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HISTORY OF RELIGION

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OUTLINES
OF THE
HISTORY OF RELIGION

BY
JOHN K. INGRAM, LL.D.

"L'homme devient de plus en plus religieux"

—AUGUSTE COMTE

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TO
AUGUSTE COMTE,
FOUNDER OF THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY.

Vagliami il lungo studio e il grande amore,
Che m' han fatto cercar lo tuo volume.
Tu se' lo mio maestro, e il mio autore.

P R E F A C E.

THE present publication makes no claim to originality. The one object I have kept before me is to represent correctly, in an abbreviated and somewhat simplified form, the doctrine of Auguste Comte on the subject of the volume. I have followed his systematic divisions and classifications, and the order of his exposition;¹ and, when he appeared to express an idea with special aptness or force, I have often adopted his words. I have sought to include in the body of the text only what he has somewhere said in substance; when observations occurred to me, suggested by his language or seeming to illustrate his views, I have embodied them

¹ In vol. iii. of the *Politique Positive*.

in a footnote. The concluding remarks are my own, though these also are, of course, founded on his writings.

Those who are already acquainted with Comte's system may be disposed to ask why I have undertaken this task at all, since I have only reproduced in altered form what is to be found in his works. I answer, I have done it with the object of attracting to the study of those works such of my readers as have capacity and leisure for that study, and of furnishing intelligent persons who, in our busy modern life, cannot find time for personal investigation, or have not the necessary preparation for it, with such an outline of his historical doctrine as may place them at the right point of view in relation to the spiritual evolution of our race. Positivism is in the air, and is more and more attracting the attention of earnest minds. Groups of persons in different parts of the world have adopted it as their intellectual creed and their rule of life. I shall much regret if at such a time the present sketch should draw away a single student from direct inquiry into what the Master has himself said. I have

hoped that I might rather stimulate such inquiry, and, where circumstances make it difficult or impossible, might at least prevent misconception, and supply food for profitable reflection.

The work which is incumbent on us and on our immediate successors is that of bringing the modern Revolution to an end. In its historical course, it contained within it two distinct, though closely connected, movements—one, the dissolution of the old system of thought and life; the other, the social establishment of the new. The former of these operations has been, notwithstanding superficial appearances, sufficiently accomplished; the plan of the latter has been traced, but its practical realisation still lies before us. The elements of the new order had, during several centuries, been prepared by the development of scientific thought and the prevalence of industrial activity. What was then required was a general doctrine, founded on positive knowledge, capable of combining, co-ordinating, and directing the theoretical and practical sides of modern existence—of, in fact, in the largest

sense, regulating human life : in other words, a new Religion. And it is my conviction that the Religion of Humanity, founded by Auguste Comte, can alone meet this great demand, can alone acquire and maintain a universal ascendancy over public and private conduct, through a discipline of the feelings and a renovation of the intellect.

This practical mission of Positivism is often overlooked. Notwithstanding the name of the system, which places it in sharp contrast with Negativism, many people, reading what is said of it in the journals of the day, often by writers who really know very little of it, regard its doctrine as discarding Theologism and leaving a blank in its stead. That judgment properly characterises the incoherent schemes of the Revolutionary schools, but is inapplicable to Positivism, which establishes new convictions to take the place of the old. If any one supposes that its ascendancy will relax the stringency of duty or weaken moral discipline, he labours under a fundamental error. Resting on scientific truth, it will give a more solid foundation for the exercise of personal self-

control as well as for the spiritual government of society than can be derived from the now decadent forms of religious opinion. Our conduct, in the adult period of our race, must be guided by what we know, not by what we do not and cannot know. And the vague sentiments to which theologians now mainly appeal can never furnish the steady support and the effective stimulus to right action which are supplied by demonstrable beliefs.

The dissolving action of the modern Revolution, as traced in the following pages, went as far as to develop a twofold form of Deism, and this creed, in the one or the other shape, represented the condition of mind of most French, and many English, thinkers at the beginning of the nineteenth century, while some had proceeded as far as Atheism. As a permanent state of opinion, this last is more at variance with the spirit of Positivism than any theological faith, because it is purely destructive and leads only to cosmogonic and other irrational or idle speculation, carrying men away from the social and moral issues which are at once accessible and all-important. Few in our

time occupy this standpoint; the prevalent state of opinion of those Westerns who do not adhere to Christianity is that of a more or less general scepticism. Accredited writers have taken up the ground that perhaps, after all, nothing, even in the physical world, can be really known; and have presented this, according to an old and often-repeated tactic, as a reason, not for themselves accepting, but for inducing others to accept, the whole theological tradition. But in a scientific age this way of contemplating things is not likely to produce much effect, and the most notable effort towards it seems to be already discounted. The ordinary cultivated Englishman, who has parted with the 'orthodox' faith, commonly rests (if such a word may be used of a state liable to perpetual fluctuation) in the equivocal and self-contradictory form of opinion which is sometimes called Neo-, but ought rather to be named Pseudo-Christianity. This is an attempt to retain the Christian name and attitude while rejecting the Christian creed, thus depriving that religion of all that gives it any degree of logical coherence or practical efficacy, and sub-

stituting individual impressions for authoritative dogma.¹ This habit of mind, whilst it is an interesting symptom of the transition now in progress, has little claim to our indulgence, and less to our respect, for it is alike without rational and historical justification, and most commonly results from intellectual inertia or moral cowardice.

I have often thought that the atmosphere of controversy would be cleared, and mystification avoided, if those who write on these great subjects now, when not criticism but construction is the order of the day, would indicate distinctly to their readers the extent of their own beliefs. I fear a good many, by judicious reserves and adroit adjustments of phrase, pass themselves off upon us as 'orthodox' in religion who do not really accept the dogmas they seem to defend. All the circumstances of our time call for sincerity, and those who are not really in earnest had better be silent.

¹ This tone of mind has been encouraged by the temporary vogue of the writings of Renan, in which, along with much that is ingenious and even just, there is a general absence of rigorous logic, and a pervading flavour of sickly sentimentality, which, in the end, in spite of the charm of his style, become repellent to a strong intellect and a healthy taste.

Any one who understands his age must see that we have come to an *impasse*—that without a change at once in our point of view and our policy no really important, or even solid, results can be achieved in the social and moral sphere—that nothing can be realised beyond *motus in circulo*. And not only so, but doubt is sapping all foundations, and many of the most precious acquisitions of our race are imperilled by subversive utopias. They cannot be preserved without a rational system of belief; only a scientific doctrine of human nature and society, and, associated with this, a new affective culture and practical régime, can avert the deluge.

Some of those who, whilst unfriendly to Positivism, do not feel themselves able to confute its claims, are fond of representing it as premature, and proposing to postpone the consideration of it until Science and History have completed the investigations in which during our time they have been engaged. Our notions of the world, it is said, will be modified by further inquiry, and our views of the past will be altered by the discovery of documents of various kinds which have hitherto escaped

observation. The time for a new synthesis, it is inferred, has not yet arrived. This way of speaking may impose on some who do not understand the present situation of the human mind. But the premises thus suggested do not lead to the conclusion which it is sought to draw from them. The *one* necessary condition of the production of a definitive synthesis was the establishment of each of the seven fundamental sciences on a positive basis. Once placed on this basis, their development will proceed uninterruptedly in the future; but we can at once take our stand at the right general point of view at which it is the object of philosophy to place us, and can conform our habitual feelings and modes of action to the standard created by our new convictions. This was impossible so long as the three different attitudes of mind—the Theological, the Metaphysical, and the Positive—co-existed in different intellectual provinces. But the foundation of Sociology by Comte, with his consequent establishment of Morals on their true foundation, has cleared this impossibility out of the way, and has enabled us to form a

just and harmonious, though, of course, not an absolutely complete, conception of the natural order. Further theories of a less comprehensive kind will be added, as Humanity requires, to the primary doctrines of the scientific faith. Hitherto unknown memoirs, State papers and other sources of knowledge concerning individual transactions will supply corrections or enlargements of our historical ideas. But the basis, whether of method or of doctrine, will remain unaffected. In the cosmical and the human sciences alike, the broad and common phenomena are the most important, and the desideratum is not so much to ascertain facts as to understand their relations and discover their laws.

So far with respect to Positivism in general. I must now say a few words as to the view of history which is presented in the following pages.

There are estimable works, in which, under the name, *History of Religion*, are presented detailed descriptions of the several special forms which it has assumed in different human societies—Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrian-

ism, and the rest. But it is obvious that history implies progressive evolution, and that this can exist only within a definite continuous, and sufficiently homogeneous, social series. The definitive solution of the religious problem has been committed by all the forces which have acted on our race to the nations of the West. When it has been recognised and applied by those nations, will come the time for its extension to the Eastern monotheists and to the Theocratic and Fetishistic populations. Then all the sound knowledge of the existing religious systems of the world which the researches of scholars and the observation of practical men shall have gained will be of the greatest value for the purpose of effectively propagating the final synthesis. But the object now most important is to understand the modifications which have successively taken place in the opinions of the social group of which we ourselves form a part, and through which the true faith must be communicated to the rest of mankind.

There are some questions which have been much discussed by the so-called Anthropologists respecting the early phases of social

development, to which no reference is made in the present essay. Comte did not aim—and I, accordingly, have not done so—at describing all the institutions of primitive man. With respect to several problems, perhaps rather curious than important, which are still *sub judice*, nothing is here either affirmed or denied. What has been sought is to give such a general conception of the past, both remote and recent, as will convey its essential character, and will enable the intelligent reader, who is not a specialist, to understand the human movement as a whole, and appreciate the filiation which marks its successive stages. This large view of the subject ought to be universally apprehended, especially now when it is so important to develop or confirm the historic spirit and the sentiment of social continuity, as well as to prepare thoughtful minds for an inevitable future.

It will be seen that I do not adopt the non-natural theory which looks on Protestantism as representing the true type of historical Christianity. I regard, as did Comte, the Church of Gregory the Great, of Hildebrand and St Bernard, as its real representative, and Protes-

tantism as the first stage in its systematic demolition, following on its spontaneous disorganisation. Luther, Calvin, and Socinus mark the three most prominent steps in the evolution of its decadence—the discipline, the hierarchical constitution, and the doctrine being successively assailed. That the maintenance of the modified system or group of systems, which remained after they had severally exercised their dissolving influence, is becoming highly precarious, every one now sees. But the hopes which Catholics sometimes found on the growing weakness of the Protestant opposition are as fallacious as were the expectations of a universal triumph suggested to the Reformers by the partial successes of the sixteenth century. As the Roman world has long been divided between Christianity and Islam, so, since the Thirty Years' War, the Christian West has been divided between Catholicism and Protestantism. Each may occasionally gain a local or temporary superiority, but neither will absorb the other; both will disappear before the march of the Religion of Humanity.

A few words of personal explanation may

here be permitted me. Those who have lived in close relations with me are already aware of my adhesion to the Positive doctrine. Some, even of those who were acquainted with the fact, and amongst them persons who are entitled to my respect, will perhaps be offended by the public declaration of that adhesion. But I cannot apologise for maintaining what I believe to be true. I have not rashly propounded the opinions here put forward. During my whole adult life I have devoted earnest thought to the great religious and social questions, the supreme importance of which I early recognised. My attention having been called to Positivism, mainly through the notices of it in J. S. Mill's *Logic*, I gave it much serious study. When the philosophical doctrine rose into the Religion of Humanity, I became fully convinced that it was what mankind wanted in the spiritual sphere. Whilst I endeavoured to acquire and maintain the acquaintance with various forms of intellectual activity required for the proper discharge of my academic functions, as well as demanded by the culture of our epoch, I was content to renounce the work of production in

the several special departments which I might perhaps have cultivated with a certain degree of success, and to devote the greatest part of my time and mental energy to obtaining a thorough knowledge of what appeared to me more necessary for the world than any results I was likely to attain in the particular fields of contemporary research. Now approaching the close of my career, I do not regret this choice; and I am desirous of communicating to others the convictions which have been to myself a source of mental satisfaction and of moral guidance.

Intellectually constrained to accept the philosophic bases on which the Positive Religion rests, I have tried its efficacy on my own heart and life; and, whilst lamenting the insufficient degree in which I have followed its teachings, I have learned to appreciate its practical power. No creed seems to me so effectually to destroy the 'refuges of lies' by which our partiality for ourselves leads us to excuse our misdeeds and shortcomings. I have found it to pronounce the demands of duty in such a way that they cannot be mistaken or eluded. And it appears to me to be alone capable of real social efficacy;

in particular, no otherwise than through its extension can the moral unity of mankind be ultimately realised. Long a silent student and observer of the wants and tendencies of my time, and regarding myself as under an implied contract not to interfere with the religious ideas of the young persons whose literary instruction was intrusted to me, I do not, now that I am free from any such obligation, feel justified in continuing this reticence to the end. Holding the religion I profess to be the *unum necessarium* for society, I cannot be content to pass away, as I must soon do, without giving public expression to that conviction.

38 UPPER MOUNT STREET, DUBLIN.

OUTLINES

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HISTORY OF RELIGION.

IT is in our time no longer necessary to establish by argument the possibility of treating the constitution and development of Society on strictly scientific bases. All writers worthy of any regard have, expressly or tacitly, admitted this conclusion. Those who still profess to regard social phenomena from the point of view of theology as produced by arbitrary and inscrutable wills, constantly contradict their own principles, and show that they really consider those phenomena to be subjected to natural law ; whilst the partisans of metaphysical politics are unable to offer any explanation of the past, and, in the midst

of the problems of the present, can do nothing but repeat the outworn and barren shibboleths of 'natural right' and 'popular sovereignty.'

We have spoken of 'the constitution and development' of Society, because both these sides of sociological theory have to be kept in view. There are certain fundamental attributes of Society which are inherent in its natural constitution and reproduce themselves in all its various forms; and these are the object of study in Social Statics. But there is also a movement of Society in time, in the course of which it passes through successive phases; and the investigation of this movement is the office of Social Dynamics. The combination of these is necessary to constitute a rational sociology.

It is obvious, indeed, that a theory of social movement implies a theory of the fundamental constitution of Society. Progress must mean the development of order; it is in history that the essential qualities of social Man must be with ever-increasing clearness revealed. History must present the picture of a growing

realisation of the system of life proper to true human nature, and resulting from the more and more rightly apprehended situation of the race.

For perfect rationality the historical movement ought to be considered in all its elements, the relations between them, and their mutual action, being constantly kept in view. But it is not always possible to carry this principle into full effect; the several social factors must for convenience be studied apart, at least provisionally. There is, however, one amongst them so eminently synthetic in its character that it may fitly represent them all—namely, Religion. In studying the development of this, as we now propose to do, we shall of necessity comprise in our view—potentially, if not actually—every form of human thought, feeling, and action which the past exhibits, and shall be led to contemplate some which the future may be expected to disclose.

According to the general logical principle we have laid down that Dynamical presupposes Statical Sociology—that the investigation of progress implies as its condition a theory of

order—it is necessary for us first to understand what are the foundations of religion in the constitution of the individual man and of human society.

Without any affectation of scientific exactness, but founding ourselves purely on common experience, we can see that there are in human nature three different elements—namely sentiment (or, as it is called in popular metaphorical language, heart), intellect, and character. These three elements correspond respectively to the three functions denoted by the verbs—*to feel, to think, to act.*

Some of the metaphysical schools of the last and the preceding century sought to reduce by fallacious, though plausible, analyses, the several faculties and tendencies comprised under these three heads to a very small number. But one of the great services of Gall was his decisive criticism of these schemes, and his establishment of a multiplicity of distinct powers and motors in our intellectual and moral constitution. He carried, probably, this just view to an extreme with regard to our intellectual faculties; but that is an error of minor consequence; the

most important point is the recognition of a variety of innate principles of feeling and consequent tendencies to action. This has always been admitted by popular good sense, notwithstanding the false refinements of speculative writers. Butler, Hume, Smith, and other eminent thinkers made highly probable, and later science has conclusively established, the natural existence of the altruistic affections, which it was once attempted to represent as modes of self-love. These affections, here again relying on ordinary observation, we may assume as threefold—namely, attachment, veneration, and general benevolence, chiefly developed respectively in our relations to our equals, superiors, and inferiors. Besides these principles, there are a number of independent impulses which, though not directly or consciously self-seeking, have no relation to the good of others, but stimulate to the attainment of different external objects which are sought for their own sake, and, resting in the satisfaction of the individual alone, may, by contrast with the altruistic, be called egoistic.

Now, when we examine these several con-

stituents of human nature with respect to their relative strength, we must arrive at the double conclusion, first, of the natural preponderance of the feelings over the intellectual faculties; and, secondly, of the superiority in energy and perseverance of the egoistic to the altruistic motors. Thus arises the individual human problem, how the altruism, comparatively weak in our constitution, is to be reinforced, so as, not indeed—except in isolated cases—to be permanently stronger than our native egoism, but strong enough to offer it habitual resistance and exercise upon it habitual control. Such a modifying influence is plainly indispensable. For the egoistic motors, if left to themselves, would, by their number and diversity, carry us at different times in different directions, and prevent any stable and self-consistent economy of our moral nature, and, as the result of this internal disorder, would lead to a random, purposeless, and incoherent course of external action. It is only the persistent protest, or, in happier natures, the silent ascendancy of altruism, that can check the endless conflict of purely personal impulses, and give to our multifarious con-

stitution the requisite unity and singleness of aim.

When we pass from the consideration of the individual and contemplate human society, the same necessity becomes obvious. The different human units are habitually actuated by special forms of egoism, arising out of divergent interests, and leading to competition and collision. And thus the problem of unity presents itself in the social, as before in the individual, sphere. As in the latter it is necessary to regulate, so in the former it is necessary to bind together, the different elements of the system. And here again it is through a sufficient development of the altruistic tendencies that the requisite unity is to be attained.

Every influence that tends to form the altruistic habit—such as domestic life, social solidarity, peaceful intercourse—assists towards the solution of the great problem by modifying our moral nature in the right direction. But the work cannot be done without the aid of the intellect, mental coherence being, in general, necessary to maintain effective unity. Spontaneous sentiment, indeed, can produce a

certain degree of internal harmony, as may be observed especially in times of scepticism and intellectual anarchy. And it can also, to a certain extent, act as a bond of union in Society. But without a sufficient fixity of convictions in the individual and a sufficient social convergence in opinion, unity is imperfect and precarious. The 'opinion' here indicated must have reference to man's appreciation of the external influences by which he finds himself surrounded, and to the recognition of a superior Power (or Powers) controlling his life. The sense of the domination of such a Power seconds the internal discipline of the individual, and the common consciousness of subordination to it disposes to social unity.

When this Power is conceived as not only influencing our destinies, but as inspired with sentiments similar to the human, interested in human welfare, and intervening in human affairs for the benefit of individuals, families, or nations, it attracts corresponding regards, and wins the affections of those who believe themselves objects of its goodwill. To this combination of sentiment and conviction—in other

words, of Love and Faith, directed towards a superior Power, and to the state of unity thence resulting—we give the name of Religion.¹

The contemplation of the superior Power naturally develops Veneration ; and in proportion as it is regarded as caring for portions, or for the whole, of the human race, general Benevolence will be viewed as prescribed to worshippers, and thus indirectly this branch of altruism will be encouraged.

In order to understand more clearly the nature of Religion, we must decompose it into three, rather than two, constituent parts. There is, first, as we have indicated, the dogma presented to our faith—determining the nature of

¹ Some etymologists (see *Cic. de N. D.*, ii 28 ; *Aug. de Civ. D.*, x. 3) have derived *religio* from *relegere*, considering it as a word belonging to the same group with *diligere* and *negligere*. But there appears to be no sufficient reason for rejecting the explanation of the word as coming from *religare*, and conveying the idea of a 'bond' ; cf. the formation of *opinio* from *opin-ari*, or of *optio* from *optare*. Whatever may be thought of this, the (at least) possible relation to *religare* may be kept in view, as representing to us the double function which Religion has to discharge — that of 'uniting' by its discipline our subjective tendencies, which are naturally discordant *inter se*, and that of 'binding together' different human beings, too much disposed to disunion and conflict.

the external Power to which our individual and social lives are subject. There is, secondly, the cultus, expressing, and so stimulating and regulating, our sentiments towards that superior Power. And lastly, the régime, or system of life — of private and public conduct, which will be moulded on the opinions we hold respecting the acts, wills, and ordinances of the superior Power. These three elements of Religion correspond respectively to the three functions of our nature before named—thinking, feeling, and action ; to the three principal human constructions—Philosophy, Poetry, and Politics ; and to the three great human ideals—the True, the Beautiful, and the Good.

Religion, like every other social product of human nature, while marked by certain permanent characteristics, is subject to a historical development—an ordered change. It passes naturally through successive stages, and these it is the object of the present essay to study. This change depends on the variation in time of our opinions respecting the external powers which influence our lives. Progress is in all cases the development of order, and the con-

stant tendency of Religion has been, and is, towards more correct conceptions of the world, and towards a system of the affections and a rule of life in harmony with those conceptions. The march of the human spirit in this direction points to a definitive normal state, in which the most perfect type of Religion—that most profoundly accordant with the fundamental nature and the true situation of man—will prevail, and will possess a stability which could not belong to any of the provisional forms by which it will have been gradually prepared.

FETISHISM.

The necessary postulate of superior Powers influencing our destiny, actuated by affections similar to our own, and thus capable of sympathising with us and of attracting our sympathies, was reached by virtue of primordial and universal tendencies of our nature. Before we have discovered the laws that regulate external events, we are irresistibly led to conceive the phenomena we observe, as resulting from acts similar to those which we

experience in ourselves, and which then appear to us to need no explanation. Taking little account—in the absence, or at least feebleness, of purely speculative impulses — of agencies which do not immediately or obviously affect us, we attribute those that do influence us to wills analogous to the human, regarded as inherent in the objects acting on us. This tendency may still be observed, not only in the retarded races of mankind, but in children and even, temporarily, in educated adults when the feelings are strongly excited and the law of the phenomenon is unknown. From this primitive logic arises spontaneously the first human religion,¹ that of Fetishism,² the

¹ Much has been heard in modern times of a supposed 'natural religion,' which, as a theoretic system, is really a metaphysical construction most commonly used to enable its professors to dispense with revelation. The truth is that the one natural religion is Fetishism, the only faith which arises spontaneously amongst men. Monotheism, which, in the so-called 'natural religion' of the metaphysicians, is represented as an inevitable result of observation and reflection, recommending itself to universal human nature, was really in its origin posterior to Polytheism, as Hume long since proved; and not only is this so, but all theologism, whether recognising the existence of many gods or of one, is by no means an early development, but succeeds everywhere the Fetishistic faith, which is alone primitive.

² We often find in writers who vaguely conceive this primitive state of the intellect, the name 'Nature-worship'

essential character of which is the habitual attribution of life to the material objects most interesting to each individual or each family. The object is conceived as possessed of a consciousness and affections similar to those

applied to it. But the notion of 'Nature,' historically important, becomes noteworthy only at a later stage, and the term in question suggests rather artificial schemes of Pantheism or the modes of thought of some modern poets, than the opinions of the primitive man, who worships not a cosmic whole, but individual objects. His belief is best denoted by the name 'Fetichism.' The repugnance some feel to its use in this way may arise from the bad sense habitually attached to the word as connoting mental degradation. But this association is a product of the ignorant contempt with which the early ideas and institutions of mankind are too commonly regarded. They are often by shallow minds treated as senseless perversions, instead of being viewed as necessary steps in a noble progression. As is often said, but not yet sufficiently felt, no social phase can be understood without sympathy; every widely prevalent human development should be habitually (though, of course, not exclusively) contemplated on its best side, which is what explains its existence and reveals its significance: not, as is too common, in its extravagances or abuses. Restricted to its proper time and place, the low type is as normal as the high; it is also its necessary preparation—'the child is father of the man.'

The word 'fetish' (*fetiço*), as applied to the objects of primitive adoration, originated with the Portuguese traders and settlers who were brought into contact with the African populations. *Fetiço* is explained in Roquetti's Portuguese Dictionary by the French equivalents 'sortilège, maléfice, enchantement, charme.' The term 'Fetichisme,' as the name of the corresponding religion, was first employed by the President De Brosses. See his *Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches*, 1760.

of the human being whose lot it modifies or whose sentiments it engages. Its action on the individual is regarded as, for the most part, benevolent, but sometimes hostile. And its goodwill may be conciliated, or its unfriendly dispositions modified, by methods similar to those which affect our fellowmen. This faith rests on a false hypothesis; but it disengages the intellect from its initial torpor, and enables the believer to generalise and co-ordinate his ideas in the only way then possible. It stamps, too, on his mind the great truth of the subordination of man to the outer world. And, morally, it awakens and vivifies his sympathies, by the assimilation of all that surrounds him to the human type.

The Fetishistic system of society on its practical side is one of frequent, if not incessant, warfare. When we consider the human population as a whole, its adequate sustenance is necessarily procurable only by labour acting on the physical medium which surrounds us. But this does not hold true of the different elements of that population. The small groups which form the early communities adopt, as far as

possible, a more compendious and easier mode of maintenance by appropriating the fruits of labour which they have not undergone. This process falls in with, and gratifies, the repugnance to continuous and systematic physical exertion which characterises the early stages of society, and the mutual enmities which, even without special excitement, are found to exist between different tribes before the moral culture spontaneously produced by wider associations. Labour is, of course, still necessary to the conquering community, the results of war being uncertain; but it falls upon the unenterprising members of the community, who are unfit for warlike operations, and is often in large measure imposed upon the weaker sex.

These military habits long outlive the Fetishistic period; and, notwithstanding the growing distaste for war entertained by the foremost nations of our time, we must recognise that such habits were necessary for social development. Their principal utility, it is true, belongs to a later stage of the human movement than that with which we are now concerned—a stage at which, as we shall here-

after see, conquest became the foundation of lasting peace. Under Fetishism the struggles of tribes were generally internecine, the object being less subjugation than extermination, at least of the male sex, limited only by occasional adoptions. They were, in the main, politically sterile, scarcely ever producing large associations. But they had important reactions on the individual. They tended to develop his intelligence by the necessity, incidental to all warfare, whether offensive or defensive, of foresight, skilful combination, and ingenious stratagem. The natural disinclination to exertion, characteristic of primitive man, is overcome by the excitement of martial enterprise even in a greater degree than by hunting, the ordinary amusement of uncultured races. And, though the highest moral qualities — the altruistic—are restricted to a narrow circle, they receive a lively impulse within that circle. The necessities of the case compel the fighting members of the tribe to a close union, and exact a large amount of self-control and even self-sacrifice for the good of the whole. They enforce an—at least—temporary subordination,

and a respect for genuine ability, and unite chiefs and inferiors by obedience, and even devotion, on the one side and a certain measure of generosity on the other. In fact, the educative action of military life, when arrived at its highest efficacy and conducted under the most favourable conditions, is found in a rudimentary state in these initial conflicts. And just as the spontaneity of the Fetishistic faith enabled mankind to enter on a course of intellectual development which could not have been produced by the slow progress of observation without such a hypothesis to stimulate and guide that observation, so the spontaneity of military action provided a school of discipline which could not have arisen from a pacific organisation then essentially premature.

Action for the improvement of the external world might at first view seem to be seriously impeded by the universal adoration which Fetishism institutes. But it must be remembered that this adoration is commonly not social, but individual, or at most domestic, and that it is not species but particular objects that are consecrated in the esteem of each believer or each family. So

that the faith is by no means inconsistent with the extensive destruction which in early periods must often be carried out both in animal and vegetable existence in order to clear an area for human development. Of the destruction thus organised, to which, apart from practical motives, human nature is at first spontaneously disposed by its predominant instincts rather than to any form of productive effort, Fetishism in fact provides the only limitation then available, by investing certain objects—and, at a later stage, certain animal races, commonly the most useful ones—with a religious consecration. To this period belongs one of the most important human triumphs in the domestication of the animals which are most serviceable to man, especially as auxiliaries, whether in the chase, or war, or in agricultural operations. It cannot be doubted that this achievement was largely due to the habits of friendly familiarity with the lower animals which the Fetishistic exaggeration of their resemblance to man naturally engendered, very unlike the cold disdain often inspired or encouraged by modern beliefs. This fraternal association led to a more thorough knowledge

of the habits and characters of these inferior allies of our race.

To Fetishism belongs the first stable constitution of the human family. No system, indeed, creates the human affections, which it can only stimulate and regularise. But the narrow sphere of Fetishistic beliefs tended to concentrate, and so to strengthen, the fundamental ties of domestic life. Polygamy, indeed, existed, but that practice, though destined everywhere to disappear, is not to be absolutely condemned without regard to the social situation. It is to be compared with the purely animal state which preceded it. Later experience proves that it is compatible with tenderness and with the domestic influence of women; and in the early stages of society it furnishes, by the expenses which it involves, a special motive for the material accumulations indispensable for progress. It multiplied alliances between families, and even between hostile tribes, the conquerors often appropriating the wives, and adopting the children, of the vanquished. The influence of age, too, was recognised in the Fetishistic family, and to some extent in the tribe, the counsels of

experience tempering the supremacy of the practical chiefs, so as to afford a first rude outline of the functions of the future priesthood.

Life being considered universal, death is regarded, not as its cessation, but as a new species of vitality. The remains of a deceased person, it is held, continue to feel, think, and will, and to be capable of activity. His action after death is naturally conceived as inspired by the sentiments known to have been habitual to him in life, and is regarded as more powerful than that which he formerly exercised. It therefore strongly influences the fortunes of his descendants. And thus we have the origin of the worship of ancestors, which has sometimes been represented as the single root of all religion, but is really only a subordinate, though important, derivative from the general creed of Fetishism.

The greatest æsthetic contribution of the Fetishistic period was the essential formation of human language. But the predominance of sentiment, characteristic of this stage, tended eminently to the development of art, properly so called. The animation of all beings and their assimilation to ourselves must have power-

fully awakened sympathy in all tender souls. The deficiency of technical appliances, and the absence of means of perpetuating poetical or musical products, have, indeed, made this period almost a blank in the history of art as known to us. But we can see from observation of the so-called 'savages' of our own time that individual artistic gifts and their social appreciation, though only by a restricted public, must have been largely brought into play, and thus the first foundations laid on which were built the admirable superstructures of the succeeding stage.

Fetishism laboured under two fundamental defects, one on the theoretic, the other on the practical side. Intellectually, it could extend only to the material and vital domains, and could not comprise any doctrine concerning moral and social phenomena. Consisting, as it essentially did, in a transference to external objects of the human type, so far as this was empirically known, it could not suggest any theory of our own nature, individual or collective. We shall see hereafter how the religious system which succeeded it, attempted, with partial, but only partial success, to occupy this additional province.

With respect to public life, Fetishism is radically insufficient, and thus betrays its necessarily provisional nature. It drew, indeed, a rude outline of the city, and inspired a strong attachment to the narrow community to which the believer belonged. But the local, and even domestic, character of the worship, and the multiplicity of corresponding beliefs, did not admit of the rise of large societies, or the development of a spiritual authority in the full sense of that phrase. And this defect could not be remedied by temporal action, for the nature of its warfare concurred with its theoretic foundations in making extensive political aggregations and extensive military authority impossible.

But we have now to see how the Fetishistic system of life and thought underwent changes which opened the way to a larger social development, and led, without any breach of continuity, to the ascendancy of the next religious phase.

1. The first of these changes, the general establishment of sedentary life, resulted more from the sentiments inspired or encouraged by Fetishism towards the objects associated

with home than from a perception of its practical advantages, which could be but little appreciated prior to experience. Along with fixity of residence, an increased and more systematic practice of agriculture became the rule, and, as connected with this, the personal succeeding to the collective appropriation of the soil. And thus was laid the foundation of the whole future development of industry, which, however, remained socially subordinate to warfare.

2. On the intellectual side, it was necessary for the progress of theory as well as for the improvement of the arts, that abstract contemplation of the world should succeed to concrete. At first, existences are the object of study, but in order to arrive at laws (properly so called), not *things*, but *events*, must be habitually considered. It may with truth be said that this change in the point of view is the most important in the whole of the human preparation. What represents it in the sphere of religion is the transition from Fetishism to Polytheism. Gradually the attribution of life to the material objects without us is abandoned, and the new

conception is introduced of the intervention of invisible beings in the production of the different classes of phenomena which groups of objects exhibit in common. Matter is conceived as inert; its properties are viewed as created by the volitions of personal agents outside the objects; and the life formerly ascribed to individual things becomes an aptitude to undergo those divine influences. The variety of physical phenomena required a multiplicity of gods, and they were necessarily supposed to possess the superhuman powers required for the production of the effects ascribed to them. They were not conceived as morally perfect beings, but as magnified men, with characters more or less adapted to their respective functions, and actuated by special partialities and antipathies.

The natural growth of observation, correcting hypotheses essentially subject to verification, spontaneously led to this change in human conceptions. But it was facilitated by a modification which the Fetishistic worship underwent in its last stage. We refer to the ascendancy over the other objects of adoration

which was acquired by the heavenly bodies as a result of the extension of sedentary life. Mankind at first addressed their chief homage, not to the celestial bodies, but to the terrestrial existences, animate or inanimate, whose wills seemed to exercise a direct and powerful action on their destinies. But a degree of regularity in the courses of those bodies attracted speculative attention when residences became fixed, whilst their influence on the life and work of the corresponding populations was more apparent. And thus arose a primitive astrology which regarded the heavenly bodies as consciously acting on terrestrial events, and these new Fetishes gradually prevailed over the old without absolutely supplanting them. An astro-latric stage thus intervened between Fetishism proper and Polytheism, being a modification of the former, and leading naturally to the latter. This origin of the gods is indicated by many facts, and is so plain that it has become the foundation of the irrational exaggerations of the modern Comparative Mythologists — improperly so called.

Connected with the rise of Astrolatry is the

appearance of one of the most important of human institutions, with which the later progress of society was essentially bound up—that, namely, of a Priesthood. It could not, indeed, take a decisive form before the establishment of Polytheism. But the inaccessibility of the heavenly bodies, contrasted with the nearness of the earlier objects of adoration, and the regularity of their movements, which, in proportion as it became recognised, stimulated the hope of understanding their designs, pointed to the necessity, and led to the recognition, of official interpreters, specially qualified to read the indications they offered respecting human fortunes, and to conciliate by due homage their favourable action on individuals and communities.

These latest developments in the history of Fetishism enable us to understand how it passed into Theologism, under which alone the influences here referred to could become fully efficacious.

POLYTHEISM.

The principal defect of Fetishism lay in its political insufficiency ; it could not (except, to some extent, in its Astrolatric form) create vast associations. This work was done by Theologism, whose historical office was thus rather social than intellectual. It took the two successive forms of Polytheism and Monotheism. An almost exclusive interest is often attached to the latter ; but it was really only a reduction and concentration of Polytheism, which was in all respects the truly characteristic, and, historically, by far the most important form of Theologism.

Though, as we have said, chiefly social in its operation, Polytheism fulfilled important intellectual objects. Its predecessor, Fetishism, could embrace only the external order ; by fixing thought on this, it laid the foundation of the necessary conviction of the subordination of man to the world ; but, by the exclusion of the human domain from its contemplation, it tended to produce absolute Fatalism. Polytheism corrected this vicious excess by

comprising in its view the human order, which soon became the favourite scene of divine action. It also represented the outer world as eminently modifiable. The bodies which surround us, conceived, as we have seen, by Fetishism as possessing a life similar to our own, were now regarded as in themselves inert, and undergoing passively the arbitrary operation of ideal beings outside them, whose action explained all their phenomena.

Whilst the Fetishistic fatalism disposed to inaction, Polytheism tended to encourage activity. The irresistible intervention of the gods was obtainable to further the efforts of their worshippers, and thus was generated a hope of indefinitely transforming the world for the purposes of the human agent. The extravagantly wide range of such conceptions is indicated by the doctrine of metamorphoses, which opened a vista of endless transformations by divine caprice seconding human aspirations. The limitation of these subversive ideas was due to the rooted habits which the Fetishistic fatalism had wrought into men's minds, aided doubtless by the wise control of the priesthoods,

now happily existing, whose members incorporated with Theologism the dogma of *Destiny*, its necessary corrective. Thus kept within due bounds, the change was highly useful which developed the instinct of improvement previously subjugated by the spirit of conservatism. Man was conceived in contrast with the world, subordinated to, but able to modify, without dominating, it. The wills attributed to the gods were really human wills, though the worshippers did not so regard them; and the entirely chimerical nature of the theological scheme admitted the shaping of these wills in accordance with human requirements. The claims of Order and Progress were thus provisionally reconciled under a fictitious synthesis.

The enlarged sphere of human activity, and the now prevailing consideration of events as distinct from existences, awakened a strong desire for prevision, which was then necessarily conceived as founded on a discovery of the directing wills inferred from their effects. Thus inquiries into external facts, leading towards scientific development, were originated or encouraged—as in the case of meteorological

observations—with a view to prediction. The interpretation of dreams pointed towards a study of mental and moral phenomena ; but that study was premature, and the theory of dreams was founded on the thought of objective action instead of on that of subjective reactions, from which latter point of view it deserves to be an object of positive research.

No real scientific results could be reached at this period, except in mathematics. Under Fetishism, including the astrolatric stage, numeration and the elementary operations of arithmetic had been cultivated, and also such astronomical notions as required only correct computation ; under Theologism, geometry made its appearance, requiring, as it did, as conditions precedent, the establishment of sedentary life and the consequent appropriation of land. These rudiments of science produced a sentiment of the universal order, exhibiting the first emergence of *laws*, properly so called, destined to replace the supposed action of quasi-human Powers without us.

Terrestrial Fetishism, notwithstanding the wealth of feeling it offered, could not produce important æsthetic works for want of an adequate

development of public life; and this condition was not sufficiently realised even under its astrolatric phase, though striking architectural remains testify to its capacities in that stage. Polytheism gained an immense advantage in this respect from its creation of great political associations characterised by common beliefs and a definite type of manners. Its doctrine gave it special facilities for the representation of collective existences; and modern times, long after the faith was dead, continued to use the formulas of Polytheism for this purpose.

But the great permanent æsthetic influence of Polytheism lies in the universal and familiar development of the subjective life, on which, as we shall see, the final cultus will be founded. It taught mankind to maintain an intimate association with invisible beings, and thus prepared us for living habitually in the individual and social past and in the future of humanity. The beings which Polytheism presented to the veneration of its votaries were indeed purely ideal, but they were believed to be real, and this sufficed to give to the system its educational efficacy.

With respect to practical activity, regarded on the side of the industrial movement, Fetishism had performed the triple office of clearing an area for human energies, disciplining such animals as could become auxiliaries of man, and changing life from the migratory to the sedentary state. On this basis was begun, under Polytheism, the mighty progress of action on the external world, by which the necessary accumulations of mankind have been formed and the material security of the race guaranteed.

As regards the military side of activity, the sterile struggles of Fetishistic populations were changed under Polytheism to efforts towards permanent conquest, which ultimately led to a gradual incorporation, on a large scale, of surrounding tribes about a central nucleus—a result evidently implying a previous sedentary life on the part both of the conquering and the conquered communities. Thus was reached the true social destination of war, which, by its sufficient extension and success, prepared a final régime of peace, subject only to subordinate and temporary interruptions.

Polytheism is, better than any other religious

system, adapted to realise such an incorporation, reconciling, as it does, a strongly national cultus with a readiness to welcome and admit within it the deities of the subjugated races. From the same accommodating spirit arose the full development of the institution of slavery, which, though previously existing in a certain degree, performed no important social office. Now, it enabled the warriors to develop adequately their habitual collective activity, with which industrial preoccupations could not be made to harmonise, leaving to captives spared in the field and transplanted to the conquering country the cultivation of the land and the conduct of manufactures. Thus was carried on a systematic education of the non-citizen population in the peaceful arts, and a habit of steady industry enforced, without interference with the military activity of the nation.

With respect to the education of the human sentiments, we have to remember that, whilst Fetishism had consecrated private life—the Family, it was the office of Polytheism to develop public life—the City. The former specially cultivated the sentiment of Attachment ;

the latter, that of Veneration. It strongly constituted political authorities, whose ascendancy was regarded as founded on descent from the gods, and it thus justified, and even ennobled, obedience. But it did not sufficiently discipline command; that office was reserved for a later stage of human history. Too often, under Polytheism, a harsh pride and self-sufficiency characterise the rulers, degenerating into tyranny; and the poet's words seem verified — *humanum paucis vivit genus*. But the education of mankind proceeded slowly and by successive steps, and we must not expect from any historic phase aptitudes which it could not possess. Each stage must be judged by the efficacy with which it discharged its characteristic office.

We have now to consider more closely the character of Polytheism in the two different forms which it assumed—that of Conservative Polytheism, under sacerdotal rule, and that of Progressive Polytheism, under military predominance.

In all antiquity there was a confusion of the temporal and spiritual powers: only in the Middle Ages was an important step taken to-

wards their separation and mutual independence, which will be fully realised in the régime of the future. But though the respective provinces of spiritual authority and of material power were not distinctly defined, these two influences predominated respectively in the ruling colleges or corporations of different states; either the priests or the warriors took a decisive lead in each community. Military offices were subordinated to sacerdotal functions, or the military character absorbed the sacerdotal spirit. The sacerdotal system was the first to establish itself in a certain degree everywhere, and, under favourable conditions, continued to exist, as it does in several countries down to our own times. But elsewhere, though traces of its incipient existence may be found, it never gained a firm footing, and the priests early gave way before military ascendancy.

The absolute claim of each of these powers to the complete domination of public life made it difficult to establish and maintain social harmony. The priests, as organs and interpreters of supernatural beings, aspired to command, though the proper office of intel-

lect is only to advise; and the chiefs, in whose hands military power resided, and who directed the only activity then possessing a collective character, could ill submit to an external control which would fetter their operations and impede the march to conquest. Still, notwithstanding their natural antipathy, the two powers were forced to come to an alliance on the basis of the subordination of either. They were, in fact, necessary to each other; the priests must have felt that a common activity was needful to maintain civic union, and that military conquest was, in general, the only means of extending the area of sacerdotal authority; whilst the warriors were aided in the exercise of the coercive discipline required for their frequent expeditions by the sanction resulting from a religious consecration.

Which of the two powers should obtain social pre-eminence depended on the circumstances, principally external, affecting the respective communities.

Where material exigencies were not great, and sufficient accumulations could be made without much difficulty, pacific inclinations pre-

vailed and speculative tendencies were favoured. The sedentary state and astrolatry were early introduced. The old men of Fetishism became by an easy transition the priests of the community. Then, if the country was such as to facilitate internal communications and was defended by natural barriers against attacks from without, the theocratic system was developed. On the other hand, when the environment was rigorous or sterile, age had not so early an ascendancy, and the old formed the rudiment of a warrior senate rather than that of a sacerdotal body. The former system naturally preceded the latter, though in different populations; and pacific societies often became an easy prey to martial tribes. But when the material circumstances favoured the theocracies, they could successfully resist such attacks, and sometimes even propagate the theocratic polity abroad.

It was the ever-memorable task of the Theocracies to elaborate the fundamental order of humanity, a work for which our gratitude and respect are due, instead of the senseless abuse which they often meet on the ground of an immobility which, besides being greatly exagger-

ated, really characterised only their declining periods. As the theocratic has been the most durable, so also has it been the most complete of the systematic régimes which have hitherto existed, and has been the source from which all our institutions have emanated, their germs only having been deposited under Fetishistic influence.

The theocratic system is founded on two essential institutions : first, the heredity of all the professions, and secondly, the common subordination of the other castes to the sacerdotal. The hereditary transmission of social offices furnishes the only means of consolidating the degree of the division of labour which is reached in early societies, and of preserving the acquisitions of mankind, whether of the nature of processes or of products, whilst not preventing secondary improvements. Before the establishment of castes, many discoveries must have been lost for want of the domestic tradition by which the knowledge of them had to be kept alive ; and the system tended to perpetuate the aptitudes as well as the gains of our race by the force of vital heredity.

The priestly office, more than any other,

required the training which the caste system provides, and its common superiority formed a bond of union in Society at large. We must suppose the supreme caste to have constituted itself before the others, which owed to it their systematisation.

The mode of transmission here referred to tends to disappear in proportion as it becomes possible to develop aptitudes by instruction instead of by imitation. But this must not prevent us from recognising the temporary utility of the caste organisation. It invested every family with a social character by its hereditary consecration to special functions, and, by the sense of fellowship between the members of the same profession, provided a preparation for the more comprehensive civic sentiment. The supremacy of the sacerdotal caste was, as we have said, a common bond between the inferior ones, which might otherwise have become disunited and even discordant groups, having little habitual consciousness of their mutual relations. The one great vice of the theocratic régime is the confusion of counsel with command—the predominance in practical

life given to the speculative intellect. This, however, though it corrupted the sacerdotal character and ultimately in most cases broke up the system, served temporarily the useful purpose of securing in rude ages the independence of the contemplative class.

Theocracy nobly aimed at the systematisation of human existence, applying intelligence to the conservation and improvement of humanity, proclaiming morals as the science *par excellence*, and encouraging industrial habits, which were closely bound up with domestic life by the institution of caste. But this provisional co-ordination became in time oppressive, because it sought to regulate the exercise of human powers before they were sufficiently developed. It thus tended to impede that development, which had to be carried on by two succeeding social stages, in which, under the ascendancy acquired by the military power, intelligence and activity were respectively cultivated, whilst the great scheme of synthesis and synergy which Theocracy had proposed to itself, but could not realise, remains to be carried into effect by the final religion.

The chief scientific advances made under the Theocracies consist of the improvement of arithmetic, especially by the invention of an admirable system of numerical notation; and the creation of geometry, which arose, as we have said, out of the appropriation of land consequent on the transition to sedentary life. The science, however, from its restriction to practical uses, took, under this régime, a too concrete character; and the theory of areas was studied without being reduced, as its normal constitution requires, to that of linear relations—a task reserved for Greek genius. The acquisitions of the theocratic corporations in Astronomy have been commonly exaggerated; their previsions of celestial events resulted from calculations which were founded on empirical periods detected by patient observation. Their work in Chemistry and Biology was only of the nature of the collection of materials for future theory.

Their æsthetic services were the systematising of language, and the fixing and regulating of the hieroglyphic writing which had arisen under Fetishism, and which prevailed until the military societies introduced the alphabet.

Their art was inseparable from their worship, and in particular from the festivals which were then the only means of public education. The many divine types created by popular instinct, and sanctioned by the sacerdotal reason, had to be furnished with appropriate costume, manners, and history by the poetic imagination. The Hebrew writings, though monotheistic in character, indicate the majesty of which theocratic poetry in general was capable, and the surviving remains of theocratic architecture and statuary, notwithstanding their sometimes imperfect execution, exhibit an imposing grandeur.

We owe to the Theocracies the decisive rise of human industry, in which they saw their principal guarantee against military ascendancy. By the caste system they co-ordinated the several professions which had been developed by sedentary life. Though they impeded foreign commerce in the interest of national stability, they forwarded to the utmost the more important internal trade. The institution of money, insufficiently developed in the small Fetishistic communities, now took a greater extension. In the industries of this form of

Society, slavery found but little place; it became important only amongst the military populations. Theocracy, favouring domestic production, did not admit of large industrial enterprises, nor of the rise of active capitalists on the great scale. Industry could not take a collective character. That character long continued to be the prerogative of military activity; to extend it fully to the industrial world is a task which even yet remains to be achieved.

The Theocracies made valuable contributions to the moral education of our race. Though precepts founded on Theologism necessarily appealed to purely individual motives, and though rather acts than sentiments were sought to be regulated, the theocratic morality disciplined personal life in the most essential respects. It purified domestic life by interdicting incest, which vitiated the relations of kindred, and prevented the union of different families; it regulated polygamy, the abolition of which would have been premature; and it enforced, in accordance with Fetishistic traditions, habitual respect for age. With regard to social morality in the widest sense, the great work of

the theocratic system was the culture of Veneration—the sentiment which is the foundation of all human discipline. This sentiment rested on the supposed divine descent of the spiritual and temporal chiefs, and was thus more powerfully stimulated by Polytheism than it could have been by a monotheistic faith. It is true that the chiefs themselves were not thus disciplined; their conduct towards their inferiors was left, for the most part, to be guided by the sense of personal or corporate honour and the natural feeling which prompts us to benefit those by whom we are revered. But in those periods the all-important task was to form habits of voluntary subordination, so as to found strong and stable authorities; the moralisation of the authorities was to be the office of a later social stage. The general moral power of Conservative Theologism nowhere appears so plainly as in the institution of the judgment of the dead, which was not continued even by the Mediæval Church, owing to the usurpations of the temporal power.

Politically, the theocratic system cannot be

so highly commended. It could not really found the City; it could only constitute the Caste. But it prepared genuine civic existence, not merely by furnishing, as we have seen, its moral basis, but by consolidating and developing territorial property, which, without a supernatural consecration, would not have been duly respected; its action for this purpose may still be seen in the Tabu of the Polynesians who have recently passed out of Fetishism. It also connected wealth with social office, making the instrument accompany the function—a valuable provision, which will hereafter be re-established, though on a better basis than the rule of natural heredity.

We have now to pass from Conservative to Progressive Polytheism. Here we change ancestors; all the rest of the human preparation has taken place within the non-theocratic populations. Though in the Theocracies the warriors, in general, ultimately prevailed over the priests, the types of military Polytheism must not be sought in the societies thus modified; their manners were too marked and persistent to admit of such a thorough transforma-

tion. For those types we must resort to communities in which the theocratic system¹ never passed beyond the rudimentary state, and in which the physical conditions already described led to the establishment of a true military régime.

Military Polytheism, which succeeded the Sacerdotal, directing the only activity which could at the time be collective, constituted civic existence, and thus filled a most important office in the education of the race, by leading the heart from narrower sentiments towards universal benevolence. As regards the progress of the intellect, Theocracy had indeed given to this element of our nature a domination which does not rightly belong to it, but had at the same time directed it to ends too strictly practical, and so had impeded the growth of abstract speculation, which alone could lead to the final synthesis. The development of abstract thought was reserved

¹ That Greece borrowed some elements of her civilisation from the Oriental Theocracies cannot be doubted. Grote's denial of this has not met with the concurrence of other scholars. The Oracles, so highly respected even in later times, and certain hereditary priesthoods, are among the most distinct evidences of an early and undeveloped theocratic stage.

for Military Polytheism, and became the especial historic function of Greece, as the moral movement founded on the civic association was the allotted work of Rome. Thus Progressive Polytheism divides itself into the two forms of (1) Intellectual, and (2) Social Polytheism, which find their only adequate representations in ancient Greece and Rome respectively. Hence, it may be observed in passing, the preponderating study of those civilisations, which is usually prescribed in the higher education, is philosophically justified, though it has frequently been accompanied by an undue depreciation and neglect of the Mediæval period.

We proceed to consider specially the Intellectual form of Progressive Polytheism. The natural tendency of military activity is towards the institution of a system of conquest. But peculiar local and social influences might prevent the development of such a system, even in a community in which the warrior life was sufficiently strong to offer a decisive obstacle to the rise of the theocratic régime. This was the case of Greece, where the excessive physical divisions of territory hindered the continuous extension

of military domination, just as in earlier times they impeded the establishment of a Theocracy. Gradual conquests, which are the only lasting ones, became in these circumstances impossible. From the same cause, however, mutual hostilities were frequent, and the military spirit was kept alive. But, finding no sufficient sphere for this species of activity, the most eminent natures, thus left without a true civic destination, turned to æsthetic and philosophic pursuits, which there was no sacerdotal supremacy to resist. The breaking of the theocratic yoke without the succession of a systematic and gradually extending activity tended towards social anarchy, and, after a short period of kingly power, democracy prevailed almost everywhere in Greece. This form was best adapted to the intellectual mission of the nation. But it exhibits the revolutionary character which aims at the dissolution of an existing order without substituting a social equivalent. This character has marked every succeeding stage—even the Roman and the Mediæval—and has extended its ravages more widely since the downfall of the Catholico-feudal

system; nor can it be really transformed but by the triumph of the final religion.

The almost exclusive devotion to intelligence which marked the Greeks, and to which the mass of the population was in fact sacrificed, was necessary for the human preparation. The final synthesis required as its foundation a sufficient development of the whole body of abstract science. The fundamental questions of philosophy, too, had to be propounded, and some efforts made for their solution. And the æsthetic faculties of our race had to be cultivated. The Greeks reached decisive, though partial, success in the last of these objects; and, in the second, they achieved what was then possible. In the first, they did much to advance Mathematics, and, as far as theological influences permitted, Astronomy, the two primordial stages of the scientific encyclopædia; and, especially in the person of the incomparable Aristotle, laid the foundations of Biology, and drew the outlines of Statical Sociology and of Moral Theory. These were products of the positive spirit rising under the prevailing creed, and aided by a situation which, after the

repulse of the Persian theocracy, ensured an open career to the efforts of the free thinkers of Greece.

In studying the history of these remarkable populations, we should fix our principal attention on the intellectual field, in which their main contributions to the human initiation were made. For, with the exception of the glorious resistance to Persia, and the important Asiatic foundations of Alexander, there is little in their social action to deserve our admiration.¹ We are repelled by several traits of the national character—by their levity, their arrogant self-sufficiency, to which everything not Greek was barbarous, their habitual turbulence, their frequent unfaithfulness to the general cause of Hellas, and their ingratitude to the public men who served them best, whilst they unduly exalted shallow rhetoricians and intriguing political mediocrities. They were without any moral discipline, even that arising from the

¹ Grote's one-sided, though laborious and able, work has misled English opinion as to the character of the Greeks, besides unduly exalting the merits of their democratic systems. He has also erred in his plausible rehabilitation of the sophists, and has taken a narrow and prejudiced view of Alexander and his expedition.

consciousness of a permanent collective activity, which elevated the Roman mind. Though the new practical habits discouraged polygamy amongst the chiefs (to whom it had always been necessarily restricted), women were held in low esteem; the foremost men and even the philosophers lived habitually among courtesans, and the preponderance of intellect over sentiment led to the prevalence of a sexual enormity which disgraced the nation. Subversive utopias affecting domestic life were preached by the most eloquent speculative writer of the nation, and the security of property was endangered by the schemes even of official legislators—aberrations, both of which serve to encourage the anarchical dreamers of our own day. Most of these evils were the fruit of a situation in which, as we have said, military tendencies, while general and persistent, could not follow their natural course, and thus led, on the one hand, to inconsequent and ineffectual mutual struggles, while degrading industry in public estimation; and, on the other, gave to intelligence a superiority over activity which is contrary to the nature of things,

misleads social aims, and corrupts the characters of the speculative class. But we must always remember that the historic office of Greece being essentially intellectual, the absence of discipline, which produced so many deplorable results, gave a free course to poetic and philosophic inspirations, which might have been hampered by a premature attempt at systematisation.

Influenced by the thought of the immortal productions of Greek poetry, which have, however, been since surpassed, we are apt to regard the work of the nation in Art as its most important service. But it is certainly not so. Its most essential contribution to the education of the world was rendered in the domains of Philosophy and Science. In the latter of these two fields, the Greek genius impelled our race forward in its advance from the creation of imaginary causes to the recognition of real laws, which is the sole possible basis of a universal faith; whilst the efforts of the philosophic thinkers kept alive a sense of the claims of generality beside those of positivity. The mode of existence of these thinkers, indepen-

dent of the temporal power, and working on the public by the pure force of appeals to the intellect and the will, foreshadowed, in some degree, the character of the spiritual power of later times ; a number of spontaneous churches were, indeed, created by intellectual and moral association between the members of different political states, and aspirations were thus awakened towards a universal communion.

Greek science, on the one hand, built up the first foundations of the general body of abstract theory, which had been impossible under the immediate practical applications alone cultivated by the Theocracies, and thus prepared the way and furnished elements for the ultimate structure of the Positive Encyclopædia ; so that Archimedes, Apollonius, and Hipparchus were real precursors of the final religion. And, secondly, reacting on philosophic thought, it produced a sense of the contrast between the solidity of convictions founded on positive research, and the uncertainty of opinions resting on supernatural ideas and traditions. Theologism could not then, except in some specially gifted minds, be entirely eliminated ; but it was

sought to reduce and concentrate it, with the view of obtaining in this way an access to the mental and moral universality which was always the object of aspiration. Thus the speculative movement was led towards Monotheism, which had doubtless long been prevalent amongst members of the sacerdotal castes, and may possibly have been the secret of the Greek mysteries. No great profundity was required to suggest such a hypothesis. The time for a monotheistic régime, however, had not arrived. The truly great thinkers waited for a scientific synthesis and a social regeneration not yet ripe, and prepared them, as far as was then possible. But some of the more impatient and ambitious theorists attached themselves to Monotheism, and directed against the polytheistic creed criticisms which were in later times to be employed against that by which they sought to replace it. Such efforts did not find a really useful destination, until social, as distinct from intellectual, exigencies required the installation of the new doctrine; and premature efforts for its propagation troubled the present by anticipating the future. Monotheism was available

whenever it should become socially necessary ; as we have said, it is an obvious hypothesis, and had long been entertained in special circles, not to mention that it had been by the course of events placed under the guardianship of an exceptional Asiatic tribe. Its advent had to await the substantial completion of the Roman system of incorporation, which made it possible for the conception of a universal spiritual association to diffuse itself through society—a conception which, on the assumption of the permanence of theological beliefs, implied the substitution of one God for the various pantheons of the different portions of the Empire.

This leads us to consider the essential characters and destination of the Social form of Military Polytheism. The Grecian movement had sufficiently developed intelligence, but could not adequately cultivate collective activity, which at that period could find its proper field only in military life, whilst this, as we have seen, was in Greece limited, unsystematic, and in the issue fruitless, except through its latent reaction on intellect. The Roman civilisation decisively established the preponderance of action over

speculation, and furnished a practical discipline through the common and continued study of the public good, to which personal impulses were steadily subordinated. The patriotic spirit, insufficient under the Theocracies and generally sterile during the Greek elaboration, laid a strong foundation of civic unity, which was afterwards extended by the conquest and incorporation of such populations as could be truly assimilated, so that the idea of a universal moral union was irresistibly suggested, at the same time that an important step was taken towards the preparation of a medium in which it could be realised. With the close of the great office which the nation had to discharge, and with which the entire system of its existence was bound up, the corresponding régime began to undergo a spontaneous dissolution ; and from the joint influence of the Greek intellectual elaboration and the Roman political incorporation a new order emerged, which completed the human initiation, and whose necessary decay was destined immediately to precede the final regeneration.

Pedants alone can depreciate, on the ground

of their literary inferiority, the powerful intellects which were applied to the work of the Roman people, which, even if not absorbed by its social function, could not have sought to do over again what the Greeks had achieved as far as contemporary conditions permitted. That function, enlisting the interest of the whole community, saved its members from philosophic subtleties and æsthetic puerilities; and their thought is characterised by rectitude and dignity. And when their special public office had arrived at a stage of approximate fulfilment, no national vanity prevented them from readily welcoming and effectively propagating the results of Greek art and speculation, whilst they exhibited a great special aptitude for political history, which in their hands tended to rise from mere narrative to a study of the filiation of events.

The popular declamations against war, which are largely justified in relation to our own times, must not receive a general historical application. It was the only sphere, as we have more than once observed, in which collective activity could at first be developed. But the peculiar merit of

the Roman system of conquest lies in this, that whilst, during its prevalence, it diminished the ravages of the military instinct amongst the less civilised populations, preventing many sanguinary and sterile conflicts, it opened a way to universal peace, as is suggested in well-known verses of Virgil. That the social activity of the nation was essentially military arose from a human fatality which could not be eluded; a genuine organisation of Society on a pacific basis is still in the future, requiring as its necessary condition the regeneration of industry. But the indispensable military work which the Romans achieved set Western Society on the road to its ultimate constitution, while it reacted powerfully on the dominant community by generating the common consciousness of a great national mission.

We must not regret the union of the temporal and spiritual powers, which was generally characteristic of antiquity; their separation (as we have already said) could be partially effected only in the Middle Ages, and its complete realisation is reserved for the future. In Rome, the union was necessary for the absolute control and

stringent discipline required by the military system, which could ill tolerate the authoritative interference of an independently organised speculative class. Even the consecration of the temporal chiefs by a separate sacred order was not necessary, as their domination rested on the popular belief in their divine descent.

Of the special social influences due to Roman Polytheism, the most important, as tending towards characteristic features of the final religion, were those of the improvement of domestic life, and the amelioration of the position of women. The Roman matron possessed a dignity which never belonged to the Greek wife. Whilst restricted to the domestic hearth, she was charged with the superintendence of the education of the children of the family, and felt a lively interest in the civic life in which her sons were to be prepared to bear their part. She could not, indeed, be truly the companion of a husband often, and sometimes for long periods, removed from home by military duties, and she had not a personal freedom, which would then have been premature and dangerous; the authority of the *paterfamilias* was still ex-

cessive in relation to our ideas, but not to the exigencies of the time. These characters of the Roman domestic economy remained to be reformed when, first, the defensive system of the feudal period, and afterwards the habitual pacific existence, founded on the institution of standing armies, brought the sexes closely together in daily life, and softened the harsh and arbitrary traits which military habits, notwithstanding their temporary necessity and usefulness, must in ordinary natures commonly create or encourage. The absolute supremacy of the head of the household could be subjected to control only when, in the Middle Ages, a step was made towards the normal separation of the temporal and spiritual powers.

The Roman slave, as an element in domestic life, had an indirect share in the great work of the community at large. He set the citizen free from the burden of productive labour, and enabled him to give his undistracted attention to his public functions. There was thus a division of offices between them, conflict did not arise, and mutual respect and confidence were encouraged. The slave was often really

incorporated in the family, all other members of which were under the same absolute rule as himself; and the evils inherent in the institution were, in cases where natural good feeling existed, as much diminished as was then possible. Besides, the passage to the condition of freeman was open, usually as the reward of good service, the former master becoming the patron and the client taking the family name.

All the noble features of the Roman system are essentially connected with the influences of civic life. It first created the true sentiment of country through the habitual conscious co-operation in practical effort in conditions of a sufficiently intimate association; whilst veneration was kept alive, and the feelings thus grouped together were linked with a local centre, representing at once solidarity and continuity. The Country is a schoolmaster leading us up to Humanity; and patriotism, taking the form adapted to pacific and industrial existence, will be an essential element in the final religion.

The weak side of the moral culture produced

by the social situation and the civic collaboration of the Romans lay in the twofold fact that the personal veneration it developed in inferiors was not met by any regular discipline of the chiefs, and that acts rather than sentiments—being more urgently needed at the time—absorbed general solicitude. Only in the Middle Ages was the due attention paid to the regulation of the feelings on which our conduct ultimately depends, and which, by the degree of cultivation they receive, best measure our genuine progress.

We have thus seen how the national mission of Rome reacted on the dominant population. Its influence on the subjected races is more obvious. Their compulsory aggregation was the necessary preparation for their subsequent free convergence, and thus becomes a real element in religious history. Those races were not degraded by the Roman supremacy; their several cultural systems and their national customs were respected, whilst the fruitless conflicts in which they had been constantly engaged were terminated, and the advantages of Roman civilisation, including

participation in the results of Greek culture, were freely communicated to them. The great work of conquest and incorporation was, on the whole, conducted with consummate judgment by the central patriciate, especially in its earlier stages, in which we meet with many noble examples of self-denial and public devotedness in the ruling class. Whilst steadily insisting on the necessary ascendancy of Rome, its officers were ready to resort to diplomatic methods in preference to military, whenever the former were available, and their efforts were often seconded by the spontaneous adhesion or passive acquiescence of such populations as were really ripe for incorporation. As that process reached its natural limits, the corresponding régime became slowly decomposed, whilst, wanting the spontaneous discipline of a difficult task, the higher orders exhibited a deeply vitiated morality.¹

The senatorial rule was replaced by the ascendancy of a permanent dictator. The inauguration of the new régime was personally

¹ See Matthew Arnold's *Obermann Once More*, one of the finest recent products of poetic thought.

represented by him who, of all historical characters, was most equal to the function which human destinies assigned him. But the great services he could have rendered, in addition to what he had already achieved, were sacrificed by an odious and stupid murder, prompted by metaphysical fanaticism in combination with aristocratic rage.¹ It was impossible, however, to restore the previous system, now essentially exhausted. Though retrograde velleities continued to exist in some quarters, no serious attempt was made to revive the senatorial predominance. Notwithstanding the unworthiness of some of the dictators, their government was, on the whole, popular with the mass of the community. Under their supremacy, conservation, instead of extension, became the order of the day, and attention was turned, in a greater

¹ Merivale, a historian rather respectable than eminent, appears to hesitate in characterising the assassination, and to be half inclined to accept the judgment of Suetonius—'Jure caesus existimetur.' It is more important to observe, as an evidence of the recent state of historical philosophy in English academic circles, that the same writer represents the crime as ordained by Providence 'for inscrutable reasons.' By this recourse to supernatural decrees, dictated by impenetrable motives, everything receives an apparent, and nothing a real, explanation; and scientific history and political prevision are rendered alike impossible.

degree than before, to internal improvement. Real and important progress, both in thought and in practice, was realised. The jurists tended towards the construction of a code of public and private conduct entirely independent of theology. There was a growing consciousness that the provisional office of military action must undergo a transformation—that, in the altered situation, defence must be substituted for conquest. And along with this was felt a sense of the necessary preponderance of industrial life in the future, for which due preparation was made, as well as for the ultimate abolition of slavery, which was its indispensable condition. The best types of imperial rule showed a genuine solicitude for the development and propagation of the benefits of the contemporary civilisation amongst the vast populations submitted to their control.

But no partial improvements could dispense with a great movement, partly intellectual, but chiefly moral and social, which the temporal and spiritual forces of the period had, for some time, been jointly tending to produce; but which, unfortunately, the rulers of the State

could not foresee, and, when it began to gain ground, did not estimate aright.

THE CATHOLICO-FEUDAL TRANSITION.

The Greek and Roman systems of life had been characterised by the decisive development of intelligence and activity respectively. But the third element of our nature—the affective—on which our unity essentially depends, remained inadequately cultivated. And the evolution of the theoretical and practical forces, of which we have spoken, gradually awakened a sense of the urgency of a moral discipline to check the grave abuses necessarily arising from their free exercise. In the Greek world intellectual decadence had set in, expression increasingly prevailing over thought, and ingenious subtilities, which were always the foible of the Hellenic mind, more and more taking the place of solid acquisitions. In Rome, the discipline resulting from the national mission had come to an end by the sufficient accomplishment of the latter, all the races really capable of assimilation having been incorporated. The accumu-

lation of wealth, as the fruit of conquest, disposed the higher ranks to self-indulgent and dissipated habits, whilst they were forced to support the inferior citizens in habits of demoralising idleness. Conduct, alike in public and private life, could be but little influenced by the discredited polytheistic beliefs. The subject populations suffered from oppression, arising out of this scepticism and corruption; and the need of a universal morality was everywhere felt, and showed itself in anticipations, emanating from different quarters, of an approaching social regeneration. Thus was laid the foundation of an effort towards a comprehensive regulation of human life, which was indeed premature, and could only partially succeed, but which is entitled to eternal respect and gratitude, and has left us a programme which it must be the great work of our own and future times to realise. As Greece had exercised the intellect and Rome the active powers, the third transition had to cultivate the affections which were ultimately to regulate both.

For this transition a monotheistic creed was

necessary. The official doctrines of the empire were in a state of growing dissolution, and the only issue of this, in the existing intellectual and moral situation, must be a concentration, not a disappearance, of Theologism. The common civilisation propagated by conquest required a common belief within the area of that conquest, and only through Monotheism could a universal morality be established, which, on the one hand—the scientific system being still so imperfect—must rest on Theologism, and which, on the other hand, a plurality of local deities, bound up with a number of distinct nationalities, would have rendered impossible. The advocacy of the monotheistic doctrine by Greek speculative schools from the time of Socrates and Plato, which had formerly been a disturbing influence, now became really opportune, though, even without such a preparatory elaboration, the public reason, stimulated by the social demand, would have spontaneously effected the transformation, which was thus merely facilitated.

The new faith, which was the joint product of the Greek Philosophy and the Roman

domination, was, naturally, grafted on the stock of the one existing Monotheism professed by a nationality with which the Greeks had been familiar since the time of Alexander, and which had now been subjected to the Roman empire. From Judaism the new religion substantially derived its morals,¹ whilst it developed mystic doctrines peculiar to itself, which were demanded by the social environment in which it arose and the requirements it had to meet. By this spontaneous connection with a historical Monotheism, which was already possessed of the tradition of divine revelations, it evidently obtained a much more advantageous point of departure than would have been afforded by the abstract metaphysical Monotheism, which was diffused through the Greek world, whilst the latter, though insufficient as a basis, was a serviceable collateral aid. At the same time, however, a difficult problem was thus presented—that, namely, of the disengagement of a universal faith from the narrowing Jewish influences amidst which its first nucleus appeared.

This problem was solved by the genius,

¹ See Emanuel Deutsch's *Essay on the Talmud*.

self-devotion, and practical wisdom of the incomparable St Paul. Eminently fitted for the task, as at once a Jew by birth, a Greek by culture, and a Roman by civil status, he founded what—not from its performance but from its aspirations¹—we justly term Catholicism on the basis of an anterior movement which was strictly Hebrew.² This movement, but for his adhesion, might not have been more than an effort—and an abortive effort—towards a national reform, such as the prophets had preached at previous periods in the history of the Jews, and as John the Baptist had quite recently proclaimed. Paul, at first indignantly rejecting the Christian beliefs, soon perceived their capabilities, as the possible rudiments of a universal religion, and, after internal struggles which produced a cerebral crisis, adopted them, not merely with sincerity, but with the enthusiastic zeal which was natural to him.³ Sub-

¹ It is not here intended to assert that this was the earliest ecclesiastical application of the epithet *καθολικός*.

² Jesus said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'—Matt. xv. 24. See Acts xiii. 46; Matt. x. 5.

³ The repugnance of modern negativism to the systematic construction of the great Apostle is well instanced in Bentham's

ordinating himself, he idealised Jesus, whom he had not personally known, and even passionately exalted him. After an elaboration, prolonged in retirement during several years, which

curious treatise—‘Not Paul, but Jesus.’ The mental limitation and obliquity of its author (who, notwithstanding the exaggerations of J. S. Mill and others, really rendered valuable service only in the department of legal reform) are shown by his utter blindness to the noble moral nature of Paul, whom he accuses of seeking and obtaining money on false pretences. The real ground of this rancorous hostility to St Paul lay in the fact that he was the true founder of historical Christianity. The negative schools in general have attributed to the priesthoods and great individual reformers, both Christian and non-Christian, the practice of conscious and systematic deception. Positivism rejects this view, maintaining that every moral movement which has powerfully and for a long period influenced mankind has had its basis in genuine conviction.

As to Bentham's fitness for a critical study of the Apostolic history, it is enough to say that he makes St Luke one of the twelve Apostles (p. 342), and speaks of Aquila and Priscilla as “two female disciples of Paul” (p. 370). The one thing which he saw aright was the fact of the marked difference between the doctrine of Jesus and that of Paul.

Renan was a very different man from Bentham, but that ingenious and accomplished writer, whilst he could not help respecting and admiring St Paul, was but little in sympathy with either his character or his teaching. His sentiment, approaching to dislike of both, may be easily read between the lines of his biography of the Apostle in the *Origines du Christianisme*. The closing pages of that biography express the same idea as the title of Bentham's book, which has indeed become a common watchword of the cultivated sceptics of our time, and, in the form ‘Back to Christ,’ is the rather indiscreet rallying cry of the theologians who understand how untenable their traditional attitude has become.

(if we may judge from his writings) seems to have been devoted mainly to organising a theoretical transition between Judaism and Catholicism, he preached the completed doctrine, which he did not derive, except in its first lineaments, from the Palestinian believers, but believed to have been communicated to him by a direct divine revelation (Gal. i. 11, 12). In the parts of Asia Minor and Greece which he visited in his several missionary tours he formed small groups of believers, partly Jewish, partly Pagan converts, laying at the same time the foundations of a regularly constituted sacerdotal order, which, he saw, was the primary condition of doctrinal uniformity as well as of effective social action. In occasional letters, some of which have happily been preserved to us, he set forth, with as definite co-ordination as a doctrine so theoretically incoherent admitted, the essential features of the creed, which had only partially and in a vague and indeterminate way been indicated by the Jewish Reformer and his local disciples, and impelled it on a world-wide career which had not been previously contemplated for it.

The Catholic religion, slowly rising under the pressure of the official Polytheism, was involuntarily led to the principle of the separation of the temporal and spiritual powers, which was the soul of the Mediæval system and the principal source of its temporary efficacy. Having to prevail against a hostile government, it alleged—at an early stage, though not at the outset—the personal deity of its central figure, which (as the struggle with Arianism afterwards showed) gave to its apostles a claim to respect and authority greater than could have belonged to the emissaries of a prophet, even supposed superhuman, who was no more than the channel of a supernatural revelation. Thus was set up, under divine headship, over against the government of the Empire, a ‘power’ not of this world, but supreme in all that related to the sphere of the future life, and therefore entitled to interfere in behalf of the supposed eternal interests of every soul. Further, by their position in regard to the State, the ministers of the Church were from the first directed to the proper function of a spiritual authority—that, namely, of influencing sentiments instead of controlling acts.

Unprejudiced inquiry will show that, contrary to prevailing impressions, the admirable work wrought by Catholicism was not the spontaneous fruit of its special doctrines, which laboured under essential vices. They were, on the intellectual side, vague, inconsistent, and irrational, thus generating endless heresies and controversies. In the moral sphere, they tended to create an absorbing egoism in the believer—to whom vast personal interests were presented as the only worthy object of his pre-occupations—and so prompted an isolation from social interests such as was exemplified in the anchorites of the Thebaid. The system had also the effect of breaking the sense of human continuity by its absolute denunciation of its Græco-Roman predecessors and the grudging recognition which it gave to its Hebraic antecedents, even whilst, from some points of view, exaggerating the importance of the latter. But we are not to judge it in its historical operation by the inherent dogmatic character which led Trajan and Tacitus to regard it as hostile to human welfare, but by the social reactions which those great men could not foresee, and which

were produced by the wisdom of the priesthood acting as organ of public instincts in a favourable situation, and aided by an admirable ecclesiastical organisation moulded on the lines of the Roman imperial system. The sacerdotal order, availing itself of the flexibility of the Christian doctrine, interpreted and developed it, during some centuries, as the government of souls required, encouraging healthy tendencies, whilst it combated abuses and limited fanaticism. To the happy results thus achieved, the practical Roman genius, both within and without the priestly ranks, largely contributed, urging, as it did, to social applications, whilst Greek subtilty, after the doctrine had been sufficiently elaborated, spent itself on idle refinements and divagations having no relation to life. The revolt of the intellect against the vices of the creed was thus provisionally repressed, in view of the superior exigencies of social improvement.

The powers of the most eminent men of the early Middle Ages were so absorbed by the great task of establishing and fortifying the Catholic-feudal organisation that the development of

intelligence could not, before the eleventh century, become the object of much direct effort. But the influence of Catholicism, during the period of its real ascendancy, far from being hostile to intellectual progress, was distinctly conducive to it. In the sacerdotal order, the work of spiritual direction required and produced an empirical study of human nature, which merits our admiration and respect. And, as regards the mass of the several populations, the Church established, for the first time in history, a universal system of regular teaching through its services and the pulpit, as well as by personal communications, for both sexes, and for even the humblest classes, including the servile. The attempt at systematising morals, though, for want of a scientific basis, incapable of complete success, led to habitual rational discussion—not, indeed, of the principles of the dominant doctrine, but of their consequences—in which all believers were free to take part; and thus the cultivation of the intellect, especially of the deductive faculty, was promoted and diffused. Through the commemoration of the saints, some notions of, at least, Ecclesiastical History were

communicated, though the general doctrine encouraged an anti-historic sentiment of reprobation towards all the preceding phases of the human evolution—an evil, however, in some degree mitigated by the preservation of Latin as the sacred language, and the consequent accessibility of some of the ancient classics to the study of the clergy.

Catholicism continued the æsthetic education of the western nations by developing the systematic communion with ideal beings believed to be real, which had been already instituted by Polytheism. The universal diffusion of this mental habit was a preparation and training for the final religion, which will cultivate, and by repeated manifestations keep alive and deepen, our sense of the relations in which we stand to our private and public predecessors, and will continue on rational bases the invaluable institution of Prayer. A closer approach was made to the establishment of homogeneity between the adorer and the adored beings by the doctrine of the temporary assumption of human nature by the Deity, afterwards by the introduction of the

worship of saints, which prevailed over the veneration of angels, and, finally, by the gradual elaboration of the beautiful type of the Virgin Mother, the one poetic creation of Christianity, in which is anticipated the image of Humanity, destined to succeed and replace it.

Though great poetry does not appear before the time of Dante—who belongs more to the modern than to the mediæval world—already, as soon as the new languages, especially those of Romanic descent, were sufficiently elaborated, interesting chivalrous compositions were produced, due to the feudal influence, under which arose a system of manners, public and domestic, which was capable of successful idealisation.

The great cathedrals, which the Middle Ages constructed, were not merely splendid evidences of the profoundly religious feeling of the period, but contributed largely to æsthetic culture beyond the province of architecture. They, in fact, became sanctuaries of the sister arts—music (which owed its chief development to the monks), sculpture, and painting—which were thus ennobled by their consecration to the highest ends—a feature

which will be still more fully realised in the temples of the future.

That a most important *moral* improvement was the fruit of the mediæval transition will be seen by considering separately the three departments of our life — personal, domestic, and social. Under each of these heads, we must remember that there were two influences at work, which conspired to the results; the Catholic doctrine and discipline on the one hand, and, on the other, the social situation, or, more distinctly, the altered character of the activity of the period, briefly indicated by the name 'Feudalism.'

1. Notwithstanding its consecration of the believer's absorption in his celestial interests, and its denial of the natural existence of the benevolent affections, Catholicism was able indirectly to promote a high personal morality. Duty was indeed made to rest, in the last resort, on an immense egoism ;¹ but it was, at the same

¹ Though the love of God is inculcated both in the Hebrew and in the Christian system, and though natures at once noble and tender, like the author of the Fourth Gospel, or St Bernard, have preached it with special fervour, the notion of a purely disinterested love is really, as the Quietist controversy showed, foreign to true Catholic doctrine. The real and necessary

time, enforced by a systematic discipline of the will, acting chiefly, though not ex-

spirit of theological morality is represented not only in the writings of Bossuet and the decisions of Innocent the Twelfth, but in the celebrated definition of Paley, which has been repudiated by the less orthodox, but more genuinely human, feeling of our own time—'Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God and for the sake of everlasting happiness.' Even St Paul's generally elevated tone of feeling is so lowered by the character of the doctrine that he could write—'If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' Contrast with this the self-devotion of Regulus, Decius, and the many other ancients who, with the faintest prospect of any future reward, sacrificed themselves for the public good. The Apostle's personal nobleness speaks in the fine enthusiasm of Romans ix. 3.

St Paul endeavoured to remedy in some degree the essentially egoistic character of the system by preaching a mystic solidarity of believers as members of the body of Christ (Eph. v. 30, and I. Cor. vi. 15). This was a vague anticipation of the scientific conception of Humanity, which substitutes the common relation to a comprehensive whole for the contradictory image—'every one members one of another' (Rom. xii. 5, and Eph. iv. 25).

Whilst the Christian doctrine undoubtedly tended to produce an entire absorption in the contemplation of the future destinies of the individual, the supernatural sanctions never had, except in isolated cases, the degree of potency which a false view of our nature might lead us, *a priori*, to attribute to them. Conduct was really more influenced by purely human motives, and, amongst these, by benevolent impulses. Though the natural existence of the altruistic feelings was dogmatically denied, their spontaneous action was not suppressed by that theoretic error; and the systematic effort after moral goodness, even when originally prompted by the self-regarding motive to which theological hopes and fears were addressed, was supported and strengthened by the better instincts, which find a sufficient reward in their own exercise.

clusively, through this individualistic motor. The principal progress wrought in personal morals was the increased culture of sentiments, as distinguished from the prescription of external acts. This arose, as we have said, from the situation of the priesthood, who could not control conduct directly, as had been possible for the religious authorities under the Theocracies or even under the Greek and Roman systems by reason of the confusion of the powers, characteristic of antiquity. Instead of commanding, the Catholic priests could only counsel;¹ and they were thus led to regulate—so far as their theory of human nature permitted—the affections, whether self-regarding or altru-

¹ Comte observes that this attribute of the priesthood produced a remarkable permanent sympathy on the part of women towards the sacred order—the woman, like the priest, being destitute of independent physical resources, and so compelled to modify wills, instead of enforcing acts.

Here may be indicated a false note, which has not attracted attention, in Wordsworth's otherwise beautiful poem—'She was a phantom of delight.' When he speaks of the 'perfect woman, nobly plann'd, to warn, to counsel, and *command*,' by this last word he assigns to her an office which only in exceptional cases can be hers, and the habitual exercise of which would corrupt her nature. He might more justly, if with some loss of emphasis in the expression, have written—'Nobly made, to warn, to counsel, and persuade.'

istic, which are the springs of action. The religion, however, applied itself, more directly and with greater success, to the repression of evil tendencies than to the cultivation of our better instincts. Especially in regard to sexual purity, the Catholic discipline was more effective than that of any previous system. Pride and vanity, too, were strenuously repressed, humility being inculcated as one of the foremost Christian virtues.

In its moral work Catholicism employed with great advantage the construction of personal types. It concentrated on its supposed founder all the highest qualities of man which its adepts were then able to conceive;¹ thus framing an ideal type for the habitual contemplation and imitation of the faithful. An imitation which, if only the vague and indeterminate notion of the Deity had been presented as its object, could not really have guided practice, was made possible and effective through what became the most essential and

¹ So also at a later period it combined in the Virgin, without any historical basis, all the highest attributes of woman. This case illustrates well the way in which moral requirements led to subjective doctrinal constructions without intentional falsification.

fundamental element of the matured Christian scheme—namely, the doctrine of the God-man—the divine nature implying perfection and exciting veneration, whilst the human implied sympathy and conciliated affection. Between God, apart from the incarnation, and his worshippers there would have been an infinite distance—a consideration which conspires with other reasons to show that so-called philosophic deism is incapable of moral and social efficacy.

2. In domestic life a great advance was made — not, however, exclusively, or even principally, due to the Catholic influence, which preferred celibacy to marriage. The new conditions of existence arising from the transformation of military activity from aggressive to defensive, and the habits and sentiments connected with that change, had more to do with these moral results than the action of the church, which only laid the necessary foundation of purity, but could not cultivate tenderness. The more sedentary life and intermittent military action brought husband and wife into more continuous and closer relations, and both the chiefs and their followers

thus came to understand better the worth of the loving sex, and the value of domestic ties. And the larger feminine liberty, which could now be safely introduced, enabled wives and mothers to exercise more fully than before the moralising influence within the household, which will always be the highest vocation of women. This influence was seconded by the authoritative intervention of the priesthood in the internal discipline of the family—arising out of the separation of the powers—which gradually broke down the too absolute rule of the paterfamilias.

3. It was in the regulation of public life that the reigning creed was least effective. Civic solitudes were of little account in its estimation beside the perspective of the eternal lot of the individual believer. The number of mediæval treatises *de contemptu mundi*, and the continued tendency to monastic isolation, when it had ceased to be useful, show how little the doctrine was fitted to govern civic existence. This incapacity is clearly apparent in the *Imitation*, that otherwise admirable manual of the Christian life. But, notwithstanding the un-

social nature of the creed, the influences of the situation, embodied in feudalism, while they discouraged mysticism, developed noble practical traits of character. Respect for truth, scrupulous fulfilment of promises, horror of treason, nice sense of honour, hatred of oppression, a spirit of loyal devotion combined with a high sentiment of independence, all implied in the institution of Chivalry, became the eternal glory of the affective transition, and left a stamp on Western Society which, though weakened, has not been effaced by the modern anarchy.

The maintenance, and even strengthening, of the hereditary principle in the case of the temporal chiefs, which was a necessity of the period as a condition of stability, was associated with obligations towards inferiors, which preceding systems had insufficiently recognised. The feudal chief was attached to the soil, and obtained in his youth a training for the social work of his maturity. The sentiments appropriate to his position were early inspired, and a practical interest created in the lot of his dependants. This influence was promoted by the priesthood, who, during the real as-

cendency of Catholicism, were the earnest, as they were the natural, protectors of the working classes. And thus was cultivated, at least within the upper ranks, general Benevolence, the highest form of altruism, as Fetishism had developed Attachment, and Polytheism had encouraged Veneration.

In the sacerdotal order, on the other hand, the principle of heredity required to be repressed, in order to secure more completely the spiritual independence of the priesthood. With a view to this, as well as to the more effectual action of the clergy on society, the practice of celibacy was imposed upon them by the energetic efforts of the most eminent types of Catholicism, especially the great Hildebrand ; and, in the circumstances of the period, it was, doubtless, indispensable. But a moral contradiction was thus introduced into the constitution of the sacred order, its members being deprived of the admirable influence arising from an intimate association with the better sex, and rendered incapable of fully appreciating domestic life. This grave, though at the time necessary, evil was in conformity

with the vicious nature of the prevailing creed, which traced to the first woman the imagined Fall of Man, and represented marriage, not as the great means for the mutual improvement of the sexes, but as an unavoidable, though deplorable, concession to the lower appetites.

An opposition between the moral requirements of the affective transition and the political exigencies of the period, similar to that which we have noted with respect to clerical celibacy, meets us in the temporal principality of the Popes. The head of Christendom, whose doctrine, from its purely individual character, had not such a capacity for either representing or regulating public life as would have assured him a spontaneous ascendancy, needed, to guarantee his social authority, or even his just independence, the possession of a temporal domain, which was yet in contradiction to the fundamental principle of the Catholic system—the separation of the powers. The institution, indispensable as it then was, had a disastrous reaction on the ideas and habits of the priesthood, especially after the close of the true Middle Ages. The popes,

on their return from Avignon, became little more than Italian princes, and were almost exclusively occupied in military action and diplomatic effort for the preservation and extension of the States of the Church and the aggrandisement of their families, using their still subsisting spiritual prestige for temporal ends. And the Papal Court, under some of the Pontiffs, became a by-word for luxury, immorality, rapacity, and lawless violence.¹ The secondary dignitaries, bishops and abbots, followed the example of their head; they tended to become merely feudal chiefs, and, through the thirst for wealth and material power, began the degeneration which ultimately led to the irrevocable discredit of the order.²

The monastic system, especially as reformed

¹ It might seem natural that the Papacy would have recognised in its later forfeiture of the principality a source of purity and single-mindedness, which deserved to be welcomed and improved; and some enthusiastic Catholics have entertained this view. But the ceaseless lamentations for the loss, which have proceeded from the more clear-sighted adherents of the system, betray their consciousness of spiritual weakness, and of the necessity of worldly pre-eminence to preserve for the Pontiff even an illusory semblance of his former European authority.

² Catholics seem still to apprehend very imperfectly these historical facts. A recent writer sets out, as a thing to be admired and approved, the wealth and power of the Abbot of

by St Benedict, served important ends—besides its literary and industrial results, which, though real and valuable, Protestant writers have too exclusively considered—by enabling its votaries to resist successfully contemporary influences hostile to faith and morals, and also by presenting to others admirable types of self-devotion and self-conquest. In its best days, it was a standing protest against the wealth and worldliness which undermined the Church. It supplied an effective training-school for the higher secular clergy, often recruited from its ranks, and its governing offices afforded ample opportunities for the exhibition and development of political ability.¹ Directly subordinated to Rome, and liberated from the rule of the local priesthood,

Glastonbury. He 'was a great local magnate, a peer of parliament, and the master of vast estates. Four parks teeming with game, domains and manors of great extent and number, bringing to the monastery an income of more than £3000 a year in money, or ten times that amount in our money, gave him an influence of the highest importance in the West and even in all England' (Gasquet, *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, ii. p. 329). But how does it consist with the principle of the separation of the powers that the influence of either a spiritual person or a spiritual institution should be founded on material opulence?

¹ For a fine picture of admirable social work done by St Severinus, a monk of the fifth century, see Amedée Thierry's

the Western monks were active and devoted agents of the Papacy; they rendered, in particular, valuable service in the admirable enterprises for the extension of Christendom, the most notable of which was that for the conversion of England, conducted by St Augustin under the impulse of Gregory the Great. Besides, a castle being commonly associated with an abbey, religion thus exercised a continual supervision and influence over the conduct of the nobility, especially the Barbarian chiefs. But from the end of the seventh century, monasticism did more harm than good, and, notwithstanding the repeated attempts made for its reform and the noble individual types it produced, could never afterwards recover its original usefulness.

The most important social result of the Catholico-feudal transition was the decisive rise of the new industrial life by the change of slavery to serfdom, followed by the entire personal liberation, first of the urban, and then

Derniers Temps de l'Empire de l'Occident. During that dreadful period and the gradual settlement of the West after the barbarian invasions, the services of the monks were most valuable.

of the agricultural serfs. The industrial corporations, not long afterwards, received political recognition. As a product of the accumulations which were encouraged by freedom, the class of *entrepreneurs*, as distinct from the workers, began to appear. Technical inventions and adaptations tended to promote the dignity of the proletariat, by transferring the more severe and coarser labours from man to mechanical agencies. These several elements of a new practical order were due to the joint action of moral impulses and economic conditions, the latter, however, without doubt preponderating.

In the European system, viewed as a whole, a free moral union between the smaller political states arising from the feudal decomposition took the place of the forced incorporation which prevailed under the Romans. The influence of a common faith, everywhere applied by a single priesthood under one central head and exhibited to believers in an identical worship, tended to produce a sentiment of fraternity, or at least prevented and mitigated conflicts amongst these populations, whilst their Roman inheritance and the similarity of their social

situations established a certain homogeneity alike in their manners and their institutions. And thus was laid the foundation of the Occidental Commonwealth, composed of the five most advanced European nations—France, Italy, Spain, England, and Germany—with their respective natural annexes. But the exclusive nature of their creed, notwithstanding its pretensions to universality, created a permanent spirit of contempt and even ill-will towards the nationalities which were outside the Catholic group — a spirit which was only partially modified by temporal influences.

By way of recapitulation, we may here remind the reader that the Middle Ages cannot be understood except by combining in our historical appreciation the two contemporary but diverse influences of Catholicism and Feudalism. The spiritual life of the period was founded on the real, though imperfect, separation of the powers, without which the effort towards a systematisation of morals could not have realised even the partial success which it attained ; whilst the temporal régime rested on the transformation of the military system of antiquity by the

substitution of defence for conquest, and, as necessary accompaniment of this, the liberation of the working classes.

We have now to conceive in a general way the nature of the great modern movement which has filled the interval between the beginning of the fourteenth century and our own times.

THE MODERN MOVEMENT.

General View.—The essentially subjective, as well as inherently contradictory, nature of Catholicism admitted only of a transient ascendancy, founded on its social utility. As regards its extension, far from realising the aspirations implied in its name, it lost the moral government of the Eastern half of the Roman world, in which a Christianity, wanting the essential feature of a real separation of the powers, established itself; and the rise and spread of Islam had previously placed an obstinate barrier in the way of its diffusion otherwise than by colonial expansion. It was obviously destined, in spite of its programme, to be only a local and temporary religion. All that it could do in

the sphere of general human relations, it had done by its extension to the entire western group of nations, thus preparing the conception of Humanity, and proposing the problem of universality which it was incapable of solving. The numerous heresies which marked its history had been surmounted, or rather suspended, not by the intrinsic merit of its doctrine, the vices of which had, in fact, created them, but by the public sense of the benefits temporarily derived from its judicious social application. But, when it had completed its provisional work—when the practical reforms in the position of women and of the working classes over which it had, in part, presided, were sufficiently effected—it suffered the necessary fate of exhausted organisms. Protracted conflicts took place, first, between the Papacy aiming at absolute domination, and the powerful monarchies which succeeded the Feudal system, and then between the central government of the Church and its national branches. Schismatical and heretical tendencies were developed in the course of these controversies,¹ in which an appeal was neces-

¹ Cardinal Manning says (*Dublin Review*, Jan. 1888, p. 245):

sarily made to free individual examination; the weaknesses of the system became apparent, and the dissidences, long suppressed by social considerations, began the inevitable process of dissolution. It was more and more plainly seen that Catholicism could not direct the rising mental and practical order which it had assisted in developing. The Church, which had long pursued a progressive policy, now conscious of its decline, assumed an attitude of hostility to the new tendencies at work in Society, and, as the opposition grew stronger, defended itself by violent repressions,¹ for which it used

‘The minds of men had been so distracted by the great Western schism, by the frequent subtraction of obedience, by the doubtful election of popes and the simultaneous existence of two or even three claimants to the Holy See, that the supreme pontifical authority had become a matter of academical discussion *hinc inde*.’

¹ Already in the thirteenth century, when the decline of Catholicism began to be sensible, the crusades had been turned against heretics, and the revolt of the Albigenses, partly founded on doctrinal traditions, partly prompted by ecclesiastical abuses, had been quenched in blood. For this atrocious war, the Cistercian monks appear to have been most directly responsible (though the Papacy cannot be acquitted); their fanaticism being seconded by the brutal bigotry and greedy ambition of Simon de Montfort. In the same century was created the Dominican order, which, though perhaps not intended by its founder to be the organ of such action, became the principal instrument of the Inquisition—a stain which the eminent services of some of its members cannot efface.

the official supremacy it still possessed. These persecutions excited invincible antipathies, and awakened intense hatred of the system in quarters where, if a milder policy had been adopted, no stronger feeling than one of indifference would probably have existed. Catholicism was forced gradually to abandon the moral government of Society, and to become only a director and solace of individual souls. One useful public function it continued, though inadequately, to discharge, that, namely, of resisting anarchical tendencies, against which it was invoked even by incredulous statesmen when the interests of order seemed likely to be seriously compromised. It has also rendered a service by keeping alive some practical problems of statical sociology, which, during its ascendancy, it propounded, but was unable to solve.

At the same time when Catholicism began to lose its hold, Feudalism also commenced its decadence in most of the European countries. The defensive function which it discharged having been sufficiently accomplished by the incorporation of the Polytheistic tribes of the North and the successful resistance to Mussul-

man invasion, completed by the counter-movement of the Crusades, its spontaneous disorganisation was brought about by the antagonism between its two elements—the central force represented by royalty and the local force residing in the nobility. As Science in the theoretic province, so Industry in the practical, entered on the fresh development which has since been uninterruptedly continued. By reason of fixed habits and rooted prejudices, the temporal lords of the Middle Ages could not easily be transformed into administrators of industrial enterprises; and hence the new activity of the West was left without practical chiefs at the same time when Society was losing the effective authority of its former theoretic guides. Thus the transition in both spheres long proceeded without superior regulation or control, except in so far as the old powers occasionally intervened, either in their own defence or to repress extreme aberrations. Only the materials of a new order could be elaborated, and that by special and dispersive efforts, no synthesis being available to regulate both intellect and activity. And hence the

unprecedented situation presented by the Modern period, in which a growing dissolution and an empirical recomposition have proceeded side by side, the old system gradually crumbling, yet necessarily continuing to subsist in the absence of a new unity; and the elements of a new system being separately accumulated without the indispensable conditions of their co-ordination and discipline being as yet fulfilled. The combination of these two simultaneous processes—the gradual destruction, partly spontaneous, partly systematic, of the old order, spiritual and temporal, on the one hand; and the analytic and dispersive preparation of the materials of a new order, which could not yet be comprehended as a whole—this is the fundamental conception, without which the nature and history of the modern movement cannot be rightly understood.

This movement was principally intellectual, involving the substitution of the positive for the fictitious, and the relative for the absolute, in the whole mental field. But it was social also, and these two sides of it were inseparably bound together. The essential foundations of

the final civilisation had indeed already been laid in the general abolition of servitude and the domestic emancipation of women. But the normal state could not be attained without the entire regulation of the collective life, and especially of the existence of the working classes. This required as its preliminary condition the systematisation of morals, which had been only on insecure foundations, and in an imperfect and provisional way, effected by Catholicism; and *that* was a work dependent on the whole intellectual development. It involved, in fact, a radical renovation of human conceptions by the complete elimination of Theologism—a much profounder change than the concentration in which the introduction of Monotheism consisted—and a synthetic view of the material world, of human nature, and of society; in other words, the formation of a Positive Encyclopædia, which could be the result only of a long and difficult series of un-coordinated labours. The conviction of superior minds that a social regeneration would follow the maturity of the scientific movement explains the unanimous ardour with which,

resuming the suspended elaboration begun by the Greeks, the Modern Europeans threw themselves into the work of theoretic research. It was felt that a demonstrable faith would be the crown and completion of the scientific evolution, and, the final religion once established, the social renovation would follow as a consequence.

We now proceed to study in greater detail the twofold process of destruction and of reconstructive preparation above referred to, which has been common, in somewhat different forms, to all the western nations, and which constituted the last necessary preamble of the definitive order.

1. *First or Spontaneous Phase.*—The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are often erroneously regarded as a part of the Middle Ages, whilst they really form a stage of transition between those ages and modern times, properly so-called. In these centuries the decomposition of the Catholico-Feudal system proceeded, not in any appreciable degree from direct assaults, but altogether from the rivalries and dissensions of its constituent powers—dissen-

sions which had arisen in the mediæval period, but were now greatly aggravated. In the fourteenth century, the contest was chiefly between the Papacy and the temporal princes, the latter gaining the advantage; in the fifteenth, between Rome and the national clergies, which sought to organise a permanent opposition to the popes and to subject their official action to the periodical control of an insurrectionary assembly. Both the contending parties in each of these struggles professed, and doubtless felt, a real loyalty to the dogmatic and cultural elements of the system; and these remained intact, except in special local or personal instances of partial revolt or complete emancipation, whilst the government of the Church was radically altered. The results of these struggles were, in fact, first, the paralysis of the papal authority as a controlling power in the Western Commonwealth, and secondly, the subjection of the national priesthoods to the respective temporal sovereigns. The clergy, having lost their independence, were unable to offer to the several classes that social protection which had previously acquired

and preserved their popularity, but were largely occupied in guarding their own material security, which could now be guaranteed only by the civil powers. A growing servility, first towards those powers and then towards the higher ranks of society, marked their conduct; they constantly compromised their principles, and, instead of imposing a moral discipline on the strong, they were inclined to use their influence only in enforcing the blind submission of the weak to their social superiors, whose 'divine rights' they were sedulous in maintaining.¹ The spiritual disorganisation led to the rise of strong governments presiding over larger

¹ It is an important principle, too often overlooked, of Dynamical Sociology, that the decadence of a social system or of a professional order is not really due to the abuses which arise in it. These are symptoms only, and result from the decadence instead of causing it. The decadence is the consequence of a growing want of harmony between the organ and the function it has to perform; the last varying with the progress of time, and the organ being unable to adapt itself to such variations and so losing its social utility. When the needful harmony, though it may be locally or temporarily compromised, continues essentially to exist, abuses can, without much difficulty, be corrected, and a healthy and efficient state restored. As it gradually diminishes, the utmost exertions cannot effect more than a precarious and transitory amendment, and the historical student is struck by the disproportion between the often recurring and immense efforts at reform, and the insignificant results attained.

national aggregates, and wielding the concentrated power required for the maintenance of material order in the midst of increasing intellectual and moral disorder. But this power, in the absence of an adequate and worthy spiritual control, was too often wasted in mutual hostilities, dictated, not by real social interests, but by selfish ambition, as in the deplorable struggles between France and England, and the Italian wars of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. Indeed, the intellectual and practical expansion of the period was accompanied by a general relaxation of moral ties, especially in public life, which was in a large degree due to the enfeeblement and degeneracy of the headship of Christendom. The impulses of pride, vanity, and cupidity obtained a new ascendant, and politics became materialised, the intervention of the temporal power being invoked to do the work of repression, which religious influences were no longer competent to perform. All these phenomena, though clearly visible in this first stage, become more obvious and decisive in the second phase, to which we now pass.

2. *Second or Protestant Phase.*—In this phase the demolition was, in a great degree, the result, not of spontaneous collapse, but of deliberate and concerted attack. The European power of the popes, previously everywhere weakened, was now practically annulled, and, whilst the subjection of the priesthood to the temporal governments was confirmed and extended, the dogmatic system of the Church was rejected by several hitherto obedient nations. Northern and Southern Europe, ever since the Roman incorporation, which in the former was insufficient, had, along with a large community of principles and institutions, a certain difference of tendencies, resulting from their different antecedents, and this showed itself plainly in the sixteenth century. It would be an error to attribute the success of Protestantism in the northern nations to their more advanced civilisation; they were really less cultivated than the southern nations, which did not accept it. It was welcomed in England and Germany, chiefly from a revolt against Italian pretensions and exactions, seconded by a characteristic tendency to independent

personal activity ; in the south it was repelled by the moral instinct of the popular masses, though, in select circles there, complete emancipation existed to a greater extent than in the north. The central nation, France, adhered, at least officially, to the old doctrine, but only after a prolonged struggle, which left behind it roots of a later development. This provisional separation, politically recognised in principle by the Peace of Westphalia—whatever were its disadvantages (and they were only partially compensated by the common pursuit of science, art, and industry) — was evidently necessary for the welfare of Europe. If the incomplete emancipation systematised by Protestantism had everywhere prevailed, that illusory solution would have turned the West away from the pursuit of a thorough renovation ; whilst, if the Catholic resistance had been everywhere successful, a retrogression in governmental policy would have followed, and the way to a universal regeneration would have been effectually barred.

National prejudices or metaphysical prepossessions have often led to a mistaken

estimate of the social action of the rival creeds. The utility of the Reformation, as having opened in a certain portion of Europe a free course for intellectual development, is, as we have said, undeniable. Eternal gratitude is due to the eminent politicians (by whom, and not by the theoreticians, its beneficent side is truly represented), such as William the Silent, and Gustavus Adolphus, for having by their noble efforts secured liberty of thought from the control of a degenerate priesthood and retrograde civil authorities. But if this larger action of Protestantism be left out of account, and it be judged by its direct effect on social ideas and on the popular heart and mind, the philosophic verdict must be different. We must condemn its tendency to confuse the temporal and spiritual powers, to encourage individualism and arrogant self-assertion, and to obscure the sense of human continuity by inspiring a contemptuous aversion for the Middle Ages, an exclusive predilection for the early stages of the Christian Church, and a special partiality for the Jewish Theocracy. As regards the Catholic dogmas, to

which Protestantism specially objected, they cannot be philosophically judged unless we regard them, not critically, as alleged enunciations of truth, but historically as what, in common with *all* theological doctrines, they really are—products of subjective inspiration, dictated by the effort after certain moral or social ends, and developing, in accordance with that purpose, the primary postulates of the faith. The dogmatic decisions of the Church, often long delayed and much controverted, had been all along guided by profound instincts aiming at such moral and social ends; and the continuous wisdom which, upon the whole, marked those decisions, can only be appreciated aright by regarding them from the point of view which we have indicated. So regarded, the doctrine of the real presence in the Eucharist—notwithstanding its mental strangeness—and that of Purgatory, the worship of Saints, and, above all, the adoration of the Virgin, were developments of the original data of Christianity which deserve our admiration. That they were most valuable as means, whether of spiritual government or of indi-

vidual edification, is certain; and it was their felt efficiency for these purposes that commended them to the esteem of so many eminent minds, and long restricted to a small minority of Christendom the protest of the intellect against the whole basis on which they rested. The continued acceptance of Catholicism by the Southern peoples since the sixteenth century, so far as their faith is genuine, has, no doubt, been mainly a matter of feeling—a product of the heart rather than the head. There too, a silent and spontaneous dissolution of the old opinions has all along been in progress in larger and larger circles; but the delusive halt of Protestantism and the intellectual semi-satisfaction it affords have never been acceptable. Those nations, especially their feminine element, happily preserving the habits of worship notwithstanding the collapse of the dogma, and so maintaining the sense of human continuity and keeping alive a provisional moral culture, have waited for the rise of the new faith, which, it was vaguely felt, must be the ultimate outcome of the modern movement, and have given their

hearts to the Virgin until Humanity, which she prefigured, should be revealed by the final religion. Whatever temporary losses they have thus sustained will be amply repaid by the earlier triumph among them of that final religion, and under its influence they will be without difficulty brought to an equality with the northern communities in scientific and industrial progress.

A systematic resistance to the demolition of Catholicism was conducted by the Jesuits. The eminent founder of that order has been erroneously judged by Protestant and sceptical prejudice. He formed the high-minded design of repairing the degradation of the spiritual power by the creation of a new clergy, which should be capable of reorganising the whole Catholic system, and so arresting its dissolution. This clergy was to have a separate head, standing beside and, under the forms of obedience, really independent of the Pope, now absorbed mainly in the care of his temporal domain. Ignatius ought to be considered as having continued, under altered conditions, the transient and, on the whole, ineffectual

attempts at reform by the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century, and having sought to effect conservation through such reform. He aimed, at the same time, at the propagation of the faith in the non-Christian world, an enterprise represented principally by his colleague, the admirable St Francis Xavier. The chief action on Western society was to be exercised through education, the extension and improvement of which were demanded by contemporary opinion. The entire scheme, being directed to an aim fundamentally opposed to the unalterable course of human evolution, necessarily failed; indeed, after the first generation of the Ignatians, it became clear that they could not regenerate Catholicism;¹ and they then devoted themselves to mere retrograde resistance, some-

¹ It is possible that, from their intellectual superiority to other branches of the Roman spirituality, a certain number of the Jesuits may become auxiliaries of the religious reconstruction now commencing under the auspices of Positivism. However this may be, the legal penalties or disabilities to which, in some countries, they (with other religious orders) are subject, ought, without doubt, to be removed. The Company, notwithstanding the occasional revival of Protestant fears, is powerless for evil, the movement of demolition which it was designed to combat is now practically completed, and it may be of some service in opposing the anarchical tendencies which were associated with, and have survived, that movement.

times by unscrupulous methods, especially by tolerating vice and overlooking neglect of duty in the higher ranks on the single condition of professed—even when only pretended—orthodoxy, and political support of the Church. The order, naturally hated by the Protestants, and regarded with jealousy by the older organs of the Catholic defence, became greatly discredited in public opinion before it was officially suppressed in most of the Western countries, and in the end, though only temporarily, by the Papacy itself.

The struggle between Protestantism and the Jesuits, which dominated the political movement, lasted till the third generation of the seventeenth century, when Anglicanism and Aristocracy triumphed in England, and French royalty, through its interested coalition with the Catholic influence, became hopelessly retrograde, as was shown by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.¹ There was thus introduced a stationary period of official orthodoxy, often

¹ It is a significant whilst truly deplorable fact that this political outrage, alike odious and stupid, was publicly eulogised by the great Bossuet, who, in doing so, approved in general principle the 'extermination of heretics' as a duty of temporal

hypocritical, in the former country, and of religious and political oppression in the latter, which was ended in both nations by the French crisis of 1789, and the consequences which followed from it, not only in its immediate scene, but in the whole European world.

On the constructive side, to this second modern phase on which we have been dwelling belongs the whole of the admirable movement from the time of Copernicus to that of Newton, which, continuing the work of Antiquity, established on lasting bases the true system of astronomy. The demonstration of the double motion of the earth brought about the first decisive collision between the view of the world maintained by the Church and the conclusions of science. How fatal to the entire theological position the wound thus inflicted was felt to be, appeared from the disgraceful

princes. So unfit had Catholicism, even as conceived by its most eminent minds, become to preside over the political and social government of the modern world. What corresponded on the Protestant side was the system of civil disabilities long directed against dissenters from the established religion, which opposed itself as decidedly, though not so violently, as Catholicism to any extension of dissidence beyond limits officially prescribed.

persecution of Galileo by the ecclesiastical authorities.

As regards philosophy, Bacon and Descartes, under the impulse of the scientific movement, exhibited in their respective ways, so far as was then possible, the nature and conditions of what is now called the Positive method, Bacon even anticipating, though indistinctly, the renovation it was destined to effect in moral and social studies, which naturally remained longest subject to the theologico-metaphysical régime.

3. *Third or Deistic Phase.*—The partial modifications of the creed of Christendom introduced by Protestantism were altogether insufficient as a solution of the religious problem. A thorough reconstruction, both intellectual and social, was necessary. But the plan of this construction could not, so long beforehand, be conceived. The definitive order could not, even by the most advanced minds, be more than vaguely anticipated; the radical ruin of the old system was indispensable before the nature of the new could be distinctly seen. And hence the movement assumed a more

and more revolutionary character. A doctrine of systematic negation, such as had never before appeared on the same scale, was developed, and obtained a wide acceptance, taking possession even of minds which would have been hostile to it, had they foreseen its ultimate issues. Whatever repugnance the genuine philosophic spirit must feel for pure negation, and notwithstanding the grave evils which attended the ascendancy of a superficial and sophistical doctrine, we must admit it to have been necessary that it should become thus predominant, at least in France. It was then the one possible organ of regenerative aspirations, and only by its general diffusion could retrograde tendencies have been sufficiently neutralised, and provisional popular convictions created, so as to prepare the way for the future establishment of a new mental order, involving a corresponding social organisation.

The absolute right of private judgment, apart not only from regard to the authority of the past, but also from any fulfilment of conditions of competence or due preparation, had been proclaimed by Protestantism with special

relation to theological opinion. It was now extended to the whole circle of social and moral ideas, of which the reason of each individual became supreme arbiter. The principle of Equality and that of the Sovereignty of the People were naturally connected with the fundamental dogma just mentioned, and the union of these three tenets composed the body of doctrine proper to the modern revolution. It would be an entire mistake to suppose that that revolution was the consequence of the popular adoption of these principles. On the contrary, the latter arose from the spontaneous decomposition of the mediæval order of things and the state of non-government produced by the discredit into which the old authorities, spiritual and temporal, had fallen. When the dissolution had proceeded sufficiently far, the negative systematisation followed, giving a theoretic sanction and attributing a permanent character to the prevailing anarchy, which, though in fact merely a temporary social situation, was presented to the public as type of the universal regeneration. It is scarcely necessary to add that, when the negative

doctrine had been formed, its reaction on public opinion powerfully accelerated, and, above all, rendered irrevocable, the dissolution which had been already in progress.

This doctrine, being an extension of Protestantism, was naturally systematised in England, where it took definite shape about the middle of the seventeenth century in the hands of Hobbes, but the work of popularising and propagating it was performed principally by the French *littérateurs* of the succeeding age. The more violently retrograde policy of the government in the latter country specially aroused the spirit of resistance and of hostile criticism, and the failure of Protestantism to take hold of the national mind left the way open for a thorough abolition of the old system. But the most influential and efficient chiefs of the dissolving action, though at the cost of consistency and logic, did not entertain the project of a complete demolition, at once intellectual and social. The school of Voltaire directed itself to the overthrow of Christianity, but respected the temporal government, notwithstanding the retrograde character it had

assumed. This compromise served the purpose of preserving temporarily the public peace, which would have been endangered if the assault had been extended to the civil régime. The theoretical demolition of the political system was undertaken in the next generation by Rousseau, who, adopting opposite tactics to the Voltairian, abstained from attacking the spiritual constitution, and developed a species of Deism somewhat akin to Protestant Christianity. The former school was the more rational, the latter the more passionate. Both were inconsequent, each protecting in part a system which they were really engaged in destroying as a whole.

Superior to these two partial schools, though exercising comparatively little popular influence, was that to which the Encyclopædists belonged, and which, under whatever vagueness and inconsistencies it laboured, is the really great school of the eighteenth century. It was at once critical and organic; it aimed at complete renovation, though imperfectly apprehending its nature and conditions, and looked to the entire downfall of the existing system only as the

necessary prelude to a new and more stable one, both in the spiritual and the temporal sphere. This was the point of view occupied by Hume¹ and Diderot, one the most powerful, the other the most many-sided force of the century, whose joint action best continued the impulse in the direction of a positive philosophy which had been given in the preceding phase by Bacon

¹ The description of Hume as a systematic sceptic, without explanation, is misleading. He was sceptical, but of what? not of the facts or laws of inorganic or vital science, nor of historical truth, nor of moral distinctions, but of ontological theories, of all professed discoveries in fields inaccessible to the human intellect. No one calls Comte a sceptic. Hume was really an incomplete Positivist, still, of course, in some degree entangled in metaphysics, but singularly free from them, when considered in relation to his period and his contemporaries. As Mr Leslie Stephen says in his instructive work on *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, "the moral which Hume drew from his philosophy was the necessity of turning entirely to experience." Let me here incidentally protest against the description which we sometimes meet of a religion as 'an explanation of the universe.' A sane philosophy must substitute the relative notion of the *world*, substantially coincident with the solar system, which can sufficiently occupy our researches, for the absolute idea of the *universe*. The latter it is quite beyond our powers to explain, though we may *contemplate* the starry skies with Fetishistic admiration. Again, even emancipated writers speak of ontological questions as 'the great problems, 'the ultimate problems.' The primary position thus assigned to them reminds us of the importance attached by the early Greek thinkers to similar insoluble questions, which only a prolonged experience taught men to pass by as beyond the reach of our investigations. We do not easily learn to be contentedly ignorant of what cannot be known.

and Descartes. The relativity which they proclaimed was taught also, and more formally, by Kant, who, however, after admitting Theologism to be incapable of proof, ended by accepting it in the name of the practical reason, that is to say, as in his judgment permanently necessary for moral ends. Historical and social studies obtained in this period a new importance and assumed a more philosophic character in the hands of Montesquieu, Vico, and the Scottish school, especially Adam Smith and Ferguson, who all tended more or less distinctly in their several ways to prepare the general theory of human evolution, which could not as yet be distinctly conceived, or even consciously proposed as the object of research. The egoistic spirit of the negative metaphysics was combated by Georges Leroy, who decisively established the natural existence of the altruistic affections, already recognised by Hume and Smith, whilst Vauvenargues sought to revive the neglected culture of the heart. At the same time, art, which had been hitherto largely occupied in reproducing military and theological types or associated with the old cultural forms, more

distinctly proposed to itself as its object the expression of human emotions and the depiction of private and domestic life, the social state not being yet so determinate and stable as to admit of a satisfactory treatment of public life. All these partial movements were precious germs of a renovation, the advent of which many symptoms concurred in announcing.

But a still more essential condition than these philosophical and other advances was the progress of the positive sciences. Following up the great step of the establishment of the earth's double motion which had transformed our conception of the world, and interpreting the empirical results of Kepler, Newton had discovered the law of gravitation and applied it to the explanation of the more prominent celestial phenomena. It was now extended to the study of the lunar and planetary perturbations with the aid of the Cartesian geometry and the infinitesimal calculus, the general theories of rational mechanics being necessarily promoted in the course of these researches or under the impulse they produced. Another element of the scientific encyclopædia, chemistry — con-

nected with physics through the rise of electrology—obtained its systematic constitution in the hands of Lavoisier, preparing that of biology, which was soon to receive a decisive impulse from the genius of Bichat.

Meantime, in the central nation, now by the whole of historic causes irrevocably charged with the social initiative (which had temporarily belonged, first to Holland, then to England), the regenerative impulse was changed into a subversive outbreak. This was the unavoidable consequence of the fatal inequality, in rate of development, of the destructive process which had gone on during the modern period, and the reconstruction which had proceeded simultaneously, but, from its nature, more slowly. The positive evolution was not sufficiently advanced to control and guide the results of the negative movement. A great social commotion thus became inevitable, and—we must add—was indispensable to proclaim to the whole West the necessity of a thoroughly new system instead of partial amendments of the old, and to secure for regenerative ideas at once a decisive extension and an effective propagation.

The negative doctrine, having a free hand in the French crisis, soon exhibited, to the satisfaction of the world, its utter incapacity for construction, resulting from its want of a true theory of human nature and of any really scientific conception of either the past or the present of Society. Voltairism showed itself frivolous and impotent; Rousseauism, declamatory and anarchical; both were radically discredited. It was seen by even ordinary intellects that the real social solution could no more be sought in the negative metaphysics than in an exhausted and moribund theologism. Divine rights had become retrograde, and human rights must always be subversive. What was wanted was a doctrine of duty, founded on appreciable and demonstrable relations—in other words, a new religion, grouping round a common centre, at once public and private, our sentiments, thoughts, and actions.

When the immediate crisis had passed, the world was disturbed and quiet meditation impeded by the military orgy under Bonaparte, who did not at all understand the situation, and not merely wasted, but abused, one of the great-

est opportunities ever given to man, by falling back on the old resources of political tyranny and theological hypocrisy as means of securing order. When outraged Europe terminated his disastrous career, the revival and extension of spiritual liberty opened the way to a reconstruction on the true basis. In the meantime, important intellectual movements had taken place. In the midst of the revolutionary storm, Condorcet, worthy representative of the great school already spoken of, had conceived the sound idea of presenting the interpretation of the past as the foundation for the policy of the future. He could not, indeed, from the negative tendencies in which he was still involved, accomplish fitly the task he had proposed to himself, but the effort towards it had momentous results. From an opposite quarter came a useful modifying influence. After the fall of Bonaparte, De Maistre and Bonald, the last of eminent Catholic thinkers, placed in the true light some features of the mediæval system which had been misconceived or misrepresented, and laid down some of the essential conditions of social order, thus strengthening the reaction against nega-

tivism and deepening the sense of the necessity of a religion, though they could not arrest the irreparable decadence of Catholicism. The admirable historic pictures of Scott, Chateaubriand, and Manzoni co-operated in correcting the blind hatred of the ideas and institutions of the Middle Ages which had usually accompanied progressive aspirations, and inspiring the respect for the past without which it cannot be understood. At the same time, the restoration of peace, by reviving the industrial movement, raised again the inexorable question of the working classes, which now began more and more to occupy the political field. The two fundamental modern problems were thus presented in their natural and essential connection—the substitution of a demonstrable faith for supernatural beliefs, and the social incorporation of the proletariat.

For the discovery of the solution, which had long been felt to depend on the development of the positive sciences, a twofold preliminary step was needful, which was now realised. Only cosmological science, up to the present, was definitely constituted. Now

Biology was systematised by Bichat, and its necessary appendage, relating to the cerebral life, was provisionally elaborated by Gall. Thus the social domain, which had remained subject to the theologico-metaphysical régime, became accessible to genuinely scientific treatment; and with the hour appeared the man. Under the twofold impulse, resulting from the requirements of science and the moral and political demands of society, Auguste Comte discovered the fundamental laws of dynamical Sociology, whose combination laid the basis of Positivism. They were stated, with adequate proof, in that amazing work of a man of twenty-four years of age—the *Plan des travaux scientifiques nécessaires pour réorganiser la Société*, and were afterwards fully expounded and applied in the *Philosophie Positive*, which appeared between 1830 and 1842. Enunciated in the most mature form, these laws are as follows:—

I. The Law of the Three States asserts that every theoretic conception passes naturally through three successive states—the first, theological, or, more generally, fictive; the second, metaphysical; the third, positive: the first being

provisional, the second transitional, and the last definitive.

II. The Law of the Encyclopædic Scale arranges the seven fundamental sciences according to the fixed order in which they respectively attain the positive state—

1. Mathematics ;
2. Astronomy ;
3. Physics ;
4. Chemistry ;
5. Biology ;
6. Sociology ;
- and
7. Morals.

This is not the place to expound or vindicate these laws, which contain in condensed form the entire history of the intellectual movement during the preparatory life of mankind. Those who have entered into the full meaning of the present treatise will understand how they are interwoven with the progress of religion. The announcement of these laws marked a new era in the intellectual development of our race. Theological and metaphysical methods became obsolete, not only in the study of external nature, but in the entire range of human research, and Positive method became the sole organon for the formation and co-ordination of our beliefs. At the same time, the unity of Science was, for the first time, established on

solid foundations, and all the other branches of knowledge were placed under the presidency of the highest, namely, Sociology and Morals.

III. The third law affirms the successive predominance of the three forms of *practical activity*—1. military aggression; 2. military defence; and 3. lastly, industry.

These laws, combined and duly developed, adequately represent the human past and indicate the inevitable character of the future.

But, far-reaching and valuable as were these results, they did not complete the mission of the great renovator. Under the inspiration of a profound and pure affection, Comte recognised the supremacy of feeling—the preponderance of the heart over the intellect; then to the intellectual succeeded a moral reconstruction, and the Positive Philosophy rose into the Religion of Humanity.¹

The historical task we proposed to ourselves is now completed. An adequate account of the

¹ To this later stage, in which Morals was first explicitly recognised as distinct from Sociology, belongs a fourth law, laying down the historic sequence of the three forms of *social sentiment*—1. domestic; 2. civic; and 3. finally universal. This law has been amply illustrated in the preceding pages.

Religion to which the human movement has finally led would require an Essay of equal length with the present, which is, however, unnecessary, because in some of the minor writings of Comte¹ himself brief summaries of it are available for inquirers. It must here suffice to indicate its essential character and a few of its special features.*

Of absolute origins we do not, and cannot, know anything. But of one thing we have as strong evidence as of any general fact—namely, that there is, in the present, no volitional interposition from without in the government of human affairs, whether in the material or the moral sphere. And there is no sufficient reason for believing that such interposition ever took place. The whole course of events has been, and is, regulated, not by supernatural wills, but by general laws, or, in other words, by uniform relations of co-existence and succession. This conclusion,

¹ The reader is referred especially to his *Catéchisme Positiviste*, of which an English translation has been published by Dr Congreve, and the *Discours Préliminaire* to his *Politique Positive*, translated under the title *A General View of Positivism* by Dr Bridges.

once admitted, is fatal to Theologism, either as a theoretical scheme or as a practical religion. For, on the one hand, the existence and nature of the superior beings, heretofore regarded as so interposing, can, it is seen, be subjects neither of affirmation nor of denial: they are radically inaccessible to our means of exploration; and hence, hypotheses respecting them, being unverifiable, cannot form a part of the mature intellectual system of our race. On the other hand, for the real moral and social efficacy of Theologism, it is necessary that its adherents should believe themselves, as our predecessors did, to have intimate relations with those superior beings, and to be personally under their guardianship and guidance; and this would involve a perpetual series of interpositions, which, as we have said, all experience negatives. Theological beliefs, therefore, are destined to disappear by desuetude, in proportion as they exhaust the degree of social and moral utility which they still retain. But they cannot be subjects of rational discussion; they should be simply put aside, except in so far as they are treated historically

as appropriate to a particular stage in human progress, and as having contributed important, though transitory, elements to the education of mankind. From this latter point of view, as well as in consideration of such useful efficacy as they yet continue to possess, they are entitled to our gratitude and our respect.

The final Religion condenses sentiment, thought, and action round the central conception of the collective Being, Humanity, the highest existence really known to us, as they were by the last preparatory religion, though neither completely nor durably, concentrated round the purely subjective idea of one divine ruler. To know, love, and serve Humanity are the ends to which intellect, feeling, and practical life should be devoted. There is no vagueness in this programme, for these several sides of our existence are to be cultivated and disciplined under the presidency of demonstrable laws. Humanity, like all other beings of which we know anything, is subject to law, and can, therefore, be rightly served only in proportion as we understand the natural conditions of its maintenance and development.

The phrase which best describes the system of things as determining our position is that of 'modifiable fatality.' Whilst recognising the value of the order, immutable in its fundamental dispositions, on which our entire existence rests, we must not, with stupid optimism, welcome evils as products of infinite wisdom directing supreme benevolence; but, when the natural order involves consequences adverse to our well-being, submit, on the one hand, with patience and resignation to whatever is inevitable, and, on the other, use enlightened and persevering effort to defeat or mitigate such harmful influences, and to improve our circumstances, and, above all, our nature, so far as they admit of modification. The most important progress for the race, as for the individual, is moral improvement, which consists in the continuously increasing subordination of egoism to altruism. The ideal of conduct, according to this religion, is 'living for others,' for the Family, the Country, and Humanity; the latter duty, indeed, including the two former, though, as nearer to us in daily practice, these must be kept before us

as distinct objects of thought and effort. The most valuable aid towards the cultivation of the spirit which should animate our lives is to be found in worship, personal, domestic, and public. Prayer is for the Positivist, not, as hitherto commonly conceived, a petition for benefits, often in their nature material, but a movement of the heart towards purity and self-devotion. Such religious exercise should be periodically renewed—sentiment, according to a law of our nature, being strengthened, when it is sincere, by habitual appropriate expression. Personal and domestic worship will aim at recalling the images of beloved ones, most commonly deceased, who have had a softening or elevating influence on the life of the believer or the family; whilst public worship will idealise the fundamental constitution and historical life of Humanity, and will thus deepen our sense of the duties involved in the several forms and degrees of human union, and will impress on us the continuity of social existence and the debt we owe to our predecessors. And both will awaken aspiration after all good things, and prompt us to

the more earnest service of the Great Being, which is at once the Power that controls our destinies and the loving parent that sustains and adorns our material and spiritual lives.

The natural concomitant of the rise of a Church of Humanity—at the outset composed of locally disseminated groups, in the end universal and united—with a definite body of demonstrable doctrine, will be the formation of a priesthood, having, first, the office of education, gradually committed to it by general consent, but without any monopoly, and afterwards that of recalling to individuals or classes, in particular cases, the principles it teaches. This function, necessary for the regulation of all the social relations, will be especially valuable in the case of the industrial employer and employed, between whom the new sacred order will stand, at once protesting against oppression and resisting subversive tendencies, and thus reassuring the rich whilst satisfying the poor. It will also do good service in improving the tone of feeling and conduct, now so deplorably destitute of discipline, between different political communities, to whom it can speak with

authority in the name of a common faith. Such a body, to which its own doctrine denies all material power and wealth, personal or collective, hereditary or acquired, and which will not have at its command an armoury of supernatural hopes and terrors, but must rest altogether on free assent to its principles, cannot possibly become oppressive. It will perform functions which the ministers of the now prevailing religions cannot discharge, because their doctrines are, first, essentially subjective in their origin, and, therefore, secondly, mutually discordant, and so are sources of division instead of union. The efforts of their teachers—honourable in themselves—for the enforcement of moral principles rather compromise those principles than fortify them, in the present state of the human mind, because duties are rested on grounds which vigorous intellects find it increasingly difficult to accept. The organisation of which we have been speaking will amount to an establishment, on better doctrinal bases and in a more favourable social situation, of the institution nobly sought after, but only imperfectly realised, in

the Middle Ages—a spiritual authority, separate from, and independent of, all the temporal powers.¹

The moral office which the new clergy will exercise in general society will be incumbent on woman within the domestic circle. Early education will be in her hands, especially the training of the feelings and the formation of character. For the discharge of this duty, a higher and wider culture than she in general now receives will be necessary, and she must be liberated from non-domestic labour in order more completely to devote herself to her sacred task. To her husband, as well as to her children, the good wife and mother will be an ever-present representative of Humanity, and an object of devotion inferior in order, but similar in spirit, to that which is due to the great Being whom she personifies and whose benefits she transmits to them.

¹ Nothing can be here said of the more special institutions of the Positive Religion—as its system of commemoration and historical calendar, its public festivals, its system of education, its social sacraments, the political and industrial scheme it prescribes, etc. These are explained in the publications already mentioned, and, with greater development, in the *Politique Positive* (Original, or English Trans.), vol. iv.

The final régime thus rests on Universal Love, inspiring pacific activity, under the guidance of a demonstrable doctrine, these three being respectively represented by the moral ascendancy of the affective sex, the material providence of an Industrial Patriciate, and the intellectual influence of a Positive Priesthood, all supported by an energetic public opinion which will reside essentially in the proletariat.

On the reaction of this régime on Science and Art it is not possible here to enlarge : it is enough to say that, whilst encouraging the progress of both, it will, without countenancing mysticism or narrowness, bestow on them a religious consecration.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the propagation of the Faith, and the establishment of the régime founded on it, can be very rapid. It is a more profound revolution than any which our race has ever undergone or can in the future undergo. Not to speak of mere inertia and force of habit, rooted prejudices, often deserving of our respect, and powerful interests stand in the way. The rate of progress will,

of course, largely depend on the union, the energy, and the wisdom of Positivists, and on the impression produced by their public and private conduct as testifying to the excellence and the efficacy of their principles. But, whatever time may be required for the diffusion and general acceptance of the Religion, its final empire is assured. It stands on foundations which cannot be shaken, and is fitted to satisfy all the noblest aspirations of our race.

It is important to remember that it will not be necessary to wait for its definitive success before valuable fruits can be derived from it. Comte constructed a transitional scheme for the present guidance of the most advanced and influential elements in the Western populations, through which the final régime could be not only prepared but partially realised. This may form the subject of a future Essay ; at present we shall only speak of the spirit in relation to the existing creeds which ought now to characterise the votaries of the Positive Religion.

Its acceptance spontaneously terminates all hostility on their part to the several religious systems of mankind. In their view there is

really but one religion—the Religion of Love and Duty—towards which all those which have existed in the past have been approximations, and in which all that now exist will ultimately merge themselves. All have been, or are, schoolmasters to lead the world to it. Each has had, and several will still for some time have, a special place and office. They all deserve our esteem, as keeping alive the sense of the necessity of moral culture, too much overlooked by the contemporary materialism. For those who cannot accept the Religion of Humanity it is desirable that they should continue to hold by the communions in which they were born, so far as can be done without hypocrisy, thus avoiding the state of mere scepticism, with the moral perversion or paralysis which is apt to accompany it. This is especially true in relation to the Christian Churches, which represent the last and highest forms of theological religion, and whose services in the past Positivists gratefully acknowledge. It can scarcely be expected that the now prevailing systems should exhibit a similar friendliness towards the new Religion; but the wor-

thiest appreciations of it have proceeded from some members of the Christian priesthood, and the Churches are absorbing more and more of its spirit, and placing themselves more and more at the social point of view which it has from the first occupied. This indeed will not suffice; but it points to the fundamental unity of aim of all the religions, and is prophetic of a universality which cannot be looked for from any of the rival theological faiths.

It was one of the latest projects of Comte to establish a Religious Alliance between all the members of society who recognise the necessity of some spiritual discipline, and wish to maintain the supremacy of morals in the government of the world. They could unite for these purposes, whilst retaining their special convictions, but only under the presidency of Positivism, which alone recognises all their faiths as natural and necessary phases of human evolution and spontaneous affluents of the final religion. In such an alliance Mussulmans, as well as Catholics and Protestants, might be included, provided only that they accepted the principle of the separation of the Powers; and

their accession would mark the general tendency of East, as well as West, towards a universal faith. Women would be amongst the most valuable members of such an association, having so long kept alive in society the moral sentiments which the Modern Anarchy threatened to extinguish. Rival fanaticisms will, perhaps, for a considerable time prevent the union here indicated, but Positivists can at least cultivate in themselves the sympathies it would develop, and be ready to take their place in it whenever it becomes practicable. They are too profoundly convinced of the final triumph of their doctrine to feel impatient at any temporary repugnance or tardy adhesion of others to a movement which, though it would be conducive, is not at all indispensable to the world-wide diffusion of the Religion of Humanity.