condorcet, and Voltaire to regard it with contemptuous antipathy, as the principal obstruction to human progress. No difference was recognized between the period of its decline and the centuries of its growth and maturity. The vast interval from the fall of Græco-Roman civilization to the Renascence of classical literature and art in the fifteenth century was looked upon as a time of arrested growth, of comatose slumber. Needless to say that the facts of history, so regarded, refused to lend themselves to any intelligible interpretation. Pascal's brilliant conception of the series of generations as a single man ever growing, ever learning, was meaningless if during forty of those generations there was neither learning nor growth. Condorcet did his best to trace human progress from prehistoric savagery to the diffusion of Greek culture over the Mediterranean, and to forecast a splendid future founded on the past. But the Dark Ages stood in his way as a gulf that he could not overleap.[2]

The temporary failure of the French Revolution, and the collapse of hopes founded on Rousseau's anarchical dreams, forced men back upon the study of the Middle Age, and stirred up attempts to

[1] *New Calendar of Great Men.*—Ed.

[2] *Cf.* pp. 91-92.—Ed.

restore its institutions and beliefs. Poets like Walter Scott, Chateaubriand, and Manzoni idealized the days of faith and chivalry. Vigorous thinkers like de Maistre pointed out the wisdom that underlay the fabric of the mediæval Papacy.[1] Revolution and counter-revolution stood opposed, hopeless of reconcilement. It was Comte's achievement to combine the truths affirmed by each; and thus, by making a consistent theory of history for the first time possible, to open out the path of true progress.

The work on Catholicism recently published by M. Laffitte[2] sets forth the precise position occupied by the Church in the history of Humanity with extreme clearness and fullness. Based, of course, upon Comte's philosophy of history, it is far from being a mere repetition or amplification of Comte's observations on the subject. Here, as in other branches of Positive Philosophy, M. Laffitte has set himself the task of thinking out Comte's thoughts, often so condensed or set forth in such abstract language as to evade attention, and of carrying them to their legitimate conclusions. Readers of his work on Comte's *First Philosophy*[3] are well aware what light has been shed upon the most obscure passages of the master by the energy and subtle insight of the disciple, who will for ever remain associated with his name, as Archytas is associated with Pythagoras, or Theophrastus with Aristotle.

In this treatise the order followed is that indicated by the arrangement of the Positivist Calendar. St. Paul's life and work are first appreciated. His connection, at first hostile, afterwards sympathetic, with the group of Jews gathered round the memory of Jesus is spoken of; the entire originality of his conception of the crucified and risen Christ, as contrasted with the miraculous but purely human biographies of the first three Gospels, is set forth as the foundation on which it was possible to combine the enthusiasm of the Jews for their tribal God with an entire abandonment of tribal narrowness. All self-assertion on the part of the true founder of the Christian Church was done away with, and gave way to the sublimest abnegation. The Christ of St. Paul became the Ideal of Humanity—a being far above ourselves, yet with whom the adorer could become incorporate; the union of human and divine; the head of the Church. By the untiring energy and devotion of St. Paul that Church was established in many important centres of

[1] In *Du Pape*, 1817. Placed in the last section of the Positivist Library.—ED.
[2] *Le Catholicisme : St. Paul, St. Augustin, Hildebrand, St. Bernard, Bossuet.* 1897. This forms vol. iii of the *Grands Types de l'Humanité*.—ED.
[3] See above, p. 47 (note).

Asia Minor and Greece. It found a fitting environment in the Græco-Roman world of that time. Roman conquest, by suppressing the conflicts of nations, had given the death-blow to polytheism. Distant nations were brought into easy and peaceful communication; the conception of the Human Race grew familiar. Greek philosophy had prepared all cultivated minds for monotheism. Cosmopolitan cities like Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria arose, in which traditions and ideas could be exchanged. Here and elsewhere the Jewish institution of the synagogue became a powerful instrument of propagation.

The four weeks in the month of St. Paul are represented by (1) St. Augustine, in whose writings the Catholic doctrine attained its complete maturity; (2) Hildebrand, who raised the spiritual power of the Church to its highest level; (3) St. Bernard, who illustrates the full perfection and social utility of the monastic system; finally (4) Bossuet, who leads us to consider the great services of which Catholicism has been capable during the inevitable decline of its independent spiritual power. Half of the volume is occupied with this final week, the subject of it being, of course, in more immediate relation than the others with the social and religious problems of our own time.

M. Laffitte describes with extreme clearness the stages in the evolution of Catholic doctrine, from the germs visible in St. Paul's Epistles to the full statement given in the Nicene Creed. The process took place, as Cardinal Newman showed fifty years ago in his remarkable essay on Development,[1] through the resistance offered by the Church to successive heresies—principally to those of Arius, Nestorius, and Eutyches. Each of these in its own way tended fatally to impair St. Paul's fundamental institution of the Christ as the idealized and divine Humanity, intermediate between man and the abstract and barren conception of an omnipotent Creator. The most dangerous of all these heresies was that of Arius, which, by reducing the Christ to the level of a mere prophet, would have fatally undermined the spiritual power of the priesthood, endowed with the power of bringing Christ, through the sacrament of the Eucharist, within the reach of men. The heresies of Nestorius, who duplicated the personality of Christ, and of Eutyches, who practically abolished his humanity, tended, each in its own way, to a similar result. By the Catholic doctrine, combining the twofold nature of Christ with the unity of his person, the two

[1] *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*; 1845.—ED.

instincts of veneration and of love were stirred and strengthened; the controlling and purifying influences of monotheism were combined with all that was best in the older polytheism, the union of adorer and adored.

Christian doctrine is due in the main to the Eastern Church; but the great social achievement of Christianity, the formation of a spiritual power, independent of temporal sovereignty and capable of modifying and moralizing it, was effected in the West. Constantine, says Dante, "became a Greek to make room for the Shepherd."[1] In the Eastern half of the Roman world the Church remained in servile subordination to the State. Of the three chief patriarchates, neither Alexandria, Antioch, nor Constantinople attained supremacy. When the Western Empire fell into independent provinces, the bishops of Rome maintained the ascendancy of the imperial city by spiritual forces. The successive steps in the formation of the Papacy are clearly indicated in M. Laffitte's work, special prominence being given to the life and work of Gregory the Great in the sixth century, the mission of Augustine to England, the relations of the Roman bishopric with the Frankish kingdom, and the formation of the Roman territory into an independent principality. Under the Carlovingian kings the Papal power grew steadily, and finally, after a brief period of decay, was raised to its final supremacy over the West by Hildebrand, in the second half of the eleventh century.

The spiritual force of Catholicism rested in great part upon the monasteries; and one of the most interesting and original sections of M. Laffitte's work is his chapter on the rise and progress of monasticism, from St. Benedict in the fifth century to St. Bernard in the twelfth. Monastic life had been introduced into Rome by Athanasius from Egypt in the fourth century. It was practised by Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine; it was diffused in Spain by St. Isidore, in Gaul by St. Martin; and from Gaul it spread to Ireland, whence it reacted most powerfully on all Christendom. But the most potent and permanent organizer of monastic life was Benedict of Nursia. "This true Roman," says M. Laffitte, "devised a machinery for the conquest of the barbarian world by Christian civilization which we may compare with the Roman legion of former times: what the legion had been for the Senate the monastery became for the Papacy."[2]

Monasticism had its industrial as well as its spiritual side; and

[1] *Paradiso*, canto xx, 57.—ED.

[2] P. 266.—ED.

this is set forth in the book before us with great clearness. It was a form of socialistic co-operation, carried on with strenuous regard to economy, but differing profoundly from the socialist schemes of our own time in subordinating economic to moral purposes. All the greater were the industrial results. In the centuries preceding the rise of the Communes, the cultivation of the soil in northern Europe, the reclamation of wastes and forests, and the institution of the first machines, notably of wind and water-mills, was due to the Benedictines. Gradually, as capital increased, the abbots took their place in the feudal system as landlords of a milder and less exacting type than the baronial authorities. Slaves became settled cultivators, with the rights of freemen; and meantime energies were set free for the culture of music, architecture, and literature. All this is admirably illustrated by quotations from the monograph of M. Guérard on the history of the abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés, which sets forth in minute detail the precise condition of the occupiers of the lands held by this abbey in the ninth century.

Of the moral and social results of the monastic system St. Bernard is the most perfect expression. It is, however, the less needful to dwell on the services of this extraordinary man, since they have been so powerfully set forth in the *Life of St. Bernard*[1] by one of the most distinguished of English Positivists, Mr. J. Cotter Morison. We have only to think of him as the monk who, while profiting to the full by the discipline and seclusion of his cell, intervened wisely and effectively in every great question, intellectual and practical, that agitated Christendom, and who, from his humble station, was the chosen guide and counsellor of Popes and Kings. Worthy was he indeed to utter the noble hymn to the Virgin that closes the *Vision* of Dante.

With the close of the thirteenth century the sociological mission of Catholicism came to an end. Literature and the arts passed from the monks into other hands. Architecture, industry, agriculture, became the functions of trade guilds or of independent cultivators. Canon law gave way to civil law. Kings became supreme over Popes. Scholastic philosophy, once the great bulwark of orthodoxy, developed the habit and the power of criticizing the foundations of the Christian faith. After a brief delay the organized insurrection of Protestantism shattered the Catholic dominion in twain; and the

[1] *The Life and Times of St. Bernard: Abbot of Clairvaux.* (Macmillan and Co.; 1877.)—ED.

attempt forcibly to reunite it devastated Europe and wasted human energies for more than a century.

Nevertheless, a long and, in many ways, a most fruitful future lay before Catholicism in its decline. It could no longer influence the action of States. Every step taken from the Reformation to the third French Republic has made it abundantly clear that the Christian religion has no exclusive privilege to bind social action, and that the religion of the future must rest on wholly different foundations. But for the mass who do not march in the van of progress it continues to afford a moral shelter, controlling selfish passion and stimulating unselfish ardour, until the final Religion of Humanity, embracing all nations of the world within its fold, shall have spread more widely and taken more palpable shape. M. Laffitte's careful study of Bossuet discriminates with perfect clearness between the sphere of work from which Catholicism is finally excluded and that in which it can continue to work for the good of mankind. Bossuet frankly accepted the subordination of Church to State. His sole anxiety was to preserve the spiritual power from further dissolution—a policy well illustrated by his successful struggle against the quietistic and enervating mysticism of Fénelon and Molinos.

Not less instructive are the pages devoted to the examination of the systematic effort made by the Jesuits to consolidate the papal power. The political intrigues in which the later Jesuits were absorbed, and which led at last to their dissolution, have blinded us to the marvellous organization of spiritual forces effected by the first founders of the order. M. Laffitte brings us back to the true point of view from which their effort should be judged. His comparison of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius with the private devotion expounded in the *Positivist Catechism* of Auguste Comte, and exemplified in his testamentary volume,[1] is full of significance and wisdom. Never were men more vigorously prepared by moral discipline than the Jesuits for a great social function. Nor was that function wholly a failure. The Jesuit missions in China and Paraguay are the first, and hitherto the only, model of the way in which higher civilizations should proceed in modifying and elevating the retarded races of mankind.

The volume closes with some valuable counsel, in the spirit of

[1] *Testament d'Auguste Comte;* 1884. An Eng. tr. has been published as follows: *Confessions and Testament of Auguste Comte and his Correspondence with Clotilde de Vaux.* Ed. by A. Crompton. (Liverpool: Henry Young and Sons; 1910.)—ED.

Comte's *Appel aux Conservateurs*,[1] as to the way in which disciples of the new and final religion may co-operate with those older in resisting the revolutionary dangers which threaten to disintegrate many of the most precious institutions handed down to us from the past. Taking this volume as a whole, it appears to me the most valuable contribution made to Positive Politics since the death of Auguste Comte.

II

RELIGION AND SOCIOLOGY

In the December[2] number of the *Positivist Review*, under the title "Positivism and the Unknowable,"[3] something was said of the attention given by Conservatives and Catholics in France to the teaching of Auguste Comte. Among many indications of this, reference was made to two articles by M. Brunetière which appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of last year.[4] A third, by the same writer, was published on February 15.[5] Like the others, it raises important questions which it is exceedingly desirable that Positivists should consider.

The first principle laid down by the writer is that all religions, whatever their origin, duration, or value, are essentially social facts, not facts of individual life. Quoting from Guyau's work on the *Irreligion of the Future*,[6] he speaks of religion as originating, not, as often stated, in anthropomorphism, but in sociomorphism. It reflects, that is to say, not man's individual nature, but the nature of the community to which he belongs. All religions, he goes on to say, whether fetishist, polytheist, Mohammedan, or Buddhist, are social institutions; they are *motifs de rassemblement*, forces which bring men together. There have been local religions and universal religions; there have been religions of the family and religions of the State; there have been jealously exclusive religions, like Brahminism or Judaism; there have been religions of the open door, like Buddhism; there have been militant religions, like Islam. But one thing has never yet been seen—the religion of the individual.

[1] 1855. Eng. tr. in 1889, entitled *Appeal to Conservatives*. (Trübner and Co.)—Ed.
[2] 1902.
[3] The paper will be found in ch. iii of this Part.—Ed.
[4] 1902.
[5] 1903. The article was on "La Religion comme Sociologie."—Ed.
[6] M. J. Guyau, *L'irréligion de l'avenir*; 1887.—Ed.

The so-called religion of the wise man, "of which no wise man ever speaks," is no religion at all. If we have to speak of the religion of Plato or of Socrates, it began only when Socrates and Plato gathered disciples round them. To say you can have a religion to yourself is like saying you can have a family to yourself or a country to yourself. Family, Country, Religion, are collective words, or they are nonsense.

Think of the meaning of the word *heresy*. "The heretic," says Bossuet, "is the man who has an opinion," the man who detaches himself from the group. *Vae soli! Les hommes aiment à penser en troupe.* The heretic disappears unless he can gather disciples round him. If he does this, he forms a schism. But a schism is itself a communion—the gathering together of the dissenters. We thus come back to what is the principal character of religion—a belief held by many in common. Reform in religion means a revolutionary movement penetrating through every fibre of society. Thus the Buddhist revolution meant the suppression of caste. Thus, too, Christianity was persecuted, not on account of its dogma, but because it brought in a new social state. In the United States (and M. Brunetière might have added, in England also) Protestant Christians are finding out that what is wanted is the socialization of Christianity. "The doctrines of Jesus," says Mr. Herron, of Grinnell College, Iowa, "are less theological than social." Look, again, at China. Why is she so recalcitrant to our missions? Because her religion is not a theory, not a metaphysical doctrine, but a social system; and until the social structure of China is fundamentally changed Christianity will be powerless.

Having got so far, M. Brunetière goes on to say that Auguste Comte had said all this, or most of it, long ago. The whole tendency of his thought was to identify Religion and Sociology. I quote the following passage, which, full as it is of confusion and misrepresentation, is not without interest:—

> Sociology led Comte to religion; and religion as he conceived it (*sa religion*) became at once the rule and the judge of his sociology. His religion, *from which he most carefully avoided eliminating either the unknowable or the supernatural* (and, indeed, no one has spoken so severely as he of the monstrous contradiction disguised under the words "natural religion"), is the mystical foundation of his sociology. His sociology is simply an attempt to realize his "kingdom of God" upon the earth.[1]

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes* (February 15, 1903), p. 854.—ED.

On the words which I mark in italics we will not dwell at present. M. Brunetière goes on to say how highly he approves of Comte's definition of religion as given in the *Positivist Catechism*;[1] how truly, deeply, eternally religious it is; how it only needs completing to make its universal adoption desirable. Not less cordial is his praise for all that Comte says, in his annual Circulars[2] and elsewhere (see especially the sixth Circular), as to the "revolutionary disease." Comte described it as due to "an over-stimulation of pride and of vanity, kept up by the tendency, a very contagious tendency, to believe in personal infallibility."[3] It is to this disease of the public mind, and not to the progress of science and free-thought, that M. Brunetière attributes the decay of Catholicism during the last five centuries. But how does he explain the origin of the disease? Comte's explanation is well known. Theological dogma, once capable of rallying men under a common standard, has now lost its power to rally; consequently, every man tends to become his own pope, and follows what is right in his own eyes. But controversy with M. Brunetière is not the purpose of this paper, and we may pass on.

Comte's sixth Circular was written while he was preparing his *Appel aux Conservateurs*,[4] much of which, indeed, is an expansion of it. It is needless to say how gladly the Catholic writer accepts all those pages of the book which dwell on the services which Catholicism, even in its decline, is still capable of rendering, and how carefully he ignores the proofs given that the decline is irrevocable. Such one-sidedness is to be expected; it must be reckoned with as a certainty. But—and here lies the point at which this paper is aiming—*it must not be shared by Positivists*. For, on the one hand, we are bound to make it clear to ourselves and others why it is that no theological religion, whether Catholic or any other, can fulfil that one of the two essential functions of religion which consists in rallying the nations of the world under a common standard; and, on the other hand, our principles compel us to acknowledge that the second function—that of bringing the divergent desires and thoughts of each individual life under moral control—is carried out to some extent by every form of sincere belief that has prevailed among men, and assuredly not least by Catholicism, even in its decline.

[1] First Conversation. 2nd Eng. ed., p. 34.—ED.

[2] These Circulars will be found in Dr. Robinet's *Notice sur l'Œuvre et la Vie d'Auguste Comte*; 1860. 3rd ed. in 1891. For an Eng. tr. see *The Eight Circulars of Auguste Comte*. (Trübner and Co.; 1882.)—ED.

[3] Sixth Circular. See Robinet, p. 513 of 3rd ed., or p. 47 of Eng. tr.—ED.

[4] See above, p. 237 (note 1).

Let it be remembered that what Comte always looked forward to with hope was to see Positivism and Catholicism brought into direct contact and fairly confronted. The word *Christianity* in our times means something different for every person who speaks of it. It may mean strict Calvinism; it may melt away into Deism and the vaguest philanthropy. But with Catholicism no such mistake is possible. The Anglican priest may sign the Thirty-nine Articles, and may proceed to declare his doubt of every one of their dogmas. No such latitude is permissible to the Catholic. In Catholicism we have, as its supporters maintain, the only adequate discipline of life. In the early Middle Ages this claim was, as Positivists most cordially agree, very largely justified. Comte and his successor, Pierre Laffitte, have shown with far greater force and fullness than any Catholic writer, more fully than even Joseph de Maistre, that the Catholic system brought forward the problem of the moral government of human life in a way that had never before been attempted. What was peculiar to it was the rise of a special body of men, *separate from and independent of the State*, whose business it was to inculcate morality in all relations of life, public and private. I earnestly advise those who may find the fifty-fourth chapter of the *Philosophie Positive*, or the sixth chapter of the third volume of the *Positive Polity*, either too difficult or too inaccessible, to read carefully the third volume of Laffitte's *Grands Types de l'Humanité*.[1] This volume, published separately from the other two and at a much later date (1897), deals with the principal names in the month of the Positivist Calendar that bears the name of St. Paul. Libraries of Catholic theology may be safely challenged to produce a book that has done such justice to the services rendered by St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Benedict, Hildebrand, and St. Bernard.

Setting, as we do, so high a value on the Catholic Church, from its rise under St. Paul to its culmination in the age of St. Francis and of St. Thomas Aquinas, why is it that we repudiate its claims to the moral government of mankind in the present and in the future?

For many reasons; but chiefly because, so far as public life is concerned, Catholicism has abdicated its function. This was not due to Protestantism. Two centuries before Luther burnt the Pope's bull, or Henry VIII sent men to the scaffold for denying his own headship of the English Church, the independence of the Church as a controlling power over the Western States had died a natural death. Even at the height of its power Catholicism had

[1] See above, p. 232 (note 2).

failed to establish its control over Eastern Europe. It could not breathe its life into the feeble Christianity of Byzantium; its heroic struggle with heroic Islam ended in an armed truce. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw its increasing subjection to the State. The sixteenth and seventeenth brought the Protestant revolt and the final independence of the revolters. The eighteenth century, making every dogma of theology an open question, culminated in the French Revolution; and not merely those who took part in it, but such onlookers as Goethe and Wordsworth, and countless others, felt that a new era had begun.

Throughout these five centuries a marvellous store had accumulated of scientific discoveries, artistic creations, industrial inventions, geographical explorations; many of the first, and some of the second, being hostile to Catholic doctrine, and all independent of it. Small wonder that early in the nineteenth century men of insight, born under the impulses of the Revolution, should feel that the time for the reconstruction of life on a purely human basis was at hand. Among these prophetic souls Comte stood alone in surveying the full extent of the problem to be solved. To those familiar with Condorcet's *Progress of the Human Mind*,[1] and with de Maistre's appreciation of the mediæval Papacy,[2] it will be enough to say that his great discovery of sociological evolution combined the point of view of both these thinkers. To Condorcet human progress seemed continuous, from the humblest beginnings onwards, till Christianity arose. Christianity, as he conceived it, involved civilization in a thousand years of darkness, till the Renascence and the Revolution restored the light. For de Maistre, on the other hand, the mediæval years were luminous and progressive; with the fall of the mediæval Papacy began a long period of moral and social aberration, from which it was the business of the nineteenth century to save us.

We come back, then, to the position taken up by Comte in the *Appel aux Conservateurs*, as guiding the attitude of Positivists to other forms of religion. Briefly, it is this: that, while the claim of Catholicism, or of any other theistic doctrine, to direct the public life of mankind has become, in the course of evolution, dangerous to public order, and requires unflinching resistance, yet, nevertheless, there is a standpoint from which Positivists and many followers of older faiths can recognize the value of each other's work. Both are aiming, though in widely different ways and in different surroundings, at an identical purpose. Both are protests against

[1] See above, p. 91 (note 5).

[2] *The Pope*.—ED.

irreligion; in other words, both are upholding the supremacy of soul over body, of spirit over matter, of love, joy, and reverence over cynical epicureanism or hopeless apathy.

Let there be no mistake, no mystification. When the Positivist and the Catholic meet on the arena of public life, there can be no surrender and no compromise. To direction of the public concerns of mankind Catholicism (and the same may be said of every form of organized Christianity—Greek, Anglican, Lutheran, or Calvinist) has irrevocably lost every lawful claim. Attempts to restore the power of the mediæval Church have been made from Philip II onwards. They have been repeated through the nineteenth century in Spain, in Austria, in Spanish America, and, above all, in France under Charles X, under the Second Empire, under the Third Republic. What has come of them we know. Nor can better things be said of the attitude of the Anglican clergy towards the Calvinists of South Africa, or of the resistance of British Nonconformists to justice in Ireland, or of the attempts of Christian missionaries, of whatever sect, to uproot the foundations of Chinese civilization. In the public relations of men, national or international, organized theism, in all its forms, has become a source of disunion and disturbance. All this has been said by Comte in words of unmistakable clearness. And yet Comte it was who, in the work I am now speaking of,[1] put forward the conception of a religious league against irreligion, in which, under Positivist direction, sincere supporters of every organized creed should be invited to take part.

I have noticed that many Positivists are disposed to disregard this conception, and even to look upon it as a chimerical paradox. To me it presents itself as a very striking illustration of Comte's depth of sympathy, and comprehensive grasp of the facts of moral life. It should be noted that, forty years after the publication of the *Appel aux Conservateurs*, Pierre Laffitte was led, at the close of his elaborate study of Catholicism,[2] to an almost identical conclusion. I say "almost identical," for, having regard to political and social changes which had taken place in the interval, wise modifications were introduced by Comte's successor, which, however, left the principle entirely untouched. Even so, it may still be regarded by some as an ideal counsel of perfection, which can never be applied. Yet it should be remembered that in all religion that

[1] The *Appel*. See pp. 117–23 of the Eng. tr.—ED.
[2] *Le Catholicisme*, pp. 687–90.

deserves the name we have to deal with ideals, our business being to strive to translate them into realities as time and place may serve. Prayer, the life-blood of all religions—what is it but the constant effort to uphold and to renew the ideal of life?

Religions are many; religion is one. The rate of transit from primitive and imperfect forms towards that which is perfect and final varies not merely between one century and another, not merely between one nation and another, but with different members of the same community. Difference of intellectual power is not the only cause of this, not even the principal cause. It depends rather on variations in social environment, on individual temperament, on historical antecedent. Any street in Paris, London, or Berlin contains a large number of families who are entirely "emancipated" from theology, and who live without ideals or aspirations of any sort or kind, sunk in selfish apathy or industrial slavery. In a Tyrolese or Irish village many families are sustained in their direst sorrows by lifting up their hearts to the Virgin Mother, the embodiment of purity and pity. Which are nearest to the Religion of Humanity?

III

MODERN CHRISTIANITY

JUDGED by its action on the collective life of nations, Christianity during the last few years, as during many that have gone before them, has been found wanting. In questions of justice, whether national or international, its authorized exponents have not been conspicuous as champions of right, and have very frequently ranged themselves on the side of wrong. Honourable exceptions there have been; but, on looking at the principal issues that have divided nations during the last ten years, it will hardly be felt that the case against Christianity has been too strongly stated.

Eight or nine years ago[1] France was deeply stirred by the charge of treason brought against a Jewish officer in the French army. There is no need to repeat the tale of the Dreyfus agitation. It is enough to say, in the fewest and plainest words, that the whole force of the Catholic hierarchy was arrayed on the side of injustice, and very nearly achieved success. Just as that struggle was ending, Great Britain was dragged by her plutocracy into war for the

[1] Written in 1905.—ED.

suppression of the Boer Republics. The minority that protested was strong and resolute; but the few clergy that joined it served but to make the acquiescence in wrong-doing of the clerical majority more conspicuous. If we turn to Eastern Europe, we find the Russian Procurator of the Holy Synod directing, now as ever, the forces of obscurantist repression. Lastly, in Eastern Asia, we see Christian missions, especially those of the Catholic Church, exacting exorbitant damages for riots which their own folly has provoked, and claiming exterritorial privileges that, if prolonged, would sap the foundation of Chinese civilization.

It is not, therefore, surprising that those who are absorbed either as actors or as spectators in the business of public life—to whom the struggle for justice between classes or between nations is everything, and the rest almost nothing—should grow impatient when they see the established Churches ranging themselves on the wrong side, or at best passive in defence of the right. We may regret, but we cannot wonder, that they should take the rate of decay in theological belief as their measure of social and moral progress, and that they should be sometimes tempted into language that recalls the stupendous blunder of Condorcet and other leaders of the French Revolution, of regarding the whole Middle Age as a millennium of stagnation or reaction. That M. Jaurès and his followers, fighting against an organized conspiracy for the destruction of the French Republic, should speak, write, and act in this way is perfectly intelligible.

But Positivists have been taught to look at this matter from a more comprehensive standpoint. They have not been backward in the struggle for political justice, as all will allow. Their record as to India, China, Egypt, South Africa, Ireland, is one of which they need not be ashamed. They have supported the just claims of labour; they have been the firm opponents of Church establishments. Nevertheless, though this is much, yet for men, one of whose aims is "to see life steadily and see it whole," it is not enough. Justice is but one of the four cardinal virtues. And the Christian Church called our attention to others besides those four. It is possible to conceive a social state in which a series of vigorous and wise rulers should have established an unbroken period of peaceful and equitable government, and in which, nevertheless, the lives of the governed were not worth living. Something of this kind is what actually took place in the best period of the Roman Empire. Greek intellect and Roman energy had displayed forces for which there was apparently no further vent. On the surface of

things there seemed little to complain of, and little to work for. Refined culture was diffused everywhere, and there were no more worlds to conquer.

In such a condition of the world, "the fullness of time having come," Paul founded the Christian Church. It is not needful here to enter into the disputed question of the personality of Jesus, in which the sublime abnegation of Paul's noble and heroic nature inspired him to annihilate his own. Enough to recognize what surely must now be obvious, that the Christ of Paul's letters to the Galatians and Romans, the Unifier of divine and human, the Man-God, differed widely from the Galilean prophet and miracle-worker of the first two, or even of the first three, Gospels. The founder of a Jewish sect was transformed into the central object of a universal faith that embraced the whole Roman world. Put forth as an ideal vision, it might have impressed a few ardent spirits, and then have faded into oblivion. But in Paul the inspiration of a prophet was combined with the energy and organizing genius of a Cæsar. In city after city of the Eastern Mediterranean a fortress of the new faith was built; and when his life was prematurely cut short the Catholic Church was founded. A society existed outside the sphere of political life whose direct object, in view of the speedy coming of the Messiah, was the purification of the soul, the education of the heart, the restraint of baser passions, the systematic culture, impressed on young and old, on rich and poor, on bond and free, of the instincts of reverence and love. Stable enough to survive the fading hopes of the immediate advent of the Christ, this society permeated and leavened the mass of the Roman world, acted on, and was in turn moulded by, feudal customs, and stood out at last in the Papacy of Hildebrand and Innocent III as the moral arbiter of European States.

I am not proposing to recount Church history in two or three pages. But I gladly take occasion to recall the attention of readers of the *Positivist Review*, as I have done once before, to the masterly treatment of this subject, from the Positivist standpoint, by Pierre Laffitte; and I am the more willing to urge this that in our English work on the Positivist Calendar[1] my own treatment of the life of St. Paul did not lay such stress as Laffitte's book,[2] published some years later, would have taught me to do, upon the germs of Catholic discipline visible throughout St. Paul's teaching. They needed, in fact, only the natural process of development, which Cardinal

[1] *New Calendar of Great Men.*—ED. [2] *Le Catholicisme.*—ED.

Newman so powerfully depicted sixty years ago, to pass into the accepted creed of mediæval Christendom. Newman remarks, in the Introduction to his remarkable essay,[1] that "perhaps the only English writer who has any claim to be considered an ecclesiastical historian is the unbeliever Gibbon." Gibbon had realized, in his own imperfect way, that Christianity was something more than a creed, that it was not to be summed up in a manual of doctrine, that it was a social force of stupendous import undergoing through a long series of centuries a process of organic development.

If Newman could have read the volume to which I am now calling attention, he might with more reason have said that, while written by the principal exponent, next to Comte, of the Religion of Humanity, it contains a more adequate account of the rise, constitution, and social efficacy of the Christian Church than has ever yet been presented by any of its professed defenders. In form it is a continuation, but on a much larger and fuller scale, of the two volumes entitled *Grands Types de l'Humanité*,[2] which deal with the great men commemorated in the first five months of the Positivist Calendar. In this third volume one month alone is dealt with—the month of St. Paul; and nearly half the volume, 300 pages, is devoted to the week commemorating the celebrities of Christianity during the last five or six centuries. This period, as students of Comte's philosophy of history are well aware, began with the spontaneous decay of the Papacy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries under Anti-popes, Schisms, and conflicting Councils; this in the sixteenth and seventeenth was followed by the systematic disruption effected by Luther and Calvin; finally came the more destructive movement of Deism and Atheism, issuing in the Revolution, from the turmoil of which we have not yet escaped. Chief among the Catholic celebrities of this period comes Bossuet, the philosophic organizer of the Gallican Church. With him are associated Christian philanthropists like St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the order of Sisters of Charity, and the Abbé de l'Épée, the teacher of the deaf and dumb; beneficent mystics like Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa, and the founders of the Society of Friends; reformers of Church discipline within the limits that were then possible, like Charles Borromeo, Xavier, and Loyola. It is obvious that other names might have been chosen more familiar to British

[1] See above, p. 233 (note).

[2] *Les Grands Types de l'Humanité*. Appréciation systématique des principaux agents de l'évolution humain, par P. Laffitte. Two vols. (Paris; 1875–1876.)—ED.

and American ears. But this is a matter of quite secondary importance for our present purpose, and need not be discussed here. The essential point to be considered is that throughout the period during which Catholicism, as a force acting on national and international life, was undergoing continuous decline, it presents us with a series of men and women whose services to the moral life of Western Europe deserved, in Comte's opinion, special commemoration.

Now, it is sometimes said and thought that all this was well enough for times when the final faith of Humanity had not yet arisen; when it was not thought possible that there could be any organized moral discipline except under the guidance of theological belief. But the case is now quite otherwise. A human religion in perfect harmony with science, satisfying the most ardent imagination and directing our moral energies to the culture of affection in private life and to the establishment of public justice, is now before the world. Let the world accept it, and cling no longer to "creeds outworn."

There is some truth in this, but not the whole truth. And what is missing is of great practical importance. In the first place, though it is true to say that the new religion is before the world, it has as yet been presented rather as a vision of what may be than as an effective reality. I do not doubt that the time is near at hand, perhaps in the century that is now beginning, when a teacher or school of teachers will arise whose personal devotion, aided by sufficient intellectual power, will make the Religion of Humanity as real to large bodies of men and women in Eastern and Western cities as was Christianity in the humbler streets of the cities of the Levant when Paul had done his work. But this lies still in the future. And, meanwhile, all we can be sure of is that all truly religious men and women, in the wide and all-embracing sense that Comte gave to the word *religion*, be they Agnostic, Catholic, or Methodist, are silently preparing the way for that future; standing aloof altogether from the iniquitous ambitions with which the official Churches may continue to trouble the world.

I have spoken of the fourth week of the month of St. Paul. It suggests a brief reference to the first week, which represents the three or four centuries in which the Catholic doctrine was passing through its slow yet continuous evolution from St. Paul's Epistles to the Nicene Creed. Christianity was working underground during the greater part of this period. The great Fathers of the Church, Greek or Roman, belong to its close. The thought of

an independent spiritual power which should arbitrate between contending nations, and which, when wielded by an Ambrose or a Hildebrand, could bring emperors to their knees, was not possible before the fourth century. Yet the discipline and purification of private life, the restraint of selfish passion, the culture of reverence and love, of which the triumph of the mediæval Church was the outcome, was going on all the while, and from that time to this has never ceased. It will survive, it may be, for many years after the Religion of Humanity has gained its legitimate ascendancy over the progressive sections of mankind.

Comte, as all students of his writings are aware, was too sanguine in his hopes of the rapidity with which his teaching would permeate the world. Yet his highest hopes for the nineteenth century were that at its close a thousandth part of the adult male population in Western Europe should have accepted Positivism. That so small a minority would suffice to protect the interests of public justice—that is to say, of Positivism applied to national and international life—is not the unreasonable assumption that it might at first appear. With rare and very transient exceptions, minorities have always guided the public life of the world in the past; and they will always guide it in the future. At present the work, or much of it, is done by eloquent platform speakers, by brilliant literary men, and by a Press bought and sold by millionaires. Obviously, a better result may be imagined and hoped; but in any case, be the leadership wise or unwise, it will be the function of a minority.

However this may be, it must remain a matter of momentous importance whether, in the vast majority of men and women who take no part in speculative changes, and who are not actively engaged, except at rare intervals, in public agitations, the continuity of moral tradition and discipline in private life is upheld or not. Many of the indications at the present time are unfavourable, and warn us that this continuity is threatened. Without indulging in querulous jeremiads as to contemporary morality, there is enough to make thoughtful men unwilling to see guarantees of any kind for moral discipline swept away till more efficient substitutes have taken their place. With such hesitation, Positivists can sympathize without abandoning any of their principles; or, rather, in conformity with their principles, they are bound to sympathize. Having been taught something of the more perfect religion of the future, they are the more able to recognize the value that survives from the religions of the past and present. They can tolerate no theological interference with the government of nations; no armed intervention,

whether through protected missions or otherwise, to eliminate Confucianism from China, Shintoism or Buddhism from Japan, Islam from the Ottoman Empire. To the grant of official privileges to any form of faith, their own included, they offer determined opposition. But this attitude will not hinder them from acknowledging the services rendered by theological religions in the time of their strength, and the useful work that still remains to be done by them in their period of decline.

This attitude of respectful sympathy is the essential meaning of the league of religions against irreligion, projected by Comte in his *Appel aux Conservateurs*.[1] The comments on it with which Laffitte closes his treatise on Catholicism are of great interest and value. Its mode of application will doubtless vary very widely with time and circumstance; but the combination of sincerity with sympathy will remain the characteristic note. It is, perhaps, hardly needful to point out that in the sense here given to the words *religious* and *irreligious* large masses of nominal Christians must be classed among the latter; and that among those who reject every form of theological belief some are in a very true sense religious, even though they may not formally accept the Religion of Humanity.

IV

CATHOLICISM AND SCIENCE[2]

It may be feared that the excitement of passing events has left little time or leisure for watching the remarkable controversy between Dr. St. George Mivart and Cardinal Vaughan as to the limits of divergence on scientific questions permitted by the Catholic Church. Into the details of the controversy I have no intention of entering. Those who care to study them, and they are worth study, will find most of them in the *Nineteenth Century* (August 1899, January, February, and March, 1900), and in the *Times* from January 12 to January 27. For several years Dr. Mivart has been maintaining that the attitude of the Roman Church with respect to modern scientific discovery was far less inflexible and uncompromising than had been commonly supposed. He had been encouraged by many Catholic theologians to believe that the Church had taken

[1] *Cf.* above, p. 242.—Ed. [2] April, 1900.

warning from the scandal of Galileo's imprisonment, and would in the future avoid the mistake of presenting any obstacles to scientific research, whatever the conclusions to which such research might lead. However obstructive Catholicism might appear, especially in its Roman centre, there was yet room within its borders for a progressive element, which at some future time might leaven the inert mass and restore its intellectual vitality.

Hoping and believing this, yet not feeling quite sure of it, Dr. Mivart resolved to bring the matter to a definite issue. To live in a fog of doubt and equivocation on such a matter had become intolerable to him. Yes or no, is the Church prepared to accept the conclusions to which scientific reason may lead us, whatever those conclusions may be? Assuming an affirmative answer to this question, Dr. Mivart, in his article of January last,[1] entitled "The Continuity of Catholicism," showed very quietly but also very unmistakably some of the results that followed. In a most sympathetic and reverential spirit, but without any flinching, the miraculous story of the conception and the resurrection of Jesus were dealt with as a scientific student would deal with the legends of Buddha or the early tales of Greece and Rome. The Fall of Man and the scheme of Redemption faded away altogether. "Most scholars would deny that there is more historical evidence for the garden of Eden than for the garden of the Hesperides." The Biblical account of the fall is "a myth intended to symbolize some moral lapse of the earliest races of mankind," or perhaps indicates "the first awakening of the human conscience to a perception of right and wrong." An entire change takes place in the point of view from which Christ's death is looked at. It is no longer a satisfying of God's justice and a redemption from the curse of original sin. In the view of many modern Catholics, "Christ's life and death have served to set before us a great 'object lesson.'" Observe that these and many other propositions of the same kind were not put forward by Dr. Mivart as individual speculations of his own concocting. The whole point of his article lay in his bringing them forward as samples of an evolutionary process which Catholic doctrine was at the present time undergoing in the minds of many distinguished priests and theologians he knew personally.

As might be supposed, the challenge was at once accepted. On January 9 a form of recantation was sent to Dr. Mivart, with a request that he would sign and return it; a request which, a week

[1] *Nineteenth Century*; January, 1900.—ED.

afterwards, was accompanied with an intimation that in case of refusal the law of the Church must take its course. The terms of this remarkable document are pitilessly clear. The signer was required to declare, generally, his submission to the Catholic Church as the supreme and infallible guide of Christian faith. He was then required, specifically, to announce his belief in the following tenets, in the plain literal meaning of the words: the miraculous conception of Jesus; the Virginity of Mary; the Fall of Man—that is, that "Adam's sin entailed loss of holiness and justice received from God, not for himself alone, but for us all"; that the Crucifixion of Christ "was not merely an object lesson of fidelity unto death, but a true and full satisfaction to the offended justice of God for the sins original and actual of all men." He was to "reject as false and heretical all doctrines which teach that the souls in Hell may eventually be saved, or that their state in Hell may be one which is not of punishment." He was to proclaim his belief in the plenary inspiration of Scripture in terms which would satisfy the strictest Bibliolater in Calvinism. Against evolution of doctrine in the sense foreshadowed by Dr. Mivart the form of recantation was hopelessly stringent. He was to say that "the doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed like a philosophical invention to be perfected by human ingenuity, but that.....that meaning of the sacred dogmas is to be perpetually retained which our Holy Mother the Church has once declared, and that such meaning can never be departed from under the pretence or pretext of deeper comprehension of them." He was to "reject as heretical the assertion that it is possible at some time, according to the progress of science, to give to doctrines propounded by the Church a sense different from that which the Church has understood and understands; and consequently that the sense and meaning of her doctrines can ever be in the course of time practically explained away or reversed."

Dr. Mivart made one effort—not, it would seem, a very hopeful one—to modify the Cardinal's purpose. On January 19 he wrote to ask whether Cardinal Vaughan really meant that he was to say that there are no errors, or altogether false statements or fabulous narratives, in the Old and New Testaments, and that he would not be free to hold and teach, without blame, that the world was not created in any six periods of time; that the story of the serpent and the tree is altogether false; that the history of the Tower of Babel is a mere fiction devoid of any particle of truth; that the story of Noah's ark is also quite erroneous, as again that of the plagues of Egypt; that neither Joshua nor Hezekiah interfered with the

regularity of solar time; that Jonah did not live within the belly of any kind of marine animal; that Lot's wife was never turned into a pillar of salt; and that Balaam's ass never spoke? If he is told that to believe these things is not necessary, it will "greatly facilitate the signing of the document." The Cardinal replied by referring his correspondent to the Pope's Encyclical of 1893, entited *Providentissimus Deus*. Consulting this Encyclical, Dr. Mivart found that it asserted in most unmistakable language the plenary inspiration of the Bible in every particular. His letter in the *Times* of January 27 announced the closing of the controversy. "It is now evident," he writes, "that a vast and impassable abyss yawns between Catholic dogma and science, and no man with ordinary knowledge can henceforth join the communion of the Roman Catholic Church if he correctly understands what its principles and its teaching really are. .....I categorically refuse to sign the profession of faith.....*Liberavi animam meam.* I can sing my *Nunc dimittis* and calmly await the future." So ends this significant controversy. It is worth studying, because it brings into prominence the features which distinguish Catholicism from every other form of Christianity.

In an article on Dr. Jowett in July, 1897, and again in a more recent paper on "A Church without a Creed,"[1] I tried to show the inevitable hollowness of all attempts to re-establish Christianity *as a governing influence in the world* without regard to its dogmatic basis. This has been felt by all the great teachers of the Christian religion; by St. Paul, who declared the doctrine of the Resurrection to be the foundation-stone of his faith; by St. Augustine, who spent three-fourths of his life in the refutation of heresy; by St. Bernard, whose controversy with Abelard still retains its dramatic interest; by Dominic, by Luther, by Calvin, by Bossuet when he crushed Fénelon, by the Jesuits who imprisoned Molinos; by Bishop Butler, the greatest philosopher of Anglicanism; by the most impressive of modern Catholics, Cardinal Newman. All these men knew well that as a governing force in the world Christianity without a creed is as powerless as steam without a steam-engine, or gunpowder without artillery. In season and out of season they acted according to their convictions; Augustine and Bernard with triumphant success, the rest with increasing degrees of failure as the centuries went by. When Dominic founded the Inquisition the seeds of dissolution were already sown. Calvin roused more hatred than fear when he burnt Servetus; Bossuet was followed hard by

[1] The two papers referred to will be found in the next chapter.—ED.

Voltaire. Yet still the Jesuit, feebler of intellect but not less tenacious than his founder, is doing his best to set fire to European civilization, on the bare chance that the Pope may be made king again, and France be hidden under a shameful veil of darkness.

To some of those who agree with me generally in this outline of the situation it will seem an intolerable paradox to say, as nevertheless I am compelled to say, that in the controversy between the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the distinguished man of science, the Cardinal from one point of view, and that of paramount importance, must be admitted to be right. More consistent, more faithful to his trust than his Anglican competitors, Cardinal Vaughan upholds the principle that the Catholic Church exists, not merely for the purpose of stimulating and controlling the inward emotions of men and women as individuals, but of giving counsel in their dealings with one another. To give advice in social questions implies that the adviser has a definite body of principles, defining with some degree of precision the action of man not merely as an individual, but as a member of a community. In other words, the counsellor must have a theory of human society, be that theory right or wrong. It often happens that the theory may be erroneous, and yet the advice founded on it be sound. Ptolemaic astronomers gave for the most part excellent advice to navigators and to the makers of calendars, though on a mistaken theory. The time came when the theory itself had to be corrected by Copernicus and Kepler; but in the meantime, without some theory, no advice could have been given at all.

Now, the Catholic theory of society as presented in any of the accepted treatises of Catholic doctrine, notably in the *Summa Theologiae* of Aquinas, rests on a clearly defined basis of theological dogma as laid down during the twelve centuries that preceded it. By this it is not meant that no further change was possible, but that every such change, as announced from time to time by successive Popes or Councils, must be consistent with the doctrines that had been laid down before. Catholic Christianity is an organic whole from which no part can be taken away without ruin of the rest. "Each stone," says Father Clarke, replying in February[1] to Dr. Mivart's article, "of the City of God so rests on every other that the most minute flaw in any one of them would cause the whole to collapse." "The very faintest derogation from any of the dogmas of the Church

[1] *Nineteenth Century*: February, 1900. The article was entitled "Dr. Mivart on the Continuity of Catholicism."—ED.

would at once be her destruction." Here lies the strength of that Church. Here also lies its weakness.

Not that the Church inquires too closely into the private opinions of its believers. So long as there is no open attack, no formal denial, she is as tolerant as any other Communion, perhaps more so. To a scientific student like Dr. Mivart she would say—she had, indeed, practically said in his case—"Remain within the fold as long as you will, attend our services when and as you please, we shall not molest you. Put forward what theories of evolution you please, speculate as you like on the earth's history during the myriads of centuries that went before the birth of Adam—we are not afraid of you. We do not ask you to reconcile modern speculation with the teaching of the fathers. So far as reconcilement may be necessary, leave that to us. All that we ask of you is not to attack our teaching; not to deny the creeds." It may be that such language is not ethically defensible. It may not be consistent with the highest standard of honesty and truth. But, at any rate, it would seem that no further concession is possible for a Church that claims to be "possessor of the perfect and absolute truth," and that undertakes to direct society from the standpoint of revelation and theological dogma.

Religion has two fundamental purposes: unity within the soul of man, aiming at control of selfish passion by reverence and love; and union of men together by common principles and a common purpose.[1] All forms of faith, Protestant or Catholic, attempt the first—to say nothing of Buddhism and many forms of faith that are not Christian. The Catholic Church alone upholds her mediæval claim to fulfil the second. In the Middle Ages she achieved with her very imperfect doctrine an astounding measure of success. Wise rulers account for part of this; and, moreover, the doctrine, with all its insufficiencies, was not then the hopeless anachronism which it has since become. In times when all the facts of the physical world were under the dominion of theological methods, it could not be otherwise with facts of the social world. But now that both worlds alike are penetrated with the positive spirit—the spirit, that is to say, of humanity and science—the pretensions of the Catholic Church to social dominion force her into hostility to the best interests of mankind.

To after-times the situation in which the Western world now stands will appear singularly tragic. The controlling influences of

[1] See *Positivist Catechism*, p. 34.—ED.

the past have lost their power, and have ranged themselves among the forces of evil. Those of the future, which have been so long preparing, are not yet established. What has happened during the last two years in France and England is a strange sample of a world in which moral forces have abdicated. In the Dreyfus agitation the Church of France has shown itself a den of thieves. In England the clergy, with a few noble exceptions, have looked on while their rulers were committing one of the worst political crimes in modern history,[1] and, like the priest and Levite of the parable, they have passed by on the other side.

[1] The allusion is to the South African War, which began in October, 1899.—ED.

CHAPTER II

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

I

JOWETT

OXFORD has played a singular and somewhat complicated part in the history of English social life. Recognized in the thirteenth century as one of the three centres of intellectual enlightenment in Europe, it bid fair under Grosseteste and Roger Bacon to be as distinguished in the cultivation of science as Paris in philosophical theology, or Bologna in jurisprudence. That promise failed; and the fertile field lapsed for many generations into a barren wilderness of dialectic. In the seventeenth century there was a new outburst of scientific energy. Under Wilkins, Wallis, Boyle, Christopher Wren, and Halley, Oxford took an even more prominent part than Cambridge in the foundation of the Royal Society. Sleepy conservatism prevailed through the eighteenth century, broken only by the rise and progress of Methodism. Following by a short interval the Evangelical revival came the neo-Catholic movement of seventy years ago, in which Newman was the most prominent figure, and which has left such lasting traces upon the Anglican Church. Side by side with the new mediævalism a process of a different kind has been going on, which may be briefly described as the pouring of the new wine of modern thought into the ancient bottles of the orthodox creeds. Here, too, Oxford has played a prominent part. Bishop Hampden and Dr. Arnold were contemporaries of Newman, Keble, and Pusey. The authors of the once celebrated *Essays and Reviews*[1] were for the most part Oxford clergymen. And no one, unless it be the late Dean of Westminster,[2] has set a stranger or more striking example of this mental attitude than the distinguished Master of Balliol, whose *Life*, written by two of his pupils,[3] is now passing through the circulating libraries.

[1] 1860. Jowett was one of the seven authors.—ED.
[2] Dean Stanley.—ED.
[3] *The Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett*, by E. Abbott and L. Campbell. Two vols.; 1897.—ED.

Let us form a precise notion of what the attitude in question is. You belong to a community which is universally understood to be pledged to the support of certain doctrines. Further, not merely do you belong to it, but you play a leading part in it; you make it your business to train successive generations of younger men who shall advocate the doctrines on which the community is based. Meantime you yourself have come to disbelieve these doctrines. What line of conduct is open to you? Clearly, as plain men would think, two only—complete silence or open disavowal. The former course is taken by countless thousands in whom the current theological doctrines have long since died out. Not caring to uproot the faith of those who guide their lives by that faith, and find support in it through times of temptation and trial, they are content to follow their own thoughts and to do their own work without disturbing the lives of others. They say with the poet:—

> O thou that after toil and storm
> Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,
> Whose faith has centre everywhere,
> Nor cares to fix itself to form,
>
> Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
> Her early Heaven, her happy views;
> Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
> A life that leads melodious days.[1]

But to the trainer of youth, the official teacher of the doctrines disbelieved in, this alternative of silence is not possible. There is, it would seem, but one course open—to abandon a position which you cannot honestly defend.

Nevertheless, the subtle genius of Oxford theologians has found yet another way. Leave us, they say, to interpret these articles of belief, not in the plain natural sense which they convey to ordinary men, but as holding a hidden meaning which we are prepared to assign to them. Let us take, not their letter, but their spirit. Things we have learnt in our childhood as actual facts have become to us as sacred myths, the outward embodiment of sublime spiritual truths. The transition from the belief in the legend as historical fact to the recognition of it as a myth is in many, perhaps in most, cases gradual and unconscious; and of any group of people you may meet hardly two are in the same stage of this transition. It is best on many grounds to avoid if possible any violent break or revolutionary struggle. Once let the solid kernel of precious truth

[1] Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, xxxiii.—ED.

enveloped in the myth be exposed in its bare nakedness to the rough handling of common and vulgar minds, and it will lose its freshness, perhaps its vitality.

To these considerations others of a more dubious kind are added. If I leave my post of teacher, professor, priest, spiritual guide, I sink into obscurity, I lose my influence, my power of doing good, of leading weak minds onwards. If all those who think as I do leave the Church with which we are connected, we disappear from view; we leave our places to be taken by those who will stereotype the ancient formulas, petrify them, render them incapable of further growth. It is best for us, best for those who listen to us, best for the community we belong to, that we should stay where we are. Remaining at our posts, we shall reform the Church from within. Such, in a few words, are the motives that have led men like Dean Stanley and Dr. Jowett to remain dignitaries of the Established Church after rejecting all that are commonly regarded as its fundamental dogmas.

Dr. Jowett's biographers have supplied ample material for appreciating this side of his life and character, in the extracts taken from his diary, where his thoughts on religion are set forth with unmistakable clearness. Some of these, which will be found in vol. ii, pp. 311–14, may be quoted:—

> Possible limit of changes in the Christian religion. (1) The conception of miracles may become impossible and absurd. (2) Immortality may pass into the present consciousness of goodness and of God. (3) The personality of God may pass into an idea. (4) Every moral act may be acknowledged to have a physical antecedent. (5) Doctrines may become unmeaning words. Yet the essence of religion may still be self-sacrifice, self-denial, death unto life.
>
> Herbert Spencer's view that religion has to do with the unknown is only partly true. (*a*) Religion is the ideal or aspiration of morality and politics. (*b*) It is most important in relation to man. (*c*) It is the upward uncontrollable passion of human nature.
>
> Two great forms of religion. 1. The sense of the presence of God.....the knowledge of Him as the great over-ruling law of progress in the world, whether personal or impersonal; the sympathy and harmony of the physical and moral, and of something unknown which is greater than either;.....the ideal to which all men are growing.
>
> The best of humanity is the most perfect reflection of God: humanity as it might be, not as it is; and the way up to Him is to be found in the lives of the best and greatest men—of

saints and legislators and philosophers, the founders of States and the founders of religions, allowing for and seeking to correct their necessary one-sidedness. These heroes or demigods or benefactors, as they would have been called by the ancients, are the mediators between God and man. Whither they went we also are going, and may be content to follow in their footsteps.

2. The second great truth of religion is resignation to the general facts of the world and of life. In Christianity we live; but Christianity is fast becoming one religion among many. We believe in a risen Christ; not risen, however, in the sense in which a drowning man is restored to life, nor even in the sense in which a ghost is supposed to walk the earth, nor in any sense which we can define or explain. We pray to God as a Person, as a larger self; but there must always be a *subintelligitur* that He is not a Person. Our forms of worship, public and private, imply some interference with the course of nature. We know that the empire of law permeates all things.

"You impose upon us with words; you deprive us of all our hopes, joys, motives; you undermine the foundations of morality." No! there is no greater comfort, no stronger motive, than the knowledge of things as they really are, apart from illusions and pretences, and conventions, and theological formulas.....Anybody who gives himself up for the good of others, who takes up his cross, will find heaven on this earth, and will trust God for all the rest.

What are we to make of these very remarkable utterances? The first thought that will strike the reader is that they are pure and undiluted Positivism. As such we may accept them thankfully. They offer us the highest ethical truth expressed in purely human language; in words almost wholly clear of everything that is mystical, fictitious, unintelligible. We find from this biography that Jowett had studied Comte's works with great care. Nevertheless, he seldom lost an opportunity of speaking of him with contemptuous dislike. Why was this? Emancipated as he was from theological trammels, fully recognizing that the way to the ideal impersonal perfection which he called God was "to be found in the lives of the best and greatest men—of saints and legislators and philosophers, the founders of States and the founders of religions"—why could he not have recognized Comte as the leader of those who had set forward this ideal as a guide of life? There seems no other reason than that the life of Auguste Comte, dominated as it was by the ethical rule, *Vivre au grand jour*,[1] was a practical rebuke to his own. A great

[1] Comte, *Catéchisme Positiviste*. "Live openly."—ED.

university dignitary, declaring ostentatiously his attachment to the Anglican Church, enjoying the power and influence of his position to the full, and passing to his grave with all the splendour of Anglican ceremonial, he may sometimes have felt his life condemned by the example of the outspoken integrity and consistent abnegation of the philosopher to whom he owed so many of his highest thoughts. It was a principle with Jowett, as with the Bishop Blougram in Browning's poem,[1] that life should be successful. He felt repugnance, as his biographer naïvely owns, for those "who made a mess with their lives." Among his pupils those interested him who showed exceptional ability; but those also not less who were likely, from wealth or rank, to occupy high positions in the State. All this brilliant and dignified life would have been shattered had it come to the knowledge of men that there was not a single article of the Apostles' Creed that he could accept in the ordinary sense that the words convey to plain men. "His influence for good," as he put it to himself, would have disappeared.

Hypocrisy has always been the besetting sin of the Anglican Church; as must ever be the case with Churches incorporated into the State system, and deriving their power and dignities from Prime Ministers and Parliaments. When the Roman wondered how one augur could meet another without smiling, he said what must always be true when men subordinate the expression of the highest truth to motives of State policy; when they say: This is what I truly and from my heart believe; but if I say so I shall no longer be bishop of my diocese, master of my college, professor of my faculty; I shall be as ordinary men, my voice will be listened to no longer. It is as though Caiaphas were to say, If I follow Jesus, how can I continue to be High Priest?

It is hard to find the truth, hard to tell it in words which others can understand. But if the utterance of it is clogged with conditions as to personal consequences, worldly prospects, diminution of influence and the like, the truth will never get itself uttered at all, and the teacher's silence or implied assent to the worn-out doctrines of his time will have the melancholy result of lowering the standard of moral courage in those who accept his guidance.

[1] The poem entitled *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.—ED.

II

A CHURCH WITHOUT A CREED

THE *Times* of September 5[1] contained a long contribution to the current discussion on the crisis in the Church from the authoress of *Robert Elsmere*, which has been expanded in the last issue of the *Nineteenth Century*.[2] The writer holds, as most people hold, that what the Ritualists are aiming at is the introduction into the Anglican Church of doctrines to which that Church has for the last three centuries been consistently opposed. It appears to her "indisputable that the English Church of the last three centuries has been broadly and historically a Church of protest against the Mass and all that hangs by it. The Ritualists are pleading, therefore, for the toleration of new beliefs and practices."[3] The compromise between certain ideas by virtue of which the English Church came into being should now, High Churchmen maintain, be enlarged; and "the present religious life of the nation can be enriched and strengthened by the bringing back of elements belonging to the common Christianity which the English Church has unduly let slip." "We are perfectly aware," she says, "of the extraordinary force and attraction of the Catholic doctrine.....It is absurd to suppose that you can permanently exclude a conception which has been so tenacious and so fertile in the life of Christendom from a great developing and assimilative body like the English Church. And if the conception cannot and should not be excluded, the rites and ceremonies which express it are inevitable, and to fight against them is a mere futility."

But Mrs. Ward goes on to point out that, while this new doctrine is pressing for acceptance on one side, another new doctrine is making an equally legitimate claim for admittance on the other. This doctrine is described as the "Christianity of a free and critical thought" as opposed to the Christianity of tradition. It is a Christianity which rejects the whole historical basis on which the Greek, Roman, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anglican Churches, as well as most of the Nonconformist communities, have hitherto taken their stand. It is a Christianity which refuses to believe that

[1] 1899

[2] October, 1899. The article was entitled "The New Reformation."—ED.

[3] The quotations are from the *Times*, not from the article in the *Nineteenth Century*.—ED.

Christ was born of a Virgin mother, that he worked miracles, that he rose from the dead, that he ascended into heaven. "Separable from these bygone historical and philosophical beliefs are," she holds, "the ethical and spiritual truths that lie at the heart of our faith; the assertion and illustration of those truths in the life and historical influence of Christ is what is essentially and eternally important; and, moreover, the assertion of them through the life of Christ and Christianity cannot be regarded by the Theist as a mere incident like any other in the history of the world, or as without some relation of special importance and significance to the Divine will and intelligence from which he believes all life to issue."

Mrs. Ward contemplates with equanimity the continued existence of a corporation endowed by the State with archbishoprics, bishoprics, deaneries, benefices, and magnificent buildings, the members of which shall be united by the flimsy tie of the name of Christian, while holding diametrically opposite opinions as to what that name connotes. To most plain men the whole thing bears the look of a misleading and mischievous jugglery. What is there in common between a creed which holds that the Almighty Creator of the Universe took upon him human shape, was born of a Virgin, and after a painful martyrdom rose from the dead, reascended into heaven, his body being partaken of by all believers in the Eucharistic sacrament, and a creed that rejects all this, and is content to believe that a remarkable prophet was born in Judæa during the reign of Augustus, taught unpopular truths and led a beneficent life for three years, suffered death for his opinions, and was laid in the grave like other men? In the interests alike of intellect and morality it is needful to protest against so enormous and outrageous a mystification, which can only result in securing a new and enlarged basis for systematic cant. Cant is a weed that runs riot everywhere, and not least on English soil. The insincere use of smooth words, especially where the insincerity is unconscious, is a corrupting and emasculating influence, incompatible with common honesty, and, therefore, fatal to any standard of life that deserves the name of religion.

The right course to take is simple in the extreme, so soon as the wrong course is clearly exposed. A State corporation empowered by the magistrate to regulate "articles of religion" is a monstrosity, because its immediate result is the organization of hypocrisy. Religion is the type of all spiritual forces, and with spiritual forces the temporal power should have nothing to do. Separation of Church from State, carried to its farthest practicable limits, is the first condition of true freedom and of political health. Of the two

creeds of which we have been speaking either, or neither, may be held with perfect honesty and consistency by any one. Both cannot be held simultaneously. Each of the two, then, and every other, must be allowed to rest on the support of its own believers.

The neo-Christian creed represents so singular a phase of thought that it is worth while to examine it more closely. When Mrs. Ward protests that Christianity cannot be regarded "as a mere incident" like any other in the history of the world, there is a sense in which we may readily accept her saying. It is assuredly not an incident like any other; it is a special fact, of exceptional and profound significance. The rise of the Christian Church during the first two centuries of our era, its extension during succeeding centuries till it became the dominant social influence—these are visible and indubitable facts which no one can gainsay. They are new facts, like the rise of Greek thought a thousand years before, or the French Revolution eighteen centuries later. Like other new facts, they may be regarded from two totally distinct points of view —that of theological, and that of positive thought. On the first it is not needful to dwell, further than to say that it is at least consistent with itself. Accepting the view that the world is governed by an inscrutable and arbitrary will, the supernatural events of the New Testament have nothing in them that is incredible.

But those who strive to bring religion into harmony with their daily life, and who see that life in all its details follows fixed and natural laws, will strive to examine the Christian epoch as they examine the other great epochs of the world, to analyse its antecedents and forecast its consequences. They will regard the Christian Church as a phase in the life of Humanity for which all that went before prepared the way; and they will find in it the germs of consequences vaster and farther-reaching than itself. To such it will appear that, after the tremendous stimulus given throughout the civilized world by Greece to intellectual culture and by Rome to practical life, it was inevitable that a recoil should take place to the inner life of emotion; and that side by side with the power of the magistrate there should arise a new and distinct authority specially charged with an appeal to the court of conscience, and with the government of the heart.

Which should be the name put prominently forward in connection with this new growth was a secondary matter. To the Positivist the first place seems to belong not to Jesus, but to Paul. If neither Jesus nor Paul had lived, a similar result would

sooner or later have been attained by parallel methods under other names. But to strip Jesus of his miraculous legend, and to continue to regard him as the central figure of the world's history, appears to the Positivist a hybrid and irrational faith with no future before it. Certainly it is not a faith that deserves that the magnificent endowments of the Church of England should be devoted to its maintenance.

III

THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE

NOT one of the least significant events of this Jubilee year[1] is the assemblage of bishops belonging to the Anglican Church, or in "full communion" with it, which has been held at Lambeth, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Nine archbishops and one hundred and eighty-two bishops took part in it. They truly described themselves as "assembled from divers parts of the earth." Of the whole number not more than two-fifths belonged to the United Kingdom (fifty-eight being English, ten Irish, and seven Scotch). Of the remainder eight represented India, fourteen Canada, sixteen Australia and New Zealand, eight the Cape, six the West Indies, and eighteen other Colonies. Forty-six came from the United States. The result of their deliberations has been given to the world in the shape of sixty-three resolutions, preceded by an Encyclical letter addressed to the Faithful in Christ Jesus.

This letter deals with three classes of questions: (1) Moral and social problems; (2) internal organization; (3) relation to other Christian bodies and foreign missions. Under the first head fall the problems of intemperance, of sexual disorder, of industrial disputes, and of arbitration between nations as a substitute for war. Let it be at once frankly accepted as a sign of progress that the great religious bodies should be compelled to turn their attention to questions of real and urgent gravity unconnected with mystical dogma, in which, therefore, men of every creed can work together for the service of man. In strenuous and persistent efforts to control excesses of the sexual instinct no one can refuse to admit that the Christian Church has done more than any other religious organization. Probably the difficulty is one which will never be

[1] 1897

entirely surmounted; approximations to the solution are all that can be expected. But from any organization claiming to be a spiritual power, fearless of the blame of politicians, a warning might be looked for against all social conditions that aggravate the danger. And of all such aggravating conditions none is more fatally operative than the accumulation of standing armies far from their homes, in tropical climates, among crowded Oriental populations. Physically, the consequences of this policy are so disastrous as to have forced themselves not merely on doctors, but on the military authorities themselves, who find a large proportion of their troops constantly in hospital. Yet the only remedies hitherto seriously proposed are such as aggravate the moral evil, while supplying an imperfect palliative for its physical symptoms. Substitute in India for a celibate army of foreigners a native militia, settled on the soil, and amenable to all the controlling local influences of custom and religion, and the evil will be reduced to its normal proportions. But till that time comes Englishmen must be prepared to know that their boasted empire in India is maintained at the expense of vice, not merely connived at by the authorities, but to some extent officially organized. The reproach is applicable to all standing armies, and will not be removed until our monstrous military systems have been replaced by a rational and peace-preserving force of police. But it applies with far greater cogency to an exotic army of foreigners stationed in a tropical population. It need hardly be said that considerations of this kind find no place in the Encyclical letter of the Lambeth Conference.

As to abstinence or moderation in the use of intoxicating drinks, the Anglican Church has not distinguished itself above other forms of religion, or from secular organizations such as trade unions or co-operative societies. In this respect no Christian organization has equalled the Mohammedan religion.

On the wide field presented by the industrial problem the remarks of the Anglican Encyclical will strike most readers as cold and barren. "We think it our duty," the bishops say, "to press the great principle of the Brotherhood of Man, and to urge the importance of bringing that principle to bear on all the relations between those who are connected by the tie of a common employment." It must be admitted that the committee to whom the subject was specially referred, and whose report is signed by the Bishop of Hereford, goes more into detail, and suggests the institution of lay committees with the special view of "studying social and industrial problems from the Christian point of view." Little

fault can be found with the views contained in this report, except that they are put forward in a timid and uncertain way. It is not, the committee say, their business to decide between "systems based respectively on collective or individual ownership of the means of production." Uncertainty as to so fundamental a question as to whether land and capital are to be held in common or to be appropriated by individuals must render advice on economic questions of very doubtful value. Vague recommendations of Brotherhood can do but little to build up the future organization of industry. Hard thinking and systematic study of the facts, animated by a social purpose, but carried on by scientific methods, are needed here, as in every other department of human life, and any spiritual power worthy of the name will be expected to supply them.

Much the same may be said of the recommendations put forward by the Encyclical as to international arbitration. "Peace," say the bishops, "is the great characteristic of the Kingdom of our Lord. .....The Christian Church can do more for it than any other influence that can be named." Surely a bold assertion. Since the fall of the Papacy in the thirteenth century, what has the Christian Church done for peace? Its discussions brought about the religious wars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, terminated at last, not by priests, but by practical statesmen at the Treaty of Westphalia.[1] And, to come much nearer home, what has the Anglican Church done during the last sixty years to prevent or arrest the interminable series of African and Asiatic wars in which this country has been engaged while extending her Empire? What bishop has proposed arbitration with Chinese, with Burmese, with Afghans, with Zulus, with Matabele, with Egyptians? I cannot remember that from the bishops' bench in Parliament a single voice in all these quarrels has been raised for peace. Not a single protest is raised in this Encyclical against imperialism; and imperialism, as now understood in England, means constant, unremitting war. No civilized country during the last half-century has been so continuously at war as England.

It is significant that, though the Encyclical dismisses the subject of war with few words, and those by no means weighty, the committee to whom it was referred allude to "deep moral principles involved in it," which have been recognized by philosophers. "In Germany, Kant and Hegel; in France, Auguste Comte; in England, Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, and John Stuart Mill have written in this sense." A remarkable admission that the ethical principles

[1] 1648

underlying the question of war were apprehended and put forward not by the Christian Church, but by thinkers every one of whom stood outside the pale of Christianity. It must be obvious, indeed, to all attentive observers of the course of modern history that the power which the Church once possessed of controlling the movements of nations has long since vanished. The mediæval Papacy could quell the intestine quarrels of European kings, and unite them in resistance to the common danger of Mussulman invasion. But with the fall of the Papacy the guidance of international forces passed into the hands of statesmen and philosophers. Clergymen had for the future to content themselves with a diminishing sphere of action in private life.

From social questions the Encyclical passes to the consideration of the internal organization of the Anglican Communion. The fatal weakness of this organization could not fail to show itself. An effective centre for it there neither is nor can be. The English bishops recognize formally the supremacy of the Queen—in other words, of Parliament. It has been a Parliamentary Church from the beginning. The State Supremacy Act of Henry VIII, the two Prayer Books of Edward VI, the restoration of Catholicism under Mary, the reversion to the Prayer Book and the Articles under Elizabeth—all these things, succeeding one another in the space of thirty years, were the doing of Parliament. But with the supremacy of Parliament and of English Prime Ministers, American bishops obviously can have nothing to do. A committee of bishops was appointed to consider "in what ways under present circumstances the unity and responsibility of the whole body may receive practical recognition." It is not surprising to find that, after two very vague and tentative resolutions had been framed by the committee with the view of establishing a "tribunal of reference," it was decided by the Conference that these resolutions should not be put. Taking the Anglican Communion as a whole, it is a society without a government.

What is the action of this Communion on other forms of religion? Here a few rough statistics are necessary. A third of the inhabitants of the world are believed to be nominally Christian. Of Christians, 215 millions are united under the Pope; 90 millions are of the Greek Church. There may be 150 millions of nominal Protestants, of which, perhaps, 40 millions may accept the Anglican form of episcopacy. A tenth part of the Christianity of the world, a thirtieth of the world's population, thus belongs to the Anglican Communion. The Encyclical is urgent in proclaiming the "duty of

special intercession for the Unity of the Church." But in the next sentence it hastens to "recognize with warm sympathy the endeavours that are being made to escape from the usurped authority of the See of Rome." Yet the bishops who write thus went on pilgrimage to Ebbsfleet to celebrate the act of one of the greatest of the Popes[1] which called the Church of England into existence. Efforts to uphold the continuity of the Church of England, as established by Acts of Parliament between 1533 and 1562, with the Church of Bede, Boniface, Anselm, and Grosseteste, are a mere juggle of words. The sympathies of the Lambeth Conference are concentrated on the Old Catholics of Germany and Austria, and the "brave and earnest men of France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal," who have freed themselves from the "unlawful terms of Communion imposed by the Church of Rome." Difference from other forms of Protestantism, Methodist, Independent, or Lutheran, there is none, except in the narrower limitation of these sympathies to communities that accept the episcopal form of government. On the whole it would seem that the prayers of the Anglican bishops for the Unity of the Christian Church are accompanied by actions tending to make that Unity more impossible than ever.

It is not by efforts of this incoherent and inconsistent character that the great religious problem of the future, the convergence of mankind in one harmonious and united faith, is likely to be solved. The foundation-stones of such a faith were laid before Christianity was born, when Thales and Pythagoras taught the first principles of scientific method.[2] Its superstructure has ever since been growing, as that method has gradually been extended from the physical world to the world of man's thoughts, emotions, and actions. On this point a discordant note is struck by the fifteenth resolution of the Conference. "The tendency," it is said, of many English-speaking Christians to entertain an exaggerated opinion of the excellences of Hinduism and Buddhism, and to ignore the fact that Jesus Christ alone has been constituted Saviour and King of Mankind, should be vigorously corrected. Vigorous efforts, they go on to say, should be made for the conversion to the Christian faith of Jews and Mohammedans. Work done on lines like these is foredoomed to failure. What is true is that, amid all the drawbacks of wars of

[1] St. Gregory the Great, who sent Augustine on his mission to England in A.D. 596.—ED.

[2] See Dr. Bridges' essay on "Thales" in *Essays and Addresses*, pp. 143–58. —ED.

commerce and commercial aggrandizement, art, industry, science, historical study, aspirations for the highest good, are gradually bringing the nations together; and the best things of life are seen to be peculiar to no theological creed, to no language, but to belong to all. Theological religion will in the end be recognized as irreligious, because it disunites. As the creeds of Asia become known to us, we can foresee the day when China, Japan, India, shall unite with Europe and America in the Religion of Humanity.

IV

THE CHURCH CONGRESS

FROM the point of view of public morality, by far the most important utterance at the Church Congress of this year[1] was that of the Bishop of Hereford. Undeterred by the taunts of opponents on a previous occasion that in urging the adaptation of Christian doctrine to public life he was venturing beyond his sphere, and that he had better leave politics alone, the Bishop has returned to the charge, and has again maintained that States and statesmen calling themselves Christian should mould their public action on the principles of Christianity.

"All I ask," the Bishop says, "is that the rulers and ministers of a Christian State should make Christian principles their guide and rule in all their public conduct and policy." These words have a most reasonable sound; it is only when we try to translate them into concrete facts that a difficulty arises as to their meaning. Assuming that Christian principles of public conduct are contained in the New Testament, we search that volume from Matthew to Revelation; but we search in vain. If, indeed, we were to take the view that the rules of public and of private conduct were identical, we should find the Christian rules laid down explicitly enough in the Sermon on the Mount. And although no one adopts these rules practically in his own private life, although no parent sending his son to a public school, no master of that school, urges their adoption, yet it is maintained with some show of truth that they present an ideal of conduct to which everyone should strive as far as possible to conform. I do not suppose that Dr. Percival ever

[1] 1898

told a boy at Rugby that when another boy hit him he was never to hit back again. But I have no doubt he urged in his sermons that boys should be slow to take offence and ready to forgive, and that he denounced the crime of bullying unsparingly. How far it is well to inculcate upon boys or men a rule of life which is so universally recognized as a counsel of ideal perfection that can never be reached is a question which need not be discussed here. What we are now considering is whether the measure of application of which the Sermon on the Mount admits in private life can be extended to practical politics. By the confession of the immense majority of Christians since the establishment of Christianity it cannot be so extended. A few exceptions there have been. The followers of George Fox firmly maintained the doctrine of non-resistance. In our own time Tolstoy is carrying that doctrine to its extreme limits, holding that arms should not be wielded even in defence of the soil against an invading army. But the doctrine taught by the immense majority of Christian teachers is and always has been the precise reverse of this. Generation after generation they hold up as examples the conduct of the Greeks under Miltiades and Leonidas, of the Romans against Pyrrhus and Hannibal, of the Germans under Arminius, of the Saxons under Alfred, of the Dutch against Philip of Spain, of the French against the invading coalitions of Europe. We teach patriotism to our children; but we do not teach it from the New Testament. Gospels and Epistles alike leave it on one side. When Christianity came into the world the *pax Romana* was established everywhere. The only recognized public duties were to pay to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's. Among the Jews, indeed, there was patriotism enough, and of the fiercest kind, as was shown under the Maccabees, and at the final siege of Jerusalem. But what room was there for the exercise of civic virtues in the primitive Christian churches? They lived for a future life in momentary expectation of the Millennium. While the States of Europe were forming in the early Middle Ages there arose a vast series of obligations to defend civilization against barbaric invasion, under the leadership of men like Charlemagne and Alfred. The final establishment of States with settled boundaries has confirmed and strengthened these obligations, and has evoked a spirit of loyalty and devotion to the fatherland as strong as and stronger than that displayed by the Greek and Roman Republics. But all this has little to do with Christianity as expressed in the Sermon on the Mount.

Consequently, we have to look for principles of national conduct

not in the Bible, but in the gradual evolution of modern Europe, and in the teaching of its philosophers, lawgivers, and statesmen. Questions of war and peace have to be decided by human, not by theological, methods; secular, not supernatural, motives operate in their decision. So far as theological religion has had anything to do with the matter, it has been a disturbing influence, as two hundred years of Crusades and a hundred years of Catholic and Protestant wars suffice to show. When America was discovered, Christian principles influenced the conquerors of Mexico and Peru in their treatment of the native population, but not in the direction of justice or humanity. Who can say that Christian missions in China during the last century have done anything but aggravate and embitter the relations of the East and the West? Their principal object has been to implant disrespect for the customs and institutions which the Chinese hold dear, and on which the whole fabric of their social state is founded. Whatever the value of the Christian churches in the West—and it has been overwhelmingly great in the past, and still remains considerable, with all its drawbacks—yet among the vast Buddhist and Mohammedan populations of the East these churches have always been agencies of disorder and discord.

No one can read the Bishop of Hereford's discourse without recognition of the moral elevation by which it is penetrated, and without sharing his aspirations for a nobler social state. Nevertheless, his eloquent comparison of the mission of England with the mission of ancient Rome inspires certain apprehensions; and these are not diminished when we read the address of the bishop-designate of Calcutta, who followed him. "To him it appeared that the Church of England was a divinely appointed instrument for carrying the Christian faith in its purity and integrity to the far places of the earth. That was the imperial Christian mission of our State and of our race." This is the climax of the new Bishop's harangue. The future of the world, he had said, belonged to the Christian nations. But among the Christian nations, he went on to say, only to those that were Protestant. And of all the Protestant churches it was the Church of England which, "like a pillar of fire, should go before the movements of the national life." Dr. Welldon's climax reminds us of Mr. Thwackum. "When I mention religion I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England."[1]

[1] Fielding's *Tom Jones*, bk. iii, ch. iii.—ED.

The Bishop of Hereford has less of the crusading spirit. Nevertheless, he holds that the "United States did the work of a Christian nation in putting an end by war to long-continued and barbarous misgovernment at their doors." These are ominous words. The Americans themselves have come to recognize by this time that the Cuban insurgents who, with the help of a continuous series of filibustering expeditions from the United States, kept their island for some years in disorder, were far less worthy of respect than the Spaniards against whom they fought. And if internal disturbance in any country is to justify its neighbour in declaring war against it with the view to its conquest and annexation, we are far indeed from the reign of peace to which the Czar's message has invited the nations. Let us, however, willingly recognize the elevated tone of many of the Bishop's remarks, which may be taken as a protest against recent wrong-doing in South Africa. "Is it not morally wrong to possess ourselves of any country, and to take no sufficient safeguards for the humane treatment, for the civilizing and the uplifting of its inhabitants, who are presumably its owners by right of immemorial possession? Is it not morally wrong to fail to protect those inhabitants from forced labour or practical slavery to selfish and unscrupulous adventurers? Is it not morally wrong to honour and promote those who, by betrayal of public trust, have helped to debase the moral currency of public life, and to bring discredit on the national honour?"

Chapter III

THE SPENCERIAN UNKNOWABLE

I

THE UNKNOWABLE

Few points in Mr. Spencer's philosophy have stirred more general interest than his claim to have solved the conflict between Religion and Science, by assigning the region of the Unknowable as the common ground on which they could meet. The main position laid down was one that could hardly be contested. For, on the one hand, religious belief, in whatever age or country, has always concerned itself with dogmas which obviously lay outside the powers of human intellect either to verify or to dispute; and, on the other hand, the scope of science has always been known to every scientific student who possessed a grain of common sense to be rigorously limited, even though the precise position of the limits could not always be assigned, and was frequently shifted. Every extension of the scientific horizon has revealed vaster regions of the unexplored which had previously been unsuspected. Man's knowledge of his ignorance has grown *pari passu* with every increase of his knowledge. Thus much, then, must be allowed at starting. Science admits the Unknowable. Religion, or at least those forms of Religion which have hitherto held dominion over the souls of men, is very largely concerned with it.

How far does this first step carry us? Will it serve as an eirenicon between Science and Religion? Does it solve the controversy between faith and reason which has been carried on since the days of Augustine's spiritual struggle; which gave birth to the Inquisition, the Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, the murder of Calas, and Voltaire's crusade of tolerance? Will it satisfy the spiritual needs of the generations to come? To these questions the answer must be, No; and for the plain and obvious reason that Religion, as we have seen it and as we know it, whatever its concern with the Unknowable as its source and its goal, has had far deeper, more constant, and more manifold relations with the things of Earth

and with the life of Man. It is with human life and human duty that Confucius, the theocrats of Egypt and India, Moses, St. Paul, and Mohammed have mainly concerned themselves.

Read any treatise of Catholic theology—the *Summa Theologiae* of Aquinas, for instance. How many pages of that great work are occupied with transcendental disquisitions on the attributes of the Supreme Being? One, perhaps, in every hundred. The rest lay down wise and elaborate counsels as to the conduct of life, private and public; as to the regulation of passions, the government of the family and the State, the guardianship of the marriage bond, the ordination of Church rulers, the observance of due forms in sacraments and ceremonials. Further, the operation of supernatural force is treated of not as something that takes place in an extra-mundane sphere, but as a series of events that have occurred in this world of ours, amenable to proof or disproof, like any other facts of human life. The conflict between Religion and Science turns not at all, or to a very small extent, upon transcendental things that went on before the world began, but upon alleged historical facts, such as the miraculous birth, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. For these evidence is produced which one side think sufficient and the other not.

Thus the existence of an Unknowable universe beyond the ken of human sense, which the man of science is as ready to acknowledge as the theologian, offers no ground for expecting a settlement of the matter at issue between them. It is not on this that the controversy hinges. Not in an outside and unseen world, but here on this earth of ours, is the arena of conflict. Can the facts of man's political and moral life be regarded, or can they not, as the result of an orderly evolution, such that, the earlier terms of the series being known, the later may with a due measure of probability be anticipated? Or are we constrained to look at them, as in days of old men looked at the facts of physical nature, as liable to unforeseen interventions from a supernatural will? Such is the problem for solution. In this century[1] and in the next the debate has been, and will be, between the supremacy in man's spiritual and social life of God or of Humanity.

If this be so, the claim put forward by Mr. Spencer to have reconciled the opposing forces of Religion and Science must be held to be unwarranted. But are we, therefore, to infer that the conception which he puts before us as the essential factor of Religion,

[1] Written in 1895.—ED.

the thought of the Infinite unknown which surrounds us, is to be set aside as of no account? This, indeed, has been the view of many Positivists, especially of those for whom the political side of Positivism has been of absorbing and exclusive interest. But there are considerations that point in another direction. One of them is contained in the well-known saying of the great thinker Kant, that there were two spectacles in the world that stirred his soul—the starry heavens and the sense of duty in the heart of man. In the stir of practical life, in the crowded friction of overgrown cities, in the imminent conflict of powerful nations, and the threatened overthrow of all that toil and genius have slowly built up, little can be seen or thought of but the struggles, the sufferings, and the aspirations of those around us. But we are impelled to intervals of solitude. There are times when the craving to leave the paths of men for mountain or sea becomes irresistible. And when this is unattainable, yet for all of us the daily revolution of the heavens brings the sunset and the stars.

When the history of the last two centuries is written, one of its most striking features will be brought into stronger prominence. In the direct ratio of the decline of theological faith grew up the worship of nature. The love of flowers that shows itself in every cottage window in town or country; the craving for open spaces where grass can be lit with sunshine; the concentration of the painter's art on landscape; the endowment of air, mountain, and sea with human emotion; above all, the intangible influence of music piercing to depths beyond the reaches of our souls—all these things have been slowly transforming modern life, and counteracting the destructive and sterilizing forces of revolution, of disorganized industry, of the rabid craving for luxury and pleasure. Wordsworth's lines on revisiting Tintern Abbey, Byron's Manfred in the Alps, Shelley's lyrics of the Cloud and the West Wind—these things will remain when the wasted energy and futile struggles of the nineteenth century shall have become a bad dream half-forgotten.

All this side of life and thought is dealt with in one of the most remarkable conceptions of Comte's *Positive Polity:* The Union of Positivism and Fetishism.[1]

Fetishism is the spontaneous philosophy of childhood—the childhood of each one of us, and of the race to which we belong. We endow with life, by instinctive impulse, things in the world around us that touch us nearly, and that stir our antipathy or our

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, pp. 37–40, 180, 450.—ED.

love. Such, in multiform phases, was the simple faith that satisfied the early tribes of men. It had much to do with those first and all-important stages of human progress which are unrecorded in history. It bound wandering tribes to a fixed position on the earth's surface, and thus laid the first foundations of civic life. Ultimately its simple dogmas were overshadowed, though not uprooted, by a new faith that grew up as large aggregations of men were formed, and as the necessity for stronger and more elaborate law and government was felt—the faith in invisible beings, not embodied in the world around us, but standing apart from it, and ruling each his own special department of nature. Then, again, after long periods of polytheistic civilization, the commonwealth of gods gave way to an isolated omnipotent monarch. But the reign of the gods has passed. Mankind is now on the eve of the reconciliation of intellect and love under the beneficent sway of Humanity.

During the long dominion of the gods fetishism has always continued to subsist as an underlying force. The worship of shrines, of household images, of Caaba stones, of relics of saints, of the tombs of those we have revered and loved, has never died out. As theology has decayed such worship has been carried on far more zealously than ever, and this within the border of the official churches no less than without. The harvest festival is celebrated now in almost every church in England. Under Positivism all such feelings will be stirred to new life. What we are tending to is this: the primal and the ultimate forms of religion are becoming one. The intermediate religions of the gods will have served their purpose in developing the intellectual powers and in ordering the civic forces of men; this done, they will become memories of the past.

These thoughts assume their final shape in the prefatory chapter[1] to Comte's final work, his *Subjective Synthesis*. Humanity, embodying the thoughts, energies, and sympathies of all who in all ages have worked for the service of man, occupies the foremost place, remains the highest object of human reverence. But with Humanity are joined, as in the immortal lyrics of Shelley's *Prometheus*,[2] the Earth, whose physical energies have after long ages built up a fitting habitation for man, and the vast unknown environment of Space, which is the seat of human destiny. Feeling

[1] See *Introduction to the Subjective Synthesis*. Tr. by R. Congreve. (Kegan Paul, Trübner, and Co.; 1891.)—ED.

[2] See especially the Song of the Earth in act iv, 370–423.—ED.

may reach where action cannot pierce. The soul of him who gazes on the afterglow of a summer sunset or on the unfathomable dome of the midnight sky may be filled no less than Dante's by "the love that moves the sun and all the stars."[1]

II

POSITIVISM AND THE UNKNOWABLE

M. BRUNETIÈRE'S articles on Comte in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of June 1 and October 1, 1902,[2] deserve attention, if only for the reason that this organ—representing the academic and literary world of France—has for the last half-century systematically held aloof from any recognition of Comte's claims to rank as a European thinker. As a criticism of the current movement of thought, what M. Brunetière says is entitled to grave consideration. It is in any case significant as an indication of a changed attitude in relation to the great renovation of thought and feeling which Comte has instituted in European life.

M. Brunetière finds himself in agreement with Comte on many points. On the negative, or critical, side he is struck by the contrast between Comte and the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century in their explanations of the source of social suffering. The tendency of eighteenth-century thinkers was to account for all social complications by defective legislation. Change our laws, they said, reform our institutions, reconstruct our forms of government, and you will have done all that is wanted—you will have renovated human nature. What came of such theories when put into practice in the French Revolution we all know. Comte worked upon wholly different lines. "Who can change men's opinions?" said Marcus Aurelius; "and yet, unless you can change their opinions, their subjection will be all force and dissembling."[3] Comte believed in the possibility of changing opinions; and he saw that, unless and until opinions were changed, change of institutions was of small account. Not that he claimed to effect this change by his own unaided effort; but he conceived himself to have discovered the law according to which opinions change,[4] and until

[1] *Paradiso*, canto xxxiii, 145.—ED.

[2] The article of June 1 was entitled "Pour le Centenaire d'Auguste Comte"; that of October 1 being on the subject of "La Métaphysique positiviste."—ED.

[3] *Meditations*, ix, 29.—ED.

[4] The Law of the Three Stages. See p. 90 (note 1).—ED.

opinions had been transformed in accordance with that law he thought it futile to hope much from mere alterations of laws and modes of government.

M. Brunetière expresses strong approval of Comte's protests against the "subjectivism" of Victor Cousin and his school, by which he means the pretensions of that school to arrive at truth by introspection and the interrogation of consciousness, thus making each individual the measure of truth. This method, as Comte forcibly showed,[1] has been condemned by the utter sterility of its results no less than by its intrinsic irrationality. To think, and at the same moment to observe ourselves thinking, is an attempt not likely to lead us far. We must look outside us, and not within, for the criterion of truth. Hence our critic thoroughly approves of Comte's construction as resting on a co-ordination of scientific truth. He appreciates, moreover, the organic character of Comte's synthesis as contrasted with the unchangeable and dogmatic science of eighteenth-century physicists, whose conceptions, he remarks, were far narrower and more obstructive to progress than the dogmas of any Church. This narrow notion of science, he considers, no one has done more to dissipate than Comte. Science in his hands passed from the statical to the dynamical point of view. Before Spencer, before Darwin, he introduced the principle of evolution, of a gradual approach to truth which would never be completely reached.

This brings us to the principal features of Comte's social conceptions—their historical character, the filiation of successive generations, and the consequent relativity of all positive judgments. Human actions and institutions have to be looked at in connection with the degree of development reached by the social environment in which they took place. They will therefore vary at different periods—not arbitrarily, but in accordance with an assignable law of change.

M. Brunetière argues that this relative character of Positivism leads by a direct path to the recognition of the Absolute—in other words, to the recognition of the Unknown Reality behind the world of phenomena which Mr. Spencer holds to be the ground on which Religion and Science can be reconciled. "From the conception," says Mr. Spencer, "of the relativity of all knowledge flows inevitably the belief in an inscrutable reality, in an Unknowable lying behind it." "An ever-present sense of real existence is the very basis of

[1] See pp. 212-14.—ED.

our intelligence.....There ever remains with us a sense of that which exists persistently and independently of conditions." "From the very necessity of thinking in relations, it follows that the Relative is itself inconceivable except as related to a real Non-relative." "To say that we cannot know the Absolute is, by implication, to affirm that there is an Absolute. In the denial of our power to learn *what* the Absolute is there lies hidden the assumption *that* it is.....The Noumenon, everywhere named as the antithesis of the Phenomenon, is throughout necessarily thought of as an actuality."[1] Again, speaking elsewhere of ultimate scientific ideas, Mr. Spencer observes: "By the Persistence of Force we really mean the persistence of some Cause which transcends our knowledge and conception. In asserting it we assert an Unconditioned Reality without beginning or end."[2]

How this conception of an Unknown Absolute could have been regarded by any thinking man as a meeting-point on which positive science and theological religion could be reconciled passes comprehension. But Mr. Spencer would reply that he never held out the hope that science and theology could be reconciled. It was of peace not between science and theology, but between science and religion, that he had spoken. Yet nowhere, throughout the long series of volumes in which his *Synthetic Philosophy* is set forth, is any clear definition to be found of what is meant by the word *religion*. In those parts of his treatise to which reference has here been made he does, indeed, state what religion is not. He says that religion has trespassed on the ground of the knowable; that it has maintained dogmas which directly conflict with the teaching of science, and that therein it has become irreligious. "Volumes," he says, "might be written upon the impiety of the pious. Through the printed and spoken thoughts of religious teachers may almost everywhere be traced a professed familiarity with the ultimate mystery of things, which, to say the least of it, seems anything but congruous with the accompanying expressions of humility. And, surprisingly enough, those tenets which most clearly display this familiarity are those insisted upon as forming the vital elements of religious belief."[3] It is, indeed, abundantly clear that these encroachments on the sphere of the knowable form the great mass of the doctrines of which the religions of the world have hitherto consisted. Abstracting from these creeds all that is anthropomorphic, all that is common to man and to the objects of his

[1] *First Principles*, § 26.—ED. [2] *Ibid.*, § 62.—ED.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2nd ed., § 31.—ED.

worship, what is left? The barren truth that there is something beyond the reach of our senses that we do not and cannot know. What theologian, what pious believer, can be grateful for this *caput mortuum?* What feelings of love and veneration can be stirred by the thought of an unknown Force of which we cannot say whether it be personal or impersonal, whether it have anything in common with those attributes that we call just or unjust, wise or unwise, benignant or malevolent? To a mere Mystery, even though infinitely potent, who can bow the knee?

Comte, says M. Brunetière, has endeavoured to realize the Unknowable, or to make it concrete, under the form of Humanity. He goes on to remark, obviously enough, that "Humanity is not the Unknowable," and, less obviously, that "the religion of humanity cannot be thought of as a religion." Nevertheless, he admits that Comte's religion is at least excellent sociology, and that it may be studied with much profit by those who cannot regard it as a religion. It will be found that this admission will lead us a long way. "Sociability," he continues, "being the most prominent characteristic of man, the highest goal of our efforts should ever be to develop, confirm, and bring it to perfection." He is much impressed by Comte's defence of marriage, by his maintenance of the ethical spirit through the whole course of education, by his great principle of the separation of spiritual from temporal power, by his substitution of the sense of duty for the sense of right, by his appreciation of mediæval Catholicism, and of de Maistre, its most vigorous expounder. Above all, he appreciates the subordinate position accorded to intellect in man's life as contrasted with that given to character. He accepts Comte's great principle that the function of intellect is to serve, and not to reign. When it imagines itself supreme it is in reality swayed by some personal passion. "A life of pure intellectual culture," said Comte, "is a culpable abuse of opportunities afforded by civilization and destined for a wholly different purpose."[1] M. Brunetière is careful to remark that, in asserting the supremacy of the heart, Comte was preaching no gospel of sentimentality. What he wished to strengthen was the sense of solidarity linking man with man; the instinct which makes men of us—the faculty of loving something other than self. He quotes with deep approval Comte's final conclusion: Positivism, springing from active life, and gradually embracing all regions of the speculative world, comes at last in its full maturity to take in

[1] See *General View*, p. 12.—ED.

the whole region of affective life, in which we find the centre of the final synthesis.[1]

Comte, it need not be said, was well aware of the mystery that lay beyond the world of phenomena. He felt it at every step, as the sailor is aware of the unfathomable ocean across which he steers his path. But since it is not given to man to penetrate that mystery, he has to turn his activities to the region where they will bear fruit. He has to survey the facts of human life, to study the relation that each bears to each, to find out how man may adapt himself to their yoke or mould them to his advantage. The ultimate source of gravitation, the ultimate constitution of matter, the full and final explanation of heat, electricity, chemical affinity—these things are for ever hid from us; not less darkly hid are the origins of life and the first promptings of love. The *why* and *whence* of these things we cannot know; enough for us to see something of the *how*—of the laws of their working. Love has arisen upon the earth, from low and humble beginnings, as the rose from the miry soil. It has built up the family, knit together the tribe, kept alive the memory of heroes, founded States, lifted temples to the sky. It reveals to everyone of us unimagined hopes, it sustains in sorrow, it dissipates despair. It is the principle on which social order rests, from which social progress flows. On its growth depend our highest purposes, our deepest happiness. If this be not religion, what more has religion to bestow?

The right word was said long ago by the great Roman naturalist: *Deus est mortali juvare mortalem.*[2] Where man helps man, there is God. It is futile to think that the best things become better by withdrawal into the gloom of nescience. Healing is in the well-known streamlet of Jordan, not in the far-off rivers of Damascus. Of what avail is it to dwell on the thought of an unknown—possibly impersonal—Force from which has issued an assemblage of facts, noble and base, hideous and lovely, mischievous and beneficent? What we cling to is the fact of beneficent Love, endowed with no omnipotence, but ever growing stronger, and wielding a plastic stress which sweeps through the dull, dense world, compelling there—

> All new successions to the forms they wear,
> Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
> To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
> And bursting in its beauty and its might
> From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.—ED. [2] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia*, bk. ii.—ED.
[3] Shelley's *Adonais*, xliii.—ED.

III

COMTE AND SPENCER ON RELIGION

A COMPREHENSIVE glance at the philosophic schemes of these celebrated thinkers reveals some remarkable points of similarity, on which it is profitable to dwell before examining their points of contrast. In the first place, it is to be remarked that both of these thinkers aimed at bringing all departments of thought under a uniform method of inquiry. All were, in their judgment, amenable to scientific treatment. In all alike uniform laws of succession and coexistence were to be looked for. Philosophy meant unified truth.

Secondly, in both thinkers there was a deliberate and complete abandonment of all search for absolute truth, a recognition that all truth attainable by human beings was *relative* to human faculties, was conditioned by limitations of human nature. This acceptance of relativity was common to the philosophies of Hume, of Kant, of Comte.[1] By Herbert Spencer it was insisted upon with careful and emphatic elaboration.

Thirdly, in the serial arrangement of the truths to be presented there is a conspicuous likeness between these two thinkers. It is true that Mr. Spencer wrote a pamphlet with the express purpose of showing that his views of the Classification of the Sciences were fundamentally different from those of Comte.[2] But, on reference to the Prospectus circulated in 1860 among intending subscribers to the *Synthetic Philosophy*, it will be noted that the proposed arrangement of material corresponds in a very marked way to that adopted in Comte's *Philosophie Positive*. After distinguishing between what is knowable and what is unknowable, he proceeds with the statement of "those highest generalizations now being disclosed by science which are severally true, not of one class of phenomena, but of *all* classes of phenomena; and which are thus the keys to all classes of phenomena." It is obvious that this section corresponds almost exactly with the *Philosophie Première* of which Comte drew the outline, leaving it to his successor, Pierre Laffitte, to fill in the details.[3] Next in logical order, Mr. Spencer goes on to say, should come the application of these *First Principles* to Inorganic Nature.

[1] *Cf.* pp. 206–8, and see p. 23 of Comte's preface to the *Early Essays on Social Philosophy*.—ED.

[2] See p. 187 (note 1).

[3] See p. 47 (note).

But this great division he decided to pass over, partly because the scheme even without it was too extensive, partly because the interpretation of Organic Nature was of more immediate importance. He therefore passes successively to Biology, Psychology, Sociology, and Ethics. Bearing in mind that most of what Spencer includes in Psychology is included in the higher division of Biology, as Comte conceived it, we find that in the general arrangement and successive order of parts there is a very striking similarity between these two philosophic schemes.[1]

Nevertheless, a very superficial study of them is enough to indicate divergences greater than the resemblances; and closer attention will but intensify the contrast. On one of these contrasts something will be said in this paper, and others may be pointed out subsequently. The one here selected meets us at the outset. Mr. Spencer's treatise opens with a discussion of the antagonism between Religion and Science, and of their final reconciliation. The author discourses at great length on "ultimate religious ideas." We are compelled, he tells us, to speculate on the origin of the Universe. We can think of it only in one of three ways: (1) That it is self-existent; (2) it is self-created; or (3) it is created by some external agency. But each of these theories, when looked at closely, turns out to be inconceivable, unthinkable. "Self-existence means existence without a beginning; and to form a conception of self-existence is to form a conception of existence without a beginning. Now, by no mental effort can we do this." Again, "to conceive self-creation is to conceive potential existence passing into actual existence by some inherent necessity; which we cannot do. We cannot form any idea of a potential existence of the universe, as distinguished from its actual existence.....This involves the idea of a change without a cause—a thing of which no idea is possible."[2] Equally unintelligible is the theistic hypothesis—creation by external agency. Creation is commonly assimilated to manufacture. But the artisan does not make the iron, wood, or stone he uses; he merely fashions and combines them. And even could we get rid of the mystery of the production of matter out of nothing, there would remain the question: How came there to be an external agency? We have to go back to the same three hypotheses by which we strove to account for the universe; and thus are driven again round the same circle.

Further, on looking at the facts around us, we are compelled to

[1] *Cf.* p. 127.—ED.

[2] *First Principles*, § 11.—ED.

attribute them to a cause, and ultimately to a first cause. This cause must be infinite, since otherwise there would be something beyond it. But how can the infinite give rise to the finite? "If the condition of causal activity is a higher state than that of quiescence, the Absolute.....has passed from a condition of comparative imperfection to one of comparative perfection, and therefore was not originally perfect. If the state of activity is an inferior state to that of quiescence, the Absolute, in becoming a cause, has lost its original perfection." If the two states are equal, and "the act of creation one of complete indifference, we must admit the possibility of two conceptions of the Absolute: the one as productive, the other as non-productive."[1] We see, therefore, that the three possible theories of the Universe, known as "Atheism, Pantheism, and Theism, when rigorously analysed, severally prove to be wholly unthinkable."[2]

A religious creed, says Mr. Spencer, is definable as an *a priori* theory of the Universe. A theory assumes two things: that there is something to be explained, and that such and such is the explanation. "Religions diametrically opposed in their overt dogmas are perfectly at one in the tacit conviction that the existence of the world, with all it contains and all which surrounds it, is a mystery calling for interpretation."[3] On this point, if on no other, there is entire unanimity. The ultimate truth, he concludes, to which Religion, as distinct from any special form of belief, leads us is that the Power which the Universe manifests over us is utterly inscrutable. "We are obliged to regard every phenomenon as a manifestation of some Power by which we are acted upon. Though Omnipresence is unthinkable, yet, as experience discloses no bounds to the diffusion of phenomena, we are unable to think of limits to the presence of this Power; while the criticisms of Science teach us that this Power is Incomprehensible. And this consciousness of an Incomprehensible Power, called Omnipresent from inability to assign its limits, is just that consciousness on which Religion dwells."[4]

What effect on human life can result from this constant contemplation of an insoluble mystery Mr. Spencer does not explain, and it is hard to see. Can it stir intellect? No; for every attempt to think of it lands us in insoluble contradictions. Can it kindle emotion? Can love, affection, veneration, be felt for an Unknown, an Unknowable? Can it link man with his fellow-men? A sense of paralysing ignorance overwhelms all alike. Can it rouse him to

[1] *First Principles*, § 13.—ED.
[2] *Ibid.*, § 14.—ED.
[3] *Ibid.*, § 14.—ED.
[4] *Ibid.*, § 27.—ED.

action? This would imply that he could in some sort foresee, and mould his activity by his foresight. Religions, as commonly understood, have implied certain definite beliefs, have instituted rules of action. But beliefs imply knowledge; they assume that the Unknowable can be known, and thus degrade the Incomprehensible to the level of what can be comprehended. Accordingly, we are not surprised to find that though Religion, in Mr. Spencer's judgment, has conferred upon Humanity the inestimable benefit of keeping alive the sense of the incomprehensible mystery of the Universe, yet that its shortcomings in this respect have been very great, and that it has continually tended towards irreligion, by maintaining definite beliefs, by claiming to know what cannot be known, and thus contradicting its own teachings. To assert that the Cause of all things possesses personality, or any other attribute, is to admit that the Incomprehensible can be so far comprehended. Religion has never, says Mr. Spencer, adequately realized its own central position. "In the devoutest faith, as we commonly see it, there lies hidden a core of scepticism; and it is this scepticism which causes that dread of inquiry shown by Religion when face to face with Science. Obliged to abandon one by one the superstitions it once tenaciously held, and daily finding its cherished beliefs more and more shaken, Religion secretly fears that all things may some day be explained, and thus itself betrays a lurking doubt whether that Incomprehensible Cause of which it is conscious is really Incomprehensible."[1]

It is impossible to conceive of a greater contrast to this conception of Religion than that which is presented to us in the teaching of Auguste Comte. Taking for his point of departure the truth on which Spencer insists with such earnestness, that knowledge of the Absolute is for ever and utterly unattainable, the Positivist builds his faith frankly and consistently upon the Relative—upon Man's life with all its conditions and limitations. Of the Universe regarded as a whole we know nothing. Of man and his environment we know something, and hope to know more; that something bearing such relation to the Universe as the Finite bears to the Infinite—a relation mathematically assignable as zero. Infinitely little though it be, that something is nevertheless our life—it is what we have to make the best of. And Religion is neither more nor less than the business of making the best of it. It is the Ideal of Life.

[1] *Ibid.*, § 28.—ED.

So far from Religion consisting in a perpetual contemplation of the Unknowable, it is in the sphere of the Knowable that it lives, moves, and has its being. What we mean by it is that state of complete unity in social and personal life in which all aspects of that life, physical or moral, converge to a common end. It implies the control of each personality and the harmonious union of all.[1] All forms of religion, each in its own way, have tended to this result. The final and complete form is that which realizes it completely; although we are constrained to speak of this as an ideal state to which we may approach indefinitely without hope of entire attainment.

The conditions of this state of unity are two—the one internal, the other external. If there is to be harmony among our conflicting desires, that one must predominate in which all can share simultaneously without antagonism. This is the moral condition. Recognition of an external power to which our life is subject—this is the intellectual condition.[2] This external order governing our life has nothing to do with the Unknown and Unknowable. On the contrary, the essential condition of its efficiency is that it shall be known. Love and Faith are the two factors of Religion. Unity within resulting from Love; union without produced by Faith.

Between the infinitely various forms of belief which have prevailed among mankind it seems at first sight paradoxical to search for anything in common. Yet one purpose is discernible in all of them—that of forming a definite conception of the order which dominates human life, so that our relation with this order may be understood and modified to our benefit. We shall best understand this central similarity between all modes of religion by studying that in which they culminate—the Religion of Humanity. We find ourselves from birth to death under the dominion of some form or other of civilization. We speak a certain language; we inherit certain traditions; we are subject to a certain government. We can no more escape from these things than we can leap off our shadow. When we look at this dominion of social life over individual action, we see it to be of long duration in the past and future. Following it back into the remotest past, we find the simplest and most primitive phases of social life to result from the physical organization of man, and from the fundamental impulses which he shares with the lower animals. Analysing life in all its phases, we see it to be dependent on the physical nature of the

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. ii, pp. 8–10.—ED. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 11.—ED.

world, on the chemical constitution of soil, air, and water, on temperature and light, on the gravitational relations of the solar system. In fine, we are dominated by an order of things from which we cannot escape, but which we have, within certain limits, the power of modifying. Though we cannot change our position in the solar system, yet by clothing, by building, by artificial warmth, we can endure rigorous climates, we can provide ourselves with tools and weapons, we can till the soil and secure the survival of the most useful plants and animals. Lastly, by education, by self-culture, by devotion, by influence of personal character, we can work upon our fellow-men, and do much to ensure the preponderance of those aspirations and desires in which all can share without antagonism; in other words, the dominion of unselfish over selfish love.

Towards this complete type of social and personal life which we call the Religion of Humanity all foregoing religions, each in its own more or less imperfect way, from primitive fetishism to Christianity, have striven to approximate. Based on the natural tendency of man to explain the movements in the world around him by the instincts and passions that vibrate within his own soul, they gave birth to tribes of imaginary beings who swayed human destiny, and whom it was man's most urgent duty to appease and propitiate. Step by step, as the laws that ruled the world were revealed by science, their power lessened; and when at last science culminated by expounding the orderly evolution of man and Humanity, they disappeared as stars fade before the dawning day.

Thus the progress of Religion is seen to follow, not the path that Mr. Spencer marked out for it, but a direction precisely the reverse. Not from the known to the unknown and mysterious lies its course, but from the mysterious and unknown to the clear and certain. Its hold on human life grows with the growth of man's thoughts, widens with the scope of his activity. As the years pass on man tends to become more and more religious.[1]

[1] See p. 208 (note 2), and Dr. Bridges' address on "Religion and Progress" in *Essays and Addresses*, pp. 34–64.—ED.

IV

WORSHIP[1]

THERE was a sentence—and it was only a sentence—in the January[2] number of the *Positivist Review* to the effect that a synthesis which took no account of Worship as a permanent element of man's life was as incomplete as Shakespeare's greatest play would be with the principal part left out. A few more words to justify and explain a somewhat strong assertion which might easily be misunderstood.

What is the meaning of the word? The presence and the recognition of dignity, worth, excellence, in some thing or person we may take as one of its first meanings, and this will suffice as a starting-point.

Now, what is here maintained—and, though many may count it a paradox, yet with Comte it was a fundamental part of his teaching—is that Worship fills an even more essential place in human life than Doctrine. The first and most essential condition for raising poor human nature to a higher level is submission,

[1] The circumstances that gave rise to this paper on "Worship" were as follows. Dr. Bridges' paper on "Mr. Spencer's Theory of Evolution" appeared in the *Positivist Review* of November, 1895, and his paper on "The Unknowable" in the next issue. In the meantime Mr. Spencer had sent a letter to the *Review* (p. 184 of this volume) with the following postscript: "P.S.—When the above was written I had not seen Dr. Bridges' second article ['The Unknowable']. The difference he emphasizes seems to me in large measure nominal. In *The Principles of Ethics*, and I think elsewhere, I have referred to the fact that in the course of human progress Religion becomes differentiated into Theology and Ethics; of which the Ethics acquires a continually increasing importance. The word *Religion* was originally used to cover all which concerns our relations to the Power (or powers) behind things, then considered as personal; and I have continued to use it in relation to that Power considered as unknowable. At the same time, such part of Religion as embodies rules of conduct towards fellow-creatures (at first obligatory only by divine command) I have dealt with under the headof Ethics, and have regarded as obligatory in virtue of conduciveness to human welfare. Thus the difference is simply that what Dr. Bridges, in pursuance of the Comtian conception, regards as religious obligation I regard as ethical obligation. Anyone who reads the closing passages of *The Principles of Ethics* will see that, if the element of worship is left out, the two views become substantially the same." Dr. Bridges thereupon appended the following postscript to his reply to Mr. Spencer's letter: "P.S.—Mr. Spencer's postscript raises larger issues than can be dealt with in a paragraph. I note only his closing remark that, 'if the element of worship is left out, the two views become substantially the same.' That may be true; but would not a synthesis from which the element of worship were left out be like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with the principal part omitted?" This paper on "Worship" must therefore be regarded as Dr. Bridges' reply to Mr. Spencer's postscript.—ED.

[2] 1896

reverence, the capacity and the habit of looking up to something better than ourselves.

Every simple statement of a truth, from the definitions of Euclid upwards, is liable to be misinterpreted, especially when the truth touches man's highest interests nearly. So it has been here. It has been often said, and the late Mr. Huxley used to amuse himself and his friends by repeating, that Comte at the end of a long life which began with much scientific promise showed signs of impaired mental power, one of the signs being that he set up an artificial religion with rites and ceremonies borrowed from the Catholic Church. Though this is a mere legend, yet colour was given to it by the fact that some disciples of Comte have really tried to establish a ritual of this kind. But such attempts remind us of impatient children who, wanting a flower-garden at short notice, put cut flowers in the soil because they cannot wait till the seeds grow. Carlyle's chapter on "Organic Filaments" in *Sartor Resartus* may be read by such with advantage.

No; liturgies do not grow up in a night like Jonah's gourd. They are not manufactured to order, like wax flowers. They have to grow, and to grow slowly. How slowly will depend, as with other growths, on soil and climate; but not speedily, in any case, if the plant is to be perennial. The one thing needful is that the process should be one of growth, not mechanism; evolution, not fabrication. Free spontaneous impulse should prompt it. In a word, it should be living, not dead. What we have to ask ourselves at the present time is not whether we shall at once set about founding a Positivist ritual that shall take the place of the liturgies and hymn-books used in chapels or churches round us, but whether we have hold of something which, while it guides our feelings, thoughts, and actions for the present, gives promise of continuous growth and fuller guidance in time to come. We have to ask, further, whether this that we hold is something that appeals to a few learned and cultivated people only, or whether it is something that all can lay hold of, as Nelson's humblest cabin-boy understood the watchword at Trafalgar.

Here lies the difference between a speculative philosophy and a rule of life. The two things may coexist in the same person with little or no connection between them. Between Faraday in the laboratory of the Royal Institution and Faraday in his Sandemanian chapel, what was there in common? Francis Bacon's philosophy and Francis Bacon's practice of law and pursuit of worldly honours were as far apart as though they were things belonging to two men

living in different countries. A greater thinker than Bacon offers us a different example. With Descartes philosophy was the centre to which every function of life converged. Of Aristotle and many another the same may be said. The truths sought and found by such men had, as they felt instinctively, an ultimate bearing on the elevation of man, though how and when this would be they did not know, and did not always ask. We may well believe that the consciousness of this sustained them in many a lonely hour. They were citizens of the world, of Humanity—not always of their country, sometimes not even of their generation.

That something more than this was wanted the best of the Greek philosophers knew well; and Pythagoras made a memorable attempt to supply the want, to combine the study of speculative truth with enthusiasm for the reform of life.[1] But the study of truth for its own sake was too new in the time of Pythagoras—it had touched only the simpler facts of number and form; it had not reached, and could not for centuries reach, the region of man's organic and moral life. So the noble effort failed; and Aristotle, a greater intellect than Pythagoras, knew the cause of failure too well to strive to renew it. But he knew also, and told men very clearly, how idle was talk about a life of virtue unless there were some means provided for surrounding young lives with an atmosphere of pure and righteous habits from the cradle.

What followed we know. Supernatural belief had to do again for the world what the old beliefs of Assyria, Egypt, and Judæa had done; what had been done by the early creeds and traditions of Greece and Rome, before revolution, conquest, and luxury had ruined them. After a thousand years of blind faith, in which speculation slumbered, while yet on the practical side of life things of infinite value were germinating, another attempt was made by the great schoolmen of the thirteenth century to harmonize the conflicting elements of life. It was the worthiest and weightiest effort ever made to reconcile science and supernatural religion. These men found their sacred poet. Careful readers of Dante's *Paradiso* know how much of it is Aquinas clothed in burning and prophetic language. But before Dante's death the decline of the Papacy had set in. Protestantism followed with its religious wars; and then came the destructive and creative eighteenth century, crowned by the Revolution. Many old things had passed away by

[1] See Dr. Bridges' biography of Pythagoras in the *New Calendar of Great Men*, pp. 98–102.—ED.

this time; many more were becoming new. And at last, in the nineteenth century, it began to be clear to those that had eyes to see that as conquest, feudalism, and empire were being superseded by peaceful republican industry, so would the place once occupied by the gods be occupied thenceforward by Humanity.

Humanity, as most readers of the *Positivist Review* are well aware, is no new figment of a thinker's fancy. Faith in Humanity underlay all that was good and great and lasting in the creeds of antiquity. Veiled under strange disguises, we find this faith in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, in the immemorial traditions of China, in the Second Table of the Mosaic Law, in the righteous wrath and pity of Æschylus and the Hebrew prophets, in Cicero's assurance of the kinship of the human race, in the supreme object of Catholic veneration, in the last words of the Arabian lawgiver. What has to be done now is to gather in this harvest of the ages, and to strip the husk from the grain. We revert to the simple meaning of Worship before spoken of—reverence for worth wherever we find it. No reconciliation of Science and Religion is needed. They converge spontaneously.

The reconciliation spoken of by Mr. Spencer in his *First Principles* lies in the common recognition by men of science and by theologians that the ultimate cause of things is inscrutable. On this there are many things to be said, one of them being that, if theologians ever came to admit it fully, theology would disappear. It will be noted that religion, in Mr. Spencer's work, is always spoken of in a theological, or at least a supernatural, sense. Positivists cannot complain of this, since Comte himself began by using the word in the same way. It was not till the last ten years of his life that he found it expedient to retain for permanent use, though stripped of every mystical sense, a word which he thought to be of great value, and to which he attached a perfectly precise and intelligible meaning.[1] By Religion he understood the state of unity resulting from the concentration of feeling, thought, and will on a definite purpose.[2] Such unity implied union, since otherwise the inward harmony would be troubled by the passions of conflict. Union, again, implies that the dominant impulses are generous, unselfish, social. Unity within, union without—such is the ideal

[1] In the *Early Essays on Social Philosophy* and the *Philosophie Positive* Comte uses the word *religion* as equivalent to *theology;* but in the *Positive Polity* he adopted the former word as representing a permanent human need, that of a synthesis of Thought, Feeling, and Action.—ED.

[2] See the Introduction to the *Positivist Catechism*, p. 34.—ED.

state called Religion by Comte, towards which, with many sad drawbacks and reversals, man is gradually tending. This conception, again be it said, needs no forcing to bring it within the domain of science. No reconciliation need be thought of. It is itself the apex, the crown of science.

Still it may be asked, Is not this state of inward and outward harmony included in Ethics? Not as Ethics is commonly understood. Always avoiding to make too much of words, yet it must be said that to lay down the rules of right conduct is one thing, the culture of the impulses which make for such conduct is another. Foremost among such impulses is reverence—the recognition of something nobler, higher, better than ourselves. Unselfish devotion is another—the impulse which prompts men to throw away wealth, comfort, even life itself, for the sake of their fellows. Yet another is the bright, cheerful gaiety and joy of life which leads to friendship and genial intercourse. All these impulses, summed up by Comte under the word *altruistic*—a most needful word, which he has brought into universal use—are spoken of by moralists; but they are stimulated to action by every form of religion that deserves the name. Not that the ethical teacher is to be undervalued. It is one of the weaknesses of Englishmen to undervalue theory in all departments, as our extreme slowness in founding technical schools may show. And so there is a tendency to pass by inquiries into moral problems as idle. But, in reality, such inquiries—which, when rightly instituted, have just the same claim to be called scientific as those of chemistry or biology—deserve, and will receive in the future, far more attention than has yet been given to them. Let me take this opportunity of acknowledging a personal obligation to Mr. Spencer for many of the noble and elevating thoughts contained in his ethical volumes. What he says of the unknowable that surrounds our little life, though not new, or claiming to be new, and though not, as it seems to me, containing a solution of our religious struggles, is yet so true and is stated with such clearness and force as, by checking intellectual pride, to tend towards spiritual concord.

But, again, it has to be said that to point out the lines of right conduct is one thing, and a thing most needful to be done; to cultivate the impulses which prompt such conduct is another thing, and even more important, because more closely allied to practical action, by which course men must finally be judged. And this was what Comte meant by saying that such culture—Cult, or Worship, if the old word is to be retained—was of more consequence than

Doctrine.[1] Only let us bear in mind what he meant by the word. The highest art, the best poetry, all that could tend to give joy or nobleness to life, was included. The festivals which he forecast for the future dealt with every phase of man's life and work—his family relations, his government, his industries, his memories of great struggles for freedom.[2]

The time for such public manifestations, presupposing, as they do, wide diffusion of strong personal convictions, has not yet come. Comte himself made no attempt to realize them. He entirely repudiated attempts to mesmerize men's emotions by outward performances corresponding to nothing within. But cultivation of the inner life by his rule, or by other analogous rules, such as saints and sages have followed from times long past, can begin at once. The men who marched from Marseilles to Paris at the supreme moment of the Revolution were chosen because they "knew how to die." Knowing this, the song they sang kept their courage at full height.

V

SACRAMENTS

It has been pointed out to me by a friend, whose judgment I greatly value, that in my recent paper on "Worship,"[3] in which I hinted at the inexpediency of attempting premature manifestations of Comte's ideals, nothing was said of those institutions to which he applied the word *Sacraments*, and which on many occasions during the last half-century, both in Paris and London, have been actually put in practice. In the present confused state of the world it is hard indeed to use any such word without the risk—or, rather, without the certainty—of being misunderstood by many. The use of the word *Religion* by Positivists has been a stumbling-block both to sincere Christians and to sincere Atheists; and it is hard to say which resent it most. And yet, if religion be a real force in the world (and who, whether Christian, Mohammedan, or Atheist, can doubt it?), it must be eminently fit to be considered from the

[1] This subject is dealt with fully in the last section of the paper on "The Seven New Thoughts of the 'Positive Polity'" in this Part.—ED.

[2] These festivals are described in subsequent papers belonging to this Part.—ED.

[3] The preceding paper.—ED.

Positive standpoint; since it is of the essence of Positivism to take account of all that is real.

Similar misunderstanding must be expected in the Positivist use of the word *Sacrament*. The word, as all know, is of Roman origin. Its adoption by the Christian Church is secondary, and, of course, of far later date. It was the Roman military oath; and round this formal declaration of obedience to the Roman standard were grouped all the feelings that ennobled the life of that great nation—patriotism, discipline, loyalty, devotion of life and energy to the public service. It is the Roman rather than the Christian use of the word that is adopted and enlarged in the Positivist use. If human life is ever to be again lifted and permanently sustained above its present level of selfish affections, narrow thoughts, and frivolous pursuits, something of the old Roman sense of obligation must be restored in ways and forms appropriate to our complex and varied society. Needless to say, such forms must be wholly disconnected from the work once ennobled by necessity, but now hateful, of slaughtering our fellow men, unless on the rare occasions of defence of hearths, homes, and native soil against criminal assault. Sacraments, in Comte's use of the word, are plain and simple recognitions that the principal events of private life have more than a private bearing; that the life of each human being, young or old, humble or exalted, is part of the common life; and that service received should be, so far as may be, repaid by service done.[1]

It is well to feel and to speak with due respect of the form of religion at present prevailing in our country. But it is well also to avoid confusion and insincerity. With the mystic meaning of the word *Sacrament*, as used in the Catholic Church, the Positivist use of it has little in common. The Roman word and the Roman meaning are far too precious to be lost. If human life is ever to become again organic, vigorous, and noble, the union of private with public life which the Roman institution symbolized must be re-asserted and maintained in such ways and forms as may be found best suited to our modern time.

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, pp. 109–16.—ED.

Chapter IV

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

I

THE MEANING OF PROGRESS[1]

When we look back on the stream of history it does not appear to us quite unbroken and continuous. Indeed, most historians dwell so exclusively on the accidents of history, the collisions of governments and nations, the crimes of rulers, the miseries of those they rule, that the true spectacle which we come to see, the growth of Humanity, is altogether hidden from us. Till the time of Condorcet it was not really recognized. It is most imperfectly recognized even by students and philosophers now. Alone among European thinkers Auguste Comte has conceived the whole meaning of that series of changes.

Condorcet saw the progress of the human *mind*, the growth of scientific discovery—beginning in Greece, continued by the Arabs, reviving at the Renascence, and carried on with astounding rapidity by Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Bichat, Faraday, Darwin, and by the practical inventors, Gutenberg, Columbus, Watt, Stephenson. But the meaning of the Middle Age, that thousand years of stagnation in material and mental growth, he utterly failed to see.[2] Hume failed and all the thinkers of the eighteenth century. Many of the nineteenth century have failed also. Comte alone saw the meaning of that thousand years of darkness, its connection with what went before and came after it, because he alone, while maintaining the claims of science more audaciously than any thinker since Aristotle, yet upheld with equal audacity against the fanatics of science the subordination of the Intellect to the Heart, the subordination of Politics to Ethics—that is, of material civilization to noble and upright life.

Now can we, with the advantage of Comte's teaching, sum up

[1] A posthumous paper which formed part of a lecture.—Ed.
[2] *Cf.* pp. 231, 241.—Ed.

his conception of Progress as the goal of human energies in such a way as to steer clear of the vague, misleading meanings or no-meanings which are so often attached to the word? I think we can. I think Comte's meaning has already been summed up in a very definite and concrete way in the Syllabus of the Course of Lectures on the History of Civilization by Professor Beesly and others.[1] "The ruin of Western civilization can be averted only by the spread of a Universal Religion and the general adoption of Home Rule." Here you have in a word the Positivist ideal of Church and State. On the one hand, cessation of war, of conquest, of vast imperial systems, whether English, French, German, or Russian. Patriotism of the true kind rendered possible by limitation of the State within natural boundaries—citizens acting together politically with just pride in the traditions of their forefathers and with mutual respect—purged of all desire to suppress and tyrannize over and govern alien civilizations, whether in Ireland, in Lorraine, in Africa, or in Asia. We are the foes of Imperialism. Where it exists and where there is no way of immediately replacing it without disorder, there we wait its euthanasia, and take every opportunity of helping its peaceful dissolution. All attempts to extend it we shall continue vigorously to resist. On this matter our minds are made up. It is a fundamental part of our religion. We cling to our fatherland. It follows that we respect the fatherland of others. For us patriotism and imperialism are two contradictory words.

For the union of the nations of the world we rely on no imperial systems, however wisely conducted, but on the Religion of Humanity. In every nation, Eastern or Western, Buddhist, Confucian, Mohammedan, no less than Christian, we see the germs of that religion. We have not got to sow the seed. The seed is in the soil already. We have but to cultivate it. With a little more energy than we have put forth already, I can see that the time will soon be ripe for establishing such a society as Comte projected in the last chapter of his *General View of Positivism*[2]—a committee consisting of men of every nation, Eastern and Western, formed for the purpose of contributing in many and various ways to the establishment of the Universal Religion. One can see already what the Japanese, Chinese, and Indian members of such a society might do in extracting each from his own sacred books and traditions such sentences

[1] A course of twenty lectures on the General History of Civilization, delivered at Newton Hall in 1888-9. The words quoted are taken from the syllabus of the lecture given by Professor Beesly on March 31, 1889.—ED.

[2] Pp. 284-90.—ED.

and wise sayings as would be found wholly convergent with the teaching of Socrates and Cicero and Seneca, of Jesus and Saint Paul and Saint Francis—in showing how institutions in part obsolete, and commonly thought obstructive, have worked in establishing law and that spirit of reverential submissiveness to an external order which lies at the root of all moral growth. Such a society would do incalculable good in teaching the various civilizations of the world to know and to respect one another. It would sound the note of alarm when the stupidity and blindness and avarice connected with commercial and material progress were likely to bring nations into hostile collision. It would show the speculators who are so greedy to drive straight lines of railway across China why the Chinese do not desire that their graveyards should be desecrated by railway cuttings; and in countless other ways such a society would do immediate and temporary good while paving the way for the Universal Religion by which the whole race of Man will one day be firmly knit together.

But we are under no illusions; we live in no fool's paradise. It will be through much tribulation that we shall enter the kingdom. What fearful and sanguinary struggles lie before the nations in a near future we know not. What suffering may be caused in England by the decentralization of the commerce of the world, now so largely concentrated in London, and the consequent forced migration of its inhabitants elsewhere, we know not. But amidst all the confusions and perils of the coming time there is a fixed goal before us, a light which cannot lead us astray. The victories of Humanity over countless obstacles in the past assure us of her triumph in the future. We are taunted that we shall never realize our hopes, never see that future. This we know well; and it is precisely this knowledge which consecrates our work by redeeming it from the taint of self-love.

II

FAITH IN HUMANITY

It is a very trite metaphor, first used, I think, by Dr. Arnold some fifty years ago in his lectures on History, that political and social progress is like the coming in of the tide. On a steeply shelving shore you may watch the forward and backward motion of the waves for some minutes without being sure whether the rise

or the fall is in excess. You have to ask a fisherman, or look at your tide-table, to be sure that in an hour's time the water will stand higher than it does now.

Reading decades for minutes, we may apply the parable to the progress of Humanity. It is said and felt by many of us that the present time is a time of reaction.[1] Some of the reasons for thinking so have been very forcibly stated by the Editor in the last number of this *Review*;[2] and Mr. Frederic Harrison's vivid picture of Lourdes[3] suggests others. It is needless and wearisome to repeat what has been said already of the enormous quantity of wealth sunk yearly by the nations of Europe in fleets and armies; of the revived pretensions of England to the government of the sea; of theocratic Russia dominating South Eastern Europe, and laying her veto on the reform of Turkey; of the paralysis of the European Concert involved in the scramble of France and England for territorial aggrandizement. Religious reaction, now as always, goes side by side with political. During the eighteen years of the third Napoleon lay schools were almost impossible in France; the prefects and the bishops were always on the same side; and the wealthier employers were ardent supporters of what Comte, the ardent sympathizer with every form of genuine religion, stigmatized as "the hypocritical conspiracy to divert the popular mind from all serious attempts to make things better in this world by holding out chimerical hopes of compensation in another."[4] It is not unlikely that here in England we may witness the systematic renewal of attempts of this kind. The project of increasing the enormous revenues of the Church of England by increased grants to denominational schools will probably be realized. The further step of giving such grants not where schools are most wanted, but where school boards are most effective, is too cynical to be realized; but that it should have found influential advocates among the clerical party shows the prevailing temper.

Bad as these things are, it is no use shutting our eyes to the possibility of yet worse. In this highly critical and unstable state of European equilibrium, as a strong statesman of high principles, like Cromwell or Richelieu, may do much for public salvation, so, and

[1] Written in 1897.—ED.

[2] The reference is to Professor Beesly's article on "Russia and Turkey" in the *Positivist Review* of December, 1896.—ED.

[3] In his article on "A Pilgrimage to Lourdes" in the *Positivist Review* of December, 1896. Reprinted in *Memories and Thoughts* (1906).—ED.

[4] See *General View*, p. 294.—ED.

more easily, may a strong man of low principles, like the first Napoleon, lead men down the paths of destruction. A European war may adjourn the highest hopes of mankind for a generation. It is needful that men who think at all should face the possibility of this; and yet should learn not to despair.

How, then, are we to learn the lesson? By the belief in an all-wise Providence, in a Being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness? Of such a belief we can but say that it transcends our knowledge. We know that our knowledge is limited. It is of the very essence of Positivism to acknowledge its limits; nay, to insist upon them far more emphatically than is done by many of the scientific teachers of our time. But, using such knowledge as we have, we see every reason for belief that this is a most imperfect world; no reason for assurance that we shall ever know any other. And to the Christian or the Mussulman who tells us, "If I held your creed I should destroy myself," we are constrained to reply: "Is your creed, then, brighter?" It is written in every orthodox manual of the Churches, whether Roman, Greek, or Anglican, that spiritual and corporal torment is eternal. From pictures of a blissful minority, standing out against so lurid a background, we can derive no comfort. If Lazarus be indeed a saint, he will spend eternity in striving to carry water to the rich man's tongue.

Driven back, then, to the purely human standpoint, forced to seek our highest happiness in this earth of ours, so loved yet so imperfect, so faulty yet so dear, we ask ourselves again the question, Where lies our hope?

It is best to take the lowest ground first, and so be sure that we build on the solid rock. Resignation to the supreme law sounds cold and barren. But it has sustained the bravest and the humblest in time of need. We all know something of the Stoics, for the thoughts of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus form part of the Bible of Humanity. Those who have not read Seneca's essays[1] on the Blessed Life, and on Peace of Mind, would be surprised to find how many of the thoughts that we read so gratefully in St. Paul's Epistles or in Thomas à Kempis are to be found in the writings of that remarkable teacher, commonly thought in the Middle Ages to have been St. Paul's personal friend. Submission to the Supreme Will, wholly apart from personal hope, is the dominant tone in these writings. It is commonly said that such thoughts are possible only to literary men living a life of ease and leisure. Nothing could

[1] *De Vita Beata* and *De Tranquillitate Animi*.—ED.

be wider of the mark. Seneca was in that position, for a time at least, though his death was violent and was bravely borne; but Epictetus was a slave. It is a grave error to suppose that culture has anything to do with the matter. Stoic courage is for the most part dumb. It is limited neither by sex, nationality, nor rank. Every fisherman who puts to sea in a gale to save drowning men from a wreck, every fireman who plunges through smoke and flame to reach children in a four-pair back, is well provided with it. Never was a mining explosion but revealed it in abundance. It lies at the root of manhood, called, by men of old, virtue. What brave men have felt from the beginning Comte put into words thus: "If we knew that the earth was soon to be shattered by collision with a star, to live for others, to control self-love by social devotion, would remain to the end the highest good and the highest duty."[1]

So much being common to the Positivist with all men, what has he to encourage him that other men as yet have not? Let us grant at once what is obviously true—that all men are not heroes, and that heroes are not always heroic. For most of us—I do not speak of those who are content to live in easy-going indifference to the future fate of their country or of their race—hope is as needful as our daily bread. Such hope the Positivist possesses. He is sustained in times of depression and reaction by distinct prospects of a better future for the world, grounded on patient study of the history of Humanity. Through all the foam and mist raised by the storms around him he sees the stream of life bending, now to this side, now to that, sometimes even seeming to retrace its course, but on the whole moving steadily in one direction. Scientific reasoning is at one with social aspiration in pointing to a future in which tillage shall take the place of carnage; in which men's strength will be spent, not in preparations for mutual slaughter, but in making this earth a beautiful and abiding dwelling-place for those that come after them, in which hopes of saving our own souls and bodies in a future world will give way to systematic efforts to save the bodies and souls of others in this.

When we say we have *faith* in such a future, what do we mean? The Apostle tells us, "Faith is the substance" (that is, the underlying foundation) "of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."[2] Looking at it closely, we shall find that there has been a great deal of faith of this kind in the world, quite apart from

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. i, p. 410.—ED.
[2] Hebrews, ch. xi, 1.—ED.

theological beliefs of any kind. When Hannibal encamped outside the walls of Rome after a victory which laid all Italy at his mercy, his camping-ground (the place can be identified now within a few yards) was put up by the citizens of Rome to auction, and was bought in at a high price. Such was the faith of Romans in the future of Rome. Those who think it impossible for men to be strongly stirred by hopes of a future which they themselves will never see will do well to read their history over again. If ancient history is too far off, let them begin with the story of the Swiss and the Dutch Republics.

If men can feel such faith in the future of their fatherland—a small space of territory, a fraction of the human race, liable to attack, invasion, even conquest—as to let their blood be shed like water in its service, is it so fantastical and idle a dream to suppose that men will give their lives, and far more universally and willingly, to the service of Humanity, the victorious survivor of so many nations and empires? Humanity herself, the preachers often tell us, may perish. Undoubtedly. And this is held to be a conclusive and triumphant argument against us; as though the prophets of Judæa, and sages innumerable from Confucius and Buddha downwards, had not taught millions to live true and honourable lives without hope of personal immortality; as though the story of every nation, the life of every good man and woman, were not ennobled by devotion to perishable things; as though the poet had never told us—

> This makes thy love more strong,
> To love that so which thou must lose ere long.

But again, we are told, your faith is not certainty. Assuredly it is not; if mathematical certainty is meant, or the certainty that comes from the direct evidence of sense. Faith is one thing; knowledge is another. But has it ever been otherwise? In times when Christian doctrine was more fervidly and universally accepted than it is now, were not the lives of pious men and women shadowed by the fearful doubt whether the future life of themselves, and of those they most loved, was to be a life of endless bliss or endless pain? Faith, in our sense of the word, is founded on science; but it is not science. Columbus had never seen the New World when he set out on his mighty voyage. Nansen could not be sure that his frozen ship would be carried from Siberia to Greenland with the ice-drift. But both these men had solid grounds for doing what they did; and their faith sustained themselves and their comrades through long weeks and months of trial. Not otherwise does the past of Humanity,

rightly studied, sustain us with the promise of her glorious future. And if it be said that men can never feel enthusiasm for what they will never see, it has to be replied again and yet again that the facts of life around us prove the contrary. When there are no longer any brave men and women left on the earth, when soldiers have ceased to rally round their flag, and no fishermen or miners can be found to risk drowning or suffocation for comrades or for strangers, it will be time to ask whether men can be stirred by other hopes than of profitable operations on the Stock Exchange in this world and eternal prolongation of their existence in another.

III

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A UNIVERSAL CHURCH[1]

MAN, as Aristotle said twenty-five centuries ago,[2] is a political animal. He is one of the social races. He is, indeed, the social race in a very special sense. Other races, as dogs, horses, cattle, deer, beavers, elephants, many kinds of birds, and even of insects, live more or less in society. But human society is distinguished from these by its far wider extension in the first place, and still more by its continuous existence through a long series of centuries and millenniums. As a result of this continuous social life two institutions have arisen—Language and Capital. Language had its first origin in men's instinctive cries under the influence of passion. When the passion, whether fear or joy or hate, was felt in common the cries were common too; and when the passion was called out by actions in which all joined, the cries became the signs of those actions and of the things connected with them. Language has gradually become the storehouse for the thoughts of successive generations of men. Capital is the result of successive generations of labour. Each man, each generation, produces more than is consumed. Hence energy is set free from hunting and fishing, and spent on work that will not bring in profit for many weeks, months, or even years; on sowing the land, on house-building, on spinning and weaving, on roads, on canals, on costly machinery of all kinds.

Association, then, is of the very essence of Man's life. All that marks him off from other animals comes from continuity with the

[1] A posthumous paper.—ED.

[2] In his *Politics*, bk. i.—ED.

past and association in the present. How is this association maintained? By a combination of the highest and lowest passions, by love and by self-interest, by family affection, by association in breadwinning, in the chase, in fishing, in keeping sheep, in agriculture, in war, and by a common religious life. The religions of the old world established moral discipline, appealing to the highest and lowest motives, reverence and fear. In a way they embraced the whole nature; but they had their imperfections. They were tribal; they were too much bound up with the constitution of the State. But some 2,500 years ago there was a change in this respect in many parts of the world at once. Men rose up wholly unconnected with the State, to exercise spiritual functions, to moralize those around them. In Greece there were the philosophers, Thales, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others; in Judæa, Hosea, Isaiah, and the rest of the prophets, preaching righteousness apart from ceremonial or legal enactment; in India there was Buddhism, triumphant under Asoka[1] 250 years before Christ. Then, still later, there came the Christian Church and the great religious community of Islam. St. Paul gave shape to the conception of a Church—*i.e.*, an organized body to promote righteousness and purity of life, irrespective of nationality.

We judge the Catholic Church in its decay. But take its first twelve hundred years from St. Paul to Dante. Take Benedict, Bede, Boniface, Bernard. What would Europe have been without it? It did not do everything. We owe much to Roman government, much to the energy of the old Northmen; but amid the fierce conflicts of the time it upheld a standard of righteousness and purity. It failed from weakness of doctrine. Two centuries before Luther it began to fail. New thoughts and hopes dawned on men—industry, discovery, art, science. Since then scepticism has gone on ever increasing. Though the Church may still offer a shelter to the weak and the timid it is no longer a rallying point for the strong. They leave it more and more. It controlled feudal strife; can it control modern industrial strife? It could mitigate the invasion of the Northmen; but what of the invasion of the steam-engine, of modern competitive commerce, of the over-crowding of modern London, of the cry of the workers to be admitted to a reasonable share of the blessings which civilization is every year bestowing more bountifully on the rich?

A Church is a society that exists for the purpose of making

[1] The Buddhist emperor of India, whose reign began in 264 B.C.—ED.

Man's life in all its phases—public, domestic, personal—as perfect as possible; an association of those who aim at helping one another to lead noble and useful lives. What are the conditions of the existence of such a society in the modern world if it is to be Catholic or Universal?

It must, in the first place, be non-theological. People must be able to join it whether they believe or whether they do not believe in the existence of a divine being such as is described in the Christian or Mohammedan Scriptures. This condition must be patent at the outset. You may have, and for a very long time will continue to have, innumerable societies, each of which has some kind of theological creed. There is nothing to prevent this; there is no reason why we should try to prevent it. We cannot disprove the existence of a God. We can repeat with the Psalmist, "The fool sayeth in his heart there is no God." But on the other hand we see more clearly than ever that no belief or disbelief in the existence or non-existence of God helps us one step forward in building-up the Church of the Future, because the foundations of that Church must be laid, not on what men differ about, but on what they agree about. Suppose you bring together in one room a score of Christians, the same number of Jews, of Mohammedans, of Hindoos, and of Chinese. Let each group be fairly representative of the country they come from. Now, what kind of agreement on theological matters could you expect from the hundred men who form this assemblage? The twenty Christians would have among them one or more Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Independents, Quakers, Unitarians, and Sceptics. The Mohammedans would have members of the two great sects, Sunnites and Shiites, and some Sceptics also. Of the Jews, some would be orthodox, others indifferent. The Hindoos would represent different forms of their religion. Of the Chinese, some would be Buddhists, some pure Confucians. What would be the result of bringing these people into a room and asking them to compare notes about their various beliefs and see whether they could agree? Evidently on all matters connected with the divine world there would be hopeless wrangling and confusion. Meanwhile it would be noticed that a few in each group held aloof from the discussion and took no part in it. And after a time these silent people from each group would come together seeking some common refuge from the noise. They would begin by exchanging courtesies, and then would exchange thoughts, until at last it would be found that these—the Sceptics from each group—would be the only people who had any chance of arriving at a

common understanding. On matters of justice, of kindness, of peaceful relations between man and man, and nation and nation, on respect for parents and for age, on hatred of treachery, on admiration for heroism and fidelity, they would find they had very much in common. And while they were finding this out a lull would perhaps occur in the theological wrangle at the other end of the room, and one by one the tired disputants would join the peaceful group, and so at last a new harmony might arise out of what threatened to be hopeless discord.

But this first condition is not enough; it is too purely negative. It was a point of view common in the eighteenth century. All that was wanted was—not to believe theology. But human beings can never be knit together by negation only. Slaves may unite to break their fetters. This is good—even glorious. But what then? When fetters are broken, they are broken. You cannot go on breaking them for ever. Unions for the sake of not doing something—not believing a creed, not drinking gin, not smoking tobacco, and so on—are rather precarious. What unites man is doing something in common—not the mere abstaining from doing. The enlightened people of the eighteenth century thought that little more was necessary than to knock down idols, to remove shutters from the windows of the mind, to let in light. Enlightened self-interest was their watchword. All this turned out to be in great part a fool's paradise. The Revolution came, and it was soon seen that men were driven along, not by calm, intellectual inquiry, but by fierce passions. The Reign of Terror followed. The Revolution devoured her children. Finally, all Europe was given over to war and mutual killing for twenty-five years. The first condition of the Church of the Future is, as we have already found, that it must be non-theological, perfectly tolerant of theological doctrine of every kind, yet standing entirely outside it. But this first condition, though necessary, is quite insufficient. Voltaire, Diderot, and the Revolution had failed for want of two things—(1) want of solid faith; (2) want of *sustained* enthusiasm.

Do you remember that wonderful passage in the New Testament from the letter, not written to the Hebrews, about faith and its power?[1] Generation after generation had an ideal before them, a saviour that should come to regenerate the world and establish righteousness upon it. The writer of the Epistle traces the history of his people from Abel to Enoch, Noah, and Abraham; then he

[1] Hebrews, ch. xi.—ED.

goes swiftly through the whole chain of events that made the Jewish nation, knit together by an unseen ideal, called faith: "The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." That is to say, there were things which, as far as your senses go, did not exist; they were not seen or heard or felt, for they were not yet born; but the substance of them was possessed by those old Jewish heroes. They held to the unseen ideal as though it were seen. That holding to the unseen ideal that they felt sure would come, even though they should never live to see it, is faith. Thus the writer tells how this holding to the unseen ideal made heroes of them. The men of old gained an honourable name by it. "By it the elders obtained a good report." "Through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong.....others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword.....All, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." No, they never saw their ideal realized; but they believed in it all the same, clung to it to the last.

Many of us in childhood have read all this, and it comes back to some of us with a sense of unreality like "a tale of little meaning though the words are strong." What we shall have to come to see is this—that all great things in the world have been done in this way. A far finer chapter than that I have read might be written about the old Romans, who felt that their small republic, smaller at first than the county of Middlesex, had a great destiny before it which they, as individual citizens, should never live to see, but which they lived and worked and fought and died to realize for those that should come after them. So was it with Mohammed and his followers, with Cromwell's Puritans, with Danton's Republicans, for even these had faith—not pure negativism; although it was only transitory, still it was faith. A belief capable of stirring enthusiasm, such is the second condition of a Church in the modern world. If we put the two conditions together, we get as the result a common belief, disconnected from theology, capable of stirring men's noblest impulses.

Faith, then, is something more than intellectual conviction; it is that, but something more—it is also the tenacious clinging to an ideal. That ideal may be theological enthusiasm for the triumph of a mystical doctrine; or it may be national enthusiasm for the

future of our country; or it may be universal enthusiasm for the future of Humanity. And if men and women of different nations and different theological convictions are to be united together, this last is the enthusiasm of which we are in search.

But a little thought will show us how insufficient even this is, if it stand alone. The strongest excitement of the noblest sympathies has often led men woefully astray. Men see some terrible suffering; they rush without thought to the first remedy they find; and perhaps all they have done is to prune the head and top branches of the evil, thereby making the root grow more vigorously than ever. We see someone in distress, or some class of people. We move heaven and earth to get a new law or a new society to relieve them. We never ask ourselves whether the change will not create new difficulties. We establish *crèches* to enable mothers to go out to work, and thus lower women's wages. We interfere with nations badly governed, and the result is the destruction of their national vitality. Generally, we may say, blind impulses to do good, if allowed to take their course, will lead to evil. Philanthropy has been described as one of the seven curses of the world; and this paradox contains a truth. We want *light* as well as *love*, *principle* as well as *impulse*.

Where are principles, convictions, to be found? Formerly, in the revelations of the Divine Will; now, in the study of the Order of the World, in the true scientific spirit, the spirit of quiet, steady, patient looking at the facts to see what their real meaning is, clearing the mind of all preconceived fancies, of all self-will, the humble subordination of one's own opinion to the teaching that the facts themselves bring. This is the true spirit of Baconian philosophy as seen in Newton, in Faraday, and in Darwin. This spirit, so fertile in the study of the material world, we have to bring to the study of the social, political, and moral world.

In the scientific world a man begins, not by thinking out everything for himself afresh; he goes to the best masters and sees what has been done before him. In mathematics, in physics, in chemistry, in physiology, there are books which are condensations of the work of many centuries. We begin by accepting that. We find the best teacher we can; and we begin by accepting him too. We take an immense number of things on trust to begin with, as, for instance, the multiplication table. We say, eleven times seven is seventy-seven; but how few of us have put down a row of eleven sevens and added them up, to see whether it is so. We first find out what has been done in each science; and then we look and work for ourselves,

if we have time and faculty. Now, as it is with arithmetic, electricity, chemistry, medicine, so it is with politics and human conduct. They must be studied in the scientific spirit.

This was the starting-point of Auguste Comte's work. Social anarchy, in his view, was caused by the lack of convictions to unite good men. Ten righteous will save the doomed city; but the ten must work together, must rally round the same standard. Comte did not merely say, "Let us try to study social phenomena scientifically." He laid the foundations of the science. He urged the scientific study of the Social Order as the foundation of all wise effort, as the basis of Progress. Had he only done this, it would have been much. But he did far more. He worked for the many as well as for the few. The Religion of Humanity is now a common phrase. It is used by numbers who know nothing of Comte's teaching and hardly know his name. Yet it was he that first brought it into use. And he meant more by it than others mean. By many these words are used very vaguely. The Religion of Humanity is described as "the essence of Christianity," whatever that may mean. Everyone uses the word Christian in his own way. Do you mean the Christianity of the Popes? Do you mean the Christianity of the men who persecute the Jews in Russia? Do you mean a general spirit of benevolence without any creed at all? I have already shown how dangerous mere philanthropy can be.

No, Comte meant something very much more distinct than this. He meant intelligent gratitude, clear-sighted, thankful acknowledgment of the services of the great and good in the past—clear-sighted, intelligent enthusiasm for a future definitely recognized as following from that past. He meant by Humanity the work done by Moses and by the Egyptians, by Homer, Aristotle, and Archimedes, and the other great poets and thinkers of the old world. He meant Scipio, Cæsar, Trajan, and the founders of the Roman State. He meant St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, the founders of the mediæval Church. He meant Dante, Shakespeare, and the whole choir of painters, poets, and musicians. He meant statesmen who have defended justice and free thought like William the Silent, and Cromwell, and Frederick. He meant the great philosophers and scientific revealers of the modern world like Descartes, Bacon, Kepler, Galileo, Bichat, and Darwin—these and also all the unnamed good and brave.

And again, by Humanity is meant not only communion with the Past, but communion with the Future. Study of the structure of

Humanity reveals more or less clearly what institutions are permanent and constant and what are changing and modifiable, so that in the Religion of Humanity is included all aspirations for the Future and hopes of Progress, all the more sure that they are founded on the laws of growth. We walk not blindly and unsteadily, because we know whither we are going, although we do not know it perfectly.

Here, then, we have the third condition necessary to a universal Church in the modern world—a belief founded on science. A small number may suffice to stir and guide the world, if only they are sure of themselves and remain faithful to their principles.

IV

THE SEVEN NEW THOUGHTS OF THE "POSITIVE POLITY"[1]

Introductory

By the seven new thoughts of the *Positive Polity*,[2] I mean the seven principal thoughts that distinguish it from Comte's previous work. What he had done in 1842, when the sixth and last volume of the *Philosophie Positive* was published, was to show that the facts of Sociology, of Man and Society, were—like the facts of Biology and Astronomy—*amenable to law*. They followed regular laws of coexistence and succession, and therefore they afforded scientific basis for action. By observing what were the permanent conditions in every state of society, Comte showed what were the institutions it was necessary to preserve. This was the basis of Order. By pointing out laws of growth followed everywhere and in all times, he indicated true principles of change. Here was the foundation of Progress.

To take elementary instances, Family and Government are uniformly persistent. They belong to Order, which is the Basis. On the other hand, the belief in God is not uniformly persistent. In Chinese civilization and in Buddhist societies it does not exist. It is therefore not part of the permanent fabric of human civilization.

[1] Posthumous paper, from a course of three lectures delivered in 1883.—Ed.

[2] *Système de politique positive: ou traité de sociologie, instituant la religion de l'humanité*. Four vols.; 1851–54. Eng. tr., entitled *System of Positive Polity*, in four vols. (Longmans, Green, and Co.; 1875–77.)—Ed.

Indeed, on further examination, a law of change shows itself—the Law of Three Stages faintly perceived by Hume and Turgot.[1] Progress in all conceptions is from Fictive to Positive, first in simple thoughts such as those of astronomy, later in complex thoughts such as those which deal with society.

At the end of the *Philosophie Positive* Comte had shown the application of these principles to many of the problems of society and of life. In particular he had dwelt on moral education, consisting in the

> wise regulation *of habits and of prejudices*, destined *from childhood* to vigorous development of the social instinct and of the sense of duty, and *afterwards* to be supplied with a rational basis, by instruction in the laws of human nature and society; so as to fix firmly and definitely the universal obligations of civilized man, beginning with personal morality, passing thence to family and social morality, and then studying the various modifications due to the different positions created by modern civilization.[2]

Comte points out the extreme incompetence of theology in dealing with moral education. For, in the first place, theology no longer unites. It is one thing to a Unitarian, another to a Catholic. Secondly, the doctrine of personal salvation was never very favourable to the highest morality. Thus this great problem had been present to Comte long before he wrote the *Politique Positive*. The same is true of Social Commemoration, and also of that vast aspect of the problem of reorganization which may be called *temporal* or *material*. The great conception that in a healthy state of society every citizen will be regarded as a public functionary holding his proper place in the industrial army—that conception which contains the germs of the solution of the whole problem of Wealth and Labour and Poverty—this too is to be found clearly stated in the first work.[3]

We may ask then, What was left for the great afterwork? The answer is given in the Final Invocation to the *Politique Positive*.[4]

Six years elapsed between the conclusion of the *Philosophie* in

[1] See p. 91.—ED.

[2] See *Phil. Pos.*, vol. vi, ch. lvii, p. 464. The italics are due to Dr. Bridges. —ED.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 482. On the question of the permanent importance of what Comte always called his *ouvrage fondamental*—the *Philosophie Positive*—see p. xii of the Preface to vol. iii of the *Pos. Pol.*—ED.

[4] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, pp. 473–76.

1842 and the publication of the *Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme* in 1848.[1] In the interval he published the *Geometry*[2] in 1843, and the *Astronomy*[3] in 1844. In 1845 there came the great crisis of his life, his friendship with Madame de Vaux. In 1846, six months after her death, he wrote the Dedication of the *Politique*, and in the next year he delivered the course of lectures corresponding to the *General View*.

What was the renovation now effected in Comte's life? It was this. The moral realities of human life were brought nearer to him. Society was no longer a distant astronomical object pursuing its way through the ether in obedience to a fixed law. It was a complex of human lives, each real, swayed by stirring desires, needing guidance, support, consolation. He had seen life, as a wise philosopher sees it, from a distance, from a height as in a bird's-eye view. He now saw it as a good and merciful woman sees it, at first hand, glowing with warm blood, quivering with pain and passion. On the one hand his abstract thoughts were now translated into the language of common life; on the other, a moral renovation was effected in himself, with a new purity, gentleness, patience.

The Final Invocation recalls the way in which this moral renovation had reacted on his teaching; and he associates the inspiring influence of this personal affection with the principal thoughts which distinguished the *Positive Polity* from his former work. These thoughts, the seven essential steps in his religious construction, were (1) Humanity, (2) The Subjective Method, (3) The Cerebral Theory, (4) Ethics as the highest of the Sciences, (5) Sociocracy based on the separation of Church and State, (6) The Affinity between Fetishism and Positivism, and (7) Service weightier than Creed. Each of these we must consider in turn.

1. Humanity

In the *General View of Positivism* you may read the greater part of the book without coming to the religious conception of Humanity. It does not occur till the last chapter. We have the intellectual character of Positivism; its social purpose; its action on the people; its influence on women; its affinity with Art; five-sixths of the book—and yet no reference to the Religion of Humanity. This

[1] The Eng. tr. of this work is known as the *General View of Positivism*. —Ed.

[2] *Traité élémentaire de géométrie analytique à deux et à trois dimensions*. —Ed.

[3] See above, p. 216 (note).

is very instructive, and throws light on its real meaning. Comte has, in fact, been talking of the Religion of Humanity all the while without uttering the phrase.[1] He has been speaking of a Philosophy in which the Intellect voluntarily and freely places itself at the service of the Heart by endeavouring to establish firm scientific convictions as to right and wrong—making this the final science towards which all the rest converge. He has been speaking of the social purpose of this Philosophy, showing how the glorious aspirations of the French Revolution were abortive owing to the want of any coherent principles—how Positivism opens out an endless sphere of social applications by giving a firm basis for every virtue, personal, domestic, civic. He shows how Positivism tends to form a society, a guild, a church, outside the ordinary political fabric—not trying to upset this, but recognizing it, and modifying it for good, regulating it, moralizing it.

He has been showing how in such a society the People will find their highest aspirations realized. The education which Positivism aims at giving is itself the solution of the great problem of our time—the incorporation of the great mass of the people into the fabric of civilization. The public opinion created by such an education is the strongest force available for such a rational distribution of wealth as will make the material conditions of life tolerable, and thus make it possible for life to be beautiful. And in such a society women, too, will find their highest aspirations realized, because the culture of the heart holds the highest place, the formation and purification of character being recognized as far more important than the increase of knowledge or the multiplication of industrial inventions. In such a society, how noble is the field laid open for poetry, for Art in all its branches! Art has henceforward a social function of incomparable value, that of helping forward the highest form of progress by embodying great conceptions in such a distinct and living form that they shall become palpable and tangible. And when he has said all this, he adds that it is summed up in the word *Humanity*.[2]

[1] Some slight verbal changes necessary to the sense have been made in the first few lines of this paragraph. This being a posthumous paper, Dr. Bridges had no opportunity of revising it himself.—ED.

[2] See *General View*, p. 242. It is an interesting fact that in the first five chapters of the *Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme* (1848) Comte uses the word *humanité* in the sense of society or the social organism; but in the last chapter, entitled "Culte systématique de l'Humanité," the word is invariably written *Humanité*, the *Grand-Être* as the true religious centre. This point is obscured in the Eng. tr. of this work by the fact that throughout the *General View* Dr. Bridges wrote the word as *Humanity*.—ED.

Now this seems to lead us to a rather different way of regarding Humanity from that in which it is usually represented. Humanity is described often as a being standing outside us, made up of all the lives of the Past, governing our own individual life by a rule from which it is impossible for us to escape—by the ties of family, language, law, custom, manners, industry, poetry, art, and so on. But in what sense can Humanity be said to stand for our ideal picture of life as it should be, as it is the effort of our lives to make it? Can Humanity represent, not merely our veneration of the Past, but also our inspiration and striving for the Future? Can it call forth not merely respect, admiration, reverence, but also ardent longing for progress? Assuredly it can, and the conception of Humanity would be wholly mutilated if we left this aspect of the matter out of account.

Let us take the definition of Humanity given by Comte. "Humanity is the sum of the beings, past, future, and present, who freely work together in rendering the order of the world more perfect."[1] He condenses this shortly afterwards, defining Humanity as the sum of convergent beings. But now we want the fuller definition. Note that, while the Past comes first, next to the Past comes the Future. Beings not yet born are considered as existent, no less than those who have done their work and who seem to have passed away. This seems at first sight paradoxical and fanciful; but in truth it is extremely real and obvious, being indeed one of those truths so obvious that they escape our notice till some one comes to lift back the veil of familiarity—*i.e.*, to reveal them.

What are the elements that go to make up Humanity? We cannot reduce these to individual men and women, for an isolated life has no meaning. We can, however, see that Humanity is made up of different communities—England, France, China, and so on—and that each of these is in turn made up of numberless families. Let us take the Nation first, and then the Family. Consider ancient Rome or modern England as the object of patriotic feeling. "England expects every man to do his duty." How very real and at the same time how very complex is that word *England!* All her past and all her future are focussed in it. The past renown is called to witness: the future hopes are felt to be at stake. Both these are necessary; for of itself the worship of the Past is barren and useless, and the hope of the Future is unmeaning except as a continuation of what has gone before. In the effect of such an

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, p. 27.—ED.

appeal we see the power of Past and Future together to regulate and govern the Present. And the Family shows the same thing on a smaller scale, but more constant, more vivid—in a word, more *familiar*. A family is a collective life, of which the members now living by no means form the whole, or even the most important part. Those who live in provincial neighbourhoods where life is more settled know the meaning of the words "family pride," not at all connected with aristocratic birth—sometimes a potent influence for good, sometimes distorted, as with the Dodsons in *The Mill on the Floss*. It is very necessary to dwell on these illustrations drawn from Country and Family; for a clear conception of Humanity can hardly be obtained without looking at other and simpler collective forms where subjective, invisible life acts on objective, visible life.

But yet these illustrations are inadequate. The man without a family, the orphan outcast, is still human. The exile who is deprived of his country has still his manhood left. But if we try to conceive Man without Humanity, we strip off from him, feature by feature, every mark that separates him from the higher vertebrate animals. Imagine Bible and Koran suppressed, Homer and Greek Art non-existent. Do without Greek Philosophy and Greek Science, do without Philosophy and Science at all, and therefore without Modern Industry. Wipe St. Paul and the Christian Church off the face of history. What have you left? A few nomad tribes who can make fires, and weave and keep flocks and herds and kill wild beasts, and who above all can communicate with one another in language. But even this must go. This primitive civilization needed centuries, nay thousands of years, to grow—it belongs to Humanity.

This may enable us to realize that half of the life of Humanity which lies behind us. But, as in the case of Country and Family, we have to combine with this infinitely great past an infinitely greater future. We need something to live for, to work for. From this point of view Humanity is the meeting point of all our highest aspirations. The Past represents Order, the government of the dead; the Future represents Progress, duty, the purification of life. Thus Humanity really represents everything that is venerable and precious. It is a firm foundation; it is an anchor of hope, a centre of religion. It unites love and duty.

There still remains one question. What image can most fitly condense all these thoughts, and make them visible to us at a glance? What should be the Emblem of Humanity? It must fulfil certain conditions. It must represent Love, unselfish sym-

pathy; Order, government and guidance; Progress, growth, purification, ennoblement of character. It must be universally intelligible. Thus allegorical figures representing the growth of Science, Philosophy, and Art would be quite inappropriate and inadequate. So, too, the Crucifix, though a symbol of devotion, raises a painful image of torture and stirs up wrath against injustice. It is a symbol of disunion among men. In Hungary it has been a torch for the destruction of Jewish villages. The Catholic Church put forth in the Middle Ages another image which in some parts of the Catholic world, in Southern Europe, and perhaps still more in Southern America, has superseded the crucified Christ. I speak of the Madonna and Child. The conception sprang up spontaneously in the eleventh century, took root and grew all through the time of the Crusades, and for the mass of Catholics has been the embodiment of their faith ever since. To Comte, no more complete and sufficient type of Humanity could be conceived than this of the Mother and Child.[1] It represents Love in its purest and most unselfish form. It represents Order, guidance, providence, direction. It represents Progress of the highest and most essential kind, the development and formation of character. So beautiful is the conception that Raphael painted it fifty times. Lastly, it is universally intelligible among all nations and in every stage of civilization.

Such, then, is the first step forward taken in the *Positive Polity:* the condensation of the whole scheme of Positivism, doctrine, aspirations, work, in the religious conception of Humanity.

2. The Subjective Method

The question of human knowledge, apparently so abstruse, is really less difficult than it seems. Knowledge has two elements, the knower and the thing known, subject and object. Kant first brought this into prominence.[2] Comte generalized it as coming under the definition of all life; the continuous adjustment of Organism and Environment.[3]

The first conception of the World is mainly subjective—drawn from Man's inner consciousness. Men construct the world of the gods in the likeness of the world of their own passions. But from Greek times to our own there has been a gradual growth of positive science. The objective method, beginning in Cosmology,

[1] See *General View*, pp. 256, 286; *Positivist Catechism*, p. 99.—Ed.
[2] See the paper on "The Centenary of Kant" in Part V.—Ed.
[3] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. i, p. 575, and vol. iii, pp. 15–16.—Ed.

has finally been applied not only to the element that is known, but to the element that knows. Life, Society, and Ethic have become matters of positive science. The impulse given by Bacon has been continued by Hume, Turgot, Condorcet, Gall. Objective science has reached Humanity, and these studies have led to a revival of the subjective method in a new form. Under this aspect all subjects of inquiry are to be viewed in their relation to Man; for Man is the only centre possible. The stars are infinite. This concentration implies no narrow utilitarianism, no thought of immediate application to practical purpose or of material well-being. It means that the question will be asked of any investigation, What light does it tend to throw on Man and his work on earth? The subjective method asks questions, guided by a sense of human needs; the objective method answers them.

Logic in its true conception must include "all instruments calculated to reveal to us the truths which human necessities require,"[1] the combination of means for discovering the truths which we need. This definition of Logic was afterwards enlarged till it became: "The working together of feelings, images, and signs, to inspire us with thoughts corresponding to our moral, intellectual, and physical needs."[2] Thus poetry enters into it; moral aspirations enter into it. When the heart is raised to its highest and all the powers of imagination are strongly stirred, then the energies of pure thought are turned to the greatest account. Questions are raised, suggestions are prompted which could never have arisen otherwise. But when the questions are raised they must be solved by rigid applications of the objective method. There is no possibility of evolving solutions out of moral consciousness.

The number of questions that may be asked of Nature is infinite. Our powers are finite, and so also are our needs. Of the millions of problems that present themselves, ninety-nine per cent will profit us little. The Subjective Method consists in the wise choice among this infinite labyrinth. Moral elevation, poetic imagination, are needed to prompt this choice.

The most important facts have been left unstudied because men had lost the sense of them. People could not speculate about music, if they had no ear for it; or on painting, if they were colour-blind. So with human sympathies. How can the man who has no fine sense of honour or of justice, who has no experience of unselfish

[1] *Pos. Pol.*, vol. i, p. 364.
[2] *Synthèse Subjective*, p. 27; p. 23 of the Eng. tr.

devotion, turn his thoughts to such things as these? They have no existence for him. The highest and most difficult field of positive science needs, therefore, the culture of the Imagination and the culture of the Heart.

3. The Theory of Human Nature

Art, if worthy of the name, calls out love quite apart from faith. It is sometimes of secondary concern what the subject is. A sonata of Beethoven has none; yet it raises hidden feelings of admiration and awe and tenderness, and calls noble memories to life. The humblest picture, if true and good, gives us something to admire outside ourselves—be it a cottage by a stream, or an ancient building, or ships by the shore, or a few children playing on a village green. They are enough to call out love and sympathy for something outside our own selfish interests. So with poetry; be it only a beautiful arrangement of words, it is something. A word is an element of beauty in itself, and skilful arrangements of words, like arrangements of colours and sounds, call out hidden sympathies and associations far beyond their direct meaning. And if this be so with the simpler and humbler forms of Art, how much more deep and potent is the force when all those living, kindly sympathies, under the influence of the greatest poets, become as streams converging into a mighty river of reverence for the highest deeds of Humanity and enthusiasm for her highest hopes!

Love, then, is the Principle,[1] the source, and may be evoked independently of faith. Order is not an end in itself; it is only the basis. There is a positive danger in knowledge for its own sake. Much cant is talked as to the moralizing influence of training the intellect. The tendency of much modern teaching is unsocial. Stimulus to the intellect is useful only as a means to an end. The problem is to combine the most *generous* sympathy with the widest, the most *general* thoughts. From Sympathy and Synthesis we shall get Synergy; in other words, we shall feel together, think together, work together.

These thoughts are necessary for our present subject—the Theory of the Brain, or of Human Nature, which concerns the highest Order and the highest Progress. We have to study Human Nature in order that we may make it better. Simple as this seems, it has been by no means always recognized. Theological morality could

[1] For a full exposition of this statement see Dr. Bridges' address on "Love the Principle" in *Essays and Addresses* (pp. 96–113).—ED.

dispense with knowledge. The soul was saved by divine grace. For what was knowledge wanted? Believe and be saved. Of course the Christian Church did not act thus in practice. Otherwise, it would have been of no account. Its work—what of it was good and durable—was founded on real and solid knowledge. Remember that Positivism has been always in the world in the sphere of action. Whatever ideas men have had about the world, their practical action has always been in very many things positive. Their boats were made to keep afloat, their axes to cut. And so it has been with human nature. They had all manner of fanciful reasons and explanations for all institutions connected with the family and society. But they followed natural, scientific laws of social organization, though unconsciously. They established families, governments, and so on, in accordance with practical needs, as though they had been positivists. Prophets, reformers of all kinds and all ages, have had knowledge more or less real of the matters they had to deal with. It was so, for example, with Confucius, Isaiah, Mohammed. So, too, the poets' knowledge, though empirical, practical, instinctive, was none the less real.

The true founders of the Catholic Church, St. Paul and his successors, had a profound insight into human nature. They aimed at the discipline of the animal passions, the stimulus of veneration and love. St. Paul saw, instinctively and through the medium of a strange and to us unintelligible doctrine, that man was a compound of rebellious instincts with very feeble unselfish sympathies, and very insufficient of themselves to hold the lower instincts down. Thus, while the faith in the crucified God called forth emotions of love, reverence, and pity, there was still the difficulty of "keeping down the body and bringing it into subjection." It was possible, however, to appeal to one set of selfish instincts in subduing another. Amidst the extravagance of the doctrine, and over and above the appeal made to the fear of Hell and hope of immortal happiness in another world, there were present always these two permanent and real positive influences, the stirring up of the higher impulses and the repression of the lower. It was because the Church was so superior to its doctrine that it maintained its hold on society in the West for so many centuries. Fasting, for instance, was a recognition of the influence of body on soul, of digestive organs on brain—one of the most important problems in higher medicine. But asceticism was foolishly made an end in itself. Prolonged suicide is no more noble or laudable than instantaneous suicide. And there entered into it the secret gratification of vanity and love of power, as in the

case of St. Simeon Stylites. There were practical errors in other points. There was the Christian neglect of the body, as seen in Thomas à Becket, filth being counted as a sign of holiness. Positive science and modern social life have combined to establish a higher standard. Personal cleanliness is a part of republicanism, of the dignity of manhood. Asceticism takes its place as a part of hygiene—as an occasional aid to health. Digestion involves a great expenditure of nervous power. If more is spent on it than is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the body in full vigour, then the organs of digestion are themselves injured and the brain is weakened. I speak of habitual excess, not of occasional conviviality, which in due measure has its good side.

I have said enough to indicate some of the complications and difficulties of the problem. But there are others. At present the study of human nature is split up between three classes of persons: physicians, who study the body; philosophers, who study the mind; and priests, who study the heart. It is essential that these three should become one; and for this Biology had to be constituted as a distinct science and carried to the threshold of Sociology. This was the great work of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth, when the life of nutrition, as seen in the plant, was distinguished from the life of animality, which is superadded and subordinated to the life of nutrition.[1] Now, the first purpose of the animal life, of nervous and muscular tissue, is to destroy in order to feed. Hence we have development by survival of the fittest. This is incontestably true; the mistake is in thinking that it is the whole truth. By concentrating our attention on the origin of life or its primitive forms, we forget its advanced stages. The fact that meets us in the advanced stages of life is that animals have, in addition to eating and destroying instincts, instincts which prompt them to cling together and sacrifice their lives for each other.[2] Still more evident is this in human civilization. Man tends to exist not for his own sake, but for the sake of the community. And for the study of the tendency the constitution of Sociology is necessary.

In 1825 Gall published his treatise on the *Functions of the Brain*. In this he put forward three principles of great importance in the theory of human nature. The first is that all psychical phenomena have their seat in the brain, a point on which Bichat had fallen into error. The second is that the brain is not one organ, but a collection

[1] See pp. 5–6.—ED.

[2] *Cf.* pp. 79–80.—ED.

of organs. This is still contested. The third is that the benevolent instincts are innate. This last is especially important. Hitherto, of the only two theories accepted, one, the theological, had held the innate corruption of human nature, the other its innate selfishness. St. Paul's doctrine of *Nature* and *Grace*, more fully developed by St. Augustine and others, involved the *total corruption* of human nature. The highest impulses came from a divine source wholly independent of us, and were given forth only at the will of the Creator. This doctrine is in itself very strange and seemingly immoral; but it was turned to good account by the teachers of the Church. Through them, as the representatives of the Divinity, Grace could be found. When, however, the controlling power of the Church had gone, the doctrine was distorted, as we see in the antics of some extreme revivalists. The philosophers who succeeded the theologians were not much better. According to Hobbes, Mandeville, and Condillac, human actions were the result of mutual fear, or were determined by the balance of pleasure and pain. Hobbes considered that a healthy state of society in which the magistrate was armed with the most undisputed authority. Strong government was the only source of virtue.

As usual, the highest truth was found in the poets who painted what they saw, just as in Greek sculptors, who knew nothing of anatomy, but watched the movements of the limbs. Among philosophers the truth began to appear about the middle of the eighteenth century in Bishop Butler[1] and Vauvenargues,[2] and more especially in Hume's *Essays* on human nature[3] and Leroy's *Letters on Animals*. But Gall first put it into systematic form. He gave coherence and precision to it by attributing to the unselfish sympathies a distinct place in the structure of the brain. It is noticeable how rich were his observations on this point, showing the innate propensity to do good or to revere.[4] But his general scheme of localization and classification was extremely faulty and incoherent, especially in all that related to the intellectual functions. Comte's method was avowedly subjective, so far as the localization of organs went. He took functions as seen in animals and developed in the growth of human society. He assumed the connection of function with organ, and that like organs would be near together. On this he built up his cerebral hypothesis, very much of which he frankly avowed was not anatomically proved.

[1] See p. 64 of Dr. Ingram's *Human Nature and Morals*.—ED.
[2] See his *Maximes*, placed in the last section of the Positivist Library.—ED.
[3] *Cf.* above, p. 137.—ED.
[4] *Cf.* pp. 73, 80.—ED.

It may be asked, Why not wait? But we cannot wait till anatomists have investigated and defined each one of fifty million cells. That may or may not come in the course of the next thousand years. We want, for our practical necessities, the *best working hypothesis* as to the organization of the human body and its relation with moral and intellectual functions.

Comte took a calm survey of human nature as a whole. Then he examined the parts. He was led to a threefold division—first, the Heart, impulses, desires; second, the Intellect, the reasoning and observing powers; third, the Character, the practical qualities. The first he subdivided into seven self-seeking impulses and three altruistic ones. The Intellect he divided into Conception and Expression, and the former he divided again into Observation and Meditation, each of which was further subdivided, Observation into concrete, relative to Beings, and abstract, relative to Events, while Meditation could be either Inductive, leading to Generalization, or Deductive, leading to Systematization. Finally, the Character was analysed into Courage, Prudence, and Firmness.[1] The problem is how to act so that the resultant actions shall be harmonious with those of our fellows. This can only be by the supremacy of the social sympathies over our selfish feelings; and for this the sole way is that the intellectual functions should be subordinate to the social sympathies. The Intellect must present an ideal which kindles the sympathies, and must then in turn show the ways in which that ideal may be realized. Progress will result from the union of Love with Order.

4. Ethics, the Crowning Science

In Comte's first arrangement of the Sciences they were six in number in the following order of succession: Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Sociology. The last-named, Sociology, dealt with the laws of the growth and structure of society, and therefore included implicitly the laws of the growth and structure of each element thereof. Intrinsically, he recognized this by proposing to conclude the educational course by a year's teaching of the art of life, the practical application of scientific knowledge to Morals.[2] But in the second volume of the *Positive Polity*[3] Ethics is separated from Sociology and appears as a distinct science, so that the scheme now stands thus: Cosmology (Mathe-

[1] *Cf.* pp. 71, 74.—Ed. [2] See *General View*, p. 130.—Ed.
[3] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. ii, pp. 50, 352.—Ed.

matics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry), or the study of the inorganic world; Biology, or the study of life, including man as the highest of the animals; Sociology, or the study of continuous social existence and the laws of filiation; Ethics, or the study of the individual as the creature of Humanity,[1] including in that study all the differences of age, sex, temperament, etc., which distinguish one man, woman, or child from another, and ending with the rules of practical conduct and of education.

Great progress was involved in this change. It means that the perfection of political organization is not the be-all and end-all. You may have good government and just statesmen, yet the people governed may be mean and poor. This is seen in the best days of the Roman Empire. The ultimate test and the ultimate aim is that the individual human unit in any given state of society shall be noble, brave, intelligent, energetic, self-denying. This is the first goal—all else is secondary and subservient to this.

But, on the other hand, there is no possibility of separating Morals from Sociology, as was done, or attempted, by Christians, whether those of the earliest days of Christianity or of the present time. Read the New Testament, or the *Imitation*, or the *Pilgrim's Progress*, or a volume of sermons by Cardinal Newman—you will find in the last, no less than in the others, beautiful and deep thoughts on the emotions of the heart, on love and reverence and tenderness and repentance for sin, on control of animal passions; but of counsel for wise and just action in practical problems almost nothing—and that little usually wrong. I take Newman as the purest and most elevated of the Christian moralists of his age. But during fifty years his practical advice to the citizen as to public action would have been almost always wrong. His morals were connected with a theological Sociology which would have supported theological opinions by force, kept Jews and Dissenters out of Parliament, and in all ways maintained State protection for his own beliefs.

Positive Morals are inseparable from Sociology, just as Sociology is inseparable from Biology and Biology from Cosmology. Free action springing from noble motives and cultivated intelligence in a justly ordered Society—such is the Positivist ideal; and to this all efforts, speculative and practical, are subservient. Morals or Ethics thus viewed is the final science, including all other sciences, as it includes also every one of the arts of life.

[1] See Dr. Bridges' essay on "Man the Creature of Humanity," in *Essays and Addresses* (pp. 65–95).—ED.

5. Sociocracy, based on Separation of Church and State

Comte, having analysed the structure of Society into its various elements—material wealth, family, language, government, etc.—proceeds to consider in the sixth chapter of the second volume of the *Positive Polity*, the volume devoted to Social Statics, how these elements are combined and how they work together in practice.[1] The three chief forms of association are the Family, the State or City, and the Church. A man is a son, a husband, a father of a family; he is a citizen, he is a member of a church. The question then arises: Which of these is to take precedence, which is most important? Many would answer at once that Humanity must be supreme, that the Church, as the widest form of association, must be predominant, reducing the others to insignificance. This was not Comte's view. The Church, taking the word in its broadest significance, exists for the propagation of ideas and ideals. But man is born by the necessities of his existence to do solid, practical work—and the widest association that can directly co-operate in practical work is the State. Therefore, for practical purposes, the State, the City must be predominant, and the man must be before all things a citizen. It is impossible to give greater emphasis to the *positive* character of Comte's views of life and society. They are before all things real and founded on fact: in this case, the fact that man has to work for his living.

The State, however, in this connection, must not be conceived of as a vast Empire, where, as in India, some thousands of officials dominate—or even as a great nation like Germany, France, or England. Comte was thinking of a political community like Holland or Denmark, where citizens can know something of one another, and work together practically, and develop real civic feeling in their daily intercourse in the workshop, and it may be in the club. We are far from this here, and perhaps London or Birmingham offers a nearer approach to it than the United Kingdom. Gradually, the great centres of life in England and Scotland—Liverpool and Manchester, Newcastle and Leeds, Edinburgh and Glasgow—will gather this kind of civic feeling round them.

The State, then, is the dominant form of association, but it is not the only one. The others are indispensable. Over the State, modifying it, moralizing it, but in no way subverting it, comes the Church. Underneath the State, penetrating each element of it with

[1] The chapter is entitled "Positive Theory of Social Existence, systematized by the Priesthood."—ED.

strong emotions and affections, moulding the character of each citizen, comes the Family. The Church and the Family continue to mould and modify the State; but they will never displace it. The Family gives affections; the Church supplies ideals; but the State supplies each man with the conditions that render his daily work possible, and that is a paramount necessity of life. In the ancient world Rome gave us an imperishable model of patriotism, of common civic action for the good of the Roman State. But the old Roman ideal needs transformation from military to industrial civilization, from the conquest of men to the conquest of Nature, the moulding of raw substance into solid products of use and beauty. In the future, work must be made noble, and between the States of the future noble emulation must take the place of ignoble and wasteful and destructive competition—emulation in making the Earth beautiful, in subduing Nature most effectively, in building houses and temples that shall endure, in rearing strong and vigorous breeds of cattle, in culture of soil, in painting, music, and sculpture. Here lies the field for the patriotism of the future. In the brotherhood of nations one will surpass another in glory.

On this central association the smaller and the larger will constantly rain their beneficent influences, the Family filling the citizen with tender and generous impulses, the Church supplying him with noble ideals, bringing nations into wholesome, self-respecting, friendly contact, dissipating antagonisms and jealousies, ever developing and spreading new thoughts and new ideals of action.

Now, the very essence of a Church is that it should be free. *Libera Chiesa in libero Stato.*[1] A Church that domineers or a Church that is enslaved, neither of these deserves the name. When the Church of Humanity is spread throughout the world, as it may be far sooner than we think, all kinds of religious organizations will go on, very likely, for a long time to come side by side with it, some of them drawing nearer and nearer to it, some perhaps holding out to the last. Positivism will insist that these organizations should have every inch of freedom which we claim for ourselves. So far as they are genuine expressions of human ideals, they will be really working with us under other forms; so far as they are merely obstructive, they are foredoomed to failure.

This, then, is the fifth new feature of the *Positive Polity*—the relation of the three chief forms of human association in the

[1] "A free Church in a free State." The favourite political maxim of the Italian statesman, Cavour.—ED.

Sociocracy of the future, wherein the Family represents Love, and the Church represents Order, scientific thought and poetic ideals, both acting on the State to urge it along the path of true Progress.

6. Affinity of Fetishism and Positivism

The words, *Love*, *Order*, *Progress*, which we have seen to be so intimately connected with the first five steps, the five new thoughts already spoken of, are still more closely associated with the last two. In the sixth step we see how the Heart intervenes in our conception of the Order of the World through every stage of human Progress; and in the seventh we are taught that a right state of the Heart is even more helpful to Progress than a right state of the Understanding.

The third volume of the *Positive Polity*, which deals with the historic evolution, is full of remarkable thoughts, as, for instance, that all history, from that of Greece to the French Revolution, is a transition from Theocracy to the Positive stage, or, to take another instance, the description of Theocracy itself. But perhaps the most essential thought of all, containing the germ of all the others, is the affinity between Fetishism and Positivism.[1] All the other phases pass away: this endures and will endure: it is the only permanent element of the fictive stage, considered as a whole. The word *Fétichisme* was first used by the President de Brosses in the eighteenth century,[2] but a recognition of the thing is to be found in Hume's Essay on Religion,[3] and even earlier.[4] In its essence it is man's tendency to attribute his own emotions and volitions to the world around him. It is distinct from Theism, for, though the Deities under Theism may be fashioned in the likeness of men, they are not identified with any particular object: they may control a whole class of objects. Astrology, the worship of the heavenly bodies, or of the vault of heaven itself, is at once the highest phase of Fetishism and the transition to Theism. The worship of the heavenly bodies needed a priesthood because of their inaccessibility, their regularity, their universality; and the rise of a priesthood prepared the way for the still more inaccessible Gods. In China

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iii, pp. 99, 128–29.—Ed.

[2] C. de Brosses used the word to denote this stage of religious thought, in his *Du culte des dieux fétiches* (1760).—Ed.

[3] *The Natural History of Religion* (1757). See sect. ii on the "Origin of Polytheism."—Ed.

[4] Vico appears to have been the earliest known writer to give a systematic exposition of the subject in his *Scienza Nuova* (1730).—Ed.

this transition did not take place. The Heaven, the Earth, the Wind, etc., are still, with Ancestor-Worship, the basis of the national religion. To some, indeed, the worship of ancestors has seemed to include the whole religion of primitive man, but it is really a particular case of this tendency. To the dead are attributed the passions of the living. The broad result is that unknown phenomena are interpreted by attributing to them human emotion. In practical matters real knowledge, however limited, an incipient Positivism, always dominated; but it was modified by Fetishistic awe, of which we can still see the traces in such words as *religio*, *sacer*, *taboo*.

To Fetishism we trace the beginnings of spiritual government, due to the combination of the instinct of reverence with the instinct of self-preservation. Archdeacon Gray, in his book on China,[1] gives an account of Chinese worship which shows how Fetishism can supply much that Monotheists claim as belonging solely to their religion. He says there are two annual festivals in the third and the ninth months.

> Worship is imperative on all classes of society. The prayers to their ancestors are such as those which Christian men present to the God of all good, when they ask that they may receive grace to preserve them safe in the midst of life's temptations, and to prepare them for eternal glory. It is sad to think that the Chinese should be so blinded by the god of this world as to suppose they can obtain from the creature what emanates from the Creator alone. It is usual for them, at any time of perplexity and trouble, to repair to the tombs and consult the spirits of their ancestors. . . . I have several times seen widows weeping by the graves of their husbands; relating their troubles to the dead, and seeking consolation from them.[2]

To Fetishism we trace also the love of the soil, the *dolce nido* of Petrarch, the first germs of patriotism; the training of animals; the observation of plants.

Fetishism depends on two principles: (*a*) What touches us nearly moves us to love or fear; (*b*) In the absence of true knowledge these emotions mould our beliefs. This explains the persistence of Fetishism throughout Polytheism, as seen in the worship of the Nile in Egypt, of the Ganges in India, of Fire in many religions. Even in Jewish life, in the Hebrew scriptures, we see the same

[1] J. H. Gray, *China: A History of the Laws, Manners, and Customs of the People*, two vols.; 1878.—ED.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 322.

survivals and read of Rachel's gods, High places, etc. In Roman life, too, we find Fetishism still represented by the god Terminus, the Lares and Penates, the fire on the hearth, and the power of words. It survives to modify abstract Monotheism: under Mohammedanism, the Caaba at Mecca is still held sacred; and in the Middle Age we have the honour paid to the Shrines of Saints. And in modern life we see the same feeling surviving in even greater strength, as is shown by the worship of the tomb in sceptical and revolutionary Paris, and by the worship of Nature—of earth and sky—by the painters and poets, by Turner, Wordsworth, and Shelley. Take, for instance, Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*:—

> Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
> Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

Or Wordsworth's *Lines at Tintern Abbey*, or the skating scene at Windermere in the *Prelude*.[1]

Comte's final conception of the relation between Positivism and Fetishism is put forward in his *Synthèse Subjective*.[2] We are ignorant of the Universe in itself. We only know it as it affects us. Space is but a form of thought; objectively we know nothing of it. In regard to these, Logic of Signs we have none, Logic of Images we have none; the Logic of Feeling alone is left. It is open to us to give way to it, provided we are without any illusion as to the reality or unreality of its conclusions. Under this condition, we may conceive Space as the seat of Destiny, and the Universe as instinct with Love.[3]

7. Cult before Doctrine: Service weightier than Creed

The *Synthèse Subjective*, Comte's last work, opens with this passage:—

> To subordinate Progress to Order, Analysis to Synthesis, Egoism to Altruism; such are the three statements, practical, theoretical, and moral, of the problem which man has to solve, and by solving to attain a complete and stable unity. Severally peculiar to the three parts of our nature, these three distinct ways of stating the same question are not merely closely connected, but equivalent, by virtue of the interdependence of activity, intellect, and feeling. They necessarily coincide, and yet the last of the three surpasses the two others, as being alone in relation with the immediate source of the

[1] *Cf.* above, pp. 275–77.—ED.
[2] See pp. 8–26 of the Introduction; or pp. 6–22 of the Eng. tr.—ED.
[3] See on the whole subject of this sixth step the paper on "Fetishism and Positivism" in the next chapter.—ED.

> common solution. For Order presupposes Love, and Synthesis can only be a consequence of Sympathy; intellectual unity and practical unity are then impossible without moral unity; thus Religion is as superior to Philosophy as it is to Politics. The problem for man is in the last resort reducible to the construction of unity of feeling, by the development of altruism and the compression of egotism; and therefore improvement is subordinate to conservation, and the spirit of detail to the genius of synthesis.[1]

Thus we see that, however important is the question of precedence, we must bear in mind that both Cult and Doctrine still remain essential, even though the first may be of greater weight than the second.

What is Cult? "Worship" is a most imperfect and inadequate rendering of the French word *culte*. Worship suggests almost irresistibly the attitude of petition to a powerful being outside us who is able to grant or refuse our requests. Hence there has arisen a tendency among some Positivists to address Humanity somewhat in the way in which Christians or Mohammedans address God. I think a more careful reading of Comte would have led to a different path. The subject we are now treating is dealt with in the second chapter of the fourth volume of the *Positive Polity*.[2]

Cult or culture is simply tilth, in its primitive meaning of the artificial modification of the soil so that it may bear better fruit, as in such words as agriculture, horticulture, pisciculture, the first beginnings of Man's modification of the world, the origin of Progress. Carry this meaning a step further to the modifications of our own nature, physical, intellectual, emotional. Of these the last is the most important; the culture of the Heart is central. Cult, then, is culture of the highest thing we have: the Heart within us.

But can we have Cult without dogma or discipline? Can culture of the Heart go on alone? On one hypothesis it could: that the function of nutrition was as easy as respiration. Then there would be no work in the world but Art, and we should live in an eternal Golden Age. This could only be if Man were set free from material necessities. But we have to strive against a hard destiny. The struggle has inevitably strengthened the selfish passions. Man is

[1] *Introduction to the Subjective Synthesis* (1891), p. 1.—ED.
[2] The chapter is entitled "General View of the Affective Life, or definitive systematization of the Positive system of Worship."—ED.

not born corrupt; but he is born with an immense preponderance of self-love over love of others. And the material situation is still formidable, the intellectual and political still unsettled. We have a distracted Europe and war of creeds. We have modern London and its problems. We have our own idleness, sloth, and selfishness. Under these circumstances, to concentrate our whole attention on the culture of the higher sympathies, to dissociate this from deep study, and from wise political and social activity, would be to build a Paradise of Fools. Mysticism, considered as the culture of the heart apart from intellect and character, deserves severe blame; as much so as the culture of the reason apart from the sympathies.

Besides, if we do not have a care, this culture of the heart alone, this mysticism, defeats its own ends. It leads to barrenness and hardness. Bishop Butler puts it thus:—

> And in like manner, as habits belonging to the body are produced by external acts, so habits of the mind are produced by the exertion of inward practical principles: *i.e.*, by carrying them into act, or acting upon them—the principles of obedience, of veracity, justice, and charity. Nor can those habits be formed by any external cause of action otherwise than as it proceeds from these principles; because it is only these inward principles exerted which are strictly acts of obedience, of veracity, of justice, and of charity.....But going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it; this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible—*i.e*, form a habit of insensibility to all moral considerations. For, from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker.[1]

Butler's law may be stated thus:—*Practical habits* are formed and strengthened by repeated acts; *passive impressions* grow weaker by being repeated. He adds:—

> Resolutions also to do well are properly acts. And endeavouring to enforce upon our own minds a practical sense of virtue, or to beget in others that practical sense of it which a man really has himself, is a virtuous act. All these, therefore, may and will contribute towards forming good habits.[2]

Passive impressions, then, are positively dangerous, except as they lead to active exertion. The kindling of the highest emotions, accompanied by personal effort, leads to good; unaccompanied by effort, it hardens.

[1] *The Analogy of Religion*, pt. i, ch. v. [2] *Ibid.*

This brings us to two conclusions. First, the practice of good works must come before any kind of Cult: to do good is the most powerful of all agencies for feeling good. Secondly, private cult should come before public both in time and in efficiency. It is a necessary condition of the genuineness of public cult. It implies greater effort. It is not, as in some other religions, the mere repetition of prayers. It is a distinct effort to recall the dearest objects of personal affection, to clear away all crust of irritation, to revive pure and sacred memories, to strengthen every feeling of veneration for what is above, of pity and protection for what is below, of warm friendship for what is equal; and with the strength that issues from those sacred impulses to form for oneself an ideal of life, and daily to renew that ideal. This calling up of noble images, this kindling of unselfish sympathies, this purging the soul of ignoble suspicions or mean desires, this framing of an ideal of life, this renewal of the resolution to subdue self-love and to serve Humanity—this, in the Positive meaning of the word, is Prayer. It needs strong effort of the will; it is no series of "passive impressions" growing weaker with each repetition. It is a "practical habit," growing stronger with exercise.[1]

Now, of the three forms of Cult—private, domestic, public—Comte, as we know, put in practice the first two; private confessions and prayers, and the Sacraments, the intervention of Society in the events of family life.[2] The third—public cult—he did not inaugurate. When pressed to institute liturgical forms, he remarked that, till the public mind was better prepared, such a thing would be, like the formulæ of freemasonry, wanting in reality. His successor, M. Laffitte, instituted two public festivals—that of Humanity,[3] indicated by Comte as the first of those for which the time was ripe; and the commemoration of Comte's death.[4]

The provisional historical Calendar is avowedly imperfect and temporary—avowedly imperfect because of thirteen months it gives only one to Theocracy, while giving twelve to the transition.[5] It is a still more serious imperfection that hardly any mention is made of Fetishism, the only permanent part of the fictive era. The

[1] For Comte's account of this subject see *General View*, p. 260; *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, pp. 101–7; *Positivist Catechism*, pp. 74–75, 87–89. See also Dr. Bridges' address on "Prayer and Work" in *Essays and Addresses*.—ED.

[2] See pp. 293–94.—ED.

[3] On New Year's Day.—ED.

[4] September 5, 1857.—ED.

[5] By "transition" Dr. Bridges means the centuries of recorded history through which the Western world has passed in its transition from the initial Theocracy to the final Sociocracy.—ED.

Calendar had for its primary purpose to penetrate men's minds with the sense of continuity, to show that we are not of yesterday, and to stimulate reverence for the great men who have led us on.[1] But it does not pretend to cover the whole of life. It is thus important to make ourselves familiar with the abstract and permanent Calendar. This, like the other, consists of thirteen months, divided here into three groups. The first six months represent the bonds that knit society together—Humanity, Country, City, and the Family in all its relations. The next three months commemorate the preparatory stages of Humanity—Fetishism, Polytheism, Monotheism. The last four are devoted to the normal functions of Humanity—Womanhood, the Priesthood, the Direction of Industry, Labour. The abstract, like the provisional Calendar, ends with the Day of All the Dead, to which is added in leap-years the Day of Noble Women.[2] Now, it is hard to see what aspect of Humanity is here left out. We have a series of eighty-one festivals, in some weeks—one, in others—two, giving a complete picture of the whole organization of life at which Positivism aims.[3] We have the central conception—Humanity. We have the family tie very copiously insisted on. We have the long struggle of Humanity through infancy and youth to maturity; the strife of creeds, the rivalry of nations; the long, painful transition from theology to Positivism, from the civilization founded on war to the civilization founded on work. In this struggle every brave toiler has his place, on whatever side he fought; the castes are glorified, and the Greeks who broke through caste; Scipio who conquered, Hannibal who succumbed; Mohammed and Saladin on one side, Godfrey and Saint Bernard on the other. Finally, we have the permanent action of each representative of Humanity—Womanhood, the moral providence; the Priesthood—including thinkers, artists, even the wise, experienced old men of a country village—the intellectual providence; the Directors of Industry, bankers, merchants, manufacturers, cultivators, superintending the production of the world; and the Proletariate, the vast working class, bringing their practical experience of the hard facts of life, keeping all the rest in the grooves of reality and common sense, and throwing out from their body men

[1] See p. 62 (note 7). For Comte's account of this historical Calendar see *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, pp. 346–50; also *Appeal to Conservatives*, pp. 174–76.—ED.

[2] For Comte's explanation of the abstract Calendar see the *Positivist Catechism*, pp. 100–12, and *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, pp. 116–38. Both of these Calendars will be found in the pocket edition of Tables mentioned on p. 167 (note 1).—ED.

[3] The reader will find a more detailed description of these festivals in the paper on "The Day of All the Dead" in the next chapter.—ED.

like the Arkwrights, the Cromptons, the Jacquards, the Stephensons, or again poets like Robert Burns, or naturalists like Edwardes, or enthusiasts like Saint Francis, to correct the narrowness or the pedantry of the recognized authorities by native wit and untaught wisdom and energy. I say that in this conception of the Positivist cult there is a vivid, palpable, synthetic mode of implanting the vital truths of Positivism into heart and head alike, of making them part of the very fibre of our being, which transcends infinitely all that the best and clearest systematic teaching could do. It is for this reason that Comte summed up the whole of the fourth volume of the *Positive Polity* in the conception that in Positivism the Cult stood before the Doctrine.[1]

And, indeed, this final seventh step sums up all the others. Humanity; the Subjective Method; the picture of the Functions of the Brain; the supremacy of Ethics; the Sociocratic State, moralized by the Family and guided by a free Church; the permanent alliance of Fetishism and Positivism—these are all contained in this final truth, the precedence of the Cult, conceived as Comte conceived it, over the systematic Doctrine. The Doctrine is necessary, let me again repeat. Without the systematic intellectual teaching mapped out for us by Comte, and continually growing with the growing years, we should lose firmness and clearness of conviction, we should give way here, we should wander into extravagances there—the Doctrine is a systematic appeal to the Intellect to recognize the ascendancy of the Heart and freely to devote itself to the Heart's service. But the Cult is an appeal to the whole nature of man at once—an appeal to bodily sense, to deep thought, to strong emotion, in order that the whole man and the whole community may act together for the service of Humanity.

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, p. 459. Consult also pp. 76–81 of the same volume.

Chapter V

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY—*continued*

V

SYMPATHY AND SYNTHESIS

If I had to choose among the chapters of Comte's *Positive Polity* that which was most original, or at least most distinctive of a teacher of a new way of life, I should point to the first chapter of the second volume.[1] No doubt scanty justice is done to any section of this work by separating it from the rest. Yet it seems to demarcate the writer more definitely than any other—not merely in philosophic method, but in temper of mind, in tone of feeling, in the standpoint from which he looked on life—from any teacher that the world has seen. I well remember its falling in my way at Oxford forty-five years ago.[2] I had not read any of Comte's writings before, and this no doubt may partly account for the depth of the impression made. But every subsequent reading has made it deeper.

What was there to explain the strange fascination of those pages? Assuredly it was not due to their literary qualities, for these at first reading were singularly unattractive. Ornament, wealth of illustration, rhetorical devices of any sort or kind, there were none. A patient and persistent reader became gradually conscious of condensed thought expressed in language almost wholly free from technical terms; but, on the other hand, it was abstract in the extreme, and the reader felt that the transition to the concrete was left to be effected by special efforts. But what was new, what was profoundly impressive, what marked the teaching from that of other philosophic or religious treatises, was the combination established, in ways consistent with modern thought, between Sympathy and Synthesis. Nothing of the kind had been attempted before; and, amid all that has been written on the subject since, it still seems to me to stand alone. Observe that I lay stress on the

[1] Entitled "The General Theory of Religion; or, the Positive Theory of Human Unity."—Ed.

[2] Written in 1898.—Ed.

words *consistent with modern thought*. Attempts to concentrate the emotions and thoughts of men on a supreme and central object have abounded in the world's history. Every form of religion is such an attempt; the most effective by far hitherto having been the Catholic Church of Western Europe in the thirteenth century, as portrayed in the *Summa Theologiae* of Aquinas and the *Vision* of Dante. But though Aquinas is still studied by many, and the *Paradiso* of Dante has probably more readers now than in any previous time, it is a truism to say that the modes of belief of these two thinkers are no more our own than are those of the Homeric poems. What we have in common with Dante is doubtless more important than our points of divergence; and the same may be said of Homer. But the divergence is vast. Try to imagine a modern poet glorifying an eternal hell. "The Divine Power made me, the Supreme Wisdom, and the Primal Love. Before me were no things created save those that are eternal, and I eternally endure. Leave all hope aside, ye that enter here."[1]

Or, if the words of a poet are to be treated as parable—though Dante's parables were always built up on a rigid substructure of literal fact—what can we say of Aquinas's systematic explanation of the coexistence of eternal evil with omnipotent wisdom? "Since God is extremely good, he could never suffer evil to exist in his works unless he were so all-powerful that he could bring good even out of evil. It belongs, therefore, to the infinite goodness of God that he should allow evil things to exist, so that out of them he may extract good things." And it need not be said that he was at one with Dante in believing that evil things were of eternal duration. I repeat that belief in an omnipotent permitter of *eternal* evil is absolutely alien to modern ways of thought and feeling. Nominally upheld, it is in fact rejected by the most religious of the worshippers of God. Can any woman be found who will say that she fully and sincerely accepts it?

For these and for other reasons the monotheistic synthesis of the Middle Ages collapsed. Destructive inroads had been made upon it two centuries before the times of Luther and Calvin. Orthodox Protestantism was followed by the deism of Socinus and Voltaire, and this again by the various phases of pantheism, materialism, and agnosticism so familiar, and, it may be added, so wearisome, to most rational thinkers, to say nothing of the vast mass of men and women occupied with the practical business of life. Of these a large number

[1] Dante, *Inferno*, canto iii, 1–9.—ED.

are deeply interested in religious questions. But most religious people make a broad and deep distinction between religion and theology. Not that they repudiate explicitly any article of theological faith; on the contrary, most would rally round it, if attacked, as soldiers round their flag; but in the absence of such a crisis they have grown practically indifferent to all articles of belief, whether of the Church of England or any other. Where do we find the most strenuous religious enthusiasm at the present moment? Evidently among the high Ritualists and in the Salvation Army. The indifference of both to systematic theology is notorious. Their religion is mystical, in the strictest and most respectful sense of that word. It affects their inward emotions: the belief inspired by it is often of the vaguest kind. It has sometimes, though not always, a very powerful influence on their conduct; but on their conduct as individuals rather than as citizens. Public action requires definite principles—in other words, a dogma, a theory of life; and these things they have not. They hold with St. Francis, Thomas à Kempis, Molinos, Madame de Guyon, Bunyan, George Fox; not with St. Dominic, Aquinas, Calvin, or Knox. In a word, their religion is Sympathy without Synthesis; they choose Love rather than Light. And if one of these must be rejected, it cannot be denied that they choose rightly. But that it should be needful to choose at all—there lies the tragedy. To the purity and devotion of their lives, to their efforts to lighten the load of suffering on victims of the struggle for existence, to their rescue of individuals from physical or moral peril, let those who cannot share their labours at least pay a due tribute of respect, and let them do likewise when and where they can. Yet none the more can we help seeing, by the light of each year's experience, how powerless all mystical religion is and must be in handling the stupendous problems which are now threatening the fabric of man's civilized existence. First among these is the labour problem, formidable throughout the nineteenth century: more formidable in recent years, now that it has become the principal stimulus to the rival rapacities of Western nations in their contact with the civilizations of the East.

Turning from religion to the other great spiritual force of our time—science—the outlook is not more satisfactory. A suspicion has been widely diffused of late that science, with all its astounding applications to industry and commerce, has done much to raise new social problems, but next to nothing for their solution. Comte's supreme contribution to special science, his foundation of sociology

in the years 1822–42,[1] is obtaining every day wider acceptance from European thinkers. But hitherto most of them have made a wrong use of it. Accepting the principle that sociology had a biological basis, but ignoring the equally important truth that sociology had inductions of its own with which biology could not interfere, they have twice in the nineteenth century—first in the case of the Malthusians, and again in that of the Darwinians[2]—distorted an undoubted biological fact into a principle of political action. Men born two generations ago remember how hard a struggle it was to break through the trammels of the old political economy, and how those who took part in it were met with the taunt of fighting against the laws of nature. The new statesmanship, based on one-sided deductions from truths of natural history indicated by Darwin, has still to await a similar reaction; and, till it comes, bitter results will follow. On the whole, it has to be owned by those who look, as does the present writer, to science as the foundation on which the future of civilization must rest, that modern science, splendid as its achievements have been and permanent as is their value, has done hitherto as much to promote social discord as to prevent it.

What explains so startling a paradox? It is that so few teachers have arisen who have attempted any tolerable Synthesis of scientific truth; few, indeed, who can be brought to recognize that it is worth attempting. Be it understood that by "Synthesis" is meant not a mere bringing of various truths into juxtaposition, as in the pages of an encyclopædia or in the annual report of the British Association. It is far more than this. It implies the recognition that, while no scientific conclusion is unimportant, the importance of some is far greater than that of others. It implies a co-ordination, a hierarchy of the sciences. This was the purpose of Comte's *System of Positive Philosophy*,[3] and it will be seen that two things were involved in it. First, his intention could not have been carried out but for his discovery that the facts of human society and human conduct were not less amenable to scientific method than the facts of number, of form, of motion, molar or molecular, or of living

[1] In 1822 Comte's famous essay appeared, entitled "A plan of the scientific labours necessary for the reorganization of society." It contained the first statement of the Law of the Three States and the exposition of Social Physics as a distinct and independent science. In 1842 the last vol. of the *Phil. Pos.* was published, with the concluding chapters of the Social Philosophy.—ED.

[2] A full exposition of this point will be found in the chapter on "Politics and the Darwinian Theory" in Part IV.—ED.

[3] The title of Comte's philosophical work was *Cours de philosophie positive*, but in later years he spoke of it as his *Système de philosophie positive*. See note on p. 1 of *General View*.—ED.

bodies. Secondly, it followed, this discovery once made and recognized, that this new science must take its place as the supreme and central science. In other words, it became the keystone of any true scientific Synthesis. So far-reaching a proposition must obviously be left for future treatment. Let it be assumed for the moment as proved, and see what follows. If the study of Humanity comes to be regarded as the supreme object of intellectual research, not superseding other departments of work, but stimulating them and inspiring them with new life; and if, while this philosophic change is proceeding, the emotions and aspirations of mankind be directed no longer towards an incredible divinity, the omnipotent permitter of evil, but towards the supreme Love, the foe of oppression and injustice—the champion through the ages of the suffering and the downtrodden, whom Positivists call "Humanity" and mystics call "Christ"; if such a revolution as this take place—and perhaps even now it is silently going on—then the religion of the future may be nearer than most men dare to hope.

Thus Comte's doctrine reconciles, as no other doctrine known to me reconciles, Sympathy with Synthesis. In the Catholic system, as set forth by its great doctors, notably by Aquinas, we have the nearest approach to it. But intellectually that system fails to satisfy the conditions of modern thought; and the moral failure is hardly less striking than the intellectual. By the best women of our time, no less than by the best men, essential parts of it are practically rejected. This sounds paradoxical, since among the best women I count many whose orthodoxy is unchallenged, and whose devotion in every sense of that word is beyond dispute. Yet it is true nevertheless. Their point of view has changed without their knowing it. They no longer believe in an omnipotent permitter of eternal evil. Old words remain; but in reality the first person of the Trinity has passed out of their ken, and their thoughts are fixed on the second. Their faith in Christ—by which I mean not a cold Unitarian belief in the man Jesus, but faith in a superhuman friend and defender of the downtrodden, living and working from age to age—is as strong as ever, in some ways stronger. But the Christ they worship is more akin to the Humanity of the Positivist than to the God of Aquinas or of Dante. And in the worship of the Virgin, so operative in southern Catholic countries, so beautifully depicted in Manzoni's novel,[1] and now in course of revival in the Anglican Church, their approach is even nearer.

[1] *I Promessi Sposi* (1825–27). *The Betrothed* is in the first section of the Positivist Library.—ED.

Obviously, religion of this kind, beautiful in all the aspects of private life, fruitful in good works, in tenderness, in purity, in self-control, in compassionate and delicate thought for the sick and suffering, is not all that is needed. It is much, but not enough. It does not deal effectively with that vast order of things in which men have to act together. Of the social and political field it leaves the greater part untouched. Admit—and it would be gross injustice to deny—that it purifies and ennobles individual conduct. Can it be maintained that it does as much for public life? Can it claim to make clearly and definitely for political righteousness? I shall be told of the many efforts of public philanthropy which Christianity has inaugurated, from the emancipation of serfs in the Middle Ages to the setting free of slaves, white or black, in our own day. There is truth in this, though some reserves are to be made. Not all these things were begun by the Church; not all have been done wisely. Some of them have served as cloaks for iniquitous aggression—without the assent of the promoters, indeed, but also without their resistance. Are we sure that pity for the Swazis will not be used by interested statesmen and financiers as an engine of aggression against the Transvaal? In public life, even more than in private, justice should take precedence of generosity; and the first needs more thought, and is less involved in self-deception, than the second.

To sum this up in a word, what is best and purest in the theological religion of our time is Sympathy without Synthesis. That the majority of men and women in Europe and America call themselves Christian; that in a minority of these, yet still a notable minority, what they believe operates for good on their private conduct—this is surely obvious. Equally obvious is it that Christian theology, as a scheme capable of guiding public action, has broken down. Beneficent as it often is in private life, it fails utterly in public. Applied to political action, and above all to action between the nations, it is sometimes barren, sometimes chaotic and subversive, sometimes a cloak for conspiracies of the strong against the weak. To stir vague sympathies is not enough. What we want is useful guidance towards the attainment of man's highest hopes, the establishment of peace and justice on the earth. And this theology does not supply.

Does Positivism hold out a better prospect? Looked at from the moral side, the answer cannot be doubtful. Positivism concentrates thought, feeling, and effort on the highest interests of man—those that relate to the Family, the Fatherland, and Humanity—

with the purpose of making human life on this earth more noble and more just. Few will deny that the assemblage of the brave, the loving, and the wise who have worked for us through the past, and who shall arise in a future yet unborn, stirs our deepest reverence and kindles our purest hopes. Once explain what Positivism means—that the Religion of Humanity means the Service of Man—and the *sympathy* aroused by it admits no further question. But what of it as a *synthesis ?* In other words, do we gain from it, not merely enthusiasm, but guidance?

Some of the critics of Positivism have thought its emotional side so unduly prominent as to throw the intellectual into the background. As Spinoza was called by Novalis "God-intoxicated," so Comte was spoken of by Mill as "morality-intoxicated." We have, therefore, to ask ourselves: "Would the triumph of the Religion of Humanity involve a narrowing of human interests, like that which took place between the fifth century and the fifteenth?" For, although the restriction of intellectual progress during the Middle Ages was far less rigorous than is commonly thought, no one can deny that it was real. It was the price to be paid for ethical progress of transcendent importance—a high price, though not too great. Yet the prayer of everyone who cares for the future of mankind must be that it shall not be required again. Were it otherwise, many would echo the prayer of Ajax: "Give light, and let us die!"

Put in other words, the question is: "Does the philosophy known as Positive embrace all that is of real interest to mankind? Would its acceptance slacken, or would it stimulate, intellectual progress?"

The answer would need a volume; but the outline of the answer may be given in a few words. In the Positive Synthesis the final object of study is human nature and human activity—Man and his Work. Therefore one of the first questions to be asked about it is this: Does the study of human nature conducted in the Positive spirit tend to throw other studies unduly into the background? It will be found that the result is exactly the reverse of this. Positive method applied to the investigation of human nature and society tends to give new life to the other sciences, and to indicate new fields of research of which nothing hitherto had been heard or thought. Let us see if this be so.

Moral science, cultivated by the methods of metaphysicians and theologians, is obviously not stimulating to biological and physical research. It stands wholly aloof from these; and if all our mental energies were given to it, physical science would be discouraged and

neglected, as in the Middle Ages. Roger Bacon, Grosseteste, and a few others, were but exceptions to a general rule. But in the Positive Synthesis such exceptions become the normal type. Positive study of man and his work implies scientific investigation of man's surroundings, social, biological, and physical. Comte's remarkable conception of the *milieu*, well translated by Mr. Spencer as *environment*, included every force of whatever kind acting on an organism. Man's action—his conduct—is not action in a vacuum. He is a member of a given community, the members of which belong to the highest order of animals. How much of man's nature, as we now see it, is due to his historical evolution in the social state? How much to his position as a highly organized vertebrate? Here lies a vast field of research, which the best minds have hardly begun to cultivate. Yet the importance of it is manifest. One of these two sets of conditions is evidently less modifiable than the other. For instance, man may, and probably soon will, abandon the military state and content himself with aiming at the peaceful subjugation of his planet. Yet, though he may leave off the business of soldiering, the instinct of anger will never be rooted out till the circulation of his blood ceases. So much by way of illustrating the close connection of Positive Ethics with the sciences of sociology and biology.

On the chemical, physical, and astronomical conditions of life it is hardly needful to dwell. Comte has reminded us of Milton's bold fiction that after the Fall of Man the angels were ordered to change the inclination of the earth's axis upon the plane of its orbit, as an indication of the dependence of man's life on astronomical relations. How deeply astronomical discovery has touched the beliefs and institutions of mankind is obvious to the most elementary student of the evolution of thought and society. From whatever point of view we look at it, we shall find that the study of human nature, when carried on in the Positive spirit, is the keystone of a Synthetic Philosophy. It embraces every subject of human interest; the microcosm involves the macrocosm. Again be it repeated that of man as an isolated object of academic study there is no question here. The aim of the Positive Synthesis is to throw light on Man and his Work; on man set free from supernatural fears and from the vile craving to subdue his fellow men, striving to amend the imperfections of his nature, thankfully accepting the gifts of beauty and affection which life affords, resigned to its sorrows, and without other ambition than to render the earth a fitter dwelling-place for those who shall come after him.

VI

THE POSITIVIST CATECHISM

WHICH is the book—or is there any?—in which the elementary principles of Positivism are explained in moderate compass, and in simple language which any ordinary reader to whom the subject is quite new can easily follow? Perhaps there is none that fulfils all the conditions completely. To a student prepared to devote some time to the subject I should advise perusal of the earlier works of Comte, reprinted as an appendix to the *Positive Polity*,[1] and published lately as a separate volume by the Paris Society at 10 Rue Monsieur-le-Prince.[2] Written some years before his *Philosophie Positive*, and in an easier and more attractive style, they bring into prominence what in that work remains in the background—the constructive aim which occupied his whole life; the restoration of moral government on the basis of human science. Two things in this series of short treatises stand out clearly. First, that every orderly society requires for its maintenance some form of spiritual, no less than some form of State, government. Secondly, that social and moral facts are under the dominion of natural law no less than the facts of the world around us, organic and inorganic. To bring sociology into line with biology and physics is shown to be the first condition of establishing moral order; because, once this result obtained, the same trust can be reposed in scientific teachers of politics and ethics as is already yielded to scientific teachers of astronomy and chemistry. In old times the planets were believed to be moved by divine agencies, and thunder indicated the wrath, or, it might be, some other message, of a deity. Step by step the facts of nature have been shown to follow an orderly process that can be more or less precisely foreseen—the simpler facts first, afterwards the more complex. With the subjection to scientific law of man's political and moral life the main problem is solved, the foundation of the new and permanent Order is laid.

Many would be more attracted by these early works of Comte than by those of his maturity. They are written, as has been said, in a more flowing style, are less abstract, and are more copiously illustrated by examples than those of later date. The fifteen years

[1] *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, pp. 491–653.—ED.

[2] The Eng. tr. has also been published in a separate form entitled *Early Essays on Social Philosophy*. See above, p. 95 (note).—ED.

from 1828 to 1842 were occupied with his *Positive Philosophy*. Not, however, that he abandoned then or at any other time the attempt to present his principles in popular form. During all these years he was delivering a course of lectures on Popular Astronomy, to which was prefixed an elaborate *Discourse on the Positive Spirit*, published separately in 1843, and printed also in 1844 as an Introduction to the *Astronomy*.[1] Comte held very strongly that logical principles could not be effectively taught apart from their application. In many ways astronomy seemed to him a model science for the illustration of Positive principles. It was more perfect than any other; the facts contained in it were more amenable to precise prevision—the crucial distinction of science properly so called from mere learning and erudition. Its historical reaction on the movement of European thought had been singularly marked. Some of the best of Comte's disciples were drawn to him by this course of teaching, notably Fabien Magnin. It must, nevertheless, be admitted that at this period of his career Comte was too fully occupied with the intellectual side of his teaching to make it possible for the political and moral side to be adequately presented.

In 1845 a crisis in his personal history roused strong emotions,[2] which, while lending new force to his intellectual and social ardour, revealed aspects of life, of individual life especially, which he had hitherto passed by. Then came the great earthquake of 1848,[3] a significant reminder of the unstable foundations on which European society rested. Under the influences of this stormy time appeared Comte's *General View of Positivism*,[4] afterwards prefixed to his *Positive Polity*. Little need be said here of this work, which has been widely circulated by the Positivist Society of Newton Hall.[5] It presents Comte's synthesis for the first time as a message not merely to philosophical students, but to all men and women of Western countries. It takes cognizance of the vast modifying force exercised by women through the family upon the social fabric. It appreciates the labour question as the principal problem for states-

[1] See above, p. 216 (note).

[2] Comte's intimate friendship with Madame Clotilde de Vaux commenced in April, 1845.—ED.

[3] Dr. Bridges refers to the general democratic movement which took place in Europe at this time, characterized in France by the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the second Republic.—ED.

[4] *Discours sur l'ensemble du Positivisme*, 1848. Eng. tr. by Dr. Bridges entitled *A General View of Positivism;* 1865. 2nd ed. in 1880 (Reeves and Turner). Also published by Messrs. Routledge in their New Universal Library (1908).—ED.

[5] Written in 1897, when this Society still met at Newton Hall.—ED.

men; but as one which statesmen cannot solve unaided, since the solution needs a deep change in opinion, guided by thinkers capable of scientifically estimating the forces of modern life, and thus of forming a true conception of the path of progress. References to contemporary events sometimes perplex the reader. But on the whole it must be regarded as the best introduction to the study of Positivism for those who approach it from the outside. For those who have already accepted its fundamental principles, and wish to find them gathered together in a small compass, the book I have next to speak of will be found more useful, in spite of what very many readers will regard as a most unattractive mode of presentation.

The *Positivist Catechism*[1] appeared in 1852, four years after the *General View;* the first volume of the *Positive Polity* had appeared in the previous year. Most people think of a catechism as a series of short questions and answers. But this work is in the form of dialogues between a priest and a woman—a form notoriously repellent to Protestant imaginations, and not much more acceptable in Catholic countries. We need, indeed, to be constantly reminded that the priest in question is not a young Seminarist endowed by his Church with supernatural powers, but a married man of mature age, claiming no prestige except such as may follow from proved education and character. Indeed, the correspondence of Euler with a German princess on mathematical and physical subjects[2] gives in some respects a more adequate notion of Comte's purpose than the title of the work would convey. Comte's life was lonely, and his surroundings had not tended to give his genius a dramatic turn; so that, looked at artistically, the dialogue differs far too little from monologue. But obviously such criticisms are quite secondary.

What is really important is that the *Positivist Catechism* is the completest view within a short compass of Comte's principles and scheme of life. Looked at philosophically, it has three distinct advantages over any previous work. 1. *La morale*, the science of human nature, for the first time takes its place at the summit of the scientific scale, as distinct from Sociology, the science of the structure and evolution of society.[3] In the *General View*, as in the *Philosophie Positive*, only six sciences are spoken of—Sociology,

[1] *Catéchisme Positiviste.* Eng. tr. by R. Congreve, entitled *The Catechism of Positive Religion;* 1858. 2nd ed. 1883 (Trübner and Co.).—ED.

[2] *Lettres à une Princesse d'Allemagne sur quelques sujets de physique et de philosophie;* 1768–1772.—ED.

[3] *Cf.* above, p. 321.—ED.

Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, Mathematics. Sociology included Ethics implicitly. But in the final science of Ethics our attention is concentrated, not on Humanity, but on man as the product of Humanity, contrasted with man the pre-historic savage. Attaining the best possible government and political organization, we have not yet reached the goal. Man was never governed better than in the age of the Antonines, but the individual product left much to desire. What is the individual man or woman, is the final question; what the standard of purity, truth, and courage; what the capacity for the highest intellectual and social ideals? Comte never lived to finish his two projected works on the Theory of Human Nature and on the Art of Education conceived as a process lasting from birth to old age.[1] But the germs of his thoughts on these subjects are more visible in the *Catechism* than in anything written previously.

2. In the *Catechism* we find the first methodical statement of Comte's psychology, as set forth in his *Tableau Cérébral*, or schedule of the functions of the brain.[2] Correcting the crudities of Gall's work on the same subject by his philosophical insight into the complex combinations of elementary passions framed during man's historical development, Comte has here supplied an instrument for the study of human nature that can be handled by every intelligent observer; all the more effectively if unversed in the subtleties of the schools. The supreme problem of human life, the harmonious working of the self-regarding passions under the control of those that prompt to the love of others, assumes thus a definite and palpable shape that no other mode of presentation could have given to it.

3. The last two dialogues of the *Catechism* are devoted to a History of Religion—an anticipation, in fact, of the philosophy of history contained in the third volume of the *Positive Polity*. No words are needed to point out the value of this admirable condensation, in less than sixty pages, of the "History of Humanity from Fetishism to Positivism."

On the purely philosophical side, then, there is much in the *Positivist Catechism* which is not to be found in previous abridgments of Comte's works. It differs from them yet more obviously in the definiteness with which his thoughts on religion and on the organization of individual no less than of social life are presented. Religion is distinctly defined as "the state of complete unity in personal and social life resulting from the convergence of all its

[1] *Cf.* pp. 166-67.—ED.

[2] See above, p. 167 (note).

functions, moral and physical, to a common purpose."[1] It is pointed out that this state is an ideal towards which we may continually approach, but which can never be attained; and that the various creeds that have prevailed among men are so many attempts, suited to time and place, to reach it more or less perfectly.

Take another fundamental point. The pupil in the third dialogue asks the master, What place can prayer have in Positive Religion? Comte replies that such a void, if it were real, would be fatal. Prayer, he continues, is the most essential element in every form of religion.[2] In Positivism prayer is purified from every trace of the self-regarding taint which too often clings to it in theological systems. It does not consist in petition. It is the formation and daily renewal by love, by meditation, by spoken word, of our ideal of life. Since the surroundings and experience of every one of us are so different, it is plain that the forms which such meditation may take are infinitely various. No human lot is so destitute as to have in it nothing to love and to cherish. Positivist prayer consists in reviving such personal affections, in strengthening and purifying them, as the strongest stimulant to social service.[3] Doubtless the formation and the constant renewal of an ideal is itself the first step to its attainment; and in this sense it may be truly said that there is an answer to prayer. But from all material taint, all hope of personal advantage, Positivist prayer is, as the best Christian and Mohammedan prayer has long been, absolutely free. It should be added that, until the habit of such personal devotion should have become sufficiently confirmed and extended, it was Comte's view, constantly repeated throughout this work, that all attempts to organize public ceremonial must be premature and abortive. He carefully abstained himself from any attempt in this direction. Though some of his disciples have gone beyond the master in this respect, it may be doubted how far they have advanced the cause of Positive religion by doing so—whether they have not diffused a sense of unreality over something which to Comte himself was intensely real.

In the third part of the *Catechism*, Comte puts forward his vision of the future organization of society. None but the blindest adepts can refuse to admit that he was entirely mistaken as to the time needed for its realization. When he wrote[4] the abolition of war between civilized nations seemed within easy reach. The

[1] *Positivist Catechism*, p. 34.—ED.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 74.—ED.
[3] *Cf.* above, p. 330.—ED.
[4] 1852

forced union of Italy, the struggle of Prussia with Austria for ascendancy in Germany, the disastrous duel between Germany and France, lastly the throwing open of Africa to the reckless rivalries of colonial ambitions, were things unforeseen. Each and all of them have helped to adjourn the peaceful organization of Western Society for many a long year. Nevertheless, this vision of the future is not merely of great literary and philosophical interest, but of extreme practical value, to those who know how to interpret it. Comte has claimed for Utopias a definite place among the methods of the sociologist.[1] Rightly constructed, they present truths hitherto unaccepted with a vividness that no abstract exposition could equal; enforcing thus, to use Comte's language, the logic of signs with the logic of images and the logic of feelings. With a definite conception of the future constantly held before us, action in the present is kept steady, and is swayed less by the glamour of contemporary passions. It has not turned out to be true that the end of the nineteenth century would see France divided into seventeen republics; Ireland, Scotland, and Wales in the enjoyment of Home Rule, and Western Europe converted into an assemblage of sixty independent States. All this seems wild enough to the enthusiast for modern Imperialism. Yet, to the student of history who remembers how within a few decades the Empire of Charlemagne, or most of it, melted away into small feudal States, it need not be incredible that the empires of the nineteenth century should have no longer date. The wiser among modern democrats are beginning to see that if the citizen is not to be overridden by State officials, military and civil, the State must be of moderate compass.

Similarly with education. At present the tendency of reformers is to hand over education in all its grades to the State. They fail to see that this new State-Church which they are building up so proudly will one day become a formidable danger to spiritual progress, by stereotyping the views of the average man, and thus discouraging the propagation of new truth; since truth, in the first instance, is always held by a minority. If education is to be worthy of the name, it must be carried on by volunteer associations independently of State control. There was a time when the progressive party recognized this truth. But the temptation to use the forces of the State for overthrowing the institutions of their adversaries has been too much for them. Comte's picture, wholly Utopian at present, of the organization of education by a body unprivileged

[1] See *Pos. Pol.*, vol. iv, pp. 239–45, 266.—ED.

by State monopolies, wholly free from official trammels, and kept fresh and strong by the constant presence of rival efforts, opens out the full range of what may be done in the future to compensate the inequality of human lots by diffusion of the highest culture, to organize resistance to material oppression, and to promote every form of spiritual progress.

The *Positivist Catechism* is not the most attractive portal through which to enter on the study of Positivism. But for those who have already studied it, it is the best condensation in a short space of Comte's teaching.

VII

IS POSITIVISM A SECT?

WHAT is a sect? The first dictionary I open tells me that it means "a body of persons united in tenets, chiefly in philosophy or religion, but constituting a distinct party by holding sentiments different from those of other men." This definition, I suppose, will generally be accepted as a fair one, so far as it goes, and at least it may be taken as our starting-point. It implies a minority living in the midst of a majority which holds other views, and which is either indifferent or hostile. The doctrines advocated may be foolish and false, or they may be wise and true. Again, they may have a short life or a long one. They may pass away rapidly into obscurity, or be destined for durable and wide dominion. How this will be in each case the event alone can answer. Christianity was a sect in the days of Tacitus and Trajan. Islam was a sect, and a very small one, at the date of the *Hegira*. Of the sects which have perished either by natural decay, by persecution, or by incorporation into those that have survived, the record is very long, though of necessity imperfect.

The definition here given speaks only of tenets in philosophy and religion. But it will hold good, with an important qualification to be indicated later, of the history of science. In 1543 Copernicus revived the hypothesis advocated two thousand years earlier, perhaps by Pythagoras, certainly by Aristarchus of Samos, of the earth's rotation and orbital movement round the sun. He worked out the hypothesis in detail, and brought forward many new arguments in support of it. But he fell so far short of demonstration that many subsequent astronomers—one at least of whom, Tycho Brahé,

possessed genius and knowledge far surpassing his own—were unable to accept the theory. For at least two generations the Copernicans may be regarded as a sect. They were a minority in the scientific world of their time, and many of the arguments which they brought to bear against the very strong considerations that told the other way were unsound, and even sophistical. Not till Bradley's discovery in the eighteenth century of the aberration of light can the theory of Copernicus be said to have been really demonstrated.[1] During a large part of this long interval students of the science were influenced partly, no doubt, by their own independent powers of observation and judgment, but also partly by considerations not purely intellectual. Reverence for a stronger mind with which they had been in contact swayed some. Others—and perhaps, whether they knew it or not, all—were bent in varying degrees towards one or other conclusion by their estimate of the social results to which either might lead. It would be easy enough to find other instances in which the spirit of sect has made itself felt in the history of science, sometimes with retarding, sometimes with stimulating, results. In the history of medicine, which, though not a science, is an art striving to found itself on science, sects have abounded, and the spirit that prompts them is very far from extinct. Evolution controversies, during the last hundred years, afford like examples. Readers of Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*[2] will remember the enthusiasm of the philosophic poet at the contest between Cuvier and Geoffroy de Saint-Hilaire in July, 1830, while the so-called Revolution of that date was going on, which last he, in common with Comte, thought of minor importance.[3] Contemptuous opposition was shown by the scientific world of that time, and for nearly thirty years afterwards, to evolution theories of all kinds, and notably to those of Lamarck, and to the popular and doubtless crude exposition of Lamarck in England (*Vestiges of Creation*).[4] At the present time,[5] more than a generation after Darwin, we may witness much in the opposition between those who deny and those who assert the possibility of the inheritance of acquired characters, which may without offence be regarded as sectarian, in the sense in which the word is here used—namely, the mixture with purely

[1] See on this subject the biographies of Copernicus, Tycho Brahé, and Bradley in the *New Calendar of Great Men*.—ED.

[2] *Gespräche mit Goethe*; 1836–1848.—ED.

[3] The contest alluded to was a famous controversy in the Paris Academy of Sciences on biological evolution.—ED.

[4] R. Chambers, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*; 1844.—ED.

[5] Written in 1901.—ED.

intellectual processes of impulses not purely intellectual. Happily for the world, the scientific student, generally speaking, is no "algebraic ghost";[1] he has feelings and passions like the rest of us. Of the feelings roused in this, as in every other, department of human activity, some may be more potent, but none more honourable, than the respect felt by a younger or less skilled worker for the greater experience or intrinsic superiority of a colleague. Such ascendancy of a stronger mind over a weaker is inevitable. It has always existed; it will exist to the end of time. It is as much a law of nature as the law of gravitation. Like every other function and organ of man and society, it has been abused in the past, and will doubtless be abused in the future. Such abuses may and will be corrected more completely as time goes on. Meantime the use will be, as it has always been, overwhelmingly important as compared with the abuse. Without reverence, as wise men of old times and of our own time have told us, man's life would not hold together for a moment, and would not be worth trying to hold together. That other and baser elements enter but too often into the sectarian spirit is certain—mean jealousies, Pharisaic self-esteem, and all the foul growth of envy and spite that Browning has painted in his *Spanish Cloister*.[2] But this is merely to say that man is man. *Qui vitia odit homines odit.* It is bad to have evil passions, but worse to be passionless.

It would seem, then, that the sectarian spirit is not likely to disappear altogether within any future that we can foresee, springing as it does naturally from the habit of forming groups for a common purpose. With this habit men cannot dispense unless they fall into the pathological condition of isolation from their kind—becoming, as the French say, *aliénés*. Nevertheless, there is, as I said at the outset, a real difference between the sectarian spirit in science and the correspondent spirit in theological and most philosophical systems. It is that science provides its own corrective, which in the end is always effectual. Contending scientific schools, recognizing as they do a common method of research, arrive at last at some new discovery which unites and reconciles what is true in each. Thus, to take the instance above mentioned, one of Tycho Brahé's strongest objections to belief in the earth's revolution, based on the fact that a star seen from two opposite points in the earth's orbit (that is to say, 190 millions of miles apart) occupied the same apparent position in the sky, has been removed in com-

[1] This was the epithet applied to Comte by T. Carlyle.—ED.
[2] The poem entitled *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister*.—ED.

paratively recent times by the discovery, which Bradley had sought for in vain, of annual parallax in several of the fixed stars. Other instances will occur to the most superficial student of the history of science. To sum up in a word this distinctive note of science, it deals with things which can be brought to the test of demonstration, whereas theology does not.

Let us apply the foregoing remarks to the immediate purpose of this paper. And, first, what is Positivism ?

Positivism, looked at as a philosophical system, is an attempt to present the principal truths of science, from Mathematics to Morals, in an orderly arrangement, so framed that the simpler sciences, dealing with facts common to the world and man, shall throw light on the more complex, and specially on those which relate to human nature and human conduct. It expressly refrains from any attempt to explain these latter orders of facts as deductions from a single principle. The unity of the system depends upon its method and its purpose. The method is that of all masters in science; the purpose is the Service of Man.

Positivism, looked at practically, is a systematic attempt to bring about willing and joyful obedience to principles of right and wrong in private and public life, in ways consistent with science, and independent of supernatural belief. In other words, it aims at becoming the universal religion of mankind. Such words would need explanation in any case; they need it all the more that Auguste Comte, in his earlier works, used the word *Religion* with a theological implication.[1]

This still remains a part of its popular meaning; although it is not uncommon to apply the word to any fervid agitation which stirs the souls of men, and unites them in a noble purpose. Thus it has been used to denote the feeling which prompted men to defend their national independence; it has been applied to the generous emotions that pervaded Western Europe at the outbreak of the French Revolution—emotions so powerfully portrayed in Wordsworth's *Prelude*. For us the important point is that Comte has fixed its meaning in a way that may be regarded as final; one which holds good in varying degrees of every mode of religion which has swayed mankind, and which rests upon the element that is common to all. It will be found clearly defined in language of Dantesque precision and beauty in the Introduction to the *Positivist Catechism*.[2] The passage, if possible, should be read in the original

[1] See p. 291 (note 1).

[2] P. 34.—ED.

—a remark which, be it said in passing, may be extended to other translations of Comte, certainly to those of the present writer; though translations, even to those who know French, may be useful as commentaries. Briefly, religion, as here defined, denotes the state in which man is exercising his powers in perfect peace within and without—peace between his own discordant moods, peace with his fellow-men throughout the world. Religion is not a creed; it is a state of emotion, thought, and will, guided to a purpose which can be shared by all. The various modes of religion that have hitherto guided, or that may hereafter guide, mankind, may be regarded as modes more or less efficacious of attaining to this ideal state.

Peace within—Union without; which mode of religion comes nearest to the goal? All religions that deserve the name have attained the first in some measure, and have at least aspired to the second. They have aimed at universal union. Christianity has put forward this claim; so has Islam. Each has striven to absorb the polytheism of India, the astrology and ancestral cult of China; and each has failed. Hope on either side of victory over the other disappeared with the Crusades. Why is this? Because of their reliance on transcendental doctrines incapable of proof, and mutually destructive. The condition of Union can only be fulfilled by bringing the truths that concern man's highest and dearest interests within the range of scientific certainty. To do this is the main purpose of Positivism.

So far as this purpose is really fulfilled, I think it would be unreasonable to speak of Positivism as a sect, except in that modified sense of the word above noted, in which a sectarian spirit has shown itself for comparatively brief intervals in the history of physical and biological science. In this sense it may seem chimerical to hope that, human nature being what it is, sectarian feeling should be wholly avoided in the centuries before us. If such feelings have shown themselves on questions of astronomy, of geology, of the transitions from Ascidians to Vertebrates, of the formation of Coral Reefs (not to speak of the far paltrier squabbles of Latin and Greek grammarians), how can we expect that they should be wholly absent from discussions in which the highest and dearest interests of Humanity are at stake? We may be sure that they will not, and that all that can be hoped is that those who are tempted to err in this way will be held in check by the wide grasp of scientific truth, and by the historic spirit presupposed in adequate teachers of Positive doctrines; and still more by the sympathy with every phase of human nature, heroic, tender, passionate, or humorous,

which can never be wholly wanting in those who try to train themselves and their children in accordance with the New Life.

VIII

FETISHISM AND POSITIVISM

AMONG the later thoughts of Comte, to be found in germ perhaps in the *Philosophie*, but fully developed only in the *Politique*, few are more remarkable than his indication of the affinity between the earliest and the latest stages of social evolution.[1] Civilization, as we actually know it, has been continuous from the beginning, but has followed a long and devious course, with many windings, many bends backwards, many periods at which the stream seemed to stagnate. From the rude ritual of savage tribes, in which stocks and stones were worshipped, arose theism in all its forms. Then came the polytheism of the great theocratic empires, the break-up of those theocracies under Greek intellect and Roman conquest, the rise of mediæval monotheism with its defensive wars, finally the dominion of science and industry in modern life. Such has been the sequence of stages among that part of the world's population which, by common consent, has taken the lead in civilization. Will it be needful for retarded nations, Asiatic or African, to follow painfully in the wake of their leaders? Or can they profit by experience, and raise themselves rapidly to the foremost rank? If we come to the latter conclusion, we shall evidently be led to take a much more hopeful view of the immediate future of the world. One most striking instance of rapid transition from primitive to highly developed civilization is being at the present moment offered to us by Japan.[2]

In this connection it will be useful to consider the principle of Comte's political philosophy to which I have referred above, and the more so that but little attention has been hitherto directed to it.

The word *fétichisme* was used in the eighteenth century by de Brosses to denote the religious beliefs and practices of negro tribes on the West African coast who regarded certain inanimate objects as set apart, as sacred, with power to confer blessings or inflict

[1] See p. 275 (note).

[2] Written in 1905.—ED.

harm on men.[1] Its use was extended by Comte to the whole system of beliefs and institutions characteristic of primitive man. These during the nineteenth century were the subject of extensive and elaborate inquiry, and an immense body of literature has been collected, with more or less consciousness of its significance. All that is meant by the North American word *totem*, by the Polynesian word *taboo*, by the old Latin word *sacer*, is being carefully collected, compared, and classified, with the result that light is being thrown —often, it is true, a very dim light—on the connection of these primitive ideas and beliefs with the earliest social institutions of mankind, at a time when the *family*, in the patriarchal sense of that word, had no existence. Much of this early period of man's life upon our planet is irrecoverably lost to us. The gaps in the sociological record are as great as those in the geological record. Time has undoubtedly been wasted in building up hypotheses which perhaps we may never be able to test by confronting them with facts. And this is the more true that, owing to the reckless expansion of modern commercialism, the facts themselves are disappearing. Of the most primitive races of mankind there will soon be left none to investigate. The Tasmanians have disappeared already; the Australians are swiftly disappearing.

But, without entering into disputed details, let us concentrate attention on the salient point of fetishistic belief—the tendency to explain the world by man, *transporter partout le type humain*, to conceive of surrounding objects, or at least of some among them, as animated by feelings and powers akin to those of which man is conscious within himself. It has been well said that the fetishist has no belief in the supernatural, for the best of all reasons—that he knows nothing of the natural. He explains things new and unknown to him, as other people do, by things that are better known and more familiar; and the things most familiar to him are his own fears and passions, his own dreams and shadows, the facts of sleep and death.

The first to call attention systematically to this mode of regarding the surrounding world was the Neapolitan thinker Vico, early in the eighteenth century. With Vico, as afterwards with Comte, it formed the basis of his philosophy. Let us recall a few of Vico's words: "Men, ignorant of the causes of things, and unable to explain them even by analogy, endowed surrounding objects with their own nature. So it is that when they see the magnet attracting iron they

[1] See p. 325 (note 2).

say the loadstone is enamoured of the metal." "All nature," he goes on to say, "becomes to primitive man a vast animated body capable of passion and affection." "It is noteworthy," he observes, "that in all languages a large number of expressions relating to inanimate things are taken from the human body, or from human feelings and passions. *Head* signifies summit, or beginning; *forehead, shoulders*, front and back; we speak of any kind of opening as a *mouth;* the rim of a vessel is *a lip;* a rake or a comb has *teeth;* so, too, we speak of the *gorge* of a river, of the *flesh* of fruits, of a *vein* of metal. Wine is the *blood* of the grape; in a mine we descend to the *bowels* of the earth; the sky or the sea *smiles;* the wind *whistles*, the waves *murmur;* a table *groans* under the weight of provisions. Innumerable examples may be gathered from all languages."[1]

The process of explaining the world by human customs and feelings is curiously exemplified in the institutions of primitive man in many parts of the world, notably in North America, West Africa, and Australia, known as totemism. "Totem," a North American word, indicates some species of animal, plant, or other object held sacred by all the members of a group or clan, who appear to regard themselves as physically in some way related to it and partaking of its nature. Most Australian tribes are divided into two classes, or, as some observers call them, *phratries*. Each phratry includes a large number of groups or clans, each distinguished by a certain totem. The phratries are held entirely distinct from each other, and are exogamous—that is to say, members of the same phratry cannot intermarry. There are yet further restrictions on intermarriage. A man of one phratry cannot intermarry with any woman of the other, but only with a woman belonging to a special class of the other phratry; so that each phratry is divided into two matrimonial classes. If A and B stand for the two classes of the one phratry, A′ and B′ may denote the two classes of the other. A must choose their wives from A′, B from B′. The social classification of an Australian tribe is therefore extremely elaborate, far more elaborate indeed than would appear from the above statement. Now, the important thing to note for our immediate purpose is that this social classification becomes the principle for classifying things of whatever kind. In the tribes of the Bellingen River, and in those of Port Mackay,[2] observers on the spot tell us that all nature is

[1] The above quotations are translated from the 2nd ed. (1730) of the *Scienza Nuova*.—ED.

[2] New South Wales.—ED.

regarded as belonging to one or the other of the two phratries. The sun, the moon, the stars, wind, rain, lightning, as well as every familiar animal and plant, are ranged in one division or the other. In the fourfold division of the Wakelbura tribe all objects known to the tribe belong to one of the groups. In the Mount Gambier tribe[1] the two phratries are called Kumite and Kroki; each of them is divided into five totemic clans, and under one of these ten divisions all things, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral, find their place. Some of these are objects of food, and the members of a clan are usually forbidden to eat things belonging to their own totem. But these bear but a small proportion to the whole. For example, the first of the five groups belonging to the Kumite phratry is Mula (fishing falcon). With it are grouped smoke, honeysuckle, certain trees, etc. The second is Parangal (pelican). It contains black-wood, dog, fire, ice, etc. The third is that of the Crow; with it are classed rain, thunder, lightning, hail, clouds, etc. The fourth is that of the Black Cockatoo, including the moon, stars, etc. The fifth, Karato (a harmless snake), is associated with fish, seals, etc.

It is not possible, or at least it is rarely possible, to give any consistent explanation of the mental process underlying the formation of these groups. But the essential thing for the purpose now before us is to note that the earliest classifications of things were moulded on the classifications of social groups. The first logical categories were social categories. It was because men formed groups, and thought collectively, that they ranged other beings in these groups. Phratries were the first genera, clans the first species. The things of one class were related to each other—were of the same flesh and substance as the men and women of that class. The fetishist philosophy, the mode of thought and feeling common to primitive tribes, has been spoken of as centred in man—anthropocentric. M. Durkheim, one of the first to call attention to this branch of the subject, points out that it might be spoken of with more truth as socio-centric—centred in man's social life.

The passage from fetishism to theism, from the worship of visible and tangible objects animated by human passions to the worship of imaginary beings ruling over a vast province of nature, was the result, and also the source, of fundamental changes, social and intellectual. But these changes were evolutionary rather than revolutionary—many centuries were needed for their accomplishment. Primitive fetishism was wholly unadapted for the cohesion

[1] South Australia.—ED.

of large societies. The change from maternal to paternal descent, the institution of the patriarchal family, the successful wars waged by a warrior of more than usual powers, the worship centralized round his tomb; again, the growth of language to the point at which almost every abstract term became identified with a deity, as in early Italian religion; the growth of star-worship, sun, moon, planets, and principal stars uniting scattered tribes in a common object of reverence—these are some of the many ways in which theocracy arose from primal fetishism. We need not suppose uniformity in each case. By one mode or another governments arose, spiritual and temporal. Men were to submit for long ages to come to priests and kings.

This is not the place to enter into any defence of theocratic civilization against the modern revolutionary tendency to look on all submission as a sign of degradation. Sufficient to say that the rise and maintenance of great societies like those of Egypt and Babylonia, with all their industrial and intellectual results, could not have taken place otherwise. The wars of a conquering monarch were the condition of long periods of peace and industry. The codes of priests brought order and dignity into the family and into the State. But what we have to note here is that fetishism was not destroyed by theism—the old foundation of fetishistic adoration and belief still remained. The tomb of the heroic ancestor was still a sacred shrine. If we trace back, as recent discoveries enable us to do, the rise of the Babylonian and Assyrian gods from their origin, we find them in the earliest ages to be tribal gods, whose dominion steadily extended with the growing dominion of the tribe. But throughout the history of these empires, and over their whole extent, local gods swarmed everywhere. The god of Israel did not suppress the household images that Rachel carried with her in her flight from Laban, nor the "high places" that remained sacred throughout the Hebrew monarchies. The hearths of Greek and Roman households were sacred amidst the splendour of their polytheism. The hearth of Rome herself, watched by the Vestal Virgins, has become again for some of us a place of pious pilgrimage. The shrines of deities were not more sacred than in aftertimes became the shrines of saints. Who again can estimate, in the story of Islam, the unifying force of the sacred stone of Mecca?

And thus we find in the end that the primitive religion of the human race has much in common with the latest religion. Our love goes forth at last to Humanity and to Earth, the home of Humanity. But there are many steps which lead us onward to this

goal. There is our first home with all its childish memories, our native village where many a farm, cottage, church, spire, ancient tree, flowing stream, is knit to our affections with ties that are never broken. We pass into the world and tread the soil of our country. That soil becomes sacred to us; the flag, symbol of its unity, stirs more enthusiasm when the time calls for it than the Australian ever felt for his *Churinga*.[1] We overstep our country's boundaries, and visit friendly lands from whom we have received precious produce of all sorts—food for body and soul. Memories of bitter strife are drowned in memories of fellowship and kindness. Their shrines become our shrines; Rome, Paris, Athens, Jerusalem, Weimar, Washington, are added to our inheritance. Their mountains become ours, their rivers ours.

Poets and painters have given voice to these emotions. "He is made one with Nature," says Shelley of Adonais.[2] Wordsworth has made his hills, lakes, and skies as sacred to us as Westminster Abbey. Flower-worship is more widely diffused now among rich and poor, among wise and ignorant, than in any former age. Despite the hideousness of modern suburbs—nay, because of our growing hatred of their hideousness—we are at one with the Japanese in readiness for festivals of spring flowers. Thus the highest and the lowest phases of faith are brought together. To endow the world around us with human emotions is the religion of the savage. It will become—it is even now becoming—the religion of the civilized man. And when we cease to "think imperially," and turn away deliberately from conquest of our fellow man to peaceful dominion over the earth, we shall deal with dead matter more gently than conquerors have dealt with living men. Gardens will outnumber factories, the green life of plants and trees will not be blasted by chemical fumes, the refuse of bleach-works and dye-works will cease to blacken our streams.

We are in close contact with four or five Asiatic civilizations differing widely from each other, and from our own. We are in touch with Islam, with the faith and ritual of Brahma and of Buddha, with the ancestor-worship of China and Japan. Which of all these worshippers will find it easiest to rise to the mental level of the Western nations? Recent events[3] would seem to point to those populations who have escaped the formidable difficulties

[1] The *churinga* is a soul-token or amulet of wood or stone used by the Arunta nation of Central Australia.—ED.

[2] *Adonais*, xlii.—ED.

[3] Written in 1905.—ED.

with which theism has encumbered modern thought, and who may pass with hardly a break from the worship of the spirits of the dead to the worship of Humanity.

IX

THE DAY OF ALL THE DEAD[1]

THE year that comes to its end to-night will be remembered in the world's history for two events of supreme importance: the establishment of Japan as one of the Great Powers, and the awakening of Russia from a condition of torpid despotism to constitutional freedom. Each of these events has already reacted, and will for a long time continue to react, upon opinion throughout the world in many ways. Let us examine the first of them.

During the last three centuries the conviction has been firmly established that the Eastern nations of the world were subordinate to the Western; and that the superiority of the West was connected, in some way, not always very clearly defined, with its acceptance of Christianity. In former times such a belief would have been impossible. The rivalry of Christianity with Islam endured for many centuries, until, a century after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, the long strife was finally settled at the battle of Lepanto.[2] Since then the leading Powers of the world have been exclusively Christian; the non-Christian East has been, in one way or other, subordinate to the Christian West; has been understood to stand on a lower level of civilization and power.

The truth underlying this conception was, not that the West was made strong by Christianity, but that it inherited from the Græco-Roman world the germs of science and industry, which, when developed in the sixteenth and succeeding centuries, became the source of modern civilization. Through the Arabs, Western Europe received the results of Greek astronomy. Roman imperialism gave birth to mediæval feudalism, and the replacement of slavery by serfage, and, ultimately, by free labour. The inventions of the

[1] An Address delivered in Essex Hall, London, on December 31, 1905. It was first published in the *Positivist Review* of April, 1906, and was reprinted in *Essays and Addresses* (1907).—ED.

[2] 1571.—ED.

compass, of gunpowder, of printing, the geographical discoveries of Vasco da Gama and Columbus, and, finally, the tremendous impulse to thought given by Copernicus and Galileo, opened to the world a new era, which, as we can now see, was destined to bring about the unification of the nations under the Religion of Humanity.

The first fruit of this new era has been the uplifting of Japan to the level of the Western nations. The process seemed to superficial onlookers unexpected and sudden. In reality its foundation had been long prepared and deeply laid. An ancient and coherent civilization, built up from units of great individual energy, strengthened by long periods of internal struggle, in which a type of character had been developed, recalling the noblest examples of our own mediæval chivalry, was ready to receive the results of Western science and industry, without sacrifice of its own original powers. Japan adopted our law, our medicine, our marvellous mechanical appliances, our methods of self-defence by land and sea. She never for a moment abandoned her resolution to uphold the independence of her tribunals, and to rid herself at the earliest moment of the incubus of foreign law-courts in her cities, which hitherto had been the symbol of Western ascendancy in Eastern countries.

What is the religion of Japan? If we look into it closely, we see that one constituent of it, the most ancient, and, perhaps, not the least potent, is a development of the simple nature-worship and ancestor-worship common to all primitive nations. It has much in common with the religion of China, with the religion of primitive Rome, with the religion of ancient Israel, before the establishment of monotheocracy. Shinto, thus it is called, is a genuine product of Japanese soil. Its Pantheon is crowded with a host of deities; every stream, every mountain, every tree, has its god or goddess; every hero, every ancestor, has his place in the Shinto theocracy. Its creed may be summed up in two sentences: belief in the continued existence, real though shadowy, of the dead; and belief in the sacred origin and character of the occupant of the throne.

If we would see this religion in action, I know no better way than to quote from the description given by the correspondent of the *Standard* of the ceremonial that took place on June 20, 1904, at the funeral service performed in the presence of the First Japanese Army in memory of those who fell in the battles fought at the crossing of the Yalu River:—

The priest stood on the mountain-side facing the multitude. In his uplifted hand was a pine branch hung with strips of white paper, emblems of the soul's purity. Thrice the branch swept the air above the bowed heads in the plain below. The simplicity of this act of purification, the silence of the vast congregation, the beauty of the scene, all combined to fill with awe and reverence the alien spectator as well as the native worshipper. Behind the priest, on a green mound, was the sanctuary, an oblong enclosure hung with symbolic banners, white, blue, yellow, black, and red. The High Priest drew near to the altar, and, bowing before it, took from his breast a scroll, from which he recited these words :—

"I, Hirokage Shimizu, Shinto priest, reverently speak to the souls of Lieutenant Jiro Takuma and other officers and soldiers who died in the battle of the Yalu and elsewhere, inviting them to approach the altar which we have erected at the foot of Mount Teisen, beyond the walls of Feng-huang-cheng. When friendly ties were broken, and we came to the Russians with weapons in our hands, you marched to the front with the First Army, knowing that this was the hour of sacrifice and duty. Bravely did you endure hardship and privation on sea and land, on mountain and in valley. On the first day in May you came to the Yalu and fought with admirable courage amid hail of bullet and flash of bayonet. Some of you did excellent service in the work of road and bridge building and transport. All of you helped to achieve that brilliant victory which has added lustre to the Empire and renown to the army. Here we would willingly tell again the story of that battle and talk over the future; but, alas, you are separated from us by the dark veil of death. We cannot see your brave faces, nor hear your cheerful voices. Deeply do we feel this separation. More than worldly honour have you won. Your spirits will be for ever with the gods who guard the Empire, and your name will be cherished as an example of loyalty. Our General and we desire to pay our respects to your loyal souls by this memorial service, and by offerings reverently laid upon the altar."

It would seem, then, that men, not isolated heroes only of surpassing worth, but men in the mass, men by the thousand and the million, may be roused to heroic endurance and absolute self-sacrifice quite apart from any transcendent prospects of a personal future inspired by supernatural belief. It has long been matter of common knowledge that the Hebrews, till a very late period of their history, had no belief in a future state. The three hundred who fell with Leonidas at Thermopylæ were assuredly stirred to their immortal deed by something more potent than the worship of Zeus, or Artemis, or Hera. The poet's epitaph on their grave was just this

one simple word: "Stranger, tell the Lacedaemonians that we lie here in obedience to their commands."[1] "Winning inextinguishable fame for their beloved fatherland," he says elsewhere, "they clad themselves with the dark cloud of death. They died, but they are not dead. Valour leads them up with glory from the house of Hades."[2] The more closely we look into it the more clearly we shall see that what has brought men to their highest level has been the bond that united man with man. Trace history throughout, and we shall find that this is true. Pass from Greece to Rome, thence to the history of the Crusades, and onwards to the history of the Revolution. We shall see that, as the elder Pliny said, "where man helps man, there is God."[3] There is the force that raises man above himself and lifts him to the highest level of manhood.

We have been led to these thoughts by considering the first of the two great events of the last year—the outcome of Japanese valour and Japanese religion, resulting in the admission of a new member into the commonalty of great nations. Let us turn now to the second: the struggle of Russia to awake from the torpor of despotic autocracy, and to take her place among free self-governing commonwealths. One or two prefatory words, by way of briefly surveying the problem. Russia is a new country; new by comparison with Western Europe, new by comparison with the two established governments of the Far East—China and Japan. She did not pass through the renovating discipline of Roman conquest. She was left outside the spiritual dominion of the mediæval Popes. Imagine Latin and Teutonic Europe, between the fifth and twelfth centuries, deprived of the moral discipline of men like Benedict, Bede, Boniface, Alfred, Charlemagne, Hildebrand, and St. Bernard, and we realize what the Slavonic world has been through all those centuries. Its religion was the second-rate form of Christianity that was left in England when Henry VIII had made himself Head of the Church. The separation of spiritual from temporal power, of Church from State, is the first condition of freedom. That freedom Russia has never possessed. The deposition of the Procurator of the Holy Synod from his power to suppress the slightest sign of spiritual independence in the remotest village of the Empire is the surest and most signal proof of the momentous importance of the crisis that is now being decided. "Through much tribulation," it

[1] Epigram by Simonides of Ceos, the Greek lyric poet.—ED.

[2] Also by Simonides, but it was written with reference to the Lacedæmonians who died at Platæa, not to those who fell at Thermopylæ.—ED.

[3] *Deus est mortali juvare mortalem.* See p. 281 (note 2).—ED.

was said of old, "must ye enter the kingdom." And fearful is the tribulation through which Russia is now passing, and has yet to pass. We can but stand by and look on as the struggle advances, and the smoke of battle becomes darker and more dense; confident that a highly-gifted race which has been slowly assimilating the science and thought of the West, which has already produced great men of science, great thinkers, great artists, great musicians, will win through to the daylight and to the blessings of peace. Her bravest blood during these past years has been shed like water; but it will not have fallen to the ground in vain. Her dead will sanctify and ennoble the living and the yet unborn.

We meet to-night to celebrate the Festival of the Dead[1]; the dead of every degree and rank and worth. Other days are set apart for the commemoration of saints and heroes, those who are in a special sense the types and representatives of Humanity—the great poets, the great thinkers, the great rulers, the great spiritual guides. We are not thinking to-night so much of Shakespeare or of Aristotle, or of Cæsar and Cromwell, of St. Paul, of St. Augustine and St. Francis, of Moses, Mohammed, Confucius, and the marvellous Indian Prince[2] who regenerated the Asiatic world, as of the vast mass of men who have worked and toiled without fame or distinction, and the fruit of whose labours we inherit and enjoy. We think of the millions of workmen who, from the days of the Romans to the present time, made our roads, cleared our forests, drained our marsh lands, built and rebuilt our towns and villages, from century to century; of the women who bore and nursed their children, and ministered to their daily wants, kept alive the mother-tongue, handed on traditions, customs, legends, rules of life. These "fear no more the heat o' the sun, nor the furious winter's rages; they their earthly task have done; home have gone and ta'en their wages."[3] The kindly earth holds them. Yet the payment of

[1] As this paper is entitled "The Day of All the Dead," it is necessary to remind the reader that the word *All* must not be taken to mean all human beings without exception who have lived upon the earth. It means only those who have co-operated in some way, however humbly or slightly, in the building-up of the great social organism of Humanity. Only such persons really form a true part of Humanity, and the eighty-one Festivals of Comte's Table represent the various aspects of her Life. The word *All* merely emphasizes the difference between the General Day of the Dead and the other days of the historic Calendar devoted to individual men and women of special eminence. Comte himself in his Table uses the expression "Fête universelle des Morts," which might be translated "A General Commemoration of the Dead." See on this subject pp. 225, 276 of this volume, and p. 53 of the *Positivist Catechism*.—ED.

[2] Buddha.—ED.

[3] Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, act iv, sc. 2, slightly paraphrased.—ED.

wages does not settle the matter, does not wind up the account. Their work, or the fruit of their work, remains; and is gathered in by us who follow them. Such is the vast assemblage of the Dead with whom we place ourselves in communion to-night. Let me quote Dr. Ingram's beautiful words:—

> Not only those by household memories
> Link'd with our lives, for whom, on bended knees,
> Daily we yearn, and tears not seldom shed—
> Nor only the great spirits who have led
> Man's upward march to nobler destinies,
> Whose record in Fame's golden book is read—
> We reverence to-day; not only these,
> But all, in whatsoever age or clime
> (Albeit the names of most the unpitying Hours
> Have hid for ever in the abyss of time),
> Who, faithful, patient, helpful, strove to be,
> And so, while worshipping imagin'd Powers,
> True service did, Humanity! to Thee.[1]

The Festival of the Dead, supplemented in every fourth year by the Festival of Noble Women, terminates the list of eighty-one festivals which constitute Auguste Comte's ideal picture of the public worship of Humanity.[2] It may be well to look a little more closely into the arrangement of these festivals; frankly admitting that the realization of the scheme is reserved for a distant future. Yet, regarded as an Utopia, it will be found to throw light on the structure and the life of the great Organism of which each of us is a member. The festivals fall into three groups. The first group, occupying the first six of the thirteen lunar months—that is to say, twenty-four weeks—deals with the fundamental bonds of society, that is, with the elementary social relations. The year begins with the greatest of all festivals, that which presents the idealization of our highest hopes and aspirations—the Festival of Humanity. When our numbers permit—and this may be sooner than we think—this day will probably be the first to offer an adequate combination of the resources of music and poetry with the synthetic thoughts that naturally belong to the greatest of our festivals.

[1] This is the sonnet entitled *A Positivist Solemnity*, the first line of which—"Now dawns the sacred day of All the Dead"—was not quoted by Dr. Bridges. The sonnet will be found on p. 54 of J. K. Ingram's *Sonnets and other Poems*. (A. and C. Black; 1900.) It was included, with three others by Dr. Ingram, in the collection of Hymns and Poems entitled *Service of Man*, ed. by Mrs. F. Harrison, of which a new ed. was published by the Positivist Society in 1905. —ED.

[2] See p. 331 (note 2).

The four Sundays of the first month are given to the various degrees of Social Union. The first to the religious bond, independent of political ties. The faiths of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, unite many nations, which, politically, are wide apart and often hostile, by the tie of a common Church. Next in order comes the territory which unites small States by the memories of the larger political aggregate to which they once belonged: those memories being strengthened in most cases by the bond of a common language. The memory of a common origin and history, and the possession of a common language, is a strong bond of union for England with English Colonies and with the once hostile commonwealth of the United States. When Italy becomes a federation of small republics these will still be knit together by the language of Dante. On the third Sunday in this month the State, properly so called, will be commemorated: the great historical City—as, for instance, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Edinburgh, Rouen, Bordeaux, Florence, with the smaller towns and territory belonging to each; calling forth all the historic memories and all the political energy and social enthusiasm so keenly felt where prominent citizens are well known to all their fellows, and where the deadening lust of conquest and empire is powerless to penetrate. Finally, the fourth Sunday of the month is given to the humblest form of social union, that of the village or township: in which each member of the community is brought into the close fellowship of neighbourhood.

The festivals of the next five months are suggested by the intimate ties of Family Life—the union of husband and wife, the relation of parents to children, of children to parents, the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood, the bond of master and servant. In the third chapter of the second volume of his *Positive Polity*,[1] Comte dwells in detail on the great principle that family life is the preparatory school of ethics: the spontaneous source of our moral education. In no other department of thought does he diverge more completely from the current views of most social reformers, who are for taking education more and more out of the hands of parents and transferring it to the community. But Society, Comte tells us, is not made up of individuals. It is made up of families.[2]

The Family is the natural transition between pure personality and true sociability. The affections which it calls into play are not without alloy. They have, always more or less marked, an

[1] *Pos. Pol.*, vol. ii, pp. 155-60.—ED.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 152-53.—ED.

element of Self, and from this they derive their peculiar energy. The educational work of the family begins with the forced submission of the infant at birth. This grows to respect and veneration for parents. On this grow the affections of brotherhood and sisterhood; and, at last, come the voluntary ties of marriage and of children. Looked at politically, we may speak of the family as the smallest of political societies, consisting essentially of the couple by which it is founded; but extended by the filial, fraternal, and domestic ties. From it we derive our best and surest insight into human nature. Speaking generally, the members of our family are the only beings whom we ever learn fully to know. And this even though our judgment be sometimes partial. It is said that love is very often blind. But we should remember that hate is blind invariably, and with more baneful consequences. We may admit that family life is exposed to the danger of promoting an aggregate selfishness. But this is a danger which attaches to all communities less than Humanity, whether large or small. A great part of history is occupied by fierce struggles of opposing patriotisms; yet who will say that patriotism is ignoble? We must face this danger as well as we can. But before everything we must arouse the instincts of sympathy from their original torpor, whatever may be the danger of their receiving at one time or other a mischievous bias.

We must bear in mind that Comte looked forward to certain important changes in family life which would bring it into fuller accordance with social needs. One of these is the frank and full recognition of domestic service as an element of the family. This clashes sharply with the modern revolutionary temper. If we wish to rise above the habitual disregard of such service as degrading, we have to go back to the Middle Age, and think of the motto, *Ich dien*, so proudly adopted by the Prince of Wales in the fourteenth century. Another change was Comte's enlarged view of inheritance. To the bulk of a rich man's fortune his children, he considered, had no necessary claim. Capital is a trust to be handed down to those most fit to preserve and increase it; and the most fit will often be found outside the range of blood relationship. Adoption of a capable successor will often supersede inheritance by the natural tie.

On the sound constitution of the family depend the health and vigour of the community. The festivals of these five months bring into prominence all the phases of private life that are treated, wisely or unwisely, in the modern novel.

We pass, then, in the twenty-fifth week of the year, to the

review of the past phases in the history of Humanity, which have prepared the way to her present and future state. These phases connect themselves with the three successive stages of belief—Fetishism, Polytheism, Monotheism.

Here we note at once that Fetishism for the first time receives due honour as the primal phase in this great story; honour which could not be paid in the Calendar commemorative of great men, for the great men of Fetishism have passed away from us without a sign. Four festivals are celebrated in the month of Fetishism, marking four essential steps in human history. When they were taken we know not; we can but note their fundamental importance. The taming of Animals, the invention of Fire, the worship of the Sun, as the prime regulator of the seasons and of social institutions, and the use of Iron for weapons of war and for implements of industry.

Fetishism was followed by Polytheism; and in the Polytheistic month we celebrate, first, its conservative stage, the great theocracies of Egypt, Babylonia, India, Peru, not forgetting its fundamental institution of Caste, the great school of apprenticeship and discipline in the arts of life; and, next, the progressive polytheism of Greece and Rome. To Greece two weeks are devoted. In the first honour is paid to the three chief names in poetry and art—Homer, Æschylus, and Phidias. In the second week the founders of philosophy and science are celebrated—Thales, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Archimedes, Apollonius, and Hipparchus. And the great struggle, without which these men could never have been, is summed up in the word—Salamis. Three names—Scipio, Cæsar, Trajan—suffice to immortalize the social achievements of Rome in government and law.

Of the month of Monotheism the first week is given to Judaic theocracy, represented in the three types of Abraham, Moses, and Solomon; the second week to Catholicism. St. Paul, its founder, is followed by Charlemagne, Alfred, Hildebrand, Godfrey, and St. Bernard. The third week is that of Islam and its founder, special mention being made of the great battle[1] that ended the military strife between Islam and its great rival—the battle in which Cervantes was a soldier. The last week is consecrated to the Western revolution in its entirety, the period at once organic and critical in which political anarchy went side by side with reconstruction, bringing out the immediate elements of the final system,

[1] Lepanto, 1571.—ED.

both in the spiritual and temporal order. Dante, Descartes, and Frederick are taken as the types of this revolutionary and reconstructive movement.

The festivals of the last four of the thirteen months display Humanity as a living and acting force, as a superintending Providence, as our shelter and protectress against the dangers and fatalities of life. Of Positive Religion, Love is the Principle.[1] With that we begin. A mother's love is the surrounding atmosphere of our early life; the love of wife, sister, daughter, follows; and these implant the memories which keep alive the hopes and the affections which save us from moral death. Love is not limited "to its more vehement and selfish forms, the desire of youth for beauty, the consuming love of the mother for the infant." It leads beyond these to "the tranquil and purer manifestations of the spirit, the love of a father for a son, of a friend for a friend; that love which can light up a face upon the edge of the dark river, and can smile in the very throes of pain." Such love is "the only thing which holds out a tender defiance against change and suffering and death." "If we desire and endeavour not to sin against love, not to nourish hate or strife, to hold out the hand again and again to any message of sympathy or trust, not to struggle for our own profit, not to reject tenderness, to believe in the good faith and the goodwill of men; we are then in the way. We may make mistakes, we may fail a thousand times; but the key of heaven is in our hands."[2] Of this all-protecting, all-providing love, woman is the source and centre. Who does not feel that, when the time comes for disbanding armies and for uniting the diminished navies of the world into a single fleet for the police of the seas, that women will have taken a leading part in bringing that time near? In this tenth month special note will be taken of private meditation and prayer as the means of keeping alive the influences of Home by due recognition of those who have called out and strengthened the springs of character and moral life.

The eleventh month brings before us the Intellectual Providence of Humanity. In the preceding month we deal with the affections by which action is prompted. In this month we are encouraged to think, in order to act wisely. A special Festival of Art is placed here; and also a Festival of Science. Passion for ideal beauty, strenuous search for the profoundest and highest truth, will be fostered

[1] See p. 39 (note), also p. 317 (note).

[2] The passages quoted are from pp. 169–71 of *The Upton Letters*. By A. C. Benson; 1905.—ED.

by the Religion of Humanity, and animated to new life, not left as heretofore to casual and isolated efforts. Yet these things, precious as they are, will be held subordinate to the training of the young lives of each generation, and to the guidance of grown men and women in the intricate problems and the new forms of social struggle which each century is sure to bring. Intellectual energy, like mechanical energy, is in constant risk of dissipation. Waste of it is always going on; and yet of all the treasures that Humanity has at her disposal it is the most important to economize. There is none too much of it. Our educating providence will guard us against the ever-recurring temptation to indulge in the discussion of insoluble problems, the spinning of endless conjectures as to the origin of matter, as to space of four dimensions, as to the abstract rights of man, as to the immortality of the soul, and will concentrate our thought on the essential task of making private and public life more perfect. During this month the most ancient form of spiritual power, that which is exercised by the old men of the primitive tribe, will be specially celebrated.[1]

In the twelfth month the holders of capital will be seen in their true place as Captains of Industry.[2] To realize the providential character of their great social function, we have only to call to mind the disasters following on the absence of wisdom in the management of capital. When avarice or mad ambition drives the capitalist to rash and foolhardy adventures, ending in chaos, what shipwreck of happiness to millions, what diffusion of universal mistrust, what floodgates of ill-will unfastened! Within due measure capital must be concentrated, and there must be personal responsibility for its use. To imagine that complicated operations in the financial world (and on this all other industrial operations depend) can be conducted by casual committees chosen by an ignorant democracy is one of the wildest hallucinations that ever deluded mankind.

And, finally, the thirteenth and last month of the Positivist year brings before us the dependence of each one of us on the entire assemblage of our fellow-citizens. Here, again, what we owe to those who work faithfully is brought home to us by the few who are false to their trust. An uncemented drain-pipe, letting fever into a household; a plate on a railway loosely laid; a signal missed or misinterpreted; a safety lamp in a coal mine neglected; a girder in a bridge badly painted; bad brickwork; bad gasfitting; bad plumb-

[1] In the Festival of Old Men.—ED.
[2] This month also has a special Festival, that of the Knights.—ED.

ing—all such things pointing to the countless evils that follow when the sentinel of the industrial army is asleep at his post—do but emphasize the enormous preponderance of cases when he does not sleep; when, by his care and faithful work, each one of us is saved from destruction and danger. Two festivals adorn this last of the months. First, the Festival of Inventors,[1] many of them workmen, very few of them either philosophers or capitalists, who, possessing a few elements of theoretical knowledge, large practical experience, and vigorous imagination, devise new forms of applying and economizing force, and thus help mankind forward to the mastery of the world. Again, in the Festival of St. Francis, with whose followers may be joined in our thoughts the memory of the mendicant in Scott's *Antiquary*, we have recognition of lives unfit for any special industrial office, debarred from the scientific eminence that would have given them spiritual ascendancy, yet capable, in their poverty and dependence, of exercising beneficent influence on those around them.

And then, at the end of all, we commemorate the Dead of all nations and tongues, of every place, every station—thinkers, rulers, workmen, mother, wife, child—all who have lived, have loved, have wrought, have left memories behind them, which, on this last night of the year, we call back to life. We do not judge; we leave that high function to others. We think of the two rivers in Dante's "Earthly Paradise"—the river of forgetfulness, the river of goodwill.[2] We bathe in the first, which wipes all memories away. We drink of the second, which restores the happy memories, the remembrance of bright companionship, of kind and friendly service. These last friends we judge not; but it may be that we judge ourselves. We may think that we might have done more to make their lives happy; we might have uttered the forgiving word, for want of which it may be that a taint of bitterness stayed with them to the end. Irrevocable Death forbids this now. All the more shall we widen and strengthen our sympathies for the future, for those who remain with us still. Never let us forget that our chief purpose in holding communion with the Dead is that we may feel, think, and act more justly and more kindly towards the Living.

[1] Typified by Gutenberg, Columbus, Vaucanson, Watt, and Montgolfier. —ED.

[2] *Purgatorio*, canto xxviii, 121–32.—ED.

PART IV

POLITICS

Chapter I

POLITICS AND THE DARWINIAN THEORY

I

DARWINISM IN POLITICS[1]

Nearly thirty years ago a few Positivists published a book on the foreign policy of England.[2] It dealt with the constitution of Western Europe, with the alliance then firmly established between France and England, with the British claim to dominion of the sea, with our relations with India, China, and Japan, and, lastly, with our contact with uncivilized races. The book was criticized; but the criticism was not all unfavourable. It achieved some practical results. Positivists found willing and energetic co-operators in their protests against atrocious cruelties to negroes in Jamaica.[3] They joined with Bright and Cobden, but on widely different principles, in resisting war with China, which was then in the throes of the Tai-ping rebellion,[4] and offered to ambitious Anglo-Indians a promising field for annexation. From all meetings of workmen their views on these and the like questions met with enthusiastic response. The case being now quite otherwise, it seems worth while to ask ourselves the reason why. It is said that Englishmen never know when they are beaten. If this were true, it would show courage; but not the best kind of courage, for that is to admit the fact of defeat, to find the reason for it, and so, forewarned and forearmed, to make ready for a new struggle with better weapons. Positivists will do well frankly to admit that for the present their hopes of seeing satisfactory relations established with foreign nations, civilized or barbarous, have received a very severe check. An exception may be made in the case of China, who, notwithstanding a long series of outrageous attacks partially neutralized by the unselfish heroism of Gordon, has shown herself able, as we

[1] February, 1894.

[2] *International Policy*. Essays on the Foreign Relations of England. 1866. 2nd ed., 1884. (Chapman and Hall.)—Ed.

[3] During the insurrection of 1865, under the governorship of Eyre.—Ed.

[4] 1850-64.—Ed.

foretold that she would be able, to defend her independence, and who now offers us a cheap defence against Russia. Everywhere else, in Burma, in Baluchistan, in New Guinea—above all, in Africa, East, West, North, and South—there have been aggression, annexation, and what follows annexation: an enormous increase of our navy, accompanied by increasing danger of war with our great naval rival. Forty years ago, not merely were we at peace with France, but there was a very effective Anglo-French alliance, which, though subject to occasional shocks, yet remained on the whole intact, till our fatal occupation of Egypt.[1] This alliance has long since disappeared, and a Russo-French alliance has taken its place.

Why and how has this change come about? The political stages of it are not difficult to trace. The Italian war of 1859 roused German jealousies of France. These jealousies found a partial issue in the combination of Austria and Prussia against Denmark a few years later. The Schleswig-Holstein triumph was speedily followed by the quarrel between the victors, ending in the union of North Germany under Prussia. After Königgrätz[2] war with France became certain. The occupation of French provinces by German troops became, and still remains, the most prominent and obvious source of European disorder, as the Editor of the *Positivist Review* has repeatedly pointed out.[3] Since then the manhood of continental Europe has turned half its ploughshares into swords. England, flattering herself that she could stand apart, and, under the shelter of Franco-German rivalry, found an African empire unassailed, is being driven to an inordinate increase of her navy in face of a declining trade, of ruined agriculture, of an unexampled crowding of half-instructed and dissatisfied masses in large towns, of Irish disaffection, of systematic propagation of the Socialist Utopia. These are some of the most obvious conditions which are now disheartening such political observers as are not convinced of the omnipotence of Parliaments, be they ever so democratic, to provide effective remedies for social evils.

These, however, are the outward symptoms only. The egoistic factors in man's life are constant quantities, or nearly so. Unscrupulous politicians, mercantile adventurers of the Phœnician type, men greedy for blood and pillage—whether within or without the limits of the law—have abounded before, and may abound again. Progress is not uniform, and the sooner we recognize this elementary

[1] 1882 [2] 1866

[3] See the *Positivist Review* of February, 1893, for an address by Professor Beesly on "The Causes of Modern Militarism."—ED.

truth of social dynamics the better it will be for us. There have been Nimrods and Attilas, Phœnician and Norse pirates, Elizabethan and Spanish buccaneers, at frequent intervals in the world's history. And the hunters of Matabele are only worse than these because they carry bishops along with them, and clothe their atrocities with the cant of civilization. But, though passions and instincts of this sort are constant factors in human affairs, they are not always dominant factors. To use a biological expression, they are sometimes *inhibited* by other influences. Christianity was such an influence when St. Ambrose drove Theodosius from his church because of the massacre of Thessalonica, or when St. Bernard denounced the persecution of the Jews in the Second Crusade. It had changed its character in the sixteenth century, when the Mexican and Peruvian kingdoms were destroyed under the pretext of promoting it; and it became nugatory as a public force in the nineteenth, when an Archbishop of Canterbury could advise his clergy to refrain from denouncing the opium trade, when missionaries are paving the way for the importation into Eastern and Southern Africa of every vice of Western civilization, and when all religious parties, so Mr. Cecil Rhodes on January 6 of this year assured the people of Cape Town, could approve of the extermination of the Matabele. Christianity, regarded as a force operative on private life and conduct, is not dead—very far from it. In this respect, though far from being all that its supporters claim, it has a long future before it. But as a force determining the collective action of States its vitality is gone. Looked at from the political side, the stronghold of Theism is no longer in the Christian world, but in the Mohammedan. And it is precisely against Mohammedanism that every section of the European invaders of Africa—missionaries, merchants, and military adventurers—are now agreed to fight.

It remains nevertheless true that men are not governed on the whole by their baser interests. They are governed in the long run by ideas—though Englishmen, of all nations in the world, are the slowest to believe it. One of their superiorities to the rest of the world consists, they think, in their conviction that theory has very little to do with practice. We all of us know, and meet every day of our lives, the man who says, "All that is very well in theory; but I am a practical man, and"—we know the rest. Such a man is not wholly wrong. No theory is convertible into practice by a stroke of the pen. On the other hand, he is never wholly right. Men cannot do without a theory, whether they are conscious or not

of holding it. Scornful rejection of theory as an agent in human affairs means very often blind acceptance of a false theory—in other words, slavery to prejudice.

It would sound paradoxical, for instance, to class the appearance in 1859 of Darwin's *Origin of Species* as among important political events. Yet it is not difficult to see that not even the war for Italian independence, which began in that year, can rival it in the importance of its results, when these are fairly measured.

By those who have not given much attention to the subject Darwin is looked at as the originator of the view that the various species of plants and animals branched out from a common stock by gradual processes, as opposed to the view that they arose suddenly by special acts of creative power. This, however, is very wide of the mark. Educated men (I am speaking here not of the literary culture given at our public schools and at Oxford, which sometimes usurps the name of education, but of something very different) had long ago given up the notion that lions and tigers rose up one fine morning out of the ground in the way described by Milton. Evolution, as opposed to creation, is at least as old as the middle of the last century. Buffon, Lamarck, Oken, von Baer, the poet Goethe had systematically advocated the principle, though the mode in which it worked remained to them a matter of great doubt. The hypothesis of Lamarck, which is now being actively discussed, was not generally accepted by naturalists. It was in this state of scientific opinion that Darwin and Wallace propounded their view of the particular way in which evolution took place, founded on the population theory of Malthus.

I am not now discussing the validity of this hypothesis. The point to which I am calling attention is the extreme rapidity with which it has been applied to the solution of political and social problems. Let us take one or two instances. In the *Daily Chronicle* of December 4[1] there is a report of a conversation with Dr. Wallace on the question of the emancipation of women. The conversation was long and interesting, and it would not be fair to condense it into two or three sentences. Dr. Wallace looks forward, as Positivists do, to a reformed humanity. He considers that, when women are absolutely free from all legal and social restrictions due to the "accident of sex," and when the excess of female over male population is reversed, not by killing off women, but by taking greater care of the lives of men, then the emancipated women of

[1] 1893

the future—being more free than at present not to marry, and having more men to choose from—"may be trusted to reject idle, selfish, and worthless suitors," who will thus be left without progeny. "The method by which the animal and vegetable worlds have been improved and developed has been through weeding out. The survival of the fittest is really the extinction of the unfit.....In order to cleanse society of the unfit we must give to woman the power of selection in marriage." I need not say I am not discussing Dr. Wallace's views on the position of women. I am calling attention to the way in which a biological hypothesis, proved or unproved, is made to do duty as a guide in a very complicated sociological problem. Take another instance. I was reading the other day a pamphlet on vaccination, in which the writer is contesting the expediency of compulsory infantile vaccination. He observes: "We must remember that it is the delicate, the weak, and the careless that chiefly suffer from small-pox, and that a general law removing the liability from these is promoting the survival of the unfit." Here we have exactly the same crude attempt to use a theory, intended by its authors as an explanation of certain facts of natural history, as a key to a political problem of considerable difficulty.

These two instances may suffice to illustrate the wide and varied application of the competitive theory of Evolution to matters of politics and ethics. We need not be surprised, then, at the influence exercised by the theory when it seems to flatter strong interests and selfish passions. In recent dealings with Oriental nations, and above all with African tribes, it has been operative in a very marked way. Not, of course, that the bands of civilized marauders who have been indulging in wholesale pillage and assassination south of the Zambezi trouble themselves about Mr. Darwin's hypotheses. Gold and land are what they want; the rest is leather and prunella. The way in which the Darwinian theory works is to inhibit the restraining influences at home. The white race, it is said and thought, are "fitter" than the black race. It is the course of nature that the lower race should be extinguished and the superior survive. Such is the reasoning which, consciously or unconsciously, produces in the minds of good men a certain degree of acquiescence, sometimes even active approval of wholesale assassination of brave savages with the scientific appliances of modern warfare. That Darwin and many of his followers were humane men is not to the point. Malthus was well known to be a man of great personal kindliness; but the cruel use made of his theory in administration of the Poor Law and in systematic indif-

ference to all efforts to improve the condition of the poor is notorious.

In considering the Darwinian position from the social point of view, two points must be carefully distinguished. First, the hypothesis may be valid for plants and the lower animals, and yet be inapplicable, or only partially applicable, to human affairs. Or, secondly, it may be a very incomplete hypothesis even in its own sphere of natural history. Both these points must be reserved for further consideration.[1]

II

THE DARWINIST UTOPIA[2]

A MORE startling example of the false method in sociology of which I have been lately speaking[3] can hardly be conceived than is offered by Mr. Kidd's work on *Social Evolution*,[4] which is now attracting, not without reason, wide and careful attention. Written with much vigour, using the doctrine of competitive evolution as the key to the riddle of man's past and future, it reaches some very startling conclusions, which are at any rate likely to induce some readers to reconsider the premises from which they flow.

Let us briefly set down the main positions of this book, and the results derived from them.

1. There is one cause of Progress, and one only, whether among individuals or communities: competition of variations, survival of the few successful among many failures.

2. Not merely is competitive selection necessary for progress; it is an indispensable condition for maintaining the level already reached. Once remove it, and you have the hypothetical phenomenon indicated by Darwin's successor, Weismann, called *panmixia—i.e.*, the degeneracy that, according to this writer, occurs when all variations, favourable or unfavourable, have an equal chance of propagating themselves. For, though variations in this case will continue to occur in all directions, yet a greater number, so Weismann asserts,

[1] The first point was dealt with by Dr. Bridges in the next two papers, the second point being the subject of the paper on "The Darwinian Controversy" in Part I.—ED.

[2] July, 1894.

[3] Dr. Bridges refers to the preceding paper on "Darwinism in Politics."—ED.

[4] *Social Evolution*, by B. Kidd. (Macmillan and Co.; 1894.)—ED.

will occur in a downward than in an upward direction. Hence the structures and organs elaborated in the course of evolution will gradually disappear, and the species will revert to the primitive stock from which it sprang.

3. Social organisms are but higher forms of life. Their laws of growth are in the main identical with those of the lower forms. They, like other organisms, are in a state of perpetual struggle. There are more of them than there is adequate room for. Those of them which in the course of generations develop variations that give them an advantage over their rivals survive. The others perish.

4. The variations which give such an advantage are those which induce individual units to sacrifice their own comfort and happiness for the good of the community.

5. Here comes into view a fundamental antagonism between the interests of individuals and the interests of societies, which is intensified by every advance in the increase and the diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as men become more enlightened and desirous of securing the comfort of their own lives and of those immediately connected with them, will they be anxious to put an end to that state of internecine competition between societies on which, nevertheless, if Darwin and Weismann be right, all progress depends. They will set before themselves an ideal of peace, of social justice, of restricted competition, of control over the spontaneous growth of population, of harmony between the interests of each man and the interests of state. This ideal, could it be realized, would involve the cessation of progress, since progress rests on competition, and ultimately the relapse into savagery. It will be pursued none the less; since men will never willingly consent to the continuance of a state of things in which, to use Mr. Huxley's words, "amidst a large and increasing body of the population of all the great industrial centres, *la misère* reigns supreme;.....in which, with every addition to the population, the multitude already sunk in the pit, and the number of the host sliding towards it, continually increase."[1] Mr. Charles Booth has recently told us that "of thirty-seven districts of London, each with a total population of over 30,000, and containing altogether 1,179,000 persons, the proportion in poverty in no case falls below forty per cent, and in some of them it reaches sixty per cent."[2] If this state of things be a condition of social pro-

[1] Quoted by Mr. Kidd from *Social Diseases and Worse Remedies;* 1891; pp. 32–33.—ED.

[2] Quoted by Mr. Kidd from *Labour and Life of the People;* 1891.—ED.

gress, men will never willingly consent that their own lives and the lives of those dear to them should be miserable for the sake of a distant future which they will never see.

6. The central fact in progressive societies being "that the interests of the social organism and those of the individuals comprising it at any time are inherently and essentially irreconcilable,"[1] what is the factor that maintains progress? That factor, Mr. Kidd asserts, is Religion. The forms and phases of Religion are infinite; but there is one character common to them all. The motives and sanctions given by Religion to the actions and beliefs which it involves are ultra-rational. From the rudest fetishism to the most highly organized form of Christianity, from belief in ghosts to belief in the Trinity, the same fact strikes us. A religion without supernatural foundations has never yet existed, and never will exist. For that name is not to be claimed by isolated groups or schools gathered round some doctrine or some philosophic name; it can only be given to a faith appealing to the hearts and governing the actions of men of all sorts and conditions. "Of forms of belief intended to regulate conduct in which super-rational sanction has no place, none," says Mr. Kidd, "has *proved* itself to be a religion; none of them can so far claim to have influenced and moved large masses of men in the manner of a religion."[2] A scientific religion is a contradiction in terms. For the function of religion is to induce men to submit to restrictions, and to engage in courses of action which are directly contrary to their individual interests and to those of their own generation, but which are favourable to the ultimate survival and progress of the community to which they belong. Science and reason, on the other hand, lead men to do the best they can for their own immediate well-being and for those of their fellow-men in whom they can take a personal interest. Therefore, between Science and Religion there is an implacable antagonism—a gulf which cannot be crossed.

7. The most important fact in the history of Social Evolution is the rise and progress of Christianity. Its importance consists in this. By stimulating altruistic feeling to a degree unparalleled by any former creed, it has led to the destruction of privilege and of caste-feeling established by the Roman Empire and the feudal system. The consequence has been that, whereas the prizes of life in former times could only be gained by the few, they are now thrown every year more and more open to the many. In this way

[1] *Social Evolution*, p. 78.—ED.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 112.—ED.

the area of competition has become enormously widened. It follows that competition has become far more intense than formerly, and that it will become far intenser in the future in proportion as the disappearance of privilege and the establishment of State-supported education give every one a fair start. And as competition is the sole channel of progress, the superiority of Western nations over the rest of the planet will become more and more obvious and uncontested.

8. There are certain regions, such as Africa and the tropical parts of North and South America, in which from climatic reasons the Western man cannot work. But over these he will maintain administrative control. The destiny of these regions is administration by Western officials on the same plan which has worked so successfully in India.

Such is the vision of the future that unfolds itself to that school of evolutionists to whom competitive struggle and survival of the fittest appear the sole factor in social progress. It is not an alluring picture. Throughout all time it is fated that more human beings shall be brought into the world than there is room to maintain in decent comfort; and that the charmed circle of those who succeed shall be surrounded by the wide and dreary fringe of those who fail. Once let the competition cease, once let the number of entries for the race fall to the level of the number of prizes to be given —and progress ceases; nay, the social structure degenerates slowly but surely to the depths from which it sprang. For in every organism, individual or collective, the structures gained in the long struggle through the ages tend to disappear so soon as the competitive struggle ceases. They maintain their existence only by constant pressure of the grindstone. Such is the iron law of *panmixia* as enunciated by Weismann.

From so gloomy a destiny it might well be supposed that there would be continuous efforts to escape. Reason and intellect brought to bear on the facts of social life suggest measures for withdrawing from the competitive mill, for surrounding the social organism with such protective institutions as shall shelter it from rivalry, for refusing to bring into the world an excess of human beings for whom there are no vacant places, and who therefore must perish miserably. But though Reason and Science point this way, Religion, a more potent factor in human life, points in another; and the essential feature of Religion is to be ultra-rational, to move in a sphere where Logic and Reason have no sway.

Thus the Darwinian fabric rests ultimately on the foundation of

supernatural belief. A few philosophers may reject it; but, seeing it to be essential for the maintenance of the competitive struggle, they will come at last to acquiesce in its continuance, and will watch with equanimity the willingness with which belief in God induces men to accept a state of things of which atrocious misery is an unavoidable accompaniment. *Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer.*[1]

Against this melancholy picture of human future let us place the conception of social progress held by those who utterly disbelieve in the permanent antagonism of Religion and Science, or of the welfare of Society and that of its component units.

When the social state of primitive Man became stable and continuous, certain instincts rose to prominence which in his isolated condition had been latent or repressed. Far down in the scale of animal life we can trace, side by side with the passions of self-preservation, the impulses which inspire protection of the young, and the tendencies towards tribal gathering carried often to disregard of individual danger or death for the sake of the community.[2] In Man, as soon as his superiority to other animal races was once assured, these altruistic impulses found freer play, and were strengthened by exercise as the generations followed one another. Moreover, quite independent of inherited changes in the nervous structure of each individual, there is a progressive development of the society through accumulation of mental and material products. The growth of capital sets free large amounts of nervous energy for other things than the provision of food and clothing. The growth of language makes it possible to store up intellectual products and to strengthen the continuity of past and present generations. Man begins to form rude theories of his place in the world, and of the forces that govern him; theories which, in the absence of all knowledge, are inspired by the lowest and the highest of his emotions—fear and reverence. Purely supernatural at first, these primitive religions pass by slow degrees from the irrational and divine to the rational and human; and are finding in the present time their final issue, through the teaching of social and historic science on the one hand, and on the other through the wide-spread though vague ideal of the Christ, in the Religion of Humanity.

The inherent antagonism between Society and its units, which

[1] "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him." From a poem by Voltaire.—ED.

[2] *Cf.* pp. 79–80.—ED.

Mr. Kidd supposes, is the merest nightmare born of the crude materialism that regards the science of Man as a mere deduction from certain hypotheses of natural history unaccepted even in their own domain by many of those who know, and resting on the slenderest foundation of fact. Problems of population and heredity, which solve themselves in plants and beasts by the ordeal of fierce conflict, pass with Man into a new dispensation as different from the old as the space enclosed by a garden wall is from the wild confusion of the fields and woods around it. In the woodland the trees and grasses best adapted to the soil and climate multiply as they will and can; the less favoured ones are starved out and disappear, or hide in obscure places with stunted growth. Under the provident eye and hand of the gardener, each enjoys its proper soil and climate, and has room to grow. So will it be under the reign of Humanity when the procreation of the human race takes place under the spiritual forces of that religion to which all other modes of religion are but the precursors.

The writer of this work complains that philosophic thinkers have hitherto neglected Religion as a factor in civilization. From a critic of Auguste Comte this is a strange reproach, since in Comte's work on the structure of Society and the Philosophy of History,[1] Religion is the main subject. If he had studied that work more closely, he would see that his own conception of Religion, involving a perpetual conflict with science and a permanent antagonism between Man and Society, is a contradiction in terms. The religious state implies the harmonious action of all spiritual energies, whether of thought, feeling, or will. It implies unity within, union without: inward and outward peace. Is Mr. Kidd ready to enter any London pulpit and say, "Worship God and do his will: by so doing you and yours will be miserable, but you will promote the ultimate establishment of your race as masters of the world"?

On the whole, perhaps the most striking lesson to be learnt from this singular book is a caution against taking up the last new scientific hypothesis before facts have been found to prove or disprove it, holding it forth as a proposition from Newton's *Principia*, and using it as the basis of a new social system. The pivot on which Mr. Kidd's argument hinges is Weismann's hypothesis of *panmixia*, the view that without competition organisms would not be maintained at their present level, much less rise beyond it; that they would revert soon to more degraded forms.

[1] The *Politique Positive*.—ED.

But *panmixia* is not accepted yet even by biologists; and even if it were, it would be rash in the extreme to extend its application to human evolution, where forces of a wholly different kind come into play.

III

THE ASCENT OF MAN[1]

THERE are many signs that the exclusive ascendancy of the competitive theory of evolution to which we have been subjected during the past thirty years is drawing to a close, and that a broader and deeper theory, at once more synthetic and more sympathetic, is beginning to take its place. Not that the labours and researches of Darwin and his successors will be discarded or thrown into the background. The appearance, in 1859, of the *Origin of Species* will remain an epoch in the history of science. But the theory will be supplemented by the incorporation of other factors. Internecine competition will no longer be recognized as the sole motive force which has prepared this earth of ours for the advent of man. Far greater caution will be used in the application of the Darwinian theory to the solution of human problems. It will become more and more clear that other agencies than those of rivalry and combat have been always at work; and that these, as time goes on, tend to become increasingly prominent, until we pass under the reign of Humanity into what is practically a new dispensation—the state in which man's providence brings the forces of the material world into harmony, and renders them subservient to an ethical purpose. All this may be summed up by saying that, as men discern the narrowness of the limits within which Darwinism is useful as a key to the history of man, they will revert to the theory of human evolution put forth earlier in the nineteenth century by Auguste Comte.

An indication of this kind is given by Mr. Henry Drummond's recent book, entitled *The Ascent of Man*.[2] The author is a Spiritualist. But he has familiarized himself with the results of recent biological research, and in no way shrinks from any conclusion to which scientific investigation may lead. Let it be said at once that, in what relates to man and his position in the world,

[1] August, 1894.
[2] *The Lowell Lectures on the Ascent of Man*; 1894.—ED.