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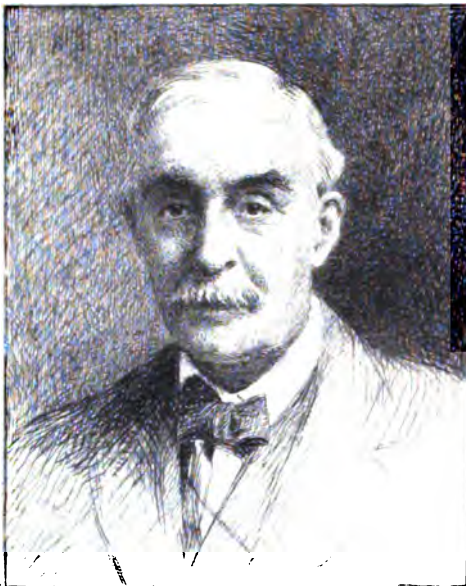
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RELIGION WITHOUT GOD
AND
GOD WITHOUT RELIGION.

BY

WILLIAM ARTHUR

AUTHOR OF "THE TONGUE OF FIRE," "A HISTORY OF THE VATICAN COUNCIL,"
"ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND MORAL LAW," ETC., ETC.

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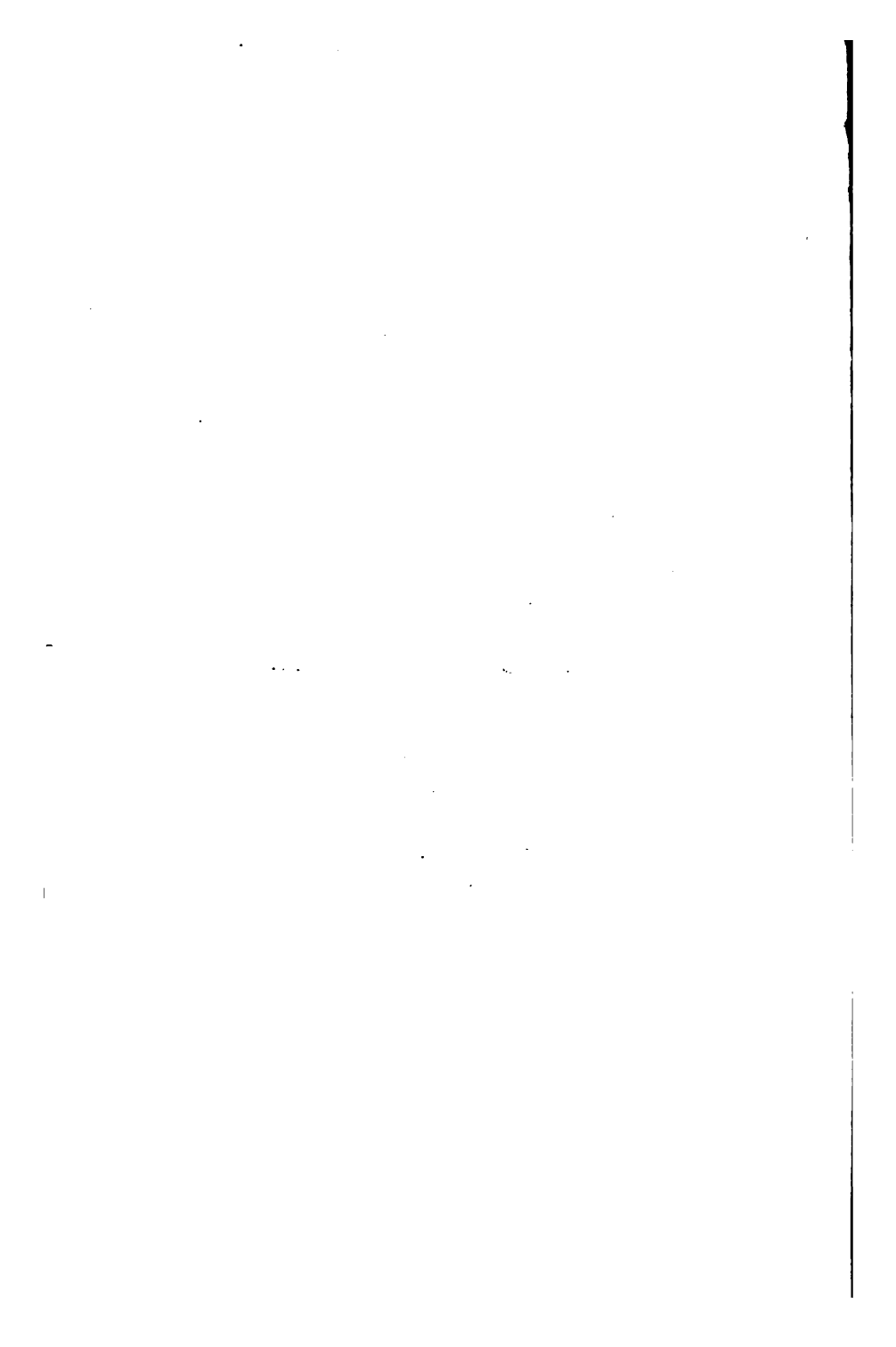
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POSITIVISM

AND

MR. FREDERIC HARRISON.



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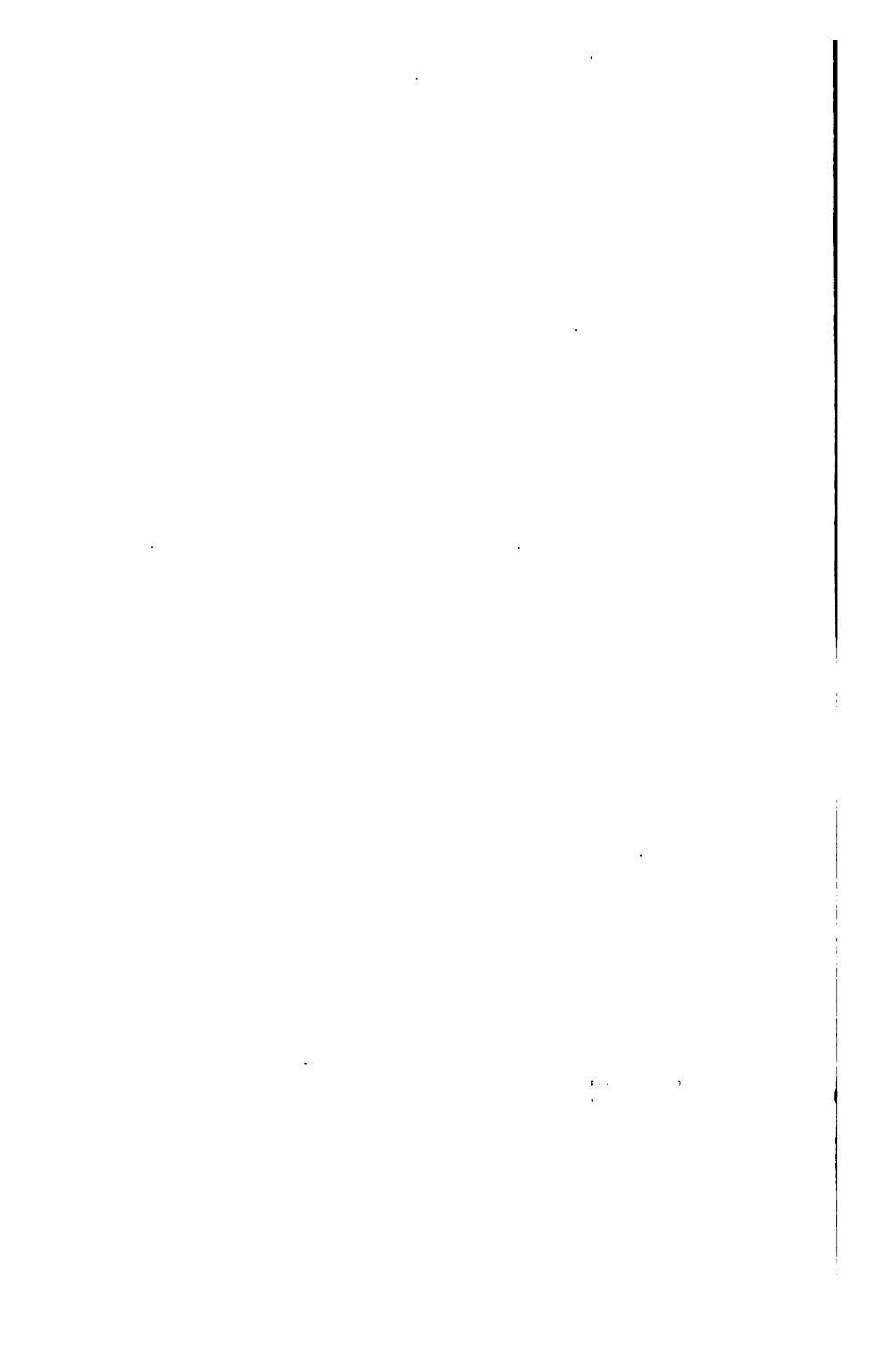
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POSITIVISM

— 101 —

CHAPTER I.

THE GENERAL POSITION OF COMTE.

I.—*A Recent Controversy.*

A RECENT controversy in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century*, extending over many months, seems distinctly to mark a stage in modern speculations upon Theism. Three differing schools are championed by three properly representative men, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and Sir Fitzjames Stephen. Each of these comes forward with the consciousness of both prowess and reputation ; each feels the stimulus of a conflict with equals ; each presents his case with the latest lights and most mature arguments available. The tournament itself is a passing spectacle, but the topics are of eternal interest ; and yet constitute a burning question of the present hour.

The clearest impression left upon one's mind at the close of the tilting is, that each of the three contending causes was favoured in its champion ; but

that each of the champions was unhappy in his cause. So long as any one of them attacks the system of his antagonists he is triumphant, but so soon as his own system is in turn attacked, it is rent with wounds. Mr. Spencer carries such heavy armour, Mr. Harrison shows such sprightly fence, Sir Fitzjames Stephen moves with such finished action, and so deftly delivers a mortal thrust, that one feels not only that they were all knights of metal true, but that each was on his metal, meeting foeman worthy of his steel ; which in the words of one who did not consciously follow Walter Scott reads :

Κάρτιστοι μὲν ἔσαν καὶ καρτίστοις ἐμάχοντο.

Severally the cavaliers march off the field with their personal renown not only unharmed but untouched. On the field, however, each of them leaves his steed woefully maimed. Looking at them lying there in such evil plight, and thinking how high-prancing and high-snorting they were before the lists were joined, one feels that this is a moment when their merits may be soberly looked into. Indeed, this may be now done, and that with all modesty, even by humble persons destitute of any pretension to the accomplishments of the three unhorsed champions, and equally destitute of any pretension to a similar place in public consideration : persons, in fact, without any pretension whatever, except that of exercising the ordinary

human right of forming an opinion on whatever is presented to our belief, and of saying what we think of it. This simple right is one the exercise of which is challenged more or less loudly in proportion as things are propounded with an air of superiority, and an apparent expectation of unconditional acquiescence.

Mr. Harrison represents Positivism, the faith and worship of Auguste Comte, the first clearly-defined movement in retreat of the Atheists. Mr. Spencer represents his own Agnosticism, a further development of the march in retreat from Atheism. Sir Fitzjames Stephen represents Deism, with a slight savour of easy-going Utilitarianism. The first two schools are akin in their origin, but divergent in their tendency. The third is hostile to both: to Positivism fundamentally and utterly; to Agnosticism in the sense of ridiculing an arrested development, when it is held up as an ideal type. The gage of battle thrown down to Christian and Deist by Harrison and Spencer is: *Religion without God*; that thrown down to Positivist, Agnostic, and Christian by Stephen is: *God without Religion*. It was not for any of the three to throw down the nobler gauntlet, *God and Religion*. It is significant that, while each combatant disputes one or other of the terms of that device, none of them dares to dispute them both united.

II.—*Relations of Positivism to Agnosticism.*

Mr. Harrison commences with a full-toned commendation of the Religion of Humanity, and after it has been severely handled, ends by so pitifully minimising it, as to render it necessary for us to set out with an authentic idea of what it really is. And here I say at once that the writings of English Positivists are not my sources. I go to the master. According, then, to Comte, not in any *obiter dictum*, but in solemn form, the Religion of Humanity is that in which "Humanity has once for all substituted itself for God, without for a moment forgetting His provisional services."¹ These words sufficiently indicate the true doctrine of the system, and also its spirit; but one other phrase of the Founder may help us to commence with a further insight of its essential traits. "To-day there remain but two camps: the one retrograde and anarchic, wherein God confusedly presides; the other organic and progressive, systematically devoted to Humanity."²

The relations between this well-defined school and that of our English Agnostics are keenly disputed both here and abroad. The Positivists claim Mr.

¹ *Catechisme Positiviste*, p. 37, 2nd Edition. I quote this edition throughout, and am responsible for the translations. It was edited by M. Pierre Lafitte, who, as is well known, on the death of Comte was installed as Director of Positivism.

² *Ensemble du Positivism*, p. 394.

Spencer as one of their own flock, who has broken away from the fold. They assert that his leading ideas are derived from Comte. Yet Mr. Harrison plainly says that the writings of the master are to Mr. Spencer the Absolute Unknown, much as he is indebted to him through others. Mr. Spencer shows that he knows more of Comte than is good for the Cause of Positivism ; and yet he knows less than would be good for his own influence, especially for any hope of its permanence. Had he many years ago gone to the bottom of Comte, probably certain "debts," which in his *Classification of the Sciences* he gracefully acknowledges, would never have been contracted, and he would have moved in a clearer "environment." So much does he follow Comte, consciously or unconsciously, and that often in the weakest procedure of his philosophy, that when Comtism is well grasped, Agnosticism is not hard to deal with.

It is to be said, on the other hand, that in repelling the charge of discipleship Mr. Spencer contrasts favourably with Comte when doing the same for himself in respect of Saint-Simon, whose secretary he had been, with whose *imprimatur* had been issued his first essays as "by my pupil," and whom he nevertheless called, in formal writing, "a superficial and depraved juggler." This slight estimate of a reconstructor of society, under whom the greater recon-

strucker had studied if he had not learned, was, however, too much of a piece with Comte's mode of speaking of public men when they were not either his disciples or his patrons.

Not only is the influence of Comte great with the Agnostics, but some of our men of science, who in science would be ashamed to follow such a leader, retail small tangled skeins of his philosophy, as if they were making the world wise. As to our so-called philosophical writers, very many of them send forth platitudes which are his, sometimes at second hand, sometimes at perhaps twenty-second. Hence the desirableness of knowing and understanding, not his unconscious followers, or avowed exponents, but his own thoughts and intents.

III.—*Positivism a Movement in Retreat of Atheism.*

In saying that Positivism constitutes the first movement in retreat of the Atheists, I said what will be doubted in two opposite directions. The Comtist will say, We are not Atheists; the student of Comtism will say, So far from being in retreat, they push forward beyond other Atheists; for, while ordinary ones only deny God, they do more: they attempt to replace Him. The facts meet both of these allegations very simply. Sheer and bottomless as was the Atheism of Comte, dogged as was his determination to hold in his intellect rather than

suffer it to take any step whatever in a direction which might lead up to God, yet neither intellectually nor morally could he content himself with the name of Atheist. He enlarges upon differences between himself and the Atheists, and his disciples echo his lucubrations. That is, he differs not from their being "without God," but only from their schemes of the origin or the system of the universe, and from their blunder in attempting to prove a negative. He felt that if you investigated the origin of the universe at all, more could be said for a Creator than for chance, or self-evolution ; and that if you investigated its ends, more could be said for a designing mind than for other hypotheses.

He not only passed by but "rejected" all that he calls in his loose way "supernatural beliefs," meaning neither beliefs held by supernatural beings, nor beliefs infused into us by supernatural beings, but belief in the existence of any supernatural being—a belief which, so far from being supernatural, is proved by all history to be perfectly natural to mankind ; so natural, that to find a man who could deliberately present to his own intellect and accept the assertion, No being of higher grade than man exists, would be to find an unnatural creature. He imperatively forbade any seeking after a Cause, either original or final. He insisted that faith in One God, as well as in many gods, or in Fetishes, was a "fictitious" stage of the

human mind, impossible to it after it had once reached its maturity. Belief in a future life or a world to come, he spurned as a mere chimera. Any spiritual being, soul, angel, gods, or God, he swept out of the way as so much "fiction." Above all, he exulted in the superiority of Humanity to the Almighty; in Her superiority as a real Goddess in contrast with a chimera god, Her superiority as a source of instruction, a beneficent Power, a true Providence, an object of worship. One phrase will represent many. I carefully follow his own method of using capitals. "Our humble Goddess is exempt from the diverse caprices proper to her almighty precursor. Her actions of whatsoever kind follow appreciable laws."¹

When the smoke of the barricades of 1848 made him see all the clocks of time pointing to the hour for his great reconstruction, he issued his *Ensemble du Positivisme* bearing on the titlepage his motto: *To re-organize without God or King*; and he might have added, without parliament.² When again, after Louis Napoleon's *Coup d'État*, the smoke was once more in his eyes, he issued what in his own style he called "a decisive proclamation," saying that the servants of Humanity came forward to take the direction of terrestrial affairs by "irrevocably excluding from

¹ *Catéchisme*, p. 284.

² Published separately, and reprinted in the *Politique Positive* as the preliminary discourse.

political supremacy the various slaves of God, Catholics, Protestants, or Deists."¹ All this he did, and much more of which this is the example; but in the manly form of saying There is no God, he did not dare to say it.

He fancied there was a logical gain in avoiding the verbal negative, whereas it was really only a rhetorical one. But the rhetorical effect was vast. It did not sound so ill. It made hasty readers say, He is no Atheist. It opened curious distinctions between being "without God," and being Atheists. But viewed logically asserting that God was only a fiction and a chimera, was virtually not less a negative than asserting that He did not exist. He who should assert, "Queen Victoria is not Queen of England," would scarcely be in a more difficult case, than he who should assert: "Queen Victoria is only Queen of Lilliput." And even in a club of butterfly politicians he who went about saying: I do not say Queen Victoria is not Queen of England, but I do say Queen Victoria is only Queen of Lilliput, would not pass either for a manly man or a thoughtful thinker. Comte simply took the advantage of a standing *petitio principii*. The question was begged: all supernatural beings were fictitious, and no inquiry into the matter was possible. On these data were all arguments based.

¹ *Catéchisme* p. 3.

IV.—*Comte's Atheism Vindicated by his French Disciples.*

Among disciples this aspect of Positivism is represented in terms considerably affected by the "environment." The system is most robust in its native air. It speaks in our English atmosphere with bated breath.

Comte's official biographer, Dr. Robinet (for Littré is heretical, and in his Life offends the orthodox as much as Mill offended him), exults in the advent of Humanity as everywhere "replacing the ancient sovereignty"; for, he adds, *Extinctis Diis Deoque, successit Humanitas*. Miss Martineau, in her abridged translation of Comte, left out the striking passage where, flouting the idea that the heavens declare the glory of God, he avers that they "do not declare any glory but that of Hipparchus, Kepler, Newton, and all the others who have contributed to establish their laws." ¹ Mr. G. H. Lewes, in printing this, tried to bewilder English readers by distinctions between Comte and Atheists. Dr. Congreve, in translating the "proclamation" quoted above, substituted for Comte's phrase "slaves of God," which even Deists would resent, the term "servants of God," which to Christians would be the most honourable of names. Mr. Mill, while not concealing the

¹ *Philosophie Positive*, vol. 2, p. 36.

Atheism of Comte, goes so far as to say that one may be a good Positivist and believe in God. This was too much: Count Wyruboff, publishing a joint pamphlet with Littré, cried that there was not to be in Positivism two opposite streams. Mill had done even worse than what I have said; for a man may believe in God, and yet, if he always refuses to seek for the Cause of anything, to enquire either as to beginnings or endings, to ask Why? he will draw away others from danger of believing in much more than Humanity, and will probably get his own intellect trimmed down in time to the proper level. Therefore, great indeed was the offending of Mill. With representatives of theology and metaphysics, says Wyruboff; we have often seen Positivists debating causes first and final, "but never before had positivist to argue against positivist that the hypothesis of the beginning and the end of things was incompatible with the character of the scientific mind. But that is what we are now brought to. The positivism of Mr. Mill does not oppose the indefinite search after the Why? while M. Comte strongly condemns that search. . . . Mr. Mill lays down the principle that

Mill
Rebuked
by
Wyruboff. the positive method is not the negation of the supernatural, but only pushes it back to the origin of things. . . . Certainly, positive philosophy is not the negation of the philosophy of the supernatural; *if it denied* [the italics are mine]

anything whatever, the part it would play would be a narrow one, and of short duration. For the old dogma it substitutes dogma of its own, new dogma. . . . If we suppose that it is compatible with the scientific spirit of our age to believe in an intelligence that directs the world and its destinies, conformably to the laws of what is called nature, how then shall we distinguish Positivists from theologians who affirm that the creator made the laws, or from materialists, who maintain that it is atoms which have constructed and which rule the universe? ”¹

Notwithstanding all this, the fact remained that Positivism represented a movement of the Atheists in retreat, though a masked retreat. This became even more apparent when Comte began to treat of morals. All previous essays of reconstruction “without God,” had covered the artificers with evil repute, from laxity of moral principle. This Comte felt. He very fully recognized the necessity of a moral basis for society. He accepted from Christianity in the main its morals, making supposed amendments, changing names, shifting sanctions, lowering scope, and asserting originality when there was palpable copying, all which did not alter the fact that any gold and jewels of moral wealth he had to offer were found in the treasury of the Bible.

¹ *Auguste Comte et Stuart Mill*, by E. Littré and G. Wyruboff, Paris, 1867, p. 61-63.

The movement in retreat was accentuated when Comte, whose desire to frame a moral society was no *Further* feint, but perfectly sincere, showed his con- *Retreat.* sciousness that framed it could not be on any other basis than that of a "faith" and a "religion." To any mind less inconsequential than his own, the retreat in a philosophic point of view would have seemed complete when he arrived at the point of saying that the object of worship must be "A being like man, yet above man." This again he imagines was original, and certainly his application of the principle was as new as the principle itself was old. He lays down the axiom that "It is of necessity that our intelligence should make us conceive of a power without us so superior to ourselves that to it must be always subordinated our existence."¹ By just inference this would mean a power somewhat different from Comte's favourite creature, the *Grand-Être*, on the one hand, or from inorganic nature on the other. Another of his postulates is: "In order to regulate us [individually] and combine us, religion must first of all subordinate us to an external power of which the irresistible supremacy does not leave us *in* any incertitude."²

¹ *Politique Positive*, Vol. 2, p. 12. Mr. Harrison's translation of this passage is freer and more elegant, but also yields a better basis for theistic inferences.

² *Politique Positive*. 4, 12.

The God who was to be replaced was not to be in terms denied. The religion that was to be superseded was to have its moral standard, in the main, accepted. The new religion "without God," was to rest on the solemn recognition of a being external to ourselves, like us, and supreme over us. This posts the retreating Atheist at a point on the road leading to Mr. Spencer's ground of the unknowable Power, which is itself a day's march on the way to a sure resting place. But Comte really believed that in his unrivalled emanation, the *Grand-Être*, or fully stated, in the Great Being, the Great Fetish, and the Great Environment, he had found all that he had postulated, all that human reason would demand, all that was necessary to check for ever the strange tendency of mankind to feel after God if haply they might find Him. He did not perceive that in backing from off the prayerless ground of Atheism, he had backed on to ground proper to Theism. He was compelled to postulate that an object of worship should be external to ourselves, and of indubitable supremacy. In this he followed human reason. He then assumed that these two conditions—Externality to man and Supremacy over man,—met within our species. In this he was not more inconsequential than he often is. We first tell the horses that in order to find the being under whom an individual horse may rise to the highest development

*A Being
above us
Confessed
Necessary.*

of form and power, the being under whom also horses collectively may attain to the utmost perfection in combined operation, they must look to a being who is first external to themselves, and in the second place of indubitable supremacy. We then tell them that to find this being they must not look higher than their own species, but must look within it ; must there discover the sum total of Equinity, and look up to this as their Great Being.

V.—*Self Deception of Positivists.*

It would seem that, as in other matters, so in respect of his self-deception as to the hold of Christianity upon mankind, the English Comtists reflect the master. He ridiculously underrated that hold, whether he thought of Roman Catholicism, of which he knew something, or of Protestantism, of which he was so ignorant that, as to that point, Littré and Mill agree in giving him up. With Mr. Harrison self-deception as to the vitality of the religion of Christ proceeds so far that he thinks Mr. Spencer's demonstrations against the existence of a Living God "decisive," and he finds it hard to conceive how belief in it "can rally for another bout."

Belief in a Living God is here face to face with Positivism, Agnosticism, and all forms of Unbelief ; the greatest force existing among men. It is here in the marrow of tens of millions ; here warm in

the homes where domestic bliss is best known; here in the closets where day dawns the fairest and where at eventide there is light; here in the peace of the happy and the purity of the good; here in the zeal of the holy and the compassions of the humane; here in the first intuitions of the child and the last conclusions of the sage;¹ here in the simple notions of peasant, mariner, and pioneer; here in the learned lights of those who study nature with open face, not with intellect bandaged to shut out causes or designs. Ay, science herself, in spite of some of her able professors, is on all fields busied in finding, hewing, and polishing stones for the ever-growing temple to the Known God: temple that will stand while the world stands.

But this is a digression. Mr. Harrison intended no step in retreat when, referring to what he calls, after the master, the primitive and the final forms of the religion of man, he wrote: "Both rest on the same elements, belief in the Power which controls his life, and grateful reverence for the power so acknowledged." But, however a Comtist may fetter his mind till he shall have no larger ideas to attach to words like these, than the influence of the race generally over us as individuals, human nature is by such words carried out to a world beyond the race, beyond

¹ An able paper in *The London Quarterly Review* on the philosophy of Mr. Spencer (No. cxx.) has these words: "Theism is the first instinct and the last conviction of reflective humanity."

its reach, and to a Power which transcends all phenomena and originates all laws.

If some have excelled in the art of teaching men to read into words meanings they were put together to exclude, no one could excel Comte in teaching how to read out of them all correct meaning, and keep the husk. "Power" to an ordinary man has a full and noble signification. We shall see what it has to a Positivist, who can call Comte's goddess "The Power which controls our life," who can believe that, while the Primitive man thought it was nature, "the Cultured man knows that power to be Humanity." At least two members of the genus "cultured man," instead of regarding as a Power an unknowable entity on which Comte fixes the cognomen of Humanity, unite in regarding that goddess as a conceit quite as shadowy and comical as she is taken to be by any of us Christians. Yet these "cultured men" are no Christians.

To appreciate properly the self-deception of Comte and his followers as to the incomparable scientific and philosophic superiority of their own religion over Christianity, it is necessary to have a clear view of what they mean by Humanity, and what by the Religion of Humanity.

CHAPTER II.

THE POLITY OF COMTE.

I.—*Comte's Reconstruction of Society.*

COMTE can never be rightly judged, whether as to his moral sentiments or as to his philosophical principles, without a clear conception of his *His* life-long aim : an aim which his disciples are *Great* justified in viewing as the continuous thread *Aim.* that holds together his entire system. Of this aim neither Mill nor Littré caught a distinct view till after,—attracted by strong “theological” sympathy,—they had committed themselves beyond recall to make his reputation. When they were awoke by strange things, they tried to persuade themselves, each in a different way, that what they had admired ought to have led up to something if not solid at least not “ridiculous.” But between them that term “ridiculous” gave rise to words. “It hurts,” pensively says M. Littré, “my sentiment of equity, nay, my artistic sentiment, that this dreary word should be the last that remains on the mind of Mr. Mill's reader” . . . “the last word of the last

sentence is ridiculous." Littré would have taken leave more handsomely; for, indeed, he held that the "absurdities" of M. Comte "were more pathologic than philosophic." They may easily have been more pathologic, since perhaps the absurdities of no man are philosophic.¹

That, however, does not impair the evidence that all his life long Comte had in view the practical scheme which scared away those who had hoped for great things from the man who taught people to organize without God, and not to call themselves Atheists. Four years before the first volume of Positive Philosophy was issued sixteen before the last, Comte had published his *Considérations sur le Pouvoir Spirituel*. His official representative, M. Pierre Lafitte, says "he never did more than add the perfecting to this great *début*, which will be eternally read and read again as one of his most powerful creations."² Had Mr. Mill read it before he made in England a name for Comte, it is not certain that he would have troubled himself with his later creations. The leading idea of this essay is the separation of the spiritual and temporal powers. According to the accurate analysis of M. Pierre Lafitte, the new Spiritual Power was to control education, by means of it to form the opinions

¹ *Auguste Comte et Stuart Mill*, p. 6.

² *Revue Occidentale*, Vol. ii., p. 171.

and feelings of children, thus to secure influence over them in mature age, and a power of counselling with authority. Out of this would spring national and international functions of the Spiritual Power; it would direct opinion in each country, would establish harmony of opinion between the different countries, and would make itself the organ of collective operations. To these ends would be absolutely essential moral formulas to be universally accepted.

Already Comte could "read out" from the word "spiritual" all the proper meaning of spirituality, leaving behind only the meaning of intellectual. Whether he yet saw or did not see how to read out from the word Religion all meaning of a bond to God, *Debasing* of a bond between mankind and things *Terms.* unseen, of a bond between every man and a common Father, therefore between each man and every other as two brothers—an idea lowered by Comte to the level of two "others,"—whether or not he yet saw how to perform this feat, does not appear. But had Mill or men like him had the scheme here outlined in their eye, the early pages of the *Philosophie Positive* would have prepared them to find that the all-dominating law of the Three States had been "discovered" as the basis of the philosophic structure, on which were to rest the moral formulas for universal acceptance, on which, again, was to rest the authority of the Spiritual Power. This impression would have

been confirmed and defined when they came to his history of human progress, in which the practical end, the final cause, of the "law" of the Three States crops out at every turn. That even when writing this the details of his religion were present to his own imagination, I do not believe; but the essential end of the universal dominion of a Priesthood, ruling without Kings or Parliaments, and without any *highly* educated class but themselves, was as clear to him then as at the last.

In fact, the founder of Mr. Harrison's religion was one of the many reconstructors of society, artificially hatched in the hot embers left behind by the great revolution. He thought that the centre of such reconstruction had been shifted from Rome to Paris. He best knew the principles and methods of the Parisian reconstructors, yet he saw the historic advantage of the Papal ones. Avowedly he followed the leading ideas of M. De Maistre, and it is manifest that he was greatly stimulated by Lamennais.¹ So his type was to be the Mediæval Papacy; and at first he would seem to have admitted a temporal power analagous to the mediæval Emperor. He says that perhaps in the new order of things it may be necessary

¹ In the *Geschichte des Vaticanischen Konzils*, by J. Friedrich, 1877, is a good sketch of the earlier stage of the Papal movement of reconstruction, not yet published when I wrote my own History of the Vatican Council.

to have "a certain degree of temporal sovereignty, extending over the most advanced nations." ¹ This, however, in his mature scheme, completely disappears. He was not going to have a "two-headed monster," as Cardinal Manning accused Mr. Bryce of making the duplex power of Pope and Emperor; Mr. Bryce's fault being that he forgot the claims of doctrinal symmetry in simple historical truth. Comte's new Spiritual Power was not to be imperilled by any great, concentrated temporal power. Meditation on his plan would show him how incompatible with its requirements would prove in practice powerful national governments, or one central temporal power. The following sentence is worth weighing: "The spiritual power will be of course invested, in relation to the different nations and their temporal chiefs, with such a measure of authority as may be indispensable in order to their being led *voluntarily or involuntarily* [italics mine] to submit their disputes to its arbitration, and to receive from it a common impulse in cases calling for collective action." ²

Even at the outset, though in an undecided way admitting the possibility of some central temporal power, the essential feature of his reconstruction was not that. "The thing necessary beyond dispute is the establishment of a doc-

¹ *Politique Positive*, Vol. iv., page 213 of the Appendix.

² *Politique Positive*, Vol. iv., p. 196 Appendix.

trine of Society common to the different nations, and *consequently* [the italics mine] *of a spiritual sovereignty* capable of maintaining this doctrine, by organising a European education, and by afterwards applying it suitably in practical relations."¹ This great Occidental Sovereignty was the end and ideal of M. Comte from first to last. A sharp separation of men into classes being one of his guiding principles, "the action of the Spiritual Power" became "indispensable to establish and maintain a social classification conformed to the spirit of the system." He made no secret that the original idea of his Kingdom of priests without God, was derived from the Romish idea of the Kingdom of God as the government of all men by the Pope through the clergy. We are not, he says, to be astonished that this government of Europe should be viewed by Catholic philosophers as the principal and characteristic attribute of the spiritual power.²

His Model of Re-construction. This his original end, consistently kept in view, gave colour to all Comte saw in nature, or read in books. While at the Vatican they were assuming that the Bishop of Rome was the successor to the place and powers of the mediæval pope, Comte held that his day was past, his creed exhaled away from human souls, his moral

¹ *Politique Positive*, Vol. iv., p. 213, Appendix.

² *Politique Positive*, Vol. iv., 196, Appendix. *Ut supra*, p. 212.

ascendency for ever lost. Therefore must there be another head, the High Priest of Humanity, who, and not the Bishop of Rome, should guide the wheels of the reconstituted world. While at Rome they aimed at the perfecting of the machinery of reconstruction by means indicated in first passing a dogma without a General Council—thus setting up empirical autocracy—and next by getting a General Council to make a dogma of the Pope's infallibility, thus establishing legal autocracy, Comte aimed at it by the monopoly of education; thus accepting from Rome her exterior circle of means, while for her inner circle of dogma, substituting dogma of his own.

It is natural for patrons like Mill and Littré to complain when they find that Comte's Atheism leads to a religion, and that the religion is "outrageous," "absurd," "ridiculous." It is, however, for dignitaries of his church, like M. Pierre Lafitte, to cry: Every temporal power needs to be counselled, consecrated, and regulated. This triple operation presupposes a common doctrine and a priesthood, with a public which, by approving or disapproving, reacts on the temporal power. That public is formed of women and the working classes. This, then, is the sum of the grand construction. The problem of the Nineteenth Century is precisely the constitution of a priesthood, the basis of such an organization; and this is indicated by the decisive formula of Auguste Comte, adopted as motto

by me, in my annual circulars, viz. "The formation of the positive priesthood becomes the first condition of a regeneration not less indispensable for order than for progress."¹

II.—*The New Nations.*

Without a clear view of this programme no one of Comte's processes can be seen through. With it in our eye, we can admire how he first clears the ground, and can appreciate the 'grand construction,' he proceeds to rear on the vacant place. All great nations are to disappear; for even the reconstructors of the Vatican have not a stronger prejudice against "nationalism," than had Comte against great countries. His reason assigned, however, is like himself, strangely inconsequential. Great nations dissipate the sentiment of patriotism by diffusing it over too wide a surface! To great nations are to succeed small States of a million or a million and a-half of population. Both kings and parliaments are to take their departure; for the first are dangerous to the Spiritual Power, and the second are hateful, very hateful, to M. Comte. I do not remember that according to the formula dear to Pius IX. he called them the Tower of Babel. The

¹ *Revue Occidentale*, Vol. ii., p. 171. I condense M. Lafitte, but give only his words.

Western World, then, is to be composed of some sixty small republics.

At the head of this group of States, seated in Paris, "the metropolis of the regenerated Occident," *The New Supreme Head.* sits the High Priest of Humanity. Or, in the nobler language of Dr. Robinet, the whole priesthood, in its various orders of aspirants, vicars, and ordained priests, is constantly and intimately bound together and directed by a sole organ, a supreme head, the High Priest of Humanity, whose eternal see is Paris, future metropolis of the regenerated West, which will be hereafter the spiritual centre of our earth. To this august functionary belongs the government of the Positivist clergy, and the general direction of collective human kind. ¹

This "august functionary" is to receive from the State an annual income of £2,400, besides allowances for the expenses of his "immense" administration. He directly rules the clergy over the whole extent of the States; appointing, changing, dismissing them all on his own "moral responsibility." Any priest aspiring to political power by flattering either the capitalist class on the one hand, or the working classes on the other, is to be excluded from the priesthood. To assist the High Priest, four National

¹ *Œuvre et Vie d'Auguste Comte*, p. 80.

Superiors preside respectively over the Italian, Spanish, German, and British "Churches."

Thus it will be noted that while he abolishes nationality as respects the political organization, he retains it in the ecclesiastical. Therefore for Italians, Spaniards, Germans, and Britons, respectively, the sole representative of a national authority would be the Chief Ecclesiastic, the National Superior. The French, of course, would have the High Priest himself, to whom the others would be as Provincials to the General of an Order. Ranking Germany and England after Spain is intentional, according accurately with Comte's appreciation, which as to our own nation was anything but flattering.

The succession to the office of High Priest rests, like all other power, with him. He names his own successor. But the unanimous consent is required of the four National Superiors. In case of their not agreeing, the opinion of the two thousand "deans" is taken. The Deans are the heads of the two thousand *Philosophical Presbyteries*, otherwise called *Sacred Orders of Colleges*. A college is composed of seven *the* priests and three vicars. Each college stands *Clergy.* beside a Temple of Humanity, and parallel with a Positive School. The temple is surrounded by a "sacred grove," where lie those selected dead who, by a post-mortem judgment conducted by the priests, at the end of seven years after decease, are

proclaimed worthy of incorporation with the Goddess Humanity. ¶These are carried in "pomp" from their temporary grave to the sacred grove. The priest may be ordained at forty-two years of age. He resides in the college, and is entitled to four hundred and eighty pounds a year, besides travelling expenses on "diocesan tours." He must be married, but if widowed once, widowed for life. He must renounce all private property, and is absolutely forbidden to earn money, beyond his regular stipend.

Of the two lower orders of clergy, the Vicars only form part of the spiritual power, and even they are not entitled to teach or preach except by dispensation. They may enter the order at the age of thirty-five, and are under the same law as the priests in respect of property and marriage. Their stipend is £240 a year.

Below the Spiritual Power lies the third order of clergy, the Aspirants, whose numbers, unlike the two higher orders, are unlimited. Entering the order at the age of twenty-eight, they exercise no function of the spiritual power. They receive £120 a year, and their renunciation of private property is only provisional. The clergy are to include the medical profession, and all the social organs of intellectual life, regulating even "coinage, measures, &c."

The time for the advent to power of this great

heirarchy is not far off. "Before the end of the nineteenth century," France is to be divided into seventeen small republics, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are all to be severed from England, similar partitioning is to take place elsewhere, and if Ireland and Portugal are not themselves sub-divided, they will be the largest states remaining! So will the arena be prepared for the due separation of the two powers.

III.—*The New Temporal Power.*

The new temporal power is divided into two classes, the *Patriciat* and the *Prolétaires*. We have no words exactly to correspond to Comte's idea of these: I shall call them *Capitalists* and *Working Classes*. But I am scarcely justified in calling the working men a portion of the temporal power. They and the women are the outside populace, who by opinion and influence may act upon the Power, but who cannot act otherwise upon it except through the priests. These, again, are without any armed force or any right to employ it; but supported by the women and the working men, they have a right to counsel with authority.

The Power so to be counselled by authority consists in each State of the three principal bankers

formed into a triumvirate. There is, the reader must understand, no realm in which matters are so exactly regulated as in the territory of M. Comte's goddess. Taking the population of the whole West, as he then set it, at one hundred and twenty millions, the allowance of capitalists is fixed precisely at seven hundred and two thousand. That number is sufficient. They consist of two thousand bankers, one hundred thousand merchants, two hundred thousand manufacturers, and four hundred thousand farmers. In those hands is all capital to be concentrated; to be used freely on their own "moral responsibility." Upon such a concentration of capital and civil command Comte looks with profound complacency. "Thus condensed in certain families, forming in each State scarcely a thirtieth part of the population, the temporal power will be all the more sensible of its duties as well as of its force; and will be conscious of a standing necessity of justifying, by a worthy public exercise of it, an authority without external brilliancy."¹

Two thousand bankers will correspond to the two thousand temples of Humanity, each of which will be under the protection of an "adjacent" banker, who by command of the Triumvirate will hand to the clergy their stipends. Hence will arise intimate relations between the priests and the industrial

¹ *Politique Positive*, II. 415, 416.

chiefs, so as to keep alive in the latter the veneration for the clergy, resulting from their own education, prolonged by that of their children. Public institutions common to different countries are to be in the hands of the priests: that is, coinage, measures, and such like. With these the Temporal Power of the particular States is not to interfere, except to promote foundations by providing proper expenses. Others than priests are not to be forbidden to educate, but as they will only be inferior men, their competition will be of small account. All work is to be held as gratuitous service to Humanity. All occupations to be regarded as public functions. Yet every family is to own its own house, and a mite of ground, and every workman is to have his wage separated into two portions, one constant, work or no work, the other contingent. Every capitalist is to have absolute control over the use and transmission of his funds. Trades are to be hereditary. Society is to be in all matters "systematized" by the priests, and to what extent such systematizing will proceed may be conjectured from the fact that the only example of human life as now existing which to Comte appeared to be organized was military life.

Women are to hold no property whatever. In this, he says, they are like the Priests; but the latter have their assured salaries, their unapproachable

position, and their educational ascendant. But just as in the case of the working classes the absence of all political life and action is to be compensated by personal comfort, so in the case of the women is the absence of all right of property to be compensated by some special ascendancy of woman over man, of the "emotional sex," over the intellectual one; an ascendancy to be confirmed and sublimated by the worship of mother, wife, and daughter, and by the institution of man thinking under the inspiration of woman: one of the most potent of Comte's specifics. To harmonize with this he is always putting the intellect under the emotions, never taking time to show how our feelings towards M. Comte, or any one else, depend on our ideas of him. If we take him for a sage, as his disciples do, we feel one sort of emotion; if for a great muser and a weak reasoner, as some of us do, we feel another sort of emotion; if for "an Atheist and a madman," as his wife did, we feel a third sort. The emotions solicit and react upon the conceptions; but the conceptions mould the emotions.

Thus, then, is the regenerated West to sit, free from war, with one type of education, "uniform" customs, and common festivals. And mark the climax! "The High Priest of Humanity will, better than any pope of the Middle Ages, constitute the only chief truly occidental. At need he will be able

to concentrate the whole sacerdotal action in order to repress any tyrannical triumvirate, by invoking, it may be, the neighbouring cavaliers, or even the peaceable mediation of impartial governments.”¹

I had omitted the chivalry. They are to be an order of voluntary protectors of the clergy, to guarantee them against temporal tyranny. They will consist of capitalists and command “immense” funds.

IV.—*Centralization of the New Power.*

To complete the view of the concentration of authority, it is only necessary to add that, while in all orders and classes the incumbent of office names his successor, the owner of property his heirs, there is to this rule one portentous exception. The succession to all offices among the clergy is in the hands of the High Priest of Humanity alone! They have no property, they are changed or dismissed at his will, they may not earn a shilling by pen or spade; and their offices all lapse to one lord. No dispute about investiture or institution shall ever trouble the commonwealth in which Mr. Harrison invites us ill-governed English to make our abode. “It is only in the spiritual order that all appointments are

¹ *Catéchisme Positive*, p. 319. Without going to the ponderous books any one may verify every touch in my outline from the Catechism alone.

in the hands of the supreme head, to obtain a sufficient concentration of so difficult an office." ¹

This, then, is the territory laid out by M. Comte. When I saunter round it, I feel a rising wish that it had been visited by my simple-minded fellow-countryman, Jonathan Swift! People would like to hear from him what was to be seen there. He failing, perhaps Lord Spencer could frame an idea of the happiness of figuring as Temporal Power in a commonwealth where the proportions of that same were those of a respectable provincial banker, having on each hand another provincial banker, and called to face a Dean commanding all the professional men and schoolmasters, backed by a National Superior, backed by a universal High Priest able to concentrate, according to Comte's express intention, the sacerdotal action of his "unlimited" army of absolute dependents, all of whom would be regulars, no seculars whatever.

The one thing which Comte most frequently sets down to the credit of "Catholicism," is "the separation of the powers," of which he makes, as shown above, his own modification. He is so ignorant of the origin, principles, and spirit of Christianity, that it always, for practical purposes, rises up into his view in the tiara. He takes Paul for its founder; assuming that he, out of self-abnegation, set forward

¹ *Catéchisme*, p. 107.

a fictitious founder.¹ He takes the law of loving our neighbour as ourselves, to be a "Catholic" formula, though he did know of Moses,—perhaps as much as may be gathered from some general reading, takes it as more modern than the "ancient," rule of "treating another as you would wish to be treated by him."² Even in respect of the point on which his whole programme depends, the separation of the powers, he knows not the facts, and misconstrues the relations.

Instead of the Papacy separating the spiritual power from the temporal, Constantine had found himself in face of a power which, in complete separation from the temporal, had through centuries of waxing force become so strong that it and the Emperor must reckon with one another. He it was who set the spiritual office of the ministers of Christ on the temporal lines of the Roman Magistracy, and the strife of the "Catholicism" which is Comte's Christianity was to absorb into "spiritual" officers, the operative powers of temporal chiefs—titles, lands, right of levying tax, judicial functions, and power over peace and war.

¹ These incredible assertions occur in the *Catéchisme*. See *inter alia* p. 225. It is at p. 351 that we have the following: "Catholicism arose . . . under the impulsion, too much overlooked, of the incomparable Paul, whose sublime personal abnegation facilitated the movement of nascent unity, by allowing a false founder to take the front place. *Donc la sublime abnégation personnelle facilita l'essor de l'unité naissante, en laissant prévaloir un faux fondateur.*"

² *Catéchisme*, p. 279.

He must in all things abstract and generalize, still and always generalize. He generalized a separation from temporal functions of the original office of the Christian ministry into a separation normal under the mediæval papacy, whereas it really existed and wrought marvels chiefly in times before the word Catholicism was written, and became more and more effaced as soon as the Papacy arose, and in proportion as it prevailed. In this he only once more leaped over the rising walls of history. But, like the constructors elsewhere, he had his own sense of "separation." The Spiritual Power was to be separated from the Temporal, in the sense in which in our navy the power of the Captain is separated from that of the Sailing Master—it was of a higher order, and was to have the rights of superiority.

Having now before us the Polity Comte proposed to erect, we are prepared to look at the philosophical principles on which it was to be grounded. They are, not less than his Polity, characteristic of his personal peculiarities; and when once they have been really mastered may be stated in a form easily understood. His disciples say that science led him to philosophy, and philosophy to religion and polity. Only disciples will adopt that view. He began as a reconstructor of society with and among reconstructers. Polity was his end; to this at first he may have taken philosophy without religion as the sufficient means. To obtain

a proper system of such philosophy science must be recast. After all it appeared that though he could invent a philosophy without God, by framing sciences without God, he could not apply that philosophy to purposes of practical reconstruction without a religion. Polity led him to philosophy, to science, and to religion in turn ; all these being but the stepping stones to his one end.

CHAPTER III.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMTE.

I.—*Essentially a Restriction of Thought and Inquiry.*

IN whatever else he suffered under self-illusion, Comte thoroughly realized the impossibility of his Polity being set up, before the way had been prepared by a philosophy which should train the human mind to observe the phenomena of nature without seeing in them any token of a Creator. He fancied that belief in God had already disappeared ; but acting on the principle that nothing is really displaced until it is replaced, he felt that to prevent such belief from coming back, a religion must be constructed with a new Faith, Worship, and Rule of Conduct. He also felt that no such religion could be accepted till the circle of the sciences should be taught on the principle of habituating men to avoid any deeper thinking than what was involved in observing phenomena and inquiring into their so-called laws—habituating them to avoid all thinking as to the nature of things, as to the cause of events, as to the origin of finite things, as to the end of arrangements manifestly temporal,

all thinking as to the purpose of structures which come into being fitted beforehand for offices to themselves unknown, as to the source of forces uniting into one system widely sundered worlds, as to the adjustment of all things ; as to any Author of it and them.

In giving this estimate of the system, which to me appears the simplest of truths, I know that I am directly contradicting representations as to profound thinking, great thinking, deep philosophy, and so forth, which have occupied the public mind, accredited sometimes by names of weight, and often by vigorous assertion. Hence no fear need trouble me, that any one will take on trust one word of mine, without verifying it. On the other hand, I may hope that no one will take it on trust that they must be in the right who say the opposite of what has just been said ; and that it must have been spoken inconsiderately. Never did man speak with more deliberation than do I in saying that the ponderous and labyrinthian speculations of Comte practically result in an apparatus of expedients for forestalling deep thinking, by providing men with makeshift explanations, and even by preventing them from seeking any explanation. If you suppose that in so saying I have neglected in the first place to know whereof I affirm, and in the next place to weigh beforehand what I say, I welcome and invite your

*A System of
Makeshift
Explanations.*

careful exploration of the author himself ; but confess that I shall not set much store by your impressions caught from current representations.

II.—*His Works and Principles.*

Four years after he had issued his original outline of a Polity, appeared the first volume of *Philosophie Positive*, in the publication of which work passed away twelve years. This work announced itself as the precursor of the great construction. After nine years of interval appeared the first volume of the *Politique Positive*, or Positive Polity, for which the former work was supposed to have ripened the human mind. In the three succeeding years were issued the three other volumes. My copy of this work bears in a large firm hand the inscription : *À M. le baron Alexandre de Humboldt hommage de l'auteur Auguste Comte Paris, le 26 Bichat 67 (28 Décembre, 1855)*. One of the standing boasts of Comte's admirers is that among those who had been seen at some of his lectures, Humboldt was to be reckoned. Of his presentation copy of the great work which embodied the final polity of all mankind, Humboldt had cut open two leaves, partially cut one or two more, and not another. I have preserved the book much as I found it. It will be remarked that Comte, in dating, uses his own calendar, his month being

Bichat, his year 67; yet out of respect to such of mankind as yet lingered in the old style he subjoined the vulgar date.

What, then, was the *Positive Philosophy* which was to lay the foundations for the superstructure of the great polity of a Mandarin-Brahman-Papal hierarchy? It was a system of universal

*His System
is Science
subjected to
a Dogmatic
Philosophy.*

science, professing to educe a philosophy from observed phenomena, but in reality preceding science by an *à priori* dogmatic philosophy, and limiting research in science to such points as could be made to illustrate that philosophy. Here again I fly in the face of great authorities; and if I am wrong shall have only reproach for my pains. Setting out with the assumption that the human race has now outgrown every form of "theological belief," which, be it well noted, means belief in either gods many or One God; the Positive Philosophy treats of the various sciences on the fore-announced conclusion that each of them, and in particular astronomy, is fatal to any such belief.

Comte's survey of natural science leads up to the new science of sociology. This is based on the assumption that "law" means in morals, as it does in matter, a rule "invariable" in the sense of being inviolable. Hence the consequence that no free agents exist among us any more than on high. This conclusion

is facilitated by the assumption of certain principles, the most extraordinary ever passed by sane men as enunciated by a sane man. First: in the positive state of mind, man properly speaking, that is, the individual, does not exist, or is only a pure abstraction; what is real is Humanity. Secondly: Society is an organism; not an organization merely, but an organism. Thirdly: in Society no such thing as rights exist, only duties. The word rights must be banished from morals just like the word "causes" from philosophy.¹

III.—*Only Phenomena and Laws to be studied.*

In treating of any science, no facts are consciously allowed to enter into the field of vision beyond phenomena and so-called laws. A thing is covered with a nimbus forbidding you to search into its nature. An event is fenced off by a line behind it forbidding you to inquire into its cause, and by a second line before it forbidding you to inquire into its design. Whether of a thing or of an event, you are to take its appearance, its phenomenon, and not to look behind the phenomenon for an explanation of the phenomenon. That is, you are not to look within a thing for the nature of the thing. Not to look behind

*Restriction
of the
Field of
View.*

¹ *Pos. Phil.*, VI., 692. *L'Esprit Positif*, 74. *Catéchisme*, p. 296. La notion du *droit* doit disparaître du domaine politique, comme la notion de *cause* du domaine philosophique.

an event for the cause of it, or before it for the design ; not to look above an adjustment for a harmonizing mind, or above worlds adjusted to worlds for one all uniting Power. You are to observe the appearance, and to trace out its laws.

These so-called laws, we must bear in mind, are the "invariable" rules, incapable of being broken or altered, which are observed in the operations of inorganic matter. Suppose, for instance, *Illustration of Mail Coach.* you see a mail coach, you are to note its appearance, length, breadth, height, colour, and so forth. Farther, you are to search for its law—eight miles an hour, or nine, or ten. Having learned these you have learned all that a thing like you was made to learn. Dare not to assume that the appearance, though a perfectly trustworthy index of the coach, is not the coach, and never professed to be. The coach itself, remember, is a phenomenon, an appearance. Dare not to say that the very use of the appearance is to make you aware of the presence of much that does not appear, and to remind you of the existence of many things not here present. Dare not to say that the phenomenon tells you of a post office, a correspondence, a commerce, a community, a legislation and an Executive Head. Perhaps you may reply : Not to let it tell me of anything, but its shapes, colours, motions, and its law of velocity, would be to put myself in the place of the

dog who stares at the show. Even he, after he has observed it several times, knows more, knows better than that the law of the coach lies in any rule of proportion between the rate of its velocity and the horse-power. Of such rule he may know nothing ; but he does know that the law of the coach is in the coachman, who no sooner sets foot on the step, than off bounds the dog, anticipating velocity as the result of command. The village boy knows that if the law of the coach lies in the coachman, the law of the coachman lies in the Postmaster-General, and the law of the Postmaster-General in the Sovereign. But neither dog nor boy could know what they do know, were the rules of Comtism the law of even animal mind. It is perfectly true that in practice the rule laid down is not observed by Comte or anyone else ; but that does not recall the laying of it down, nor prevent the attempt to work according to it from bridling the movement of mind and warping its direction.

IV.—*Comte's Fundamental Law of the Three States.*

Before the *Philosophie Positive* introduces the reader to any science, it largely pre-occupies the mind with metaphysical axioms as to certain psychological laws, which all the sciences in turn are to illustrate. These are announced as a grand discovery ; even the dis-

covery of the Law of the Three States. It is this discovery which has enabled the human race—for to the elated discoverer the feat is actually performed;—to effect its transition from the long, weary stages of its preparation, into its final stage of mature development, of emancipation and repose. This matchless discovery, this “grand fundamental law,” is proudly borne by the inventor as the golden key which has opened to him the three realms of the past, the present, and the future. It is, as I said, a law of our psychological constitution and states; and though M. Comte is just about to enact that we shall not *Breaks his rules in formulating his Chief Law.* inquire into the nature of things or into their origin, he himself, having to work with a human mind, breaks both these rules in the act of enunciating the law before he gets to the part of it that specifies them! All his law says is about the “nature” of mind! This is one *aliquid humanum*, human weakness. A second is that he assigns, and that without hesitation or alternative, an origin to this nature of the mind; the origin is not from “nothing”; he is too logical for that. It is not from Chance; he contemns those who would account for things by that. It is not from a Creator; the idea of such a being is a mere imagination. It is from “invariable necessity.” This, like Chance, is a *metaphysical* name, serving to rein up, as if by a *reason*, a *poor* intellect robbed of its rational liberty

of tracing up intelligent effects to an intelligent cause. It is M. Comte's *deus ex machinâ*, serving him at all turns for both origin and cause, though in general he is unconscious of seeking either, seemingly taking it for granted that whenever he said things were "by necessity," by "invariable necessity," by "invincible necessity," or were necessary, we should all agree that they were either without origin or cause, or of such origin or cause as lay beyond the bounds of the knowable.

The great Law of the three States, then, is this, that by "invariable necessity," and "by its nature," *the Formula of the Law. human mind in every one of our principal conceptions, in every branch of our knowledge, passes successively through three different theoretic states.* These are: First, the theological or fictitious state; secondly, the metaphysical or abstract state; thirdly, the scientific or positive state. The theological, fictitious state is the "necessary" starting-point of the human mind. The metaphysical, abstract state is its stage of transition. The scientific, positive state is its fixed and final one. In its fictitious state the mind studies the nature of things, with their causes originating or final. In its transition stage—the metaphysical—the mind replaces supernatural agents by abstract forces, real entities inherent in different things. In its positive, scientific stage the mind renounces the search after the origin and destiny of

the universe: renounces the knowledge of the inner causes of phenomena, and attaches itself solely to the pursuit of their effective laws, that is, of their invariable relations of succession and similitude.

From these Three States of mind spring three methods of philosophy, not only radically opposed to one another, but mutually excluding one another.

Three Types of Philosophy. From the fictitious state springs the philosophy which explains phenomena by causes, and ultimately by voluntary agents, natural or supernatural, whose intervention accounts for events. From the transitional state springs the philosophy which explains phenomena by assigning to every phenomenon a proper entity, of which the operation accounts for events. From the positive state of mind springs the philosophy which explains phenomena no further than by connecting particular phenomena together under some general head. The fictitious stage culminates at the point where One Being is regarded as First Cause and universal providence. The transition stage culminates in the point where a sole entity Nature is viewed as the source of all phenomena. The positive stage tends to, but possibly may never attain as its point of culmination, an ability to regard all observable phenomena as particular cases of one general fact.

Of this last method and range of explanation a natural consequence is that the positive philosophy

not only renounces the study of the inner nature of things, of their causes and their designs, but looks upon these as absolutely inaccessible and void of meaning for us ; and as to the mysteries of theology, they are "of necessity interdicted to human reason." This philosophy observes phenomena, and seeks for laws ; but seeks for nothing else. Hence it commands you not to ask Why? but only How? ¹

The renouncing of explanation is grounded on the assumption that all "scientific" explanation consists merely in ranking any particular thing under its proper class. Considering how innocently Mr. Herbert Spencer has accepted this nostrum of Comte, and how potent are the narcotics he professes to concoct out of its virtues, it is, however superficial in itself, not lightly to be passed over. Perhaps it is the slightest lath in thinking which two successive heads of schools ever judged strong enough to bear the strain of a ponderous superstructure. Great adepts in *petitio principii*, in begging the question, as are both Comte and Spencer, even their hardihood might in this case have yielded to some little wariness of human common sense. Ranking a thing with its class is not the explanation of it, as Comte has it ; and is not the knowledge of it, as Spencer has it. It is an act

¹ The prime statement of these principles, constantly reiterated in all Comte's writings, is found in the first twenty pages of the *Philosophie Positive*.

proceeding from knowledge already acquired, and designed to keep such knowledge ready at hand for future use. That act presupposes and cannot help presupposing two items of knowledge,—that of the individual thing, and that of the right class under which to place it. Classing it, the result of this twofold knowledge, is, then, the source of it! No; classing it explains nothing, and is rightly done or wrongly according as your mind is or is not previously in possession of the true explanation. Classing the thing is not the acquisition of knowledge either of it or of its class; but it is the putting together of those two pieces of knowledge for ready reference. It is filing your document on the right file, not reading either it or those already on the file.

Suppose I see a man passing on the road and, after examination, say: This is a soldier of the eleventh regiment, What does that imply? It implies first, that I have taken knowledge of the man and his uniform. This knowledge is new, and it is individual. Without previous knowledge of a more general character it would not enable me to classify him. Did I not know the difference between a soldier's uniform and that of a policeman, to me he might seem to be a policeman. Did I not know the difference between the uniform of the line and the cavalry, to me he might seem to be a dragoon. Did I not know the difference between the uniform of one regiment of the line and another,

I might be able to say that he belonged to the line, but should not be able to give any more exact classification. By absolute necessity the act of saying he belongs to the eleventh presupposes as already existing in my mind the explanation of what the man is and what the class in which I set him. A philosopher who can call classing an object either the explanation of it or the knowledge of it, is like the schoolboy who takes a syllogism for an instrument of discovering truths not given in the premises. Just as the syllogism is an instrument for educing a truth out of a form more or less implicit into one perfectly explicit, so classing is an instrument for keeping knowledge, which left detached would easily be lost, permanently within reach by putting it with its like. It is the classing of a given thing that springs from the knowledge of it and its class, and not the knowledge of it and its class that springs from the classing of it.

V.—Assumptions of the Law of the Three States.

The fundamental assumptions involved in the law of the Three States are startling. The first is that the Three States are universal to human conceptions and branches of knowledge. This is simply a metaphysical axiom; and it is not true. Many conceptions and branches of knowledge do not pass in

succession through these three states. The second fundamental assumption is that the Three States are necessary. This also is simply a metaphysical axiom, and again, it is not true. Not being universal they cannot be necessary. The considerations advanced by Comte in support of the necessity and universality of the Three States are slender and wholly insufficient. The third fundamental assumption is that these Three States are necessarily successive. That axiom also is not true. There is in a conception no necessity of passing through these three successive steps. All the views may simultaneously concur towards one comprehensive conception. On the other hand, they may never all three either succeed one another or co-exist.

The fourth fundamental assumption, capital to Positivism, is that the stage in which the study of causes, of design, and of the nature of things is renounced, in which that of the existence of God or a future life is interdicted, in which the question Why is inhibited, and only the question How is licensed, in which research is curtailed to the ascertainment of laws only, is the mature and consummating stage of human development. This metaphysical axiom is untrue from first to last; is the antipodes of our human knowledge, derived from observation, inference, or intuition.

It is logical that a race without a God should be

a race without a Why; but a race without a Why would not be the human race; must be one much lower down in the scale of mind. *A Race without a Why.* The state of mind in which men do not enquire into the nature of things, is one in which they do not even ask, What is it? and that fact you no whit alter by calling the nature of a thing its "inner nature." The state of mind in which men do not inquire into the causes of things is one in which they do not ask, What did it? or, Who did it? The state in which they do not inquire into the design of things is one in which they do not ask, What for? and any state of a human being in which he does not ask What is it? What or Who did it? and, What for? is one of the lowest flats of savagery, or else a state of approximate inanity. It cannot be proved that in a sane man such a state of mind ever existed; all we know seems to say that in such an one it could not exist; but if it could, then it would not be a fixed state or a final one, but must lead downward towards imbecility.¹ Mr. Harrison resents a mild hint of Mr. Spencer's about men thinking in grooves, and

One of the most recent German explorers in the Basin of the Congo, Lieutenant Wissman, speaking of the mental superiority of the Tuschilange over other negro nations, says: "The best token of this superiority is the question, Why? with which one is here so often confronted, a question which elsewhere seems to lie beyond the negro."—*Mittheilungen der Afrikanischen Gesellschaft in Deutschland*. Band 4 Hef 1. s. 41.

says that is what all systematic thinkers do. But when a system begins by cutting off from intellect the organs of its noblest powers, of those powers in the use of which our progress has been made, men who profess to submit their intellect to the knife need not say much about systematic thinking. Most of the good thinking they will do will be in spite of their system.

The fixed state, the final state of man, one
Comte's that renounces investigation of the nature
Final Stage of things, and inquiry into causes and de-
a Retrograde signs! It is only in his lowest state that
One. man approaches to this fanciful condition. In proportion as intellect freely plays does it refuse to rest in mere appearances, and resolve to learn the nature of a thing. Heat, to be sure, is what warms, melts, or inflames, as the case may be. But it is the higher man, and not the lower, who asks, What is it? an emanation, like odour, or an undulation, like sound? a flux of matter, or a mode of motion? So with every chemical analysis, so with every lawyer's study of his case; so with every critic's peering into a new poem, argument, or history. These men are searching into the nature of things. "Inner nature"! Well when we have learned that the outer nature of a tiger is hairy, we are disposed to learn also whether his inner nature is or is not ferocious. When we have learned that the outer nature of a metal is yellow, we like to

know whether its inner nature is gold or aluminium bronze. When we have learned that the outer nature of a man's words is agreeable, we like to know whether the inner nature of them is true. As to "things in themselves," *Dinge au sich* and such other fringes, whether put on by Kant or Hamilton, they make no more difference to the nature of things, than does Comte's own *intime*.

The nature of a thing is something without which no thing exists, something that is various, according as the properties of the thing are complex, that has different manifestations, according to those varying properties, and that becomes known to us just in so far as those manifestations come under our observation. It is a something that never shows itself, except when all those properties are united in the normal state; something which disappears when any property is withdrawn, or when the normal state is changed. Few things in physics are more striking than is the vast change which may be made in the nature of a body by a slight withdrawal from it of some constituent or addition to it of another. More of the nature of a given thing we cannot know than its manifestations reveal, or than sound inferences from them warrant. But if by calling manifestations of things, that is phenomena, mere shows—we mean that they are shows, not of anything, shows without a thing shown, unreal shows—then, do we play off

upon ourselves a childish fallacy, and no pretensions of heaven-high philosophy will save us from the consequences. Appearances are not "mere shows." They are shows of something to someone. On the other hand they are appearances and not the things that make the appearances. In calling things phenomena Comte only follows the flock; but a more misleading habit flock never was silly enough to follow.

Perhaps the assumption which has the greatest practical effect upon thinking and reasoning is that science shows all things to be governed *by laws*, without any intelligent being, instead of being governed according to laws by an Intelligent Being who set things their laws. This science does not show. The assumption that it does show it is hardy, but utterly unscrupulous. Science shows that inorganic nature is governed according to fixed rules, involving proportion, order in time and space, and adjustment of complex relations. Science of mind, if purely historic, shows that such a fixing of rules for inorganic bodies, and their conduct, involves mind and design; since it never arises without these. Science farther shows that the fixed properties of inorganic agents, and the processes which result so long as they are left to themselves, become liable to indefinite changes as soon as intelligent agents enter on the scene. Science shows that the weakest in-

telligent agent can change properties and processes, within a certain range, and that one of highly advanced intelligence can do so on a scale incalculably transcending that of the weakest one. Science shows that what are called laws of nature, are miscalled, being not laws in the clear sense of a precept capable of being obeyed or disobeyed, but being rules of procedure, or of proportion, absolutely inviolable. Science shows that these rules of procedure and proportion become known to mind in studying the properties of matter, and thenceforth are turned into instruments of mind for guiding the processes of matter, and within limits for calling into existence new properties or neutralizing old ones.

Science is far from showing that the terminal point of governing power in nature is found, in so-called laws, which instead of being capable of being defined as laws by even Comte himself, are at once diluted into "invariable relations of succession and similitude." Science shows that successions and similitudes are not laws, but results of forces working according to rules. It shows that mind, once cognisant of these forces, can change the current of successions, can turn similitude into difference, and difference into similitude, by knowledge of properties, and of their rules of operation. It shows that the extent of this power of altering successions and similitudes depends on range of intellect, amount of knowledge, and force of will.

Science thus sets us down before intelligence and will as the terminal points of demonstrated control over visible phenomena. If, with Comte, we refuse to go up to the terminal point, in hope of escaping from the action of Will and of Intelligent Agents, science shows these coming in at every step. Science itself is one grand procession of finite intelligent agents, amid unintelligent agents and forces, advancing from height to height, and from void to void, across bodies, across interspaces, the finite intelligence constantly gaining fresh dominion over finite properties, forces, relations, and as constantly feeling itself called forwards and upwards towards infinite relations and a career without limit.

Of all the fundamental assumptions, the one *Assumed Knowledge of the Unknowable* which at my first reading of Comte, now very many years ago, most amazed me—not so much because he made it, for all one heard in Paris prepared one for anything, but because Englishmen of repute as thinkers, gave it currency, with some implied sanction of their names—is still the one that most perplexes me, not at all as to Comte's faculty of assuming, but as to the extent of human "receptivity," whenever I read things which imply that sober men let it pass. It is an assumption to which Mr. Harrison might fairly call the attention of Mr. Spencer. And here, I shall take the liberty of substituting for a vaguely rhetorical word of Comte,

one of Mr. Spencer's, the meaning of which one can fix. What Comte calls "inaccessible," Mr. Spencer calls "unknowable." The whole law, then, of Comte, the whole operation of humanity in its mature stage, depends on what? on three things: first, a knowledge of the boundary-line dividing between the knowable and unknowable; secondly, on M. Comte's personal power to fix that line at the true point; and in the third place, on his being in a position to make assertions respecting things on both sides of it, the far side as well as the near.

This monstrous triple assumption of Knowledge under the guise of non-Knowledge is the cornerstone of the positive philosophy. Without this assumption not one of Comte's Three States could be formulated. He knows just where to draw the line, yea, to fix it for ever; otherwise he could not rule that causes, natures, and designs are on yonder side of it, and laws only on this one; could not forbid the search after the one as hopelessly barren, and sanction that of the other as fruitful; least of all could he forbid the questions which might hereafter revive a search for a First Cause. He knows what does or does not exist deeper in than the bounds of the knowable, else he could not say that the inner nature, essence, entity, or whatever else you may call it, is only a modification of a fiction. He knows what

*A Triple
Assumption
of Unreal
Knowledge.*

does and what does not exist higher up than the bounds of the knowable, else he could not pronounce that God is a fiction—as positive an affirmation as can be made.

It is up and down the realm marked off by himself as beyond the bounds of the knowable, that Comte rambles, pronouncing this thing chimerical, that fictitious, the next thing a fabrication, another unreal, and so forth. These positive assertions as to souls of men, angels, gods, God, are made not once, not a hundred times, but many hundreds; are made not hypothetically, or with an air of respect for the intellects of people less well informed on matters within the shadow of the unknowable; but are made dogmatically, dictatorially, always with an air of perfect information, sometimes as if with a snort of contempt. Whence, then, this authentic knowledge of the territory called inaccessible? Whence this distinct prospect all over the range of the invisible? Whence this precision and certitude as to the non-existence of whales in seas into which no one can, by hypothesis, ever sail? Extract these affirmations, with the inferences founded upon them, out of the thousands of pages of Comte, and the whole house he built will fall into shapeless materials, like any house from which you withdraw foundations and cement.

Mr. George H. Lewes has a passage describing

the positive philosopher as objecting to your calling life a spirit, *as if you knew* ; objecting also to your making assumptions and dogmas touching that spirit, *as if you knew*. Never, however, did he object to Comte ranging over the universe of the inaccessible, affirming and denying not only as if he knew, but as if that remote part of the ocean around us, was the one on which, while others knew nothing, he could speak with the authority of an admiralty survey and charts ; could speak as entitled to call any idea of land in this direction a delusion, of rocks in that direction a fantasy, or of whales in a certain quarter a chimera. An author of catholicism, *i.e.*, Christianity, was real, St. Paul ; a founder of Rome was real,—Numa ; an inventor of *Comte's Realities and Unrealities.* the balloon was real and one of the heroes of time, but I forget his name ; predecessors in philosophy of M. Comte himself were real, such as Aristotle, Bacon, and some others ; but an Author and builder of the universe, a Predecessor of all finite minds and modes of thought was, he asserted, a fictitious being, *as if he knew*. Human providence was actual, the moral providence of woman, the intellectual providence of the priest, the material providence of the temporal chief, the general providence of the working class ; but divine providence, universal providence, surveying at once morals, intellect, and bodily need, conversant

at once with eye, light and sun, with breast, air and heat, with hunger, crops and weather, with sensation, medium and object; any such providence was, he asserted, a chimera, *as if he knew*. The subjective life of his own imagining was real—that life which the living confer upon the dead when they form of them in their own minds pictures, and offer to them “worship,” this was not only real, but *the real life*; whereas the life of the soul after death, its own life conscious and intelligent, was, he assumed and asserted, only imaginary, *as if he knew*.

VI.—*The Three supposed Philosophies do not necessarily exclude one another.*

The final assumption is as untrue as the rest. It is that the three methods of philosophy, which spring out of the Three States, mutually exclude one another. Let us recall those three methods. The first explains the Universe by the pre-existence of a Creator and Ruler; the second explains phenomena by essences, entities, or nature inherent in things the third explains phenomena only by laws, and by grouping laws,—less general ones under those more so. These three methods of explanation do not exclude one another; on the contrary, the highest includes the other two. The lowest would exclude the other two were it possible to put the human mind into the cage, and disable it from seeking for

nature, essence, cause, design, origin or originating will ; but into any such confinement no mind can be crushed, not that of the inventor of the cage.

History is there, in spite of attempts to "law" it out of living movement, into mere moulds. As a matter of history, then, has the highest mode of explaining the universe excluded the other two?

Moses Moses explained the origin of things
Metaphysical finite by the pre-existence of a Being
and Positive capable of giving to them both begin-
as well as ning and end. Did he say that when
Theological. originated they were left by their Creator without
each thing receiving a nature of its own, by which
it should be distinguished from things of any other
nature? Precisely the contrary. To each was as-
signed its purpose, and to each was given a nature
adapted to the fulfilment of such purpose. If, there-
fore, Moses had explained the fact that this plant
bore figs while that other bore haws, by the fact that
the one possessed the nature of a fig tree and the
other the nature of a thorn, would he, as a matter
of fact, exclude the explanation that the ultimate
cause of their respective natures—of "their kind"—
lay in the Creator's will? Yet further: If Moses
asserted that the sun had a Creator, that he had also
a design, to give light, with a nature adapted to that
design, did he assume that he had no law, that he
was to rule without measure, number or limit ; that

he, co-operating with moon and earth, was to give us seasons, days and years, with a constant clashing of "caprices"? or did he assume a reign of law, fixed and invariable, so long as the Almighty willed its continuance? I do not say that M. Comte knew, but I do say that any Englishman of moderate intelligence ought to know the facts touching this point in the history of human thought. Those facts once called to mind, the Law of the Three States goes to pieces against the first serious example of a cosmogony.

A single exception to the three successive stages in any conception, in any branch of knowledge, would suffice to disprove their invariable necessity from the nature of the mind. But the difficulty would be to find any case on record where the nature of the mind had permitted it to pass spontaneously in succession through the three stages in Comte's order. How the second State is more metaphysical than the first, which assigns to things both an author and a nature, one cannot see. How the third is not metaphysical at all, seeing that it abstracts from things only their phenomena and laws, and confines observation to these, again one cannot see. But that the co-existence of the three states in the same mind is the normal condition of all who are happy enough to believe in God, is a fact so palpable on the face of history and literature, that to ignore it requires

audacious ignorance, ignorance even of the ignorance itself.

Comte fancies that we are all "theologists" in childhood, metaphysicians in youth, and Positivists in maturity. When I come to believe that things are ruled by their own modes of procedure only, which is what being ruled by "laws" comes to, and not by a Creator, through a nature various and with varying rules, I shall believe myself gone far back toward childhood. The truth manifestly is that the doctrine of creation implies both nature and law, as surely as it presupposes a Creator. The Creator who wills a thing to be must will it to be something, that is to be of some kind, that is to have a nature distinctively its own, which you may call entity, essence, quintessence, inner nature, ultimate nature, proximate principle, or by any name you think fit. Willing one kind to be this and another that, involves willing that one should act thus and another in a different way, that is, that each thing according to its nature shall have its fixed modes of operation. Creation implies both distinctive natures and laws; and no explanation which did not include all three would accord with the doctrine that all things were made and fitted to common ends.

Does any Comtist suppose that when Newton had discovered the law of gravitation he thereby became less interested in the nature of that property of matter by which every particle

*Newton
Theological
and
Positive.*

tends towards every other particle? The researches of Boscovich, Le Sage, and others prove that at all events the human mind did not. Does anyone suppose that Newton then became less disposed to ascribe both the property and the law to the will of a Creator? If not, the conception of law does not exclude that of an intelligent cause, does not even "interdict" the search for one, except to hearts stimulated by atheistic antipathies, or intellects reined in by Comtist bit and bridle. What Newton had discovered was simply a rule of proportion employed in procedure. According to human means of knowing, and human processes of thought, such a rule seemed clearly to presuppose knowledge of matter, of space, of time and also of motion, combined with a design to harmonize the motions of different pieces of matter, whether near to one another or far distant; and with power to do so. This in its turn seemed to presuppose a Creator. To say that the adjustment conspicuous in the law does not presuppose planning and discerning, and that these do not presuppose a Being capable of discerning, planning, and adjusting on the requisite scale, is to set at naught the experience of man, and to rob human reason of its validity. The *law* of gravitation being ascertained, the problem of the nature of it became not less interesting than before, but more so: the question of its origin remained as before, only with a clearer light on the

road leading up to God. Should any one prove that gravitation was due to the impact of corpuscles, such additional light upon its nature would not alter the question of its law; no more would it stay further study of laws: for new ones would then come to be investigated, as the discovery of a cause always stimulates the search into its laws, that is, into the rules employed in its procedure.

How necessary to the *a priori* assumptions of Comte is the idea of the mutual exclusion of the different systems may be gathered from one example among many. Confessing that in animated nature (in Biology, as he calls it, for to him the science and not the things known is habitually the real thing) we cannot predict events, as in inorganic, he draws from this his all-important conclusion of "without God." We can modify events here when we cannot predict them. Hence is it "shown unquestionably that the diverse events of the real world are not ruled by supernatural will, but by natural laws."¹ Shown unquestionably! Might they not be ruled by both? His proof that they are not ruled by laws *and* supernatural will, is that they are in part ruled by natural will and natural laws. To me it is hence "shown unquestionably," that, as natural will can rule events, through natural laws, so can supernatural will rule them now

¹ *Phil. Fw. III.*, 454.

according to natural laws, now, if that be better, by higher law.

In the fact that in living bodies we can at will "disturb phenomena, suspend them, even destroy them," he sees a reason for "repelling every idea of a theologic direction,"¹ *i.e.*, of their being directed by God. He is so eager to exclude any idea of a divine will above physical laws, where facts force him to admit a human one, that he totally forgets, that it is not with animated nature, or even with organic nature, that begins our power of "disturbing phenomena." If it did not begin till then, the evidence would not be lessened that will and law are not mutually exclusive. But it does begin earlier. We can less modify phenomena in a bee without destroying it than in a stone. We can modify gases, and yet restore them in a degree immensely greater than we can any living things. Our power to predict the course of any physical agent wholly depends on whether or not it comes under animal or vegetable control. Free from that control its evolution can be reckoned upon but not under it, except in a very small degree. We do know that no intelligent agent, however skilled, can do with it anything that violates one physical law. But we also know that the practical result of this restriction becomes elastic in proportion as skill increases, and at last so elastic, that what is possible

¹ *Phil. Pos. III.*, 457.

and what is not possible is a matter on which we are slow to pronounce in proportion as we are well informed.

VII.—*Sciences Excluded from View.*

Professing to ground philosophy altogether on the sciences of observation, Comte, as we have seen, does in fact lay at the foundation of all science his own metaphysical dogma touching psychological processes. Psychology itself, however, he rules out of the list of sciences; and that on the ground, above all things, that the mind cannot observe itself, cannot

*No
Psychology
or Mental
Science.*

stay itself to see itself at work. "The human mind," so runs his axiom, as luckless as the rest, "can directly observe all phenomena except its own."¹ This, he says, is by an "invincible necessity." Miss Martineau omits that part of it.² This child of his fancy pitilessly chastises its parent when he comes to set himself in his chamber of the soul, there forming images of the dead, watching the lines, correcting the touches and finally worshipping the completed sketches. Not only does he make his psychological dogmas the groundwork of his natural science, but such of the sciences as he acknowledges are so manipulated as continually to reflect in the facets of his prism the

¹ *Phil. Pos.* I. 34. ² *Vol. I.*, p. 11.

colours predetermined by the "law." Among the sciences scored out are geology and organic chemistry. The one substituted for mental science is phrenology ; not that he professes that we can see the brain at work, any more than he recognizes the fact that the one thing we do constantly see at work is our own mind, while a thing we never can see at work is brain, our views of it being confined to the dead brain of other people. But for him the way to study the mind is to observe the brain, and the way to observe brain is to feel the bumps on the cranium. Hence, while asserting that the mind cannot divide itself to see itself reason, because there is only one "organ," he goes on to say that we can understand how a man can observe the working of his own passions, because the "organs" in which the passions have their seat are distinct from those of observation. The passion, however, cannot be a strong one, for such is incompatible with the act of observation !¹ Now this Mr. Harrison, I suppose, takes not for a muddle of metaphysics, but for science and philosophy. By the way, even Mr. Harrison would sometimes seem to adopt the strange view of metaphysics which is perpetually recurring in Comte. To him metaphysics are the accounting for phenomena by entities. Mr. Mill gently says that he uses the word for anything he does not like. He uses it absurdly ; and if he did not like metaphysics, he

¹ *Phil. Pos.* I. 36.

wrote them as diligently as most men, but in general very poor metaphysics ; with, however, occasionally a very fine stroke.

One of the few points in which Comte is intellectually consistent—the consistency of his aim and pursuit is high to the last degree—is this, that he makes no attempt to unify nature or the universe. He limits himself to unifying science. Such portion of the universe as may lie beyond the solar system, he treats in somewhat the same spirit as a Parisian treats the provinces. Even in the solar system he thinks study is chiefly to be confined to the “five planets.” That portion of nature which he really

admits to sit to him he unifies first objectively, by classing it all into two sections, inorganic and organic, both of which inevitably unite in one, that is, in body.

This division assumes that body is all things, and that all things are bodies. It also assumes that things and phenomena are one and the same ; according to this, light considered merely as an undulation of ether is a “phenomenon,” not merely a thing or a process, while light making manifest to an eye things and processes is no more than a phenomenon. The fact being that on one hundred and ninety million of miles of its way from home to foreign shores sunlight is no phenomenon at all, not appearing

*All things
Assumed to
be either
Organic
or Inorganic.*

*The
Phenomenon
confounded
with the
Thing
Appearing.*

to any one. Yet it is then a real thing and a right glorious process, glorious to the eye that sees the end, although there in the eyeless waste of emptiness, it moves and moves a dark traveller through a dark field. Only down here in our lower air does it become visual, only inside of these small eyes of ours and of our humble fellow creatures, does it turn from a thing moving in a darkness that comprehends it not, to a light lightening every man that cometh into the world.

VIII.—*Not Technically a Materialist.*

It would be hard to call Comte a materialist, for he spurns the name in a different spirit from his rejection of that of atheist. Apparently he would have a real contempt for the intellect of any one who could call atoms the source of potencies and life. That, however, is, perhaps, more connected with his dread of looking too far up in the direction of the beginning than with anything else. He cunningly sees the prodigious advantage of treating of mind and matter on one and the same principle, without the trouble of proving that they are one and the same thing. Just as the question is begged respecting the existence of supernatural beings, so also is the question begged respecting the essentially different nature of matter and mind. He takes the advantage of being without

God, and refusing to call himself an Atheist ; and the advantage of assuming that all things are bodies, either organic or inorganic, without confessing to himself that either we must take mind as the product of matter, or matter as the product of mind.

This advantage as a controversialist, which is what Comte above all things is, even when most covertly, is dearly paid for. It produces a style of reasoning in which things are mercilessly mixed up which in nature are kept far asunder. If you will insist on treating land and water as proximate substances, no doubt you may, for proximate they are. But if you reason of water as of land, and of land as of water, the result will be in reasoning, what it would be in physics, if you mingled the two,—mud. You apply to mind the laws of matter, and to matter the notions of mind ; and while at the moment you seem to produce brilliant effects, when your work settles down it is—mud. Comte in this respect is not so bad as some of the dissecting-room school of metaphysicians among ourselves, whose freaks surpass all description.

He is no evolutionist. He rejected the solutions of Lamarck, the forerunner of Darwin. As to the relations of matter and mind, I do not remember anything in his writings implying that he could fancy he had explained them by an analogy like that of the concave and convex in the same form ; though such a fancy would not be foreign to his mental habits when

in his more mystical states. He could well take analogy for identity. Archbishop Thompson speaks of Comte as an exaggerated Nominalist.¹ But who else ever pushed Realism to the extent of making an abstract general term into the true object of worship?

Practically he unifies all knowledge into that of bodies, and assumes that bodies are the only objects of knowledge. But his higher unification has to be effected through mind and mental processes. Mathematics he makes the universal science which guides the march of every other science. How far it is a science of the knower, of the processes of mind in dealing with magnitudes, before it becomes a science of things known, he partly sees and generally forgets. By what processes the mind proceeds to measure such *Mathematics* magnitudes as eye sees not, to calculate *a Science* such numbers as eye again sees not; and *of Mental* *Processes.* so to acquire the power of mapping out in detail fields of nature which otherwise it could only unify in indistinct mass or total; this is what mathematics teach with patient care and giant result. What Comte principally, not exclusively, sees, is the application of those recognized and regulated processes of mind to questions of magnitudes. To him, measuring the celestial distances is measuring "indirectly," which put into a definite shape means, by mental processes where no physical measures can be applied; by pro-

¹ "Laws of Thought," p. 119.

cesses which, taking some small given dimension as a basis, proceed outwards toward infinity ; processes which declare that for the human mind earth is not the orbit or the limit, but only the *pou sto*, the prop on which to rest its lever.

In his earlier days he sees, in part at least, that mathe-
Identifies matics are an extension of logic. In his
Logic and later he identifies the two. The process was
Mathematics. with him, as with most rabid generalizers, an easy one. Mathematics were logic, applied to questions of extension and number. Therefore, logic was nothing but mathematics. Prosody is grammar ; and the most precise part of grammar,—its only rigidly measurable part : *ergo* grammar is prosody. But laying this subjective foundation for the unity of science, he refuses any place to the antecedent processes or attributes of mind,—to all those attributes by virtue of which it seeks to know, and reasons its way to knowledge, to all its processes in such reasoning and ascertaining of the truth till it comes to a certain class of truths where probabilities end and strict measure and number alone are of account. His reason for including mathematics, and giving it the first place, is, that physical laws presuppose logical laws. The knowledge of the one certainly does presuppose the knowledge of the other. But how as to the instituting of them I use the word “instituting” in the natural sense, that of setting up the law, not in Comte’s loose sense—

that of discovering it, and expressing it in form. He would have been the last to admit that what are called physical laws presupposed a mind knowing proportion and sequence, and able to impress upon bodies rules by which these should be observed. But just as surely as do harmonized motions presuppose proportion and sequence, so surely do proportion and sequence presuppose mind capable of comparison, judgment, and prevision.

IX.—*His Classification of the Sciences.*

All nature, then, being put into the two grooves of inorganic and organic, our studies are to run on those lines. He thinks it of vast importance to fix the place of each Science on a graduated scale; its rank in the *hierachy*. Each science is to take rank, then, prior to any others whose phenomena depend upon and presuppose its phenomena. This being so we expect to begin with chemistry; but no, with astronomy. It alone, says Comte, exhibits only mathematical phenomena. That was not his point. That science was to rank first whose phenomena were presupposed by the next, not that whose phenomena were only mathematical; which, I suppose, means, could only be measured and counted. This is not correct even of the heavenly bodies, seeing that their heat can be felt, their light seen, their figures traced by the eye. In spite of this, he affirms that their

phenomena are purely mathematical. The true reason why he began with Astronomy was not what he supposes ; but the natural one that the earth and all its works manifestly depend on the heavens. Instead of beginning to study bodies in their atoms, molecules and masses, which certainly are presupposed in their figure and motions, he begins where he can study only figure and motion, and eventually mass. Thence he comes to Terrestrial Physics ; thence to Chemistry ; next to Biology or Science of Organic bodies, including Physiology and Sociology.

His scheme is this :—

CRUDE BODIES :

ASTRONOMY.

PHYSICS.

CHEMISTRY.

ORGANIC BODIES :

PHYSIOLOGY.

SOCIAL PHYSICS.

These five sciences comprehend the circle of all knowledge ; presupposing, however, and presupposing nothing else ; mathematics ; consisting of geometry, the calculus, and rational mechanics. They comprehend all objects of knowledge, in spite of his oft reiterated assertion that man is the principal theme of our study ; and in spite of his preliminary principle that ideas govern and overturn the world, which he explains as meaning in other words that in the last resort all the social mechanism rests upon opinion.¹

¹ *Pos. Phil. I.*, 48.

In this classification his principle of succession according to the dependence of the phenomena on those of the sciences preceding is violated at least in two cases. One I have already noted. The other is physics and chemistry: the forces and motions of bodies in mass clearly depend on their atoms, molecules, and affinities, and presuppose them all, whereas these do not presuppose motion in mass.

Carefully guarding himself against being lowered to the rank of the scientists, for whose specialistic narrowness he never had contempt too strong, and ostentatiously setting himself forth as a philosopher only, dealing with the abstract sides and relations of all science, one would have expected him to avoid expositions of particular branches of science, and to take physical facts from their confessed professors, and accredited expositors. He chooses to make large expositions of his own. The specialists have not set any seal of general approval upon these treatises; but they were as necessary to fit all things to his Three States, as are those of Mr. Spencer to fit all things to his doctrine of the persistence and equivalence of force.

It was mortifying beyond patience that his sixth volume of the *Philosophie Positive* appeared with a note,—inserted most impudently by his publisher,—from Arago, his official superior, speaking of him even in his own branch of knowledge, that by teaching

which he lived, mathematics, with overt contempt. He had written a querulous, offensive preface attacking many, and Arago in particular. The publisher wanted not to bring out the book ; but yielded to Arago and did it. Yet preceding the preface he set Arago's curt statement that the ill-humour of Comte was due to the appointment of another to a chair he coveted. In Comte he says : " I did not recognize any mathematical title to the post, either great or small." A chair was the ambition of his life ; and he once thought that he had made a favourable impression on Guizot. But the chair never came, and Guizot was added to the list of spiteful metaphysicians. He punished the publisher for his insolence.

X.—*Organic and Inorganic.*

True to the principle of studying only bodies, when he approaches life, animal and vegetable, it is *His Defini.* defined as consisting in "absorption and *tion of Life.* exhalation," the very attributes of a gutter. Miss Martineau, gently, intimates that it would be well to insert "assimilation"; forgetting that our mode of using that word, shows that already we have read into it the idea of life, presupposing our knowledge of it. The gutter, in its way, assimilates matter, as well as does, in its way, the water-wagtail. But the one pulls pure water and dry clay down to mud,

while the life that is in the other lifts up matter and transforms it into living blood, flesh, bone and feather. He has many incidental definitions of life. And the nature of it is often under his notice, in spite of all laws to the contrary.

Another of his definitions of the living organism is: "Unity and coherence in space, progressive change in time." This he innocently says is "almost the whole matter." Such is the effect of defining by the lowest part or parts. Unity and coherence in space, with progressive change in time, will fit well upon the face of any cliff, upon any rock you can find along the sea shore, upon any stream or railway train. Absurd as it would be to define compounds by the highest constituent alone, it is immeasurably more absurd to define them by the lowest. A living creature defined by speaking of unity and cohesion in space and progressive change in time! that is farewell to accuracy and careful thought. Life defined by speaking of absorption and exhalation! that is muddle below notice. It is equalled only by the depths to which among ourselves followers, who are not disciples, fall when they sink from one vagueness to another till, anything with a tangible idea becoming dangerous for their theories, life or mind, or even thinking, may be described as organisation of changes, then as changes, then as motions, then as states, and if there be anything more vague, more unmeaning than states, that

are not states of some one thing in particular, that doubtless will be resorted to.

As life is only a property of organized bodies, so mind is only a property of a more complex organization, and human mind only a property of the most complex body of all. This property of this peculiar body is best studied in society, and society moves under the control of nature, and nature under "invariable laws," which means inviolable rules; for although physical, mental and moral laws differ in respect of sphere and detail, they all belong to the one "invariable" order. The law of the Three States is made to guide all human history, as firmly as does the turning of the needle to the pole guide the navigator. Wherever a danger arises of admitting into view true laws, commands which may be violated or obeyed, but which cannot be annulled or even altered, it is evaded by the ever-present explanation, "by necessity," or some kindred metaphysical expedient.

The principle of dividing objects of knowledge into inorganic and organic vitiates all study higher up than anatomy. For the special purpose of the chemist who seeks to know properties of bodies the classification is right. For the philosopher who seeks to know whatsoever goes to constitute the universe whether body or not body, it is wholly insufficient and misleading. M. Comte tells me much about "neces-

sity." Is it organic or inorganic? He tells me about the "nature" of my mind. Is a nature organic or inorganic? He often speaks of "proportions." Is proportion organic or inorganic? "Prevision" is one of his prime delights. Is it organic or inorganic? "Relation" is constantly on his lips. Is relation organic or inorganic? "Succession" and "similitude" are of his corner stones. Are they organic or inorganic? Without "law" his system could not rise an inch above the ground. Is law organic or inorganic? None of his sciences can dispense with Space or Time: are they organic or inorganic?

To study even the physical universe on the assumption that you are studying only *body* is *Body not the Universe.* manifestly untrue to nature; not less so than if a man set out to study the navy on the assumption that he was to study only vessels. Doing this he would divide his subject into wooden vessels and iron ones. But motive power is neither, no more are sailors, nor yet discipline, order, rank, exercise, courage, science, art of navigation, and other constituents, without which all wood and iron would no more make up a navy than would organic and inorganic make up a universe without constituents as high above them as they are above nothing. The method of taking only the lowest terms of the problem requires a problem whose terms are homogeneous. The lowest terms of the problem man, horse and gig,

are gig and harness. You can never solve your problem by them ; and you strangely belittle your own processes of thought when, first having excluded the animal life of the horse, and the free agency of the man, you proceed to enunciate a series of big-worded explanations.

You could not explain all by the mind and body of the man ; nor yet by the mind and body of the horse ; but when you come to the gig and harness alone, how much will they explain ? Not motion, not speed, not guidance. If you see the horse sprawling and the man also, you may explain that by the gig : it has broken down. But if you see horse, gig, and man, as if one body moved by one soul and will, winding amid vehicles, round corners, shunning what is to be shunned, and nearing what is to be neared, you have to explain the movements of the gig by those of the horse, and those of the horse by the will of the man. False to nature you may be ; but nature will find you out ; and of all forms of easily detected untruth few are less likely to escape in the long run than the folly of defining things by their lowest constituent. The marvel is how far it has been allowed to go ; but that is a preparation for the cure, seeing the absurdities to which it leads.

Of course when you want a definition of a genus which will not exclude any of its species, you are compelled to take the lowest species. But a poor schoolboy is

he who takes the type that excludes everything which characterizes any species or individual except the lowest as the type of all the species and individuals.

The law of Parsimony is right. Never resort to a higher agency to explain what is really explained by a lower. But side by side with this runs the Law of Adequacy. Never fancy that you explain a whole by what explains only its lowest part.

Where you have body and life in one you will never define the whole by what is applicable to body without life, as in Comte's *fiasco* cited. Where you have life and mind in one you will never define the whole by what is applicable to life without mind, though one could cite definitions of animal life which suit a cabbage as well as a swallow. Where you have mind and spirit in one you cannot define the whole by what describes only mind, though one could easily cite definitions of man which suit a sloth as well as a philosopher. The lengths, I repeat, to which this false method of definition has been pushed, will make reason revolt against it.

Gravitation is not body ; velocity is not body ; motion is not body ; light is not body ; sound is not body ; proportion, law, sequence, cause, effect, prevision, adaptation, harmony, end, success are not body ; and the laws of body are not their laws. The subterfuge that all these are properties of body is also untrue to nature, as much so as would be the asser-

tion that sound was a property of the ear, whereas all the ears in the universe could not evolve a sound ; or as the assertion that the Suez Canal was a property of the Desert, whereas the Desert could never evolve it, or preserve it when given. It is a gift to the Desert bestowed by mind, and capable of being preserved only by the continued attention of mind. Standing in St. Paul's Cathedral it is false to imagine that all its constituents are bodies and properties of body. The bodies, their properties, and all they could themselves evolve, would make together a heap of rubbish. All that transforms mere material into this fane is mind and powers of mind, giving to body properties impressed, differing from any that would ever be evolved : proportion, form, adjustment of light to shade, and colouring stuff to light. The vacant space is greater than that occupied by body, and for the sake of that and its uses are all the bodies set in their respective places. ¹

XI.—*No Free Agents.*

The scheme of Positivism theoretically leaves no place whatever for free agents, whether on this side of the line of the Inaccessible or on the other. Indeed, nothing is in theory more scorned than the idea that either things or events can be fashioned by voluntary

¹ *Catechisme*, ii. 57.

agents. At every allusion to their supposed influence, it is resented as arbitrary, capricious, interfering, inconsistent with order, subversive of law and fatal to prevision. Such metaphysical pellets are flung in handfuls into the face of facts. This strong antipathy to will, often apparently a mere intellectual foible, is probably not a little connected with the desire to suppress freedom, in such sense as we understand it, and to submit human institutions and life to rigid rule, imposed by what Comte and the Vatican would agree in calling Authority: that is, the autocratic command of a Hierarchy. This denial of all voluntary agents is consistently maintained as long as M. Comte moves on the far side of the line of the Inaccessible. In respect of events above Earth, say rather above the range of mathematical calculation, he no more hesitates than does a historian in the Puranas as to the length of reigns in the dynasty of the Sun, a good many thousands of years ago. At that distance all is as precise as the multiplication table. But just as the historian in the Puranas finds his vision begin to waver on this side of the historical line, so is it with M. Comte on this side of his own line,—the Accessible side. The deeper he gets into nature, man, affairs, the clearer becomes the presence of will, and the wilder becomes his inconsistency with his dogmas. So long as he reasons about the skies, a region whereof none of the facts come within our

observation except those which can be dealt with on the principles of lines, figures, and motions, his thick net of axioms forms a sufficient breastwork behind which he can to his heart's content affirm that no wills act, can scoff at the idea of voluntary agents as synonymous with a reign of caprice, can treat the fixed order of lifeless nature as the sum total of all order. But once entered upon our world, he finds that much more of what is going on comes in to trouble the point of view. That, however, he has, as a controversialist, taken the advantage of settling beforehand, on the basis of another region, observed only in outline. What exists for lines, figures, and motions, must exist for all things, and must be a sufficing test of law for them. But after all, within this circle of earthly things, first life, next mind, and in the third place, moral agents appear, and turn out to be realities no more to be got rid of than lines, figures, and motions, and realities at least as significant. The network of metaphysical maxims cannot stem the stream; it flows straight through all its meshes. Wills do act, and yet caprice and will are not synonymous. Voluntary agents do make and unmake lines, figures, surfaces, motions; and yet no law of line, figure, surface, or motion is the worse. Voluntary agents do make and unmake inert ones; change them and change them back again; intensify or restrain their action, combine them or disjoin them,

all at will, generally according to some intelligent design, often in pursuit of a far-reaching purpose. Yet no law of any physical agent is violated. The fixed order of nature is no whit disturbed; but only her combination of fixed order and free agency is revealed and to some extent displayed.

This clear revelation, however, of free agency acting upon a basis of fixed order is the heterodoxy of nature. She is treated not as a muse, but as a tyrannical schoolmaster who must be barred out. Hence the restrictions upon inquiry. Hence the defining of every compound by its lowest constituent. Hence those twistings and torturings of language in forms possible and impossible to confound the free with the fixed, mind with brain, thought with mere "change," will with force, motive with motive power, so that by some means the law of the lifeless may be made to appear the law of the responsible. This, however, like all rebellion against nature, has its reaction. So when, in practice, our power of modification has to be admitted, it is sometimes overdone, in seeming oblivion of the fact that in theory it is altogether excluded.

This inconsistency at last breaks out almost everywhere; that is, after you have had patience
Modifying to go down through the surface soil of
Order. words, phrases, axioms, metaphors, iterations, and professions, and to penetrate to such

rock or rubble of meaning as may lie at the bottom. You have feeling modifying ideas and will ; and man modifying phenomena, modifying not merely nature, but the order of nature, modifying fatality, modifying destiny, modifying environment, ay, modifying even laws. In this Comte goes much further than I should do ; for I insist that what he calls laws, *i.e.*, physical rules, cannot be modified, which means altered, by any known finite agent. As to modifying fatality and destiny, that is a specimen of the way in which rhetoric and muddled metaphysics are put in the place of thinking. To talk of modifying the order of nature is mere vagueness of expression : room for immense variation of state being part of the essential order of nature, and what we can vary being not the order, but the state ; the modified state being as much in the order of nature when intelligent agents impose new properties or new action on inert ones, as was the original state in her order so long as inert agents were left to their own evolution. Modify phenomena we can, not by modifying "laws," but by setting them in motion and combining them ; or to put it more strictly, by modifying inert agents in their properties and mutual relations, and conscious agents in their notions, feelings, and will ; all which is done within the limits of law physical in the case of material agents, combined with law mental in the case of animals, and with law moral in the case of men.

A universe governed by mere physical law is not our universe, where mind has its own laws, and moral agents also their own.

The ease with which Positivism passes from one basis of reasoning to another, and an inconsistent one, is illustrated in two successive sentences of the *Catechisme*.¹ The first tells us that Positivism "sets aside all searching into the causes properly so called, either first or final, of any events whatsoever, as being radically inaccessible and profoundly idle. Therefore does she always explain *how*, never *why*." This is

Teleology sound doctrine, soundly expressed; but the *comes back*. next words: "When, however, Positivism explains the means of directing our activity, it, *on the contrary* [italics mine], constantly puts forward the consideration of the end; since in that case the effect certainly emanates from an intelligent will."

The first of these two sentences plants your feet on the stony flat of what I shall call Physical Legalism, where so far from being able to achieve anything, you cannot even learn more than the appearance of a thing and its immutable modes of operation in a region where end, aim, cause, and intelligent will are all pure illusions; where so-called agents are not beings who can act as they choose, but things which move as they are moved; where so-called laws are not precepts which it is

¹ p. 51.

good to keep, and bad to violate, but rules that keep themselves and must go into operation. The next sentence, on the contrary, sets you on teleological ground, in a large place and on a high level.

Here Intelligence addresses itself to intelligence, setting in view ends as the motive to prompt to activity, instead of leaving all activity to "laws," as an evolution directed only by them. Here Intelligence trusts to its power of moving kindred intelligence, to the power of the latter in guiding will, to the power of will in directing action, and the power of action as a means of effecting practical ends. Here we find again, man and nature, which in the dreary land of Physical Legalism were both shrivelled up into "organic and inorganic." Nature is no more a mere machine moved by physical law ; but an instrument on which, according to its properties, a potent performer plays. Man is no more a mere "governor," on the engine, as incapable of knowing the part he has to play, or of learning his duty, or setting before himself ends, as are the plates and rods. He is a Being. He is moved by a consideration of ends ; by appeals to his judgment and desire. He is a Power : he can sway the action of his own wondrous frame, and through it that of ten thousand agents in the outer domain of nature. He is a Cause whose will and action bring forth effects. He is an Origin giving a beginning first in thought, and eventually in

act or in embodied form, to what previously existed not.

But at every conscious throb of his own being is suggested to him a Being in which he lives and moves. At every conception of an End he is solicited to think of One who sees ends afar off, across ages, æons, along all the line of Eternity. At every stroke of his power he is invited to look up to a Power far above all his might. At every effect he causes he is reminded of effects he cannot cause, and of a Cause above all effects. At every sight of things which took from him their origin he is set face to face with the fact that all things finite are things which began, and beyond these things of dimensions and of time, his reason can find rest only in an Originator competent out of His own powers to give existence to them all. The conscious limits of my being, the conscious limits of my power, whether in causing change in what exists under my hand or in originating what as yet does not exist, contrasted with the boundless range of my thought and anticipations, makes me like a fledgling feeling its wings. Yonder old, old friend, whose bright face has smiled upon me on seas and deserts, on Alpine peak and in swarming capital,—steady Arcturus seems to say, Once up here, you will take from my shores, a view out across the imagined bounds of the inaccessible, onward in the direction of the next milestone.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY.

I.—*The Object of Worship.*

WE have now to obtain a view of the Positive Religion, the outgrowth of this philosophy and of science as moulded to it, which being offered as a system improved upon Christianity, elaborated with unsparing patience, and heralded by imposing pretensions, must on that account have considerable interest, so long as any one stands up, as Mr. Harrison in his first article did, to proclaim it as the one that is to replace what in the quaint shibboleth of his school he calls "theology."

A Positivist has a great advantage over an agnostic in possessing a clear idea that a religion is not a mere internal sentiment ; but must comprise a faith, a worship, and a rule of conduct. This was the order in which Comte originally stated them ; but that was a "concession to Catholicism," recalling which he solemnly reformed the order to stereotype it as Worship, Faith, and Government. This was one of his most logical

*Faith,
Worship,
and Rule of
Conduct.*

proceedings : for first to worship something, and then begin to believe, or see if you cannot believe, in what you have worshipped is, surely, logical when you worship literally you know not what. Massimo d'Azeglio tells how the neighbours in Piedmont, speaking of his ancestors, used to say : Those Counts Taparelli have not their brains in the same place as others.¹ Now, satisfied that my reader has his brains in the right place, I shall begin with the object of faith, although few things more tempting than Comtist worship ever fall in one's way.

What, then, is the object of faith? Somehow or
The Object other this object is seldom stated by
of Faith. Comtists in the fully-developed formula of the Master. It is a Triad : The Great Being, The Great Fetish, and The Great Environment. The last two are soon explained : the Great Environment is Space, the seat of the Laws. Space the seat of the Laws ! that implies that laws are extended somethings which occupy space, a quiet, incidental token of the grovelling thought to which mere Physical Legalism tends. The Great Fetish is our globe. Seeing that the pent-up thing called "the world" by Comte—for he hardly ever widens out to such a word as universe—absolutely consists of nothing knowable except phenomena and laws, one would think that the globe as seat of some phenomena, and space as *seat* of all

¹ I miei Ricordi.

laws, would do for his divinities. Not so ; the great object of worship is Humanity. And Humanity does not mean a humane disposition, neither does it mean that common nature possessed by all human beings. Mr. Harrison, reeling under the blows of his opponents, is willing to give up the capital H. That is a sign of retreat ! for when the flagstaff is dropped off from the flag, all you can hope is that it may be carried off the field, not that it shall wave over the foe. What, then, is Humanity ? The definition which, in one of Comte's favourite terms, I might call "incomparable," which Dr. Robinet reverentially calls "final," is : *The sum total of convergent beings.*¹ That is a truly Comtesque definition. You have a subject which, before it got into his hands, was intelligible, "humanity," and then coupled to it you have a predicate "sum total of convergent beings," which is only mist with a shine over it. With Comte, as with many, a "being" does not mean an intelligent being, not even a sentient being. A stone, a child, and an angel are to him beings ; *i.e.*, a being is a thing. Then the sum total of convergent things ought to mean in the solar system every atom composing it, and in the stellar heavens the same. But as he constantly jumbles up sphere with sphere, he means not convergent bodies, but co-operating conscious agents. Such agents

*The "Sum
Total of
Convergent
Beings."*

¹ *Œuvre et Vie d'Auguste Comte*, p. 33.

co-operate in serving the interests of the human race ; but in doing so they may converge, diverge, cross or collide, and that is no matter. The spokes of a wheel converge, but would never co-operate to move the waggon did not the horse and man, who do not converge, co-operate to that end. All trees converge, their axes running towards the centre of the earth ; but co-operate to build a ship they never do. No metaphors are more calculated to mislead, when the fact that they are metaphors is forgotten, than are those drawn from geometry or arithmetic. The fact that the original meaning of the terms is precise in measure and count renders all applications of them when such precision fails, extremely liable to generate error.

What, then, is Humanity? It is the sum total of human beings past, present, and to come ; that is, of the living, the dead, and the unborn.

The Object of Faith
an
Abstraction. This definition occurs constantly, and is implied on almost every page. Now this would seem at first sight to be an unknown quantity of an unknowable abstraction. The number of the living is not known, that of the dead is totally unknown, that of the unborn the same. The number of the living, indeed, is not unknowable: we can conceive its possible ascertainment ; but the other two quantities are not only unknown, they are unknowable ; and that not

after some metaphysical sense of the word know, which might prevent one from saying that he knows his headache, because he cannot give this, that, or the other definition of it ; but they are unknowable in the sober, literal sense of being utterly beyond either observation or inference. Mr. Harrison no more can say what is the sum total of Humanity, than can Sir Fitzjames Stephen say what is the sum total of hairs in the wigs of judges, past, present, and future.

But after all Comte's Humanity is not the sum total. He explains that the word sum total does not mean all men, only the useful ones. Mr. Spencer
A Fraction
even of an
Abstraction. thinks it not perspicacious to say that the word whole of itself tells you that it means not the whole. Mr. Harrison is rather hurt. Mr. Spencer, he says, ought to take pains to understand Comte ; for the word is *ensemble*, and is French. Well, yes, it is ; and is just as clear as sum total in English ; and Mr. Spencer might have been taking pains to understand Comte for thirty years and more, and yet wonder that any Englishman knowing French should challenge his remark. Our word "whole" may, it is true, be either an individual or a collective whole. One brick is a whole, and the sum total of all bricks is a whole. But one brick is no more an *ensemble* of bricks than it is a sum total of them ; and all the red and brown bricks, leaving out white and yellow ones, are not and never can be the *ensemble*

or sum total of the genus. So when Comte says, "the word *ensemble* sufficiently indicates that all men are not to be included," he plays with words. It indicates nothing of the kind, except to an adept.

Then who are those who go to form that sum-total which sufficiently tells you it is a portion only? To describe them Mr. Harrison is happy enough to find a sieve-bottomed phrase worthy of the master and the school. "Humanity includes the sum of human civilization."¹ Now, until I read that definition, I never had learned in any language, living or dead, home, foreign, or outlandish, that civilization was a human being past, present, or future. But it seems that it is; and the object of Mr. Harrison's faith is the sum total of it! It is better, after all, to deal with Comte directly: he says "sum total of human beings," and to human beings I return; but as to the sum total? Having to deduct all that have not, do not and hereafter will not contribute to human progress, How many are to be deducted? Unknown! How many remain? Unknown! Is either quantity knowable? Both unknowable.

But M. Comte has an expedient. Any sum total of beings is an abstraction; and even an integer abstraction is slender material out of which to frame a Great Being; but the fraction of an abstraction! To

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, 1884, p. 376.

redress this defect Comte tells you: "Many remain
Animals as parasites . . . such are wretched burdens
added on the Great Being . . . but if these makers of
to make up manure do not truly form a part of Humanity,
 a just compensation prescribes to you to join to the new
 Supreme Being all his worthy animal auxiliaries." These he defines as all animals that voluntarily yield a useful coöperation to human destinies; and then adds: "We hesitate not then to regard such horses, dogs, bullocks, &c., as more estimable than certain men."¹ His everlasting *ignoratio elenchi*! The thing he had to prove was that animals were a portion of humanity: what he does prove is that we call a useful horse more estimable than certain men.

Very true! and so we do not hesitate to recognize as more estimable than certain dogs, such cats as are comfortable to live with. But when the point is to ascertain the sum total of Caninity, do we subtract all the naughty curs, and add on all the excellent cats? Indeed, I can remember, more than half a century ago, a molecule of humanity to which certain sheep appeared more estimable than certain cows with the crumpled horn, seeing that these, instead of voluntarily coöperating towards the happy evolution of said molecule, seemed much inclined to operate in a manner to arrest its development. Nevertheless, it never struck even that molecule that

¹ *Catéchisme*, pp. 66 67.

the way to ascertain the sum total of Bovinity was to subtract all the vicious cows and add on all the amiable sheep. Earlier in history even than that, one made the discovery that a living dog was better than a dead lion ; but failed to see the inference that the sum of Leoninity should be made up by adding on one living dog for, say, two dead lions.

We began with an unknown,—the sum of past, present and future men ; from this we were told to subtract an unknown,—the sum of the useless *The New Supreme Being.* men ; to the remainder, the third unknown, we were told to add a fourth unknown,—the sum of helpful animals. Four unknowns do not make one known. The first sum total was an abstraction, the sum deducted was an abstraction, the sum added was an abstraction ; the result is an unknown fraction of an unknowable abstraction. This is the “New Supreme Being” of M. Comte’s tumid abortions, and of Mr. Frederic Harrison’s crackling audacity. This it is which men claiming above all things to be thinkers, can with a serious air offer to our souls, to our trust and hope, instead of our Maker, Preserver, Redeemer, and Judge.

II.—*The Goddess.*

Comte “adoring” Clotilde de Vaux is a spectacle not worth wasting a word upon ; being best treated as “pathological.” But when men evidently in their

senses, read his maunderings about our goddess,—I ought to write Goddess,—about her accepting only such sincere adorers as are prepared for her “august worship by private homages daily paid to her best organs”;¹ about “the moral providence of our Goddess”; about her many points of superiority over The Almighty,—when they read this, not as hallucination, but as thought; when they believe it, or fancy that they do so; when they offer it to us instead of the truth that has made us free; then the escape of a pathological explanation not being open, we stand puzzled for words. Mr. Spencer has a phrase the strict application of which to the master might be disputed by experts; but which does seem wonderfully well to characterize disciples: “a lack of mental balance unparalleled among sane people.” The genius of an inventor easily admits of “a bee in the bonnet,” and the genius of Comte was essentially that of an inventor, evermore poring over constructions, social instead of mechanical.

Mr. Spencer, in order to “know” the Goddess, asks, Where is its seat of consciousness? Ah! of the unborn portion of “her,” the consciousness, whether individual or collective, has never been; of the dead portion the collective consciousness never was, and, according to Comte the individual never more will be; of the

*Where or
What is
the Goddess?*

¹ *Catéchisme*, p. 104.

living portion the individual consciousness is, was, and will be; but the collective consciousness, where is the seat even of that fraction?

I had often put the matter in a plainer way, a childish way: Humanity *à la Comte*, if it is anything, must be something; it cannot be a sum-total of non-existing things, such as the consciousnesses of the dead. Then, what is it? Is it animal, vegetable, or mineral? Where is it? When is it? What is it like? What can it do?

As to the What is it? Comtism piles up answers, which analysed leave, as the residuum, exactly what Mr. Harrison says of the Unknowable: "a sort of a something about which we can know nothing," seeing it is neither organic nor inorganic, neither anywhere in space, nor *anywhen* in time. It has no dimensions (except it may be the fourth), it has no form or colour, therefore it is not for the eye; no sound, therefore is not for the ear; no intelligence, *The Goddess* feeling, or will, therefore is not for the *a mere* understanding. It is, again to fall back *Logician's* upon Mr. Harrison, "a mere logician's *Formula.* formula, intelligible only to certain trained metaphysicians. An abstraction which we cannot conceive, or present in thought, or regard as having personality, or as capable of feeling, purpose, or thought. An ever-present conundrum to be everlastingly given up." This, when we come to

look into Mr. Spencer, will prove to be less true of his Unknowable than of Comte's. The latter Unknowable is only the fiction of a child clothed in the phrases of a dreamer. By a strange inversion, Mr. Spencer denies to Reality, Power, Being and true Presence, the proper attributes of what is real, potent, existing, and before us ; while Mr. Harrison tries to hang all these attributes on to what has no reality, power, or being, and is no where at all. Whoever demurs to the assertion that the sum-total of human beings is an abstraction, it cannot be a Positivist. The Master has decided the point that among human beings the individual is an abstraction, and no *ensemble* of abstractions can make up a concrete being.

"The proper character of this new Great Being"—it is the master not the disciple who speaks—"consisting in its being necessarily composed of separable elements, all its existence reposes on the mutual love which always binds its different parts."¹ It may be true that the Great Being is a compound, but neither a chemical nor a spiritual one ; for among the dead, who form, as we are constantly notified, the preponderating element in this compound, there *The Goddess a Compound.* is no chemistry, and, according to Comte, no spirit, or even mind. The parts of the Great Being are separable ! Yes, the living portion of it

¹ *Ensemble du Positivisme*, p. 323.

we see in parts not only separable, as were the Siamese Twins, but actually separate, each part occupying its own position in space and time. But as to the "separable" parts composing the dead portion and the unborn one, where are they? What qualities do they possess? What can they do? All the answer Positivism returns to Where? is nowhere; to What can they do? nothing; to What properties do they possess? none. One of the Positivist's axioms is: "No properties without bodies"; then where are the bodies of the immensely preponderating portion of the Great Being, without which it cannot have properties? Of course I do not accept the axiom, which is only a case of false "conversion," a fallacy almost as common in Comte as *ignoratio elenchi*. It is quite true that there are no bodies without properties, but on that account it does not follow that there are no properties without bodies; any more than from the fact that there is no Duke without a man, it follows that there is no man without a Duke.

The compound is a purely metaphysical one, and you might as well look for it anywhere but in the imagination of a metaphysician, as you might look for Homer's Juno, Dante's Beatrice, or Spenser's Una. "All its existence reposes" on the moonlight metaphysics of M. Comte. "Conceive of it," he cries in his helpless inconsequence, "as like yourself, but in a more striking degree, directed by feeling, enlightened

by intelligence, and sustained by activity.”¹ Is it not “composed” principally of —? “Our Great Being is composed for the greater part of the dead.” Then have the dead feeling, intelligence, and activity? If they have not, the dictum just quoted is the silliest of dicta. If they have, Positivism is the silliest form of unbelief.

III.—*The Goddess lets in Theology.*

“Ten years ago,” writes Mr. Harrison, “I warned Mr. Spencer that to invoke the unknowable is to reopen the whole range of metaphysics; and the entire apparatus of theology will enter through the breach.” If Mr. Spencer’s knowledge of Comte was not altogether at second hand, as Mr. Harrison intimates, he must have smiled. Invoke the unknowable! All Comte’s praying is that precisely,—invocation of the unknowable, as, in spite of Mr. Harrison, “invocation” is his own word. Of the separable parts of his Great Being he invokes by preference such as are dead; and the dead are the unknowable. In the “whole range of metaphysics” there is no structure more metaphysical than is his religion from end to end. In the dead wall of Atheism he makes a ragged breach, and through it will belief in God come in conquering.

One of the “Cultured Men,” Sir Fitzjames Stephen, says: “I would as soon worship the ugliest

¹ *Catéchisme*, p. 210.

idol in India, before which a majority of the *Cultured Men on the Goddess.* Queen's subjects chop off the heads of poor little goats." This sounds as if the Cultured Man knew what comes practically out of the attempts of men of education to organize and turn to social uses the superstitions of the ignorant. The other Cultured Man who has spoken is hampered, as we have seen, with an idea that a Great Being ought to be a conscious being. This shows that Mr. Herbert Spencer after all is only a weak mortal like the rest of us, not one of the transcendentals breathed upon by the Goddess, watched by the "Angels," tended by the "Guardians," cherished by the "Immortal Companions," by the "Angelic Disciples," whose "Angelic Ascendant" transforms men from sober reasoners into cloud-capped phenomena, in that state of evolution which might be pictured in the limpid Saxon of Mr. Spencer himself as "An indefinite incoherent homogeneity." This might be also expressed in that equally simple and perspicuous piece of M. Comte's Gallic which elsewhere I once quoted as, according to the master depicting, "the principal conception of Positivism: Man thinking under the inspiration of woman to make synthesis and sympathy always concur to regulate synergy."¹

Of course the idea that a Great Being ought to be a conscious one is, on the part of Mr. Spencer, a pure

¹ Preface to *Catechisme.*

piece of metaphysics, with a suspicious leaning *Ought not towards theology ; not worthy of one the Goddess whom Positivists have so far honoured to be a Con-* as to cite him as one of the “emancipated.” *scious Being?* He actually goes on to say: “If the Great Being . . . is unconscious, the emotions of veneration and gratitude are absolutely irrelevant.” Sir Fitzjames Stephen, refreshing his Indian knowledge, might on this have said, The Brahmans did better. When they made Brahm unconscious, they did not put him as primus of the Triad, but set up distinct from him a conscious Creator, a Preserver, and a Destroyer. Comparing that invention with the poor Parisian one Mr. Spencer may cry “retrogressive religion,” in the logical sense as well as in the chronological one.

“A spectator,” says Mr. Spencer, in noteworthy terms, “who seeing a bubble floating on a great river, had his attention so absorbed by the bubble that he ignored the river—nay, even ridiculed anyone who thought that the river out of which the bubble arose and into which it would presently lapse, deserved recognition, would fitly typify a disciple of M. Comte, who, centreing all his higher sentiments on Humanity, holds it absurd to let either thought or feeling be occupied by that great stream of Creative Power, unlimited in space or in time, of which Humanity is a transitory product.”¹

Mr. Spencer knows that precisely this ignoring of the river, by absorbing the attention on the bubble, is *Mr. Spencer's* the “condition of existence” of Positivism. *River and Bubble.* He injures his own case by over-stating it, when he says that “the Comtean system

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1884, p. 23.

limits itself to phenomena, and deliberately ignores the existence of anything implied by the phenomena.”¹ No, it deliberately ignores not “anything implied,” for it admits that laws are implied, and permits you to pursue enquiry as far as to them. But it not only deliberately ignores any cause as presupposed by phenomena, and any design as implied in them, but, as we already know, sternly commands you not to enquire after either, and not even to ask Why? only How? This being, as Mr. Spencer knows, the corner stone of the Positive Philosophy, when watching Comte tracing the foundations of the new Eternal City, he need not wonder to see him behind each brick draw a line, and before it another. Behind it stands this notice, All beyond in this direction “inaccessible.” What caused brick-burning, is not to be even asked after. Before the brick stands the same notice, All beyond in this direction “inaccessible”: the design of brick-burning must never be enquired after.

Cause and Final Cause. Things do bend so that, somehow, if you found out that later in time than the brick came a fulfilled intent, say wall-building, you would be led on round a gentle circling line till you actually arrived on ground preceding the brick in time, where up would rise an originating cause. This would be the death of Positivism. To return from my poor bricks to Mr. Spencer’s noble river: if it swells,

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1884, p. 5.

Positivism gives you permission to ask, How does it swell? suddenly or slowly, an inch a day, or a foot an hour? swell smoothly or in waves? but to ask Why it swells? might lead one to say: Because far beyond the range of sight rain falls, or in regions never explored snow melts. That might make one ask, Why does snow melt? because the sun grows warmer? Why does the sun grow warmer? because the earth is moving round him, and our part of it is turning now towards him? And why does the earth move round him, and turn different parts towards him at different times? because that is the law? and who made the law?

Comte had a certain sagacity, by virtue of which when at sea he scented the approach of *Comte's* land. The moment you mentioned Cause, *Sagacity*. he scented a First Cause. The moment you hinted at a beginning, he scented a Beginner. The moment you mentioned a design, he scented a designing mind; also a Will, to him the horrid hydra whose aspect always disturbed his nerves. Therefore must you not look beyond the phenomenon for why, wherefore, or because; you may look at it; and if you can decipher the law written on its heart, glorious power and prince art thou. But if your untaught intellect should ask, Who wrote it? woe to thee, woe. Mr. Harrison will record, "I warned him that he would get into strange company"; and Mr.

George Lewes will tell you that you are doing what no Positive Philosopher would do.

Now Mr. Spencer says, as irreverently as a Christian might do, that in seeing only phenomena, and not also the "things implied" by them, Comte "eviscerates things," takes the inside out of them, and "leaves a shell of appearances with no reality inside."

Restriction of Inquiry, Intellectual Suicide. This to Mr. Spencer is "performing the happy despatch," and he very emphatically for his own part declines "to commit intellectual suicide." When I once said that the demand upon us to renounce free enquiry into cause and design was neither more nor less than a demand to truncate our own intellects, and to do it at both ends, I did not go so far as Mr. Spencer.¹ His enquiry after the seat of consciousness of the Great Being, cruel as it is, is not so deadly as the few sentences last quoted. By them the beautiful glass case placed by Comte over his philosophy, under which, and only under which, that exotic can have hopes of life, is ruthlessly sent into shivers.

"Eviscerates things"! Never was word truer; and how far Comtist habits go towards making men look only at the husks of things, shortening their sight even for that, how far towards producing intellectual myopy we shall be supplied with means of judging. But though we are not yet dealing with Mr. Spencer, it

¹ *On the Difference Between Physical and Moral Law.*

may, even here, not be out of place to wonder a little whether he never saw in a certain English Unknowable, a family resemblance, a relation of similitude, to speak in proper phrase, to a certain French "in-accessible"? One may wonder also if he, in looking with surprise on people who "leave no reality in the inside" of things, never thought of some other people who, discovering inside of things a reality present and powerful, refuse to conceive of it, think of it, know it.

IV.—*Mr. Harrison Retreating.*

Sir Fitzjames Stephen is of opinion that: "Humanity spelled with a capital H (Mr. Harrison's God) is neither better nor worse fitted to be a God than the Unknowable with the capital U. They are as much alike as six and half a dozen. Each is a barren abstraction."¹ Sir Fitzjames speaks of Humanity as a God. Comte, so far as I remember, never does: always as a goddess. One of the saddest sights in Mr. Harrison's casting away of arms and banners as he retreats, is his saying, "There is no godhood now in Humanity." Does he know or does he not know, how Comte and the official Parisian Comtists speak first of their goddess, next extol her providence moral, intellectual, and material, after that magnify her

*No
Godhood
in
Humanity*

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1884, p. 910.

worship, and finally plume their wings for flights to her honour and glory, as a divinity much to be preferred to the Lord Almighty, singing pæans which are mostly parodies ?

Dr. Robinet, who himself takes pains to show us that the object of worship is "existence" and not "beings," nevertheless thus pæanizes. Humanity is a very real being. She is the only true Great Being, the only true Supreme Being! immeasurable, because she covers the world; eternal, because she embraces at one and the same time past, present, and future ; Almighty because no intelligent action can be compared with hers. It is on Humanity that our destinies depend. It is she who protects us against fatalities exterior and interior ; who defends us against physical evil and fortifies us against moral evil. It is she that diminishes the pressure of natural imperfections and mollifies their bitterness. It is she whose tutelary action, the sole providence of our earth, has gradually elevated us from the miseries of animality to the charms and grandeur of social life. In her is our stay, in her our force, in her our consolation, our hope, and our dignity! She is the measure of our duty, the condition of our happiness, and on her advent depends the salvation of the world. ¹

There is no godhood in Humanity, says the English

¹ *Œuvre*, p. 37.

Positivist! What a descent from the height higher than Olympus! We come down to a level where we hear that "The religion of Humanity is simply morality fused with social devotion, and enlightened by sound philosophy."¹ If, in executing his strategic change of base, Mr. Harrison throws away, as I before said, arms and banners, he never parts with drums and trumpets. He keeps the drums all beating, and makes every trumpet blow. Sir Fitzjames Stephen "raves" like Timon of Athens; both his opponents talk "sheer nonsense." In this perplexed hour, Mr. Harrison adds to the exact definition of his *New Definition of the Goddess* already cited two others equally luminous. In the first, she was the sum total of human civilization. In the next: "Humanity, I say, is nothing but the sum total of all the forces of individual men and women."² But really, I have some doubt as to whether all the forces of individual men and women are civilizing. Mr. Spencer and Sir Fitzjames Stephen, though they are not Christians, seem to raise points about worshipping forces that do not come up even to the height of being civilizing. Had not Comte himself misgivings? Did he worship all? In the third definition, we read: "The march of civilization of which Humanity, as I understand it, is at once product and author."³ This is very precise.

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 91, 370.

² p. 37.

³ p. 373.

The Goddess is the product of a march. Who began the march? At what stage did it produce the Goddess? What was marching before the march became a march of either civilization or humanity; that is, up to the time when the march made the Goddess? Moreover, seeing that Humanity is a product of civilization, what existed to civilize and to be civilized before any Humanity had been produced?

I shall assume that the religion of Humanity still means the religion of M. Comte, and not the *Sum of Civilization*, that new Absolute Unknown, born of sore embarrassments. I shall also assume that it is not *The sum total of all the powers of individual men and women*, a second Absolute Unknown, born of the same stock. And finally that it is not *The product and author of the March of Civilization*, latest Absolute Unknown, offspring of the same distressed parents. The real religion of Humanity, comprises, then, besides the faith and object of faith, a Worship and a Rule of Conduct. Its worship takes in the round *Rites and Ceremonies*. of secret, family, and public devotions; of temples, groves, altars, processions, banners; of calendars, commemorations, and festivals, of sacraments, nine in all; of great annual solemnities, of rites and ceremonies manifold. The secret devotions are the type and expositor of all the rest. "Our Goddess" is worshipped only through her "best organs." These, to a man, are mother, wife, daughter; to a

woman, father, husband, son. Comte, instead of his own wife, who could not live with him, any more than colleagues could keep right with him, or even friends could get on with him, unless, like those of Carlyle, they came, as Mr. Froude says, to worship ;—instead of his own wife, he worshipped the memory of the wife of another man ;—his palavers about whom are mere folly, for their attachment was free from criminality. Instead of a daughter, he selected his cook, as some of his friends called her, as others his housekeeper. The *Comte's own* dead mother, the dead sweetheart, beside *Guardian* his living wife, and the housekeeper, were *Angels.* to the High Priest of Humanity, the Organs of his Goddess. He conferred on the non-existent dead, by free grant, what he called a Subjective Life. That did not mean a life within their own consciousness, exempt from sensations caused by physical objects. Nay, consciousness they had none, capability of sensation, none. The Subjective Life of Clotilde de Vaux had no more effect on the self, the I, of Clotilde de Vaux, than has the dream of a *Comte's* gold digger on the veins in the rock. *Gift of* Just as the existence of the vein is often *Immortality.* all within the self of the digger, subjective to him, and only to him, so was the life of Clotilde de Vaux all within the self of her sweetheart, subjective to Comte, and only to him. This thorough misapprehension of terms is characteristic of his metaphysics.

This Subjective Life it is which he and the poor gentlemen who copy him, call "real." By means of it they do almost as much for the dead as Dr. Tyndall does for atoms, a vigorous fancy in the Positivist giving to dead non-existence immortality, and in the materialist to lifeless existence the potency of conferring life.¹ The art of reading out all true meaning from terms, need hardly be pushed farther than by trying to pass off upon me, as an equivalent for my expectation of fulness of joy at God's right hand for ever more, the prospect that some other man's wife may make pictures of me in her imagination when I am dead, and call it for her part private worship ; while to me it is "immortality."

These pictures on the imagination are to be carefully drawn. Remember ! the steps of the process are prescribed by one who has formally prescribed the study of mind in mind, on the ground that it cannot observe its own operations. Three times a day, are you to worship; two hours would be a proper length of time to spend in doing it. You are to recall the last posture in which you saw your "guardian angel," also the seat and the garb. You are to keep her or him always at one age. Hence, very seriously does the "great

¹ Le cas le plus simple, et aussi le plus usuel, quand on applique le culte subjectif à faire dignement revivre un être chéri.—*Catéchisme*, p. 85. Un simple prolongement de l'existence réelle.—p. 85.

thinker," infer for himself and instruct you that in the subjective life the age is fixed. Yet you are not deceived. He does not pretend that there is any "object," which has an age either to be fixed or unfixed. Only, for all that, there exists the Subjective Life, which is the real life; and in it the age is fixed. Such are the realities of that lunar world where "man thinking under the inspiration of woman," sees what we see not. To give vividness to your portraits in mind-colour, you are to limn them in detail. You may for beauty's sake—to idealize your drawing,—omit real faults in the original, but you may not insert artificial merits, except in a very moderate degree. Thus perfecting your picture, you "commemorate" the dead, and adore Humanity, by "a sort of interior invocation." This commemoration is to be followed by "effusion," telling your "organ," and through her Humanity, how grateful you are for her benefits, how trustful in her providence, how zealous for her service great above all gods, goddesses, or other fictitious *Comte's* beings pictured by "theologians." You do not *Prayers*. ask her for anything. Yet "prayer" is the ordinary word for what you do, and another word is "invocation." "My holy *interlocutrix*" is Comte's epithet for Madame de Vaux. The dwelling of M. Comte is often called the holy abode; and yet pushed by his opponents our English Positivist abandons even "holy Humanity." One of the grand effects

of Positive education as anticipated by Comte, is that eventually every one will become artist sufficient to compose his own prayers.

This worship of the abstract idea of Humanity under the representation in your mere imagination of her past in the mother, of her present in the wife, and of her future in your daughter, or some other woman is, then, the *culte*, the final "realism," the definitive and positive form of worship which "synthetically reveals to us Humanity, and develops the feelings proper to the existence she prescribes to us." The reality of the object of worship, as contrasted with the "fictitious," beings of theology, is illustrated to the reason of M. Comte by the fact that in his "secret effusions," the Positivist shuts his eyes, in order "the better to see the internal image," whereas the theologian opens his eyes to see outside of himself a chimerical object!

It is a fair specimen of Comte's metaphysics when to distinguish between the mind-picture drawn by memory, and the original picture on the mind impressed by sensation, he calls the former "the image," and the latter "the object." He much more frequently calls the former, "the interior image," and the latter, "the exterior impression." As if the image first made on my mind by the portrait of Comte is not as much interior as

¹ *Calichisme*, p. 86.

one later evoked by memory. It is not the impression that is "exterior," but the portrait, between which and the impression come air, light, lenses, retina, and a good many other things. The stage of transfer—rather of transformation—from impression to idea, whereby the impression of certain black marks on a white ground, which is all the engraving of Comte when before me had to "impress" on my brain, became spiritualized into conceptions of a man of certain qualities, is a stage far too real for Comte and far too deep for his philosophy: a stage treated by many men more fit than he with ludicrous superficiality. Comte could better talk of the essential end of subjective worship being the *cerebral invocation of beloved beings*. This phrase reminds me of another of his minor merits: he often points an antithesis as between things cerebral and things corporeal.

I said that nothing is asked for of your beloved beings. That seems the ordinary representation of the case. It seems also to be Mr. Harrison's. Yet Comte has this language, Although the Positivist prays above all as an effusion of his feelings, he may also ask, but only for noble progress. To ask for riches or power would be absurd, as well as ignoble. The sign of the cross is not copied; but you do something: you touch on your cranium three bumps, the organs

*Nothing
asked for
in
Prayer.*

of love, order, and progress. Public worship is called Collective invocations addressed directly to Humanity.

Of the nine sacraments, *Admission* consecrates birth

Comte's Sacraments. The priest takes from the parents their solemn engagement to prepare the new scion of Humanity *for the service of the Goddess.* The new scion has not godfather and godmother, but two living "patrons," chosen by his parents with the sanction of the priest. Their assistance is to be primarily "spiritual," but also temporal in case of need. More than this, he has two patrons from the dead; not exactly patron saints. Yet is the scion to select at a later stage a third for himself, from the "sacred representatives of Humanity." Mr. Spencer is censured for taking the "sacred representatives" *The Saints.* in the Calendar for canonized, and it does seem hard to canonize something that exists not; but is it very easy to make it a representative, and that of the Great Being?

The second sacrament, *Initiation*, is received at the age of fourteen. Then begins the systematic education by the priests. At twenty-one *Admission* authorizes the youth to "freely serve Humanity," from which up to that time, "he received everything without rendering anything"! So, all that bright childhood does for home, all its reaction on the workshop, the counting house, and the factory of the fathers, all that our working boys, cabin-boys—brave

helpers of all humanity, many a one of them—mill-boys, plough-boys, and others do for us, is nought! Yea, and have I never seen a tiny girl, whose heritage from humanity was of the humblest, rendering to humanity service enough to light one up with a smile, to make one say, God bless the child! service in carrying her father's dinner, in tending the baby, or in helping her mother to make and mend?

The "free" or emancipated servant of Humanity will in seven years more have shown what his calling should be, and at twenty-eight he receives the sacrament of *Destination*. Other religions reserved only for priests and kings a sacrament of orders. Humanity confers it on all. To the temple, before the priest, must every one come to be fixed by public act in the calling appointed for him! It may, however, be changed. The next sacrament is *Marriage*, for which women are eligible at twenty-one, men at twenty-eight. The priests only can relax this law. The sacrament of *Maturity* comes at forty-two, for men only. At sixty-three that of *Retirement*. Every man then selects his successor, for all are viewed as functionaries. He must have the sanction of his superior in doing so. The transfer is publicly done, and is subject to checks from clergy and people. The capitalist reserves of his property a personal provision. In relation to the sacrament of *Transformation* which replaces the Roman Catholic rite of

Extreme Unction, Comte lets fall not a compliment so frequent with him for that church, but the word "horrible ceremony," as if a feeling broke out common among families in the South of Europe as to the uses to which death-beds are put. The *transformation* of what death is about to transform from a living man into so much dust and nothing more, is a strange term. The priest gives a view of the sum of the "existence which is now ending." Seven years of death pass over before the next sacrament—*Incorporation*. This is meant to represent, perhaps, the judgment of the Egyptians, but at all events the Apotheosis of the ancient Romans, and the beatification of the modern. This sacrament "irrevocably fixes the lot of every one." That is, *Comte's Substitute for Purgatory*. fixes the lot of what for seven years already has been nothing but dust and ashes, and is never more capable of becoming anything, except whatever chemistry, natural or artificial, may turn such dust and ashes to. But the family feelings and repute are "fixed"; for the priests pronounce a judgment, according to which the remains are either carried in a solemn procession, headed by the clergy, to the sacred grove surrounding the temple, or else are borne as a pestilent burden to the "desert of the reprobate," among persons executed, suicides, and duellists.

Much of the meaning is still left in the term

EXCOMMUNICATION. The priests, in the name of the Great Being, pronounce sentence, branding the culprit as a false servant, thenceforth no more to partake of the duties or benefits of human association. The offender, however rich or powerful, will be gradually abandoned by subordinates, domestics, and even nearest relations. In spite of his wealth no one will serve him: he must procure his own subsistence. He may flee the country, but cannot escape the reprobation of the universal priesthood, unless he takes refuge with some nation which has not received the positive faith, which will eventually extend over the whole human planet.¹ This reminds me that the most descriptive name for the priest is formally stated to be "judge."

It might have been thought that in totally giving up the life of the soul after death, Comte had lost to his priesthood all power over the dead, and consequently all derived from them. But his faculty of imitative invention was wonderful. In seven years of suspense for survivors, coupled with the prospect of a solemn assize that would "fix the lot," both of the body and the memory of the deceased, he gained back a considerable portion of what he lost by giving up purgatory. True, his plan in its conception is perfectly free from the trading element; but how in practice it could succeed to the commerce

*Post-
Mortem
Judgment.*

¹ *Catéchisme*, 266.

of purgatory in countries where that had prevailed without bringing in an analogous one, is hard to see.

V.—*The Dominion of the Dead over the Living.*

The brilliancy of his feat of faith in calling into life, from nought, the Subjective Population of humanity, and making religion, morals, society hang not upon ghosts, but on mental pictures of men and women who left no ghosts, greatly elated M. Comte. The “chimerical gross idea” of “objective immortality,” that is, of an immortality involving thought, feeling, and action, was an anti-social fiction! Contrariwise, Subjective Immortality,—that is, immortality composed of the thoughts living men may have about a dead one who cannot think,—is noble and real, and calls out and fosters social instincts! The essential subjective dominion, that is, of the dead over the living, forms in our social existence the part that cannot be modified. The pretension to escape from this empire is a symptom in the unsoundness of mind towards which the West is travelling. This empire will soon make the course of civilization more calculable than that of some stars. After these sentences, which I condense, comes one which, for the comfort of this Age of Great Cities, I must give *verbatim*: “When the true Great Being shall

worthily occupy all the human planet, every city will live under the total weight of all the preceding generations, not only of those which have relations with its own interior, but also with the entire sum of our terrestrial ancestors."¹ The effect of all is, that the living are more and more governed by the dead : a favourite formula.

From some passages one would think that the long "cerebral hygiene," which for twenty years he kept up, not reading book, journal, or periodical, save only daily Dante and Thomas à Kempis, substituting in the latter case for the name of God, that of Humanity, had at length done rather more than to necessitate Littré's naïve explanation, that in earlier years M. Comte had done fruitful reading. It would seem as if the brain had come to take the portraits it painted within for real beings governing us at their will, and not for images made

¹ *Pol. Positive* II. pp. 362-364. Mr. Harrison's version of this passage is elegant and faithful to the sense ; but I prefer being literal. It may hereafter be said that the Duke of Argyll took as a title, *The Reign of Law*, from Comte, since Mr. Harrison uses that phrase in translating a paragraph or two after the passages last quoted. The phrase is the Duke's ; and is put into Comte only by a very liberal rendering, one that gives him more than his own. All Comte says is that the positive mode of conceiving phenomena had "to attain to the most complex and noblest of them." This Mr. Harrison translates : "That the most complex and noblest of all phenomena, the human, should be brought within the General Reign of Law." [The capitals are not mine.]—*Positive Polity*, p. 298. Il fallait que son ascension objective parvint jusqu' aux phénomènes les plus compliqués et les plus nobles.—*Pol. Pos.* II., 368.

and unmade at our will. In saying this I do not wish to intimate that one who, throughout a considerable number of years, shuts off his mind from the thoughts of living men, and holds it always in converse with images graven by itself, telling these that they are the realities, and pouring out to them effusions of feeling, to which he gives the name of prayer and worship, will in the end retain the capability of remaking the images at will, or of setting bounds to their power over him. But in judging of Comte's meaning in such cases, we need to make allowance for metaphor by which things are made to feel, speak, and act in ways very wonderful, more wonderful even than those in which a German commentator impersonates his theory, and makes it think and feel to any amount. If all Comte means is the influence of the mind and life of past generations on the lot and course of the living one, then are his words on this matter as hard to construe into rationality, as on some others. The fact that men being dead yet speak, the fact that the generation of to-day follow for good in the footsteps of generations long departed, or that for evil men of this century follow a Jehu of some century preceding who taught them to sin, are plain facts of human history, long recognized both in the abstract and the concrete.

More than thirty years ago, from the fact that such a one as St. Paul was exercising in our day a greater

influence for good than a host of living men, and that his influence grew broader and deeper as time rolled on, I deduced the inference that it was hard to conceive of his own thought and feeling as being extinct. ¹ Young then, I already knew enough of Positivism to regard it as one of the noxious forms of Parisian plague. Now that I see the light glinting off white hairs,—a sheen of the Better Land,—you come to tell me that the extent to which deeds done in the body will react on my life after dissolution is to be measured by what I make survivors think of me, and not by how much I make them think of God and of His Christ! When once I had become Nothing, what life would be given to me by the recollections of others? Not more than is given to a gravestone by letters carved upon it. What would it do for others to think of me? But if any word by me spoken or deed done should be so blessed as to lead some one while I live or after I die to remember his Creator in the days of his youth, he would when old regard that as an eternal benefaction. If any word or deed should be so blessed as to lead some one in advanced age to seek after, and taste the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, for him the “starless grave” would be changed to an opening upwards disclosing a firmament of suns innumerable.

¹ *Lecture on Heroes.* Volume of Young Men’s Christian Association for 1851.

The law laid down by Comte : that present generations come more and more under the power of past ones, if taken not poetically, but as a scientific statement, is simply untrue ; except of stationary or retrograde communities. In India or China, where, before modern inroads of Western energy, the spirit of civilized life held the living in subjection to the example and lessons of the dead, arts, sciences, and society tended to decay. Among M. Comte's beloved Fitish folk the same is the case ; and generally also under the sway of his "admirable" religion of the Moslems, which presents things in this century behind the state in which it found them twelve, ten, or five centuries ago. But it is otherwise where men know that they are not under any dominion of the dead, real or imaginary ; where they know that, heirs of whatever the dead have given, taught, and done, they are free to go beyond it, rise above it, and, if they find it false, to depart from and overthrow it ; where they know that to this they are called by the Father of dead, living, and unborn, and that instead of honouring the dead by being "ruled" by them, those most honour the great benefactors of mankind who use their gifts not as mere moulds in which to cast images of them, but as germ-thoughts out of which to evolve somewhat in advance of the original, be it like to it or unlike.

If in our social existence the dominion of the dead had been the "one portion that could not be modified," *We can Break Away from the Tradition of the Dead.* then would human progress have altogether ceased. If every city had lived under the weight of the accumulated power of the human dead, then would the banks of the Thames have been governed from the graveyards of Asia or Africa. No; the empire of the living by the dead is one of the base superstitions which engender individual feebleness, and social rot; just as the dependence for life "subjective or objective,"—that is, imaginary or real,—of the dead upon the living is a potent fiction of priestcraft, full of harm to character and property, fraught with seeds of unreal care. One half of this truth Comte saw when he spoke of "immortality" as an "unsocial" dogma; knowing how Purgatory was made an instrument of ravages upon death-beds, perpetrated in the name of souls existing, indeed, but existing in such a state of dependence on fellow-creatures as is unknown even in life upon earth. Of all the accretions upon Christianity by adaptation from Paganism, none was so potent as an instrument of degrading the clergy into huxters, of rendering property insecure, of reducing families, and of enfeebling the foundations of civil order as the Religion of the Dead in the form of Purgatory. According to present fashion, these statements will be called bigotry: they are history; and the bigotry and

injustice lie on the part of those, who with history in their hands, refuse to see the facts, and reproach any who do see them.

“Christ died, rose, and lives again that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living.”

*Christ
Lord of
Dead and
Living.* In His hand stands yonder cottage child, and all the powers of all the dead, of the “aggregate of our terrestrial ancestors,”

cannot hurt a hair of his head, without permission of his Father in heaven. That child is is

*What a
Cottage
Child is to
a Christian.* neither a half beast, as Sir Fitzjames Stephen calls mankind, nor a whole beast, as Mr. Harrison, while professing to consider man our highest known power,

in very deed and truth makes him,—a beast that perisheth; a beast who is more cunning, indeed, than any other beast of the field, but who is only, as if a chemical compound more complex than others, a something that ceases to exist when the compound is dissolved. That child is a ward of Almighty power. It is no more at the mercy of the dead now that it is one of the living, than it will be at the mercy of the living when it shall have become one of the dead. While it is in this mortal life, the departed can no more work it any ill than can the invisible vapours of last year's snow cut gashes in a diamond. When removed hence its rest, its life, its gladness yonder; the brightness of its dwelling, and the

measure of its store, will no more depend on the loving memory of this boy or the vivid picturing of that girl, on the spells of this priest or the incense of that altar, than will the flight and song of the lark, its air, its sun, and the panorama opened to its eye below, above, around, depend on shells in larks' nests, or on the embryos within them. The life and immortality brought to light in the Gospel end these religions of the dead. The living are not slaves of the dead, the dead are not dependents of the living. "*He* lives"; and therefore we live also; and no servant's will shall assign the portion of living or dead, though many servant hands may bear it, serve it, or carry it away. They that know what it is for the living to live under the full weight of the power of the dead, on the one hand, or, on the other hand, what it is for the dead to be viewed as pauper dependents on the bedesmen of the living; they who have seen how in the former case stagnation reigns, and how in the latter case goods and independence vanish from families to be centred in the childless, they only can begin to form a sober estimate of that priceless liberty wherewith Christ has made us free: free while we live from the malice of the dead; free when we die from the neglect or cupidity of the living.

Five hundred years ago was seen moving up and down from Oxford to London, Ludgershall or Lutterworth, a Yorkshireman, whose large eyes were all

alight with genius, with lore, and with high restoring purpose. Here upon the commanding heights, there in the fattest valleys, sat what he called Caimes Castles, which ruled over the land plundering the living in the interests of the dead; castles in which licensed riot "counselled, consecrated and regulated" all civil life. He saw one set of men selling prayers, a given quantity and quality for so much, and another set of men buying prayers, so much for a given quantity and quality; and he said, I seem to see men trading in their own shadows when the sun is going down.¹

Wyclif, in hearing the groans of poor and rich under a dominion of the dead administered by armies of priests, and looking into the Gospel of Christ to learn what He had instituted, gave voice to the public longing in a loud cry for the restoration of the liberty wherewith Christ had set us free, liberty which he

*Wyclif's
Cry for
Christ's
Freedom.*

evermore, and with all varieties and reiterations, contrasted with the rule of the "sects," as he called them, foisted in "modern" times into the simple church set up among

¹ Tales stulte mercantes cum oracionibus (*sic*) sunt similes stolidis mercantibus cum suis umbris sole ad vesperam declinante.—Wyclif's Latin works, Vol. I., p. 347. The two volumes already brought out by the Wyclif Society, are essential to all who want to understand the moral Making of England. To the irrecoverable disgrace of English letters, these writings are first printed, not at Oxford, but at Leipsic, and edited by a German.

men by our Lord and His Apostles. The shadow benefits of which he saw the monks making merchandise were not more shadowy than the Comtist prayers, "guardian angels," and "angelic devotions,"—mere idols of the cave,—which are commended to us by Mr Harrison. And though the "grossness" of an immortality dependent for its rest upon the liberality of the living was sufficiently seen by Comte to make him avoid reinstating the mercantile element in the *post mortem* power of his priests, or in the offices of prayer, nevertheless those offices as fixed by him would be more debilitating to the human mind than even those invented for Purgatory, and probably also would more rapidly tend to the confounding of reality with figment, and to the consequent loosening of moral foundations.

VI.—*Comte's Moral Aims Real.*

It must not be supposed that in thus speaking, I would call in doubt Comte's desire to reorganize society on a basis of morality. In that he was sincere and very earnest. His sense of the ruinous effects of vice was keen, his estimate,—in theorizing,—of family life high, his admiration of goodness real. His powers as a thinker, have been ridiculously exaggerated ; his weakness as a reasoner, felt by most, has been distinctly pointed out by scarcely anyone ;

and what was no particular enigma in his intellect, any more than in that of many men with a genius for imitative invention, has been fought over as if it was something to vitiate all he did on the one hand, or on the other, a hallowed cicatrice not to be alluded to.

His wish to found a religious and moral society was at least as real and strong, as his desire to be the Head of that society. And so perfect is his failure to find foundations, after a life-long absorption in the search for them, that if one could honestly think him a wise man and a sound reasoner, as well as one intending to do good in a social sense, one would feel that there was some advantage in magnifying his wisdom, when recording the futility of his system as set face to face with Christianity. He did

Religion wish to found a "religious" society, but
without God his irrevocable postulate was that it must
and Morals be without God. He wished to found a
without moral society, but again his postulate was
Rights. that it must take physical laws and moral laws as
 equally "invariable." I do not mean that he is
 consistent with this ; for often, especially in his later
 writings, he is in flagrant contradiction with his
 fundamental assumption. All that notwithstanding,
 the assumption exists and appears in a thousand
 forms. One of his axioms being that "Every theo-
 logical tendency, Catholic, Protestant, or Deist,

really concurs in prolonging and aggravating moral anarchy,"¹ he must expel belief in God from among men. To this end it was that he proceeded to prove that each separate science is hostile to belief in God ; because it shows that phenomena are governed by law, and not by "arbitrary wills" ; it being assumed that if an Almighty Creator existed his will would be the antithesis of law and stable order. This conceit might seem to be imputed by malice to one with any repute as a thinker ; but it is the life-blood in the veins of his oddly organized system. In harmony with the attempt to found Religion without God, is Comte's attempt to found morals without rights. A principle of his, oft repeated, is that men have no rights—that, indeed, the word right should be banished from morals, like cause from philosophy.

In his tenth circular M. Pierre Lafitte bewails the fact that the appeal against Comte's will was based on the ground that he was an *Atheist and a Madman*. The worst was, his wife maintained these grounds ; and in her presence her counsel added : "M. Comte has three angels : Madame de Vaux ; his housekeeper or rather his cook ; and, Mr. President, I scarcely dare to add that he included his mother in such company." A sorrowful addition is : "Madame Comte has the custody of the picture in which an eminent artist has

¹ *Ensemble du Positivisme*, p. 392.

reproduced the great renovator thinking under the inspiration of *his guardian angels*.¹

VII.—*Comte on Society.*

Having in this spirit gone through what he takes for a circle of the sciences, and having filed away the idea of God out of nature, he comes to society. This is absolutely governed by nature, nature is absolutely governed by "laws," and the great achievement of the Positive Philosophy is to show that the movements of society, instead of being the resultant of many forces—physical forces under physical laws, acting with and acted on by mental forces under mental laws and by free moral agents under moral laws,—is the highest result of a single force, "invariable laws," which no will, human or superhuman, originates or administers; physical law, mental law, and moral law all concurring in one "immoveable order." To this "immoveable order" are all events subject, whether events of the interior man or of exterior nature, "all phenomena whatever," so that the different classes of them will become equally capable of being predicted, when once their laws are known. These laws and this order all come of the one metaphysical source, "necessity," which, in the absence of a Why or a Cause, is perpetually brought in to account for men and things.

¹Robinet, *Ceuvre et Vie*, p. 568 and p. 547.

It is wonderful how with a framework of studies so contracted as "organic and inorganic," and with social postulates so visionary as that the individual man is an abstraction, and that human rights have no existence, Comte could rise to moral aims even as high as those he recognised. But of the fact that without moral bonds society could not cohere he had a firm grasp. He accepted explicitly *Altruism* the principle that we ought to live for *or* the others, and enforced it. He would have *Otherwise.* spurned the notion that it came to him from the foot of the Cross ; from the unconscious testimony borne by the enemies of his fictitious founder of Christianity to the principle embodied before their eyes in His life and death :—"He saved others, himself he cannot save."—The ground, however, on which Comte could place this duty sank to the level of his belief. We were to live for others that we might live in others and by others. That is, in order that when we were dead others might remember us with reverent affection. To him Man at his origin was a fatherless fruit of earth ; and the individual man at his hour of departure was the heir of nought : neither of Father nor brother, neither of joy nor consciousness. He could not say, If you love your Father, you must love your brother, for there being no common father, brothers there were none. So, the old word Brother, sacred at least ever since the days of Moses, that

word which in Paul's apology to a raging mob, whom he calls "Men, Brethren, and Fathers," strikes in silvery contrast to the word of Socrates in his apology to deliberating fellow citizens: "Men Athenians"; that word Brother consecrated in even the lowest types of Judaism and Christianity, and not forgotten by Moslems, drops out and disappears. Your fellow man is only "another." Your love is not "brother-love," it is love of another, coined into the poor Latinized word *altruism*. Your only life after death is the Subjective Life which consists in such memory of you as may be cherished by the living. Your only hope of "eternizing" yourself is by living in the recollections of the race. Therefore, so to love others and so to live for them that they shall recognize you as a true servant of Humanity, and hold you in eternal remembrance,—that is your way to "immortality," in the measure of lean signification left within sublime words.

Selfishness takes many forms sordid and futile; but one so utterly empty of meaning as the ambition of being, after death, pictured within some one's brain as a "saint" (*pace* Mr. Harrison) is scarcely to be found. The love of happiness, that noble spark of the divine nature, which in Christianity everywhere gleams, and is everywhere fanned, fanned by light airs of earthly good, by gales of eternal bliss, is sneered at by Positivists as selfishness. This is

worthy of their metaphysics. The expansiveness of Joy, the benignity of Peace, the tendency of Hope to do good and to communicate are truths too deep for them, broadly as they are sown on the surface of the Bible, and oft as they spring out of the ground all around us. Not to seek happiness would be infra-human; would be a shade of diabolism short of seeking to make others miserable. To live for others in order to live in them is for a selfish end, and an end hollow as a child's fancy. To live for others in order to save that which is lost, to comfort the sorrowful, strengthen the weak, and restore the broken character to the image of God, is unselfish, though filled full of happiness, of a happiness which is clearly accounted for by the principle that God is love: for then is living for others truly sublime when your love becomes to them a token, faint, indeed, but expressive of the manner of love wherewith God has loved them.

The startling principle that "rights" are to be banished from morals, as "Causes" are from philosophy, is logical.¹ With what right in its hands can a thing come into being that is not the offspring of any one, only one bubble more upon a stream; not even an effect of a cause, only a sequence of certain antecedents? To a Christian every child of man comes into the world

*Rights in
Christianity.*

¹*Catéchisme*, p. 297.

bearing in its right hand a scroll written on the inside with duty, and on the outside with rights : "Thou shalt love God," duty ; "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," duty too, but duty involving corresponding right,—right, in the name of God, to the love of every man. At the side of such private right stands supreme Authority, and behind that Authority Eternal Power and Godhead. That child is not merely an "other." He is the offspring of God. Let all men do him good, and God will bless them for it ; taking the benefit to the child as a tribute to Himself. Let any man do him ill, and God will reckon with him for it ; taking the injury to His offspring as an offence against Himself. Of all this Comte seems to have had no knowledge, any more than if it existed not in Holy Scripture. To him God was the "Anti-social" despot whose service wrested you away from that of human kind, before whom the highest holiness consisted in renunciation of natural ties, in the exchange of real human duties, for a buried life passed in artificial forms. Therefore, though he could rise with the Christian so far as to say, Love one *another*, it was not for him to reach the level whence it can be said : He that loveth God, let him love *his brother also*.

And as to the level from which he delivered his own precepts, he owed it to Christianity. If the

*Public
Authority
identifies itself
with Private
Right.*

contrary be asserted, then it is for his disciples to cite the authentic instance in which a race beginning as what they assume to be not men in a primitive condition, but men in their primæval state, to borrow a distinction from the Duke of Argyll, rose, by simple force of human nature, from absolute savagery first to Fetish worship, next to Polytheism, after that to Monotheism, and finally to Positivism. Cases are not wanting of populations which have existed from before the dawn of history in continuous succession from generation to generation. Some such races have lived where they were separated from any communities acted upon by the doctrines and institutes of Moses, the Prophets, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Only in that case are they of any scientific value for testing the Positivist principle. If, then, one such community can be traced through Comte's stages, we may begin to ask whether there is not in human nature some "necessity," such as he assumes. But the fact is that just in proportion as men were separated from the original centre of the race did they lose organized society; and in proportion as they lost that did they sink deeper towards Fetishism with savagery. A further fact is that they begin to rise from such a condition only by influences from without. Therefore the famous Law of the Three States appears not to be the result of a scientific induction, but to be a

*Practical Test
for the
Three States.*

force of human nature, from absolute savagery first to Fetish worship, next to Polytheism, after that to Monotheism,

simple *à priori* metaphysical guess, on which society is to be explained by our modern Positivists as was physical nature by the ancient Sophists.

When our English Positivist minimises the religion of Humanity to the mere principle of recognizing your duties on *human grounds*, he backs far, very far, from the true line of front. *There is*, says Dr. Robinet, [the italics his] *only one Positivism: it is the religion of Humanity*. They only are Positivists who accept all its dogmas, and sincerely seek to apply them . . . that religion has its See, its worship, its priesthood; it has a saint for founder, and in case of need will have its confessors and martyrs." ¹

Comte's system recognizes the fact,—does much *The Value of* more than imply it—that only on a foundation prepared by Christianity, could a solid *Christianity* moral superstructure be reared. He assumes *tacitly* that he would lead mankind onward to higher stages. I assert that his methods would lead them backwards towards Polytheism, fetishism, materialism, and moral decline of every kind. For it is very noteworthy that in his scheme both Polytheism and Fetishism are virtually, though mystically, embodied, while Monotheism is strictly excluded. I need not say that I do not use the word Polytheism in the vulgar sense, utterly false and groundless, which assumes that to Pagans it meant many Supreme Beings. Never, and

¹*CŒuvre et Vie*, p. 387.

not anywhere. It meant gods many, each particular god being far from Supreme, Infinite, or Eternal ; being simply an immortal of perhaps celestial, of perhaps terrestrial birth, and possessed of such power as fell to his lot, or as he could acquire in contest. With both Fetishism and Polytheism Comte evinces constant sympathy. From Romanism what he omits are Christian doctrines and the Christian type of ministry, what he accepts are the elements which point towards Polytheism and Fetishism, which again he parodies. He also accepts much of the Roman Civil organization found in the Papal form of hierarchy. "Catholicism minus Christianity," was the natural summary of one. "Catholicism plus science," was the reply of a Comtist. No ; for of Catholicism Comte rejects the Christian part, the salt, and keeps the Pagan, and political. Had the Comtist said Romanism plus science, he would have been nearer the truth, but even then we should have to read out from the meaning of Romanism its Christian elements. Neither Catholicism without Christianity nor Comtism plus science will stand. Christianity and science will both stand.

While this was passing through the press, I read, in an official discourse of Mr. Harrison, that Positivism had no priestcraft that needed to be dropped. Every Brahman and every Roman Catholic Priest would say the same of his own system. Comte's Polity is

before the world, and every one can judge for himself of the extent of professional illusion involved in the belief that it contains no priestcraft. A system more minutely contrived to rule mankind by a corps of priests, directed from a sole centre, it would be difficult to invent.

VIII.—*Society an Organism.*

An example of Comte's method of employing his terminology and of reasoning occurs in the typical case of representing Society as an Organism. This is a point on which Mr. Spencer gains for himself the applause of Mr. Harrison, as employing the correct term. Society, according to Comte, is not merely an organization formed among individual men, like a corporation or a regiment, but is an organism like a man or a microbe. So far from being bound by the fact that this is only a metaphor, he expands metaphor to allegory, and pushes allegory to identity. Yea, society, in his hands, becomes an organism even more compacted together than is an individual. "The Social Organism is a single whole just as, and even more than, the individual Organism."¹ Even

¹ I give the version of Mr. Harrison (*Positive Policy II.* 31) The phrase *une solidarité équivalente et même supérieure* (*Politique Positive II.* 227) might be thought scarcely to sustain his rendering; but it fully indicates the concurrent action of part with part under common bond. In another place (*Politique Positive II.* 287) the simple word *solidarité* is rendered by Mr. Harrison, *solidarity or membership of a body.* (*Positive Polity II.* 238).

this does not content him. He affirms that now and henceforth we are to take our type of the individual organism from our sociology; that means in plain words,—alas, alas, for poor people afflicted with a necessity of attaching to every phrase a definite meaning!—when we want to know the physical constitution of a man, we must deduce it from our theory of Society! Be not startled! for the next phrase is to the effect that the *direct study of the true Great Being*, the only being in whom life is completely developed, will henceforth yield the normal groundwork for our conceptions of less eminent organisms, be those conceptions scientific or logical.¹ If, then, the collective whole is the true organism, the analysis of it properly falls in the first instance to the physiologist and the chemist, and only after them to the philosopher.

One can imagine it possible that Comte on pounding to men of science the grand principle that society was an organism and that its *elements* were families, its *tissues* classes or castes, its *organs* cities,² may have been met with the observation: If it is an

¹(*Politique Positive II.* 288). Mr. Harrison's version makes the assertion even more definite than the original; not merely the groundwork of our "conceptions," but of our "knowledge."

²*Politique Positive II.* 290. In at least one case he makes social forces to be the *tissues*; the forces are Numbers and Wealth—material force; Conception and Expression—intellectual force; Command and Obedience—moral force. That is command where right does not exist; obedience where there cannot exist a right to command.

organism, then you will pass it over to the physiologist, who will ascertain what are its functions and organs, and next to the chemist, who will ascertain what are its elements and principles. The facts being thus properly sifted, it will then be for you as a philosopher to point out the relation of those facts to one another, to man, and to the general scheme of the universe. If he ever got a reply of this sort, it would stimulate the bitterness with which he inveighs against the narrowness and prejudice of men of science, against their anarchical speciality, and incapacity for receiving general views. For instead of regarding his *elements*, *tissues*, and *organs* as rather poor allegorizing, he of course regarded them as great philosophic conceptions, and pieces of sound reasoning. Yet he gravely inserts warnings against pushing analogies too far lest we should be drawn into fanciful conclusions!

He would himself have resented a use of any mathematical term such as he made of "Organism." The fact that analogies could be traced between a circle and a sphere, or between a square and a cube, would not have beguiled him into calling a circle a sphere, or a square a cube. But it was another matter when the term, instead of being one whose correspondence with the thing it stood for could be checked by measure or number, became a logical one in the higher sense of being checked only by thought, and general observation. In this wider sphere the fact

that in society exist analogues to what exists in an individual organism, deludes him into calling society an organism. And he is quite aware that only analogues exist. Having made up his mind to call a mere sum total an Organism, of course this reacts upon his reasoning.

Religion, he holds, must place men under an external Power. This is the development of the biological view that an organism is subordinated to its environment. Teaching this, biology proves the necessary superiority of an external Power. And to provide this *external* Power, religion presents us to Humanity, as pictured inside of our heads. From the fact that an individual man is dependent for breath, warmth, light, drink, and food on things external to his frame, things totally beyond his power to produce, is drawn the conclusion that collective man is dependent on nothing whatever outside of collective man. Or if this is not the implied inference, then it is, that collective man though, like an individual man, dependent on external powers, is to carry all praise and trust only to his own credit. The fact that "the environment" of man individual or collective is external, might have led to the question, what is external to the environment? Air is not the outside of the universe; no more is sunlight: What do they depend upon? Does biology tell us?

Now what biology does is not to "place" anything, but to learn what things are really placed, and how the Power that places has placed them. Religion according to Comte is to begin by "placing" man under an environment, to find which it goes in search of Humanity. Biology finds earth, air, fire, and water existing as the environment of every individual organism,—pre-existing as really External Powers, powers different in nature and scope from the organism, beyond its skill to "Compose." Religion, according to Comte, finding no adequate Power around, beneath, above man, is bound to "place" him under a fiction of its own devising. If biology, instead of finding that all trees are dependent on the external powers of air, light, &c., set itself to work to "place" them under an inverted external power formed of the sum-total of all good trees past, present, and future, and then called this a Power whose supremacy did not leave us in any incertitude, we should at least doubt whether, with all their alleged "anarchy," men of science would not call back biology from its aberrations to observation and rational inference.

One more case may not be without interest. He dwells upon the law of mechanics that motion

*Motion of
Bodies and
of Opinion
one
Phenomenon.*

common to a whole system does not disturb, as among themselves, the bodies comprised in that system. For instance, when a railway carriage rushes on at fifty

miles an hour the passengers retain their respective places. But if one of them refused to go on at that rate, or tried to stand still, or to keep to ten miles an hour, he would come into collision with the rest. This is movement. So also the progress of opinion is movement, and if all advance at one velocity there is no collision, but if some are slower or quicker than the mass, collision must arise. This, for a sound thinker would be an illustration; for Comte they are two cases of motion, the one in inorganic physics, the other in social physics. Motion in the sense of transport of a body from place to place, and motion in the sense of a change of opinion, are ruled by the same law! in the latter sense "motion" or "movement," is a mere metaphor; as much so as when we say that a road runs.

Few more curious exercises of intellect, and not many more instructive, could be found for some honest foe to "false coin" than going through Comte and taking note of the terms which for purposes of correct thinking are spoiled, by one or other of the two processes of reading in meanings or reading them out; spoiled so as to lead to the confounding of physical atoms, and elements of thought; of bodily organs and offices in society; to the confounding of objective with subjective, of concrete with abstract, and so forth, amid

Both
Illustrating
the Law
of Mechanics.

Terms used
in Degraded
Senses.

much parade of attention to these distinctions. When one realizes the extent to which a writer like Comte may degrade language as a vehicle of clear ideas, one feels that if Max Müller could awaken the public to the depth and height of the deception that is going on, and to its tendencies to deteriorate that plumb and straight method of mind which makes strong men, he would do for us a service not to be valued in gold.¹

It would be more lively to point out Comte's reflected influence upon Mr. Harrison's metaphysics *Positivist* and range of view than to indicate in the *Metaphysics*. duller master the original qualities ; but it would be less useful. Perhaps Mr. Harrison would object to his metaphysics being spoken of, as he seems to think it possible to dive into the profound questions of philosophy without any metaphysics,—one of the odd signs of the school to which he has put himself. A London lad led down to Margate by a great magician, and told he was to bathe in the sea, plunging head foremost into deep water, but to keep clear of the salt, always rises up to me as the type of an innocent disciple of Comte who eschews and abuses metaphysics.

As to mental myopy naturally induced by Comtism, take one sentence. Mr. Harrison, instead of ascribing

¹ His Articles in the *Nineteenth Century* on Forgotten Bibles and Savages are real contributions in this sense.

“ veneration and gratitude,” to any Being or Power
Restricted above men, says: “ I prefer to ascribe
Inquiry it to that human race which we know
generates and feel ; and which *so far as we can see*
Narrowness of View. [italics mine] *has fashioned its own destiny*
 in spite of tremendous obstacles in his environment.” ¹

“ So far as we can see ” ! and how far can a Comtist see ? Though we knew that he durst not try to see as far as a cause, a design, a why, or an origin, one might have thought that he would retain, at least for the first generation, the ability to see as far as the homely old “ elements,” earth, air, fire, and water. But no ; the race shapes its own destiny, in spite of tremendous obstacles in *his* environment. Its environment is composed of those four constituents. They are in its “ destiny ” the pre-established forces without which man cannot live, against which he cannot prevail, and which he can no more “ fashion ” than the compass can fashion ship and sea. He “ fashions his own destiny ” ! How far overhead does his power of “ fashioning ” extend ? A few inches. The sun is the most potent factor “ so far as we can see ” in the destiny of man, viewed as a perishing animal. Did he fashion the sun ? Ether is another factor perhaps only second in importance ; did he fashion it ? And so on through all that is grand in the surroundings of man “ so far as we can see.”

¹*Nineteenth Century*, 91, p. 374.

The destiny of man had to be fashioned from afar, had to be fashioned by harmony of more worlds than one ; had to be fashioned by power over *Did Man* dull mass, over swift force, over empty *fashion his* space ; had to be fashioned by lighting in *own Destiny?* one world the lamps of another ; had to be fashioned by fitting within man adaptation to things without, to things beneath him, things around him, things above, things unseen, and things unspeakably far away. It had to be fashioned by moulding into one system distinct domains ; a first consisting of inert agents governed by invariable rule, incapable of self-determined action or of alternative modes of acting : a second consisting of animated agents governed by mental laws capable within a given range of self-determined action, and of a given control over inert agents : a third consisting of free agents governed by violable but not variable moral laws, and capable not only of self-determined action and of alternatives as to modes of acting, but also capable of controlling both animated nature through its mental laws, and inert nature through its physical ones. It had to be fashioned so that the necessitated action of the inert agent should be subordinated to the intelligent action of the animated one, and that this again in its turn should be subordinated to action of the free agents, in such manner that he, with his higher law, should reign over both animated and inert nature ; the

mental laws of the one and the physical laws of the other being coördinated into such harmony with his own higher law of liberty that his dominion while ameliorating his own condition, should tend also to the amelioration of both animated and inert nature. All this co-ordinating of different orders of agents, in different orders of relations, ranging from the free and responsible to the fixed and irresponsible, required and in all reason pre-supposed One capable of giving both liberty and law, both force and ability to wield forces, both motive powers necessitating some given movement of bodies, and motives addressing themselves to those powers in mind which represent the very opposite of necessitated movement, namely, the ability to chose between one of two alternative courses.

The babe that is to-day unborn and to-morrow will be one of us knows nothing of "the environment." Earth is to him unknown and for the moment unknowable. Yet has he already feet to walk with. Air is to him equally unknown, yet has he a set of apparatuses which all Humanity could not fashion for putting him into harmony with air. Make if you can an air cell, a drop of blood, a vein, or a vocal chord. If you cannot, and will not see farther than Comte permits, do stand out of the sunshine of free mind. Speech is to the unborn child unknown, yet has he—in tongue, ear, throat, chest,—

a world of living levers, valves, pulleys, and impellers all fitted to wed the future thoughts of his breast to those of fellow men. To him plants, water, and minerals are unknown. Yet is he replete with organs and forces pre-arranged to assimilate these to himself and out of them to "fashion," bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. So far then as I can see, that babe at his first entrance upon his future environment, at his first contact with the things which go to make it up, bears in his hand a noble patent of descent, which reads: My Father made them all! this eye and that sun are from one Author; this chest and that air from one Author; this voice and those ears of men and animals from one Author; this mind and those proportions, movements, harmonies of distant

*To Whom are
Veneration
and Gratitude
Due.*

worlds from one Author. So far as I can see to that Author is due my first, my deepest "veneration and gratitude," the sole object He, in turning to which my whole nature feels that its faculty of veneration and gratitude is called out with full play and worthy scope. And no sooner do veneration and gratitude swell upwards to the Great Parent, than they dictate toward the offspring a fellow-feeling, warm as brotherly love, and ennobled by eternal hope,—hope that he and I may together glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.

IX.—*Mr. Harrison's Humanity.*

Mr Harrison did well in resenting the terms in which his antagonists spoke of our common race. He did well in asserting its claims on our respect and gratitude, and in saying that these virtues will die out if "philosophers succeed in persuading the world that the human race are a set of Yahoos." He did well in speaking of our human "brotherhood." In all this he turned his face towards Christianity. None knows better than he that the brotherhood which Christianity nurses in her bosom, and feeds with every word of the Christ, feeds with His flesh and blood, becomes in Positivism a shrivelled change—*an Otherhood*. None knows better that the human race, which even in its state of sin is in Christianity dear beyond measure to an All-blessed Father, has in Positivism no Father, and is dear to none better than itself. No one more fully knows that the human heart, which in Christianity is lifted upwards by the Brotherhood of the Son of God, has in Positivism no sympathy from above, no friend, brother, or helper fairer than the average of that race of which so many ruin one another, and so many more speak only of rivals, enemies, or hollow friends. Mr. Harrison well said that anything worthy to be dignified by the name of religion, involves "religious belief in something vastly nobler and stronger than

self." Yet he asks me to give up my happy faith in One who is not only vastly but infinitely nobler and better than self, whether self means me personally, or as in the lips of a Positivist it may mean, the moral sum total of the race! If the portraits of Mr. Spencer and Sir Fitzjames Stephen given by Mr. Harrison are correct, they stand for personal worth on a level, on which no careful thinker would place the average of the race. Yet that race is what they are invited to worship as vastly nobler and better than self. Their recoil from the invitation ought to lead Positivists to enquire whether our Father, "vastly nobler and better than self," is not a real Power instead of being fictitious, whether He is not a Lord and Saviour instead of a chimera.

It may seem hopeless to add, so complete seems the self-illusion of Positivists as to the hold on mankind of religion, as men mean it, that perhaps that recoil may lead Mr. Harrison to somewhat qualify his conviction that "the cultured man" takes the Goddess of M. Comte for the Power that controls our lives.

Mr Harrison did well in declaring that Humanity had no "godhood," that it was no substitute for God, that he was willing to drop the capital H, that he was willing to give up the word "worship," and to speak rather of showing affection and reverence; and that he wished for no other worship than such

as we give to our father and mother. In all this he turned his back on the religion of Humanity.

Perhaps Mr. Harrison did not do particularly well in copying the trite fallacy which evades proving that it is right to pray to dead men, by proving it right to hold the worthy dead in veneration. And, he ought, in judging his two opponents, to remember that they reason like men, not like Positivists. When they are summoned to accept a religion of Humanity, to accept Humanity as a substitute for God, and as an object of worship (which *pace* Mr. Harrison putting off the harness, is what they were summoned to by Mr. Harrison putting it on), their reply is directed not to the false issue of the *ignoratio elenchi*, "respect and affection," but to the true one, "adore." From a Positivist point of view he certainly did not do well in saying that Humanity is no substitute for God. To us Christians of course it is not. We

Is Humanity resent the proposal of it as such;—resent
a Substitute it not only as an outrage on all moral
for God? order, but as seeming to us an affront to any intellect to which it is offered, the very offer supposing that the person's reason may be capable of entertaining such a proposal. But in Positivism there is no controversy. From beginning to end to displace God by replacing Him with Humanity is its spirit, its letter, its proclaimed intent, its vaunted result.

"If people mean by religion," says Mr. Harrison,

“going down on their knees and invoking a supernatural being, I will wait till the word religion has lost these associations.” *If* people mean this! What else should sensible people mean? Going down on our knees to a Being supernatural to ourselves and

*The True
Idea of
Religion.*

our race, and invoking that Being, is religion. In that act all the depths of reason echo with the cry, Adore. All the fields of nature re-echo with the cry, Ask and receive! for asking in order to receive is an established method of nature. But going down on your knees to invoke what is not a superhuman being, what is not even a human being, nay, not even a useful animal, a cow, such as Hindus worship; what is nothing more than a mental image of a woman whom you believe to be out of existence, were she your own wife or the wife of another;—going down on your knees to invoke that figment, or invoking it without going down on your knees, and calling the act worship and religion, is to me one of the most grotesque of human superstitions; and my personal observation of them has not been small.

To tell a race to unite by finding within itself a centre of union is one of the oldest and frailest of our illusions. It has been the curse of mankind

*The True
Centre of
Union.*

to aim at bringing us under one human head, whether political or religious, or both combined in one;—a phantasm of ambition

which from Babylon and Memphis down has brought forth war and woe, and which, if less threatening at No. 10, Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, than in some other places is, as Mr. Mill said, "more ridiculous." A centre of union for a species lies not within the species, but without it. The centre of union for the trees is not a tree : it is Earth, the root and fatness of all trees. The centre of union for the streams is not a river : it is Ocean, the fulness of all streams. The centre of union for all the planets is not a planet : it is the Sun. The centre of union for our breasts is not a breast : it is the Air. The centre of union for eyes is not an eye : it is the Light. The centre of union for Christians is not a Christian : it is the Christ. The centre of union for man is not a man : it is the Eternal Father. The centre of union for worlds is not a world : it is the Maker of them all.

A man retreating is entitled to complain. Yet the complaint is very odd when Mr. Harrison's *False Theological Terms.* opponents are chidden for "foisting" into Positivist phraseology, "theological ideas when none are suggested by us." What else did they mean to suggest? Their terms are "Religion," "The True Religion," "The Church," "Worship," "systematic worship," "prayer," "invocation," "temple," "priest," "sacrament," "faith," "the true faith," "dogma," "Angels," "Guardian Angels," "Immortality,"

"Eternal," "Infinite," "Almighty," "The Great Being," "The True Great Being," "The Supreme Being," "Our Goddess." Men making such a clang-clang of theological terms, and saying that they suggest no theological ideas, may, no doubt, be reasoned with, but one has to ask, On what principles are we to set about it? If once they begin to feel ashamed of their illicit commerce in stolen terms, a commerce by which most of their gains have come, there is hope of their resorting to the bullion of sterling speech, when their poverty will soon appear.

Even at the last Mr. Harrison assumes that "intelligent" love and respect for our human brotherhood

What is means love and respect on Positivist
"Intelligent" grounds, that is, on the belief that the
Love to Man? race is son to no one, that the individual is "an abstraction," that human life is a breath which goes out for ever, that instead of one human soul being worth a world, all human souls are not worth a straw, and that the sum of human character, human aims, and human hopes here and hereafter, are interests for which no thought has ever been taken in any mind higher up in the universe than minds housed in crania of bone. Now to me these views seem not only unintelligent, but seem to display a lack of acquaintance with facts caused by your predetermined limitation of your point of view. In like manner is it assumed that recognizing

your duty to your fellow men "on human grounds," involves the exclusion from your view of divine grounds. If there is no Living God in whom men have their being, with whom they are in constant relations, then, of course, "human grounds" are bounded by the lines of human persons. But if such a Being exists, and if human relations with Him are actual, then grounds which exclude the consideration of those relations and of that Being are improperly circumscribed. They are narrower than human grounds, and in their practical operation, if left to work without being counteracted by the broader Christian view, they would be inhuman.

"Divinities have ended for us," says Mr. Harrison, *as if he knew*. Not knowing it, he is prepared to assert it. Asserting it, he is prepared to require us to admit it, if we are to take "human ground." If we demur, he will call our views "theological,"

A Krooman thinking that a name to frighten us. One
Skipper. who can take such a stand appears like a skipper on the African shores, say a Krooman, who calls a "foreign-going" captain a star-gazer. I, says the Krooman, go from headland to headland. I steer by what I know. I keep to terrestrial ground. But he! why he fancies that out of sight of land people can find out what spot they are on by looking at another world through a glass. That is celestial ground; and we are not simple enough to believe that it is

from another world that we are going to learn whether it is here we are or there !! Is the Krooman right or wrong? Is sighting the headlands, when put in comparison with taking the sun's altitude, a method more properly human or only more narrowly so? Suppose the heavens left the Positivist African and his headlands to themselves, to their laws and what they and their laws could evolve, in fine, to things accessible, what would be evolved? or to take the proper Positivist word, what would by "inviolable necessity" take place? There would be a lack of phenomena! the headlands would make no appearance; the land would not manifest itself; the laws would issue no mandate; all things would lapse into the Inaccessible, into the Unknowable; and the philosophic Krooman would set his bright eyes upon a stone wall of dead darkness. Therefore let him learn that terrestrial grounds to be true to earth must include the gifts and forces of other worlds, and also active relations between them and these shores on which we sail. But, in candour I must say, that the Krooman skipper who should take the sighting of successive headlands for a process depending only on earth, only on human nature, would be too unintelligent to match with the scores of West Coast Christian Negroes whom I have personally known, or with the Moslem nations, the Bedouins, or Kabyles.

Men that have read other books beside Comte and

the amateur philosophizing of some physicist, holding up their faces and telling us that in order to take human ground for loving our Brother we must shut out his Father and ours! Men that have read some other history than *The True Human Ground for Loving our Brother.* in Comte spouting about enthusiastic love for the human race as new! What, love to the life, love to the death, to the cross, to the lazar-house, to the rack, to the deadly swamp, to the cannibal oven, to the burning stake "New"! The modern obscurantism or physical legalism, which in the name of "laws" not only will shut up the universe in the two pigeonholes of organic and inorganic, but will find no other place for its Author and Finisher; which further shuts off the mind from any study but that of appearances and "laws," can surely operate rapidly in reducing mental range, and obscuring knowledge actually acquired, when a gentleman of gifts and attainments can unconsciously speak as from a level of information below that of multitudes neither gifted nor highly taught. What is new is not the love of mankind, not the prizing of a human being, even one of the bad, as beyond all earthly valuation; it is the fancy that reducing the relations of the human race to those of a perishing animal, and making that a cause for man worshipping man and not his Maker, is a ground for enthusiastic love of mankind.

One never outlives that feeling of having to deal with a ludicrous conceit which arose unconquerably when first one realized, as seriously intended, the idea that Humanity conceived of as without a Father and without a Future was more properly an object of interest than Humanity conceived of as the offspring of God, and as fraught in each single person with an immortal soul. The feeling of ludicrousness rose to a high pitch when from mere interest in Humanity the conclusion was pushed on to the worship of it;—to the worship of what had first been proved to be a waif to whom could not apply even the saying: “It is somebody’s bairn”; to the worship of what had first been proved to be a bubble which to-day rolls upon the stream and to-morrow will disappear for ever. It seemed at that time a conceit eminently un-English, incapable of winning an English imagination. Harriet Martineau’s astute avoidance or veiling of Comte’s weakest points, and Mill’s tardy effort to relieve himself of the discredit due to his ill-measured encomiums, rather confirmed this view; seeming to indicate that the English intellect, even when most atheistically biassed, was too robust for these Parisian fumes. But in Mr. Harrison we have an authentic case of an English gentleman of mental force and finish, possessing an organ of credulity so commodious as to take in Comte bodily. [I use the language of phrenology, which in speaking of Comtists

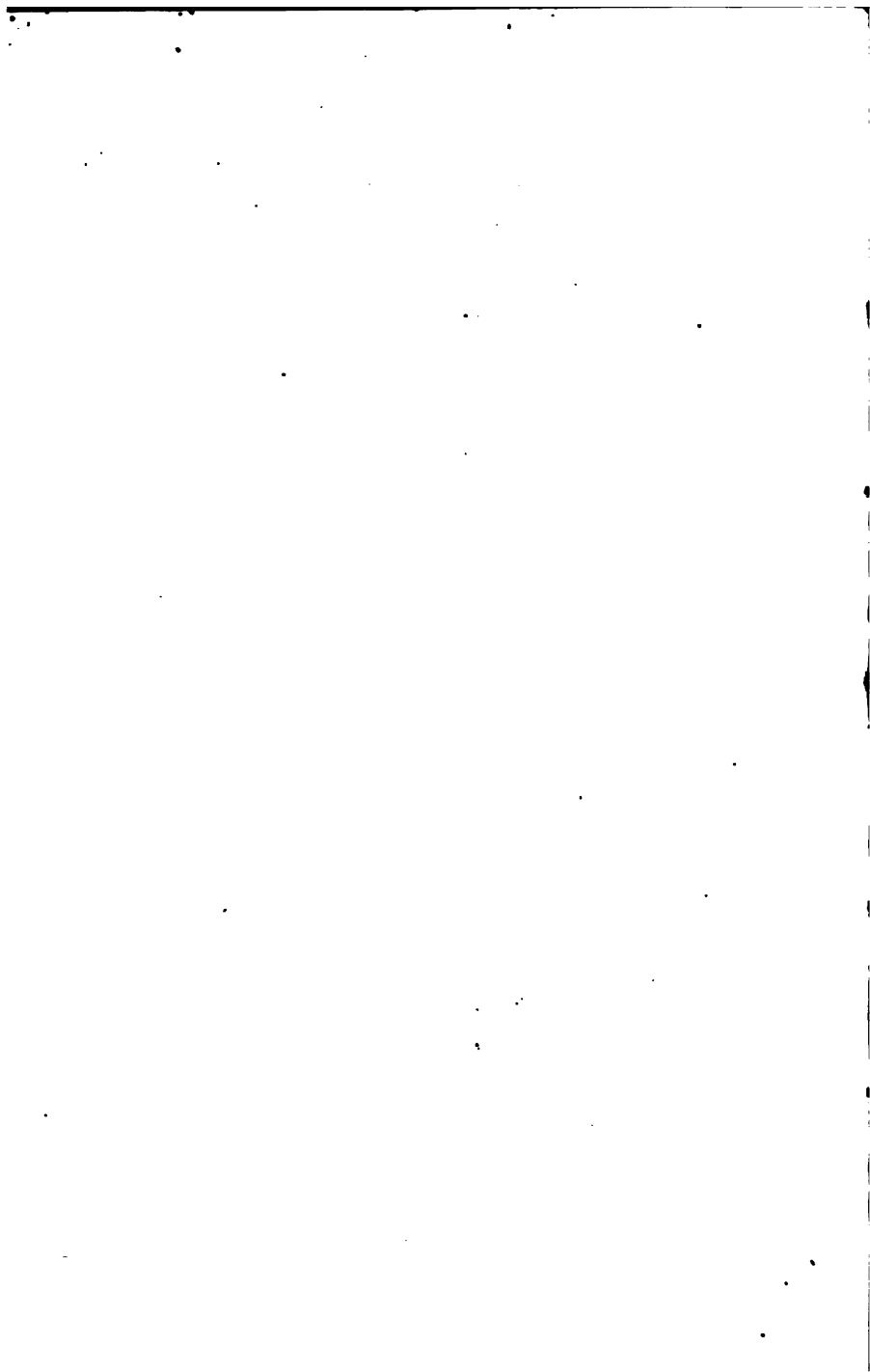
seems to be the proper tongue.] To him fatherless futureless Humanity is a more proper object of enthusiasm than man viewed as the divinely appointed lord of this Earth, of a world in whose habitable parts rejoices the Wisdom of the Eternal, as the being among whose Sons that Wisdom takes delight, the being for whom Christ died. To him fatherless futureless humanity is a more proper object of a Religion than the Lord God Almighty.

This spectacle of mind and of the way in which mind may play is one on which I never muse without being irresistibly reminded of that ingenious Hibernian,—his name, alas! gone with that of the unremembered men of parts,—who bravely argued thus: "I don't see why people should make so much of the Sun. Now, isn't the Moon of more consequence? for sure the Sun is never up but in the daytime."

The Positivists might long ago have given up the hope of Mr. Spencer as a Comtist. He has firm hold of principles irreconcilable with the fundamental narrowness of the system. His intellect has not the "necessary" affinity with its congenital eccentricity. Nevertheless it was not by any means the most visionary of Mr. Harrison's hopes, if he did think it possible that Agnosticism, the verbally negative side of the Inaccessible, and Positivism, the verbally affirmative side of the Unknowable, while each starting on its

own line might meet, and compounding their forces yield a resultant pushing in the right direction of re-organizing without God!

In the dark hour before the dawn, I heard the North Wind say to the West Wind: "Brother, let us blow together, for nothing can withstand our united force. We will drive back the approaching morn. We will teach the sons of Adam, prone over-much to magnify the light, that their true environment is air; part and parcel of their own real world." So both of them did blow, and great was the sound and whirl. In the midst of this, quietly came the sunbeams, all the way down from heaven. They brightened the fields, they chased away night from around the sons of Adam, and entered into their eyes.



AGNOSTICISM

AND

MR. HERBERT SPENCER

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II.
AGNOSTICISM
AND
MR. HERBERT SPENCER.

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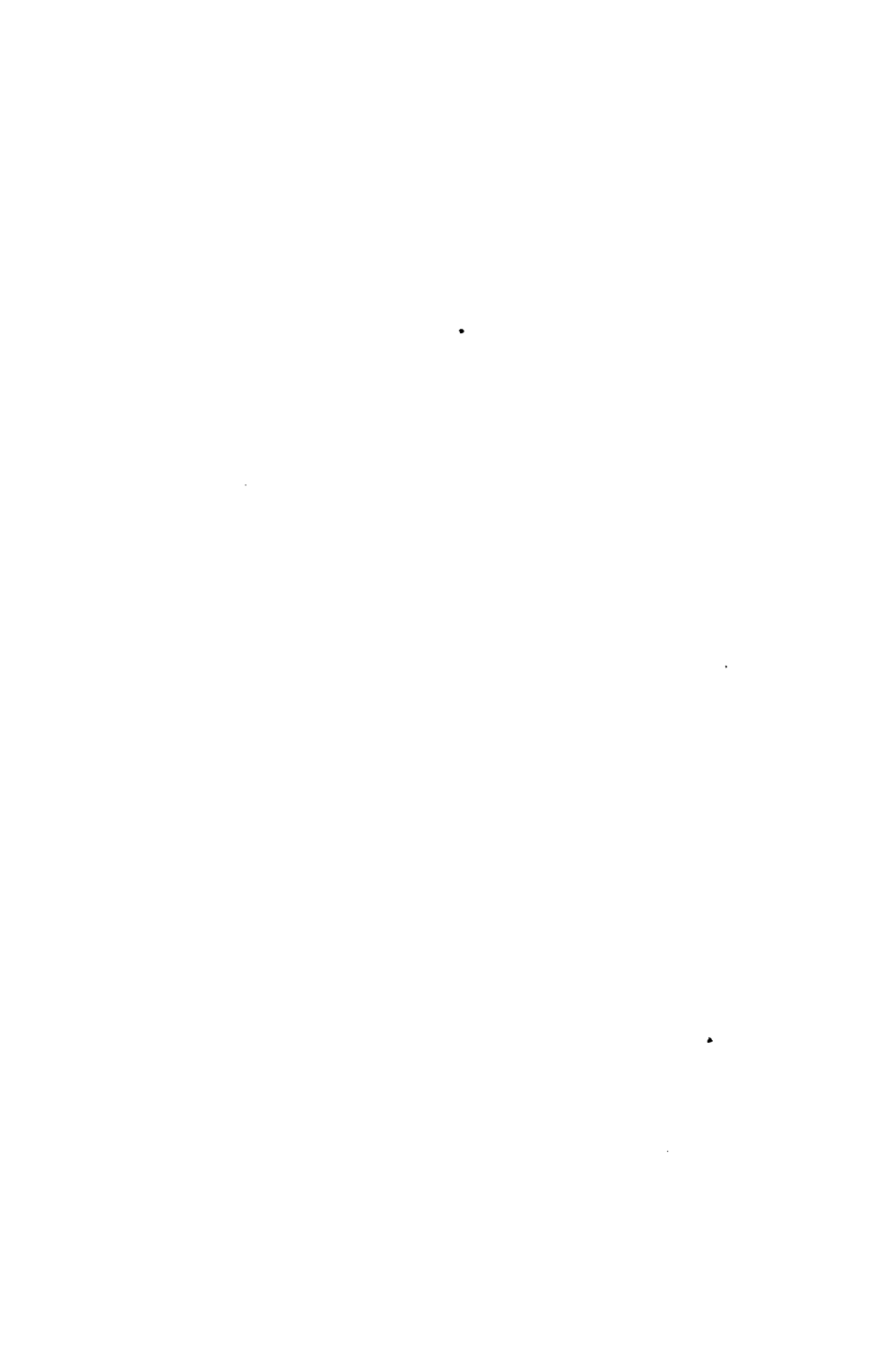
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AGNOSTICISM.



CHAPTER I.

MR. SPENCER'S ARRAY OF THINGS UNKNOWABLE.

I.—*The Array Apparently Formidable.*

IT is a somewhat animated chase when we set out to learn what the things are which Mr. Herbert Spencer declares to be Unknowable. They are soon found to be so numerous, and in some cases they are so unexpected, that we early begin to surmise either that the world has hitherto misunderstood the meaning of knowledge, or that some objects may have been admitted by Mr. Spencer to the class of unknowables without satisfactory evidence.

Mr. Spencer's array of objects not knowable might at first sight seem appalling. Indeed many excellent people have shown great concern because, among other things comprised in it, a foremost place is given to diplomatic substitutes for the name of the Creator. On the other hand, many have displayed a triumphant hope that the day of "theology,"—the new, stealthy

name for faith in God,—was near its close, seeing it was scarcely possible for people to continue to believe in His existence, after a great philosopher like Mr. Herbert Spencer had pronounced any Personal God to be unknowable. Considering, however, the number of things which on the same authority are set down as unknowable, perhaps those very persons would not warmly welcome the state of affairs which would result from a total loss of faith in the existence of them all. What that state of affairs would be, you may in some small part conjecture, if you set out in one line the names of those objects which, according to this great philosopher, are unknowable in common with the Creator of the world.

Time is unknowable, *Space* is unknowable, the *Earth* is unknowable, *Matter* is unknowable, *Mind* *Time, Space,* is unknowable, *Force* is unknowable, *Earth, Matter,* *Motion* is unknowable, and even *Self,* *Motion, Mind,* *Self.* your own personality, is unknowable.

Probably I shall, to some, appear in naming such familiar objects like one who speaks lightly. Therefore Mr. Spencer's own expressions shall be given. As to Space and Time, his view is that the immediate knowledge of them which we seem to have proves, when examined, to be "total ignorance."¹ Respecting the Earth he says that "we habitually speak as though we had an idea of it." As to Matter he believes that

¹ *First Prin.*, § 15.

form what suppositions we may as to its ultimate nature, those suppositions "leave us nothing but a choice between opposite absurdities."¹ More than that, he says that "could we succeed in decomposing matter into those ultimate homogeneous units of which it is not improbably composed . . . the ultimate unit must remain absolutely unknown."² Place in unlimited space, he declares to be "inconceivable." Of Motion, the following is his judgment: "Neither when considered in connection with Space, nor when considered in connection with Matter, nor when considered in connection with Rest, do we find that Motion is truly cognizable. All efforts to understand its essential nature do but bring us to alternative impossibilities of thought."³ These instances might suffice, but I shall add to them Mr. Spencer's words on the question of our knowing or not knowing our own personality: "The personality of which each is conscious, and of which the existence is to each a fact beyond all others the most certain, is yet a thing which cannot be truly known at all: knowledge of it is forbidden by the very nature of thought."⁴

In practical life we find that many things which are really unknowable, seeing that they do not exist, are notwithstanding conceivable. Take as instances a

¹ *First Prin.*, § 16.

² *Principles of Psychology*, § 62.

³ *First Prin.*, § 17.

⁴ *First Prin.*, § 20.

phœnix or perpetual motion. But Mr. Spencer ranks not a few things as more than unknowable, as inconceivable; which things are to most men perfectly conceivable, and even knowable. Of these inconceivables some are confessedly things which have an existence. Perhaps most of us would be slow to admit that anything which undoubtedly exists is to be held as unknowable in an absolute sense. None of us pretends that he knows or can know the exact state of things at the centre of the earth. Yet we can conceive of that state. One thing we do perfectly know,—that some state of things must exist there. In addition to this we know some states which cannot exist, and some which might. And if we do not know the rest, we can conceive of it; with the possibility, it is true, of being wrong, but also with the possibility of being right.

Some of Mr. Spencer's dicta are as follows: "Unlimited duration is inconceivable." Absolute motion "cannot be imagined, much less known." The solar system is "an utterly inconceivable object"¹ As to the universe, "we cannot form any idea of the potential existence of the universe."² Of rest and motion we learn that, "it is impossible to conceive Rest becoming Motion or Motion becoming Rest."³

¹ *First Prin.*, § 9.

² *First Prin.*, § 11.

³ *First Prin.*, § 19.

II.—*What Forbids Knowledge of Self.*

One of the expressions above cited may be taken as the key to Mr. Spencer's method. Knowledge of our personality is forbidden by *the very nature of thought*. His design is to divide all truths whatever into two well defined classes: "a positively unknown and a positively known." Of one class experience makes the *inaccessibility certain*, of the other class the *accessibility certain*. The one class is reduced to *perfect clearness*, the other to *impenetrable mystery*. Now the very first thing placed in the dark class is one to the heart's content of a Positivist, "We can never learn the *nature* of that which is manifested to us." The italics are Mr. Spencer's. Yet though we cannot know the nature of things, we are informed that it is the very *nature* of thought which forbids us to know our own personality. This is not a mere incidental or superficial inconsistency. So far is it from being so, that the very thing which is here formally marked as that which we never can learn, is the one which in his *Classification of the Sciences* (p. 7) Mr. Spencer even more formally marks as the object of study in the first of his great divisions of science, *i.e.*, the Abstract Sciences: "The essential *nature* of some phenomenon is considered apart from the phenomena which disguise it."¹

¹ *First Prin.*, § 35.

Thus, then, the teacher who teaches that we can never learn the nature of anything, who teaches that the nature of matter and of motion are unknowable, who wonders at us for speaking of the earth "as though we had an idea of it," is, nevertheless, himself privately so well informed upon the *very nature* of thought that he can declare the decree that it forbids to us the knowledge of our own personality.

In the mere phraseology of the propositions quoted there are one or two little points which, in passing, may be glanced at. For instance, it is said that motion in connection with rest is not truly cognizable, as it is also said not to be cognizable in connection with space and matter. I altogether agree that motion is not cognizable in connection with rest, but is always known as disconnected from it, as forming the antithesis to it. In connection with space *and* matter, on the contrary, it is knowable, and is known; though not in connection with either one of them separated from the other. Again, I perfectly concur in the proposition that it is impossible to conceive rest becoming motion or motion rest. I could as easily conceive of silence becoming sound or sound silence. But what Mr. Spencer intends to say is a different matter. He intends to say that it is impossible for us to conceive of how a body at rest becomes a body in motion.

III.—*If it were True that All This is Unknowable !*

On looking over even the enumeration of things unknowable given above, an enumeration that does not pretend to exhaust all the objects marked as such in the compass of Mr. Spencer's writings, the first reflection raised is, What a blank must the human mind be ! and what a maze the track of human progress ! If we are *totally ignorant* of Space, we are without any gauge of distance ; here is there, and there is here, and everywhere is nowhere. If we are totally ignorant of Time, day is night and night is day ; was is is, and is is was, and will be is both was and is ; momentary and long-continuing are undistinguishable. So we might go on. But any one can do that for himself. Everyone, however, at the bare names of the things ranked as unknowable or inconceivable, will feel that if, in reality, they were all struck out of the column of knowledge, the amount left standing would scarcely be worth adding up. We do speak of the Earth as though we had an idea of it. Had we none, our voyage over it would be weary beating onward in the night by dead reckoning, without compass, chronometer, or star.

No sooner, however, do we realize the condition to which mankind would be reduced were all the things really unknown which by Mr. Spencer are called unknowable, than we awake to the consciousness

that he must employ language in private and tentative senses, not in the recognised senses proper to public teaching. This impression becomes stronger at every point in our advance. Not only in descriptions, not only in those incidental definitions which often indicate more finely than the formal ones the real lines of a thinker's thought, but also in the most studied *ex cathedra* definitions possible, we find a royal contempt of the old rule: The *unwonted is obscure*. Therefore, plain, to ordinary men, as are words like know and do not know, knowable and unknowable, conceivable and inconceivable, it becomes manifest that in Mr. Spencer's pages their sense is unwonted, therefore, obscure; it is even inconstant, and such terms cannot be received at the values for which they pass current in the established commerce of mind.

The enthusiasts of unbelief who are ready to suppose that because Mr. Spencer has declared God to be unknowable, inconceivable, and so forth, believers in His existence must change their mind, might perhaps pause, at least for a moment. If Christians are to say: The Living God cannot be a real being since Mr. Spencer declares that He is unknowable and inconceivable; must not unbelievers say, Space cannot be a real thing, for it is equally declared to be unknowable; no more can Time be a real thing; nor yet Motion, or Force; nay, not Matter, or even my own Personality? Mr. Spencer's declaration that each one of these is

unknowable, is as strong as that the Living God is so. On the other hand, every man knows that each one of these objects is real; he knows that to abstract them all from the universe would leave it without form and void; he knows that a point really unknowable is what existence would be were any one of those things absent. This knowledge is so deeply based in nature, so well tested by every possible strain, that not in the case of any one of the "unknowables" or "inconceivables" mentioned, does the fact that Mr. Spencer says we cannot know it change in the least degree the conviction of any person as to the reality of its existence.

It does not change his own. He fully believes in the actual existence of many things which he calls unknowable; yes, even of things which he affirms we cannot form a conception of. He is as fully convinced of the real existence of space and time, of matter and force, of mind and motion, of earth and the solar system, as if he had never said a word about their being unknowable or inconceivable. He knows that he knows them, and shows it in every page he writes. Not with a knowledge, indeed, according to his wonderful definitions and theories as to what knowing consists in, but according to what far better indicates his real habits of thought and feeling, namely, his ordinary mental process in respect of these and of other things, which process he cannot write without disclosing.

If Time and Space were really not things, but only forms,—whether forms of thought as Kant has it, or forms of things as Spencer has it,—I should, in that case, probably go with Spencer and not with Kant. But nature will not let one go with either. Thoughts, whether those of Kant or your own, did not make either Time or Space. Both of them existed before ever the thought of Man said either I am, I was, or I shall be ; before ever it said I am *here*, and thou art *there*. Things did not make Time and Space. Before the hills, before the sun, they were ; the birthday of each separate world was a point in time, its birthplace was a point in space. These two arenas of the universe are things but not body, things but not mind, things but not spirit. Space is the arena for bodies, forces, and motions. Time is the arena for events, including all thoughts, plans, deeds, and records ; all play of forces, birth of bodies, sweep of motions, and every phase of change.

IV.—*What is Conceiving a Thing ?*

Telling me that I cannot conceive great powers of nature—powers that are a thousand times mightier than I—seems to me altogether gratuitous. But if it is meant that I cannot *conceive of* them, one is not to be told that. We can conceive of them. When the ideas are put into unmistakable language, and it is said that we cannot form any conception of things ; then the

saying betrays its utter inaccuracy. You set upon the phrase "forming a conception of" a thing a private meaning, as if it had mixed itself up in the mind with the phrase "conceive it," till the mixture resulted in mere confusion. Sir William Hamilton's expression about thinking a thing, and not thinking it, has been the source of much luminous mist. The only thing Sir William ever did think was his own thoughts. In doing that he did what few are capable of doing. But he never thought things, much as he talked of doing it. He never thought either bread or butter, either quantification or predicate. He thought of them. To speak of thinking a thing as if it were a thought, is a mode of expression that must bring in cognate obliquity of phrase in related matters. So, speaking in one and the same discussion of conceiving a thing and *conceiving of* it as if they were synonymous, imports into what ought to be very definite language extreme vagueness, which becomes worse and worse when at the same time a conception of a thing is taken to be equivalent to a detailed knowledge of its features, such as will enable you to make of it in your mind a full-length picture.

But all this is necessary to Mr. Spencer's method of proving that God is not a Knowable being, not One to whom we can ascribe attributes: for if He is not One whom we can class, not One of whom we can delineate in our minds a full image, necessarily He is

not on Agnostic principles One of whom we can form any conception, or to whom we can attribute personal qualities or the actions of an intelligent agent.

V.—*The Positivists and Mr. Spencer.*

The Positivists would naturally look upon the position that God was unknowable as one chosen by an adroit scholar of the master who had taught people not to deny as well as not to affirm. After all, saying Unknowable seemed less risky than saying, a mere chimæra; which was both affirming and denying in one; was, in fact, doing the two things of which you were not to do either. They claimed Mr. Spencer as a co-disciple. They even now affirm that his leading ideas are all borrowed from Comte.

To this Mr. Spencer has replied effectually, not only disclaiming discipleship, but alleging grounds of dissent from Comte's philosophy and polity, and showing how much the Positivists erred in taking, as traces of Comte, things which they had themselves, indeed, learned from him, but which he had learned from sources common to all searchers. All this Mr. Spencer did in a manner which perfectly conciliated self respect with respect for others.¹ He let it appear as Mill had done, as Miss Martineau, and, more

¹ Reasons for Dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte, appended to *Classification of the Sciences*.

candidly still, Littré did, that the great attraction of Comte had been "theological" rather than intellectual. He is astonished that any one acquainted with his writings "should suppose I have any general sympathy with M. Comte, save that implied by *preferring proved facts to superstitions.*" The italics are mine. But if Comte on the one hand was set high because of his adroit manner of turning science and even history against revealed religion, on the other hand philosophic writers who followed his methods and praised his thinking were reckoned as followers without note being taken of the exact line at which their reason rescued them out of his train. Littré had rather earnestly to say that his chief point of attachment to Comte was on the ground of his firm exclusion of "theological" views. Mr. Spencer's sympathy with Comte was evidently grounded on the same characteristic; but his dissent commenced at an earlier stage.

Mr. Spencer's most striking mark of separation from Positivism lies in the position—"The consciousness of Cause can be abolished only by abolishing
His consciousness itself."¹ In laying down this
Position principle, he was well aware that wherever it
as to should be applied, it would spring the key-
Cause. stone of M. Comte's arch. He smiled at the three pre-
 tended systems of philosophizing, contending that there

¹ *Classification of the Sciences*, p. 36.

was only one. The portentous law of the Three Stages he treated with no respect at all. Still, his intended denial of it is curiously ill-aimed. Instead of saying, as he set out to do, that our conceptions and the different branches of our knowledge do not pass through the three alleged stages or any similar ones, what he says is : "The progress of our conceptions, and of each branch of knowledge, is from beginning to end intrinsically alike." Their progress might be from beginning to end intrinsically alike, and yet be exactly what Comte asserts.

It is obvious that in taking the position above cited on the question of Causes, Mr. Spencer trod under foot the Positivist restriction on enquiry. Once started on the interrogation of nature as to the cause of this event, and then of the next, we are not to be stopped at one point in the chain more than at another. The inevitable result is that, if we do not stop ourselves, we are led up and up till we stand at that terminal point where all the Whys end and all the Because begin. That is, we are set in presence of the First Cause. That this might never be, the Positivists have fulminated their Don't Ask. Mr. Spencer is not disciple enough of the Vatican to follow them in that. Whatever else you may say of his teaching, you will not have to say that the master bars the scholars out. He was not brought up among traditions according to which one man is to rule over

the why and because of all other men; and hence the claim to set a fence around all investigation of causes and origins, calling upon mankind evermore to take the word of command from the High Priest of Humanity, would to him probably seem as ridiculous, viewed by the light of reason, as it would seem impracticable, viewed in the light of every-day life.

So far from shrinking from the study of origins, even though the risk of being compelled to confess to a personal God would, at times, appear to be

*His
Partiality
for
Origins.*

looming upon Mr. Spencer, he seems to have a propensity for origins. He is great upon origins. Few pieces of reading would be more entertaining than his exercises in mindmaking, in worldmaking, in eyemaking, in earmaking, in mouthmaking, and in constituting things in general out of their own properties, out of their own operations, out of their own relations, yea, verily, even out of their own appearances, except for the drawback that those exercises do not pass for mental gymnastics, but for the construction of solid works. As it was the art of Comte to divorce phenomena from cause and events from origin; so is it the foible—for in him it does not wear the appearance of art—of Mr. Spencer to divorce origin from originator and cause from will and intention.

In pursuit of this plan he often concurs with the Positivist treatment of phenomena; yet often diverges

from it. With them he confounds things with phenomena; habitually speaking as if, because a phenomenon is a thing, a thing is therefore only a phenomenon. That is to say, because a shadow is a thing, the thing shadowed, whether man, cow, or fingerpost, is only a shadow. But this fault is not confined to Agnostics and Positivists. From being an innocent and natural laxity of popular language, it has among large classes oozed through into the very structure of reasoning, ossifying it wherever it comes. Habits and conception moulded by this sophism cast deep shadows, not those of the morning which rapidly decline, but the shadows of the evening which do not decline, which lengthen and broaden till they cover all. Those shadows are already tolerably deep around a man before he can take an appearance as equivalent to the thing which makes its appearance; and, in consequence, takes a thing as if it were only its own appearance, or, more grotesque still, "constituted of" its own appearances. In confounding things with phenomena, Mr. Spencer, like the Positivists, only follows the flock.

Mr. Spencer in the late controversy is under the impression that the Positivists ignore all that is implied by a phenomenon. In his earlier *Reasons for Dissenting*, he more accurately stated the case, saying: That the essential principle of their philosophy is an avowed

ignoring of *Cause* altogether. Law, however, they admit ; and practically Mr. Spencer follows them in

His excluding from the view taken of law any
Position idea of different orders of laws for coördi-
as to
Laws. nation as between different orders of agents ;

and in thus lowering the conception of all law to that of the inviolable rule of procedure for inanimate agents, thereby levelling man as an individual, and society as an aggregate of men, down to the adamant of *invariable order*, which necessarily presupposes inviolable laws. For if there exists in nature any class of agents, who may, in a given case, either break law or keep it, then is order not invariable ; then for that class of agents, to whom law is the living law of liberty, and not stone dead rule, disorder may arise. But it will be worth while further on to devote a short chapter to Mr. Spencer's doctrine of law, free will, and necessity.

The striking point for our present survey is that, while the Positivist allows not of any inquiry into a phenomenon beyond what he calls its laws, and pro-

All nounces all questions as to cause and origin
Phenomena steps towards the inaccessible—thus barring
Shows of
Only One up even the way to a First Cause—Mr.
Reality. Spencer holds that all phenomena are but the show of one sole underlying reality, which reality, to state his position plainly, they do not reveal, but disguise. What he intends is not that each separate appearance has behind it a separate substance, which

makes the appearance and is in part revealed by it. Far from it. He deliberately describes the phenomena as disguising the phenomenon,¹ which language may, perhaps, in itself appear to be some slight punishment for the habit of treating all things as mere appearances. But the illustrations of these peculiarities must at present be reserved, our point being that, in Mr. Spencer's view, all phenomena are firstly mere shows, secondly disguises, and thirdly manifestations of one all-pervading, all-present, all-operating reality. You may tell me that the terms "mere show," "disguise," and "manifestation" are incompatible. I do not wait to do more at present than to say, They are Mr. Spencer's terms correctly gathered, as will subsequently appear.

VI.—*The Absolute Unknowable.*

This all-present and all-operating reality is, then, among a multitude of Unknowables, the Absolute Unknowable—yea, inconceivable as well as unknowable. Still, nothing is further from the truth than the idea that Mr. Spencer here means something unreal, something non-existent. On the contrary, it is the world, it is we men and women, it is the clay, and the wind, the ships, and the pounds, shillings, and pence, all of us together, poor things, classed as phenomena that

¹ *Classification of the Sciences*, p. 7.

are unreal. His Unknowable is, he holds, not negative, but positive. It is an Energy; it is a Power; it is Infinite; it is Eternal; yea, it is the Infinite and Eternal energy from which all things proceed. It is one, one everywhere and in all time, one within us and without us; one in matter and in mind. "The Power manifested throughout the Universe distinguished as material is the same power which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness."¹ That is, material things and mental powers are both and equally the one power manifesting itself. I hesitated about saying, Manifesting itself; but why should I? for "Manifested" is Mr. Spencer's word. The Power, then, is "manifested" in matter; it "wells up" in our minds. Yet after welling up, it is all underground; after being manifested, it is absolutely unknown; yea, absolutely unknowable! Yet notwithstanding that fact, "the relation it bears to us and the universe" lies so well within the private ken of Mr. Spencer that he is able formally to describe it as "the substratum at once of material and mental existence."

Mr. Harrison, eager, if possible, to find a parallel for the unknowable of Positivist worship, an unknowable for the main part of it non-existing, had called Mr. Spencer's *Unknowable* the All-Nothingness. "So far," retorts Mr. Spencer, "from regarding that which transcends phenomena as the All-Nothingness, I regard it

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 89, p. 5.

as the All-Being. Everywhere I have spoken of the Unknowable as the Ultimate Reality—the sole existence : all things present to consciousness being but shows of it, Mr. Harrison entirely inverts our relative positions. As I understand the case, the ‘All-Nothingness’ is that phenomenal existence in which M. Comte and his disciples profess to dwell.”¹ Let it not be supposed that the intention here is to indicate the nothingness of two parts of the Positivist Goddess—the future portion of humanity, which is nothing, as having never come into existence ; and the past portion, which is nothing, as having gone out of existence. It is not this that is intended, but that all things whatsoever are only mere shows, mere phenomena, All-Nothingness.

It is perfectly correct that Mr. Spencer never does represent his own Somewhat as nothing, his substratum as an empty abyss, his Power as a chimæra, his Energy as a negation. Mr. Harrison, for reasons of his own, calls it a negation, and tries to justify this by logic of his own. That is his matter. He copies the reasoners who call a protest a mere negation, because it negatives the pretensions it resists, which it does by affirming and maintaining the rights invaded by such pretensions. A protest, like a rampart, has its inside and its outside. The inside affirms the position of one, the outside

¹ *Nineteenth Century*. No. 89, p. 6.

denies that of another. The "mere negation" is, in either case, an empty sound. Mr. Spencer is positive, very positive, in his view of the reality of his own Somewhat, and what is more, in its exclusive and all-comprising reality. So positive is he of it, that, as we have just seen, the world of phenomena is the All-Nothingness; and as with him things are phenomena, and we who call ourselves persons are phenomena, therefore, we and they are portions of the All-Nothingness.

VII.—*The Positivist, Agnostic, and Christian Positions Respectively.*

Positivism, to make man all in all, makes God a chimæra, a fiction. Agnosticism, to make an Ultimate Reality—an unknowable power—all in all, makes man and nature a mere show, an All-Nothingness. Christianity makes God all in all, and man a real being under God, with nature a real world around man and under God. It is in direct contradiction to Positivism in asserting the reality of God's existence, His supremacy, and His glory. It is in direct contradiction to Agnosticism in asserting the reality of human nature—body and soul, the reality of animal life and mind, the reality of bodies and the properties of bodies, the reality of forces and motions; the reality of one harmonious universe composed of all these

and governed by God. It is further in direct contradiction to Agnosticism in asserting the truthfulness of phenomena as a channel of manifestation, a channel by which real things, or objects, become known to a real observer, or subject, and that by a real and not by an illusive knowledge—real, yet only partial. It is in direct contradiction both to Positivism and Agnosticism in asserting that this universe, having different orders of creatures, is harmonized in different groups of relations, determined by different orders of laws: unconscious agents holding unconscious relations determined by inviolable rules; conscious agents holding conscious relations determined by mental laws; moral agents holding moral relations determined by moral, that is to say, by true laws. True laws are precepts recognizing the possibility of two courses under the same circumstances, one right and the other wrong; precepts, in fact, based upon that very possibility which is in itself the antithesis of all physical laws. The religion of Christ is a religion with a Living God, a living faith, a living worship, and a living moral code. Mr. Spencer presents us with what he regards as all that is to survive of religion—a sentiment; a mere sentiment, a sense of the mystery of the universe, above all of the mystery of the Unknowable Reality. This is religion without a living being to worship, without a doctrine, without a moral lawgiver. Mr. Spencer formally rejects any imputation

of intending his religion to call us to worship, or to bring us either spiritual comforts or moral strength.

His expectation of making this supplant Christianity is grounded on his being able to make it appear that *Mr. Spencer's* God is not a Living Creator and Ruler of men, but that all things are mere shows of one being, itself a stream, an energy, a power, a substratum, an anything, so long as you admit that it has not personality, or intelligence, or any of the attributes usually assigned to God. Yet he does not stand steady over these abysmal gulfs: in fact, he reels over them. When stating his position, that "duty requires us neither to affirm nor deny personality," he adds words which, from the point of view either of the frank Atheist or the Positivist, mark a long stage of retreat. Christians, he intimates, "make the erroneous assumption that the choice is between personality and something lower than personality; whereas the choice is rather between personality and something higher"¹ This utterance is of long standing, and is reissued in the recent controversy. Then we are to recognize in the ultimate cause of things a nature "higher" than what Christians understand by the nature of a personal God! If Mr. Spencer does not mean that, what can be said or thought of his words in such a connection? Yet all the light he gives upon his own conceptions

¹ *First Prin.*, § 31.

of what is understood by personality would lead to the conclusion that such conceptions are admirably incorrect as to what Christians understand by it, especially when applied to God. Further, what he says of his own Unknowable Power sinks it below the level of personality in degrees which to a Christian appear immeasurable.

Another striking expression has respect to his refusal to ascribe intelligence to the Cause of things.

Personality and Intelligence. "Is it not just possible that there is a mode of being as much transcending Intelligence and Will as these transcend mechanical motion?"¹ If by intelligence and will Mr. Spencer intends human intelligence and will, then he may possibly remember that, very long ago, the thoughts of man, when compared with those of God, were set down as being low as the earth is when compared with the heaven. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heaven is higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."² These words indicate the Christian conception of a personal and intelligent God. Human forms, measures, limits, processes are all left below on the ground. But the power of thinking, feeling, acting is not left below; it rises up to infinite heights; it expands in every direction till it

¹ *First Prin.*, § 31.

² *Isaiah* lv.

fills the universe, and encloses it round about. Mr. Spencer surely is not unaware that this is included in the Christian conception of God's personality and intelligence. Being aware of it, if he sets side by side with it his own hints of what, as to personality, he has to argue against, he must surely feel somewhat strange. If a French philosopher instructed his readers that the English are so eccentric in their ideas that they believe their streets to possess the attribute of locomotion, even going so far as to say that Oxford street *runs* from Bloomsbury to Tyburn, he would not have ground for piquing himself on the accuracy of his science.

Comparing intelligence and will with higher thought and comparing them with mechanical motion are different things; for mechanical motion, being simply compulsory change of place by a body forced to leave this spot and move to that, is not mind. By increasing such motion to practically infinite rapidity you would not engender intellects, but only dissipate bodies. A Being—"a mode of being" is not natural language for anything but a mode—a Being with powers of conceiving, discerning, foreknowing, designing, directing, originating, changing, and undoing, higher than human power, higher than all limits, is the Christian's centre of thought, his glory; the sun of his soul. But "a mode of being," destitute of these powers, instead of

being higher than human intellect and will, would to him seem lower ; would seem what, indeed, might be called a mode of existence, but not a Power.

Taking, then, the fact that Mr. Spencer holds to the reality of an infinite and eternal Somewhat, manifested *The Next Questions.* in all phenomena, together with the fact that he holds a great number of the most conspicuous phenomena to be unknowable, as well as the Reality which they all disguise, we feel at once that the import of unknowableness becomes the question on which depends the practical upshot of his teaching. We must, then, try to ascertain what it is which, according to him, suffices to place a thing beyond the line of the knowable. If we have no idea of the Earth, what is it which bears it away out of the range of our ideas ? If we know not and cannot know our own personality, what is it which spirits it off into the shades of the unknowable ? If we are totally ignorant of space and time, what can that be which changes our oldest, most familiar acquaintances into utter strangers, to whom we need not a fresh introduction, but actually a first one ?

CHAPTER II.

WHAT SUFFICES ACCORDING TO MR. SPENCER TO PLACE A THING BEYOND THE LINE OF THE KNOWABLE.

I.—Things Admitted to be Real Held for Unknowable.

IT will be at once obvious, from what has been said in the preceding chapter, that when Mr. Spencer speaks of an object as being unknowable, he does not deny its existence. Neither does he mean that it lies beyond the range both of the senses and of legitimate inference. Nay, he does not even mean that it is rendered unknowable through being beyond the observation of the senses, and by coming only within the range of legitimate inference. He manifestly does mean that what is within the range of legitimate inference may be unknowable; nay, more, that what is within the range of our senses may be unknowable. He even means that what is within our consciousness, that a thing of which we possess a certitude is, or may be, unknowable. These statements may seem paradoxical; but only at first sight. Anyone who recalls the names of the objects already

enumerated as unknowable, will see how literal and exact the statements are.

Motion is one of the things unknowable, "not truly cognizable," not cognizable in connection with space, *Motion as an Unknowable.* not in connection with matter! Yet if there is in human experience one thing that comes within the range of direct observation, and of inference also in every imaginable degree, that thing is motion. The eye sees it, the ear hears it, the hand, the shin, the whole person feels it; the reason traces its passage in effects which follow it and only it, traces it every hour of every day. Consciousness, also, speaks as distinctly as either sense or reason. We are conscious of moving and being moved; conscious of motions within the frame cognizable only by our own mind; conscious of motions passing to the limbs, and cognizable by others; conscious of motions forcing the frame into impact against outer bodies, setting them in motion. What, then, is meant by telling us that things we see, things we trace by clear inference, things of which we are conscious, are to us not only unknown but also unknowable? Mr. Spencer has a meaning which study easily collects; but to that the only human answer is, Motion is not only knowable but known, and your puzzles come to little.

It is quite true that motion is neither organic nor inorganic. It is quite true that it is not matter. It

is quite true that it is not mind. It is quite true that, like force, its parent, it appears only as a messenger of interchange, of communication, bringing together things which else were always asunder ; adding to matter moved no atom, adding to mind that causes motion no attribute ; and yet constituting the index which more clearly than any other physical object marks off the different realms and characteristics of matter on the one hand and of mind on the other.

One chief characteristic of matter which all acknowledge to be absolutely universal is what we call inertia. That means simply that matter when at rest cannot set itself in motion, and when in motion cannot bring itself to rest ; in other words, it can neither initiate motion nor stay it. Mind, on the contrary, can initiate motion and also stay it ; it can make what is now a body at rest become a body in motion ; can accelerate its motion or retard it ; can observe its motion and measure it ; can guide its motion and alter its direction ; can make it avoid collision with this substance and bring it into collision with that one ; can even altogether arrest its motion. Further still, it can pre-arrange before the body is first started how swift or slow its motion is to be, and when and how it is to be arrested. And yet this very motion, which mind thus originates, directs, propor-

Motion a Connecting Link Between Mind and Matter.

tions, and ends, is what is to mind not truly cognizable! The evidence to prove this ought to be conclusive; otherwise the allegation that other things are unknowable will not carry deep significance.

Mr. Spencer in his *First Principles* presents us with interesting discussions on motion in relation to matter, on motion in relation to space, on motion in relation to rest; but motion in relation to intelligence and will escapes his notice. Yet he does not lose sight of the origin of motions. "Familiar with the fact from childhood, we see nothing remarkable in the ability of a moving thing to generate movement in a thing that is stationary."¹ Why should we? As the idea that a thing is remarkable generally includes the idea that it is unusual, there is in that sense nothing remarkable in the ability of a moving body to make another body move. If it could not do so, that would in ordinary life be very remarkable. Nevertheless the unseen somewhat, which one body imparts to another in the act of striking it, is no mean wonder. It is a somewhat which adds not to it and subtracts not from it, which leaves its constitution unchanged, and "yet enables it to traverse space." Ay, and in traversing space may endow it with a power of penetration marvellous to behold. That power of penetration is but another side of its power to generate movement; and the difference between a piece of lead lying still,

¹ *First Prin.*, § 17.

and the same piece of lead leaving the muzzle of a rifle, is a noble rebuke to that sophism which would say : It is only a piece of lead. It is not only a piece of lead. It is a piece of lead with an added momentum which may decide the fate of a critical day. Yet if we blotted out all the conclusions in modern philosophic writing which rest upon the sophism that such and such a thing, because by some general term it can be brought under the same class as another, is "no more" than that other, some assertions which at this moment greatly weigh with educated men would no longer weigh with them at all.

If, then, the ability of a moving body to originate motion in a stationary one is wonderful, what shall *Originating and Assisting Motion.* we say of the ability of a stationary body to originate motion in stationary bodies, and also to accelerate and arrest it in moving ones? This is an attribute never found in a stationary body, when mere body. A body that is at this moment at rest may at the command of mind slightly move, enough only to press a finger on a spring, or to utter a word. Yet that word may be transformed into an important play of forces : forces to be calculated by no physical rule, but solely by the intellectual power, the strength of will, or perhaps the authority of the person speaking. The simple word Forward, the simple word Fire! what mines of motion may they not explode! When

once you have come out of the realm of body into that of will and proper law, the physical equivalence of an antecedent and a succeeding motion is one of the weakest of philosophic dreams. The corollary of the conservation of energy is the convertibility of force. The field on which this can be turned to account offers the grandest arena in physics for the ascendancy of thought, forethought, and design to display itself.

The amount of motion which a moving body shall generate may be calculated by physical rules. Not so the amount of motion which an act of will shall generate. That must be calculated, as has been said, on the basis of intellectual force, strength of will, or authority. The Forward ! of one colonel will generate a mighty motion, and that of another a feeble one, in the same body of men. The word of one officer will make a whole army move, that of another of a different rank only a single company. The chemist, the acoustician, or the physicist cannot detect any physical elements in the one word different from those in the other. The kinds of motion into which the motion of a lifeless body may transmute itself may be calculated. The kinds into which the movement of the hand or of the lips may be transmuted cannot be calculated. It depends, in part, on the mind and intention of the person who initiates and directs the

*What Motions
Are and What
Are Not Cal-
culable.*

motion of hand or lips, which two elements of initiation and direction are totally strange to the physical forces—forces which continue, but do not begin; which combine, but do not direct. The kinds of movement into which it may be transmuted depend in part on the mind and will of the agents to whom the motion is directed. If these have no mind and will, you can calculate its effects by physical rule. If the station-master signals to an engine without any engineer, you can calculate what amount of motion will be generated by his motion: so much vibration of air. If the agents are without mind and will, but have vegetable life, your calculation of effects, though approximately good, ceases to be of certitude. If they have animal mind and will, its effect depends on their temper, training, strength, and other matters special to themselves. If they have human mind and will, its effect depends on the same elements developed on a vastly wider scale. Mind as a known source and ruler of motion is one of the phenomena that flash upon us at every phase of life. Very wonderful is it that philosophers, who spend much strength in trying to make thought and mind appear to be only molecular motions, have no time to spend on molecular motion, mechanical motion, animal motion, vegetable motion—motions of solids, of liquids, of gases—as the undoubted work of thought and mind.

Motion is unknown! it is not truly cognizable! the

attempt to understand the nature of it only leads to alternate impossibilities of thought: I ought to say "essential" nature, as if that altered the case. Mr. Spencer knows its essential nature very fairly for one lost in "alternate impossibilities of thought," since he affirms "motion is change of place."¹ But although his private information enables him thus to enunciate what it is, just as it enables him to tell what the *very nature* of thought forbids or does not forbid, this does not alter the fact that, as to human minds in general, they must accept his dictum that motion is one of the things not only unknown, but also unknowable.

The processes of agriculture and horticulture are accumulations of proof that the nature and effects of vegetable motion are known to man, and in *Motions that are Knowable.* large part guided by him. The whole career of navigation from the catamaran to the ironclad is one accumulation of proofs that mechanical motion is known, initiated, checked, and, above all, directed by us. All land travel, from the walk to the palanquin, the stage coach, and the railway, is another accumulation of evidence to the same effect. The entire system of factories is yet another: if the nature of mechanical motion were not cognizable, Manchester and Lowell, Lyons and Belfast, would never have made cottons, silks, or linens. The telegraph wires running

¹ *First Prin.*, § 17.

over our ridges and under our seas are witnesses, to any but an Agnostic, that molecular motion is known, initiated, directed. The dread art of war is one deep-dyed record of man's knowledge of motion and power over it. It is hard to tell whether in it animal motions, chemical motions, or mechanical motions are most wonderfully brought to bear on the ends in view. So in the fine arts, the piano and the harp, the song and the oration, the picture and the statue, are all witnesses to our knowledge of motion. Putting all these together, and also other groups of facts which will occur to anyone, surely the experience of life certifies to all men that in respect of the knowableness or unknowableness of motion, instead of halting between alternative impossibilities of thought, we march from impossibility to impossibility of achievement.

Could the fancy of Mr. Spencer be reduced to fact, and our race be awoke up next Monday morning without any true knowledge of motion, *What if We Really Did Not Know Motion?* what would be the condition of human affairs by the end of the week? That Saturday's sun would set upon an Earth that could no longer be called part of a cosmos. The number of its inhabitants would be already greatly reduced, and such as were still alive would be plunged in mourning, lamentation, and woe. No one could loose the ox from the stall, or lead the horse

to the watering. No market wain could reach the market cross. No ploughman could guide either team or plough. The factory bell could not be rung. The bank coffers could not be opened. No clock could be wound up ; no steamer could leave the pier. The surgeon could not bind the wound, nor the druggist find the bottle. Ships would lie idle in the docks, and at sea the steersman could not guide the wheel, or the crew lay hands on the halliards. The school would be a place impossible ; the parade, a hustling of fools. All motion would be disorder, and all disorder would be without repair. The end would be close at hand.

It seems to me as if, in that world without a goal, one hears a sage cry to the sparrow, saying : " Thou canst find thy nest ; lead me to mine." The sparrow replies : Tell me the way. " Ah," rejoins the sage, " if I knew how you ought to move, I should know how to move myself." It is the paralysis of an individual when he has to say, I have lost the power to move. It would be the paralysis of human nature had it lost the true knowledge of motion.

The countless number of motions originated by men on any given day, pre-determined by them so as to harmonize with other motions, some their own, some proceeding from sources independent of them ; these motions, taken with their intercrossings, their compoundings, their separations, and their fruitful

effects, are demonstrations, surpassing any requirements of evidence, that the mind of man has some true knowledge of motion, and that he has over it the mysterious power of originating and stopping it, as well as that of guiding and bending it while in flight. That he knows it to perfection, even a child would not say. That he does not know it at all, is too poor a saying to become an intelligent child.

The further we follow up motion the more do we come into the presence of mind. As motion is the message of force in matter, so is force the message of mind to matter. Mind is a Mistress of motion only because she is a Mother of force. Knowledge of motion is knowledge of the effects of force: knowledge of the amounts and directions of force is knowledge of the energies of mind. So far as we know, every moving body moves in conveying a purpose—moves as the representative of an originating will and a selected end.

II.—*His Grounds for Holding Motion as Unknowable.*

What, then, are the grounds upon which Mr. Spencer affirms motion to be not truly cognizable? Does he say that it is not real? No: he asserts its reality; and yet, in a very striking and suggestive passage, he distinctly implies that it is not a

thing. But that implication I take to be only one instance of a habit of slipping in for a particular term a universal one. Speaking of motion: "What is this," he asks, "added to a body which does not sensibly affect any of its properties and yet enables it to traverse space? Here is an object at rest and here is the same object moving. In the one state it has no tendency to change its place; but in the other it is obliged at each instant to assume a new position. What is it which will for ever go on producing this effect without being exhausted? and how does it dwell in the object? The motion you say has been communicated. But how?—What has been communicated? The striking body has not transferred a *thing* to the body struck [*italics* Mr. Spencer's]; and it is equally out of the question to say that it has transferred an *attribute*. What then has it transferred?"¹

What then has it transferred? Mr. Spencer's answers to his own question are three, and are all perfectly plain: It has not transferred a thing; it has not transferred an attribute; it has transferred motion. Therefore, it follows that motion is neither a thing nor an attribute. Yet in reality Mr. Spencer holds it to be both a thing and an attribute. Holding that it is not matter added to a body, for the particular term,

*Is Motion a
Thing, an
Attribute, or
Nothing?*

¹ *First Prin.*, § 17.

matter, he slips in the universal one, a thing.¹ He holds that it is not a *property*, a permanent, inseparable quality of a body. For this narrower term he slips in the broader one, attribute. But motion is as much an attribute of the sea as extension is. Mr. Spencer says that motion does not sensibly affect any of the *properties* of the body. That is, it does not alter particular properties; but it is an attribute which, while present, alters the whole body, and alters its relations with everything in existence. We attribute to a train on its way rapid motion, or slow motion, just as the case may be. Mr. Spencer holds that the body striking has transferred to the body struck a something which obliges it to assume at each instant a new position, something which enables it to traverse space. This contemplates only inert bodies and their motion; and to them language is perfectly applicable which makes the ability to traverse space synonymous with compulsion to move. Voluntary movement is here out of sight. To include it would be nature *versus* much modern philosophy.

Taking it then as settled that he admits motion to be an actual somewhat, does he take it not for a real thing, only for an illusory appearance? With considerable show of reason, from his language, this question might be answered in the affirmative. Still it would not be then correctly answered. Whatever he says about

¹ "Matter" in its logical relation to "thing" is some things.

our ideas of motion being "illusive," he holds to the reality of motion. Sometimes, indeed, his words might warrant a hasty reader in saying that he denied it. "A body," he remarks, "impelled by the hand is clearly perceived to move, and to move in a definite direction: there seems at first sight no possibility of doubting that its motion is real, or that it is towards a given point. Yet it is easy to show that we not only may be, but usually are, quite wrong in both these judgments."¹ If we usually are wrong in both these judgments, then the motion of a body impelled by the hand and clearly perceived to move is usually not real motion, and its direction is usually not towards the point towards which it is seen to move.

But such positions are not made good by the ingenious cases alleged in support of them. Those cases establish nothing more than the fact that the senses do not inform us of all the motions which affect any given body. They fail, and fail utterly, to establish either that the motion of the body impelled by the hand is not real, or that the direction of that motion is not the one it is perceived to be.²

¹ *First Prin.*, § 17.

² Perhaps Mr. Spencer may put into the word "real" the meaning of not relative. If so, that is to me one of the things incomprehensible. Motion, to my mind, must always be both real and relative; and the attempt to set up an antithesis between what is relative and what is real is one of the most misleading contrivances of the schools. A relation, indeed, can no more constitute the things related, than an

To prove that our ideas of motion are illusive, Mr. Spencer puts a case.¹ He imagines a ship sailing to the west, and the captain walking to the east, just at the same rate of speed. This compound motion

*The Case of
Moving
Captain and
Ship.*

he still further compounds by taking into view the motion of the earth round its axis from west to east hundreds of times faster. This he compounds still further by taking into view the motion of the earth in its orbit in the opposite direction, sixty or seventy times faster than the last named motion. Even this he compounds further by taking into view the motion of the solar system, carrying the earth towards some point in the constellation Hercules. He thinks that from all this it results that the captain in walking from stem to stern, at the same rate as the ship sails, is stationary, "though to all on board the ship he *seems* to be moving." [Italics mine.] Seems to be moving! he is moving. What does Mr. Spencer understand by motion? If there is no motion without getting further east or west, further

appearance can constitute the thing which appears, or than a change can constitute the thing which changes. On the other hand, a relation once formed is itself a reality as well as are the two things related, and a change in relations is a real change, may be a momentous one, even though it be not a change in the properties of either one or other of the things related. A change in relations is a real change even if it do not affect properties, and a change in properties must be a relative as well as a real change.

¹ *First Prin.*, § 17.

north or south, then molecular motion is done away with. But that is not all. If a man whose left leg is passing his right leg, whose right leg is passing his left leg, in regular alternation; a man whose whole body is traversing space; a man who is every moment changing his position; a man who passes the foremast, passes the mainmast, passes the companion, passes the mizen, passes everything, to the taffrail,—is not moving, nothing ever moves. The illusiveness is not in the eyes of the people on board, but in the fog-signals of the philosopher. Sight reports a man moving from stem to stern, and a man moving from stem to stern there is in reality. Sight tells the truth respecting him equally well as it tells it respecting the other men who sit still.

Sight does not say that this motion of the man from stem to stern is the sum total of all motion that affects the vehicle in which he is being carried,—affects its relations to the surface of the earth, to the solar system, to the stellar universe. Sight has comparatively little part in those questions. It sees what it sees, reports it, and makes reason aware by its report that man is born to move under more powers than he sees, and is led by those powers; and that where sight ends there his relations, his interests, his means of knowing, are only at their starting point.

The man is motionless! because forsooth the ship

goes west as fast as he goes east, and carries him with her. If stationary meant motionless,—and that would be the only relevant meaning in the present case,—he would not be even stationary, but the opposite of stationary ; for he is constantly changing place. If stationary means remaining over the same part of the earth's surface, then a pendulum is stationary, but not motionless ; soldiers marking time are stationary, but not motionless ; and a tree swaying is stationary, but not motionless.

To those familiar with such puzzles, the case put is only one of a body in a vehicle, itself in another vehicle, and this again in an outer vehicle. A cherry in a hamper, the hamper in a truck, the truck in a train ; that is all. Suppose the cherry to be at the end of the hamper next to the engine. Suppose that Clerk Maxwell causes the cherry to become possessed by one of his demons. The consequence is that instead of behaving properly, like "organic and inorganic," it takes to behaviour never heard of within that line of "inanimate material agency," which to many writers of our philosophical schools encloses all agency, but which Sir William Thomson, the man of science, cautiously marked as the line dividing between two regions requiring different systems of calculation,¹ which caution and distinction Helmholtz,

¹ Quoted *Unseen Universe*, p. 86.

in reviewing Sir William, takes note of with the remark that it is "very wise."¹

So our cherry, thus animated, is minded to a walk, a long walk, even all the length of the hamper. Therefore, it does walk across dozens of inanimate cherries, across scores of rods and spaces between rods, till it rests at the extreme end of the hamper. Now, is anything more untrue to sense, to perception, to reason, to nature, and to science, than to speak of this movement as only a seeming one, or as being tainted with even the slightest shade of unreality? Suppose that the train is heading west, and going five times faster than the cherry moves. In this case the cherry is no further east at the end of its race than at its beginning; on the contrary, it is further west. That has nothing to do with the reality, or illusiveness, of its independent movement. Nor yet with the direction of it. The cherry really did move, really left the place where it had been, really crossed one cherry, really crossed the hollow between that and the next, really crossed the second cherry, and so on, over body and void alternately to the end. At the end it was no longer in the place where it had been, and it was in a place where it had not been. So much for the *reality* of the movement. One word as to its direction. How, Mr. Spencer seems to ask, could it be moving eastward when at the end of the journey

¹ *Nature*, No. 811, Vol. 32.

it was further westward than it was at the beginning. That is a mere school puzzle. Is it as far westward as it would have been had it not moved? is it as far westward as the other cherries carried on inertly just as the vehicle went? No; it is not so far westward by the whole length of the hamper. Every inch it moved counts in the difference between the position of the cherries which did not move and its own. Exactly as many inches as it moved, so many is it eastward of them.

The case of the ship is all Mr. Spencer advances in proof of our nescience of motion "in connection with space." This is what he counts upon to sustain the *Illusive* conclusions—that what we perceive are *Ideas.* not the real motions; that our ideas of motion are illusive; that what seems moving proves to be stationary, what seems stationary proves to be moving; and that what we conclude to be going rapidly in one direction proves to be going more rapidly in the opposite direction.

Of these propositions the last answers itself. "Going more rapidly in the opposite direction" implies that it is also going in the other direction, though less rapidly. The proof that it is so going lies in the result of the two motions; which differs from what would be the result of the more rapid, were it not in part counteracted by the less rapid. As to the assertion that what seems moving proves to be stationary, and *vice versa*,

the reply is, not always; not ordinarily; only, perhaps, in one case out of many. When it does occur, it is not generally a case of simple motion, as between two bodies before a stationary observer; but of compound motion, the observer himself generally being in some vehicle. The cases that can be cited are particular ones, and not universal. Therefore, the two general conclusions are both erroneous. "Our ideas of motion are illusive," is a universal assertion, and is not correct. Some of our ideas of motion are illusive; but generally they are not illusive; and, when they are so, the illusion is generally temporary and contains seeds of self-correction. "What we perceive are not real motions"—the term being universal, the assertion is not true. Some motions which we seem to perceive are not real; but nearly all of what we perceive are real motions. But when we examine the very case first described by Mr. Spencer, that of "a body impelled by the hand"; which, as he truly says, "is clearly perceived to move, and to move in a definite direction"; and respecting which he asserts that we are "usually quite wrong in both these judgments"; there is but one possible reply. Usually we are quite right in both these judgments; and the case in which we are wrong in both of them, if known, is not cited by Mr. Spencer; if knowable, is not indicated by him. To prove us usually wrong in both these judgments he quotes no case of a body impelled by the hand, but gives the case of ship and captain. That

case he handles so as to construct a puzzle ; which puzzle, a little looked into, opens of itself and leaves us smiling, when we find it advanced as a philosophic proof, in this age of science, that motion is unknowable.

Thus Mr. Spencer's demonstration, that motion "when considered in connection with space" is not truly cognizable, goes in reality to prove only that such motions as we see are not all that are taking place. In his selected case the only motion directly and instantly seen is that of the captain himself ; or the independent motion of a body in a moving

*He Proves
that We do
not Know
what We See
by Our
Knowledge of
what We
do not See.*

vehicle. The second motion, that of the ship, the moving vehicle, can be easily seen if looked for. But the rapid motions of the greater moving vehicle, the earth, are utterly unseen, and remain so after reason has found them out ; whether it be its daily wheeling round at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, or its annual circuit at the rate of between sixty and seventy thousand miles an hour. In motion, as in other things, sight shows us a small part of what affects us, of what it is of moment that we should know. We are made to rise by sight to wider and deeper things than it reveals. This is really what Mr. Spencer's instances show ;—that the mightiest physical movements with which the human body is carried along, in which it takes a part, are

beyond sight, beyond perception; undiscerned through any sense, yet within the grasp of knowledge, by just inference. His method of proving that we do not know what we see, is by displaying our knowledge of much more than we do see. Or in other words, he literally employs our knowledge of the unseen to establish our nescience of the seen. Nature employs our knowledge of the seen to apprise us of the unseen, to teach us that for a little which the eye reveals there is much behind, so much that the human being, body and mind, is in perpetual relation with things certainly existing, in part known, and yet passing knowledge.

So completely unseen is the rotary motion of the earth, that even at this day the majority of human beings are not cognizant of it. So completely unseen is the greater motion of the earth in its orbit, that they who know how great is its speed are but a fraction of mankind. The further motion of the earth and all it contains, in company with the sun and the sister planets, is almost beyond the hearing of any but those who have schooling in civilized countries. Yet all-unseen as these are, unheard, unfelt, are they unknown? Are we "quite wrong" in holding that they are real? "quite wrong" in holding that they are in given directions? Is our condition in respect of them to be called, with attention to the just use of language, "total ignorance"? Is it not a case of knowing truly, and yet knowing in part?

III.—*Motion in Connection with Matter.*

Having now seen how little it is that with Mr. Spencer suffices to place motion "considered in connection with space" beyond the line of the knowable, we do not need to do more than glance at his reasons for placing it beyond the same line when "considered in connection with matter." These, in fact, have already been before us. They are summed up in the question: What has the body striking transferred to the body struck? Or in another form: "In what respect does a body after impact differ from itself before impact?" Mr. Spencer's own answers are direct and plain, contained as they are in other questions. After it has been struck, the body is *enabled to traverse space*, which I should say only of a living body; or it is *obliged at each instant to assume a new position*, which is true of all bodies moved by material force. This is the respect in which it differs from itself when it was at rest. Then, he urges, What has been communicated? Of course the answer is, Motion. But here he abruptly changes his method of questioning from What to How. Instead of asking What is motion? and giving his own answer, "change of place," or any other, he asks How? that is, how has it been communicated? Here is one case of many in which the How is not easier than the Why? for we often can tell why a thing has been set in motion when we are unable to tell How. Com-

municated the motion has indeed been, and that we know. The What is therefore settled. The body struck has had motion imparted to it, the body striking has lost its motion. We were cognizant of motion in the body that delivered the stroke ; cognizant of rest in the body waiting to be struck ; cognizant of a change in it from rest to motion the instant after impact ; cognizant of a continuance of the motion so begun ; and cognizant of first an arrest of motion, and then of rest after motion, in the body that delivered the stroke. Yet motion "considered in connection with matter is not truly cognizable." And with Mr. Spencer it suffices to place it beyond the line of the knowable, that he can ask about it the questions we have cited ! He does, indeed, prove that our knowledge of it is not omniscience, but as an attempt to prove that it is nescience, I do not know what admirers and disciples may say of his argument. Any one of them could ask the master quite as many questions, and quite as hard ones, about the process of his writing books. Yet I suppose they admit the fact of his writing books as one that is knowable.

IV.—*Motion in Connection with Rest.*

It will be remembered that motion "considered in connection with rest" is not truly cognizable. I do not hesitate to take "truly cognizable" as simply meaning

cognizable, for what is not true knowledge is not knowledge at all. Mr. Spencer apparently means by truly cognizable what most would mean by completely or perfectly explicable; but if that is his meaning it is a private one, till so stated. Mankind do not attach any such meaning to the words. Most men know both persons and things very truly in respect of which there remains more unknown to them than what is known.

Why, then, is motion not cognizable when considered in its relations to rest? Because, says Mr. Spencer, when we witness changes from rest to motion or from motion to rest, we find it impossible "truly to represent these transitions in thought." A moving body cannot, he adds, be brought to rest without passing through all the rates of speed between its own and none at all, or rest. But we cannot mentally picture the passing from the lowest degree of motion to none at all. Between the two the gap is impassable. From a something, however minute, to nothing, the difference is infinite. Hence we cannot see how the infinitesimal motion becomes no motion, even the least conceivable motion being infinite as compared with rest; and therefore "motion considered in connection with rest" is not cognizable. Now, in all this what we do not see is how an infinitesimal anything passes into nothing; for an infinitesimal never does pass into nothing; as on the other hand *nothing never*

passes into an infinitesimal anything. What we do see is that motion is ended and rest sets in. This we are cognizant of, and able to verify in many ways. We are cognizant of changes from rest to motion, cognizant of changes from motion to rest. Wordy puzzles about infinities and infinitesimals and nothings, which are excellent sharpeners for youths in schools, or good pastime for monks in cloisters, are anything but excellent when put out as philosophy. The old puzzles which prove that nothing can move, and that it both rains and does not rain, seem to me serious compared with some of the Agnostic puzzles. This, however, is a digression; and now to return to rest and motion. If to be "truly" cognizant of them means being able to answer all possible questions about them, and if not being able to do this reduces our knowledge to untrue knowledge, then mankind in all its experience is astray; then truly knowing one's own body means being able *truly to represent all its transitions in thought*.¹ Sometimes it happens that the longer we know our bodies and the more we study them, the less able are we to give a satisfactory account of their transitions.

We have now seen the reasons why, whether considered in relation to space, to matter, or to rest, motion is placed beyond the line of the knowable.

¹ *First Prin.*, §17. "Truly to represent these transitions in thought we find impossible," *i.e.*, from rest to motion and *vice versa*.

Those reasons leave us where we were, and leave the question where it was. Motion is real, and we know it. Motion when seen by us is generally in the direction it seems to be in. When it is a motion made with our body, or by our body impelling something else, it is always in the direction it seems to be in. That fact is not altered if a vehicle containing us, and also the thing we impel, carries both in a direction opposite to the one in which we impelled it. But when our own bodies are not making proper motions, but are being carried along while themselves in a sense at rest, then are we, until experience corrects first impressions, subject to illusions in respect of the movements of bodies outside of the vehicle—be it boat, train, or anything else. Perhaps the best vehicle for illustrating this is an outside jaunting car running fast along fields of potatoes or corn in “ridges.” The ridges seem to spin round with amusing velocity. Even in childhood, however, how soon one learns that the illusion is an illusion; after which all its power of deception is gone. Exceptions of this kind only render more conclusive the evidence that sight is ordinarily worthy of full trust, and that, when it brings illusions, it brings with them elements of detection and correction which will eventually prove effectual.

The reality of our knowledge of motion and its partiality at the same time are both in keeping with

what applies to all our knowledge. I say all ; for we ought not to speak of illusory impressions
Illusion ought not to speak of illusory impressions
not as illusive knowledge, false knowledge, not
Knowledge. true knowledge, or such like, as if know-
ledge could be both true and false. It can be true and partial ; but illusion is not knowledge at all. It is ignorance and worse ; for while in mere ignorance we have no idea at all of a thing, in illusion we have no just idea of it and have a false one.

V.—*Seen Bearing Witness to Unseen.*

Instead, then, of the unknowableness of motion reacting upon our belief in the Living God so as to lead us to say that He cannot be known, the testimony of motion and our knowledge of it turns all the other way. It is manifest to reason—so manifest that not to have faith in it is unreasonable—that we are borne on—we, our fellows, our world, and other worlds in companionship—by movements of which no eye sees, no ear hears, no hand feels a single indication. It is equally manifest that of the existence of these we are not left without witness, though it is not directly revealed to sense. One slight movement of a planet or a star may open an avenue through which shall appear to thought sweeps and systems of motion which never will to man on earth become objects of sense. The movements which are familiar

objects of sense,— the fall of an apple, the rise of a water-vapour, the swelling of a tide—are each and every one to us the index of present interests, and also of others that, though more remote, are also often more momentous. These familiar movements, near and visible, are tokens of forces on which individual welfare depends, ay, individual existence ; but the unseen movements which they reveal to faith, without displaying them to sight, are tokens of forces on which the existence of the earth itself depends, the existence of worlds and worlds travelling in concert. Motion of things lifeless is the witness to mind and life. Behind a movement are will and purpose ; in it are power and guiding ; before it work and ends. The telescope of the astronomer leads us upwards to marvels of motion in magnitudes of mass and space that overwhelm us ; the microscope of the naturalist leads us downwards to motions of living motes bordering closely on the infinitely minute. The one and the other set us in presence of an infinity. Amid one and the other we see power and guiding in the movement, work and ends before the movement ; and shall we see, or refuse to see, will and purpose behind the movement ?

VI.—*The Grounds of the Unknowableness of the Earth.*

Our impression that nothing in the so-called necience of Mr. Spencer is of force to disturb our faith in

the existence of a Personal God, or, indeed, our faith in anything else, is strengthened if we briefly pass in review some others of the objects which to him are unknowable, noting what, in their case, also suffices to place them beyond the line of the knowable. Why should it be strange to Mr. Spencer that we speak as though we had an idea of the earth? Perhaps it may be that he takes, as an equivalent for that phrase, his own alternative phrase subjoined to it,—“as though we could think of it in the same way that we think of minor objects.”¹ Some of us believe that we have an idea of London, and yet never fancied that we could think of it in the same way as we do of a single cottage. For, by thinking of it in the same way, our author evidently intends forming of it in the mind an equally commensurate picture. He says that, when we are on the sea-shore, we can “realize with tolerable clearness” the curvature of the earth’s surface; and we can also, “with something like completeness,” mentally represent to ourselves the piece of rock on which we stand. This he calls forming a conception of the rock; and I assume also of the curvature. But he says that if we attempt to follow out the idea of the curvature to the antipodes we are utterly baffled; and forming a conception of the earth as we did of the rock we find impossible. That cannot

¹ *First Prin.*, § 9.

mean more than that we are unable to form as complete a mental image of the large object as of the small one. It does not mean that we have not an idea of the large one, or that it is to us unknown, much less unknowable.

Mr. Spencer's criterion of knowledge amounts to a mere ability to picture the form and colour of an *His Piece of Rock.* object in the imagination. He can have in view no other idea of knowledge when he speaks of the piece of rock as being mentally represented with something like completeness. All he thinks of is evidently the mental image of the shape and colour of a piece of rock, so as to be able to think "of its top, its sides, and its under surface, at the same time or nearly at the same time." Is that sufficient to give us a tolerably complete knowledge of it? It does not even assure me that I shall know of what kind of stone it is. How often on the sea-shore has one asked people who well knew the shape and colour of the rocks what kind they were of, and found they did not know? They might be granite, or basalt, or limestone, for what they could tell. A geologist who never saw the piece of rock, and could make no mental representation of it, would know more about its nature by showing him a pebble from the foot of it than the mere mental representation, "with something like completeness," would ever yield. The criterion is applicable

only to surfaces, and even as to them it is for the little and nothing but the little.

Our mental picture of the earth Mr. Spencer takes to be compounded out of the image of an artificial globe and such perceptions of the earth's surface as our eyes give us. Very well ; if so composed, it will be substantially correct as to form. But did the original mental conception of a globular earth spring from the "terrestrial globe"? If it did, What did the original conception of a terrestrial globe spring from? Most of us would say that the globe was child and not parent of the conception, and that a conception of the earth as a globe was parent of a model of it in that form. The genesis of the "terrestrial globe" lies in the conceptions of man as to the form of his abode. Like other shapes, it is the die of thought stamped upon matter. It "differentiates" that particular piece of matter from others of the same composition, by a something added to it which does not change its properties, which does not, like motion, enable it to traverse space, but which does enable it to present to all minds the idea conceived by one. Thus, then, does form stand up as a witness to the power of mind over matter, and also as an interpreter of mind to mind—interpreter of thoughts respecting matter which words could not render until after a form had first embodied the thought, and a word had subsequently been associated with that form, as its name, capable of recalling it.

The method of presenting the terrestrial globe as the origin of our conception of the earth's rotundity

*The Case
of the
Terrestrial
Globe.*

is not repugnant to much of our modern philosophical writing. When things are constituted out of their own properties, operations, modes of procedure, and appearances, why not also out of their own offspring? But leaving these questions to Agnostics, we pass on to note their surprise at our thinking that we have an idea of the earth. We feel that we have an idea of it; one, like all our ideas, falling short of knowledge to perfection, yet one, like all our knowledge, yielding us guidance beyond price. Mr. Spencer's words have often recalled to me the mid-day when, on the ship *Essex*, Captain Foord said: "If the wind holds we shall sight the Friar's Hood by three o'clock." The name was that of a mountain in Ceylon, and we had been some ninety days without sight of land. When the word was fulfilled how vividly I felt that it was a

*Have We an
Idea of the
Earth?*

striking proof of the reality of science and of its value. We had indeed an idea of the earth. That idea was that the way to voyage over it is to seek guidance from on high. Earth, as we saw it during three months, could give us no information as to where we were. From the wave that sank out of view at the same time as the coast of Madeira to the one which rose into view at the same time as the coast of Ceylon, no hint of north or south

did billow or ripple yield us. Our information as to where we were and whither we were going came solely from the signs set in the firmament of heaven. Faith in these, and knowledge deduced by reason from the data they afforded, had led us through far extended vacancy towards the desired objects. Strange shores rose up to testify that the heavens utter speech—speech that man can so interpret as to turn it into knowledge sufficient to be his guide.

Mr. Spencer, then, may call our ideas of the earth either a real conception or a symbolical one ; but they are of use. So, when he passes to such ideas as are imperfect, not through the great size of the object, but through its numerous divisions, the same is true: our ideas are of use. Great durations and great magnitudes, he says, are not actually conceived, but only symbolically. It is true, if we speak of a year, we do not picture each moment in imagination. No more, if we speak of miles do we picture every inch ; or if we speak of a million of pounds do we picture each sovereign. But our idea of a whole is as definite as that of a single part, and as correct. It is not a full comprehension, if that means separately seeing all the parts in one mental act. It is a definite and an accurate conception. Try any ordinary man, and see if he will accept the enjoyment of a possession for 364 days as being for a year. Try any clerk if he will

take 999,999 pounds for a million. A collective idea is as definite, and as trustworthy, as any other; perhaps more definite than an individual one, because less perplexed with forms and colours, if it refer to objects of sense; and less with details, if it refer to other objects of thought. For instance, our conception of a thousand pounds is just as clear, whether it means one bank note, or ten hundred gold pieces. In the first case, we can picture the note, "with something like completeness," but may be puzzled with a doubt as to the number, the signature, or the letter. In the second case, we cannot picture each of the ten hundred pieces. But if any one tries to pass off upon us nine hundred for ten, we show at once that inability to form a complete "mental representation" was not ignorance, as the ability to form it in the case of the note was not knowledge. It was mere imagining of the object of sense,—the body, or framework, or symbol, or phenomenon, or ghost; whatever you please to call it, of the object of thought. That was a given value; and whether it was represented by pieces of metal or pieces of paper was a mere accidental circumstance. It was acquaintance with the value, a just estimate of the object of thought, which constituted knowledge. Our conception of great durations, great magnitudes, or aught else collective, is not commensurate, is not knowledge to perfection. It is, on the other hand, not nescience, and not

illusion ; it is real, partial cognizance, vindicating the truthfulness of the past, guiding the present, preparing safe action for the future ; priceless knowledge inviting us to grow therein.

VII.—*Why Space and Time are Unknowable.*

What is it that suffices to place Space and Time beyond the line of the knowable ? It is this : " To be conceived at all, a thing must be conceived as having attributes."¹ Now, as to space, our philosopher holds that the only attribute which it is possible to think of as belonging to it is extension ; and to credit it with this implies a confusion of thought ; seeing that extension and space are convertible terms. Thus, space has no attributes, and Time is equally destitute of them ; and this defect removes them out of the range of knowledge. This method of defining first and observing afterwards, is a good one for putting things beyond any line you think fit. Mr. Spencer cannot credit space with extension Can you, sagacious reader, debit it with non-extension ? is it to you " possible to think of it " as without extension ?

For me, I could readily credit it with capacity, and consequently with extension in length, breadth, *Has Space* and height, not to speak of the fourth *Attributes?* dimension. Space is one of the few things the reality of which can be verified by each of

¹ *First Prin.*, § 15.

the senses separately. Like motion and form, it is not matter; like them, it is not mind. Unlike them, it is not anything that finite mind can originate or annul. But not being either matter or mind, it is yet so related to each of them by Him who was before either, and is ever present with both, that every sense can verify it. The substance which when an inch from the lips yielded us no taste is sweet when that space has been crossed. That which offered no hardness a foot off is hard when that space is no more between. The flower that yields us no odour when at the other end of a room smells sweet when near at hand. The clock that sends us no sound when a mile off does so when we draw near. The bird that is visible for a certain space disappears beyond it. Similar remarks apply to time. Here, then, once more, our knowledge is neither omniscience nor nescience. It is the real but partial knowledge of finite minds; fit for them, serviceable for their uses. Mr. Spencer may put time and space beyond the bounds of the knowable; to us they are within those bounds; they are things we cannot help knowing, things which saturate us with evidence of their presence, and of their momentous place in the system of the universe. Neither mind, body, nor spirit; neither matter nor form; neither motion nor force; they encompass all of these—two omnipresent and perpetual witnesses to one all-

comprehending power, and to one all-harmonizing plan. We know them, and we know them in part.

VIII.—*Why Matter is Unknowable.*

What places *matter* beyond the line of the knowable? It is declared to be "in its ultimate nature as absolutely incomprehensible as space and time." Suppose it to be so; if space and time though incomprehensible are knowable, so may matter be. Mr. Spencer has no ill-will to matter, yet he seems rather more than usually exigent in respect of it. "Could we succeed in decomposing it into those ultimate homogeneous units of which it is not improbably composed," we should, he thinks, still be unable to say what it is. "The ultimate unit must remain absolutely unknown."¹ Most of us would be disposed to call it knowledge when we knew its mass, its form, its forces, its motions, its properties in combining, its properties isolated; and knew its composition down to the smallest sensible grain, down with Dallinger and his microscope to the minutest particle that even it can bring up out of the unknown, then down beyond the particle to the molecule, and down further to the atom, the ultimate atom, Thomson's vortex, or the hard and solid mite of Lucretius. Yet after all this we must pronounce the ultimate atom

¹ *Principles of Psychology*, § 62.

absolutely unknown. That is, finding it out had left us where we were before we found it out ; before, indeed, we ever began to seek it out ; ay, before we ever heard of it. No : the atom would not be absolutely unknown. In its minuteness, like Space in its vastness, it would at the same time be known, and yet pass our knowledge.

IX.—*Why Self is Unknowable.*

Finally, we ask what suffices to place *Self*, or our own personality, beyond the line of the knowable ? Here there is no ambiguity in Mr. Spencer as to the reality of our personal existence, or of our consciousness of it ; no doubt as to the confessed certainty of it. It is admitted to be the certainty of the crowd and the philosopher alike. What, then, renders unknowable that which is real, that which we are certain of, conscious of ? It is the definitions. "If the object perceived is self, what is the subject that perceives ?" This tremendous puzzle is followed up thus : "If it

Can Self be is the true self which thinks, what other self
Subject can it be that is thought of ?" Now, the
and Object ? pre-conceived definition of knowledge evidently postulates that the knowing and the known cannot be one and the same. We do not, it would seem, know self ; but one thing we do know, absolutely know, rightly know, that if there is one self thought of, it must be another self that thinks of it ! If, for

instance, it is the true self that is touched, it must be another self that touches it. If it is the true self that is shaved, it must be another self that shaves it. The axiom that if one self is thought of it must be another self that thinks of it, is taken as a thing we do know. We are assumed so well to know it that we use it as the criterion by which to judge whether or not we can know things open to sense. Yet things more obvious than that axiom are ruled beyond the line of knowledge. The description of things we do not know includes self, matter, time, space, motion.

Dean Mansel is responsible for the final evidence that self lies beyond the line of the knowable. "Clearly a true cognition of self implies a state in which the knowing and the known are one, —in which subject and object are identified; and this Mr. Mansel rightly holds to be the annihilation of both." The annihilation it is of the idea that they are two, the establishment of the position that they are one; but the annihilation it is not of the position that the knower knows himself, and that the known is known to himself; that the subject is its own object, and the object its own subject. This is what the experience of all mankind has settled. For one case in a day when anything else than ourselves is our object, there are many when nothing else is so. Therefore when we read, "that the personality of which each is conscious, and of which the existence

is to each a fact beyond all others the most certain, is yet a thing which cannot be truly known at all : knowledge of it is forbidden by the very nature of thought,"¹ we reply : On the contrary, it is known, it is certain, it is a matter of consciousness. *Not truly known at all !* Not known to perfection ; like other things, partly known to us, and perfectly known to One heart-searcher only. Knowledge of self is *forbidden by the very nature of thought !* Non-knowledge of it, nescience of it, is forbidden by the very nature of thought. Men are their own objects at every waking moment. What is your object when you are saying to yourself, "I think," "I wish," "I fear" ; when you say "I came," "I went," "I heard," "I read" ? What is your object in the great majority of your mental observations ? Yourself ; some thought, or feeling, or act of your own, past, present, or future. You note your thoughts as they rise, judge some of them proper to be uttered, some proper to be repressed ; some to be cherished, some to be checked. This does not annihilate anything but the theory of such metaphysicians as allow themselves to be dazzled with the excessive light of their own definitions. Human thought does not work as British statesmen do, like bees under a glass hive ; it can shut itself off from every human eye save one. But it does work on a sea of glass. As the swan, on still Saint Mary's lake, swam double—swan and shadow, so

¹ *First Prin.*, § 20.

does thought arise double—the thought and the consciousness of it. This self-seeing, self-knowing, self-judging life of the human soul is a fact too deeply seated in the experience of all men to be disturbed by any leverage of logic, much less by a few dexterous turns of a metaphysical kaleidoscope.

Every step, then, in the investigation of the objects pronounced to be unknowable by Mr. Spencer, and of the reasons for which he places them in that category, goes to give keener edge to the question, What can he mean by knowing a thing, and what by not knowing it? He cannot mean what men mean by it, what women and children mean by it, what dictionaries say it ought to mean. He must surely have discovered some private species of knowledge peculiar to his own researches.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHAT CONSISTS, ACCORDING TO MR. SPENCER,
KNOWING A THING AND NOT KNOWING IT?

I.—*Is All Science Prevision?*

MR. SPENCER lays it down that science is simply a development of common knowledge ; so much so, that if we reject science we must reject all knowledge. He also lays it down "that all science is prevision."¹ It would follow that all knowledge is prevision. Now, it is not possible for us to foresee that of which we are in "total ignorance," that of which we have no cognition, that which is to us utterly inconceivable ; so then, if all knowledge is prevision, it will follow that all knowledge must be knowledge. To this truism the Agnosticism of Mr. Spencer would not, in theory, offer any objection, although, in practice, it seeks to make room for itself by undermining the greater part of our knowledge, and making it appear to be nescience.

I do not wish to pledge myself to the position that all science is prevision, or even that all common

¹ *First Prin.*, . . .

knowledge—less systematized, less carefully laid up for future use than science—is so. Both my reader and I may be of opinion that our knowledge of our own deceased relations is not prevision, but something so different from it that it needs a philosopher of acknowledged rank to scorn the difference. Even in science, probably all Herschel's knowledge of Uranus was not prevision, probably all Faraday's knowledge of electricity was not prevision, and probably all Owen's knowledge of animals was not prevision. I do not say that it is Mr. Spencer's own fixed view that all science is prevision, but rather look on his assertion to that effect as one instance of the premature stage at which his opinions, even on central questions, sometimes come into the world.

II.—*What is the Least Degree of Knowledge?*

In the endeavour to gain some clear light on what Mr. Spencer really does mean by knowledge, one tries to find out what he accepts as the lowest degree of it, and also what he regards as its opposite. On the first of these two points we have direct evidence. He clearly tells us what is, in his view, the *smallest conceivable* degree of knowledge, so that whatever does not rise to that level cannot be knowledge in any degree whatever. "Manifestly, the smallest conceivable degree of knowledge implies at least two things between which some community is

recognized.”¹ That is, it implies a comparison of two things between which the mind recognizes some point or points in common. This extends the assertion, that knowledge implies comparison of one object with others, and makes it include comparison of it with similars. The grounds of this assertion need to be well noted: “An object is said to be little known when it is alien to objects of which we have had experience, and it is said to be well-known when there is great community of attributes between it and objects of which we have had experience.” Should we then say that a thing is well-known because it in several points resembles things previously known? For instance, is the Spanish language well-known to an Italian because “there is great community of attributes” between it and the language of which he has had experience from infancy? No, it is not well-known; it is not even ill-known. The truth is that a thing is not well-known, but that it is soon learned when it resembles things we do know. So long as the locomotive was confined to George Stephenson’s premises, it was not well-known to other engineers, to whom the stationary engine was familiar. When first seen by them it was not instantly well-known, but their knowledge of attributes resembling its attributes made it easy for them to learn it. It was after they had done that,

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 59.

and not till after it, that to them the locomotive was well-known. Finding, then, the Agnostic view of what constitutes a thing "well-known," so doubtful, we turn to what might be supposed to be the more congenial side of the question, namely, what constitutes a thing "little known."

Is it correct that if a thing is alien to other things of which we have had experience, it is therefore little known? If so, the Welsh language would be little known to Welshmen, and the Chinese language to Chinamen. Both are alien to any other languages of which they respectively have had experience.

In practice, the fact that a given object, be it an object of thought or be it an object of sense, differs from all others, does not necessarily lead to its being little known, but has a tendency to make it notorious. Amber was for ages known, though alien to other known substances, and was often wrongly affiliated: for men, not content with knowing it, wished also to know its origin. A thing totally unlike things of which we have had experience is hard to learn; and that is all that can be made of the Agnostic assumption

III.—*Mind Unclassable and therefore Unknowable!*

Here it is to be distinctly noted that these axioms as to what constitutes a thing well-known and little known, are laid down immediately on the way to the

conclusion that *Mind is unclassable and therefore unknowable*. A thing, avers our axiomatist, "is completely unknown where there is no recognized community at all" between it and other things known to us. "If so, how can we know the substance of Mind?" In the conclusion, above put in italics, Mr. Spencer no longer speaks of "the substance of Mind," but uses the much clearer expression Mind. Therefore it is mind itself that is unknowable; and that for the cogent reason that, as there is manifestly no second thing of a similar kind to compare it with, it cannot be known.

Another instance this of first defining and afterwards observing. Settle it beforehand that whatever has not a fellow, or at least a distantly resembling similar, is unknowable, and then you will not be tempted to observe whether the air you breathe is knowable or not. Another point to be remarked here is that in selecting Mind as a thing unknowable, because it is without a fellow, Mr. Spencer takes, not human mind, not superhuman mind, nor yet infra-human mind; but mind in the total. In so doing, he selects an object which includes not only countless individuals, but species as yet uncounted. He selects a genus, of which the different species resemble one another and differ, while within each species the individuals again resemble one another and differ. These species are as numerous, perhaps, as those included in any other genus that could be selected; unless

indeed, we make but one group of mind and all else calling the whole of them things. Now, this whole genus, Mind, is unknowable, because it is unclassable, and is unclassable for the excellent reason that when once you have included in it every mind of any kind, there is nothing left to class the whole with.

In presence of this all-sufficing and obvious reason, which Mr. Spencer does not assign, the two recondite ones he does assign appear superfluous. But though they prove nothing, and go to prove nothing, they construct a school puzzle. Mind must be unknowable because of what? because it is never felt, never observed, never present to consciousness? because 'it never produces effects from which the reality of its existence may be properly inferred? because it is evident we could account for all events as well without it as with it? No: not for these reasons, or any similar ones. It is unknowable because by constructing a quasi-dilemma between an Idealist and a Realist we can make a puzzle. If, argues Mr. Spencer, the Idealist is right, no other substance except mind exists; therefore none to compare it with; hence "it remains unknown." If, on the contrary, the Realist is right, all things are either Mind or not Mind, therefore nothing similar to mind exists, only things dissimilar. On these grounds it is, in language already cited, "unclassable, and therefore unknowable." Each of these arguments assumes

as an axiom the broad proposition that what cannot be classed cannot be known, a proposition at which we shall look in its turn. Challenge this assumed major in either argument, and it becomes at once a tricycle on two wheels.

IV.—*The Unique not The Unknown.*

Now, to the question: Is it or is it not true that no degree of knowledge whatever can be had of any object unless there exist at least two, with observable points of resemblance? That is the actual form of the question as stated by Mr. Spencer; but it is not the form in which it is treated of by him. Instead of taking two minds as affording to us the materials for a comparison, he groups together all minds of all grades, and then sets over against them the rest of the universe, and concludes that there is in it nothing to compare with mind; *ergo*, nothing to render it knowable. On this method of treatment he could as easily prove that fish were unknowable; for if all fish are fish, and all other things are not fish, what is to be asserted of all other things is that they are alien from fish, hence fish are unclassable, and therefore unknowable. The same method of employing a privative proposition will bring out the same result for earthquakes: since all earthquakes are earthquakes, and all other things are alien

from them, therefore they are not classable or knowable.

First it was laid down that there must be two things in some respect corresponding. That is the general principle. Next, when we were confronted with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of things in many respects corresponding, called minds, we were told that, whereas all minds are Mind, they cannot be compared, or classed, or known. That is the application of the principle to a particular case. It would not be easy to set limits to this felicitous method of constraining all nature to take the black veil. We can always divide the sum total of things into some one thing, and all the rest into an *ego* and a *non-ego*, according to the logic of the gentleman who knew only two airs, of which one was *God Save the Queen* and the other was not.

Unsatisfactory as is this method of Mr. Spencer, it is hard to see how he could have adopted a better so long as he worked in the self-imposed shackles of his own axiom, standing at the head of the paragraph on which we have been commenting: "To know anything is to distinguish it as such and such — to class it as of this or that order."¹ This being premised in all reasoning about knowledge, renders it mere

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the Only
Way of
Knowing?*

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 59.

folly to think of knowing anything of which there are not at least two, anything which does not naturally fall into a class. It renders it folly to suppose that there might be a case of an object known, even well-known according to human measure, which, nevertheless, is not one of many similars, not even one of two, but is a self-classed somewhat that not only stands out distinct from other things, but stands off from them, foreign to them, an object actually unique.

The bearing of this upon the question of the existence of One who cannot be compared to any other or likened to any class is obvious. Even if such an One did exist, He must under this axiom be unknowable. The axiom would leave the question of His existence or non-existence unsettled; but would settle for ever and ever the question of His knowableness. Granted the existence of such a Being, the conditions of that existence raise a strong presumption that all things will concur to make Him known in part, each finite object reflecting some ray of His infinity from an angle peculiar to itself, each dependent object, in like manner, reflecting some ray from His power. This presumption follows from the bare thought of His absolute preëminence and His all-originating acts. But it is to forestall any such presumption, and to turn absolute preëminence into an insurmountable obstacle against making Himself

known, that the maxim is invented which affirms that nothing can be known unless there are at least two of a class.

This principle, however, cannot be applied to that One supreme object of knowledge without embracing others. It cannot be so applied until after it has been first accepted as a general principle. To accept it as such is easy, if you lay it down beforehand as an axiom, to which all reasoning is to be adjusted. To accept it as such is hard, indeed becomes impossible, if you first take cases, draw out their testimony, and from that testimony attempt to deduce your general principle. Comte's imagination that classing a thing was explaining it may have been the parent, and apparently was the parent, of Mr. Spencer's imagination that to class a thing is to know it. If so, the offspring is afflicted with the infirmity of the parent in an aggravated form.

From the region of axioms and assumptions let us descend to that of human experience.

Whenever I think of the Agnostic position, that to know a thing is to class it, that you cannot have even the lowest conceivable degree of knowledge of anything unless you have at least two in some points similar to compare, and that therefore any object whatever that should be sole of its kind, incapable of being likened to any other within our experience, must

*Case of the
Pacific
and
Islanders.*

remain unknown,— whenever I think on this, by some strange association I am reminded of that remarkable man, lately deceased, Thakombau, King of Fiji. He, according to the notion under review, never could know the Pacific. No more could his remarkable compeer, King George of the Friendly Isles. The question cannot be raised whether or not they did know it. That question, you will remark, is forestalled by an axiom that renders it folly to raise any question of fact. They *could* not know the Pacific. It was alien from all other objects of which they had experience; there was no community of attributes between it and other known objects; it absolutely could not be classed, therefore, in the lucid language of our author, it remained “completely unknown”; for, he says, an object is “completely unknown when there is no recognized community at all.”

It is true that both Thakombau and George lived much upon the Pacific, by day and by night, in peace and war, in storm and calm; but the Pacific was alien from all else of which they had experience. There were no other seas with which they could class it. It was not like their bits of islands, or their canoes; not like their huts or clubs; not like the churches when these arose; not like the big ships of the white man. Thus “at least two things” of a class were never presented to their experience; and without such

a comparison, knowledge could not be arrived at. Then, be content, neither Thakombau nor George could know the Pacific.

In like manner North Country captains, who come from the Tyne, or the Wear, or the Tees to the Thames, cannot know the sea. Or, if one of them can know it, it is not because he faced the North Sea when he was twelve years old, and has passed over it summer and winter ever since, and has had it dashing over him several times a year; no, no, he can know it only because he also knows the Baltic and the Mediterranean, at least knows about them, and can class the North Sea as one of the order!

And thou, sagacious reader, thou also knowest not. Be meek! Thou canst not know the Sun. He is alien from all other things in thy experience. There are not "at least two things" in the class. In order to know the Sun, thou art under obligation first to set beside the one that exists "at least" one additional. He is absolutely unclassified. Astronomers talk as if the stars might be something like him; but if that is so, the likeness must be for people of other worlds, not for thee and me in our low estate. Perhaps some may get over the difficulty by classing the Sun with the moon, so making two, calling both lights. By this comparison and classing, we do get, it might be argued, knowledge of the sun. Yet a point would be raised by adopting

*Case of the
Sun—Is it
Knowable?*

an argument like that. If the Sun had himself shone for the whole twenty-four hours he would have been altogether unknowable! for in that case there would have been absolutely nothing to class him with.

One word more upon these unclassed unknowables. You have heard of a thing called the Air, or Atmosphere, or some such name. Now, if it is a knowable thing, at least two of the kind or two somewhat akin must exist. Who comes forward to tell his experiences of a second? The lark that makes the welkin ring does not know the air; for he cannot class it with others of its order. The sailor who, furling the royal, looks away into heaven above and far around on earth beneath, and feels the coming gale, does not know the air; he never saw another like it. The meteorologist that watches threads and sashes of fleecy clouds, watches forming mist, and rising snow-vapour, and descending snow-crystals, watches the tokens of to-morrow and the mementoes of yesterday, cannot know the atmosphere, for it has no double: in nature it stands alone in presence of all human experience. Yet are sea and sun and air three of the things best known—their being without similars no more rendering them unknown than their being without equals renders them small.¹

¹ The fact that classing is the *result* of knowledge cannot be more clearly implied than in the words of Mr. Spencer: "When we group an object with certain others, we do so because in some or all of its characters it resembles them."—*Prin. of Psych.*, § 310.

If, then, things which in nature are so knowable, and in human experience are so universally known, are, nevertheless, on Agnostic principles unknowable, we need not be surprised to find that in the first place the mind of man, and in the second place the Creator of all things, are so likewise.

Having now before us two fixed points in the Agnosticism of Mr. Spencer—first, that all things are unknowable except when at least two exist which may be compared; and secondly, that the lowest conceivable degree of knowledge is that resulting from a comparison made between two—we have some light upon what he counts for the opposite of knowledge: it is lack of power to class a thing. The classable is the knowable; the unclassable is the unknowable. The principal use of this canon, as we have already intimated, is to make a clear end of attempts to know One who is always and ever One; of Him who is alone, and beside Him, or like Him, there is not another. “The First Cause, the Infinite, the Absolute, to be known at all, must be classed.”¹ *To be known at all*: that is not equivocal language. Denying that He can be known at all, is very different from denying that He can be known to perfection. The First Cause cannot be classed, *ergo* the First Cause cannot be known at all! The sun cannot be classed, the atmosphere cannot be classed; and yet

¹ *First Prin.*, p. 81.

nothing is more truly known than the sun and the air, though nothing exists of which by searching we more truly learn that we cannot find out all.

This canon which puts not only the Creator into the class of things unknowable, but also sun, and sea, and air, would have sufficed for Mr. Spencer when placing in that class also Space and Time. They are both absolutely unclassable. But, for some reason, it is a different proof that is resorted to in their case.

V.—*Why Space and Time are Unknowable.*

We might fancy that we knew time as told off for us by the pulsing of the blood in our veins, or by the coming up of the successive suns ; that we knew space as marked out for us by our own persons, houses, fields ; by air, and sea, and stars. But it is all, like so many other things, an illusion. They are both unknowable. And on what grounds? For the solemn reason that a thing cannot be known but by knowing its attributes ; and time and space not having any attributes, we cannot, of course, know them. You may have grown up with the idea that an ordinary prerequisite to knowledge of the attributes of any particular thing was some knowledge of the thing itself. Perhaps you may have in certain cases even found that your knowledge of the thing had been of some standing before its most significant attributes

became clearly defined to your view. Perhaps you may have gone so far as to share in the prejudice inveterate in popular English philosophy, which holds that the way to a knowledge of the attributes of any particular pudding is to make acquaintance with the pudding itself. Still you must submit to learn that you shall first know the attributes, and then commence to know the thing ; and, moreover, that space cannot have any attributes. Knowledge by description is, of course, knowledge of attributes ; knowledge by observation is knowledge of the thing itself, bringing with it instantly knowledge of some attributes, the more obvious ones, and subsequently knowledge of others, the more hidden.

We have already seen Space defined as synonymous with extension. But all definitions formed out of such antecedent knowledge as you possess of attributes before ever you know the thing itself, while prodigiously convenient as facilitating welcome conclusions, are subject to a certain compressibility. Space is a second time defined—that is, by incidental definition—as “unoccupied extension,” so changing its character. In this new light, “occupied extension, or Body,”¹ is not space, for it has the attribute of resistance. If wherever any body exists, space ceases

¹ *First Prin.*, § 63. “Occupied extension, or Body, being distinguished in consciousness from unoccupied extension, or Space, by its resistance, this attribute must clearly have precedence in the genesis of the idea.”

to exist, one would admit that there it would have no attributes. But to call occupied extension Body, is to put the contained for the container. An occupied house is not a tenant. And a body is as much the occupier in space, as is the tenant in a tenement. When Mr. Spencer first makes extension identical with space, and then reduces space to *unoccupied* extension, making occupied extension not identical with but distinguished from it, as being identical with body, he does indeed bewilder his reader; but he does not prove even that space has no attributes; much less does he prove that it is unknowable. Knowable it is, and known; known to consciousness, known to experience, known with a knowledge verifiable by reason, and verifiable by every one of the senses.

Both the principle that it is only when similars can be compared that we can attain to even the lowest conceivable degree of knowledge, and the principle that what we cannot class we cannot know at all, when patiently applied to facts, do not fit on to them with the elasticity of a true generalization, and soon become overstretched and rend. The theory that the unclassable is unknowable is born of an inversion of facts. It is quite true that all things we are able to class are things which we know; but it does not follow that all things which we know are things we are able to class. A similar inversion gives origin

to the idea that we cannot know a thing except by first knowing its attributes. Knowing by observation the attributes of a thing, even in the least degree, presupposes a knowledge of the thing itself, but a knowledge of the thing itself in the least degree does not *pre*-suppose any knowledge of its attributes. One can easily conceive of a person who has known Mr. Spencer for twenty years, who can describe his person, dress, and carriage, and who yet shall have no knowledge, or next to none, of his modes of thought and processes of mind. But even the modicum of knowledge of attributes—height, complexion, voice, and so on—presupposes a direct knowledge of his person.

This naturally leads us to another point in what Mr. Spencer sets before us as the opposite of knowledge.

VI.—*Is Ability to Picture the Form the Only Test of Knowledge?*

Inability in any case to form what he calls a conception, that is,—and I do not caricature,—a picture in our minds of any object bodily, amounts in his view to non-knowledge, is utter ignorance, is the absence of a cognition. Now, let us take the person supposed a moment ago, one who can make in his mind a fair picture of Mr. Spencer,

who, indeed, cannot help carrying such a picture with him, ready to show itself whenever called up, but who, nevertheless, does not know a chapter of his works, has no conception of the extent of his knowledge, and could not guess how he would think or argue on this question or on the other. Side by side with this person set another who never saw Mr. Spencer, who does not know whether he is tall or short, handsome or plain-looking, fashionably dressed or unfashionably; but who knows his views, his style, his habits of thought, his powers of mind, and moral sympathies. Which of the two has the cognition of Mr. Spencer that most nearly approaches to an adequate one? Obviously the latter. Yet he can make no picture of him in his mind. And what if he cannot? The form and colours of Mr. Spencer's person and dress may almost be said to be neither here nor there in the knowledge of him. The idea to form of him in your mind is a conception of powers of intellect, habits of thought, and kinds of feeling. No one of these is a thing for pictures of "its top, its sides, and its under surface at the same time." Picture Mr. Spencer's top, his sides, and his under surface to the most minute perfection, and you are a strange philosopher if you take that for any respectable conception of him. We saw at the outset that such picturing did not yield even a fair knowledge of a piece of rock; but when you come to a man, to an

author, to a philosopher, the idea of the power to picture his appearance as being anything but the mere husk of knowledge, and mere knowledge of the husk, is laughable.

Just as knowledge of a figure is gained by observing its form and colour through the eye, so is knowledge of an intelligent agent gained by observing his works through the mind. Stare at Mr. Spencer's books ; finger, taste, smell them ; and you obtain no knowledge of him. Read them without a previous knowledge of English, and you obtain no knowledge of him. Read them with a poor knowledge of English, and no knowledge of science or philosophy, and you gain but glimmering lights on him and his ways. Read them with considerable knowledge but distracted attention, and the result is little different. Read them with both knowledge and attention, and then you observe Mr. Spencer, and draw knowledge of him from actual observation of how he thinks and feels, as seen in how he writes. This observation is not of shape and hue, not of things capable of being numbered and measured, but of the invisible powers of a soul, as manifested in what it produces. His dog can get the knowledge of him that comes by observation, if observation means looking at him. But of the true observation, that of his mind and thought, only man or higher than man is capable.

If there is one kind of inability to class a thing

which springs from want of knowledge, there is a second kind which springs from the unique character of the object, and in this case the inability becomes more and more confirmed in proportion as greater acquaintance with the object brings further knowledge of its attributes. If a master totally new to a school cannot tell into which class he should put a new pupil, it is because he knows neither boy nor class. But even after he has become acquainted with the classes, he cannot class a new boy until after he has examined him or learned his antecedents. The cause of inability here is obviously want of knowledge. But it is another matter when a master perfectly acquainted with his classes, on examining a new boy, finds him immeasurably ahead of any class in the school, so that to place him in any of them would be to declass him, and if he is to be rightly placed he must be made a class by himself. In this case the inability to class is not due to defect of knowledge; for it is the fruit of knowledge. It arises solely from the unique character of the object known. And the fact of an object being unique in its character, instead of raising an obstacle to knowledge, offers a stimulus to it, as we saw in the case of amber. "I know nothing like it," is a reason for seeking to know more of it, and that whether the "nothing like it" is absolute or only means nothing of the same kind equal to it.

The most fatal form of inability to class is that which arises from inability to know. Let the school-master call his porter and ask him to class the new boy. He may, as quickly as the master, take knowledge of his "top, his sides, and his under surface," but of his learning he knows nothing and he has no means of testing it; he cannot touch, taste, or handle it. Ask many a man who could readily class one of Mr. Spencer's volumes as an octavo or a quarto, as unbound or in cloth, to class one of his arguments, saying whether it is a syllogism, a sorites, or an enthymeme; and if a syllogism, of what figure and mood. He would be destitute of the means of conjecturing what you intended; he could only say that he thought it a strong argument or a weak one. This answer, however, would be in itself proof that he was not "totally ignorant" of the argument; proof that he had seen it, observed it, judged respecting it; proof, in fact, of practical knowledge—of a state of things far removed from nescience.

So unsettled is Mr. Spencer in his view of what knowledge consists in, that after he has in one place

<p><i>Mr. Spencer Defines Life and Describes Knowledge in the Same Terms.</i></p>	<p>given three successive definitions of life, he in other places describes "cognition" and "intelligence" in almost the same words adopted as the ultimate and thoroughly clarified definition of life itself. The latter is defined as being the continuous</p>
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adjustment of internal relations to external relations.¹ In another place we read: "Every act of Intelligence being, in essence, an adjustment of inner to outer relations."² And again, in respect of knowledge we are told that "Whenever a group of inner relations, or cognition, is completely conformed to a group of outer relations, or phenomenon, by a rational process—whenever there is what we call an understanding of the phenomena."³ Thus, then, adjustment of inner to outer relations is an act of intelligence, and adjustment of internal to external relations is life itself. Life being as much the property of a lichen as of a botanist, if the acts of intelligence of the latter are only such as can be correctly described in terms which suffice to describe the life of the lichen, we may answer for it that he will never observe, describe, or classify either plants or seeds.

Mr. Spencer has a partiality for what he calls a definition. And so things called definitions are erected into axioms to which, once asserted or assumed, all subsequent proof and disproof must conform. The method of describing by the lowest term is the one that seems to preside over the birth of these extraordinary productions. That method is good for classifying in which the object is to generalize, but it ruins definition in which the object is to

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 131. ² Same, § 174. ³ Same, § 168.

specialize. Instead of basing his definition on the genus, Mr. Spencer, like Comte, seems to think it better to base it upon the *summmum genus*. If we define a European not as a man born in Europe but as an animal born in Europe, or, better still, as an organism native to Europe, we may have some idea of the principle on which things called definitions are framed,—the principle of defining by rendering your term indefinite, so as to include things which it would exclude if left to define itself. According, then, to the thrice-refined definition of life, it is an “adjustment.”

VII.—*What is an Adjustment?*

And what is an adjustment? Is it a person who adjusts? Is it things which are adjusted? Neither. Is it an operation which results from the adjustment, for the sake of which, indeed, it was made? No. It is one of two things: either the act of a person who adjusts things, or the state of the things which are being or have been adjusted. It is a word full of the idea of design and intelligent control when interpreted by human experience; experience of cases in which the origin and process of a given adjustment have not to be groped after in the dark of utter non-experience, but are clearly traceable in ascertained facts. “A *continuous* adjustment.” The adjustment of the motions of a chronometer to those of the earth and

sun is continuous. The adjustments of eating and drinking are intermittent, those of sleep periodical. What was the *continuous* adjustment of a grain of corn to outer relations when, entombed with a mummy, it retained its hidden life for ages? Adjustment of *internal relations* to *external relations*! internal and external to what? to a vacuum, to a corpse, to a cavern, to a universe, or to a single organism? the definition affords us no hint. It is plain that Mr. Spencer means in the one case internal to an organism, that is, a living body, and therefore external to its environment, and that in the other case he means internal to the environment and external to the living body: for necessarily the terms exchange places according to the case. Here, then, the adjustment presupposes first a living thing, or organism; secondly, it presupposes an element or environment in which and on which this organism can live; and thirdly, it presupposes a set of relations already established within the living thing and another set of relations established within the environment, each set being external to the other. They must be each external to the other: for it is *between* these that the adjustment has to be originated and preserved as continuous. But liberal as is this grant of pre-existing things, the definition makes a still larger one. It grants the adjustment itself as pre-existing to life: for "continuous" can never mean the continuing of what has not yet been

begun ; so the continuing dates from a moment subsequent to the making of the adjustment. This pre-existence, implied in the word "continuous," becomes almost explicit when two sets of *relations* are spoken of. The adjustment is between relations within the living thing and relations within the lifeless environment. Good relations are themselves the effect of adjustments ; the relation of blood and lungs within an animal and that of air and heat without it are both the effects of adjustments. But the essential point is a third adjustment between these two. That is provided in breathing. That adjustment once established, its marvellous effect is a continuous *re-adjustment*. The original adjustment was not in any proper sense continuous, for it was antecedent, made once for all, like an organ before the discharge of a function. Without readjustment, both continuous and ever varying, the original adjustment would fail of effect. In the case of the grain of mummy corn the aboriginal adjustment was valid, and survived ; but it was not supplemented by a continuous readjustment, and so the very things which are often spoken of as the constituents of life were absent—absorption, growth, waste, reproduction. Yet Life was not absent. Life abode in the non-absorbing, non-growing, non-wasting, non-reproducing body, and abode in it for ages. That Life carried in it a capability of all

*Life Involves
Power of Con-
tinuous Self
Readjust-
ment.*

these, carried a power to ensure all these, given the proper readjustments in the environment.

A loom with its many internal relations has an adjustment of these to external relations. When it is a

*Illustration
of a
Loom.*

damask loom such relations are extremely complex, and the adjustment of them is wonderfully made. This adjustment is all antecedent, by necessity antecedent, to the blowing of a single rose on the textile flower bed. The first throw of the shuttle calls for a readjustment ; and that readjustment must proceed in an unbroken succession. But whence does it proceed ? from the internal relations of the loom ? from the external relations of the design ? or from the "act of intelligence" of one who presides educating results about which neither loom nor design knows anything ? Every line of the pattern as it comes out, produced by motions which to one ignorant of the process often seem contradictory and confused, bears witness to knowledge, to foreknowledge, and to power of transferring from mind forms conceived within it, and impressing them upon refractory 'matter. Directed by this power, lifeless processes are made to evolve semblances of life, substances having no sense of beauty are made to evolve forms that charm, surfaces that never felt or smiled are made to vivify with new elements of pleasure the relations between the lily of the field and the human soul.

The process of "intelligence," or "understanding," or "knowing," as seen by Mr. Spencer, would appear to be only the shadow from the under side of nature in action. He sees in every act of intelligence an adjustment, and that is the "essence" of it. Nature shows to us in every adjustment *an act of intelligence*, and that is the essence of it. Every adjustment between the inward parts of a human frame and the outward parts of nature, as distinctly speak of a presiding Ruler as do stalks, leaves, and petals coming up in order and arranging themselves in their proper relations on a web speak of a presiding mind; a mind unseen to warp or woof, to reed or treadle; a mind which as to its higher resources and processes is past finding out even for the weaver who guides the loom; a mind that could fore-ordain and coördain, could fix where in the executing of its plan should be the place of inorganic agents, that of organic fibres, that of physical forces, and that of the mindful hand of man. The punctured cards displayed no flowers, yet they insured their appearance in the web,—so were they coördained with other elements alien to them. The shuttle carried no forms, only artless thread, yet every time it flew, complex figures advanced a step; so were its motions and its charge coördained with other elements of motion, matter, and thought.

But the master-mind here had no more power to give to one part of the loom, or to the total combina-

tion of machines composing it, the gift of self-repair or self-adjustment, than it had of giving to the mill "hand" the power of inventing the loom, or of conceiving the designs. The loom that can grow with exercise, the loom that can right a tangle by simply going on, the loom that again by simply going on can restore a part worn or torn away, the loom that can engender ten looms out of one, is unknowable to mortal inventors. The loom that we know preaches of Mind invisibly impressing its conceptions on matter by processes which an animal might well suppose to be the whole of what was in operation; processes in which, so far as we have any means of ascertaining, no mind inferior to that of the being who made the loom and works it could trace the ever-present ascendancy and determining power of the human soul. In every ring and rattle of the process, in every fitness and utility of the fabric produced, I hear the testimony that each adjustment is an act of intelligence, and that intelligence dwells not in unconscious things and unconscious motions, but in a thinking Being. I hear also the further testimony that only a being standing on some approach to a level with the Author of a grand process can properly trace the Author's part in it; albeit even a very inferior animal might surmise that processes above his power proceed from a being above his degree.

It was necessary to glance at this peculiarity

whereby intelligence and life are described in similar terms.

But although this, with other such vacillations, indicates a certain hesitancy as to which view of knowledge is the one really to hold by, Mr. Spencer's prevalent conception of what knowledge consists in manifestly is composed of the two elements, the power of picturing objects, and that of classifying them.

VIII.—*Knowing by Sight and Knowing by Mind.*

Other languages employ two distinct words to denote two modes of knowing, for which in English we have only one name. We say, I know an astronomer, and we say, I know astronomy. In saying this an Italian, a German, or a Frenchman, would not repeat the same word in the second case; but would use two words, indicating a difference between knowing by sight an object of sense—a person, and knowing by process of mind an object of thought—a science. The astronomer being a person, an object of sense, knowing him means knowing him by sight; astronomy being an object of thought, a group of truths, knowing it means knowing the truths of it by mental processes. Knowledge by sight of the astronomer may or may not be connected with deeper knowledge through mental processes; knowledge by mental

process of astronomy may or may not be connected with certain visual observations. As to objects of sense, we know them in such a manner that on seeing we can recognise them, and without seeing we can more or less picture them in our mind's eye. As to objects of thought, when they are not objects of sense, we know them in such manner that when they are named the name suggests to us a definite idea of the object, and without their being named, we can of ourselves call up the same definite idea of them. "He knows Sir John Herschel" means he has seen and could recognise him. "He knows Kepler's laws" means he has learned and could recall them.

For two really different assertions—"I have seen and could recognise" on the one hand, and "I have learned and could recall to mind" on the other—we employ only one and the same word, "I know." For the first an Italian would use the word *conoscere*, and for the second *sapere*; a German for the first *kennen*, for the second *wissen*; a Frenchman for the first *connaitre*, for the second *savoir*. These notable differences in language intimate a real difference in the two cases, and keep alive the consciousness of it. This difference is not only real but considerable. "I have seen and could recognise" may imply no more than superficial knowledge, yet it does imply observation by sense; while "I have learned and could recall" may imply deep knowledge, though it

does not necessarily imply observation by sense. This distinction and its effect on thought we lose in English, yet we have forms which intimate it. We may say: "I know him, but I know nothing about him;" or, "I do not know him, but I know all about him." In the first case the knowledge is direct, by sense; but it is of mere shape, colour, and gait. In the second case it is indirect, by considering his productions, or by testimony of persons or documents; and it may be knowledge of the man to the core. The most important knowledge is ordinarily the knowledge about a thing, and it is only in the case of a thing that is of no importance but for its shape, size, and colour that the knowledge of these yielded by sight is the main portion of our knowledge about the object.

It is between these two kinds of knowing that Mr. Spencer's views oscillate. His "conception," or picturing of a rock, is mere knowing appearance by sight; his classing an individual object with those to which it properly pertains, on the contrary, presupposes knowledge about both it and them. He makes no point towards proving that either one or the other kind of knowledge is nescience. Neither of them is so or can be.

Sense-cognizance, say of a piece of rock, is no more nescience than it is complete knowledge. Classifying cognizance is no more complete knowledge than

it is nescience. Neither of these represents a perfect accord between our idea of any given object and all points in the nature and capabilities of that object ; but no more does either of them represent falsity in such ideas of it as we may have formed with due care and checks, much less does either represent a total absence of accord between such ideas and external relations. When Mr. Spencer describes acts of intelligence as adjustments of inner relations to outer relations, he means that our ideas of objects answer to the nature of the objects ; and what he calls adjusting internal relations to it is what we ordinary mortals call forming a just idea of it. He speaks of inner relations being "completely conformed" to outer relations, and of every attribute necessarily involved in the phenomena having "its internal representative." All which seems to point to absolute knowledge, but is not so intended. But it is utterly inconsistent with nescience. It means knowing, and knowing truly in a practical sense. Mr. Spencer seems to accept power to picture in mind the form and colour of an object as the true and adequate type of knowledge. Yet he insists that lack of complete knowledge is equivalent to lack of any. Each of these two confusions is prolific of other confusions. To clear them up it will be desirable to spend a little time in dwelling upon the question whether all our knowledge is not partial and at the same time real.

In raising such a question one feels as if going downwards! but we are obliged to raise it. It is a question which lies at the root of a right understanding of Agnosticism, and, in presence of the doctrine of nescience, at the root also of any right assertion of either science or faith.

CHAPTER IV.

IS NOT ALL OUR KNOWLEDGE PARTIAL, AND YET
REAL?

IN his chapter on the *Substance of Mind*, a very curious one, Mr. Spencer begins by saying: "To write a chapter for the purpose of showing that nothing is known, or can be known, of the subject which the title of the chapter indicates will be thought strange."¹ He would be an unaccountable critic who should reckon as strange anything that might be said on the particular subject of knowing and not knowing by Mr. Herbert Spencer. One's only course is to take each assertion of a general principle as one finds it, each treatment of a particular case as one finds it, each implication as one finds it, each assumed definition and each formal definition as one finds it; and to go on in one's own way. This is what most will do after discovering how much and how little is to be gained by making classified groups of Spencerian utterances, and how much and how little any general rules guide our author in his methods of pushing conclusions.

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 58.

I.—*The Position that "Nothing Can Be Known of the Substance of Mind."*

In the case above quoted the phrase is "nothing is known, or can be known," of the substance of Mind. That is definite. Not only does it assert that we do not know what the substance of mind is, but that we do not and cannot know anything of it or about it;—a widely different matter. I do not know Mr. Spencer, but I can know and do know something about him. I do not know the substance of his mind, but I do know something about it, for I know at least some of its attributes, by knowing its productions; and even an Agnostic will find it hard to say that knowledge of some of the attributes of a substance is the same thing as knowing nothing about it; or, in other words, that partial knowledge is no knowledge, or that partial knowledge is not real knowledge.

Speaking of what may be meant by the phrase "substance of mind," as distinguished from what, in his own vocabulary, is called its portions,—"each portion that is separable by introspection, but seems homogeneous and undecomposable,"¹ Mr. Spencer says: If the phrase *substance of mind* "is taken to mean the underlying something of which these distinguishable portions are formed, or of which they are modifications, then we know nothing about it, and never can know

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 58.

anything about it." Mark, he does not say we do not know what the substance is, and cannot know it ; but we do not know anything about it, and cannot. If so, we do not know its portions. Yet he has just spoken of its portions as being objects of introspection ; as being distinguishable ; yea, as being separable, that is, as being discerned and classified, *ergo* known. Moreover, he says, in that clear English of which he is as capable as he is of the wonderful word-web he mostly delights to weave, that if by the phrase substance of mind we mean these portions, "then we do know something of the substance of mind, and may know more." Here is a clear implication that knowledge is perfectly compatible with partial knowledge, and that partial knowledge is real knowledge ; not only real, but also the dawn of brighter knowledge. This simple elementary truth turns whole tracts of what the disciples of Mr. Spencer call by the noble name of philosophy into something else.

As to the mere language of what we have been quoting, it is not looser than of wont. A substance

Does a *underlies* its portions ! it underlies its attributes, its proportions, its phenomena ; but
Substance
"Underlie"
or Constitute
its Portions? it constitutes its portions. Granite underlies other rocks, but granite constitutes any portion of granite rocks. The substance of these rocks underlies all their properties and phenomena. A portion is separable, and carries with

it substance, property, and phenomena. A property or phenomenon is not separable, but becomes possible only when the substance exists which underlies it, and in which alone it has its being. Then, again, we have "a portion" as synonymous with a *modification* of the substance! It is not so: a portion is the same substance in the same state as another portion; there may be modification with portioning or without it, and there may be portioning without modification of substance. Indeed, when once any modification of substance takes place, it is not mere portioning. Two goldsmiths shall respectively portion out two halves of the same ingot; the one does not modify the substance, the other does. The portions given out by the latter are not any longer gold, but alloyed gold. Let it, however, be remarked that Mr. Spencer often speaks of a modification of form in the same terms as he would use for a modification of substance; and even freely calls that heterogeneous which is only multi-form, speaking of increasing heterogeneity where the substance remains identical and only form is varied.

II.—*Admits that we Can Know "States" of Mind.*

On the point that our condition as to the substance of mind is true nescience—not ignorance in part, but total ignorance—Mr. Spencer is clear. "Absolute ignorance of the substance of mind," is his language soon following that above noted. Yet in the same

sentence he recognises as an underlying truth the reality of partial knowledge, and also the fact that we can know states of mind; so that we can at the same time know states of a substance and be in "absolute ignorance" of the substance itself. This flies in the face of the principle that to know a thing is to know its attributes. That principle, it will be remembered, is laid down with the purpose of proving that we cannot know space, since it has no attributes. In the present case, the purpose is to show that we cannot know mind, which confessedly has no lack of them; though we may know states of mind, which are manifestations of attributes. If we know the states, we must know more or less of the attributes. If I see that a circular band is in a state of rapid contraction after having been stretched out and let go, I know that it has the attribute of elasticity. Yet this partial knowledge of states and attributes is quietly bound up by Mr. Spencer in the same bundle with "absolute ignorance" of the substance. From absolute ignorance of the substance of mind, he says, "of which all particular states are modifications, let us turn to that partial knowledge of these particular states, as qualitatively characterized, which lies within our possible grasp." Yes, we can turn to partial knowledge of the states of mind, as of those of matter; this is within our possible grasp. Of states, as of substance, our knowledge is here rightly taken to be no more than

partial. We neither, in fact, know all the states of any one substance, nor all the traits involved in any given state. Our knowledge of the states of a substance is no more absolute than is our ignorance of the substance itself; of the state much remains unknown amid the known, and of the substance much becomes known amid the unknown.

Partial knowledge extending beyond states, including constituents, is, notwithstanding what has just now been quoted, held by Mr. Spencer to be identical with absolute ignorance. *Absolute Ignorance of Mind and Matter.* Impartially applying this principle to both mind and matter, he says,¹ that if we could prove that mind consists of homogeneous units of feeling, we should be unable to say what mind is; just as we should be unable to say what matter is did we succeed in decomposing it into those ultimate homogeneous units of which it is not improbably composed. "In the one case, as in the other, the ultimate unit must remain, for the reasons assigned at the outset, absolutely unknown." *Absolutely unknown!* proved, yet absolutely unknown! seen, yet absolutely unknown! for the hypothesis is that the ultimate unit in the case of mind has been proved, and in that of matter has been found out by analysis, that is, seen. The assumption here is startling: that the amount of cognizance involved in knowing the

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 62.

states of a substance, knowing its changes, knowing its properties, yea, knowing even its constituent elements down to the ultimate unit, is the same thing as absolute ignorance. To treat the assumption as serious is not easy. The amount of knowledge here involved leaves it, indeed, possible for us to ask questions about both substance and constituent which we cannot answer ; but it also places us in a position to answer questions which would confound one who was comparatively ignorant, not to speak of one in absolute ignorance. But less than absolute ignorance will not satisfy Mr. Spencer as to what is our condition. Two pages after the words last quoted, he tells us respecting matter that the conception we form to ourselves of it "is but the symbol of some form of Power absolutely and for ever unknown to us."

After this, those timid people who are disturbed because God is pronounced to be the Absolute Unknowable may surely breathe freely. Matter may be a *form* of power, or it may be, as all things seem rather to prove, a product of power, but in either case it is not absolutely unknown to us even now, much less for ever. Our conception of it may be what Mr. Spencer calls a symbol, or what he calls a real conception,—and in the case of an atom the difficulty in seeing its top, its sides, and its under-surface *at the same time* does not lie in its being too big, but in its

being so little that we cannot see it at all. But give to our conception whatever name you please, it is proved by ten thousand tests to be in the main just; proved by ten thousand fruits to be useful; proved by the experience of every moment to be such as any one of us can safely act upon, such as the corresponding results to any number of different persons will verify. This, then, is knowledge; partial certainly, but constituting a state of mind strongly in contrast with anything that can be justly called absolute ignorance.

III.—*Mr. Spencer's Cases of Complete Knowledge.*

If, on the one hand, we are astonished to find a large measure of partial knowledge confounded with absolute ignorance, on the other hand we are scarcely less astonished to find, in sundry instances, a measure of knowledge, obviously no more than partial, sometimes announced as complete, sometimes as nearly so. The reader will recall the assertion that a thing is *completely known* if it has many attributes in common with things of which we have had experience; and will also recall our piece of rock, mentally represented "with something like completeness." It is likewise said that if an individual man is mentioned, "a tolerably complete idea of him is formed"; whereas many may think that if seeing a unit of matter would leave us in absolute ignorance of it, it sometimes happens

that, after having been for years in the habit of seeing a certain unit of humanity called a man, we find that our knowledge of him was only comparative ignorance.

This imagined complete knowledge is occasionally expressed by Mr. Spencer in terms so broad that, carefully weighed, one would hardly think them applicable to any knowledge less perfect than that of our Creator. For instance, when he is speaking of those states of mind, or in his words "tracts of consciousness," which men call acts of reasoning, which he calls "ratiocinative tracts," acts of reasoning which are about objects of sense, he speaks of our conceptions as answering "to the objects in all their attributes, and in all their activities." That is language I could not apply to my own knowledge of any single object of sense, not to that of the ink I write with, of the pen it flows out of, nor yet of the fingers that hold the pen. But lest I should seem to overstate the case, I quote at full : "Much more heterogeneous still are those tracts of consciousness distinguished as ratiocinative tracts, in which the multiform feelings given us by objects through eyes, ears, and tactual organs, nose, and palate, are formed into conceptions that answer to the objects in all their attributes and in all their activities."¹ So, therefore, when a grain of musk gives

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 75.

to one's "ratiocinative tracts," through the nose, a certain feeling, that feeling is formed or may be formed by the ratiocinative tracts into conceptions which answer to musk in all its attributes and in all its activities. Alas! how far behind must my ratiocinative tracts be! Never yet did they, in their utmost self-complacency, seem to approach to an adequate knowledge of that trifling thing called musk, in some of its attributes and some of its activities.

No, there is no tolerable attention to accuracy in describing human cognizance as either the extreme of absolute ignorance or the extreme of absolute knowledge. It stands in a fitter relation to ourselves. Just as we are neither nothingness nor infinity, but hover between the two, so is it with our knowledge. It makes its way in the open firmament of heaven, where reigns neither total darkness nor perfect day; where morn, sufficient for the present advance, foretells clear shining that will never cease to grow brighter.

The doctrine that our condition as to mind or matter, as to space or time, as to motion or force, as to the system of the universe and the existence of our Creator, is a condition of nescience, is in flat contradiction to experience and reason. In these cases, as in every other, our condition is one of partial knowledge. The alternative which would confine us to either absolute knowledge

*Our
Knowledge
neither
Absolute
Knowledge
nor
Absolute
Ignorance.*

or absolute ignorance is one that has no place in practical thinking: a mere puzzle for boys at school. Fact and nature, reason and Holy Scripture, all alike recognize the truth that the knowledge of a finite being is knowledge in part, and knowledge accompanied by liability to error.

We know our own mental history, each one for himself, the most stupid man knowing more of what passes in his own mind than of anything else, and knowing much which others can never know. Yet who of us has an absolute knowledge of all that has passed in his own mind? who of us would not fail to answer some questions on this matter and to solve puzzles framed by a skilful hand? So also we know something of the history of our own town or country; but who would engage to meet every inquiry respecting it of an Agnostic, ingenious in puzzle-making; who, nevertheless, would fail to be amused if told that his lack of perfect knowledge was nescience? So with the history of other countries, we neither know all about it nor yet nothing about it. So with the aggregate history of the human race; who does not know something of it, and who does know all?

As to places as well as to events, the same rule holds good. A farmer would be slow to admit that he knew nothing of his farm, and would only laugh at the philosopher who put crooked questions which no one could answer, and then professed to think that

he who was not prepared on such points had absolutely no knowledge of the matter. A ruler knows something of his own country; and yet one could ask questions of Queen Victoria about the British dominions, or of Emperor William about Germany, or of Presidents Cleveland and Grévy about America and France, which they would not be ashamed or surprised that they could not answer, though they would be amused that any man should imagine that, because of this, they were in total ignorance of the subject.

IV.—*Knowing What Passes Knowledge.*

All workers and thinkers have constantly present to them, whether explicitly recognized or but dimly felt, an experience which has always been in terms familiar to Christians: the experience of knowing what passes knowledge. The botanist knows the plants; yet they pass his knowledge. The politician knows men, opinions, national affairs; yet they pass his knowledge. The scholar knows languages; yet they pass his knowledge. The mariner knows the sea, the naturalist knows the animals, the physicist knows the forces, the engineer knows machines, the doctor knows the human frame, the meteorologist knows the winds, the astronomer knows the stars; yet every one of these in his own case is conscious that, though in comparison with common men he is familiar

with his subject, it nevertheless passes his knowledge. Tell him that he is totally ignorant of it, and he will smile. Tell him, on the other hand, that he knows it perfectly, and, if he is superficial and self-conceited, he may almost agree with you—yet, with this interpretation in a half-latent consciousness, that he knows more than others, as much as passes for superior knowledge; but if he is deep and earnest, probably, instead of agreeing with you, he will feel,—More remains unknown than I yet know. We are not made to be non-knowers, as the stones are. We are made to know; because we are made in the image of God. We are not made to know to perfection; because we are not God. We are neither nescient nor omniscient. If we close not our eyes, if we let in the light of nature, of events, of reason, we know the existence of a Creator and Preserver, and in knowing it feel how far He passes all our knowledge. If drawing nigh, and yet nigher, seeking the light of the Spirit of God, we know the love of Christ, again do we learn that it passeth knowledge.

V.—*Is Knowledge Real or Illusive?*

The fact being established that all our knowledge, even of ordinary things, is partial, next arises the question whether it is real, or is an illusion. Here consciousness, experiment, and reason combine in

signifying to us that human knowledge is true knowledge, as far as it goes ; just as the knowledge of the lower animals is true, as far as it goes. It is no matter at all whether migratory birds are idealists or realists ; or, whether they do or do not divide the whole world into the south and the not-south. If they are idealists, and look on both south and north as only forms of bird-thought, it is true that to them all things are in the ultimate analysis bird ; but it does not follow that really all things are bird. If they are realists, and hold south and north to be no birds, nor the ideal creation of birds, but actual things altogether outside of bird and bird-world, even then all things are to them bird, and not-bird. In this case nothing exists to compare with not-bird, for the only other thing which does exist is bird, and it is not of the same class, but is alien from not-bird. The philosophic facts being indisputable, if the birds choose, they may say not-bird is unknowable ; because there is nothing to class it with. Let them say it. They cannot live by it. They do know season, and south and north, and a way in the air, and steer a correct course through seas of azure unsurveyed. We see that they know : their action proves their knowledge. How does that knowledge come ? in what does it consist ? how far is it conscious or unconscious ? can we by searching find it out ? “ Whence cometh wisdom ? and where is the place of

understanding?"¹ Having asked your questions, be still for a time, still in the silent presence of the Fountain of Wisdom Eternal; and then confess: "It is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. . . . God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof."²

This allusion to birds reminds me of the value, as well as the beauty, of those contributions to sound knowledge and clear thought made by the Duke of Argyll, especially in his last and noblest work, *The Unity of Nature*.

As with migratory birds, so with other orders of the animal kingdom, we see that such knowledge as they possess, call it instinctive, intuitional, or inferred, has in every case special features, peculiar to that order of creature, serviceable for its distinctive uses; while side by side with this special element in each particular race runs the common element of identical impressions, those of all animals of a given object being practically identical.

Partial as is the knowledge of a lamb, insufficient as it would be for the uses of a swallow or a pilchard, it is true knowledge, and knowledge directly adapted to the present and the future of a lamb. The same state of things meets your eye wherever it turns—whether to the creeping thing under your feet, or the shoals

¹ *Job* xxviii. 20. ² *Ibid*, 21-23.

darkening the waters of the bay, to the dog by your side, or the fowls in the air. The animated races are blessed with knowledge in degrees endlessly varied; knowledge in one creature of what is unknown to another; yet accompanied by ignorance of what is known to the other—by more than ignorance of it, by inability to learn it;—knowledge always turning both downwards and upwards, both to objects below the creature—inert, lifeless, inferior, yet essential to it—and to objects above the creature, objects with which it has to deal, and which it cannot either annihilate or ignore.

However special to a given race may be its knowledge and powers, somehow the exercise of them serves uses important to other races, uses not without a bearing on the universal system of living beings.

As contrasted with our own, the instinctive knowledge of animals is remarkable for its maturity at birth, and equally so for its limited power of subsequent increase. Power of increase there is; but the limits of that power are narrow, just as are at birth the limits of actual knowledge in our race. A dipper a few hours old in the woods of Inverary knows of some things essential for both dipper and Duke to know, much more than does at the same age an heir of all the lore of the castle. But coming into life apparently isolated from the

*Animals Can
Acquire
Knowledge.*

lights of the past, and even from the relations of the present, our human child brings with it a portentous capacity of the future. The starlight which shines into the eye of the young nightingale has travelled during as many years as that which awakes the first nocturnal observations of a boy. But to its latest day the nightingale has never learned how far the beautiful beams have come, or in how large a system it enjoys its appointed place. That place is to sing, and not to increase in wisdom and understanding. The boy, on the other hand, may go onward for eighty years from the time when he first crowed at the sight of the stars, adding to his knowledge every day, not only of them, but of other things. And at the end he may feel that he is only beginning to know the rudiments of what he is capable of knowing.

Slight, however, as is the power of augmenting the original stock of knowledge in the lower animals, that power does include capacity of receiving instruction, both from their own race and from beings of a higher nature. This power of acquiring and receiving knowledge lifts them above all mere vegetable life, and the knowledge imparted, whether by instruction from an equal or from a superior being, is real knowledge. When learned from those of its own race, the knowledge serves the ends of the animal; when learned from those of a higher race, it elevates the animal and at the same time answers the design of the

trainer. It is no more illusion either to the animal or the trainer than it is nescience.

Horse and dog, parrot and carrier-pigeon, bear and monkey, falcon and bullfinch, all show that lessons from man are not lost upon them; but are of force to impart to them abilities not to be acquired from members of their own species. Such new abilities prove that their mind can respond to a higher one so far as to rise to knowledge and action which were not taught by nature, and could not be taught by their own race. Any person who has once happened to stand among picketed cavalry horses when the signal sounded for evening corn knows how they make the welkin ring with testimony that to them those notes are no uncertain sound; but that they convey to steed, as clearly as to trooper, the knowledge of "what is piped and harped." This their knowledge is not illusion. It is working cognizance. It bears witness to the truthfulness of nature in its modes of revealing to their inward feeling what concerns them in the outer world. It bears witness also to the actuality of their relations with man. It makes manifest his ability to reveal his own mind to their mind according to the capacity of the latter. It proves that within the limits of that capacity he can enrich them with knowledge of his purpose and his music. And thus the concurrence of two creatures so dissimilar—concurrence shared in by many other races—in

recognizing the same facts by the same signs, or in responding to them in ways analogous, affords a verification overwhelming in evidence of the common origin of mind, as well as of the coördination of different orders of agents under one supreme fountain of order.

Is there a touch of irony when the prophet, speaking of the ox, says that he knows his *owner*, but when

Ox and Ass. speaking of the ass does not set him so high—he knows his master's *crib*? Even if there is, although the ass so pictured has made progress on the way downwards towards Agnosticism, he is not as yet nescient. He still does know; if it is only the crib where he finds his fodder. To know the crib, and not to know the hand that filled it; to know the fodder, and not to know the care and skill out of which it came; to know the field, and not to know the Owner of field, of grass, and beast, and man; to know the agents and their coördinations, and not to know an ordaining Principal; to know their relations, and not to know a combining Will which links this to that; to know the coöperation of world with world, of body with void, of distance with proximity, of force with resistance, of motion with inertia and rest, of life with things lifeless and mind with things mindless—by which coöperation we are fed and enabled to renew our strength—and not to know Him at whose command all these work together for our good, does seem to be

the poorest ambition of, obscurantism, of those who "rebel against the light."

Nature testifies that knowledge in the animals is real, and distinctive in different classes. It is real, whether it is knowledge at birth of what they never learned, whether it is what their parents taught them, or whether it is what they picked up by experience. It is real, when it has been imparted by man. And does not man himself know, who can so impart knowledge to inferior creatures?

If at birth there exists nothing but a passive receptivity of impressions, why is not a horse as educable as a man? ¹ is one of Mr. Spencer's natural questions. I suppose that an answer might be found by such people as fancy that this rustle of words—*Why is not a Horse Educable?*—"passive receptivity of impressions"—has any sense when applied to a creature which, in receiving impressions, converts them into feelings or ideas, or can have any sense when applied to anything higher than putty or potter's clay. Such persons might say: Because the passive receptivity of impressions in the horse is of a lower degree than in the man. The answer would be as good as hundreds in the chapters from the midst of which this question is taken. A passive receptivity is one thing, a transforming force is another. Make impressions on clay to your heart's content; it will hold them, and not

¹ *Principles of Psychology*, § 207.

alter them by converting them into either reflex action, or sensation, or perception, or emotion, or judgment, or deliberate act. Make them on a telephone without a human ear at the other end of it. The passive receptivity is no worse for such an omission. But will the "reflex action" which we call an answer come? Make them on a telegraphic wire to New York with a horse's eye upon the other end of it. When the impression you make is "buy," will that impression be converted into a purchase? when it is "sell," will it be converted into a sale? The horse is not a man, and for that reason is not educable for the work of a man. He, indeed, is no passive receptivity, nor any other of the unmeaning abstractions with which much philosophic science, or scientific philosophy, fills its canvas. He, in his measure, is a transforming force, and impressions made upon him undergo potency of change.

But *for the work of a horse* the horse is more educable than a man. If horses undertook to train boys they would probably find them very uneducable. For two reasons: first, they were not made for horse operations; and in the second place, they are the superior beings; and it is of nature that superior beings shall teach the inferior, rather than be taught by them. In this, then, the horse has educational advantages which, on every non-theistic principle, are lacking to man—the

*"Passive
Receptivity"
and
Transforming
Power.*

advantages of a double teaching, one from his own fellows and another from beings standing above him. To the spirit of the beast that goeth downward is always secured by nature the privilege of being able to look upwards. To the spirit of man that goeth upward this privilege is denied by unbelief; by it that spirit is doomed always to look downwards, doomed to know only inferiors, doomed never to be enlightened by One whose thoughts are very deep.

The authenticity of knowledge among the lower animals is certainly not due to its being perfect. A puzzle-wright with a fraction of Mr. Spencer's skill could bewilder the most learned animal on the matter of its own special science. That would not prove that, so far as it did know, its knowledge was illusion, much less that it was nescience. If, then, imperfect knowledge in the lower animals is authentic, whether it be knowledge born with them, knowledge learned from their parents, or knowledge imbibed from a superior being, is it natural, is it supposable, that in the same superior being knowledge shall be less authentic than in them? is it probable that it shall less correctly inform him respecting things without him, and less safely guide him in his relations with those things?

VI.—*Human Knowledge Real.*

Objects of knowledge may be within us, or without; may come up in our consciousness without either inference of reason or impression of sense; may come up in it by inference of reason without impression of sense; may come up through such impression. But come before our consciousness in whatsoever way they may, they are knowable and are known. The first word of science to us is—Know thyself. These bodies, whether organic or inorganic, cannot enable us to do. They cannot even tell us to do it; much less how it is to be done. No more can we tell either of these things to them. Can anything be more absurd than for a great public teacher, first to tell men that they are agents of the same order as the governor of a steam engine, and in the next breath to tell them that their business is to learn the order of nature and to conform themselves to it? Let him tell that to the *governor!* and he will have to let it know how it is to begin to learn, and how to conform *itself*. The bare words “learn” and “conform ourselves,” even without the word “our business,” proclaim a transition from the realm of physical rule to that of proper law. “Learn,” is *Thou shalt*; “Conform yourselves,” is *Thou shalt*; “Your business,” is *Thou oughtest*. This is the domain of precept, of motive, of choice between alternative courses. We are here far away from the domain of

mere body. We are with agents who can be commanded, who can learn, who can take up a business and lay it down; who can really know, and whose knowledge of physical nature all depends on antecedent knowledge of the mind and its processes.

VII.—*Knowledge by Instinct, by Consciousness, by Sense, by Intuition, by Science, by Testimony.*

Knowledge of thought and feeling is our most immediate, direct, and certain knowledge. It alone arises in consciousness without waiting upon the successive steps of any outward process of sensation, or inward process of reasoning. From our knowledge of thought and feeling flows that of expression, their outward and visible sign. Of the several kinds of expression, including looks, tones, gesture, the most important is speech. From our knowledge of speech flows that of argument, language employed in reasoning. From our knowledge of argument flows that of mathematical proof, reasoning confined to magnitudes. From reasoning on magnitudes, not by process of pure intellect as in mathematics, but by process of sense, flows measuring applied to verse and music. From all these, combined with the desire to create, flow art, the arts, and all inventions. The desire to imitate is a subordinate auxiliary serving under the desire to produce. From all preceding science and art spring the

so-called physical and natural sciences, each one of which represents an application to the study of a particular set of objects of all the lights which have been contributed by knowledge of mind, of language, of processes of reasoning, and methods of representation or procedure.

Knowledge of thought systematized is *mental science*. Knowledge of expression in its principle part is *science of language*. Knowledge of argument is *science of logic*. Knowledge of reasoning on magnitudes includes *geometry and arithmetic* in the widest senses. And the knowledge of all these, applied to research in one set of physical objects, constitutes astronomy; applied to another set, geology; applied to a third, biology; and so on.

It is vain to attempt an absolute separation of the initial and instrumental sciences—those of mind, language, and reasoning—from any one of the physical sciences. As well separate letters from language, or terms from logic, or axioms from mathematics. The initial and instrumental sciences accompany the labourer in any field of physical research at every step, as much as the alphabet accompanies the grammarian or the poet. In proportion to his hold of them is, other things being equal, his equipment for his peculiar sphere. Every step he makes in observing, discriminating, or classing, every step in framing a hypothesis or devising an experiment, supposes by

invincible necessity the truth, the authenticity of many branches of antecedent knowledge.

We exist and we know it. We think and we know it. We wish and we know it. We note the present and we know it. We recall the past and we know it. We anticipate the future and we know it. We long to see things and we know it. We remember things no longer within sight and we know it. We picture what we never saw and we know it. We form a certain opinion and we know it. We form an opposite opinion and we know it. We desire to express the one opinion and we know the desire. We desire to suppress the other and we know that. We believe a statement and know that we believe. We disbelieve another and know that we disbelieve. We cannot say whether to believe or not to believe a third and know that we doubt. All this is knowing purely intellectual acts, observing things when the subject is its own object—things which do not easily admit of external verification, some of them not at all. It is knowledge of thought and feeling.

To take knowledge by sensation. We are warm and we know it; we are cold and know it. We are touched in the dark by a pillow; we know both that something touched us and that the something was soft. We are touched in the dark by a door; we know both that something touched us and that it

was hard. We hear a sweet voice, and know that it is a voice—not a mere noise—a human voice, not a bird's, and that it is sweet ; we hear a harsh voice, and know it to be habitually harsh ; we hear a third rough, and know it to be the roughness of a cold. This is knowledge of feeling and thought following on impression from external objects. All this is easily verified ; yet is not a whit more truly known than some of the preceding facts which are only internal, and not capable of external verification. When we *see* the pillow or the door we add a perception through sight to a sensation of touch. This perception is additional knowledge, and is as clear as the original sensation ; but the knowledge of having been touched, and that by a soft substance in one case and a hard one in the other, was just as clear when we had only the one sensation as after it had been corroborated by the additional sensation.

As to *knowledge by Intuition* : the knowledge that a whole is greater than any of its parts is true knowledge. No challenge, defying us to picture in one mental representation all wholes and all their parts, ruffles our confidence in the reality of such knowledge. The thing asserted is of such a nature that every human mind which clearly grasps the meaning of the terms at once perceives its truth, its necessary truth, its universal truth ; and never afterwards swerves from that conclusion. The assertion

instantly takes rank as an axiom. Thereafter any argument which contradicts it is out of court. So is it with another piece of knowledge—namely, that two things which are equal to one and the same third are equal to one another. The same sense of its necessary truth, and its universal truth, arises in all minds immediately on clear comprehension of what is here alleged, and no change of this conviction ever arises later from tests and experience. It is, as we say, self-evident. This, also, is therefore immediately recognised as an axiom, not to be demonstrated, but to be used to test attempted demonstrations by. This is intuitive knowledge. The firm footing which in such axiomatic knowledge the mind is conscious of possessing is proof that the Author of both the knower and the things to be known has correlated mind and its objects in such manner that correspondence of mind with mind, in respect of those objects, shall proceed on firm ground; one mind being assured that to other minds the object presents in the main the same attributes as to itself. The fact that two minds in corresponding, that is, in reciprocally communicating and comparing their knowledge, agree, leads us to call that agreement a correspondence, and even to extend the figure, and call an agreement of attributes in the object with apprehensions in the mind correspondence; not, however, implying exchange of sentiments, but simply the fact

that the attributes which the mind perceives in the object are really in it. When we say that in two cogwheels the cogs and notches correspond, we do not mean that they interchange question and answer, or remark and answer, but that figuratively each "answers to" the other, and both "answer to" the idea of their constructor, so "answering" their end.

Inferential knowledge is also real knowledge ; and that in spite of the fact that, whether it be arrived at by logical inference or by the more restricted mathematical inference, the process is liable to error, and hence the conclusion. In argument, we easily misapprehend terms, or fall into a false process in comparing them ; in either of which cases the conclusion is vitiated. In calculations we easily fall into error of process, whence error of conclusion is inevitable. This does indeed establish the fact that a supposed inference is not necessarily a real one ; but it does not touch the fact that a real inference will always abide the test of time and experience, thereby vindicating its claim to be an expression of true knowledge. Grant a right of slipping in between the admitted terms a suppositious one, and any result is possible. An evolutionist, for instance, adduces several facts, say 7, and one or two "might-bes," say 2, and then 3 facts more, and concludes that the sum is a dozen. Now the interpolated two being deducted, the sum has to be done over again ; and you cannot make a dozen.

Knowledge by testimony is also real. If the testimony is false or inaccurate, the knowledge is illusion, just as an inference is an illusion if the process has been vitiated. If the testimony is both truthful and accurate, then is knowledge the result. A man who never had been in America has said to a citizen of New York, as they sailed up the bay together: That is Staten Island, those are The Narrows; that is the Battery, yonder is St. George's Church. His knowledge of the existence of the place, and of certain of its features, though only founded on testimony—that testimony being truthful and accurate, and having also been clearly apprehended—was real knowledge; needing only sight to convert it into experience. In travelling a careful man will often, from knowledge which he brings with him, correct the information given by persons on the spot, will sometimes correct even the information of guides.

Knowledge by testimony, also knowledge by inference and belief, come closely together as well as run parallel. All knowledge involves belief; but belief is not knowledge. We may believe what is not true. This we call knowing what really we do not know. Illusion is a sincere, but ill-founded, belief resting upon supposed, but incorrect, observation or testimony, or else on supposed, but not valid, inference. When testimony is good, and apprehension correct, the consequent belief can hardly be set lower than know-

ledge gained by experience. What difference is there in my certitude of the existence of Sydney or San Francisco, which I never saw, and my certitude of the existence of London, where I live, or of Cannes, where I write? I could not recognize the former by sight, but perhaps could state facts about them not known to some who had actually lived in them.

I have barely alluded to *knowledge by instinct*, which in point of order takes precedence of all other kinds, and in point of importance retains that precedence among animals that at birth enter upon their inheritance, which is the Past; whereas in man, whose inheritance is the Hereafter, its place is not conspicuous; he is held waiting for the waking up of fresh powers stage by stage as he advances on his way. If the dipper already mentioned displays striking knowledge the first day, higher races far outstrip man in the proportionate attainment of their first years compared with those of their later ones. The colt from a famous stud will reach the zenith of his fame at an age when the son of the master scarcely knows his letters. Knowledge displayed antecedently to testimony, to reasoning, to experience, to sensations corresponding, or to consciousness corresponding—the instinctive knowledge of bee, ant, bird—is not more striking in its ripeness at birth than in its precision and specialized adaptation to the future of the individual and the race. Affecting, as this knowledge does, numerous external objects,

complex processes, and works of skill, such maturity without a past as it displays, such acquaintance without previous sight, such discrimination before opportunities of comparing, such prevision of ends before any lessons of want, such selection of means before any trials, and in execution such expertness before exercise, lead us up above all the steps of creature teaching, and set us before the Power which knoweth and giveth knowledge. There is a school earlier than the mother's knee ; there is a Teacher who can not only instruct but incline, and not only incline but empower. The knowledge of what to do before even questions could arise, the inclination to do it before use had trained to it, the ability to perform before example seen, all point upwards, upwards.

The consciousness of these instinctive lights and powers must be one of the earliest acts of consciousness. The knowledge brought by sense reinforces that consciousness and stimulates the powers. Later, in man, Reason with its intuitions and its inferences, testimony, experience, all proceed in constant streams to augment the fund of knowledge, with him low at birth, and nearly equal in all ; but far otherwise as life goes on. The attempts to account for *all* instinctive knowledge by the experience of the race, which is a good account of certain modifications and phases of it, form one of the poorest of the many inexpressibly poor efforts to pass off intricate webs of wordcraft for genuine scien-

tific accounts of things. Instinctive knowledge is the foundation of all other, and he who regards it as either nescience or illusion, he who does not accept it as effective knowledge so far as it goes, must have private passages in his mind in which ordinary lights are quenched. He who fancies that he has caught it in a wood of nerves and ganglia, plexuses, and nexuses, integrations, and differentiations, and vibrations, and equilibrations, must give us leave to admire.

When a state of partial knowledge is confounded with nescience or with illusion, it is turned into a cause of intellectual gloom; as if any supposed gains of our own were unreal, and as if the total sum bequeathed by our predecessors was a heritage of masks. If what we suppose ourselves to know in the objects of thought, both within and without us, is made to appear unreal, any striving after knowledge of nature or art, of God or man, seems as if it were but flitting from bough to bough in some enchanted grove where only illusions dwell. Unable to know within ourselves, unable to know around us, even things of which all our senses plainly tell, how can we look above and hope to know any Being or Power higher than visible objects? Unable to know what we saw in the past, and what we see in the present, it becomes impossible for us to listen to any voice gently sounding from this side of

*Effect of
Confounding
Partial
Knowledge
with
Nescience.*

the grave over to the other and saying: What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter. The wand that turns our knowledge into nescience becomes a club that beats down all our hope of brighter light in a better world.

VIII.—*Effect on Christian Minds of Partial Knowledge.*

Very different is the aspect assumed by partial knowledge when once its validity is admitted. We then cease to have any suspicion of being a sport of mocking somethings, or mocking nothings, which illude us with ideas that we are, that we think, that we know, and that our actions are pregnant with vast meaning and issues, whereas we are but infinitesimal fractions of an All-nothingness. We then feel ourselves to be a reality—a small but still a significant reality; girt round about on every hand by relations and beings, all realities possessing a significance ever ascending, the whole being embraced in the arms of one Infinite Life and Truth. Existence real, matter real, life real, mind real, force real, motion real; man real, God real; thought itself ceases to be idle phantasm, and the soul of man may look upwards and breathe a morning air that inspires him for an everlasting ascent.

Once certified that our knowledge is real, the fact that we only know in part, instead of benumbing our

aspirations, inspires them anew. To the knower, the fact that he does not know all is a call, when once he believes that effort will be rewarded, not mocked. The certitude, "I know all; no more remains to learn," must be to a finite intellect the knell of progress. Let one believe this, and there will he stand; content, perhaps, if he believes he is to die to-morrow, and if to him death means really entering into nothingness. But not so if he expects even to live for years here, never knowing any fresh object, or any more about familiar ones; still less if he expects, on passing out of this bodily envelope, to enter upon a world as far above this in matter for knowledge and means of knowing as this world, when he was brought into it, proved to be superior to that earlier smaller world wherein he dwelt when his unknown and unknowable mother was his universe.

To live here and not learn would be dull even to stupid men; even to the frivolous who put telling and hearing news for all increase of knowledge. But to go forth into another world and live in it for ever and ever incapable of advancing, stagnant from the first, would be mentally appalling. On the other hand, the consciousness that what Now knows not Hereafter makes known, and that in the Beings, the themes, and the life of that other world there is room for a finite mind to travel evermore onward on the road to infinite attainments, gives to our present

winning him onward, ever rewarding with new wonder and joy. A Father's House of many mansions sends out its distant lights to cheer him, with the sure and certain hope of a Face to Face beholding, and a knowledge of all the Father spreads before His sons.

Strangely, a noted passage with a metaphor, often regarded as written by Mr. Spencer to show us how nescience overpowers and invalidates knowledge, and certainly quoted in that sense by favourable critics,

Mr. Spencer, really expresses the Christian view of
in fact, partial knowledge as growing and gaining
Corroborates upon nescience ; for when you imagine an
This. enlarging sphere pushing out its surround-

ing atmosphere, though it is true that the larger it grows, the larger is the circle of atmosphere which it touches, that is not because the emptiness grows, but because the fulness does so. Let a globe in a schoolroom be enlarged till it reaches the walls and ceiling ; of course the circle of empty air now touching its surface is a much larger one than when the globe was a twentieth part of its present size ; but that is the result of the increase of the globe, and the pushing back of the emptiness. Therefore the true effect of this striking language is exactly the reverse of what it is sometimes cited as carrying : " Regarding science as a gradually increasing sphere, we may say that every addition to its surface does

but bring it in wider contact with surrounding nescience."¹

IX.—*His "Unascertained Something."*

Mr. Spencer sees that this coexistence of knowledge and nescience promises to the human race that so long as it shall exist a sphere of research will exist in "that unascertained something which phenomena and their relations imply." Such is the Future into which Agnosticism shrivels up the Christian hope of eternal increase of knowledge. The race "through all future time,"—that is, terrestrial time, until this ball shall roll its last round upon its axis, or at least until man for the last time shall count the round—may have the benefit of "occupying itself" with an "unascertained something." This term, of all Mr. Spencer's diplomatic names for his own substitute for a Living and True God, is the clearest and best. Nevertheless, the prospect that after us succeeding generations may contemplate an *unascertained something* does not seem to be a broad addition to mortal hopes. Every pain and pleasure, every bone and sinew, offers to us an unascertained something. The Agnostic's prospect is as small in comparison with the Christian's prospect as the range of a short-sighted eye is small in comparison with that of telescope and microscope com-

¹ *First Prin.*, § 4.

bined. Each individual soul, not only until the moment
The Contrast when on earth the evening and the morning
between shall be the last day, but for ever and ever,
Agnostic and "may occupy itself" with more than "an un-
Christian ascertained something"—with undiscovered
Hopes. depths in One Well Known Being, and with ever fresh
unascertained somethings in His works and ways.
Thus will that remain possible to each one of us for
ever and ever which Mr. Spencer concedes to the
race—for the time it lasts—namely, that "it must
always continue possible for the mind to dwell upon
that which transcends knowledge."

Dwelling upon Him who when most known is
most seen to transcend knowledge, each separate soul
will gather store of joy greater than the whole race
can accumulate in its transient course by dwelling on
finite things alone, dissociated from that Infinite One
whom in some faint degree all finite things display.
To know Him is to love, to know Him much is to
love much, to know more is to love more, to increase
in knowledge eternally is to grow in love eternally;
to love is to live in earnest; to love God is to love
and live for all that is good, is the height of highest
life. To dwell upon an unascertained something
offers to the individual a certain hope of intellectual
employ for the few days of life that remain. To
dwell in successive generations upon an unascertained
something extends that pale hope from our age to

the race, till the axle of its carriage breaks and both vehicle and fare sink together in the bottomless nought. This is not thy heritage, O soul of immortal man! Thou shalt know God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent; shalt know here and know hereafter Him whom to know is life eternal.

At page 285 I quoted the passage in Job where the dwelling-place of Wisdom (its Where and its Whence) is inquired for. The inquirer sees knowledge shown in the veins of silver, gold, and iron; and yet another knowledge in mining and working them. He sees knowledge in the regulated office of darkness, and in the alternate appearing and disappearing of the waters. He sees it in the heat of the earth, and in its bread-bearing fecundity; in its stones, in its gems; in its water courses, floods, and strange balance of weights and forces. He sees it in the path of the fowl, in the eye of the bird of prey. He hears man confess that he can neither make it nor buy it; that his valuables are not of price in the treasure-house whence it flows. The Depth says—It is not in me; the Sea—It is not with me. The vulture's eye discovers it not; the widest range of winged fowl leads not to its home. The destroyer and the grave have heard the fame thereof, but of them it could not come. Whence, then, whence? God understandeth it; He knoweth it; He declareth it.

The reverse of this process is shown in the hundred

and thirty-ninth Psalm. In Job, man is searching after the abode of knowledge ; in the Psalm, he is seeking how he can escape from its pursuit. It is present at his down-sitting, at his uprising. It is before him, behind him ; within him, looking through him. It scrutinizes even his thought, and thought afar off. Yea, it anticipated and fore-traced his existence. Distance does not remove him from it ; darkness does not cover from it ; night is no night for it ; neither the world above nor the world below is another world to it. This knowledge is not human, not creaturely ; the attempt to flee from it is the attempt to flee from the presence of God. If we seek for the fountain of knowledge, we meet with God. If we would flee from knowledge, we are encompassed with God. Height, depth, darkness, light, earth, heaven, hell—all feel that one Presence, and are interpenetrated with the glance of that all-searching view.

In these simple records of ancient times—dear to millions in all times, millions augmenting with every decade—*Mr. Spencer's Doctrine of Intelligence.* Mr. Spencer might gather some hints as to what are the ideas of Personality and Intelligence which really prevail among believers in revealed religion. His misconceptions are gratuitous. If he cannot conceive personality without a body, or substance without matter, or production otherwise than as by an artificer, all who love the Bible habitually can and do. Where he will find

a "mode of being" higher than the Personality felt and known in such writing as that referred to above, where a "mode of being," higher than this Intelligence, he gives us no means of imagining. For him, indeed, the "universal law of nervous action explains this universal law of intelligence for us";¹ the universe we live in is not all pervaded by nerves, and tokens of intelligence are not bounded by the human epidermis. For him, "regarded under every variety of aspect, Intelligence is found to consist in the establishment of correspondences between relations in the organism and relations in the environment." For us the establishment of relations, and even the idea of establishing them, is impossible except as the act of an Intelligence already existing; and the effective establishment of them is impossible if such pre-existing Intelligence cannot command power to determine the inmost nature of things.

It will throw light back on the ground we have already traversed, and also forward on what yet lies before us, if we now take some specific notice of Mr. Spencer's teaching as to the part played in the system of the universe by Illusion and Phenomena. Indeed this, while one of the most interesting phases of his speculations, is perhaps the one which offers the key to the whole.

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 268.

² Same, § 176.

CHAPTER V.

MR. SPENCER'S DOCTRINE OF ILLUSION AND
PHENOMENA.I.—*Is a Thing Identical with Its Own Appearances?*

IF one plainly said that the appearance of Westminster Abbey is the same thing as the Abbey itself, probably not many would let the statement pass unchallenged. Again, if it was plainly said that the Abbey was only an appearance, and that it was nothing except when making an appearance, not many would concur. Yet the universal propositions—that every appearance is itself the thing that makes the appearance, that everything is only an appearance, and that everything is nothing except when it is making an appearance, might have been accepted in broad daylight as fundamental axioms, so frequently are they assumed in reasoning not confined to Positivists and Agnostics.

Now, so far as we of human race are concerned, a thing may exist, and yet make no appearances to us; and when that is the case, on what principle can such a thing be called a phenomenon, since that means only a thing appearing? Whether appearing or not

appearing, realities are truly things, that is, they are objects thought about, or as a Cockney would say, unwittingly conserving the record of a truth, they are *thinks*.

The thing, may be as real and mighty as gravitation, and, whether making appearances or not making them, it, by virtue of its reality and might, may possibly become an object of thought, and even of certitude. It may, like gravitation, be the cause of ten thousand appearances. Or it may, like ether, be a necessary condition of appearances. The fact that it does not appear to us does not reduce it from the rank of a thing to that of a nothing. That fact only proclaims that things of an importance as transcendent as that of gravitation or ether exist, affect our condition, and yet are never presented to eye, ear, or other sense. These things are, nevertheless, revealed to the Higher Man, made manifest by rays finer than those of the sun, announced by speech subtler than that of voice—a speech addressed to somewhat within us which hearkens for notes deeper than pulses in the air. Local manifestations would not represent the universal presence of these momentous realities; and intermittent ones would not represent their constancy of operation. They become known to us, not by being shown to any organ of sense, but by force of evidence collected from all points of the field of observation.

*Things
which
Do Not
Appear*

When things that do not make any appearances are called phenomena, it is by a use of language looser than should pass when thinkers mean work. When a thing is above form and colour—the sole objects capable of appearing through the eye ; when it is above tremors in the air—the sole objects capable of appearing through the hearing ; when it is above corporal emissions and contacts—the sole objects capable of appearing through the other senses ; when, in a word, by reason of its higher nature, it does not appear to the senses but to the soul, to call it by a name which signifies that it is nothing but an appearance to sense is no less than a forcing of phraseology to misrepresent. Though these non-appearing realities wait in their silent abodes to be felt after and found by the spirit of man, the innumerable phenomena of which they are either the condition or the cause constantly point up to them.

To all men except philosophers Appearances intelligibly announce their place and mission in the general system of things. To ordinary people it seems to be a fact upon the face of nature that the Appearance fills an appointed place as a messenger of knowledge between a *body* and a mind, in a manner analogous to that in which the word holds its place between one mind and another. Many as are the strong points of a body, it has no inheritance in the

*Appearances
Manifestations
of a Body to
a Mind*

Logos. It cannot learn a language, and it cannot speak or be spoken to. By other bodies this would never be deplored ; for to them it would be no defect. They have no promptings to communicate information or to seek it. The ruby never cares to utter its sentiments to the emerald, nor the pearl to explain its origin. Yet if bodies are to fulfil their office in a world governed by mind, they must somehow become known to minds. But they cannot make themselves known, cannot tell of their existence, much less of their properties and uses ; and did matters remain thus, mind could make no more of iron or rocksalt than marble can make of them.

Here, then, enters the Appearance, having its office and nature well defined. Just as speechless matter could not make itself known to mind without some method of appearances ; so mind could not itself command knowledge of a body without some such method. An Appearance is a combination whereby a body shoots forth from itself into a mind the announcement : Here I am. Except to a mind, it can make no such announcement. The appearance also affords some clue as to what kind of an *I* is the one so announced. Although, as has been said, this is done in a manner somewhat analogous to that wherein a mind, by a word, shoots forth from itself into another mind any idea it wishes to convey, there is yet a great difference, notwithstanding the fact that

in both cases there is presupposed in mind the power of apprehension, of attention, and of inference.

The body which appears knows nothing of the appearance it makes, nothing of the mind into which it darts it, nothing of the medium through which it is darted, nothing of the impression made by it as it reaches its goal. Tell a body that there is a mind observing it, and it will not in consequence do anything which it would not do in the absence of an observer. Ay, if all the minds upon earth were watching, it would do nothing but what it would do if there was only one mind watching, or none at all. It cannot respond to observation.

In contrast with this, a mind when making its thoughts appear knows somewhat of the being to whom it would manifest them. To a mere

*Contrast
between This
and a Manifestation
of Mind.*

body—to a statue, or a portrait, to a telescope or a pair of spectacles, to a printing press or an electrical machine—it knows that it cannot make its thoughts known. On the other hand, it knows that to an animal it can make them appear in some small part, and to a man in large measure. In addition to this, it knows something of the form it ought to give to the appearance, and something of the medium through which it passes, whether light, or air, or light and paper, or wire, or whip, or rod, or rein. It also knows something of the impression which the appearance will probably produce.

Accordingly, if it is to be made to the eye, the mind adapts form and movement to light and shade; if to the ear, it adapts sound not only to the hearer, but also to distance. Similarly it modifies its signs according as the mind to be approached is that of an animal, a child, an ignoramus, or a person of intelligence. When conscious of the absence of both man and animal, it has no impulse to employ speech, gesture, or look in order to make its thoughts appear.

Now, if a man holds up his hand as a signal, who of us would identify the sight with the man; or if he shouts, who of us would identify the sound with him? Yet if a body appears to us by a sight, a sound, a touch, smell, or taste, we seem to identify body and appearance by calling the one a phenomenon and the other a phenomenon. How is this? We do not confound a projectile with the weapon from which it is shot, nor yet with the target at which it flies, any more than with the air that bears it up or with the impression it makes on striking. We hold the bowman and his bow for one thing, the arrow for a second, the air for a third, the target for a fourth, and the impression for a fifth; each of them as distinct from the others as if it existed alone. So it is with a speaker. He is one thing (both bowman and bow), the word is a second, the air a third, the ear aimed at a fourth, the impression to be made a fifth. Now,

is an appearance to be confounded with the thing that makes it, any more than a word is with the speaker? Yet while we should not call both orator and oration speech, we do habitually call both an appearance and the substance which makes it phenomena.

Why philosophers should execute such feats of writing over what to ordinary persons would appear as plain as nature can make it, is not for us to say. We must deferentially accept their prodigious paragraphs as throes of the evolution from well-digested common thought into purely technical formulas. Nevertheless, we shall never be content to regard, say, a peacock and the appearance he makes as one and the same thing. We shall not be persuaded that on a pitch dark night when he makes no appearance there is any less of him or any different form of him from what existed at golden noon when he dazzled the beholders. We shall not believe that it makes the difference of a feather to his frame whether the beholders are a wren and a yellow-hammer or a whole school of children. Let those who think it philosophic call *him* and not merely his appearance a phenomenon. We shall call him a peacock—a peacock when he makes a phenomenon, and as much a peacock when he does not appear.

II.—*Are Phenomena Disguises?*

If this view is correct, the Appearance is the speech of bodies in like manner as speech is the appearance of minds. This, however, is in direct contradiction to Mr. Spencer's teaching. In his *Classification of the Sciences* he gives, in obvious imitation of Comte, a carefully concocted diagram of the sciences, accompanied by definitions. He thus defines science [*italics mine*]: "Science is that which treats of the *forms* in which phenomena are known to us," and again: "Science is that which treats of the *phenomena themselves*." Here it is quite obvious that "phenomena" is not used as the name of mere appearances, but of things, substances and their appearances both together. "The *forms* in which phenomena are known"! But phenomena are only the forms in which substances are known. What, then, is the form of a form? Science, as viewed in the light of this definition, has no other occupation than to treat of the forms of forms. Even Comte, upon whom Mr. Spencer is here avowedly improving, allowed science to study appearances and their laws. Mr. Spencer is far too sensible to lay down restrictive rules as to what questions we shall ask and what we shall not; but, were his words taken as they stand, we should say he believes that in point of fact science is restricted to phenomena and forms of phenomena. His words,

however, mean more than appears. It may seem at first sight hard to believe, but what he really intended is that Science treats of things, with time and space.

Kant had called Time and Space forms of thought, to which Mr. Spencer demurs, and calls them forms of things. But in his formula he does not call things things, but phenomena, and consequently makes time and space forms of phenomena. Kant apparently discharged out of the word *form* the old scholastic meaning, and put into it a new one of his own. With him *form* does not seem to mean the distinguishing characteristic which marks off a thing from every other thing, but seems to mean a condition preceding existence and indispensable to it. Time and space, then, he holds are not things in themselves;—whatever that may mean, as one fails to realize a thing out of itself;—they are forms of thought, or essential precedent conditions of thought. Whether Mr. Spencer takes the word form in the old sense or in the apparently Kantian one, he does not say. In practical use he gives to it applications irreconcilable with either of the two meanings; as, for instance, when he calls Time “the blank form” in which successive states of consciousness are presented and represented.¹ A riddle of a definition this; and one might easily occupy many pages in attempting to find out what signification may lie under the metaphor. To whom

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 337.

or to what are the states presented and represented? Of whom or of what are the states states? How is the form blank, and yet capable of receiving only successive entries? Who makes the entries, or presents the things presented? Is not Time quite as much the arena of contemporaneous events as of events in series, quite as much of coexisting bodies and minds as of successive ones? and so on: the questions come too thick for discussion. The constant ringing of an antithesis between Space as the abstract of *coexistent* relations and Time as the abstract of *successive* ones seems to indicate a total oblivion to the fact that successive things are in space as well as in time, and that coexistent things are in time as well as in space. Confining the idea of coexistence to Space treats Time as if it were length without breadth, and confining succession to Time treats Space as if it were breadth without length; whereas space is as long as time, and time as broad as space.

One thing, however, is manifest, that for Mr. Spencer things are phenomena and the forms of things are time and space. Here comes boldly into view the conception of Mr. Spencer as to the place and office of phenomena or appearances. He usually contrasts phenomenon and reality, not phenomenon and substance. This assumes that the phenomenon is not a reality; whereas, be it an appearance, an image, a reflection, or even a shadow, it is a reality

as truly as the substance it discloses. The shadows on the sundial have played the part of important realities in many a juncture of urgency.

Holding that logic and mathematics treat of time and space, he says they treat of the Forms of phenomena, and he therefore calls them the *Abstract Sciences*. Holding that it is not of time and space, but of things themselves, that the other sciences treat, he calls them *Concrete Sciences*, and by compounding the two makes a middle class, the *Abstract Concrete Sciences*.

*Mr. Spencer's
Scheme
of the
Sciences.*

His scheme is this:—

SCIENCE is	{	that which treats of the forms in which phenomena are known to us	{	ABSTRACT SCIENCE	}	Logic and Mathematics
		that which treats of the phenomena themselves	{	ABSTRACT CONCRETE SCIENCE	}	Mechanics, Physics, Chemistry, etc.
			{	CONCRETE SCIENCE	}	Astronomy, Geology, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, etc.
		in their elements				
		in their totalities				

To keep our own point in view, we do not note in these two groups of studies any other feature than this, that the objects of knowledge are so described as to throw out in high relief Mr. Spencer's doctrine that phenomena are not revealing messengers, but are disguises. That by "disguise" Mr. Spencer understands much the same as the public do, may be

as the man painted is a real man, or the tree painted a real tree. If it well simulates the appearance of the thing pictured, in that it only testifies to the trustworthiness of appearances, when not meant to deceive but to inform.

“The looking-glass,” says Mr. Spencer, “still more distinctly proves how deceptive is sight when unverified by touch.” In this Mr. Spencer concurs with notables ancient and modern. Nevertheless, it really is not correct that the looking-glass proves that sight unverified by touch is deceptive. What it does prove is that first impressions need to be checked; and that is true respecting impressions of touch as well as those of sight, and equally true respecting impressions purely of mind. But how much can touch tell us about impressions caught from a looking-glass? It can tell us that the surface we are looking at is solid and smooth. That is all. It cannot decide whether or not a man is behind the solid, or enclosed within it. No more can it decide whether the solid is transparent or opaque, whether a reflector of light or a non-reflector.

Even at the first the principal impression of what the looking-glass conveys is one that gives real information. It is only subordinate traits which are illusive. The glass shows the appearance of a man; and a man there is. What is in fault is not sight, but inexperience. There are in this

reflected appearance peculiarities not belonging to the direct appearance of a man ; but our experience has not prepared us to seize these and conclude accordingly. A few repetitions of the experience enable us to distinguish these traits, and to discriminate between a direct appearance of a man and one reflected. This is correction by sight itself, not by touch. Sight told true. It showed what was to be shown. A man is present, otherwise never would the glass give the reflection—never would the eye see it. A baby that never touched the great mirror perfectly knows that by getting before it she will have a sight of baby, and that by holding up dolly to it she will have a sight of dolly. How little of illusion and how much of reality, even to the baby, there is in this reflection soon appears. She speedily learns that when she wants a sight of dolly in the glass, she cannot get it by holding up the rattle. If dolly is presented it will reflect dolly, and if the rattle, the rattle ; but as to getting it to reflect the one when the other is presented—no, no.

When we mistake a reflection for a body, sight itself soon corrects the illusion ; it soon distinguishes among others those bodies which will reflect images, and soon ascertains in what positions they yield a reflection, and in what they do not. The reflection is as much a reality as the body ; and its reality lies

in not being a body, but a reflection, just as the reality of the body lies in the opposite. One would make a false representation in telling you that the body is a real reflection, as clearly as one would in telling you that the reflection is a real body. How important this reality may be is seen in the effects of moonlight, in those of the planets, in those of flashed signals, and in the familiar fact that something may be seen in a mirror which one person would give much to conceal and another much to discover. Nature is true. A shadow is true ; that of a camel is never made by a man. A reflection is true ; no glass, no pond, will give you back the reflection of a man if it is a camel you set before it. An image is true ; the young which bear the image of the deer are not sprung of oxen. And so also is the direct appearance true ; the appearance of your father is not that of your neighbour. In fact, the direct appearance is the image of an object which pencils of light paint on your retina, itself a plate prepared from of old, and capable of taking on the image and presenting it to the mind, just as the plate of an astronomer takes on the image of stars, some visible by the naked eye, some visible by the telescope, some invisible even by the aid of the strongest telescope ever made, yet, nevertheless, revealed to the eye itself by the image taken on by the more sensitive "dry plate," during a long-continued exposure.

It is obvious that the question whether appearances disguise realities or reveal them involves the truthfulness of the whole system of communication in nature. If they disguise, then the realities themselves are misrepresented; the something, whatever it may be, emitted from each reality as originating an appearance is a misleading utterance, the medium conveying it carries forward a deceptive communication, the organ which takes it up from the medium passes on the deception, and the intervening nerve and brain are engaged in bewildering a knower by a false notion of things professedly made known. The reality of the knower and the distinction between him and the things to be made known are both implied in the supposition of a scheme of illusory communications as well as in that of a scheme of truthful ones. It as much takes an observer to receive a false impression as to receive a true one, and it as much takes an object to give out a deceptive sign as a candid one. Therefore, the idea that a system of illusion clears the way to the doctrine of universal identity, by destroying the reality of supposed persons and things, is superficial. Persons and things are as real when disguising themselves by false appearances as when manifesting themselves by truthful ones. Persons deceived by disguises are as real as persons informed by frank appearances.

III.—*Appearances Reveal, do not Disguise.*

We have to keep before us the fact that, according to our philosopher, what we do in the highest sciences is to consider the *essential nature* of things, and side by side with this we have to keep in view the fact that appearances disguise things. I need hardly repeat the imposing formula that the phenomenon is disguised by the phenomena. If appearances disguise things, what can there be to present the essential nature of things to our consideration? that nature is not indicated to us by the signs contrived in nature, but is hidden from us. In such a case should we not have a better chance of knowing the real nature of a thing if it did not make any appearances? We admit that non-appearance is not a contribution to knowledge; but at all events it does not give false ideas. The witness who answers not to his name in Court may be blamed, but not for giving false evidence.

It will hardly be said that our knowledge of bodies which never make appearances to us is greater than that of those which do. The surface of the earth is to us a phenomenon distributed into countless phenomena, while its centre is no phenomenon at all, never addressing itself to any of our senses. Which of the two is the better known to us? Holding, however, as we do, that phenomena do not disguise but

reveal realities, we by no means imply that they deliver knowledge to us in such a manner that it takes its place in the mind without attention on our part. No more would we imply that after attentive observation the knowledge received by us amounts to a power of defining the object, "in itself," "in its substance," "in its nature," "in its essential nature," "in its ultimate nature," and so forth. Still further are we from supposing that any one appearance of a thing may disclose all that is to be known of it, or, indeed, that its repeated appearances to any one sense can do so. On the contrary, after the appearances of a given body for years to all our senses alternately, it is not in our power to say how much of its properties still remains unknown.

The extent to which any set of appearances reveals to a mind the properties and possibilities of an object depends greatly on the character of the mind. It depends on its nature, whether human or animal, and if animal, what animal. If human, it depends on its native power of apprehension, on its acquired power of observation and inference, on its memory, and on its power of reflection. To a cat the same object making the same appearance will not reveal what it will to a man. And it will reveal widely differing amounts of its properties to a drayman, a painter, and a trained physicist. But revealing in part is totally different from disguising. On this

difference turns the entire question. If nature is truthful and mind is to be relied upon, appearances do reveal, though only in part. If, instead of this, nature is deceitful and mind is an accessory to its own illusion, knowledge becomes a phantasm, science is but angling in the Dead Sea, and faith ceases to have any foundation.

When reading that things are phenomena, and phenomena disguises, I seem carried back again among old friends in the Mysore, hearing them exclaim, *Mosa, all is Mosa!* illusion, all is illusion!

Oriental Pantheist's View. That idea sits well on a clear-headed Pantheist, especially when he is ready to accept its moral and social corollaries. But it does not sit at all well on one who disclaims Pantheism, who preaches observation, not mere meditation, and who is by no means prepared for the moral and social corollaries. When Brahm from being One became many, he placed each separate being, or what seemed a separate being, under the influence of an illusion, *Maya*. This illusion is particularly strong in man, who under it thinks of himself as separate from Brahm. Yet is Brahm alone the true existence, the sole reality. Be it said, however, for Asiatic Pantheism, that Brahm is not conceived of as an impersonal tendency, or stream, or principle, or any similar abstraction eviscerated of sense. He is distinctly conceived of as willing and acting, even if only intermittently. He not only

wishes to be, but he makes us act; he is the ever-
operating power, and that with his own knowledge
and by his own intention. This may be inconsistent,
but it is real. It is pushed so far that the true
doctrine of creation often breaks out, as an under-
lying truth will do, so that it would be held as
always taught were it not contradicted in other pas-
sages and by the pervading idea of the system,
which is not that of creation, but of self-diversifying.
"From the beginning, the middle, and the end of all
things." "I an entity, and non-entity," is a
summary of true Pantheism. But this presents to us
a conscious being, one who knows his own existence,
and what he is. Again, a few words condense much
teaching: "He makes him to do good deeds whom he
wishes to bring out of this world; and him he makes
to do evil deeds whom he wishes to bring again into
the world." Here, instead of being an impersonal
power, or cause, such thing, Brahm is a being who
wishes, judges, discriminates, and causes. Here,
the good deeds and evil deeds are his doing.
In this expression the distinction between good deeds
and evil deeds passes through, notwithstanding its fla-
grant contradiction with the doctrine that all deeds are
equally the operations of one sole and divine agent.
Such and other truths are stronger than the meta-

Garrett's ed., Bangalore, 1846.

Mullen's *Hebrew Philosophy*, p. 141.

physical deductions of speculators. There are different qualities of deeds, and Pantheism boldly ascribes good and bad ones to God alone. Yet to us it assigns the penalty of the bad ones. If we do evil actions we have to come back to earth, it may be as goats or fleas, as elephants or pariahs, according to the degree of our demerit. But why we should be chargeable with demerit is a question that Pantheism can no more answer than human nature can help asking; and why pain should follow actions of one kind and pleasure those of another, seeing all actions proceed from God alone, is another question for which no answer is forthcoming. In fact, the assertion, "I am the same to all mankind," is directly contradicted by the fact of punishment; and how really the relegating of faulty souls to earth again is a punishment appears in the words, "Because mankind are unacquainted with my nature they fall again from heaven." They are therefore severely punished, and thus recognised as distinct beings, as accountable agents; all which contradicts the principle of universal identity. The wicked are even spoken of as "trusting to the deceitful, diabolic, and wicked principle within them."¹ A system *originating* in Pantheism could never give birth to such expressions. They involve a whole group of ideas inconsistent with it: personality, corrupted nature,

¹ *Bhagavat Gita.*

conflicting principles; older truths overlaid but cropping out.

Whether we are to accept the doctrine of illusory phenomena or that of revealing phenomena, is a vital point between us and the Agnostics. It is a fact that the things of which we know nothing are those which offer to us no appearances, whether directly to the sense or indirectly through their effects. It is also a fact that those things which we best know are such as have appeared often to us, and through different senses. Both of these facts vindicate Appearance as a messenger of light, not of darkness. The science of astronomy would be mere guesses were not appearances truthful indices of the present, truthful remembrancers of the past, truthful presages of the future. The science of navigation would come to an end could not men rely on well-observed appearances. Geology grounds its conclusions on appearances, even after they have long been subject to modifying influences, and could not advance a step if they were mere play. Could you destroy in our doctors their faith in appearances, properly interpreted, as giving real information, you would destroy the science of medicine. "A true appearance" does not mean one that says, I have no substance behind me, but one that says, I have such and such a substance behind

me, and makes its profession good upon proof. A false appearance is one that does not make good its profession. "Deceptive" appearances often mean those which seem to promise some *future* event, such as a storm, or a favourable poll at an election, or else it may be of things out of sight, as, say, land to those at sea. "He misread the appearances" may express a serious reflection on a man's judgment. "Such appearances never deceive," is familiar as an expression, but far more so as an axiom acted upon without hesitation in every movement of life from the appearance of the grate and the matchbox in the morning to the appearance of the bedroom door at night.

When first I beheld an appearance which had already been a thousand times before my mind's eye, that of Wellington, it never occurred to me that the Duke and the appearance were interchangeable terms. When the man turned the corner the appearance ceased, but it never struck me that the Duke had ceased. No more was I struck by any fear that the appearance disguised the fine old man, or even disguised his coat or hat. So, again, when I saw Soult, who had measured swords with him. It did not seem in this case that the appearance was a Frenchman any more than in the other that it was an Englishman. Still it seemed as if in the one case the appearance had set before me a Frenchman

and in the other an Englishman whom, but for it' I might have gone all the days of my life without being able to set so really before my mind. Nor did it strike me that in the case of Frenchman or Englishman it would have made the difference of a hair or of a button to them whether I had seen them or not. In one word, I took the appearances for appearances and not for men, and took seeing the appearance for seeing the appearance and not for making the man and the appearance both. This last expression will seem absurd to those who have never been bewildered by philosophers and their fancies about the human mind making things outside of us.

Furthermore, as bearing on the question of disguise, when later I saw Soult in the Chamber of Peers, the contrast between his appearance there and what it was in Whitehall, as ablaze in his orders he sat in his silvered coach, did not strike me as disguising realities. Rather it seemed to be a difference in appearances which revealed a difference in the realities. It seemed to say, Yonder he was the representative of France at the crowning of a British Queen ; here he is a servant of France waiting upon her in his daily duty.

We should scarcely expect to find that the same philosopher who formally defines things as appearances, and who habitually assumes in reasoning that the phenomena constitute the things, and also that

they disguise them, should be the one to write : " It is rigorously impossible to conceive that our knowledge is a knowledge of appearances ; for appearance without reality is unthinkable."¹ That this general principle should be combined with the treatment of particular cases which pervades Mr. Spencer's works would to many seem " rigorously impossible to conceive."

This inconsistency is far from being the effect of a transient lapse of attention. It has a far deeper cause. The reality of which phenomena *Spencer's* are the appearances is not to the Agnostic, *Universal* as to us, a substance proper to each thing *Substance* taken individually and specially indicated by appropriate appearances. On the contrary, the Reality is one universal substance, sole and continuous in time, sole and continuous in space, which appears within us, which appears without, which is in itself the All-Being. Hence appearances are not truly appearances, but disguises—the antitheses of appearances, which are the manifestation of one person to another, or of a thing to a person ; whereas disguises are expedients for preventing an appearance from conveying the truth ; and, in the case supposed, for deceiving parts of the same being by giving them an impression that they are distinct from the whole, and hold intercourse with it. If there is in existence but

one substance, and no other being to which it can be manifested, and if all appearances are no more than tremors in that one substance, then manifestly each appearance indicative of a separate individual is a sheer illusion, and phenomena in the total are properly called an all-nothingness. They may seem to be heavens and earth, forces and motion, form and thought, man and beast, war and repose, but they are all only curls of foam on the same stream ; not even that—all only oscillations in the same cord ; not even that—they are All-nothingness.

This conception, so closely allied to the Pantheistic one, carries with it the same broad incongruity which encumbers that theory. How can nothingness be deluded ? how can it think, how imagine that things appear to it ? how can it meet one appearance by suppressing it, and another by rendering it permanent ? how can nothingness construct Synthetic Philosophies ?

Although Mr. Spencer groups together all kinds of phenomena under the one heading of All-Nothingness, it is to be said that he does not believe in two kinds of nothing. A noteworthy argument of his for refusing to look upon time and space as nonentities is that to do so " involves the absurdity that there are two kinds of nothing." Perhaps it only involves the assertion that two things of which people speak are both nothing. One may say that a griffin is nothing

and that a phoenix is nothing without believing in two kinds of nothing. But surely two kinds of it need not embarrass one who can put all phenomena into the category of nothingness. If men and cattle, fields and farming implements, markets, congresses, parliaments, churches, are all so much differentiated nothingness, surely there must be a considerable variety of nothings.

If appearances disguise realities, we should be wiser without them. This would involve the consequence that a Laura Bridgeman almost destitute of the senses was less deluded by external nature than a person equipped with all the five. But if over against the ignorance of a man who cannot see you set the optical illusions of a man who can, the latter shrink up into nothing, while the stores of information obtained through eyesight expand to incalculable values. If we were absolutely without senses, no phenomena could reach us to cause illusions, or could intervene as disguises between us and realities. The conception of a world constituted on such a principle would be practically this, that the error incident to finite knowledge would be excluded, because there would be no finite knowledge of external things. In what a world of inerrancy should we then dwell! But it would be the inerrancy of those who because of total darkness cannot attempt to walk, and therefore cannot miss

If Appearances did Disguise Realities.

their way. The system of communication in nature is a system of truthfulness ; and one who holds it to be a system of illusion, feeling, as he must do, that we should be wiser without it, should try to picture to himself a human race in which every mind was enclosed in a body destitute of senses—a body through which no phenomena could penetrate. Such a race would not suffer from disguises ; but it would be unfitted either to enjoy this world or to exercise any influence over the course of its history. All Mr. Spencer's speculations on the mode in which organs and senses were built up constitute a ponderous satire upon his principle of disguises and illusions.

IV.—*A Deceptive Universe or a Veracious One.*

Were the universe the work of two antagonistic Powers, each of which gave being to its own agents for its proper ends, it would be natural that no community of nature should link together those two alien races of beings, and that no method of communication should serve to combine them into one harmonious system. On the contrary, it would be natural that within each separate order all things should tend to the support of the one Power and the antagonizing of the other. If mind being the work of a good Power were itself good, and matter being the work of an evil Power were itself evil, they would be habitually in conflict, each seeking the destruction of the other. If

light were the messenger of the good Power and darkness of the evil one, they would never as morn and eve unite to make one day ; would never coöperate to bless our globe by jointly fostering life, to which the coming of the light brings the joy of action, and that of darkness the boon of rest.

To take a second supposition, If the universe were not the work either of two Powers or of One ; if it were not a work, a product, a creation at all ; if it were only an indescribable, unknowable sport of seeming changes in one and the selfsame substance, so that neither matter nor mind, neither life nor spirit was anything but an illusion, and—take good heed—illusion without any separate being to illude or be illuded,—then attempting to reason on any system of coördination among non-realities, of correspondence between non-entities, of communication from non-existing person to non-existing person, would be no better than shooting at shadows.

But if, according to a third supposition, the universe is the work of a single Power and a good One ; if matter be as much the creature of a beneficent God as mind ; if it is in His view good and very good, then it would seem natural that between the two should be established some medium of correspondence. Sprung from a common parentage, they would naturally be related to one another for some common

*A System of
Communication
Part of a
Truthful World.*

ends. If mind were made to employ matter, surely means would be provided enabling it to impress its volitions upon matter. If matter were made to serve mind, surely means would be provided whereby its existence and properties should be made known to mind. To command matter, mind must be able to impress upon it motion, form, and properties. The means to this end are to make each mind a centre and mistress of several forces. To serve mind, matter must give to it knowledge of its presence and also of its properties. The means to this end are to make each portion of matter a centre and source of appearances varying as its properties vary.

It is obvious that the utility of any exercise of force must depend on the truthfulness of appearances. For every movement of mind with a view to impress matter must be a movement in error, or at least at random, unless the mind first knows what body to act upon, where to find it, and how to reach it. Without a system of appearances informing mind of matter, and of forces impressing the volitions of mind on matter, our world would be a world of the dead. The senses are the channel of this double system of correspondence, or rather of connection; for true correspondence there is none; matter never either inviting or repelling communication, never feeling resentment for neglect or thanks for attention.

Are, then, the senses set for our illusion?

V.—*The Senses Organs in such a System.*

The series of the senses extending from within outwards, begins with one whose range does reach even to the surface of the frame, and terminates with one whose range reaches beyond the most distant measurement of science. If their office is to illude by disguises, the disguises cover all objects from those within the lips to those beyond the visible stars. Taste, the sense most confined in its range, yields no information as to the flavour of a body till it has actually passed within the frame and touches the palate. Touch yields none as to the consistency or temperature of a body till it actually comes in contact with our own frame without or within. Smell ranges farther, yielding information as to the odour of a body at some distance from the person, anywhere in the room, in the house, or in the immediate surroundings. Hearing ranges still further, yielding information as to the noises emitted by a body, it may be a mile or miles away. Sight ranges farthest of all, yielding information of forms and colours from our own world, from space between it and others, and from those other worlds innumerably multiplied.

Now, does Taste mislead us as to flavours, Touch as to consistency, Smell as to odours, Hearing as to sounds

Their or Sight as to forms and colours? Is the *Veracity.* palate the seat of a deception as to sweet and bitter, the skin the seat of a deception as to consistency

and temperature, the nose of one as to healthy and foul odours, the ear of one as to friendly or menacing noises, the eye of one as to forms living or dead, mild or ferocious? On the other hand, does not the palate sense, confined as it is in range, and limited as it is to the purposes of the individual, become by its uses, as guarding our nutrition, the means of preserving the race? It is our alimentary sense. Does not the dermal sense, unable to act beyond the bounds of our body, serve to regulate all its relations with other bodies, all its motions and locomotions, so becoming a real guide to all the arts, from the touch of the dairymaid to the touch of the sculptor or musician? Touch is our mechanical sense. Does not the sense which as to its range might be called the household sense guard what we breathe just as Taste guards what we eat, performing offices for us without which healthy homes and habitable cities were impossible? Smell is our sanatory sense. Does not the sense which as to its range might be called the vicinal sense enable us to pour our thoughts into the minds of other men, to impress our commands on the minds of animals, and to receive from a distance notices from both of these? Hearing is our social sense. And, finally, does not the sense which as to its range might be called the boundless sense enable us truly to know the form of our own infants, of the grass and the corn, truly to know somewhat of the moon, of the sun, and of

worlds further away. Sight is our cosmic sense. All and every one, the senses are servants of light for us, not of darkness; servants of a King who dwells in light, and not of a grim something which hides among phantasms.

To each sense in particular belong the two attributes of appropriateness and incompleteness. Taste is skilled in savour, but not in sound. Hearing is skilled in sound, but not in colour. So with the others. Each bespeaks our attention to other sources of information in the very act of contributing its own. Sight ranges so immeasurably beyond all the others that it compels us to see how little we should know if left to them alone. Having thus proved the incompleteness of the other senses, it next proves its own. It compels us to seek what it cannot show. Wide as is its sweep, its penetration is small. It never carries us below the surface. Yet it exhibits forms which at once tell that the surface is a trifling portion of the whole. Even of the surface it tells us only the form and colour, leaving all our desires to know further points to be satisfied by other senses, or by inferences of reason. In showing us the flight of a hawk, it leaves us to learn all about the mechanism employed and the mind that works it. In showing us the sunlight reflected from objects on earth and issuing from its source, it leaves us to learn all about its course from the start-

ing point to the goal ; to learn whether or not there are relays of fresh forces by the way, whether the whole journey is performed on one straight line, or whether there are pulsations and rhythm of motion. In the night it shows us how the body of the earth can conceal from us the existence of the sun; and at the same time shows how much of the universe he when shining conceals from us, even in the act of giving to us a revelation of our own world without which we should be in all but absolute ignorance of it, supposing that we could exist upon it at all. The total effect, therefore, of the lessons of sight is not that it illudes us, but that it reveals in part. At the most distant point to which assisted by the telescope sight can carry us, it leaves us on the threshold of new, unknown regions, wherein we can discern neither plant nor animal, only space with matter and motion. At the minutest point of space to which assisted by the microscope sight can descend, it leaves us amid wondrous forms of life and on the threshold of realms of life still unseen. Every sense proclaims its own office to be partial: colour is inaudible, sound is intangible, taste is invisible; all objects have properties which elude all the five senses, and yet those which are discovered by them are truly known. "In part" is inscribed on the dome and the foundations of the temple of Knowledge, and covers all its walls. The senses are obviously but givers of hints to the

reason, or at most, purveyors of detached data on which reason may operate, and from which it may educe connected and harmonious truths. But to enable it to arrive at truths, and not to mistify it by disguises, is manifestly their office.

Each sense has one of its poles directed to the object special to itself, and the other pole directed to an observer. For all the five the observer is one and the same mind; but for each of the five the object is a different one. Thus they resemble five telescopes whose inner ends converge while their outer ones diverge. The different objects proper to the respective senses may all be seated inseparable in one and the same part of space, inhering in a common substance; yet from that common substance will each particular sense choose out its proper object and report to the observer-mind on that alone. The substance may be a mineral. To the sense of Taste the object is not the colour of the mineral, or its hardness, or its sonorous qualities, or its odour, but only its flavour. The report of Taste upon that may enable the observer to say Salt; but it is by hardness, to which Touch speaks, by shape and colour, to which Sight speaks, that he can be so informed as to say Rock-salt. Or, on the other hand, the one object of the particular sense may be seated in substances wide apart, even by millions of miles, and yet will the sense combine its observation of both into one, so that the

light of the moon and that of Aldebaran shall both be known as light, though light coming from different fountains. Thus does sense unite with sense to bring from various quarters convergent rays of information before the observer, clearly acting as members one of another, and all as servants of a master whose presence is their common centre. They serve a system of dominion founded upon Knowledge, a system of dominion wherein Knowledge is power.

No one will contend that eyes made colouring matter or that ears made sound. Pigment and eye are obviously two totally independent things, and so are noise and ear. That is, object and organ are in nature things so separate as to be incapable of evolving one another. Neither will anyone contend that eyes or pigment made the light, without which eyes could never know whether the pigment was of this kind or of that. That is, organ and object are in nature things so separate from the medium through which they coöperate that they are incapable of evolving it. The same truth is exhibited in the case of air, the medium between an ear and a sonorous body. No one believes that either ear or sounding-board made the air, or could evolve it, any more than the air could make the ear, make the board, or set it in vibration. Now, the fact is broadly marked on the face of nature that in the case of the three higher senses,

*Medium
between
Object and
Organ.*

smell, hearing, and sight, the medium is one extending between object and organ for spaces which vary from a few inches to countless miles. In every case the medium is of a nature totally different from that of either object or organ, so different that, before experience had, we should confidently pronounce it chimerical to combine into one chain resulting in a sensation the action of a star, of ether, of air, and of an eyeball. In the case of both smell and hearing the medium is air; but the mode of its action differs in the two cases. Between a flower and a nostril the air simply carries particles of matter, and if it flows in the wrong direction carries them away. It is just the action of a current conveying bodies with it. Between a bell and an ear the air is not a current carrying bodies, but a vibrating medium transmitting a wave of motion.

The difference between a current and a wave is this: a current is a forward movement of the mass, bearing onward any smaller body cast in; a wave is a forward movement, not of the mass, but of a vibration in it, leaving the mass behind, and also any smaller bodies that may be in it, but transmitting the motion. The movement of a door on its hinge creates a current of air which will carry flocks of down in its own direction, but will make no sound. The creaking of a hinge will not create a current to carry anything, but will create a vibration, a sound,

which goes not only in one direction but in all directions, and is comparatively little affected by the direction of the current of air. An explosion creates both a current of air, which mechanically dashes on objects within its reach, and a vibration in air which, as sound, travels at its own rate and affects only ears, not ordinary surfaces. The two effects of an explosion are often confounded, and the current of flowing air is treated of as if it were the sonorous vibration ; its breaking of windows figuring as part of the phenomena of sound, which it no more is than is similar breaking from a rush of water. When any fragile substance is broken really by vibrations of sound, the conditions are perfectly distinct.

Ears or vibrating bodies have no more to do with evolving air than have birds' wings, or drops of rain.

Do They Air and its adaptation to a sonorous body
Evolve One at one end and to an ear at the other end
Another? are as necessary to hearing as either the ear or vibration. If ears evolved air, or eyes evolved ether, or if, contrariwise, undulations in ether wherever they touched bodies evolved eyes, or undulations in air wherever they touched bodies evolved ears, we might suppose that nature had given us some clue to processes of evolution, the pursuit of which in labyrinths without clue is now a favourite exercise of many philosophers. But here we are confronted with the fact that between organ and object intervenes a

medium alien from both, incapable of producing either, incapable of being produced by either, yet coöperating with each; coöperating, however, in modes unconscious to any of the three, and yet for ends effected through such coöperation as by one designing operator. It is the unconscious coöperation of distinct parts of an instrument, for purposes unknown to it, and alien from its materials, but purposes formed by the author of that instrument. The adaptation of the medium to the object at one end, say of ether to the combustion in a star, and to the organ at the other end, say of vibration in ether to an eye, has to be sustained over a space which exceeds not only measure but imagination, and at every throb in all its progress it laughs at notions of mere evolution.

If in using the word organ as meaning instrument, I only employ it in its proper sense, that is the very *What is an* reason why in the present day the fact should *Organ?* be noted, if not apologized for. An instrument presupposes an agent whose organ it is, and involves an end for which the agent employs it. The habit of indifferently describing as agents things which cannot properly act, which only move as they are impelled, knowing neither who impels them nor wherefore he does it, and persons who act, know that they act, know for what end they act, and use instruments for that end—this habit leads to such confusion that in the hands of many the word organ

often seems to be equivalent to a self-determining agent. Yet in such hands a self-determining agent is often theoretically held to be non-existent, although in nature his existence is perpetually, if impertinently, thrust upon our attention. An organ in a technical sense may be taken as a specialized feature of a living body, fitted to discharge some special function.

But what is a living body? According to the prince of the Positivists, a living body is one that absorbs and exhales. That is just what air has always been doing by day and by night; absorbing and exhaling water, heat, and other things as well. According to the prince of Agnostics, a living body is one which effects "a continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations." Now, of all things, air is just such a body. Its internal relations are those of oxygen to nitrogen and carbon, and these are adjusted to the external relations of heat, light, water, plants, lungs, gills, wings, and hosts of other things. They are "continuously" adjusted, with a true continuity which makes the adjustments of sleep or nutrition seem intermittent, and with a long-established continuity which makes the oldest animal or even plant appear of low antiquity. Yet neither by its absorbing and exhaling nor by its continuous adjustments does air evolve organs of sense and perception.

Whether an organ is a part of a living body or a lifeless tool, it is in its nature simply the material instrument of mind. The peculiarity of every living organ is its two sides, one for conveying material impressions from external nature inwards to the mind, and the other for conveying movements of mind—volitions—outwards to external nature. Instead of saying two sides, we should come nearer to expressing the fact by saying an up line and a down line; the up line carrying reports from object to observer, the down one carrying movements from observer to object. Each of these two lines must have its two poles: its start and its terminus. By one pole of its up line the organ receives from the medium through which the object addressed it a material impression; by the other it delivers such impression to the observer—mind, which has to transform it into an idea of the object. By the one pole of its down line the organ receives from mind an impulse which by the other pole it communicates to some external object. This is not, as it is often called, a passive and an active side of the life of man. It is a two-sided activity. Passive reception of impressions is correctly spoken of only in relation to lifeless bodies. The human organs actively modify the impressions made through the medium, modify them at the first moment of impact, and continue making new modifications at every stage up to the

final transfiguration, from a material impression to a mental idea.

It is not till that transfiguration has been effected that we have a sensation :—the mental consciousness of a certain impression and of its coming from some external body, that is, external to the mind; for the impression may have its starting point in the Southern Cross or in our own corns. But all that the one or the other can emit would fail—does fail—to give conscious impressions of constellation or of corn to anything but a living mind. Every piece of knowledge of things external must, then, begin by a coöperation of an object, a medium, an organ, and a mind. Any one of these failing, no sensation can be experienced, consequently no further acts of mind. Of members in the series only one, mind, is conscious of what is taking place. The others are instruments, but not altogether *its* instruments, at least in their action inwards. It cannot produce them, nor fully guide them; and they may act in spite of it. In their action outwards they are its instruments, acting or not acting at its behest.

We say it cannot produce these organs. A stone could do as much towards producing a peacock's voice as can a peacock. A fowl could do as much towards producing for itself human lungs as can a man. Yet in man this absence of power to produce living

*Power of
Mind to
Diminish
Labour while
Increasing
Work.*

organs is coupled with the power of supplementing with inanimate ones those which have been bestowed upon him, so that he is able to lighten bodily labour and at the same time to increase the work done. This is a fact so conspicuous and so rich in results that, instead of all motions having mechanical equivalents and effects on a calculable scale, it may be taken as a principle that when the human frame moves under trained intellect, the expenditure of mechanical force lessens in proportion as the power of accomplishing work increases. When a bobbin of weft is carried between the warp by hand alone, the expenditure of strength in proportion to the work done is great. When it is carried by a hand-shuttle, a contrivance of mind has reduced the expenditure of force and raised the amount of work. When the hand-shuttle is replaced by the fly-shuttle, a fresh contrivance of mind has caused still greater diminution of labour and increase of work. Yet in all of these cases the motive-power has to be supplied by the hand. When, however, the steam-shuttle flies without any hand, a higher contrivance of mind has notably accelerated the rate at which labour diminishes and work done increases.

In this case it is to be noted that the hand-shuttle which taxes the body for every unit of force which impels it is really not more an organ of the man's mind than the steam-shuttle which does not tax his

body except for an almost imperceptible amount of force. The volition, indeed, has to be passed through fire, water, iron, leather, and other things, in order to reach its goal; but through them all the intellect does find a way for it, and that volition as much impels the steam-shuttle without hand as the primitive shuttle with the hand. It is easy to suppose that by calculating the cells in the coal consumed, the forces set free by combustion, the proportions of the expanding water, the play of the piston, and all the operations of the gear, you are offering an explanation of how the shuttle flies. All you are explaining is the chain of processes which the intellect has devised for conveying the volition through artificial channels to effect by subsidiary forces what at first it could effect only by the direct play of mental force upon the body. The explanation of the intervening processes is valuable; but when it assumes to be more than that, to be an account of origin, means, and end all in one, then it ceases to be reasonable, ceases to be even specious.

It is no law of mere equivalence of force which brings together lighter effort and heavier work, diminishing expenditure of strength and increasing amount of labour performed. That is an order of things which cannot be established except in the realm where mind asserts its dominion over matter: an order possible only where mind lifts motion out of

the groove of inanimate force, and confers on it a power of originating motions more than equivalent—multiplied ; and not only multiplied but heterogeneous. A whistle, an upheld finger, a touch on a spring may let loose or may arrest a fleet of forces whose power of work would demand for their antecedent, on the principle of mechanical equivalence, not such tiny movements, but the stroke of a Titan. Now, in all this employment of external organs fashioned by itself out of material nature the mind receives ample proof that its perceptions of that nature are not illusive, but, on the contrary, are such as fit it to exercise dominion over matter, with precision and calculable effect.

Confining ourselves to organs of sense, we insist that they are the channels of true knowledge of body by mind. As the appearance is the speech of bodies, so is the organ the ear of the listening mind. If eye and ear, if nostril and palate are organs of illusion, their existence at all seems incomprehensible. It cannot be explained on the principle of chance, seeing they are so full of adaptations. It cannot be explained on the principle of evolution ; for on that principle nothing is permanent but what is fittest for its end, and if their end is disguise, demonstrably their fitness is not for that. If there were a Power capable of devising apparatuses so wonderful, and yet delighting in darkness so that its object was

to hinder us from knowing, why should that Power display the skill and might evidenced by these organs, when its end would be gained by letting things alone? Gems and plants are successful in knowing nothing without being encumbered with eyes and ears. Surely of them or of any creature all would say, Either leave them as they are or give them trustworthy organs.

Assuming, then, that organs of sense are *bona fide* organs of knowledge, and assuming that by the knowledge acquired through them our place in the scheme

What the Existence of an Organ Involves. of the universe is very greatly affected, we may ask, What is involved in the existence of an organ? It manifestly involves a coördination in successive stages : first, as between observer and organ ; secondly, as between observer, organ, and medium ; thirdly, as between observer, organ, medium, and object. A failure at any point in this group of coördinations, and no knowledge could result. If it is to be a case of sight, no object upon earth can show itself to us. No combination of human powers can show it without light. That medium is both a substance and a motion in that substance, ether and undulation of ether. The undulation has to come far and to cross other forces on its way. It is not one motion, not one rate of motion, but several. All this correlation has to be sustained at every point on the way up to our atmo-

sphere, and from the time when that is entered upon has to be further complicated by new correlations.

The body which is an object of vision has certain properties which reflect this motion rather than that of the light, and so makes us see the red rays and not the blue, or *vice versa*. The medium between it and the eye is not merely undulating ether, but also atmosphere, a derangement of which would, as a fog tells us, prevent object and organ from coming into correspondence. The eye, then, has to be adjusted to the light as it comes out of the sky unbroken, to the modification of it which is made by the bodies reflecting it, and to the modifications made by the atmosphere.

Is it so adjusted, or, on the contrary, is there nothing special to fit it for special uses? Let it be remembered that the light reflected by objects does not strike only upon the eye, but is dashed in ceaseless waves against any part of the person. The German proverb says that by night all cats are grey ; and so outside of an eye all sunbeams are colourless. The temples or cheek know no distinction between violet and orange. We cannot speak of mere motion, but of motion related in a special mode to an observer and his organ of observation. Whatever mere motion can do is done as effectually by rays of light falling on the breast as by those falling on the retina. Only at a single minute point of the person is an organ prepared by which motions

undiscoverable by every other thing upon earth are converted into indices of bodies at a distance, which indices are by the observing mind again converted into sensations of form and colour. And nothing but mind can effect this transformation. It is easy to say that what is objectively motion is subjectively thought. Where is it subjectively thought? wherever the motions strike? Nay! Where is it subjectively human thought? anywhere but in a human mind?

What is *objectively motion* is *subjectively thought*, hence the distinction between Observer and Object is needless! Is the motion of the sunbeams ever thought when they light on a stone or a pond? It will be confessed that all the countless motions of the sunbeams go for nothing as to producing vision so long as they take effect upon inanimate bodies. There they are not objective, that is, are not things thought about, because there is no observer to think about them. But, still more, when leaving inanimate nature we come to animated, are the motions of sunbeams ever turned into thought when they fall on the plumage of a bird or the fur of a squirrel? They absolutely reveal nothing to the feathers, nothing to the hairs, but when shot against the retina they reveal what makes bird or squirrel glad or fearful. Yet the rays that die unmeaning on the back of the bird's head or

*Motion
and
Thought.*

on the tip of the squirrel's tail come from the same object as those which inform the eye, and travel with the same undulations. The impact of the same motions, at most points of the creature's frame, leaves it unconscious of them and their source, but is at another point, and at one only, turned into a view of a nut, or a cherry, or a cat ; and this is no delusion, for the objects are really there. The motions are constituted an object only by the presence of an observer, and, the observer present, the motions are not the principal object, but only a link between him and it. Rays falling into a telescope which has not an observer behind it are as capable of turning into astronomical discoveries as are rays falling upon anything but the organ of a mind of turning into thought. Therefore, however subtly we may say that if we had instruments of observation sufficiently fine we should see that what is objectively motion is subjectively thought, we fail of creating facts to countenance the guess, and we do not nullify the fact that motions never turn to thought in inanimate creatures ; that motions of light never turn to bird thought till they have reached the eye of a bird, or to squirrel thought till they have reached the eye of a squirrel ; and that all the motions which ever flashed into the eyes of the animal creation never evolve one human thought. In fact, speaking of what is *objectively* motion presupposes what it is intended to do away with,

Mind. No motion is objective to mindless things, or to anything but mind. Whether it be motion in molecules or motion in mass, motion in rhythm or motion irregular, it never will be an object to a bow or a rifle. No mind, no object. The motions are a wonderful system of agencies for making known to mind through appropriate organs the properties of body, a system by virtue of which the distance which gives to bodies room is prevented from becoming complete isolation—a system of connecting cords traversing the distance.

What is true in respect of the sense of sight holds good of the organs of the other senses. Each has its proper object, its proper medium and its proper functions between object and observer, which functions absolutely nothing else can fulfil. Each organ is a channel of appearances: for we are not with Mr. Spencer to take visual appearances as the only kind of them. "Resistance without appearance," he says, "we decide to be body; as when striking against any object in the dark. Appearance without resistance we decide not to be body; as in the case of optical illusions."¹ Appearance is not, as here assumed, confined to vision. The object against which we knock at night appears to our feeling as well as the one we see by day does to our sight. We

*Common
Relation of
Organs and
Appearances.*

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 348.

say, It appeared like a post, or it appeared like a beam of timber ; in the one case just as we should in the other. As an entrance for appearances each particular organ is a true portal of communication, and not a screen cunningly disguised. Altogether they vindicate their office by enabling us to deal with the various bodies in nature, and to hold dominion over them. Man and child, in their relations with material objects, concur in trusting these organs as faithful guides. The same house, whenever seen, is home to master and child, to cat and dog. The field that is green to the herdsman is green to the herd. The truthfulness wherewith the senses present the appearances of nature is graven upon consciousness, tested by experience, and illustrated by the harmonious interpretation which those appearances receive from various races of creatures, beast of the field, fowl of the air, and man, the Head of them all.

Phenomena are not disguises ; and the impressions they give to us are not illusions. Had some goblin power been minded to befool us, he would have contrived a system of misleading shows. But a Prince of Light, minded to bless us with knowledge and power, wills that bodies should be known and that mind should know them. Had He been otherwise minded, body and mind might have been like a ship and a pilot in a pitch dark night, lying close to one another, each unseen, the ship waiting for a pilot and

the pilot longing for a ship. But, that separation by darkness not by distance should not prevail, He sent between body and mind his Iris, an Appearance, born in part of body, in part of mind. Issuing from body, yet incorporeal, intangible, imponderable, Appearance flits noiseless as the day ; with changeful guise coming different to the door of each particular sense, and through each delivering messages, all of which testify to a Revealer intending man to enjoy knowledge and taste its profitableness.

If phenomena are disguises, consciousness itself must be a deluder. No one dilates more upon consciousness than Mr. Spencer ; it is on *Consciousness* states of consciousness, tracts of *Illusive?* consciousness, and manifold modifications of consciousness that he builds his fabric. Nevertheless, he waves his hand and brushes aside universal consciousness as a heartless deceiver, the moment he finds it standing in the way of his theory of human action. He has to prove that the dreamers are right and the doers wrong ; that our actions are not self-determined, but strictly necessitated motions. And, therefore, the consciousness of all actors, including that of the dreamers themselves when they are acting, not dreaming, must be branded as illusive.

An important passage which I shall give at full will form a natural transition from the subject of this chapter to that of the next. The reader will here see

how things are constituted of their own states. He will find that the Self of any one, the *Ego*, is only the states of the said Self existing at a given moment. He will learn that if the *Ego* imagines itself to be something separate from that group of states, it errs, since the group of states "constitutes himself at that moment," since, in fact, "the then state of consciousness is himself." These phrases, by the way, concede that the *Ego* is a person, a *he*. Yet it is not; for it is "at the moment nothing more than the composite state of consciousness." With these particulars the reader will also have a fair example of Mr. Spencer's dilemmas, mere school puzzles; carrying absolutely no force as reasoning; unless, indeed, things said by himself at some previous stage, and by himself accepted as axioms, are to be so accepted by others. ¹

"Considered as an internal perception, the illusion consists in supposing that at each moment the *ego* is something more than the aggregate of feelings and ideas, actual and nascent, which then exists. A man who, after being subject to an impulse consisting of a group of psychical states, real and ideal, performs a certain action, usually asserts that he determined to perform the action; and by speaking of his conscious self as having been something separate from the group of psychical states constituting the impulse, is led into the error of supposing that it was not the impulse alone which determined the action. But the entire group of psychical states which constituted the antecedent of the action,

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, Vol. I., p. 500, § 219.

also constituted himself at that moment—constituted his intellectual self, that is, as distinguished from his physical self. It is alike true that he determined the action and that the aggregate of his feelings and ideas determined it; since during its existence, this aggregate constituted his then state of consciousness, that is, himself. Either the *ego*, which is supposed to determine or will the action, is present in consciousness or it is not. If it is not present in consciousness, it is something of which we are unconscious—something, therefore, of whose existence we neither have nor can have any evidence. If it is present in consciousness, then, as it is ever present, it can be at each moment nothing else than the state of consciousness, simple or compound, passing at that moment. It follows inevitably that when a certain impression received from without, makes nascent certain appropriate motor changes, and various of the feelings and ideas which must accompany and follow them, and when under the stimulus of this composite intellectual state, the nascent motor changes pass in (*sic*) actual motor changes; this composite psychical state which causes the action, is at the same time the *ego* which is said to will the action.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. SPENCER ON NECESSITY AND FREE WILL.

I.—*No Self-Determining Power.*

THE quotation which closed our last chapter makes manifest how completely Mr. Spencer is in accord with the Positivists on the question of self-determining will. He, with them, extends physical law over all orders of agents, placing under it alike animated and inanimate, animal and rational ones. Perhaps, indeed, his physical legalism is even more mechanical than theirs, if one judges by his formal expositions, not by incidental passages irreconcilable with them, of which by necessity there are many. If nature does present as a phenomenon a self-determining power, that phenomenon has to be exorcised by metaphysics. No animal has a power of self-determination any more than its fodder; and no man has it any more than the animal. A body is moved by an impulse, and impulse means the shock it receives from the striking of another body against it. A mind, as we have just seen, is also moved by an impulse; and the one impulse is treated of as if it were as imperative as

the other, and came as much from without. Yet there is a curious difference. The impulse whereby a body is caused to move comes confessedly from another body; whereas the reader has just learned that the impulse whereby a mind is moved is not external but internal, and even more—identical with it; *is itself*. With another writer it might seem strange, when the object is to disprove self-determined action, that he should assume that the impulse which determines the action is the very self of the agent. The "impulse" is a group of mental states (say psychical, if you find that to make it clearer), the "states constituted the agent himself at that moment," the "impulse alone determined the action"; therefore, the states or "composite state which excites the action is at the same time the *ego* which is said to will the action." This agent, constituted of its own states, and becoming, of course, another self with every change of state, is the sole determining force of any action; and yet every one of its actions is as much conformed to "law" as the motions in a body which has no psychical states at all, and which for every impulse must wait for the impact of another body; or, like a motor-nerve, for the behest of a mind. A material body is at least a permanent substance in which varying states arise and pass away, and is at any one moment not merely the states "passing at the moment," but the perma-

ment something in which all past states arose, and in which all future ones will arise.

Although states of consciousness are in the Agnostic system of such great account that it is they which constitute a man, when it comes to the point, What testimony is borne by consciousness on the question whether our actions are self-determined or not, Mr. Spencer sweeps it and its states away as "illusion." This illusion, he holds, goes so far that consciousness represents Self as being something which it is not, something distinct from the "states." Representing self as what it is not, it naturally represents will as what it is not; for an act of volition is a mere illusion, and the consciousness which testifies to it as a real act is both deceiver and deceived. So far, therefore, from an act of volition being a choice of one course out of two when it was possible to select either, the idea that it is so is merely illusive, and, in fact, the so-called act of will is only the ceding of a weaker to a stronger force.

II.—*Motives and Motive-Power.*

This view annihilates the difference between a motive-power and a motive; assumes their identity. Yet there is nothing in nature to which the testimony of consciousness is stronger than to this difference, and nothing in which its testimony is more easily verified.

A motive-power conveys an impulse from one body by impact against another, which impulse urges the body struck to change its place. It appeals to one thing, and that alone, namely, to physical resistance, consciousness never recognizing in the case any possible consideration but the proportion between the force and the resistance to be overcome. The idea that a ball of an ounce weight may, if it chooses, either sit still or move when struck by one of equal weight flying at great speed, never enters human head. Consciousness testifies that the case is one of physical force pure and simple, and, therefore, one with which choice or will has nothing to do.

But here a difference broadly marked in nature, and not unheeded by men of science, is often completely ignored by philosophers. That is the difference between an inanimate body and an animated one when acted upon by some motive-power. Here consciousness is just as plump in its deposition as in the other case. The force which would infallibly move an inanimate body will not infallibly move an animated one of the same weight. It may fail to stir it; or, in spite of it, the body may move in the direction opposite to it. If there is no motive for resisting, the animated body will yield to the motive-power which would move an inanimate one of equal weight. If there is a motive for resisting, the animated body may check the motive-power,

may overcome it, and yet no law of mechanics is violated. The proper amount of force to overcome that of the motive-power being displayed by the members of the animated body, and being directed not to concur with but to counteract the motive-power, Mechanical Science accepts the fact. It is not for it to say whence the decision came which fixed the direction of the animated force, whence the impulse which turned a passive limb into a potent weapon. But a decision of will which gave the impulse, adjusted its measure, and guided its direction there assuredly was—the decision of an agent which mechanics cannot reach, any more than falling waters can regain their source.

The amount of force which can be supplied by will must be limited in all finite creatures ; and, therefore, whenever there is applied to an animated body a propulsion adequate in amount, that body will be moved in spite of any motives or any resistance. But it will not be moved by a propelling force capable of moving an equal inanimate weight ; not without that force *plus* the further amount needed to overcome the resistance added by will.

Having first blurred, in their own minds, the distinction between a motive and a motive-power, philosophers next seek to obliterate it in their systems. This they cannot do by any appeal to nature without or within, to external phenomena or internal con-

sciousness. Their sole resort is to metaphysical arguments. To frame these, as we have noted, Spencer dismisses as an illusion the deposition of consciousness. He so reasons as virtually to reduce agents to one class, mere physical agents, all relations to mere physical relations, all law to mere physical modes of procedure. Such things as reasoning and resisting agents, as relations involving guilt or good desert, as laws that are precepts capable of being either obeyed or disobeyed—laws backed not by force but by rewards and punishments—do, indeed, at all stages of his course make their appearances; because a philosopher can keep them out of his discussions. Intelligent agents, moral relations, and moral laws are the things of which the universe is full, but for material systematizers such creatures walk the earth undreamed of in their philosophy. They need, to suit the generalizations, a world in which no motive should ever be urged, no appeal to a choice between two possible courses should ever be made; where only motive-power should be brought to bear on clock, beast, and man alike, and where all appeal should be simply to physical resistance.

Now, suppose that instead of the banks of iridescent scientifico-philosophical cloud which hover over Mr. Spencer's speculations, we descend to an experiment and take a case which would test the question whether a motive and a motive-power, whether an appeal to

will and an appeal to physical resistance, whether a reason for acting and an impulse compelling motion are in effect identical. This case shall be simpler than the one supposed when we showed that you could not judge of a composite whole—man, horse, and gig—

Donkey by its lowest member. At present our
and whole shall be composed of only two
Donkey members, a donkey and a donkey cart.
Cart.

This being taken as our "system," can you make the system move by a single motive-power? Undoubtedly; you can make the members of it move singly or unitedly, if only you employ sufficient force; and that no matter what motives the donkey may have for resisting the motive-power. Seeing this, we say that the donkey is "nothing but" a body, obeying the laws of matter. But pause a moment. Can you make the whole system move without any motive-power, simply by a motive? That depends on which member of it you appeal to. Suppose that instead of presenting the two classical bundles of hay on the two opposite sides of the donkey, you cause them to divide their allurements otherwise, one soliciting the donkey and the other the donkey cart. Does the cart respond to the motive? if it is already in motion, does it deflect, retard, or accelerate that motion, and if it is motionless, does it begin to move? No: its motions are not to be affected by a motive. But present the same motive to the donkey,

and you affect his motions. According as he is at rest or going in this direction or in that, he originates, retards, accelerates, or deflects motion under the sway of a motive appealing to his will, when nothing whatever touches his body as a motive-power. And mark well, whatever the donkey does, that does also the donkey cart ; so that you make both start, stop or turn by a motive without any motive-power. But you cannot do so except as long as the two are united ; for no sooner is their union dissolved than the donkey goes on, leaving the lifeless vehicle behind, incapable of motion.

So far as philosophers recognize a certain community between steed and chariot, they are on sure ground ; but when they push that degree *Hasty* *Generalization* of community to oneness of nature, and treat both as agents of one order equally *impelled* by physical force, they exceed the bounds. If, confessing that the force which induces the animal to move is manifestly not physical, but of a different order, they yet insist that it must in some way be ruled by the same laws as lifeless matter, they in this refuse to learn from phenomena, and, discrediting them, set up occult metaphysical powers as ruling behind them. All the indications of phenomena pointing to the conclusion that will is moved by power of a different order to that which moves body, it is obstinately contended that, notwithstanding all

that, phenomena and consciousness must pass for illusions, and we must settle the point on the ground of a transcendental knowledge which assures us that the same modes of procedure which are established for moving bodies avail, *mutatis mutandis*, for moving wills. In this case the phenomena and the consciousness are relegated to the protection of "the ordinary man," and the extraordinary one, for the time being, resorts to his inner light, ready the next moment to scorn all who do any such thing.

III.—*If Law in Thought, no Free Will.*

"Psychical changes," writes our author, "either conform to law or they do not. If they do not conform to law, this work, in common with all works on the subject, is sheer nonsense. No science of psychology is possible. If they do conform to law, there cannot be any such thing as free will."¹ The psychical changes here spoken of are not merely intellectual acts, but include moral decisions, as well as intellectual processes; and not only so, but also the actions springing out of such decisions. And the law here spoken of, as quietly as if all men and all ages were agreed as to its meaning, is simply physical rule, to the express exclusion of law proper; such rule as creates for agents subject to it an absolute

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 220.

necessity of following a given course, in opposition to the method of moral law, the law of liberty, which supposes the possibility of two opposite courses on the part of agents subject to it. Note the following language: "The subjective illusion in which the notion of free will commonly originates, is strengthened by a corresponding objective illusion. The actions of other individuals, lacking as they do that uniformity characterizing phenomena of which the laws are known, appear to be lawless—appear to be under no necessity of following any particular order: and are hence supposed to be determined by the independent something called the will. These effects are, however, as conformable to law as the simplest reflex actions. The irregularity and apparent freedom are inevitable results of the complexity [of causes]; and *equally arise in the inorganic world under parallel conditions.*"¹ [Italics mine].

Without dwelling on all the propositions here asserted or assumed, we may draw light from the central idea. This appears when it is taken for granted that being "lawless" means being "under no necessity of following any particular order." If all actions which do not arise out of a *necessity* of following a particular order are lawless, all mental laws and all moral laws are non-existent, because mental laws are consistent with a liability of erring.

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 219.

and moral laws with a liability of transgressing. There is, thus, no law of liberty : the only law is that of necessity. This is what the common sense of mankind has labelled as below the realm of law, in the proverb, "Necessity has no law." Where necessity begins, the reign of law ceases, and that of force comes in. Not so for Mr. Spencer ; for him freedom is only apparent even where there is irregularity, and therefore the irregularity is as much an illusion as the freedom. Indeed, such seeming irregularity equally arises, he asserts, in the *inorganic* world when the conditions are parallel. A bolder blow in the face of facts it would be hard to strike. When are the conditions parallel? They are parallel when in the inorganic world a body has been commanded to do a certain thing and, understanding the command, leaves it undone ; or has been commanded not to do it, and yet has done it? Only in such a case would the conditions be parallel, and it cannot occur. The inorganic world is below the realm of proper law, in that, of necessity, wherein neither commands nor prohibitions are of any effect. In it irregularity "equal" to direct transgression of law and manifest derangement of order is an impossibility ; for the beneficent bond of so-called physical law holds inorganic agents to a "necessity of following a particular order," and deprives free agents of any power of driving them from that order. There is no more irregularity in

complex than in comparatively simple processes, the only difference being that in the former we less readily trace out the rule; but, once traced out, it holds uniformly in the most composite body as in most simple ones. It is a profitless lesson out of Comte to make complexity necessitate irregularity. "An inevitable result of the complexity of" causes is irregularity. That seems to be a simple abnegation of science in the interests of philosophy, as understood by certain thinkers. In the world of law proper, any agent is at once withdrawn from the purview of law when it appears that he was under a necessity of following a particular course. Law has then for him no verdict and no sentence.

If mental states, cries Mr. Spencer, do not conform to law there can be no psychology, and if they do conform there can be no free will. The fact is, they do conform to law and they do not conform to it; some do and some do not. Both horns of the dilemma are blunt. If the actions done in England do not conform to law, there can be no good citizens; and if they do conform to it, there can be no culprits. Such dilemmas can be spun by the hank.

*States of
Mind Do
Conform to
Law and
Do Not.*

Psychical states may be intellectual states—acts of apprehension, comparison, judgment, inference, calculation, and so forth. If they never err, they conform to some standard, and it may be by necessity. If

sometimes they do not err and sometimes do, they still are judged by a given standard ; for no standard, no error. But if they sometimes err, then they are not necessitated to follow a particular order. Psychological states may be feelings, such as love or hatred, joy or grief ; and if sometimes they are well directed and sometimes ill, they manifestly are not necessitated to follow a particular order. Psychological states may be volitions ; and if they sometimes are right and sometimes wrong, they again are manifestly not necessitated to follow a particular order. Error in thought and feeling, wrong in action, are facts in nature which all the metaphysical puzzles and all the logical dilemmas possible will never keep out of sight, even though the dilemmas as innocently beg the question as do Mr. Spencer's inordinately often. Whether psychological states be states of the intellect, the emotions, or the will, if they always conform to law they never err, and if they never conform to it they always err, in either of which cases we should have a state of things whereof human experience knows nothing. But if we suppose the case that they sometimes err and sometimes do not, then we find ourselves in the field of facts. On this field it is plain that the law to which sometimes they conform and from which sometimes they depart is not, as a physical law always is, a necessity to follow a particular order.

The case of agents who sometimes conform to law

Both systems begin by begging the question as to the coördination of different orders of agents under different orders of laws. *Self-determining Power itself Law.* They do not ask whether it is not possible that, just as the want of self-determining power is order in one class of agents, so may the possession of it be order in another class. They do not admit to view the fact that as in the world of physics privation of freedom to err or to do wrong is order, so in the world of morals may the grant of such freedom be order. They shut out tracts of nature, by assuming a range of dominion much more limited than is hers. Liberty to err and to offend may seem altogether terrible ; yet, suppose it were possible to attempt such a thing, who does not see that to deprive all the people in England of liberty to err and to offend would involve at the same time depriving them of every other liberty? they must be bereft of voluntary motion, and even of life itself; must be reduced to the only level on which the so-called laws of Positivism and Agnosticism run, that of agents incapable of taking two alternative courses, agents necessitated to take a particular one, molecules or machines. The privation of freedom in physical agents involves the necessity of inviolable laws ; and the grant of freedom in moral agents involves the necessity of laws violable but not alterable. Under inviolable law there is no correction or direction

except by means of force struggling with force. Under violable law, direction by counsel and correction by penalty enter in. These are addressed to reason, feeling, and will ; and both of them recognise self-determining attributes.

If in the theoretic denial of freedom of the will Mr. Spencer is at one with the Positivists and many shades of Atheists and Pantheists, no man is further from any practical application to human polity of such a principle. On the question of individual liberty, as contrasted with public control, he is, as we have already hinted, not only English, but even English exaggerated, just as Comte on the same question is French exaggerated.

IV.—*Slight Difference between Voluntary Action and Involuntary Movement.*

Another dictum of Mr. Spencer's needs to be quoted verbatim : " Between an involuntary movement of the leg and a voluntary one, the difference is that, whereas the involuntary one occurs without previous consciousness of the movement to be made, the voluntary one occurs only after it has been represented in consciousness ; and as the representation of it is nothing else than a weak form of the psychical state accompanying the movement, it is nothing else

than a nascent excitation of the nerves concerned, preceding their actual excitation." ¹

So, therefore, that which makes the difference between the involuntary movement of a villain's leg when it is pushed aside by a comrade and its voluntary movement when he lifts it and kicks with it till he puts his wife to death is—what? Look carefully at Mr. Spencer's words, and do not trust my statement or analysis. It is "nothing else than a nascent excitation of the nerves concerned." Or it is "nothing else than a weak form of the psychical state accompanying the movement." That means that the difference between an involuntary movement and a voluntary action lies in previous consciousness; and this is the only difference! If so, there is no such thing as will; for to call consciousness by that name is not mere absurdity: it is falsification of thought and speech. To say that there is no *free* will is too small a conclusion to draw from these prodigious premises. But in Mr. Spencer consciousness itself, as any one may gather even from the above quotation, is scarcely more than some sort of movement in the nerves. *Nothing else* than a nascent excitation of the nerves,—that word "nothing else than," with its equivalents "only," "no more than," and so forth, is a back sluice common in currents of reasoning by which great quantities of fallacy escape. The

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 218.

metaphysics that reduce the difference between a movement which merits neither praise nor blame and a calculated action which may merit lifelong honour or capital punishment "to nothing else than a nascent excitation of nerves," are a cross between the school of medicine and the school of mental philosophy, with the defects of both and the virtues of neither.

It may help us to understand what are the true conceptions of will entertained in the Agnostic school

*The Agnostic
Origin and
Nature
of Will.* if we carefully attend to a few utterances of the master. The first gives us the origin of will, as also its nature: "We have a conflict between two sets of ideal motor

changes which severally tend to become real, and one of which eventually does become real; and this passing of an ideal motor change into a real one, we distinguish as will." ¹ The origin, then, of will is a conflict between two sets of ideal changes in the nerves, which ideas of change get into conflict without any will as yet existing to urge them in any direction, and out of conflict they generate will. This is contrary to nature, in which conflict is generated out of will. The origin of will, then, being a conflict begun antecedently to volition, the nature of will is a "passing." It is not the conflict that is will or the effect of will: it arises without will. It is not the set of ideas which triumph in the conflict that is

Prin. of Psychology, § 218.

distinguished as will : it is "this passing of an ideal motor change into a real one." Yet if you sit with the reins in your hand till all your friends have taken their places, it requires an act of will to keep the intention of moving from turning into actual movement ; and your will must restrain that of the horses. When all is ready, it requires another act of will to determine that the restraint shall cease and the movement begin, and that act of will it is which causes the passing from ideal to real motion, not "this passing" that generates the will. And if the will of the horses does not concur with yours, there will arise a conflict, which can be explained, because it is a conflict of wills, a thing well known to nature. But a conflict which begins before will is in being, and brings forth will, is a shadow-fight of overtaxed imagination.

A phrase only a few sentences earlier would seem to postpone the generation of will till after the conflict without will has given birth to action without will. We are told that when nascent motor changes are prevented from passing into action by the antagonism of other nascent motor changes, "there is constituted a state of consciousness which, when it finally issues in action, displays what we term volition." *When* it issues in action! The causal, the legislative act of will is taken an hour, a day, a week before the moment of action, and the executive.

act of will must still precede action, not wait for it, even though it precedes it immediately. And let it be noted that as in the other passage conflict was made antecedent to will, so here is "antagonism" made antecedent to it.

The history of the origin of will is varied in the following description: "Will comes into existence through the increasing complexity and imperfect coherence of automatic action."¹ First, action; secondly, complexity of action; thirdly, increasing complexity of action; fourthly, imperfect coherence of action; fifthly, bringing into existence of the offspring of all these—Will. This being the manner in which Will began to be, the next sentence tells us in what manner it goes out of action: "Just as any set of psychical changes originally displaying Memory, Reason, and Feeling cease to be conscious, rational and emotional, as fast as by repetition they grow closely organized; so do they at the same time pass beyond the sphere of volition." This means that when a process which at first called for conscious efforts of memory and reason, as well as excited feeling—a process such as adding up three columns of figures or as playing an elaborate piece of music—becomes familiar and ceases to call for *efforts* of memory and reason, or to *excite* feeling, it at the same time *passes beyond the sphere of volition*. This is not

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 218.

merely incorrect; it is conspicuously opposite to what occurs in nature. In the performance of familiar acts, such as we have instanced, it is the will that most prominently operates, so prominently that the part of memory, reason, and feeling seems almost too minute for sight. The will in such cases commands the act, and for its performance commands the services of memory and reason, and that with a mastery so established that they not only obey, but, like good servants, work without making any noise. This double failure in showing how will comes into existence and how it goes out of action raises a fear that Mr. Spencer may not have been at his best for observation at that special moment in the history of evolution when Will first did come into existence. This fear is not allayed when, on reading that Will is generated by increasing complexity of automatic changes, we turn back a page and there read that "the cessation of automatic action and the dawn of volition are one and the same thing." !!

V.—*Agnostic View of what is Freedom of Will.*

Being now in possession of the Agnostic view of the origin of Will, of its nature, and of how it ceases to operate, we may ask, What on the same system is the Freedom of the Will, or, rather, what would be the freedom of the will, did any such thing exist?

The answer is, happily, plain. According to Mr. Spencer, freedom of will would exist if every one were at liberty to desire or not to desire. In "the dogma of free will," he supposes that the real proposition affirmed is that every one is at liberty to desire or not. He thinks that this is negated by "the analysis of consciousness"; and says all admit that every one is at liberty to do what he desires to do; while it is "people of confused ideas" who suppose that the necessitarians or determinists deny this, whereas what they deny is the assertion that *Every one is at liberty to desire or not to desire.*

Lest people of confused ideas should suppose that I must be trifling in ascribing to Mr. Spencer such representations of what he has to combat, his own words must be given: "That every one is at liberty to do what he desires to do (supposing there are no external hindrances) all admit; though people of confused ideas commonly suppose this to be the thing denied. But that every one is at liberty to desire or not to desire, which is the real proposition involved in the dogma of free will, is negated as much by the analysis of consciousness, as by the contents of the preceding chapters."¹

I should not have believed that any one of ordinary acquaintance with men and thought would suppose that they who believe that man is a free agent

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 219.

affirm that *every one is at liberty not to desire*. But Mr. Herbert Spencer soberly believes that the real proposition involved in the doctrine of free will is that Every one is at liberty to desire or *not to desire*. I have heard free will discussed as between Christian and Christian, as between Christian and Hindu, as between Christian and philosophic unbelievers, call them necessitarians, determinists, or whatever pleases you ; but never have I heard any one state as his conception of free will that it means liberty to desire or not to desire. Just as soon talk of liberty not to breathe or not to digest as of liberty not to desire. That would mean being at liberty not to wish for food, drink, sleep, or rest ; at liberty not to desire to see, hear, taste, or feel ; at liberty not to desire to know and to communicate ; at liberty not to long for happiness or the society of mankind !

Certain desires and certain measures of them are antecedent to any concurrence of the will, as much so as are bones and nerves, the one being elements of the mental constitution as essential to it as are the others to the bodily one. For the mental agent desire, hope, and fear are the anticipatory forces which through the fleeting present link the lost past with the undiscovered future. As among physical agents gravitation links distant to distant, and heat causes circulation, so among mental agents desire

insures action and communication. Wider of the point at issue one could scarcely rove than a writer who imagines that in opposing belief in the freedom of the will he has to confute the fancy that men are free not to desire. And let it be marked that Mr. Spencer does not at all qualify the general term, but leaves it in all its latitude as meaning liberty to be destitute of any desire whatever.

“That every one is at liberty to do what he desires to do all admit.” That admission raises a presumption, but only a presumption. If the last mental stage between desire and act is free, is it not more probable that preceding stages are also free than that they are necessitated? In addition to raising this presumption, there is one point which the admission settles, namely, that something is free; and that something is the important step between desire and action, which being free, it follows that freedom is not a mere “illusion,” but that, on the contrary, it is a reality. This confessed, freedom occupies a position of primary importance; for its place is such that the effects of any preceding mental action all depend on the critical stage between desire and deed. It is just at that stage that will finds its place. If freedom presides over this middle passage, and yet does not mean self-determining power, what does it mean?

The true test of freedom, however, lies not merely in freedom to do what one desires, but still more in

freedom not to do what we desire ; with freedom to do what we do not desire ; what, in fact, we should give much not to have to do.

Freedom Not To Do what we Desire. Do all admit that we have that freedom ?

If they admit that man is both at liberty to do and to leave undone what he desires, and at liberty to do what he does not desire, the controversy is ended. Those who, admitting that we are free to do what we desire, deny that we are free to leave undone what we desire, and to do what we do not desire, make desire tantamount to will. This is what Mr. Spencer's positions lead to, although it is not with desire that in his exposition of principles he identifies will, but with that amorphous somewhat which he calls consciousness, or that equally unaccountable somewhat which he calls passing into action.

“ Psychical changes either conform to law or they do not.” Since desires are psychical changes, they either conform to law or do not. If they all do, every one of them is right, and each is altogether right. In this case for us not to conform to them would be to strive against law. Then the most law-abiding man on earth is he who never set his will to restrain a desire. On the other hand, if they do not conform to law, the conclusion is, not that there is no science, but that science honestly so called will now have to note the fact that something has

arisen in contravention of law ; and from this fact of science will Reason be constrained to infer that freedom to break law must exist somewhere, and must form part of universal order.

Here, then, with due submission to the Agnostics, is the point at issue in the doctrine of free will—

*Have We
or not the
Power to
Break Law?* namely, Does there or does there not exist in any agent a power to break law? We must admit that, to one whose range of view is that of the physical legalist, science becomes impossible so soon as things cease to be by necessity conformed to law ; because we cannot then have certain foresight of the course things will take. Notwithstanding this, criminal law is a science as truly as the laws of crystallization, and one of far greater breadth and depth, with far more exercise for the observation, the judgment, and the reason. But in the lips of a physical legalist the noble phrase, “conformed to law,” has no reference to conforming or refusing to conform ; it is pure metaphor, and only means following on in a fixed, inevitable order by an invariable physical rule.

What would Mr. Spencer say as to the use made of freedom in the domain where he admits of its existence? Is it, in the stage between desire and action, always used conformably to law or not? If it is, in what does it differ from necessity? If it is not, then law is broken. Now, according to the

hypothesis, when law becomes violable, science becomes impossible. Yet, in truth, the only science which then becomes impossible is that of agents that can neither break nor keep a law, that of inanimate agents who simply move as they are moved upon. That is a science of physical certainties; but there is other science than that, because there are other agents, agents capable of deviating in mental processes from the law of the process, and agents capable of opposing in moral action the law of the action. This world of wider science, taking all physical certainties as a basis, has to do with intellectual acts, now free from error, now erroneous, and with moral acts, now lawful, now unlawful; and has, therefore, for its guiding light a higher law.

Mr. Spencer, fully aware that physical law works itself out to an unfailing result, is clear that desires are psychological states, and as such conform to law. We

*Can a
Desire be
Over-
ridden?*

have already pointed out that if a desire being conformed to law is overridden, law itself is contravened. Yet if any one fact in nature is certain, certain it is that sometimes desires are overridden, and equally certain that sometimes they ought to be overridden. On Mr. Spencer's theory, the act which contravenes law is that which checks desire; on our theory, such an act may be the one which arrests a breach of law. But the essential point at this moment is that on

either theory a breach of law is involved. Now even one breach of law carries you beyond the bounds of physical rule. You emerge from under the stream of necessity, and swim with head above it, in the atmosphere of freedom. And there is a law of liberty for moral agents, as there is one of necessity for physical agents. This law contemplates diversity of quality in actions, some being anticipated as law-keeping and some as law-breaking; and for each kind respectively it provides a discriminating meed. Under law proper, all courses are not of equal merit, as they must be if every one of them originates with equal birthright of eternal necessity. When equality exists, as it does among the motions of inanimate bodies, penalties or rewards do not exist. Where diversity of quality as between good and bad begins, there begin penalties and rewards. There are certain lines of action to the train of which nature attaches woes and torments, and she is defamed when these are reckoned as among the regular lines of her ordinations. Where all is conformed to law, none suffer and order is never disturbed; but where law is sometimes violated, order is disturbed, the aggrieved suffer, and penalties to the transgressor ensue.

VI.—*Will Checking Desire and Initiating New Habits.*

If men were not free to resist desires and override them, the prospect before the race would be gloomy.

While freedom not to desire, in the absolute sense, is absurd, freedom to check desires, so as in time to quench them, is one of the noblest grants in our charter of liberties. He that with unchecked desire eats and drinks, likes or dislikes, becomes a wretch, and makes others wretched. He who checks wrong desires, and checks wrong measures of lawful desires, becomes in time so far the master of them that what once he could not resist he at length scarcely feels as of power to wrestle with him. Though all desires solicit will, with more or less potency, no desire is so imperious as not to yield to its sovereignty when asserted. Strong as is the desire to breathe, a Hindu devotee will overcome it by sheer strength of will, till from holding his breath he dies. Strong as is the desire to eat, a Hindu of high caste will check it, and in some cases will do so even to death, rather than break his caste. Stranger still, he will sometimes override this imperious physical desire, to gratify the purely mental one of revenge, by sitting at the door of an enemy till death results from starvation, and leaves him with a corpse on his hands.

Habit is recognised as of real power among men of all schools ; yet none deny that cases occur in which old habits are broken and new ones formed, notably where a question of strong desire is involved. Now, what originates the new habit? Clearly an act of will interposing between a dominant desire and the

gratification of it which previously was habitual. What interposes a second time, and so further weakens the links of association? a second act of will; and so on till successive acts of will break the old habit and lead in the new, till eventually desire becomes so amenable that the act of will is performed almost unconsciously. At this stage Mr. Spencer would hold that volition had ceased, for he says of the adult walker that "his successive steps are made with no more volition than his successive inspirations." The successive steps would at once cease if the volition to continue walking ceased; whereas the successive inspirations would not cease without a real effort, even if the man wished to hold his breath. Volition had no share in originating the inspirations, and their continuance is independent of it; but it is necessary if they are to be interrupted. As to the steps, on the contrary, volition originates them, and when it ends they end. The silence with which memory and reason work under will during the act of walking is no proof that will has ceased, or yet its instruments, but that these are perfectly docile. None of them disappear in such a walk, though Mr. Spencer thinks that they all do.¹

We must remember the fact of men usually asserting that they determined to perform a certain

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 218. "Memory, Reason, Feeling, and Will simultaneously disappear in proportion as psychological changes become automatic." The case of walking is the illustration.

action is treated as the "current illusion," and yet, illusion as it is, Mr. Spencer more than once calls it natural. He assumes as a fact which must govern others that no man does or can determine his own action, and that his freedom to do so is merely apparent. This apparent but unreal freedom he illustrates by the case of a body moving among "a number of bodies of all sizes and at all distances," which seems to move freely, while in reality it is being influenced by the attraction of them all. Hence he infers that our apparently self-determined actions are "as conformable to law as the simplest reflex actions": that is, if we determine to sacrifice our ease to save another from trouble, it is an action as much necessitated by physical law as when a muscle contracts on being pressed.

Unfortunately, however, for Mr. Spencer's illustration, he made his body move among so many others, various in mass and distance, that the attraction on one side would be nearly balanced by that on other sides, and, therefore, the motion of the body on the whole would be little affected. But a greater flaw than even this in the illustration is when he makes the body a moving one, which is in effect a self-determined one; for every moving body carries within itself a determination in a given direction, as well as a given velocity. Let him set a *non*-moving mass

among the same number of bodies of all sizes and at all distances, and see if it will go forward "in some line that appears to be self-determined." It will do no such thing. It has had no self-determining momentum imparted to it, it could evolve none, and it simply obeys the strongest force by sitting still.

But when a body launched amid other bodies is already possessed with a momentum which was not developed in it but imparted to it, then, indeed, it holds on its own way, though pulled hither by one and pulled thither by another, and in some measure influenced by all. So is it with the soul of man amid the manifold solicitations of conflicting motives. They may modify his course, but that course is self-determined; for what is within him is far more than all that attracts him from without. In him self-determining power is not lawless, any more than is momentum in a missile. It is the law of his nature that he must choose between one course and another, must choose between the evil and the good; a law entailing upon him rich estate of possibilities; a law reserving for him solemn sessions of account.

Our desires necessitated; nothing between desire and act; and the difference between an involuntary and a voluntary deed "nothing else than a nascent excitation of the nerves"! That is not what we find in nature. Certain desires are necessitated, but others rise or subside at the command of the will. And

there is no desire of which the degree is not under its control, in so far that the will holds the decision between action and no action.

VII.— *Conscience, Taste, Judgment, the Censors of Desire.*

Between desire and act come Judgment, Taste, and Conscience. I here speak of volition as act, since it is the completed act of the soul—the legislative act; all that remains being only executive. The desire may spring from bodily appetite or may be purely mental; but the act to which it points must pass the ordeal of Judgment, and be pronounced wise or unwise, profitable or injurious. It must pass the ordeal of Taste, and be pronounced comely or uncomely. It must pass the ordeal of Conscience, and be pronounced right or wrong. When Judgment condemns an action as injurious, Taste as uncomely, and Conscience as wrong, the desire to do it is rebuked and consequently enfeebled; for it is confronted by Wisdom, Beauty, and Justice. Where these all approve the action as wise, lovely, and good, the desire to do it is reinforced. Will, siding with desire, may determine against all the three censors; or, siding with them, it may determine against the desire.

Not only is will mighty over present states of mind, but one of the marvels of its power is the anticipa-

tory control it exerts over states of mind as yet
Prospective future, whether those states be intellectual
Power or emotional. An act of will resolutely
of Will. determining to perform a certain thing, at
 a future time, tends to call into play recollections,
 imaginations, calculations, desires auxiliary to the
 proposed action, and tends at the same time to check
 or even to preclude such as would be adverse to it.
 Such an act of will may also, as all familiarly know,
 considerably affect the bodily frame. In the matter
 of sleep, a strong determination to awake at a given
 hour has a tendency to bring about the act at that
 very hour. In certain men the power to take the
 decision and to carry it into effect can be habitually
 relied upon. Here is will acting in concert with time,
 pre-adjusting and measuring it by means of some
 occult concord established beforehand. Of this con-
 cord we certainly give no account by the pretty
 phrase, Unconscious Cerebration; for were the cerebra-
 tion more than unconscious—fully conscious, were one
 wide awake all the time, how would a decision taken
 in the light enable one to measure time in the dark,
 enable one after keeping still up to the right moment
 to get up when it came and act? Now, in the case of
 the sleeping man, not only is he in the dark, but
 the action of his senses is in suspension; yet at the
 end of the allotted time all his nature wakes up,
 bearing witness to the prospective power of will

in a volition adopted perhaps six hours previously, and now punctually obeyed.

Were it true that nothing interposed between desire and action, or that desire is tantamount to will, man would be the lowest animal in the herd. That terrible anomaly of his nature which has been forcibly pointed out by the Duke of Argyll, whereby he is prone to acts noxious to himself and his race, comes fully into evidence only when, conscience being unenlightened, the will is feeble for good, easily swayed by desire, and consequently mighty for evil. Did a real belief that desires were necessitated developments and actions their orderly complement generally possess mankind for a number of generations, the race that would thereafter exist would not be a race of brutes—for brutes are no such creatures—but would be a race of demons incarnate.

In all ages and nations, though philosophers have sought to persuade mankind that they were not free agents, the conclusion that we do not really determine our own actions has been repelled as bad by the common conscience, and scorned as trifling by the common understanding. The light that is in every man flashes out upon the mist in the words of Shakespeare : “ We make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and stars ; as if we were villains on necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion ; knaves, thieves,

Shakespeare
on
Divine
Thrusting,
&c.

and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on."¹ It is in man, and cannot be conjured out of him, that whatever is done "by a divine thrusting on" is well done, and that whatever is wrong has not been done by a divine thrusting on. Still stronger reason declares that any one action done by the All-Being, the sole Reality, the sole Power, manifesting itself within us and without, must be equally good with any other action done by that same Power. As, on the Agnostic principle, every action whatever is a manifestation of this ever identical Power, not thrusting lower natures on, but being itself the sole life and actor, the idea of imputing blame to one action more than to another is irrational. On such a supposition it is trifling to distinguish one as right and another as wrong. On such a supposition justice is of all fictions the most absurd, and punishment of all iniquities the most monstrous. In the Vedic hymn the devotees cry: "It was not our doing, O Varuna! it was necessity. An intoxicating draught, passion, vice, thoughtlessness, even sleep brings unrighteousness."² Not our doing, but necessity! This in reason ought to put an end to all idea of "unrighteousness." But, no! Reason and conscience repel such anodynes; it *is* our doing, and

¹ *King Lear*.

² Quoted in Mullens's *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 20.

sin is "unrighteousness," and man feels within himself a just judgment against his evil deed.

The remark of Mr. Spencer on the scepticism of Hume, who makes mind a sum total of impressions and ideas, is this : "An impression necessarily implies

States something impressed."¹ Now, if this simple
Presuppose observation suffices to show how crude was
Substances. the notion of Hume, what is to be said of Mr. Spencer's notion which makes man at any given moment only an aggregate of passing states, and makes the states and not the man determine action ; or, more properly, makes these states, and therefore all that stands instead of a man, do it ? We can only say that a state necessarily implies something of which it is a state. It is not more clearly dreaming by way of thinking to speak of an impression which is not an impression on anything, than to speak of a state which is not a state of anything. To form any real idea of what we mean by an impression, we must know what makes the impression, or what it is an impression of ; what receives the impression, or what it is an impression on ; and how it is transmitted from the thing impressing to the thing impressed. And, in like manner, to form a real idea of what we mean by a state, we must know what it is a state of and what state it is.

"How can the sceptic," proceeds Mr. Spencer,

“who has decomposed his consciousness into impressions and ideas explain the fact that he considers them as *his* impressions and ideas?” So we ask, How can the Agnostic who decomposes man into passing states of consciousness explain the fact that he considers them as *his* states of consciousness? They determine his actions, yet he calls them his past states, his present states, his nascent states, his passing states, his ideal states, his real states, his states which constitute himself! At any given moment the state of any mind is the state of a real being; of the same being whose past state was another, whose future state will be another still; of the same being in whom have had their existence all the successive states from his birth forwards. This being can be no more constituted of his own states than can the Thames be constituted of its fluctuations. Taken at any particular moment, the same being who has originated many past states, and experienced many, partly remembers them and partly forgets them; but he is prepared to originate others and to experience others; and as he bears in him the effects of the past, so does he bear in him that which will tinge the future. To say that he is nothing but the aggregate of his states at that particular moment, is to invert the facts. What his states at that particular moment may be is determined by what he has been, is, and intends to be. I do not know how many readers of Dr. Bain’s

great work on the *Senses and the Intellect* spent much time after reading the first sentence in an attempt to discover how one could constitute a thing, mind or body, of its own operations and appearances, which are part of its states. "The operations and appearances that constitute mind," is the marvellous opening. Ever since I spent a good deal of time over it on first reading it, the pleasant image of Dr. Bain has always risen before me as that of the gentleman who is constituted of his own operations and appearances.

The habit prevails with many writers of professing to constitute a given thing out of elements which cannot originate till after the existence of the thing they are to constitute, and can originate only out of that existence.

Things Not Constituted of Their Own States. Whether it be an operation, an appearance, a change, or a state, they all suppose the pre-existence of the thing operating, appearing, changing, or being in a state, which means existing somehow. How can you have a state of anything before you first have the thing itself? Can you have the state of the army among the Quakers, or the state of shipping in the Midlands? Constitute the thing, and the states of it will follow, and will constitute its changes. But if you wait till a thing which exists not is constituted out of its own states, you will wait long. And the idea that a man does not choose, does not truly

will, does not determine his conduct, because the said man is really nothing but a group of states, is one that will not content many who pause over what they are taught.

Take any ten men in a given state of mind, say, wishing to emigrate to America. That wish shapes all their actions bearing on the future, and is about to

*How to
Change
States of
Mind.*

shape their future. You, we shall suppose, seek to change the state of mind, and make them wish to emigrate to Siberia. How are you to set about it—by using motives or by using motive-power? If all you sought to do was to control the state of their bodies, you might be content with motive-power, and carry them away, willing or unwilling, as many have been carried, to Siberia. But, perhaps, the effect of that proceeding would not be to change them from the former state of mind, but to confirm them in it; so that the wish to emigrate to America, instead of being broken by your use of force, would be made stronger. If you mean to change the state of mind, so that the men instead of having to be carried by force to Siberia shall have a wish which will carry themselves and their appurtenances thither, you will address mind not by motive-power but by motive. You will approach desire through the judgment, pointing out advantages; or through the taste, pointing out beauties and pleasures; or through the conscience, pointing out duties and missions of

beneficence. If acting through these channels you arouse an ambition, a hope, a thirst to do good, or an enthusiasm of either animosity or benevolence, you may carry their wills, and they will carry your men. But if not, you perfectly know that when will is not won by reason, by imagination, or by conscience, it cannot be won by force. So, failing to carry your point by any efficacy of motives, you will only recognize the futility of motive-power. It is for machines, not for will.

VIII.—*Agnosticism Divests Man of any Proper Intelligence, Will, or Personality.*

As Positivism, beginning by declaring God a fiction, ends by making every man individually an abstraction, and by leaving him without rights; so Agnosticism, beginning by denying to God personality, intelligence, or will, ends by denying to man anything meriting the name of personality, of intelligence, or of will. For it will scarcely be contended that a set of illusive notions about ourselves and external nature can be called intelligence, or that a faculty of moving as the strongest forces push can be called will. And a mere group of states which are all illusions, of motions which are only changes under force, is not to be called a person: it is a fancy existence outlined on a

level much below that of personality. In such a scheme all rational ground for a distinction between good actions and bad ones is destroyed. An unavoidable movement does not merit either praise or blame. A seeming act of judgment which is only an illusion caused by an irresistible Power cannot be either wise or foolish. A seeming act of choice, which is no more an act of will than is the bending of a stream to right or left, according to the line of least resistance, is neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy. On this scheme all actions—call them fatal, destined, necessitated, or determined—are only such as could not have been other than they are. They are not even predestinated; for if the absolute Predestination of Paganism or Mohammedanism does render man a mere instrument and not an agent, it leaves him still the instrument of an Intelligent Being whose design and will he performs. But the universe of Agnosticism has not even the one free agent at its head, not even the one intelligent mind possessing real knowledge, not even the one will determining events. Man is a molecule in a mass; and such nobler attributes as have been ascribed to him are born of some strange tendency to illude and be illuded inherent in the mass and evolved in him.

On such a system any personality worthy of the name is lost; and, in a natural recoil from its own quenching, the soul turns back to rekindle itself at

the twin flames of nature and revelation. Nature by the testimony of consciousness, and by that of struggle, disaster, and triumph, ever reminds man that, while his arena and his powers are given to him, his lot is coloured by his choice, to which he must trace up the effects that follow for weal or woe. All our experiences of nature enforce the lesson that whatever wins over man's will commands his action ; and that on him it devolves to watch the ways of judgment, taste, and conscience which lead into the citadel of the will. In none of these experiences does motive-power appear as the force which appeals to will, any more than motives appear as the force which appeals to machines. The motives plead ; the power pushes. The motives address reason, feeling, conscience ; the power addresses weight and bulk. If Professors who compare men to the governors of steam-engines would show us governors with which they can reason, which they can move by argument ; to which they can appeal, crying that Fire, Water, and Iron expect every governor to do its duty ; which can be moved by a sense of duty, we should stand amid events hitherto undreamed of. If they will make no attempt thus to prove the similarity they assert, let them forgive the flash of ridicule in the eyes of those whom they cannot dazzle.

The testimony of nature to the reality and power of will is reinforced by Revelation, which always makes

its appeal to a soul capable of estimating profit, beauty, and right, and of being moved by them: moved by attraction to seek what is good, and lovely, and just; moved by repulsion to shun what is hurtful, unlovely, and undutiful. Revelation, ever addressing man as one indebted to the goodness of God for every power and every opportunity, yet addresses him as a portentous being to whom is permitted the liberty of misusing his powers and of squandering his opportunities—ay, and the still more awful liberty of injuring and tempting others. But liberty is not so permitted that he shall after so doing fare as if he had dutifully cultivated opportunities; as if he had benefited others and built them up in good. Revelation does not approach him with force, but with motives, appeals to feeling, reason, conscience. “Come now and let us reason together,” is the language of Almighty power addressing finite but responsible power. Revelation sets before the soul, as before a judge, in open contrast, the beauty of righteousness and the blessedness of salvation on the one hand, and on the other hand the horrors of iniquity and the suffering of fearful punishment. In sight of these it calls on man to choose—to choose life and not death, to choose a blessing and not a curse, to choose the upward way, though narrow, and not the downward way, though broad. It is not for man to choose to what

manner of person shall be given the life, the blessing, and the heritage to which the upward way leads. That is settled by unalterable law eternal. It is for man to say whether he will bow to that law or rebel; but not to say that in rebelling against moral law he is really yielding to a deeper law of invincible necessity.

When necessity to run the race of evil seems fastening upon man, because all the response of his soul to the call of God is too feeble to carry him over the current of habit and desire; when he finds that sincere choice to serve his Maker does not prove operative in holy actions; when he finds that, though his will is free from above, not "thrust on" in the evil course by power of God, nor dragged on in it by the revolving system of the universe, nevertheless, it is fettered from below, carnal, sold, in bondage to sin, so that doing the deed he hates, and failing to keep the law to which judgment and conscience assent as holy, just, and good, he feels that practically he is not a free agent, but a forced servant of a terrible captor;—when, finding all this, he is ready to lie down like a corpse and let the cold current roll over him and roll him on with it, then does Revelation set before him the Maker as a Saviour who redeems the bondsman, who breathes into him of His own free spirit, renews his will, strikes off the shackles of flesh and habit; makes him again a MAN capable of

choosing the good and refusing the evil; choosing no longer with an inoperative though sincere resolution, but with a might—the Spirit's might in the inner man—before which old desires and habits give way.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. SPENCER'S VIEW OF THE ORIGIN OF THE
UNIVERSE.I.—*Three Possible Theories.*

ACCORDING to Mr. Spencer, the theories we may form of the origin of the universe are three: "We may assert that it is self-existent; or that it is self-created; or that it is created by an external agency."¹ The theory of its self-existence he holds to be that of the Atheist; the theory of self-creation he takes for that of the Pantheist; and the theory of creation by an external agency he takes for that of the Theist.

He does not enquire which of these suppositions is the most credible; but only whether any one of them is conceivable in the *true* sense of the word. As we already know, his sense of the word is one in which conception seems to be confounded with comprehension, and comprehension seems to be confounded with power of mentally picturing every detail of the object. He undertakes to show that no one of

¹ *First Prin.*, §11.

the three suppositions is conceivable in the true sense of the word.

Treating of the Atheist theory, he naturally assumes that an assertion of self-existence involves a denial of creation. Two of his alternative phrases for uncreated are, "not produced by any other," and "independent of any other."

*Atheist
Theory.*

Now, it is obvious at first sight that nothing could be self-existent if produced by another, for that is being created ; nor yet if dependent on another, for that is being preserved. As, therefore, the Atheist asserts that the universe was not produced by a living God, or by anything else, he holds not only that it is without any head and any government, but also that, "In excluding the idea of any antecedent cause, we necessarily exclude the idea of a beginning."

This position of the Atheists Mr. Spencer meets by asserting that we cannot form a conception of existence without a beginning ; and, for this curious

*His
Reply.*

reason, that it would be conceiving "existence through infinite past time," which would imply "the conception of infinite past time, which is an impossibility." An impossibility it would clearly be, did conception *here* mean giving to a thing an existence in our minds preparatory to giving it an external existence. That is the ordinary sense of conceiving a thing, be it a poem or an inven-

tion. But it is not the sense here. All that is meant is that you cannot form a conception of infinite past time such as you do of *Paradise Lost*, although that is a widely different thing from Milton's conception of it ere it began to be. Your conception is merely apprehension ; his was generation. Yours takes cognizance of what has been made ; his gave existence to what had never before existed—gave existence, first in his spirit, later in embodied form. Now, in Mr. Spencer's peculiar sense, we are clearly unable to form a conception of infinite past time, because to see before the mind's eye the top, the sides, and the under surface of it, or any equivalents of these, is not practicable. No more is it practicable in respect of finite past time.

This is Mr. Spencer's main reply to the theory of a self-existent universe, and obviously it really has no direct bearing on the question, being a point not so much touching the origin of the universe as the abilities of the mind : a point in psychology not affecting cosmogony, except indirectly. But he advances a second argument to strengthen the first : " Even were self-existence conceivable, it would not in any sense be an explanation of the universe." Why would it not ? Because, holds Mr. Spencer, if the existence of a thing is not comprehensible, it does not become more so by the fact

that it existed long ago, or even always. This is his whole argument. The conclusion is: "Thus the Atheist theory is not only absolutely unthinkable, but, even if it were thinkable, would not be a solution." If unthinkable means unbelievable, we agree with Mr. Spencer; but as to the solution of the question of origin, surely that question would be laid to rise no more if it were proved that all things which now are have existed from all eternity.

For the conclusion that the Atheist theory is unthinkable a reason is assigned, namely, that asserting the universe to be self-existent "does not really carry us *a step beyond the cognition* of its present existence; and so leaves us with a mere re-statement of the mystery." [Italics mine.] No assertion of the existence of a thing gives to the hearer a *cognition* of its existence, but the assertion of the self-existence of a thing carries the person asserting immensely farther than an assertion of its mere existence. The assertion of the self-existence of London a mere re-statement of the assertion of its existence! It is a new statement, totally different, introducing elements of immeasurable significance. Atheist and Theist concur in saying that the universe exists; but when the Atheist asserts its self-existence, they part widely asunder. And the question whether our minds can conceive of its self-existence has no direct bearing on the other question whether these worlds and inter-

spaces are actually self-existent or not. The question it has a bearing perfectly direct upon is, whether the point is one we can discuss or not.

Let us for a moment pause to enquire whether it is really an impossibility to form a conception of infinite past time. It plainly would be so, did forming a conception of a thing mean representing all its

*Can We
Conceive of
Infinite
Past Time?*

parts in the mind. But if that be forming a conception, no mayor forms a conception of his own city, and no general of his own corps. But by forming a conception of an object I mean no more than forming such a general idea of it as it will answer to, and as nothing else will.

To apply this to past time: it is not denied that we can form a conception of a past day, yet, can we picture every second of it? Neither is it denied that we can form a conception of a past week, though we still less can picture its separate moments. But this increasing generality of our idea does not involve increasing indefiniteness, much less unreality, as Mr. Spencer seems to believe. On the contrary, our conception of a past week is just as real and as definite as that of a day. From week ascend to year, and from year to century. Here the generality of your idea is greatly increased, but this brings with it neither indistinctness nor unreality. Your idea of a century is quite as real and as sharply defined as that of a

day or an hour. Detailed picturing of parts enters not into the case. If you proceed to thousands of years, to millions, you do not reach illusive conceptions or indefinite ones, but only general ones, the details of which cannot be *comprehended* in one collective view. You are simply confronted with the fact that to a finite mind generals and particulars are not both to be grasped at one and the same time. When such a mind turns to particulars generals pass out of its view, and so do particulars when it turns to generals. But it is not necessary to confound a general idea with a "fictitious" one, or to confound absence of filling up with misrepresentation. A general view is such that the particulars will fit into it, and rise to view when attention is directed to them. Yet Mr. Spencer imagines that the assertions we make of things beheld in a general view show that we conceive of them in a *fictitious* way; an idea which his examples do not sustain.

From another point of view we can easily test the question as to whether we can or cannot form a conception of infinite past time. Easy as it is to form a conception of a day, we find it not easy to do so of a day without time previous to it. So, easy as it is to form a conception of a year, it is just as difficult to form one of a year with no time before it. And if you take a million of years, do you find it

*Can We
Conceive a
Limit to
Past Time?*

possible to conceive of the point at which you begin to count as having no duration preceding it ?

In thinking of the entire of past time the difficulty is not to conceive of it as without bounds—that, on the contrary, is what we cannot help doing. It is not merely difficult, it is simply impossible, for us to think of it as having bounds around it, and no time beyond them. A terminal point or a terminal line having on this side of it duration, and on the other side no duration, would be a creation of fancy to which even Mr. Spencer would not be equal. When Mr. Mill would give examples of things of which we cannot conceive, he says : “ We cannot represent to ourselves time and space as having an end. We cannot represent to ourselves two and two as making five.”¹

We can conceive of a time when neither earth nor sun existed, consequently, when time itself, as it is known to us, measured out in days and years, existed not. But we do not on that account conceive of the first rolling round of our globe upon its axis as an event to which no duration was antecedent. Now, in the preceding duration it matters not what point we may select—the birthday of Sirius, or that of the most distant star yet sighted—we must conceive that date as having earlier duration before it. On the one hand, finite portions of the past are easily conceived of, but, on the other hand, the total past, bounded by a

¹ Mill's *Ex. of Hamilton*, p. 67.

terminal line beyond which no past had ever existed, is what we do not and cannot conceive of. For the sum total of past duration it is the boundless and not the bounded that is naturally thought of.

If we find it thus in travelling up the line, so do we in travelling downwards. In future duration,

Can We finite portions are easily conceived of, *be*
Conceive a they moments or millions of years, *but*
Limit to of a point in coming time without *any*
Future time after it, of a sum total of duration
Duration?

that is finite, we never do conceive. Precisely the same remarks apply to space. Though these ideas are familiar to Mr. Spencer as accepted by philosophers of different shades, he rests his case against the self-existence of the universe on our assumed inability to conceive of an infinite past of time. He thus so frames his argument that it bears as much against any self-existence as against that of a globe ; as much against the self-existence of the Creator as against that of the things created.

This view might seem to be precluded by such a principle as the following: "To speak of it [the First Cause] as limited, necessarily implies a conception of something beyond its limits: it is absolutely impossible to conceive a thing as bounded without conceiving a region surrounding its boundaries."¹ Here we must ask, Is it true or not true

¹ *First Prin.*, § 12.

that whenever we conceive of an object as bounded, we do also conceive of a region beyond it? It is absolutely true, and applies equally to duration and extension. This fact, recognised by many, renders futile their disputations over the word infinite as "a mere negation." Though *infinite* is technically a negative term, substantially the negative term is *finite*, and *infinite* is the double negative which reasserts the affirmative. "Finite" asserts non-continuity, a negation of extension beyond a given degree. This negation *infinite* takes off, and denies the cessation of continuity, and affirms extension without bounds. The seeming negative negatives a negation—an end which is the negation of further continuity, be it in time or space. In negating this, it affirms what Mr. Mill clearly expresses as "greater than any finite extension."

II.—*Things Finite and Dependent cannot be Eternal.*

The nature of both bodies and interspaces shows them to us as limited, ending at a given point, no longer going on with us in space; but what then? is everything limited? does our thought in travelling over space reach a line beyond which we are alone? No; beyond the outermost there is always a further outermost. Mr. Spencer's true affirmation, about our always conceiving of some region as extending

beyond any line we may fix on, overturns his other about an infinite past being inconceivable. This is strikingly the case when he asserts that beyond any tract to which we may assign limits "there lies a region which we are compelled to regard as infinite." Can words be plainer or truer? Turn whichever way we will, in time or space, the same inability encompasses us, inability to find a true end of either! Our finite thought is set at a point amid two infinities.

Each particular body in existence bears, in the fact of its dimensions, evidence of more than its finite character ; it is not limited only, but measured. Every globe in space is a measured mass, and is running its measured miles. So every globule is a measured mite, and moves in measured pulses. Here is motion manifestly originating in time. Just as vast tracts of space are passed before we reach the beginning of any particular body, so are vast lapses of duration before we reach the beginning of pulsation in these timed motions. Here, then, is an obvious ground of difficulty in conceiving of the universe as having been in existence from all eternity. These globes once came into existence, these orbits were once traversed for the first time, these rhythmic throbs of minute motion once began. Whether it be a finite body, a finite interspace, or a finite motion, it is a thing with a beginning, therefore not self-existent.

Our difficulty is not in conceiving of the infinite, but in believing that things manifestly finite are infinite. Nor is it merely their dimensions which deprive them of any claim to self-existence.

The spectrum shows that suns and stars are compound bodies, which implies that they were put together, a fact which, if it stood alone, would disprove their self-existence. A third mark against their self-existence is this, they exist not singly, but in groups, and move in harmonies of groups, each member of a group being dependent on the others. These groups in their turn are only members of larger systems, which membership involves further and more complex dependence, dependence in rest and dependence in motion. How, then, could the idea of self-existence attach itself to things which are parts fitted to other parts, both forming smaller wholes which ascend into larger ones with intricate dependencies at every point of the series? How could it attach to things whose movements all represent a beginning, a measure, a purpose, a combination, and a fitness as processes in one grand whole? It is not of such things that we can affirm "either a duration which never ceases or an extension which nowhere comes to an end."¹ They fall below both of these standards; hence below any claim to be thought of as self-existing.

¹ Mill's *Ex. of Hamilton*, p. 34.

If it be said that the eternal existence spoken of is not that of globes, but of the atoms or molecules whereof globes are composed, the same reasons return in full force. An atom is as much a finite body as a globe, a molecule as much dependent on constituent atoms and kindred molecules as is any globe upon constituent elements and kindred globes. Each atom has its dimensions, its movement, and its surrounding interspaces. The interspaces in ether are by Mr. Spencer supposed to be of incredible magnitude compared with its atoms. A nebula is a collection of atoms, molecules, and spaces, just as the universe is a collection of globes, nebulæ, and spaces. Self-existent constellations are not more remote from experience and reason than are self-existent gases. Nor is self-existent ether any more known to experience than they, or any less contrary to reason. Just as globes and constellations while separated by interspaces are connected by forces, and thus at great distances are held communicating and coöperating, so likewise atoms and molecules separated by proportionate interspaces are connected together by minutely measured forces. One finite is adapted to another finite, and one dependent to another dependent ; the multitude of finite things framed together in close relation pointing towards some common Builder who must be Infinite ; and the multitude of dependent things resting on reciprocal supports

pointing towards a common Stay that must be Almighty.

Mr. Spencer builds much on the phrase, "passing from the imperceptible to the perceptible," which may mean several things. It often means, not "passing," or doing anything else, but only being found out by an observer. The observer may find it out by coming nearer to it, by using his eyes better, by helping his senses with invented aids, or by himself coming into existence. None of these is action on the part of the object. All things are imperceptible

Being where there are no living beings capable of
Perceptible perceiving them. When upon our earth
Impossible there was no being with eye, ear, or sense
without of temperature, did forms, or sounds, or
an Observer. heat ever pass from the imperceptible to the perceptible? In the sky above and in the laboratory, forms as big as a score of worlds, and forms infinitesimally small pass from the imperceptible to the perceptible simply because the observer has brought to his assistance telescope and microscope. When it is meant that a thing not perceptible through sense while in one state becomes so when it enters on another state, as invisible water in the atmosphere forming into mist, it is a simple fact enough, and one that has no marvellous mission in teaching cosmogony, any more than it has when passing from the perceptible to the imperceptible, like the same mist when the sun shines.

The self-existence of finite and dependent things being disproved, it does not follow that the self-existence of a Being who is both Infinite and Independent is disproved. There Mr. Spencer's universal inference shrinks at once to a particular. So far from the proved limits and proved dependency of all bodies, of all periods of time and spaces, proving aught against the Self-Existence of God, every moment of past time, leading as it does upwards to a preceding duration—a process which goes on to any conceivable extent—brings us at last to a sense of infinite past duration. Duration is not the duration of nothing. When the process ascends above every timed existence, it brings us into the presence of Him from whom all such descend. In like manner, any measured body leads us outward to yet larger dimensions, and every bounded interspace to yet wider gulfs. This process also goes on to any conceivable extent. It thrusts upon our thought the idea of a true Infinite. Boundless extension is no more the Infinity of nothing, than is boundless duration the Eternity of nothing.

III.—*Motion not Self-existent.*

Evidence against the self-existence of *motion* is urged upon both our senses and our reason, in a manner analogous to that in which evidence against the self-existence of matter is urged. The finite

character of every form of matter, the interdependence of all its portions one upon another, and the place of the whole in a system in which matter plays much the same part as ballast does in a ship, are not more conclusive than are in the case of motion its finite dimensions, the dependence of motion on motion, of one on many and many on one, and the utter dependence of all motion on some medium or vehicle. Before motion can arise its medium must exist; and to the medium must be added an impulse. Before the current can run from city to city, the wire must stretch all the way. And the wire would never make the current. That cannot be set up till a living person with a design and will gives it existence. Mr. Spencer, in one of his most interesting chapters, dwells on the rhythm of motion. In every motion in nature the rhythm is measured, and each separate mode of motion is measured on a different scale. All these rhythms tell of origin in mind, and of end by some work done, as clearly as does the rhythm of verses, that of a piano, or of our gait in walking. The successive pulses of motion which constitute its rhythm and the measure of those pulses in its various modes lead us up to a moment when it was started, and earlier than that we see a design which the measure adapted it to fulfil; while at the moment of starting an impulse was imparted which sufficed to send it forth, and

following that moment a directing power which keeps it on its course. The imagination becomes overwhelmed when we endeavour to trace through space and through matter the multitudinous rush of motions made known by the patient power of scientists: motions differing in time, in amplitude, in momentum; motions meeting, crossing, and intercrossing, yet each coöperating towards some end. One's imagination often takes post at some point central between all the suns, and tries to picture the multitude of runners from world to world which in that point converge and diverge again, with the rate of speed and particular rhythm of each. The reason avers that every beat in the vibrations of each of these, and every passage in the harmony of all, speak to us of a single, grand ποιητής—a Maker-minstrel, Author and Performer in One.

When Mr. Spencer treats the question of the self-existence of the universe as one to be settled merely as if it were a point respecting our powers of conception, so making it really a question in psychology, he seems like one who should treat the assertion that London exists by saying, It is impossible for the human mind to conceive a city with more than 4,000,000, of inhabitants; and any conception of it one may suppose himself to form is a symbolical, not a real one. Real or symbolical, it is the conception of a thing actually existing. And the question whether

or not matter and interspace, force and motion, life, mind, and moral agency combined into one universe is self-existent or originated, is no more capable of being settled by puzzles about conceptions than is the question of the existence of a city of an extent unbelievable to many, in Africa and Asia, and utterly inconceivable to all, if Mr. Spencer's ideas of conception are just.

IV.—*The Supposition of Self-creation, called Pantheistic.*

The second supposition, namely, that the universe is self-created, is regarded by Mr. Spencer as being practically that of Pantheism. It seems hardly fair to that system to father upon it so palpable a self-contradiction. The phrase "self-creation" places substantial existence—that is, the self—earlier in time than the commencement of existence, which is creation. Pantheism denies creation altogether; and treats all phenomena as equally the play of a single Being; and as misconceived whenever they are thought of as anything but that being. Therefore, not self-creation but universal identity is the view proper to Pantheism. In it God recognizes His identity with the universe; and men are to recognize their own identity with God. What it calls "manifestations," *alias* phenomena, are manifestations

of the same to the same ; what it calls recognition is the recognition of the same by the same ; all things are one scroll of illusions evermore unfolding, and crackling as it unfolds. It denies creation because there is no creature, just as Atheism denies it because there is no Creator.

Against the idea of self-creation, which might have been dismissed as a self-contradiction, Mr. Spencer

*Potential
and
Actual
Existence.* alleges that, if we accept it, we must "conceive of potential existence passing into actual existence by some inherent necessity."

This obvious inference he reinforces by the extraordinary reason : "We cannot form an idea of the potential existence of the universe as distinguished from its actual existence." All he had to show was that we cannot form an idea of its potential existence as inhering in nothing ; and that he might trust to show itself. But he passes from such solid ground to assert that we cannot form an idea of its potential existence, as distinguished from its actual existence ! As surely as we cannot think of potential existence as inhering in nothing, so surely we can think of it as inhering in an Infinite and Almighty Being. Before the matter, the spaces, the forces, and the motion whereof the universe is composed there must have existed a thought capable of devising them, and a power capable of producing them, which thought and power must have been put forth in act.

We easily conceive of the potential existence of inert bodies. Given what are called the four organogens (oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, and carbon), and you have in them the potential existence of compounds innumerable. You cannot conceive of the potential existence of a speech as inhering in nothing, either "by necessity," or otherwise; nor yet of its inhering in a stone—nay, nor even in a magpie. But, given Mr. Gladstone, and the potential existence of a speech inhering in him, is not difficult to conceive of, as distinguished from its actual existence. The fact is, you cannot conceive of an orator without conceiving of the potential existence of speeches which have never yet become actual, and may never become so. So you cannot conceive of an Infinite and Almighty Being without conceiving of the potential existence of the universe antecedently to its actual existence. As the supposition of self-existing finite things sinks from under us, leaving us resting on the basis of a self-existing Infinite Being, so does the supposition of a self-created universe sink from under us, leaving us resting upon the rock of an Almighty Creator.

V.—*Creation by External Agency, called the Theistic Theory.*

We now come to the third of the theories, that of *Creation by External Agency*, which Mr. Spencer

regards as that of the Theists. We noted that his argument against the Atheistic theory told, if it told at all, equally against the Theistic one. How well he knew this appears in his manner of closing the discussion on the Theistic idea: "Whoever argues that the Atheistic hypothesis is untenable *because it involves the impossible idea of self-existence*, must, perforce, admit that the Theistic hypothesis is untenable if it contains the same impossible idea." [Italics mine.] Now, it is Mr. Spencer who puts the argument against Atheism on the ground that it involves the idea of self-existence, and he, therefore, may feel bound to hold the Theistic idea untenable, seeing it contains the same idea. But his impression that Theists put the objection he puts seems to be accounted for only by his eagerness to kill two birds with one stone. How could Theists argue against Atheism on the ground that it involves the idea of self-existence, when one of the fundamental points in Theism is the self-existence of God? To Theists the self-existence of dependent creatures is one thing, and the self-existence of an infinite Creator is another. But his own stone kills, if it kill at all, not two birds only, but three; for his own system is that of a self-evolved universe, which clearly implies a self-existing one, evolution being incapable of doing more than change what existed.

Another point which indicates want of attention to

the doctrine of which he is treating is the phrase, "Creation by external agency." What the "agency" is composed of, whether of a syndicate, a firm, or machinery, he does not say. In what sense he introduces the word "external" he does not say. Probably in the sense of "in another part of space"; for, improbable as such an interpretation might seem, we must be guided by the following, which further indicates the measure of his acquaintance with the beliefs *The Cabinet-Maker.* he was undertaking to eradicate: "In the cosmogony long current among ourselves," he asserts, "it is assumed that the genesis of the heavens and the earth is effected somewhat after the manner in which a workman shapes a piece of furniture." A workman shaping a piece of furniture occupies a different part of space from that occupied in the first instance by the materials and later by the article; he, therefore, is properly an external agent. Moreover, he deals with materials made to his hand, and effects every change by mechanical forces. Now, Mr. Herbert Spencer believes that the Bible teaches that the heavens and the earth received their origin "somewhat after this manner": that is, it teaches that God created the heavens and the earth out of material made to His hand, and while standing outside of the material and using mechanical force. "God said, Let there be light, and there was light." That is a genesis given in somewhat the same manner as a workman

shapes a piece of furniture ! God "spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast." Here we *Creation by Command.* have the Bible idea of the manner in which the Creator gives to finite things their genesis, an idea which runs through the book. This conception of creation by a command marks off the cosmogony of the Bible from all others, ancient or modern. Creation by fiat is not the manner in which a cabinet-maker produces his articles ; nor yet somewhat after that manner. Existence bestowed by will and word is the single note sounded in holy Scripture from first to last. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by *the word* of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."¹ This conception has probably done more to shape the thought of nations touching the cosmos than any other in the history of thought. It has done so with the effect of emancipating mind from many puerile surmises. This "cosmogony long current among ourselves" does not assume that the globes in space were "framed" by hands, or that things which appear yielded the material for all that is. It assumes the productive power of an all-sufficing Being, whose simple fiat bestows existence and appoints its form and measure.

To see where Mr. Spencer's description would apply, and where it is misapplied, one has only to set

¹ *Heb.* xi. 3.

beside the account in Genesis of the creation of light the one given in the Veda of the production of Fire, the god. The feat of eliciting flame by friction of two pieces of wood is in view, and the text reads: "The apparatus of attrition is ready; the generation of the flame is ready; take up this stick, the protectress of mankind, and let us churn the fire as has been done of old." This lies upon the level of Mr. Spencer's genesis; in comparison Moses and the Prophets are as the shooting stars in comparison with fire-flies. But signs of an earlier and nobler conception are not wanting in the Hindu scriptures, as, for instance, when Brahm is represented as creating the waters by a thought, and placing within them the seed whence sprang the mundane egg which produced Brahma the Creator, *i.e.*, Brahm himself in that form. The mixture here does not cover out of sight the original conception of creation by direct fiat of spirit power.

The power of production by word being super-human, the conception of it is also superhuman.

*Conception
and
Production.* That conception was for ever graven and illuminated by the first expression of the Bible: "In the beginning."

Finite things were thus defined as being also temporal things that had a beginning. Before their origin there existed, not an eternal nothing, but a Being able to confer being:

“in the beginning, *God*.” He conferred it by His simple command: “In the beginning *God created*.” He needed only to say, Let it be, and it was, whatever might be the thing called into existence. The power of such a Being by His word, independently of all which characterizes the labour of an artisan, to create, construct, and destroy, is not only pervasive in the Bible, but in the thought and literature of all nations whose beliefs have been coloured by it, or by the common traditions of the race in its central seats, before the Biblical epoch. To the Word of the prophet, of the mantis, of the rishi, of the sage, from India to Scandinavia was often attributed a power independent of material, of distance, and of all traceable processes. Judging of Mr. Spencer’s knowledge by the pages he devotes to the subject, we might suppose that he had never heard of the conception of creation entertained by Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans, and had to frame one for them out of his own fertility. Does he suppose that when Sir John Herschel employed his celebrated phrase, in describing an atom, “a manufactured article,” he had any idea of a forge or factory in his mind? or that Prophet and Psalmist had such when they spoke of God as “stretching out the heavens as a curtain,” or of their being the work of His hands?

VI.—*The Universe Assumed to Consist of Matter.*

The true point is struck when Mr. Spencer speaks of the *real mystery* as lying in "the origin of the material of which the universe consists." This, however, assumes that the universe consists of matter, whereas Matter, Motion, and Force are recognized as constituents by Mr. Spencer. Of these three only one is matter, and how small is the proportionate space it occupies is now familiar to us. When we likened it to ballast in a ship we suggested a proportionate magnitude totally unwarranted; a true proportion would come nearer to the amount of gold in the pockets of the crew and officers. If we held that, even with a knowledge of its ultimate units, matter would remain "absolutely unknown," we should be nearer understanding how Lucretius calls his atoms by three incongruous names: matter, or stuff, generative organs, and seeds. Stuff they are, but they are all equal, and therefore none of them can generate the rest. Again, seeds are not generative organs, but generated germs, having in them, over and above the mere stuff, worlds of form, of force, of motion, of affinity, and of potentiality—a store from the generative power of the past, and a potency for the future, both equally lacking to mere stuff. Three positions in nature so flagrantly dissimilar as those of mere material, generative bodies, and seeds are not easily

assigned to the same thing in common life, but are so in the tentative stages of abstract speculation. The confusion might cease after those stages.¹

Taking note, then, of this assumption that it is matter of which the universe consists, we pass on. "The production of matter out of nothing is the real mystery." Here we agree; but let us suppose that, instead of the production of matter out of nothing, we had to account for the production by matter of Space, and all the other structural, mental, moral, and spiritual elements of the Universe, the case would be not only one of mystery, but of unbelievable absurdity.

The production of matter out of nothing would also be unbelievable if it meant, as it seems to be

Production generally taken to mean, the production
Out of of it by nothing! That, however, the
Nothing, words never can mean. *Production* sup-
or Production poses the pre-existence of some one to
by Nothing. act as producer. Here comes out the difference
 between creation as the Almighty can create and
 creation as finite creatures are said to do so.

The creature can conceive; that is, he can give within his mind an existence to a thing which else-

¹ Quæ nos materiem et genitalia corpora rebus

Reddunda in ratione vocare et semina rerum

Appellare suemus et hæc eadem usurpare corpora prima.

De Rerum Natura, I. 58, etc. Munro translates the names: matter, begetting bodies of things, seeds of things, first bodies: *i.e.*, atoms, material, genital organs, and seeds.

where has no existence. Shakespeare could conceive King Lear, some one could conceive the Taj Mehal, Mr. Spencer could conceive the Synthetic Philosophy; each finite mind having its personal power, peculiar to itself, and incommunicable to friend or heir. But when its conception is complete as to substance and form, and awaits some embodiment, the creative powers pause. They cannot make matter. Given matter already made, and mind can impress upon it

Conception what left to itself it would never evolve,
and motions, forms, relations composed into a
Production. working whole.

Shakespeare could not make air in which to sound the poem his imagination had fashioned, or surfaces on which to write it. These must come to him as genii from above to aid his plan. So the architect of the Taj could not make stone, or lime, or clay, or wood. This is the step where the creature halts: conceive the thing that exists not, he can; compose a thing which never before existed, he can; but produce the material which enables the conception to embody itself in sensible form, he absolutely cannot. This inability of the creature our anthropomorphism ascribes also to the Creator; for they who most loudly accuse believers of that offence are in all things given to it. And this poor inference from human inability to divine inability forms a barrier which no cosmogony but that of the Bible surmounts.

It never speaks of the earth and heavens as coming out of nothing. Nor yet does it ever speak of the Creator as needing matter made to hand in order to form either earth or sky. Earlier than matter He inhabits eternity, and centres in Himself all powers. He is as capable of producing matter as of producing thought, or form, or motion. But the link between conception and production creature never saw. Matter given to us, between conception and it lies force,—force which serves mind in imposing upon matter form, movement, position, relation, and so in causing it to become what by development it never would become, and to do what it never would do; but force which has no efficacy at all towards replenishing vacancy with new matter. It is this incapacity to produce matter which Christians cannot transfer from man to God.

VII.—*An Assumption of Self-Existence Necessary Somewhere.*

The three theories recognized by Mr. Spencer are now before us: those of a self-existing universe, a self-created universe, and a universe created by external agency. These three Agnosticism binds up in one bundle, holding that, as to them all, "it is not a question of probability, or credibility, but of conceivability." So completely are they all three out of court, that "we can entertain them only as we

entertain such pseud-ideas as a square fluid and a moral substance"; what mode of entertainment that is, Mr. Spencer permits us to learn. It is 'abstaining from the endeavour to render them into actual thought.'

With all this, the fact does not escape Mr. Spencer that, in spite of what he said about self-existence being an impossible idea, this very impossible idea is the one which underlies each of the three suppositions. Nature might take pleasure in making that actual which Mr. Spencer holds to be impossible, and that known which he holds to be unknowable. "It is impossible to avoid making the assumption of self-existence somewhere." This startling assertion, after the assumption has been proscribed as an "impossible idea," is, however, perfectly true. The three theories, even in Mr. Spencer's manner of stating them, all involve the assumption of self-existence somewhere. The Atheist theory assumes the self-existence of matter, the Pantheistic theory the self-existence of everything, and the Theistic theory the self-existence of God, which it pleases Mr. Spencer to call that of "external agency." The question, therefore, is not as to who does what cannot be done, seeing all do it; or as to who entertains an idea that is an impossible idea, seeing all entertain it. The question is, Who assumes self-existence in the right place? One passage would

appear to give the suffrage of Mr. Spencer to the Atheistic theory : "Impossible as it is to think of the actual Universe as self-existing, we do but multiply impossibilities of thought by every attempt we make to explain its existence." Hence it appears that if the first theory lies under an impossibility of thought, the other two lie under the same impossibility multiplied ! Whether the highest multiple of impossibility lies upon the Pantheistic theory or the Theistic one, is not said. Whatever might be the effect of this passage if it stood alone, Mr. Spencer is certainly no Atheist.

Making, then, the most moderate use of the admission that self-existence, instead of being an impossible idea, is a necessary one, and that we must assume it somewhere, let us *Suppose Universal Non-existence.* assume the self-existence of Space and of nothing else—of *space without either mind or matter in it.* This, I contend, is the only rational starting point for speculation on the origin of the universe. We do nothing if we set out with a universe of mist. That is matter with motion, therefore with forces ; and beginning with it is beginning in the middle. This mist might be the dust of what had been compact globes for vast ages. Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return, is true of greater bodies than that of man. We must go back beyond the dust, back beyond the molecule, back beyond the

atom, and if lower than the atom there be a homogeneous unit, back beyond that—back to the non-existence of matter, to the non-existence of mind—back to nothing.

Now, if the idea of self-existence can be entertained only as we entertain that of a square fluid, how can the idea of universal non-existence be entertained? Infinite space and no matter in it; infinite space and no mind in it; infinite space and no force in it; infinite space and no motion in it—is this to be mother of the universe? Here is neither mind to produce matter nor yet matter to evolve mind. We are in the lonely gulf of nought, and out of nothing will nothing come. Language itself repudiates the attempted conception as a really impossible idea: “we are” cannot come into the realm of non-existence. The fact that any theory capable of being stated assumes self-existence somewhere, and that no theory assumes a nothing out of which all things arise, is tolerably clear proof that the “impossible idea” is not that of self-existence, but that of universal non-existence. None will plead for the idea of nothing ever making anything or becoming anything. When speaking of the notion of the potential existence of the universe inhering in nothing, Mr. Spencer says that it involves the absurdity of a “nothing distinguished from all other nothings by its power to develop into something.” Here, again, language refuses to stoop to the attempted idea

"Its power" is thought utterly alien from the idea of nothing. The reason why out of nothing nothing comes is that in nothing nothing is.

Let those who speak of the creation of bodies out of nothing as if it were tantamount to their creation by nothing reflect for a moment on their own misconception. "God created" is a word that clears away any such obscurities. It places self-existence, which we must suppose somewhere, precisely there where it is of a nature to account for all derived and dependent existences.

VIII.—*Three other Theories.*

Three alternatives other than those stated by Mr. Spencer have long seemed to me those to which we are held. Seeing that we must assume self-existence somewhere, which is assuming eternal existence somewhere, we may suppose:—

1. An Eternal Nothing, which originated both mind and matter.
2. An Eternal Matter, which originated mind.
3. An Eternal Mind, which originated matter.

Of these three possible suppositions the first disappears at once. A Nothing producing mind, matter, and the scheme and powers of the universe is not only unbelievable but inconceivable. It is inconceivable, among other reasons, because the sup-

position itself is a fiction: it is, no supposing of self-existence to suppose a nothing. The only result of supposing an Eternal Nothing would be to confess all Mind as of temporal origin, as well as all matter, which appears to be as clearly so as finite minds. The second supposition, that of Eternal Matter which originates mind, if not inconceivable is unbelievable, weighted with infinite improbabilities. The third supposition, that of Eternal Mind which originates matter, is conceivable, is believable, is accordant with all probabilities. It is thus manifest that, practically, the issue must be taken as between Eternal Matter producing mind and an Eternal Mind producing matter.

Both mind and matter are here, existing together in space and time; and, since we assume that they were not produced by nothing, we are led to ask, Which is the more likely to have produced the other? It is manifest that as mind and body are known in and on our globe they are both of them finite, and both of them dependent. It is further manifest that here the more ancient is matter; for all animated bodies are such that their existence must have been preceded by that of the world. Terrestrial mind and terrestrial matter being without any mark of self-existence, and with clear marks of an existence which was originated at some point

*Mind and
Matter,
Which
Author
of the
Other?*

in past time, both of them prompt us to enquire, Whence was their origin? Matter, at least, is not limited to earth: in the air, and in the worlds beyond, it exists and is closely akin to matter here. Is mind, then, limited to earth, and has it no kindred beyond? If the mass of our globe has in the sun a kindred mass a million times as great, and in other suns kindred masses of greatness incalculable, is mind nowhere greater than upon this earth? and even as to terrestrial mind, is its activity confined to the terrestrial sphere? That question raises another: How do we know that matter exists beyond our earth? Only by mind, and it knows only by means of its excursions outside of these bounds. The strata of rocks know nothing of the mountains in the moon, and air knows nothing of the photosphere of the sun. They have no power of exploring. We come, therefore, to a comparison of the probabilities as to which of these two, mind or matter, is pointed out, by the probabilities of the case, as the type of the First Cause.

To begin at the point which we have just reached: Mind knows and is not known by matter; matter knows not and is known by mind. Mind thinks, and is not thought about by matter; matter does not think, and is thought about by mind. Mind observes, and is not observed by matter; matter does not observe, and is observed

*Mind and
Matter
Contrasted.*

by mind. Mind is both its own object and its own subject; matter is neither its own object nor its own subject. Mind investigates itself and matter; matter investigates neither itself nor mind. Mind asks questions and answers them; matter neither asks nor answers. Mind frames sciences both of itself and of matter; matter frames none of either. Mind experiments upon matter; matter does not experiment even on itself. Mind originates movement in matter when at rest, and stays movement in it when in motion; matter does not move itself when at rest, nor yet stop itself when moving. Mind designs to change the forms, the properties, and the employments of matter, and does it; it designs to bring forth new forms of matter unknown to nature, and does it; matter neither designs nor does these things, whether for itself or for mind. Mind feels pain and pleasure; matter feels neither. Mind is led by the prospect of either pain or pleasure to act and to make bodies move; matter is never led to act by any prospect of pain or pleasure, and, as has been said, never moves till moved, and never stops till stopped. In one word, human mind can do a thousand things with matter, although it is incapable of producing it, or yet of annihilating it—incapable even of changing the nature of one of its elementary bodies, or their mode of combining with others.

When, therefore, we raise the question whether it is more reasonable to believe that Matter contained the potential existence of Mind, or that Mind contained the potential existence of Matter, there can be no hesitation grounded on any assignable data. The data all point one way. Human mind, as we have seen, cannot make matter, and cannot annihilate it, yet it can in ten thousand ways modify and control it—can construct and destroy fabrics composed of it. Thus on the one hand it is not either its creator or disposer, and on the other hand it is its superior. Both finite, both dependent, and yet not equal, they are manifestly fellow-creatures placed side by side here, fitted to work together and combine into one system—a system twofold, indeed, but

Matter harmonious. They are never in nature
not Evil contrasted as the one good and the other
but Good. evil, any more than they are in the Bible.

Each is a creature of God, and therefore aboriginally good, and both unitedly form one whole which we call creation, which whole, again, was in the beginning good.

Taken by itself, matter is not capable of either mental or moral evil, nor yet of pain or pleasure. Pain is mental evil; wrong is moral evil. Mind of the humblest kind is capable of pain and capable of mental error, but incapable of moral wrong or condemnation, either self-condemnation or otherwise.

Spirit alone does moral wrong, alone is capable of consciously violating a law ; it alone is capable of both mental error and moral fault, and it alone is capable of the highest kinds of pain and pleasure—kinds combining mental, moral, and spiritual elements into a sublime whole. Never in the Bible is the seat of evil placed in matter : it is in spirit. It is the carnal *mind* that is enmity against God. What works in the children of disobedience is not a material dulness, but a “spirit,” which is a “power.” The mere matter, the mere body, often taken by the heathen philosophers as the source of all sin, is in the Bible but its instrument, and the body itself is there claimed as originally destined to be the instrument of God for righteousness, yea, to be His temple ; claimed as, by redemption, destined in immortal life to high degrees of glory as a spiritual body, to which lofty ends the erring soul is warned and counselled to restore it back.

This reminds me of a curious passage where Mr. Spencer evidently thinks that they who speak of *brute* matter abuse it ; and even hints at their ignorance and vulgarity ! *Brute Bodies* is the literal translation of Comte’s heading for the sciences of Astronomy, Physics, and Chemistry (*Sciences des Corps Bruts*). It simply means crude ; or, in commerce, raw material. The Latin word, of course, meant dull and stupid, whether applied to a man or an animal. We should

never in contempt call clay or metal as slow-witted as a mule: the abuse would be to call the mule as senseless as clay. By "brute," when applied to a man, we often mean cruel, which mere matter never is, any more than it is slow-witted. It is below either of these faults. But "brute matter" is a phrase simply meaning lifeless matter, and it is scarcely they who use terms in a classical sense who are to be called ignorant and vulgar.

Matter incapable of sin or blame, but equally incapable of virtue or praise, and mind capable of them all, are coördinated members of the great whole, without either of which we know not of any universe. Not only are they coördinated in the universe, but also in our own being, so as to constitute a single person with two natures. The human mind is fitted with a body not particularly well suited to be an organ of physical force, but wonderfully suited to be one of mental rule over animals and material instruments. Yet mind and matter, though thus coördinated and thus closely allied, are not co-extensive. Only a portion of matter, which in comparison with the whole is scarcely appreciable, is animated. Add to this the quantity that is organic, and it amounts to a mere fraction. Taking the known universe in its length and breadth, the matter in it animated and inanimate constitutes but groups of islets here and there.

The question, then, returns : Did Matter exist first and bring forth mind, or did Mind exist first and produce matter? Which of the two conceptions is the more rational, the more in accord with all the analogies of experience—that of an Eternal Mind which says of matter, Let it be! or that of Eternal Matter which produced mind? Let us recall certain marks which we have found attaching to matter. It exists in finite portions widely separated, and the known total of it is finite; every part of it is dependent; nearly all of it is inanimate; and the entire mass of it suffices but to dot the space of the universe. Matter, then, cannot account for the interspaces. It could neither make them nor give to them just proportion. Yet the interspaces, the distances, are as manifestly part of the one great system as are either bodies or finite minds. The numberless forms of action and reaction which take place athwart those interspaces are proof of a power uniting body to body across vacuity—proof of an active direction pervading every point of space.

Terrestrial mind and terrestrial matter are our materials for scientific observation. The sphere of their influence is soon described; that of matter in the form of attraction is uniform, fixed by immovable decree. This influence extends beyond our world, to the moon conspicuously, farther into space less conspicuously, but not less really; and

in addition to this influence, matter piece by piece exerts sundry other influences on contiguous pieces, influences varying with the kind of matter. All of them, however, obey laws of the same order as

Matter and the Interspaces. gravitation, being fixed in every particular of their operation, without any opening for the exercise of judgment, choice, or enterprise. But as to terrestrial interspaces, what can matter do? Can the gold in the Australian rocks move away to the marts of Europe? Can the ice on the Arctic seas transfer itself to the thirsty in New York, or send word of where it is to be found? Here it fails; for it the interspaces of earth are the inaccessible, as other worlds are for man. It may be carried across them, but passing over them or sending over them by its own power is impossible.

Does this inability attach to mind? Finite as it is, *Mind and the Interspaces.* it can master much of the difficulty of terrestrial interspaces, and penetrate much of their mystery. While the bridging over of distances or transferring itself over them is utterly alien from matter, it is one of the standing occupations of embodied mind. It is only in mind that the thought of such things can arise. Whatever may be the space occupied by any body of mere matter, that space is the total sphere of its presence, whether it be an atom or a world; and the forces which automatically stream out from it, by fixed laws, are

its total of influence. But the space occupied by its body is only the point of departure for the activity of the human mind, and the forces which automatically stream out from that body by fixed laws are not even reckoned as among its sources of influence. The sphere of a man's bodily presence does not contain his thoughts, desires, or projects for a single day. His mind constantly projects the sphere of its activity beyond that of his presence. It ranges over all space and over all time, the antipodes, the stars, or the next-door house being equally within reach of its thoughts; and if thus with objects in space, so is it with those in time: Adam and the last man are thought of with equal facility. In these excursions a sense of kindred with Infinite Mind alternately overawes it and buoys it up; whereas what it feels in respect of matter is companionship rather than kindred. It sees that for matter the limit of bodily presence is its whole limit, while for itself the limit of bodily presence is but the limit of its fulcrum. Therefore the terrestrial distances offer to mind a continuous inducement to activity. It can bridge over the gulf from London to New Zealand, and, what is more, can send, with a speed almost as of thought, its words, wishes, commands over the whole interspace, and make them take effect in various actions.

Hence we almost feel as if that idea of presence

only in one place which we rigorously attach to matter, and which we seem bound to attach also to finite mind, were overshadowed with some kind of doubt, and as if the mind really overstepped the bodily sphere. When we see that an operator in India determines the motions of a machine here, and makes it utter his words, we feel as if mind and mind were in presence, the vast interspace notwithstanding. That mind has controlled motions over a space to which the extent of its own body is but as the breadth of a cambric thread to a great plain. This control of motion beyond the sphere of presence is one of the familiar sights in life, and one that bears the thoughts away to the contemplation of an all-pervasive control of Mind. When the Indian juggler plays with two balls, his control as to whither they shall go and when they shall return to his hand is as complete during the time that they are detached from his person as during the time when they touch it. It is not the completeness of that control that is increased when the two balls become four, nor yet the evidence of the fact that bodies flying free are strictly under the direction of mind ; what is increased is the complexity of the movements over which this direction is exercised. The error of a hairbreadth, as Hazlitt put it, or of the smallest conceivable portion of time, "would be fatal"; yet mind, giving to each ball the needful attention, and exerting upon it the proper force, sustains its

mastery over the motions which it originated. Those balls are as capable of guiding themselves as are worlds, and as capable of evolving their own first impulses. The spectacle of mind first impelling and then guiding them will ever, to the thinker, suggest the conception of a Mind first setting in motion and then guiding all the spheres which revolve in space: a Mind the sphere of whose presence no body can transcend in its dimensions, or overpass in its courses. The very form of bodies is a proclamation of limits, and precludes any possibility of conceiving of them as present throughout space. In fact, the corresponding interspace is part of our conception of any two bodies, even closely related. We speedily see to the ends of any single body, whether a world or an atom. But just this defined boundary is what fails us in respect of mind; its flights, its glances, its far-reaching control, even when working through a body, stimulate us, constrain us to that very conception of a Mind pervading and controlling all the spaces of infinity, from which the local limitations of body drive us back. It would not be harder to conceive of the juggler's balls keeping up and coming right to his hand without a controlling mind than to conceive of the revolutions of the great worlds without a Mind preserving order in perpetuity, or than to conceive without a controlling mind of the numberless concussions whereby every atom in space is "bombarded"

resulting in ordered movements. And it would be no more unreasonable to think of the balls as giving origin to the juggler than to think of the bodies which circle in space as having given origin to the Mind which guides them and us. Of course the word bodies in this sentence applies equally to worlds—atoms in the aggregate, or to atoms—worlds in miniature.

The Agnostic method of avoiding the conclusion that matter is a creature of an Almighty mind is to treat matter and mind as being practically identical, though phenomenally incapable of being identified. Of all the treasons of metaphysics against physics this would seem to be the most radical, and of all concessions of physics to metaphysics the acceptance of this position by physicists would seem to be the least capable of showing any scientific plausibility. To commend this rejection of the evidence of phenomena, all of which testify to the perfectly distinct nature of mind and matter, Mr. Spencer avoids calling either of them by any name implying that it is a substance, and substitutes for both a name that describes not any substance, but only a *mode of operation* possible in any substances. He calls mind and matter "proximate activities." Now, nothing is an activity but activity itself; for the term is merely the abstract name for agility in operation, leaving the operating substance unmentioned—indeed, absolutely

indifferent. When to the phrase "proximate activities" we attach such real meanings as it admits of, they are: rates of motion nearly equal, or modes of motion nearly identical, or two pieces of matter in motion whereof the forces are nearly equal. Such are things with which science can deal, and their activities admit of being formulated. But when metaphysics attempt to shape physics by phrases, "proximate activities" is not a bad one. In the penumbra of science are always floating many guesses, hypotheses, and inchoate conceptions, out of which metaphysicians in all ages have concocted facts, which "facts" physicists often accept provisionally with great facility.

Left to himself, however, no man of science ever thinks of treating as virtually identical two objects having phenomena essentially diverse—diverse even in kind; two objects of which the one is ponderable and not the other, one measurable and not the other, and one capable of being dissolved, reconstituted, or recombined, while the other is not capable of any of these processes. Two such objects might be "proximate," as blood and bones are, but to put upon that topical metaphor the meaning of scientifically alike is what no man of science would stand. Let us suppose the two objects in question to be a despatch just written by a minister of state and another he will write immediately. In the world

of realities the latter may be a factor much more important than the former. The former may have increased the pay of a Consul; the latter may be the bringing on of a war. Now, the written despatch and the unwritten one are proximate objects; but to physical science the difference between them is wide as that between the knowable and the unknowable. The first has already come within the purview of observation; the second has not, except the observation of the mind which has conceived it, and which already knows all about it, at least all that is essential. It is already an object of thought, but not yet an object of sense; and it is not an object of thought to any mortal but the author of it: the subject and the object being one, which is not the "annihilation of both," but the activity of both. So long as the minister pleases, physical science is helpless as to analysing his despatch. It has neither atom nor molecule; is neither solid nor liquid, not even gas; its measure, weight, and consistency are things non-existent; it is to one man a perfectly known reality without bodily parts, and to all other men a reality absolutely unknowable. If in that state of things the man dies, it remains unknown and unknowable all their days to every one of those who lived while it also lived in the minister's imagination and intention.

When he wills to produce it, he cannot do so by

a word To give it a body he must employ materials produced by others, which they fashioned from material produced again by others, and so on till you come to material produced by a Hand Unseen, which no mortal could produce. Having once given to his thoughts a body, the minister can submit his despatch to physical science; but not till then. A true man of science will soon dismiss it; the paper, the ink, the spaces, the curves, right lines, points, and dimensions are not much to investigate; but the mongrel-metaphysician will argue that these are really all you can know, and that the despatch is "nothing but" so much paper, so much ink, so many lines, and so forth. Let them trifle to satiety: there is in the thing a silent force to shake two empires; and that force is not visible to the eye of physical science, but visible at once to the eye of mind, so soon as mind has retranslated the scratches upon paper back into the statesman's thoughts.

It will not be disputed that in their phenomena the two things—Mind and Matter—are more widely different from one another than any two forms of matter or any two modes of motion. No one will attempt to override phenomena who does not believe that they are disguises, and that he by an inner light can tell better than they inform him. Few real men of science saunter in such gloaming. In Positivists it is utterly inconsistent to disregard

phenomena; but that is what they are compelled to do in order to treat of mind and matter on the same principles. In an Agnostic of Mr. Spencer's school, to disregard them is not inconsistent, but is the logical issue of the doctrine of illusion and disguise. So it is with a Pantheist proper. But whoever discredits the testimony of phenomena, be it by a doctrine teaching that they are illusive, or be it by practice assuming some such doctrine as proved, takes ground which would unsettle all the methods of physical science. Now, it is manifest that phenomena are not indices of reality, but are disguises indeed, if mind and matter are not two contrasting substances, incapable of being treated on one and the same principle. They differ in all aspects in which they are presented to us; and the attempt to slur over that difference by such phrases as "proximate activities," if adroit, is vain. Mr. Spencer has a sentence which might be stamped across page after page of his books, like the mark of an inquisitor sealing their invalidity: "Rational philosophy cannot ignore those broad distinctions which the general sense of mankind has established."¹ If this may be said as to the attempt to assimilate crystallized bodies with life, how much more strongly does it apply to the attempt to identify mind and matter?

¹ *First Prin.*, § 56.

That they are two, and that all experience and analogy point to the conclusion that matter is the work of mind and not mind the product of matter, we fearlessly assert; feeling that every phenomenon within us and without us testifies that so it must be. Of the recognition of their distinctness in point of nature, even Mr. Spencer cannot free his sentences. Concluding his singular speculations on the "sub-

stance of mind," he asks: "Can the oscillations of a molecule be represented in consciousness side by side with a nervous shock, and the two be recognized as one?" To me consciousness of the oscillations of a molecule and of a shock in nerves would be consciousness of the same thing, first in the general, and next in a particular case. This is said, of course, on the supposition that a "nervous shock" means a shock in nerves. Should one be wrong, should it deliberately mean not a shock in nerves, but a state of mind ensuing upon consciousness that the nerves have been shocked, it would mean what differs from a nervous shock as much as in a collision at sea the shock in the hull of the ship differs from the shock in the mind of a passenger.

How does Mr. Spencer answer his own question as to whether an oscillation of a molecule and a state of mind (which, to suit his psychology, he calls a nervous shock) can be recognized as one? He says:

“No effort enables us to assimilate them.” It is far stronger than saying, We cannot recognize them as one; if we cannot even say that they are alike. The fact is, we cannot help assimilating an oscillation of a molecule and a shock of a nerve, if that had been what was meant. But note how the reasoning proceeds: “That a unit of feeling has nothing in common with a unit of motion, becomes more than ever manifest when we bring the two into juxtaposition.” Here we learn that a nervous shock and “a unit of feeling” are interchangeable terms. The question is, *more suo*, begged. It is assumed, and has been all along, that the mind of the passenger and the frame of the ship are identical. Yet if you shock every cord in the rigging ten times per second for a day, not one unit of feeling will result. The capacity of feeling must first be present, ere any shock, or anything will call feeling into play. Motion in a senseless substance is mere motion; motion in an animated substance is motion that may either excite feeling or else express it.

Yet, though Mr. Spencer treats feeling simply as a shock in the nerves, he plainly says it is not motion. If the unit of feeling be what he calls it, a nervous shock, it is motion. But the inconsistency is pushed to the length of saying that the unit of feeling and the unit of motion have *nothing in common*. This merely represents the underlying

facts of nature, which are thus pushed up in veins through Mr. Spencer's overlying theories. Feeling is something which begins after the nerves have had their shock, just as music begins after the chords of a piano have had theirs. Feeling of a sensation is something which sets a mind, even that of an animal, to look for a cause outside of its own body. That looking for a cause is instantaneous, and is often instantaneously followed by perception of the cause, and by an emotion affecting that cause according as the feeling traced to it has been pleasurable or the reverse. A feeling and a motion are so different that, while a motion, no matter how infinitesimally slight or how tremendously forcible, can never originate feeling except by striking upon the organs of a mind—cannot do it by impact on any other body in earth, or sea, or air,—a feeling, on the contrary, can originate motion, suspend it, keep it suspended, and launch it at a given moment after such suspense. "Nothing in common"—that goes too far. They have undoubtedly some things in common; but if they had fifty, it would not alter the fact that as between themselves they are things essentially different, far more different than glass and gutta percha.

After declaring feeling and motion to have nothing in common, Mr. Spencer glances at the essential

point now before us, as to whether mind or matter is the superior, and which of them is the more likely

*Easier to
Think
that All is
Mind
than that
All is
Matter.*

to have precedence of the other and to be its author. Of course the question does not, to him, come in that form; for with him it is rather assumed that, though feeling in the one and motion in the other have "nothing in common," they are in reality affections of one and the same substance. He says: "Were we compelled to choose between the alternatives of translating mental phenomena into physical phenomena, or of translating physical phenomena into mental phenomena, the latter alternative would seem the more acceptable of the two."¹ Who is to be the translator? Will crystals translate memory into some "physical phenomenon," or will tin translate the visions of Bunyan the tinker into metal? "Translate" in such a case is a metaphor so inapplicable that the marvel is how physicists, instead of taking it up as if it meant something intelligible, should not let it alone as fancy playing truant in metaphysics. All translating is the act of a *mind* rendering into fresh symbols another act of mind. They who talk of telegraphs *translating* may excuse themselves, if mere pupils, by Mr. Spencer's usage in this case and others; but, if they speak as physicists, they

¹ *Prin. of Psychology*, § 63.

talk unintelligible metaphors instead of stating facts. The telegraph no more translates than the operator transmits motion from shore to shore. It transmits motion, and that is all. The acme of imperception seems to be reached when an iron plate is spoken of as translating, as we have it when we are called to admire "the ability of a *mere* iron plate [italics mine] to take up the complicated aërial vibrations produced by articulated speech, which, *translated* into multitudinous and varied electric pulses, are *retranslated* a thousand miles off by another electric plate, and again heard as articulate speech."¹ The speaker by his will and at his will impresses motions on the air. These any animal ear interprets into sounds, any human ear into speech, while any ear of one knowing the language spoken *translates* them into words. An iron plate receives the motions from the air, modifies them and passes them to a wire, but in all the thousand miles is no interpretation and no translation. The thousand miles traversed, there is no interpretation or translation, if nothing is there but a *mere iron plate*. It does as it cannot help doing—pulses with the pulsing of the wire, and transmits the pulsations to the air. If a human ear is at the spot, and human attention lent, then, and only then, are the pulsations translated into speech. Do physicists

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 83, p. 10.

mean to let metaphysics of this quality mar their noble pursuits?

You cannot put either memory or prevision into a material form, or even reach them by any material test. As to "translating," say, the tides, or the seasons, or sunshine, or frost, into states of mind, all that can be meant is, making them states of mind. The fancy of our being compelled to turn changes in matter into states of mind on the one hand, or states of mind into changes in matter on the other, is entertaining; but that is all.

What is meant by saying that one of these imaginary translations would be "more acceptable" than the other, is made plain when two pages later we read: "Of the two it seems easier to translate so-called Matter into so-called Spirit, than to translate so-called Spirit into so-called Matter." The latter of the two, Mr. Spencer confesses to be "wholly impossible." Yet he shows how his own strange metaphor fills his "environment": "No translation can carry us beyond our symbols." Here the idea of actually passing the same thoughts from one set of symbols into another is clearly dominant. When we pass this thought, "Matter is the product of Mind," from English into French, we are *carried beyond* our English symbols into an entirely new set, each word in the translation being different from that in the original. We leave

our first set of symbols behind ; but they are none the worse, being as good in quantity and quality as they were before. The translation leaves the thought symbolized by them what it was, and leaves the symbols themselves what they were. All it does is to embody in a totally different set of symbols an exact reproduction of the thought. So all talk of turning so-called mind into so-called matter, or *vice versa*, under cover of such a metaphor as translating, is mere fancy.

Still, under this mere fancy lies the important admission that you cannot possibly "translate" mind into matter, and that "it seems easier" to translate matter into mind. What compels this admission is, in plain English, that you cannot account for mind, either human or Divine, by matter, and that you can account for matter by a Divine Mind, just as you can account for numberless phenomena of matter by human mind, and for that human mind by the same Divine one.

The Berkeleyan notion of matter being the creature of human ideas, existing only as those ideas give it existence, is acceptable to many who are far from being Spiritualists, though they are Idealists, in some sort of way, like Stuart Mill, who says it makes no difference : everything goes on as if matter were real. If it does, it is because matter is real. But our point here is this : that a man who can conceive of the

matter of earth, moon, sun, stars, and all the inter-spaces as being a creation of the human mind by mere ideal force, and who finds it difficult to believe in an Infinite Mind conceiving all these, in an Eternal Mind existing before any of these, in an Almighty Mind able to give being to all these, is a marvel of mental formation. That the ideas of a man should be capable of creating underfoot and overhead "permanent possibilities" of sensation, such as represent a universe, and that the ideas of every separate man should be capable of creating that universe identical in its features, and yet that the Mind of the Lord God Omnipotent should be unable to make anything except out of materials already pre-existing, might seem to be an exaggerated case of *reductio ad absurdum*. To me it is so: a greater stretch of intellectual inconsistency I can hardly conceive of. From this inconsistency Berkeley, of course, was free. To him, if matter was the creation of ideas, they were the operation of a mind, which was itself the creature of an Infinite Creator.

Our present point as to this idealistic theory is chiefly this: that the conception of mind as creating matter is here preserved and reproduced, but lowered from that of a mind of Infinite Glories to that of a mind of circumscribed ability; and the conception of the act is lowered from an actual production to some shadow of production, a shadow, however, in-

volving an equivalent power and perfectly harmonious effect in the case of billions of minds liable to err. As it is confessed that self-existence must be recognized somewhere, we say it cannot in reason be recognized in matter, cannot in reason be recognized in human mind, but can in reason be recognized in a Divine Mind. Not only can it reasonably be there recognized, but, seeing that all things are explained by that supposition, and not by any other, reason is coerced to flee into the refuge of the ever-blessed Mind Eternal.

We repeat: The supposition of an Eternal Nothing which produced both Mind and Matter, is unbelievable and inconceivable. The supposition of Eternal Matter which produced mind, is unbelievable. The supposition of an Eternal Mind which produced both matter and finite minds, is conceivable and believable, accredited to reason by infinite weight of probability.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. SPENCER'S REPLACEMENT OF GOD.

I.—*The Manner of Replacement.*

IN a passage elicited by the attack upon him from the Positivists, Mr. Spencer clearly indicates the result as to faith and religion which he anticipates from his own labours and from "science." The importance of this utterance warrants its being italicised: "*The gradual replacement of a Power allied to humanity in certain traits, by a Power which we cannot say is thus allied, leaves unchanged certain of the sentiments comprehended under the name religious.*"¹ That simply means that when the living God shall be replaced by the Absolute Unknowable, and when the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ shall vanish away, there will remain some of the feelings now called religious—say, somewhat of awe and of a sense of mystery in the presence of nature. This defines the faith and hope of the Agnostic, and is in perfect keeping with the whole tenor of Mr. Spencer's works. It is, however, the most

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 89, p. 25.

explicit statement I remember of his, so far emulating Comte as to aim at replacing the Almighty.

It is no fault of Mr. Spencer if some have taken him for a kind of outside auxiliary to the Christian argument; and if some have even gone so far as to insinuate that he veils over his faith in a Creator to save philosophical consistency. His position throughout is consistent, and his manner frankness itself. Not a trace of "Reserve" can with any fairness be imputed to him. The misconception is, doubtless, owing in part to the wonderful language in which his critical passages are couched, those on the interpretation of which that of all the rest depends; in part also to the fact that in him the animosity to the very idea of God often shown by Atheists, and conspicuous in Comte, is entirely absent, as is also the flippancy of other teachers of disbelief. In addition to this, the confessed victory on the field of morals which was ceded to the religion of Christ by Positivism is not less traceable in his writings, if less referred to. To crown all, in his conflict with Positivism, several of his positions are restated in a manner which, to ordinary men, supplied ample data for a Theistic conclusion—in fact, rendered it difficult for a mind, really free, to arrest itself short of such a conclusion.

All this notwithstanding, the attack serenely opened upon all religion except his own remnant, in

the paper *Religion a Retrospect and a Prospect*, was resolutely and carefully calculated. So formidable, indeed, did the portion of it bearing upon *No Repentance* in Theism appear to Mr. Harrison that, *Mr. Spencer.* as will be remembered, he thought theology could hardly "rally for another bout." Theology with him means faith in God ; and that stubborn vitality, as it might be called by our dealers in abstractions, is, up to the present moment, much the better for the beating. As extremes meet, Mr. Harrison so far joined those Christians who fancied that Mr. Spencer was moving on their side as to speak of the joy over one philosopher repenting. But there was no repentance ; although there was unconscious yielding of ground, to such an extent as was fatal to Atheism, and even to Pantheism, a system more allied to his own, though the affinity is on the surface rather than in the depths.

His drift was not open to misapprehension. One Power was to be replaced, and another to be inaugurated. The one to be replaced was *He Represents Divine Attributes as Human.* a Power allied to Humanity as to certain traits ; and the one which was to take its place could not be said to possess any such traits. A religion including a Faith, a system of worship, and a code of morals was to be replaced by "certain of the sentiments comprehended under the name religious." That was all, and that was everything.

No room was left for doubt as to what were those attributes ascribed to God which were to disappear. In the sentence next to the one already quoted they are summed up thus: "Such human attributes as emotion, will, and intelligence." Thus Mr. Spencer shows that he imagines Theists to be people who think that the will of God is human will, His intelligence human intelligence, His feeling human feeling! But Theists are those who do not believe that God was made in the image of man, but that, on the contrary, man was made in the image of God. This being so, they could no more conceive of the attributes of their adorable Creator as human attributes than, on the other hand, they could conceive of those of a worm as human—nay, no more than they could conceive of human feeling, will, and thought as being divine. What they are not able to conceive is that the Universe is destitute of any Being at its head who is capable of thought, feeling, and action; or that in such a Being, Head and Origin of such a Universe, thought, feeling, and action are not high above those of man, and above his best conceptions of them, as the heavens are high above the earth. In the inability to form any such conceptions they are confirmed with a tenfold confirmation by the ponderous labours of the Agnostic evolver and their spectral results. But when Christians find that even Agnostics speak of the Unknowable as a Power, they do not hold them

bound to count It a human power, merely on the ground that power is an attribute also of man. And when Agnostics speak of It as Energy, Christians do not hold them bound to reckon It as nervous energy, although they might claim some title to do so, owing to the large language about "the universal law of nervous action." Even when the Unknowable is called a Stream, Christians do not hold Agnostics bound to conceive of it as liquid, running on solids, and banked in by solids.

When one is naive enough in faith to accept the idea that man's conception of God comes from ghosts, and ghosts from dreams, which in turn come of indigestion; and to believe that the scientific representative of the primæval man is to be found in those generations of the race furthest removed in time from our original progenitors, and in those tribes which are furthest removed in space from the original centres, he may well assume that men believing in an Infinite and Eternal Spirit, Maker, Preserver, Redeemer and Judge of all, ascribe to Him the thoughts, and feeling, and will of weak human kind; and he who so totally misreads the thoughts and faith of man, his fellow, may well open his campaign as one tranquilly coming to see and conquer.

In passing, we may say that, as to the ghost theory of Mr. Spencer, and his methods of sustaining that the origin of all religion is explained by it, Mr. Harrison

slashes it to tatters, although, as a good Comtist, himself hampered by the fundamental error of regarding the *modern* savage at the furthest point of the circumference as the type of the primæval man at the centre—an error of which even our modern anthropologists are beginning to feel shy, and on which the arguments of Max Müller, the Duke of Argyll, and others press with increasing weight.

II.—*His Relation to Pantheism.*

It is only the deprivation of thought, feeling, and action in the Unknowable that prevents one from ranking Mr. Spencer as a Pantheist. Pantheism always has, somewhere in the background—asleep it may be, but given to periodical awaking—a Being who thinks, feels, and acts. Without such a feature it would not be entitled to be called Theism of any shade; and this is the very feature which is ostentatiously rejected by Mr. Spencer: here are the traits allied to humanity, “the human attributes.” So he keeps the *Pan* and rejects the *Theos*—rejects all that makes the difference between the living and the lifeless. Life, even in the lowest animated forms, always includes power of thought, feeling, and action, just as in all organic forms it includes power of self-increase, self-adjustment, self-repair, and self-multiplication, given certain conditions in the surroundings. The last named attributes, tied down to union with a

material frame, are not mentionable in any connection with such ideas as infinite, or eternal, or transcending sense. Therefore, whether it be vegetable life or animal life, the Unknowable cannot have it. The highest attributes, the mental and spiritual, are those expressly marked out as being such that we cannot say it has any of them. So this mammoth lies all athwart the Universe, a log of lifeless infinity and mindless eternity, yet the fountain of all life and mind ; like Banquo, it begets Kings, but is not one. In thus excluding mind and spirit from his conception of the First Cause, the Agnostic goes down considerably below the Pantheist. His system is not All-God, but All-force ; for in it the idea of Force replaces the ancient Fate, as lying behind worlds, men, mind, gods, and all things. These are but manifestations of it, but operations of it, and so forth, and every other conception of them is only illusory. Thus the Agnostic system is one suspended between proper materialism and true Pantheism. It is so far *Retrogressive Religion* that it goes back to that of the Hindus, and, in point of the conception of the First Cause, goes down below it.

While Mr. Spencer refuses to follow Pantheism in making man and all his attributes nothing but the operation of the divine nature and will, and for himself recognises no divine mind or will, he does, instead of these, recognize a human conception of them,

to which conception no objective reality answers *Lower than* any more than to that of Fairyland. Into *Pantheism*. what curious conclusions this drags him appears in the following: "The conception of a divine will derived from that of the human will, involves, like it, localization in space and time."¹ Theists do not conceive of a God localized in space, or limited in time: which probably they would do were the conception of God derived from that of man.

A familiar idea of Mr. Spencer is that, in the Bible, the early conception of God is that of One who is a sort of man, from which conception progressive civilization files away the human elements, and brings into view those higher ones displayed in the later Scriptures. This is the reverse of what Arabs and Jews, following history, charge as against Christianity, affirming that by it are imported into the conception of God human elements unknown to the ancient Seers. Both Arab and Jew know that the first lines of Genesis express a conception of superhuman power and true Godhead never afterwards surpassed, and that this strain is taken up and sustained in all subsequent Scripture. The fact that the Most High can appear, can speak, can meet with man in a manner suited to every changing state of his, is, with them, no reason for localizing Him or reducing Him

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 83, p. 7.

to our scale. On the contrary, it is evidence that in Him all powers unite, and that to Him all places are nigh at hand. The Book of Job and the most ancient Psalms are before the world. On no rocks are any traces more distinct than are upon this poetry of the early dawn the traces of a Known God far above all human thought. On the other hand, the Book of Revelation, the last in the Bible, and the Gospel of St. John, probably the latest writing in it, abound with human elements, the centre of them being the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III.—*The Negative and Positive Aspects of the Unknowable.*

It is hard to reconcile in Mr. Spencer's teaching the negative and positive aspects of the Ultimate Cause, as he prefers calling the First Cause. For that Cause is It, not He; is no Person. In the second place, It has no traits that can be said to be allied with human ones. In the third place, It has no consciousness. In the fourth place, It does not design, but operates after the manner, say, of a growing bank of coral. In the fifth place, It is unknown, unknowable, inconceivable, inscrutable. Finally, It is an Omnipresent Power to which no attributes can be ascribed.

No attributes, yet omnipresent! No attributes, yet a Power! Here reason seems to have done.

Of this unascertained Something Mr. Harrison says that it is "impersonal, unconscious, unthinking, and unthinkable"; while Sir James Stephen calls it a barren abstraction. Whatever else it is, it is neither God nor man. When Mr. Spencer is on his defence, his struggles to escape from the effect of these negations have no other result than that of working him into positions impossible to be held except on the ground of faith in a Living God. It is easy to retort on the Positivists, and show what a poor and ugly simulacrum is theirs. It is easy to turn off as inapplicable the remark of Sir James Stephen that the Unknowable is "like a gigantic soap-bubble, not burst but blown thinner and thinner, till it becomes absolutely imperceptible." It is easy, in like manner, to treat as inapplicable Mr. Harrison's assertion that "to make a religion out of the Unknowable is far more extravagant than to make it out of the equator." But it is impossible to deny that anything smitten with all the above negations is placed beyond any possibility of being trusted, loved, or adored.

As to making a religion out of the equator, it, too, on Agnostic principles, is unknowable. They tell me I crossed it four times, but never did I see a sign of it. It "transcends sense." It is not visible, tangible, or audible. It is easy to show that in Mr. Spencer's sense, what he calls the *true* sense, it is

inconceivable. So with the orbit of the earth ; it likewise transcends sense, but it is incapable of being made the object of a religion.

It may seem incredible that the two terms "transcending perception" and "supernatural" should be held for synonymous. Mark the following:

Is What held for synonymous. Mark the following:
Transcends "Developing man has thoughts about
Sense existences which he regards as usually
Supernatural? intangible, inaudible, invisible ; and yet which he regards as operative upon him. What suggests this notion of agencies transcending perception? How do these ideas concerning the supernatural evolve out of the natural?"¹ Of course the procedure of begging the question is adopted here as elsewhere. The idea of the supernatural *is* evolved out of the natural, and there is no argument about it! But our point is, that in the above passage the terms "being invisible" and "transcending perception" are both treated as equivalent to "supernatural." Yet our ideas of agents transcending perception are often ideas of things perfectly natural. Such agents are all those which have not form and colour to render them visible, have not sound to render them audible, and have not resisting surface to make them tangible. What "developing man," say when in embryo, does or does not think, I cannot tell ; but developed man never does think that, merely because an object

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 83, p. 1.

is imperceptible, it is supernatural. He has thoughts about gravitation as a force which "is operative upon him," a force which, however, is more than usually—invariably—invisible, intangible, inaudible; but he takes it to be a creature, filling its appointed place. He has thoughts about the earth's motion in its orbit as operative upon him, yet that motion is invisible, inaudible, intangible, but nevertheless natural. In things physical, negation of perceptibility does not involve the negation of either force, or motion. In fact, it does not involve the negation of materiality. Confounding things perceptible through sense with all things natural is like confounding rocks with all matter; and confounding all things transcending perception with things supernatural, is like confounding latent heat with ether.

It is only a small part of the sum total of matter, force, and motion included in the Universe of which sense is meant to take knowledge. To sight, it is only the denser bodies that are manifested, and of them usually no more than the surface. Many of the great powers of the physical world do not ordinarily appear to any of the senses, but move in silence, leaving their existence and attributes to be traced out by reason. Of things perceptible through sense, one alone comes from afar—light; and of its offices one of the most noteworthy is to make us aware of how small is that portion of

the physical agents "operative upon us" which ever do appear to sense.

Sensible effects of causes which are not sensible, visible effects of causes invisible, are among the earliest experiences of infancy and the most frequently repeated experiences of life. Like many others, Mr. Spencer assumes that our earliest ideas of force, our fundamental ones, are derived from our sense of the resistance offered by external bodies to our will. This is an experience which, in nature, comes later than the sense of pressure and constraint exerted upon us without or against our will by external forces, often unseen, sometimes invisible—pressure from hands unseen, from bandages unseen; contact of water unseen; lifting and removal of the whole person by arms unseen, and many other forms of action upon us from centres of force, often either unseen or invisible. These are in infancy the constant experience of night and the frequent experience of day, and constitute our earliest lessons of force.

As we grow up, every shower that falls is a visible effect of an invisible cause, and its force is not mere resistance to our effort, but a direct assault upon our person, from a centre of force totally independent of us. In this case succeeding time does not convert the invisible cause into a visible one; as it does

in respect of many of the resistless forces "operative upon us" in infancy. A visible effect of a visible cause is every hailstone, every cloud that sails across our sky, every wind that bends the trees, and every shooting star. When out of the brown earth spring the green blades, and out of the stalk the flowers blow, childhood learns from the visible effect to enquire after the invisible cause: "What makes the grass grow?" "What makes the buds come?"

When nature hides an object from all the senses, that fact does not determine whether the object is human, infra-human, or superhuman—not even whether it is corporeal or incorporeal. Yet it is not once but repeatedly that Mr. Spencer assumes "imperceptible" to be equivalent to "supernatural." "That which lies beyond the sphere of sense" ¹ is an ordinary designation for either his own Unknowable or our God. He varies this by the phrase "transcending perception," which I understand to mean not lying beyond the sphere of perception, but passing from within it to beyond it. Ether we might say "lies beyond" the sphere of sense, sunlight transcends it. Nature, for all an Agnostic sees, might never have given to us a lesson on the theme that we are not mere creatures of sense, but creatures to whom senses are only instruments of communication between one and another, and instruments of observation on bodies without us,

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 93, p. 832.

by use of which the man within acquires data for reason to proceed upon. That, however, is a lesson which she begins over again every morning, and renews every evening; a lesson on which she solemnly insists in the dark and silent night; one which she illuminates by the twinkling points which to feeble sense represent worlds.

IV.—*Positive Aspect of the Unknowable.*

Viewed only upon the negative side, the Unknowable would be merely an inconceivable variety of nothingness; but when viewed also on the positive side, it becomes an incredible whirl of contradictory somethings. Even Mr. Harrison tacitly admits that it is not all negation, calling it "a sort of a something about which we can know nothing." But, in fact, the Absolute Unknowable becomes the sum total of powers ever acting. It is "Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed." It is "the substratum at once of material and mental existence." It is the "Power manifested throughout the universe distinguished as material, [and] is the same power which in ourselves wells up in the form of consciousness." It is "the ultimate Reality, the sole existence; all things present to consciousness being but shows of it." It is "the All-Being," "the Ultimate Cause from which Humanity, individually and as a whole, in common

with all other things, has proceeded." It is "the Unknown Cause of which the entire Cosmos is a manifestation." It is "that great stream of Creative Power, unlimited in Space and Time, of which Humanity is a transitory product." It is "that Ultimate Existence of which it [humanity] is but one form out of multitudes—an Ultimate Existence which was manifested in infinitely-varied ways before Humanity arose, and will be manifested in infinitely-varied other ways when Humanity has ceased to be."

No wonder that, reading all this, persons who have not been made cautious by familiarity with the subtleties of Pantheism, should say: Here all is said that need be said as the basis of faith in a personal God. And when Pantheism proper has passed through the fining pots of European metaphysics, and has then been blended with the physical sciences, the amount of caution necessary in judging of what is meant by what seems to be said is not inconsiderable. One who has spent much time over writings of such an origin will scarcely be surprised at any combination of negatives and affirmatives, or at any blend of facts and hypotheses. In dealing with Mr. Spencer there is always one comfort: he emits his negations and affirmations as roundly as if each was self-adjusting, taking it for granted that they will assort themselves in the intellects of others as they have miraculously done in his own.

One is permitted to pause before attempting to define Mr. Spencer's Unascertained Something, of whose existence we are more certain than of any other existence; his Power without attributes; his Substratum of material existence on which only Nothingness rests; his Substratum of mental existence, in ascribing to which such attributes as emotion, will, intelligence, we are using words which when thus applied have no corresponding ideas; his Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed, and from which nothing is separate; his Phenomena, each and all of which are Eternal Energy and yet are All-Nothingness; his Unconscious Agency, of which conscious humanity is a product; his Unconscious Substance, of which conscious humanity is a form; his Manifestations, when there is only a single substance to manifest and be manifested; his Disguises, when there is only a single thing to disguise itself and be imposed upon; his Creative Power, which does not act, think, or will, and yet stands to our general conception of things in substantially the same relation as does the Creative Power asserted in theology; his Unknowable, which is "a necessary datum of every thought," which "has among our beliefs the highest validity of any," which is "a moral deliverance of consciousness."

Putting all these positives into juxtaposition with all the negatives, we arrive at only one perfectly clear idea, namely, that at every moment, no matter how much accumulates to obscure it, the existence of an Eternal and Omnipotent Creator keeps cropping up through all. The feeling which in point of clearness comes next to this is that, on even the methods of making definitions which Mr. Spencer adopts, none can be made of this Thing. Taking its lowest term, it is Nothing; taking its highest term, it is Everything. If we attempt to draw a line from the one to the other and fix a point half-way, Mr. Spencer stops us short by showing that there is no half-way from Nothing to Anything; that the distance between them is infinite.

That is my feeling. Sir James Stephen says: "Mr. Spencer's conclusion appears to me to have no meaning at all. It is so abstract that it asserts nothing." It has a meaning, but, what with negative effacing positive, and with positive outfacing negative, the meaning results in an image of mud. Instead of the conclusion asserting nothing, it asserts almost everything, yea and nay, except the intelligible thing. If by assert Sir James means affirm—though it is hard to think of him as speaking as if the man who asserts, Not guilty, did not as much assert as if he said, Guilty—then it does affirm a great deal. But the reason given, that it does not assert anything because it is

too abstract, is not valid. A concrete assertion asserts of only a single object, and may of it assert much or little. An abstract assertion asserts of a whole class of objects, and may assert what is much or little. For instance, if we say Mr. Justice Stephen is an entity in a wig, that is concrete, and cannot apply to any object on earth but one. If we say, an English judge is an entity in a wig, that is so far abstract that it does not denote any particular judge, but the whole class; yet just as much is here asserted of every member of that class as was in the concrete case asserted of only a single member. The description given by Sir James Stephen of the method by which Mr. Spencer's creation of the Unknowable is effected is exquisite, and applies just as well to his creations of beings in general and their organs: "He works his words about this way and that, he accounts with part for ghosts and dreams, and the residue thereof he maketh a God, and saith Aha, I am wise, I have seen the truth." The positive part of the structure is for Sir James, "nothing but a series of metaphors built upon one another, and ending where they began."

*Mr. Spencer's
Method
of Making
Things.*

Mr. Harrison, in sore distress on finding that the ground on which he had long firmly rested, "accepting Mr. Spencer's teaching," is beginning to heave with the hidden force of a Creator God, cries

out: "It comes to this: Mr. Spencer says to the Theologians, 'I cannot allow you to speak of a First Cause, or a Creator, or an All-Being, or an Absolute Existence, because you mean something intelligible and conceivable by these terms, and I tell you that they stand for ideas that are unthinkable and inconceivable. But,' he adds, 'I have a perfect right to talk of an Ultimate Cause and a Creative Power, and an Absolute Existence and an All-Being, because I mean nothing by these terms—at least, nothing that can be either thought of or conceived of, and I know that I am not talking of anything intelligible or conceivable. That is the faith of an Agnostic, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.'" The last phrase is as pure burlesque as when he says we might sooner think that we were reading in *Alice in Wonderland* than in a *Synthetic Philosophy*, or as when he says that it is only "the slip-slop of the theologians." As to a man being saved, there is not for either Mr. Spencer or Mr. Harrison any man to be saved, only an animated machine which falls to pieces when the steam is blown off, and can never rejoice or sorrow any more.

The earnestness with which Mr. Harrison's charge of preaching the Creator is combated throws light on the real position of our philosopher. He informs us that, where we now read the words "from which all things proceed," he originally wrote "were created

and sustained." This he erased, "because the ideas associated with these words might mislead." Words are prone to associate themselves with their ordinary meanings. Mr. Spencer still feels that the words in question would not have exceeded his thought "in the sense I used them," which was, of course, a private sense. He complains that Mr. Harrison misrepresented him, which he no doubt did ; but because Mr. Spencer's language beguiled him. "The Inscrutable Existence manifested through phenomena stands towards our general conception of things in substantially the same relation as does the creative power asserted in theology." ¹ Used in English, these words are as clear as day, and any one would cry, This *is* the Creator ; but, used in a sense private to an individual, what they might mean who could tell ? "Substantially the same" is an expression that leaves room only for differences of form, not of substance ; and a man's thoughts have already acquired an inveterate habit of "working his words this way and that" before he could think in such words when he really meant "essentially different." Any one who, on the strength of these words, had averred that Mr. Spencer renounced the struggle against "theology," and tacitly requested leave to bury his dead, would have had much excuse. On the contrary, any one who, in the face of the same

¹*Nineteenth Century*, No. 93, p. 832.

words, had said: He does not mean Theism, but something below Pantheism, would have passed for unreasonably suspicious.

He is careful, however, to show that what he did mean was that. He feels aggrieved at the imputation of belief in a Creator. He tells why he erased the misleading phrase, and I italicize his explanation: *because it might suggest the ordinary idea of a creating power separate from the created thing.* No doubt it might. The words, however much they had been "worked about," were, after all, created things separate from the creating mind, and carried their own character with them. Their nature was to suggest the ordinary idea, and that was what they would do. But the fact that in the writer's mind there had been no thing ever created, no existence "apart" from the All-Being, no "product" which was anything but the producer in a given form, no "proceeding" which ever passed out of the centre of that whence it proceeded; the fact that not anything in earth below or heaven above could say to anything else: "Thou hast made us and not we ourselves"; the fact that in his mind all things could say to all other things, if they only knew it: "You and we are not different, but one," rendered to him such words uncandid; and, exquisitely odd as is Mr. Spencer's dialect, when he does not speak plain English, want of candour seems foreign to him.

Mr. Harrison is clear that he does not misunderstand

Mr. Spencer ; but he takes the Unknowable to be tantamount to nothing ; whereas clearly it is the Knowable which is tantamount to nothing, and the Unknowable that is tantamount to everything. Mr. Spencer's language had misled the Comtists as much as it had misled unskilled Christians ; but the Comtists had not the excuse of being ignorant of how language could be "worked about this way and that." They, however, had clearly supposed that Spencer's Unknowable was their own Inaccessible under another name. Quoting the expression, "We are not permitted to know—nay, we are not even permitted to conceive—that Reality which is behind the veil of Appearance," Mr. Harrison naturally adds : "Quite so ! on that ground we long rested firmly, accepting Mr. Spencer's teaching."¹ Yet Mr. Spencer never said that what was behind the veil was a chimera, but had always said that it was a Reality. Then came the discovery that, in proportion as Mr. Spencer attempted to compress his iridescent mists into tangible forms, the irrepressible verities of Theism oozed out everywhere and covered all with an imperishable enamel. He himself did not see it ; he was "an external agency." But both Atheist and Theist saw it readily. To the Atheist the disillusion was bitter. Even after it, Mr. Harrison hugs the idea that Mr. Spencer did long ago "finally" tear up poor theology. Yet this is the strain

¹*Nineteenth Century*, No. 91, p. 358.

in which he commemorates the backward movement of Mr. Spencer from the borders of Atheism to the ground that lies only outside of the City of God :

“ Forced, as it seems, to clothe the nakedness of the Unknowable with some shreds of sentiment, Mr. Spencer has given it a positive character, which for every step it advances towards Religion recedes from sound Philosophy. The Unknowable was at first spoken of as an ‘ unthinkable abstraction,’ and so undoubtedly it is. But it finally emerges as the Ultimate Reality, the Ultimate Cause, the All-Being, the Absolute Power, the Unknown Cause, the Inscrutable Existence, the Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed, the Creative Power, ‘ the Infinite and Eternal Energy, by which all things are created and sustained.’ It is ‘ to stand in substantially the same relation towards our general conception of things as does the Creative Power asserted by Theology.’ ‘ It stands towards the Universe, and towards ourselves, in the same relation as an anthropomorphic Creator was supposed to stand, bears a like relation with it, not only to human thought but to human feeling.’ In other words, the Unknowable *is* the Creator ; subject to this, that we cannot assert or deny that he, she, or it, is Person or Being, or can feel, think, or act, or do anything else that we can either know or imagine, or is such that we can ascribe to Him, Her, or It anything whatever within the realm of consciousness.”

V.—*A Self-Evolved Universe, the Agnostic Idea.*

The last sentence shows that the cry, The Unknowable *is* the Creator, though easily accounted for, was

premature. It shows that, in spite of all the affirmatives to which his reason had forced him, Mr. Spencer still clung to the negations he had set out to make good. The true idea of creation—production by fiat—is not to be found in the synthetic philosophy ; and the true idea of a Creator—one who produces by fiat—is far above out of sight. A self-evolved universe is the theory of Mr. Spencer. I do not remember a passage pointing out wherein that differs from a self-created one ; the idea of which is for him inconceivable. An illustration, which he thinks helps us to conceive of a self-evolved one, is that of mist forming in a clear sky. He never intimates what he may mean by such a mist being *self-evolved*. The mist presupposes the existence of water, air, and heat, not to speak of other things. It presupposes the concurrent action of all these—that is, of at least two different worlds, sun and earth. The vapour which was invisible before it condensed into mist had not made ice, had not made heat to turn ice into water, had not made more heat to turn water into steam, had not made air to carry steam aloft, had not made more heat to turn steam into invisible vapour. So far from the mist being self-evolved, it was the result of a change effected by sundry agents external to itself. It was one step in the return process from imperceptible vapour to ice : first steam, next water, next ice. Neither the expanding nor the

condensing side of the process depended on the thing itself. What is self-evolved must find within itself the impulses, the agents, and the materials of its evolution. If the spider could work in a vacuum and beyond the reach of gravitation or heat, we might look on him and his web as a fair example of self-evolution. A self-evolved universe is simply another form of the self-existence of matter. Thus we return to the old point in the circle—Given matter, force, and motion, then we begin.

Now, who gives these three finites? We have seen that finite things cannot be self-originated. But, so far as I remember, among points not raised in Spencer are the questions: *Who Gives Matter, Force, and Motion?* a finite thing ever "give" itself? being given, did it ever sustain itself, independently of other things? and did it ever evolve itself without the aid and contribution of several things? As, in Mr. Spencer, the word evolution means a process of condensation, one is ready to ask, Which side of the alternating process in the case of water is the evolving one,—that by which it passes from invisible vapour downwards to steam, from steam to water, and from water to ice, or that by which it passes from ice upwards to water, from water to steam, and from steam to invisible vapour? Apparently the downward process is Mr. Spencer's evolution.¹ Yet I do

¹ "Evolution, then, is in all cases a change from a more diffused or

not know where the invisible vapour came from if not from ice. If evolution consists in an "integration of matter with a concomitant dissipation of motion," it is a process observable when elderly men grow stout. If dissolution consists in the "integration of motion and dissipation of matter," it is a process observable when young athletes are training. But I must not be tempted into following Mr. Spencer into his scheme of evolution. It is not an integral part of his Agnosticism or Religion, but a related aspect of his cosmic philosophy.¹

VI.—*Relations of Positivism, Pantheism, and Agnosticism.*

The Positivist and the Agnostic theory of the universe seem, on the final analysis, to yield the same result—eternal matter in motion. For the matter, or the motion, or the force which sets the matter

incoherent form, to a more coherent or consolidated form." *First Prin.*, § 56. This does not agree with what is said in an earlier and equally categorical description: "That in which Evolution essentially consists, is the transformation of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous." *First Prin.* § 52. Homogeneous means of one substance, unless when we distinctly speak of forms; heterogeneous of different substances. The one definition makes Evolution condensation; the other makes it the addition of new substances. If it be said that, "transformation of the homogeneous" means changing a single form into several, the language is too loose for criticism. Where only a change of form is meant, transformation is the word. Where a change of kind, it is not the word; and the mixing of contradictory terms renders clear sense impossible.

¹ Mr. Malcolm Guthrie, whose work I had not read till this book was already in the printer's hand, has with care, and great ability, treated of Mr. Spencer's Evolution apart; a very useful course.

in motion, no cause is assigned by Positivism. By Agnosticism they are dealt with as themselves the Ultimate Cause, but only in such a sense as all things are. Over either of these two systems the intellectual superiority of Pantheism is vast. It postulates a Person capable of evolving himself into all forms. The other systems are like a science of geometry commencing with problems, without axiom or definition. In contrast with Pantheism, their postulates are surreptitious, and wholly inadequate to the superstructure. Both the systems are not only *retrogressive religion*, but *downward*, the conceptions being distinctly lower. Mr. Spencer shows that Positivism as a religion contradicts Comte's principle of a progressive advance of man, being itself the reverse of an advance. This argument returns upon Agnosticism with full force. Instead of being an evolution from indefinite to definite, it is a dissolution into the most indefinite conception ever put into print under any serious pretence. Instead of an evolution from homogeneous to heterogeneous, it goes back from a heterogeneous universe, composed of Creator and creature, to what is, in very truth, homogeneous,—more than that, identical, and, withal, indefinite and incoherent. In fact, in pondering over the question what could be properly described, in the language of the famous formula, nothing comes to mind so nearly answering to it as the Agnostic conception

of the Unknowable and its cosmos—"an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity."

All the three systems have as a common feature the exclusion of that relation on which all morals rest, that of a Creature to a Creator. In none of them has matter been produced, and held to rule by a designing maker, and in none has a finite spirit been produced, and held subject to laws. In all the three differences are confined to forms, and all substances are either explicitly or implicitly one. In all the three, nature is unified by the annihilation of free agents, and the reign of sheer necessity. Ancient Fate and the modern Necessity may for practical purposes be taken as one; and thus Paganism, Atheism, and Agnosticism all unify on the principle of One Force; Pantheism, on the principle of One Being; Absolute Predestinarianism, on the principle of One Will; the Bible, on the principle of One Maker, One Preserver, One Supreme Ruler, One Universal Arbiter and Judge.

The systems which do not recognize as real the relation of creature and Creator all have one point at which they coincide and run into one. That is the point where right and wrong touch. They all concur in obliterating the dividing line between those two. Whether it is Pantheism, Atheism, or Agnosticism, actions are held, in spite of appearances, to be

first, links in a chain of necessity which cannot be broken, and secondly, operations, manifestations, or some kind of display of one and the same power. By as much higher as Pantheism is above the other two, in an intellectual point of view, by so much higher is the sanction it gives to every action indifferently. According to it, actions right and wrong, if indeed necessitated, are not so by some blind force or inconceivable necessity, but every being is the same being, every disposition his disposition, every desire his desire, every volition his volition, every deed his deed; and hence all dispositions, volitions, and acts are not merely inevitable for individuals; they are divine. This is the apotheosis of right, and the concurrent apotheosis of wrong.

Positivism, conceiving of all things as existing without a cause, and at the same time conceiving of all actions as evolving themselves under inviolable rule, and therefore in invariable order, presents each of them as equally below the reach of proper law, under the fetters of necessity, but also under its shield. No deed is a breach of order; and thus is furnished a perfect theoretic acquittal for any action whatever. But it is only an acquittal, not an apotheosis. Again, Agnosticism, which takes from Pantheism the idea of one all-constituting and all-performing substance, takes also from materialism

the idea of excluding from that substance thought, feeling, and will, and so makes action, wherever it occurs, not the predestinated fulfilment of a divine purpose, but the inevitable operation of an all-compelling, unconscious cause. Hence, it restores to wrong the complete justification afforded by Atheism, but does not give to it the apotheosis of Pantheism. The last alone lights up all deeds done with the conscious glory of a divine origin. In that respect Absolute Predestinarianism comes nearer to it than either Atheism or Agnosticism.

Viewed in its relation to morals, Pantheism might at first sight appear to be the most thorough

Happy in its destruction of all moral foundations;
Inconsistency but it is happy in its inconsistency.
in Pantheism.

It reserves a contingent future life, making the prospect of it, however, a prospect of pains and penalties. The good man may, it holds, pass from the body into interminable exemption from pain or penalty, but by cessation of separate existence, or, rather, of the illusion which he has held to be such. It thus avoids the idea of the extinction of a spirit, an idea which seems as difficult to us as that of the annihilation of matter. Instead of blank extinction, Pantheism provides absorption in the Divine whole, and consequently some ideal emerging into a higher rather than sinking into a lower nothingness. This doctrine holds over actions an

authority, a judge, and a set of terminable penalties. It is utterly subversive of the fundamental Pantheistic notion of identity, but it is so much nearer than it to what consciousness proclaims, and observation verifies, that it comes closer home to man.

That pale reflex of proper Pantheism which passes in Europe seems to drop out the future life, the transmigrations, the possibility that the *European Pantheism.* swine-man may be made into a real swine, and may hereafter be the scorn of those he now injures. Hence it takes off from wrongdoing the one hideous pall with which proper Pantheism clothes it as a deterrent. For this loss, the surrounding atmosphere, charged with the principles of Christian moral law, imposes upon its followers an unconscious compensation—a compensation which would be lost in a few ages if the Christian foundations of moral law were abandoned.

As to the future life, of course both Positivism and Agnosticism altogether shut it out of view. Man advances to the absolute end of all that can affect his lot. The foundation thus laid for moral law is obvious at a glance. He who is most secure that he shall not have to give any account for his actions is he who has made himself superior to all law, sole judge of rights, and who in taking this man's daughter, that man's wife, and the other man's blood,

*Basis for
Morals
offered by
Positivism
and
Agnosticism.*

sinning, as he does, against no authority over him on earth, sins against none above, and can never in any such case say : "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned." Still, even he may have to reckon with some red hand. The only absolutely perfect security against giving any account would, therefore, be the reward exclusively of him who should succeed in destroying every man, woman, and child, and surviving as the fittest.

VII.—*Relation of Pantheism to Atheism.*

A word or two as to the relation of Pantheism to Atheism may help to clear the general conception. Not a few competent thinkers regard Pantheism as only a variety of Atheism, and the reasons for this view are plausible. Nevertheless, it is rather a case of extremes meeting than of identity. It is with Mind that Pantheism begins, and with a Mind of unlimited powers. This Mind, by its own internal activity, evolves thoughts, acts, forms, motions, colours, all which are but itself in operation. Thus, every effect is assigned to an adequate cause, and every power traced to an adequate centre of force. In doing this, however, creation is merged in the Creator.

In contrast to this, it is with Matter that Atheism

begins, and matter it endows with powers practically infinite, however confronted by evidence that the thing itself is finite. To it Atheism either traces the design of the universe, or denies any design. As it cannot deny thought and design to man, it somehow assigns to matter all the Mind displayed in his researches and productions, or to some sounding vacuum covered with a film of words. Of course, in such a case it is not really in the vacuum that the sound is, but in the cover. It merges the Creator in the creation; the cause in the effect, showing, as has been said, its intellectual inferiority to Pantheism.

The case is not in any wise altered when mind and matter are conceived of as one and the same substance. As we have already seen, both systems concur in annulling the foundations for a true distinction between right and wrong. Their moral precepts are arches over an abyss, and without any keystone. Atheism has no Higher Being to whom man may give account; Pantheism has no Lower Being from whom an account may be exacted. The Atheist looks out upon a Universe without a moral Head; the Pantheist looks out upon a Humanity without a moral reckoning.

Now, as to the relation of Agnosticism to both of these systems, it so far meets Atheism as to leave the Universe without a moral head, and so

far Pantheism as to leave Humanity without any moral reckoning. The difficulty of saying that the Universe is self-created it evades by calling it self-evolved ; and, the difficulty of allowing man to say, I am the Creator, it escapes by holding that there is no personal God capable of saying either, I Am, or Be Thou ! The Absolute Unknown is something, and, whatever that something may be, the same in substance is man, a " form " of it.

Agnosticism distinguishes itself by having no true God at the head of the Universe, and no true Humanity here below. Looking up, we have a mere bulk of " indefinite, incoherent, homogeneity " ; looking around on man and nature, we have a mere Vanity Fair of disguises. Man is full of consciousness, of thought, feeling, and will ; prolific of inventions, projects, philosophies ; but the Substratum of his mental being has none of these, and never was Wise, or Just, or Good. Man as a body is little, and must look up. Man as a spirit is alone. Down he may look on the mind of animals, and there find mental kindred in a small degree ; upwards he cannot look. Loftier spirit, kindred to his spirit, there is none ; the cry of desolation wrung from the Indian chief by the loss of all his tribe is the fitting expression (if we change the terms of flesh to those of spirit) of the state of the friendless waif that floats on the surface of one world,

and in sight of others: To me nor relative nor blood remains—no, not a kindred drop.

Rigorously applied, the principles of Agnosticism would paralyse scientific research, by undermining

*Logical
Result of
Agnosticism.*

confidence in the reality of knowledge. They would paralyse intellectual speculation, by the feeling that things objective being illusory, subjective states must be illusions, and consciousness only an organized series of such illusions. They would paralyse moral principle, and that by two processes, the one a belief that desires and actions are necessitated parts of a resistless process, and the other a disbelief in an all-observing God and an all-searching account. But, happily, it is impossible that its principles should be in practice rigorously applied: they are too repugnant to consciousness on the one hand, and too much conflict with observation on the other. They are too clearly incapable of sustaining any fruitful process, even that of writing a book. They are compelled to borrow help in every attempt at action. Just as Pantheism has to resort to rewards and punishments after death, so has Agnosticism to confess to them here below. As Pantheism, in spite of all its dogmas, assumes that things are things and persons persons, and that in actions lies a difference of moral value, so Agnosticism, in spite of its principles, has to

assume the truthfulness of what it pronounces to be mere disguise, has to think the thoughts it stigmatizes as unthinkable, and has to seek its progress by that antagonism of conflicting wills which on its principles could never arise.

VIII.—*Affirmations of Agnosticism.*

The worst of the matter is that, seeing it cannot in practice apply its negations, Agnosticism does not accept the consequence of its affirmations. Taken as they stand, those affirmations suffice to compel a consequential thinker to say: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." These affirmations give to us a certitude of the existence of a Universal Cause, called the Ultimate Cause. This certitude is affirmed to be the highest of all our certitudes, so transcendently the highest that, "being a necessary datum in every thought, belief in its existence has among our beliefs the highest validity of any."¹ Of what, then, are we certified by this highest of all our certainties?

We are certified first of all of a Cause, so that nothing which had a beginning did begin uncaused.

Confessed Certainties. Now, is it more rational to conceive of this Cause of all as foreknowing effects, or as incapable of foresight? We are certified of a substratum of both material and mental existence:

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 89, p. 6.

is it more reasonable to regard this as being itself the highest Mind, or as being a thing destitute of Mind? We are certified of a Power which in external nature manifests itself as matter, and in man as consciousness : is it more reasonable to regard this power as conscious or as unconscious? We are certified of an Ultimate Reality of which all things present to consciousness are but shows : is it more reasonable to regard that which makes the shows, and by hypothesis makes also the consciousness, as an intelligent being or an unintelligent thing? We are certified that all things proceed from one Creative Power : is it more reasonable to conceive of that Power as destitute of the attributes, one and all, displayed in beings which proceed from it, or to conceive of it as comprising in itself all possible attributes and powers? Again, we are certified that of this Creative Power, Humanity is a product : is it more reasonable to conceive of this source of finite thought and mind, as being itself something like a mindless coral reef, or as being an Infinite and Eternal Spirit, in whom lie all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?

A hint of Mr. Spencer which was long ago alluded to, one which he always forgets in his practical workings, has been recalled by him in the recent controversy. It suffices to bar, for him, the way downward from man to anything below him. Not

between personality, intelligence and something lower, as he holds, the alternative, but between them and some mode of being higher than a Person. With him personality implies a material body, and intelligence is I know not what; for, seeing that its unit is a nervous shock and its whole the aggregate of such units, I must own to a total failure in all attempts to deduce from his elaboration wherewithal to form an idea of what an idea may be. However, I assume that a person is not less than an intelligent agent, and that intelligence is not less than the human understanding.

Surely Mr. Spencer's principles do not require me to fix anything lower than this. Such being the case when to his Infinite and Eternal Energy, his Creative Power, his Ultimate Cause, his Substratum of material and mental existence, he adds, as he is bound to do, some "mode of being" higher than that of a person higher than that of the human intelligence, in the absence of what does he stand? of Eternal Power without Godhead, or of Eternal Power without Godhead and Creative Power in a Creator, or of Creative Power and no Creator? of an Ultimate Cause and no effects following a world-plan, or of an Ultimate Cause and no effects following no plan? of a material and no Substratum which is the Preserver of the body and Saviour of the soul, or of a material and no Substratum that neither preserves the one nor

the other ; only "sustains" them, as the underlying rocks sustain the coal measures ?

Mr. Spencer has one phrase over which it is well to pause. The certitude of the existence of the Ultimate Reality is, he avers, "a moral deliverance of consciousness." I do not pretend to know the writer's shade of meaning. It reads like one of the expressions which we ordinary people are liable to "find under our pen," and do not like to part with ; but one takes it for granted that great philosophers are not liable to such sometimes happy windfalls. It seems to express a natural human consciousness of the existence of the Ultimate Reality, and to express it more strongly than even Dr. McCosh would express any natural consciousness of God. But the peculiar shade in the phrase is this, that the deliverance of consciousness which affirms the existence of the Ultimate Reality is a *moral* deliverance. That seems to say, there is in the nature of man a moral necessity for affirming such a centre, such a basis, such a vertebral column to the system of nature. Without it, or denying it, the inner man would feel an "aching void," and right and fitness would seem contemned. But if the moral consciousness affirms a backbone to the frame, or a nave to the wheel, or a basis to the column, does it not more clearly still affirm as meet and right a Head, an all-knowing Head, to these manifold worlds ?

Surely a "moral deliverance" of consciousness, when made as to the existence of anything, cannot be made as to the existence of some sort of a thing, destitute itself of any moral quality or value.

It is superfluous to say that, when one declares that he does not believe in a *personal* God, he uses terms as unintelligible as if he were to say that he does not believe in a personal man. What definition of a God is it possible to give which does not mean a person—an intelligent agent? A bodily frame no more constitutes a proper part of our conception of a person than does a lamp constitute a part of our conception of light.

So far, then, as regards the proposed substitute for our personal God, for the Father, Redeemer and Friend whom we love and adore, it is evident that what has resulted from Mr. *God neither Replaced nor Displaced.* Spencer's prodigious toil has not been "the gradual replacement of a power allied to Humanity in certain traits, by a power which we cannot say is thus allied." Instead of having commenced a replacement, he has not effected the least displacement. On the contrary, the result of his exertions has been, as the Positivists resentfully complain, the reaffirmation, one by one, of many things which the Holy Scriptures assert about the Almighty, attribute after attribute being assigned to the Ultimate Reality, of which attributes many are allied to those pertaining to man,

and allied in such a manner as they would be if the Ultimate Reality were a Living and True God and man an immortal spirit born in His image.

So much for the purposed replacement of the All-Blessed object of our religion; it only remains to consider the substitute proposed for that religion itself.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. SPENCER'S SUBSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIANITY.

I.—*Religion Confessed to be Indestructible.*

MR. SPENCER'S substitute for the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is so shadowy, that I, at least, could never look upon it as seriously offered either as a religion or as an excuse for having none. Such consideration as one gave to it was given in deference to a high reputation and a wide influence, as well as to the fact that many regarded it as something real—indeed, considerable. This feeling of having to fight a non-reality is not weakened but strengthened by the fresh light afforded through the recent collision. As a mere phase in a very curious mental development, it is not a little interesting to find proceeding side by side in one and the same intellect two several processes, one affecting the Object of Religion, and reaffirming as to that object several essential attributes supposed to have been dispelled, never more to resume coherent shape; and the other process affecting religion itself, first minimizing it to mere vapours, and next chasing it through delicate shades

of diminishing perceptibility to the point where it merges in the "infinite azure" of the All-Nothingness.

As to the Existence of a Universal Cause, the more blows dealt upon Mr. Spencer from the Atheist side, the farther does he move from the Atheist position. As to religion itself, the more he approaches to some appearance of reality in the object of religion, the more does he renounce every shadow of reality in its substance or practice.

Even in the *First Principles*, only one thing prevented one from concluding that religion in general was as completely given up as Christianity in particular was formally dismissed; and that was *Religion Indestructible*. the writer's impression that he had discovered a reconciliation between science and religion. This was a recognition of religion as a power which must be treated with. That it is so is a fact too palpable for Mr. Spencer to deny, and he exhibits no disposition to deny it. He feels that, judging from past experience, religion is an inseparable concomitant of human nature; and that religious thought and religious feeling always have exerted a dominant influence on the development of our race. While Comte first imagined that men had outgrown belief in the existence of God, and next proceeded to draw up for them a new religion suited to godless ages—seeing that some kind of religion human nature would have—Mr. Spencer reverses the process.

He holds that men never will outgrow belief in an Infinite and Eternal Energy. He holds that, so far from dissipating that belief, science inlays the grain of our thoughts with it, and that in lines deeper set than ever. He, therefore, holds that men, while outgrowing belief in a Personal God, will be very curious about the Ultimate Cause, and somewhat awed before it: which two sentiments of curiosity and veneration will be the sum total of the religion of the latter day. Thus does it come to pass that Positivism, which is absolutely without God, yet has a religion which in both domestic and political relations is to swallow up all rule and authority in itself; while Agnosticism, which at times seems to have an all-but Divine Being, and really has at least the breathless body of an Infinite Power, has of religion only a ghost.

II.—*No Love to God in Agnosticism.*

Just as Mr. Spencer enunciates, respecting the Unknowable, principles which ought to form the premises to the conclusion, "I believe in God," without reaching any conclusion, so does he seem, without reaching a conclusion, to enunciate principles which ought to form the premises to the duplex law which comprises the substance of all religion: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour as thyself. To those, he writes, who accept the doctrine of evolu-

tion, it will be obvious that, "if veneration and gratitude are due at all, they are due to that Ultimate Cause from which Humanity individually and as a whole, in common with all other things, has proceeded."¹ Nothing is hypothetical here but "if veneration and gratitude are due at all." Yet the "if" is there. Whether they are or are not due, he declines to say, remarking that if you are an Optimist, you will say, Yea; if a Pessimist, Nay. This is one of the numberless cases in which he thinks that he disposes of an objective fact, when all he does is to treat of a subjective state. Whether we be Optimists or Pessimists, is a question of our state of mind, not a question of what another does for us. We may on the same day, amid the selfsame facts, be Optimists first and Pessimists after, as Crabbe showed long ago, in his *Lover's Ride*. The Optimist may be grateful without cause; the Pessimist thankless when he ought to be grateful.

Let us suppose that we are neither Optimist nor Pessimist, but sober Christian men and women, to whom light is light and dark dark, sweet sweet and bitter bitter: that is, people who are not superlativists at all, only comparativists. In that case, we receive at the Lord's hand good and also evil; and thank and praise Him *for* the one; and, while sorrow-

*View of
Christian
neither
Optimist
nor
Pessimist.*

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 93, p. 22.

ing under the other, we still say, Blessed be the name of the Lord. We do not think that everything which occurs is right; no more do we think that everything is wrong. We believe in sin and folly; and in bounty, patience, justice, and mercy. We believe in rewards and punishments, either of which words expresses an idea incompatible with absolute Optimism on the one hand and with absolute Pessimism on the other. For some things we praise men and animals, and for some we punish them. We believe that God does so with men and angels. We believe that whatsoever He does is wholly right, and whatsoever good He bestows on us is given notwithstanding our ill-desert. We, therefore, hold ourselves bound in justice to praise Him, and hold that to refuse this is unjust and ungrateful, as well as unseemly.

It is obvious, however, that the question whether gratitude is or is not due "somewhere" is not affected by our praising or repining. We say it is due—due in such proportions that our hearts burn within us when we ponder over all we owe. But if the good which lights upon our heads came to us only from a "where," we should never feel gratitude or veneration to a "where." These emotions are such as are kindled only by the conscious goodness of an intelligent being—sacred fires of the soul, never lighted except by the flash of a living eye.

Of this Mr Spencer is not unaware. When reject-

ing the claim of Comte's goddess, he argues thus:

*Is there
Conscious
Action
of a Being?* "Veneration and gratitude felt towards any being, implies belief in the conscious action of that being." No one will gainsay that.

Hence it is clear that the two happy emotions just named will never fire up for a "where," or a "somewhat," or a "stream," no matter what its power. "Conscious action of a being," when beneficent, does, in a being capable of gratitude, awaken those emotions. And when together with beneficent action are linked glorious attributes—Power and Wisdom, Justice and Mercy—then will veneration also spring up to further ennoble gratitude.

It is no question as to how Pessimist and Optimist may feel, but wholly a question as to whether or not there is "Conscious action of a being" to render gratitude due, and whether that Being is such a One as to render veneration due also. For Mr. Spencer, alas! there is no such Action, because no such Being. On his showing, there is none for poor stray humanity. Our only hope of having the internal gloom relieved by some flicker of gratitude comes from the possibility of giving an optimistic cast to the scale, in our estimate of the relative sweet and bitter of life. But, just as gratitude can be felt only in a living heart, so can it be awakened only by the act of a living benefactor. It would be as easy to feel interest in conversing with a telephone without a person using it as to feel grati-

tude towards units of motion, or shocks in nerves, or centres of force, or ganglia, or nebulæ. Since in order to elicit veneration there must be superior worth, and to elicit gratitude there must be intentional benefaction, it follows that where neither love nor goodness exist on one side there can be no corresponding emotion on the other. In Mr. Spencer's religion there being no love of God to man, no living God capable of love, there is consequently no love of man to God. Without this, whatever "rags of religion" may be left—whether rags as threadbare as those of Agnosticism, or rags as fantastically worked with devices as those of Positivism—they can never be a cover for a man to wrap himself in.

By Positivism our emotions of veneration and gratitude are directed downwards, towards the better sort of our own race supplemented by the better sort of animals. By Agnosticism those emotions are frankly quenched, seeing that there is no living God to love us or be loved by us in return; and seeing also that, as to Humanity and its make-weight beasts, they are not fit to evoke eulogies, much less to receive adoration. On reviewing the elements of which the goddess of Positivism is made up, Mr. Spencer feels "an emotion nearer to contempt than to adoration." Yet he never seems to include the beasts who replace the worthless men. His own Unknowable is, to Mr. Harrison, a mere formula, an τ ,

and it is to Sir James Stephen a bubble invisible to the naked eye. No more, then, than the other is this object one fit to light up the immortal soul of man with such love and joy as must find expression in praise and thanksgiving.

For Mr. Spencer it is a grievance that Mr. Harrison, overlooking his "if," actually makes him say that

Propriety of Gratitude and Veneration Disclaimed. gratitude and veneration *are* due somewhere. No; he protests that he never said that; only that, if they were due anywhere, it would be to the creative power and not

to man, to the producer and not to the product. For Positivists who had long "rested" in hope of seeing the Unknowable evolve into the "chimera," this was sufficiently startling to make them forget the "if." Not give the praise and glory to Humanity! they cry; not to that Great Being whose past, present, and future are all "on this earth," all "in the dwelling-place which he has made for himself thereon."¹

No; Mr. Spencer could not give to man the glory of making either himself or his dwelling-place. Here his English common-sense saved him from following

Has Man Made His Dwelling-place? Comte the whole length. He had done so sadly too far, and in his mode of changing the parallel between society and an organism into coincidence, had run the fanciful identification to lengths outdoing even the original. But

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, No. 91, p. 373.

here was a matter capable of test by external facts, and actually tested by all rational men. The notion of man as the author of his own dwelling-place was as void as would be the notion that Queen Victoria built Windsor Castle. The dwelling-place of man was erected and roofed in, its drainage arranged, its water supply adjusted, its apparatus for lighting and ventilation fitted up, even stores of food in land and water were laid in, with much adornment of flowers, and lively minstrelsy of birds, ere the tenant entered on possession. Yet this sapient tenant is expected by the Comtists to thank himself for the wealth of good things prepared for him before he had ever lived or moved. Indeed, Mr. Harrison cannot account for Mr. Spencer's failure to see that man was bound to thank himself, except on the ground of "astonishing perversity." He then proceeds to accuse him of "lavishing" the gratitude and veneration due here on his "Unknowable and Inconceivable Postulate." But the charge was totally unfounded.

Nay, replies the accused; not so! All he had said was "if":—if gratitude be given "anywhere," let it be to the producer, not to the product. He, however, will not say that there exists any producer to thank, or, indeed, to say that, a correct balance being struck, there is anything to be thankful for. For me, this last point is immaterial. Were the balance of sweet over bitter ever so clear, we should no more thank

an unconscious something than we thank a honey-comb for the honey: for we have it confessed that gratitude can arise only as the response of conscious recipient to conscious giver. And veneration cannot be added to gratitude but by the response of moral sensibility to manifested moral worth. Now, seeing that Mr. Spencer had carefully guarded himself against saying that there was any conscious Benefactor, or, indeed, any superior Being holding a moral relation to us at all, it was natural that he should feel aggrieved on being charged with lavishing his veneration and gratitude on that breathless corpse of a First Cause which he preconizes. Love to such a thing is an "impossibility of thought," an impossibility of feeling, and an impossibility of action. And a religion without love to God is like a steam-engine without fire.

III.—*No Foundation for Love to Man.*

From this point to the kindred one that Agnosticism comprises no real foundation for love to man, we naturally pass by way of a position of Mr. Harrison, taken upon impregnable ground: "The Neo-Theisms have all the same mortal weakness that the Unknowable has. They offer no kinship, sympathy, or relation whatever between worshipper and worshipped. They, too, are logical formularies,

begotten in controversy, dwelling apart from man and the world."

"Apart" from man! objects Mr. Spencer. That is a misrepresentation; for how can that be apart which is the substance whereof man and all other things are but forms. But the very words shall be given of this passage, which, if not neutralized by negations elsewhere, would lift Mr. Spencer's system up to the level of Pantheism: "Throughout my books, the implication is that our lives, alike physical and mental, in common with all the activities, organic and inorganic, amid which we live, are but workings of this Power."¹ How, then, can it be spoken of as "apart" from man? It can be or cannot be, according as you give to the word "apart" a literal meaning or a metaphorical one. Literally, in a merely physical sense, the grass in a meadow is not apart from the clay out of which it grows. Metaphorically, in a mental and spiritual sense, grass and clay are apart from all intercourse of thought and feeling, to the full extent of possibility. And apart from man, from mind, from love and hope, from trust and joy, from praise and prayer—most utterly apart is that thing which is called the Unknowable. It is nothing to the point that, it being an unconscious whole—what I have called the corpse of a First Cause—we, like gravelstones, mushrooms, and daisies on the

¹*Nineteenth Century*, No. 89, p. 7.

ground, are the unconscious efflux from its surface. Surface, however, it has none, seeing it is everything. The utter estrangement of this unascertained Something from human life and all its weal and woe is Mr. Harrison's point; and in a mental and spiritual sense his point is well taken. Yet, in a Positivist sense, it would seem to be incautiously taken; for, if the word Unknowable is replaced by the word Necessity, all things equally come out of that and are equally apart from it, on Comte's system, as they are from the Unknowable on Spencer's.

In either case man is bereaved of all kindred higher than himself in the scale of being. Kindred below is left to him among the animals, *Has Man any Kindred above Himself?* which he can lift some little way up, if he does not sink down to them. But no higher spirit ever breathes an upward inspiration into that spirit within him for which the companionship of beasts, though welcome, is little, and even that of man is not satisfying, though full of joys. Now, in all human relations the sacredness of a lower tie is due in large part to that of a higher one, common to both parties. Were little brother in the nursery always alone with little sister, no higher love or fear, common to both, consecrating the rights of either, or commanding the justice of each, their relations would soon be those of the survival or domination of the strongest. The tie to the Parent is the sacred

and living bond which connects the rights and quickens the affections of both. This is just the tie which both Positivism and Agnosticism do away with. No Father above us, there is no brotherhood, no basis of rights, no standard of duty, no foundations.

On the Agnostic system man is a thing which comes up among other things, like the final spray of coral on a stem. He can no more make a Higher Spirit, to love him and be in turn loved by him, than the spray of coral could make a philosopher to take scientific knowledge of it. All upper space is on this system void of Spirit, void of thought, void of life. The tie of kindred to man coming, as it does, through common descent from *One* Father is frozen dead. "Forasmuch as we also are His offspring,"—that argument which from the lips of Paul could take effect on the mind of the Athenian, even under the shadow of the statue of Pallas, and could cause that mind to raise itself up in conscious superiority to images of marble or ivory or gold, is an argument altogether pointless to an Agnostic; as much so as to a Positivist. Consequently the ever-blessed corollary of that Parentage is lost; for when there is no Father to love, there is no authority to command us to love our Brother also.

Although in Mr. Spencer we have not an example of what would be produced by many ages of Agnos-

tic unbelief, but only an example of what such unbelief produces when in its first age struggling to commend itself to minds pre-occupied with the ideas of philanthropy prevailing in an atmosphere more or less Christianized, the effects of losing the true springs of such humanity are even in him already manifest. He sets out only to prove, as against Comtists, that we cannot see in mankind a fit object of the worship of mankind. But he rushes on to prove that mankind is worthy of *our* contempt rather than of our respect. This, be it carefully noted, is quite a different thing from showing that all men—*we with the rest*—are worthy of the condemnation of a Judge himself free from all sin.

Mr. Spencer's common sense leads him to say that he does not see "why we are to exclude the blameworthy from our conception of Humanity." This is done by Comtists on the principle of not reckoning the worthless as any part of the race, only as parasites—a short and easy method with sinners which a Christian regards with disgust. For him, the "blameworthy" are all of us. For him, it is neither he nor you who can tell which of two men will be found the more blameworthy in the eyes of Him who sees all—the one whose name is execrated by his contemporaries, or the one whose name is trumpeted. Nor can he tell whether the

*Agnosticism
Lowers
our Regard
for Man.*

worst man he knows may not yet become a joy to his family and a blessing to his neighbourhood ; for such changes the grace of God can make. And in looking on any bad man one feeling is present to him: "I might have been such as he ; there am I but for the grace of God." The compassions, the sense of kindred, generated by beliefs such as these are manifestly benumbed in Mr. Spencer; and, if we had the hundredth in a line of generations, with a steadily increasing estrangement from fellow feeling and Christian charity, we should have a degree of contempt for erring human beings increased manifold. He is hard on political and educational follies, pushing the legitimate lesson from them as an argument against worshipping humanity till it becomes a ground for *our* contempt of it—a feeling to which we are hardly entitled, seeing, perhaps, that to these follies each of us may himself have made some contribution.

Even the evolution of human nature in its necessary progress from worse to better—a fancy of *Services to* Mr. Spencer with others—is not to be
Mankind credited either "to Humanity as an ag-
do not gregate or to its component individuals."
Merit Such progress is that of the coral island,
Thanks! "the whole structure being entirely undesigned, and, indeed, absolutely unknown to its producers, individually or in their aggregate."¹ Here "entirely

¹*Nineteenth Century*, No. 89, p. 19.

undesigned" would exclude design on the part both of the coral polyps and on that of their Maker.

Now, just as the polyps are not to be commended, so, no more are men. Most of these did their part for the attainment of "private ends." Such private ends include both gains and enjoyments, and either of these reaped seems to disentitle a fellow man to thanks! Thus it is assumed that private ends and sinister ends are always identical, as they sometimes are when private ends conflict with public services, or falsify disinterested professions.

It is many years ago that, speaking of a man diligently breaking stones on the roadside, I said the spectacle humbled me; for it was an easier thing to make books for mankind than to break stones for them. But, had not the man his private ends? I hope he had: because if those ends were to provide for himself, his wife, and children, private as they were, instead of being sordid, they were noble, and raised the man into a true promoter of the public interest. Did I feel that in sitting there he had only the comfort of serving the rest of us, and not the consciousness of also serving himself, I should feel as if a partner in wrong. And when the pursuit of purely private ends effects great public service, there is a strong presumption that One Mind has ordained each, and coördinated both. God bless thee, then, my

friend and neighbour, whomsoever thou art, who toilest for thyself and thine own ! Thou art doing no sordid thing ! Thou art doing what, if all did, none would want, and none who suffer would be without a friend ! Mr. Spencer seems to look upon the incompatibility of private ends with public services as so complete, that he would even abate from, if not cancel, Watt's claim to credit, because he took out patents. How an Unascertained Something would govern us, I know not. But a Faithful Creator will reckon every labourer worthy of his hire ; albeit reward coming from Him can never be of debt, but always and only of grace. And under His benign reign the hope of just reward is a spring of action, not sordid, but sound and good. Right-hearted fellow-servants will always rejoice to see one well repaid whose work has notably facilitated the tasks of all the others.

Even the æsthetic joy of production seems to Mr. Spencer to detract from the respect we owe to Artist or to Author. "Thou shalt rejoice in all that thou puttest thy hand unto," is an integral part of the ordinances of religion in the Old Testament, and is one which reappears still brighter and more gladdening in the New. To true enjoyment of life fruitful action is essential, and he who in doing fruitful action counts not on finding joy, cannot know what it is to serve a Master who reckons as a glory to Himself all services done to His creatures ; who is pleased even with the

faithful duty of a bondservant toward a froward and evil master. Adam had joy in dressing the garden and in keeping it, ere sin had caused labour and sorrow to be so bound together, as in innocence are action and joy.

Mr. Spencer thinks that language is all of man's forming, and yet that it gives him no claim to credit ; for the process, as he conceives, "went on without the intention of those who were instrumental to it."

Now, let us suppose that all processes had gone on without the intention of those who were instrumental to them ; then, if that did destroy their claim to credit, what would be the natural presumption such a fact would raise ? All human experience goes for nought, all human reason is at fault, if processes in which unconscious instruments coöperate with one another towards the production of complex results of true utility are not in every case due to the preparation of instruments and their direction by a controlling mind. In the case of any one coral reef, where numberless agents combine to a given end unknown to themselves, the evidence of a single controlling mind seems obvious. But, when from one reef you pass to many, and find that in a thousand cases the ends are identical, and the processes also, then does the evidence of one central direction become overwhelming. Design there is, method there is ; and yet both are as much

hidden from the worker as from the work. Where do they lie? Is it not in the depths of an unseen Mind?

Take the other case, that of agents who are not unconscious, but are pursuing, each one of them, private ends of their own. Surely, the fact that, while singly doing this, they yet in the aggregate perform some service essential to the public welfare, is no small token that all their actions are overruled by One great Watcher. It is no man's business to see that there shall be milk in London to-morrow morning for everybody's children, but while men are labouring to provide for their own, they are anticipating the wants of others, and promoting the well-being of both. This common good is due, surely, to the care of One who guides the action of each, first for his own benefit, and next for that of his neighbour.

Joy found in work done must never detract from the credit of the doer. Joy is God's gift to action, as sorrow is sin's curse with toil, especially bootless toil. Grace repairs the work of sin by linking together labour and song. God loves the joy of the worker, even among the sinful. He has ordained joy for the sower, joy for the reaper, joy for the eater; joy for the skilled hand, in its cunning work; joy for the bright eye, in its beautiful design; joy for the fertile brain, in its instructive thought; ay, joy for the maidservant, for the manservant, for the stranger—joy even in sorrow; for, while as Creator the Lord wrought joy

into the living tissue of all action, so as Ruler did He enact joy as a proper element in all His service. Hail, then, to every worker; but most to him who best enjoys his task! Far nobler is a blacksmith singing to his sledge-hammer than a poet in a castle setting misanthropy and spleen to far-resounding verse.

IV.—*Commands to Praise a Reason for Contemning God.*

This curious side of Agnosticism, by which the joy found by men in the fulfilment of their natural tasks is turned into a reason for giving them little respect, has its counterpart in that equally curious side of it by which the fact that God commands His creatures to praise Him is turned into a reason for contemning Him. One admits that nothing could be more absurd than to praise the Unknowable; and nothing more impossible than for a heartless, mindless bulk to make itself the focus of universal joy, by making itself the object of universal praise. If the praise of a finite being is turned back upon himself, it engenders jealousy and love of adulation; but if it goes forth from himself to a being worthier than he, then it enlarges him and lifts him higher, engendering a desire to exalt what is noble, and also to unite others in sympathetic admiration of the same object. In that family where all the children praise father and mother, there is no mean guarantee for the family peace. In

a host where every officer praises the general, you may count upon regular coöperation, and steadfastness in the day and hour of danger. Just as love to a common object is the all-uniting principle, so is praise to a common object the all-uniting exercise. When the strain is "Home, sweet home," how does heart answer to heart in a family! When the strain is "God save the Queen," how does heart answer to heart in a company of Englishmen! When it is "Hail Columbia," how in one of Americans! When it is "Dear Fatherland," how in one of Germans! Praise is to love what flame is to fire.

The philosophy which thinks it accounts for human intelligence by an accumulation of nervous shocks may be excused, and even commiserated, if in the institution of praise to the Head of all life and light and joy it sees no more than "a love of adulation such as would be despised in a human being."¹ Passing by that thoughtless utterance, we need only pause to remark that in such bit of the shadow of a religion as is left by Agnosticism no place is found for praise. If praise springs of love, it follows that when the soul looks out upon a lifeless infinity, out of whose depths no eye ever glances love into its eye, it cannot feel the kindlings of love or any prompting to praise. It follows that when the eye travels up the reaches of a

*Absence of Love
and Praise a
Deduction
from
Happiness.*

¹ *First Prin.*, § 33.

past, and down the reaches of a future Eternity, and never hears a voice saying: "I am the Almighty God ; walk before Me, and be thou perfect," those springs of feeling which lie deeper than any ever touched by human presence cannot gush forth in streams of love and thanksgiving. And wherever there is nought to awaken the praises of the individual soul, there will be nought to gather into one many souls made kindred by a common love and roused into consciousness of their communion by outbursts of united praise. Wanting these two elements of human happiness—solitary adoration of a soul communing with its God, and joint adoration of many kindled with the same ardour—its two highest elements are wanting, the two which yield the fruitful hours most productive of good deeds, the golden hours most welcome back to memory. In the dynamics of beneficence no forces are comparable with love and joy, and to both of these praise is as the vital breath. A race which no living God loved, and in which none loved and praised a living God, would speedily become a race in which also no man would love his brother.

V.—*Confessed Absence of Moral Power.*

A more complete confession of the fact that his residuum of religion is destitute of moral power could hardly be expected than in the words of Mr. Spencer : "I am not concerned to show what effect religious

sentiment, as hereafter thus modified, will have as a moral agent."¹ This incredible utterance is made in resenting Mr. Harrison's ridicule of the Religion of the Unknowable as incapable of "making good men and women." "He seems to imply," complains Mr. Spencer, "that I have argued or am bound to argue that it will do this." Of course he implied it. Had he assumed that when Mr. Spencer declared that the sentiment left by Agnosticism contained more true religion than all dogmatic theology, he meant that its power as a moral agent was a matter which no one was concerned to show, Mr. Harrison might have been reasonably accused of holding up his antagonist to both reproach and ridicule. One who does not feel bound to show how a new religion will make good men and women can never feel bound to show how it will make good institutions, good books, or good anything else. For it is out of good men and women that all other good things on earth come. "True religion," divorced from all thought of moral efficacy, is an idea which one would have thought impossible for any one who had a conception of the first elements of religion and the simplest uses of language. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world." It is logical that where there is no God who is Father to the fatherless and Husband to

¹*Nineteenth Century*, No. 82, p. 25.

the widow, no God who loves the world, benefactors to the sufferer and examples purifying the world should not be raised up.

When in his *Data of Ethics* Mr. Spencer placed morals, like everything else, in the category of phenomena evolved by infallible processes, the divorce of them from all influence by religious motives was theoretically perfected. But it remained for controversy to elicit the round expression of the fact.

It is self-evident when the Object of religion Himself is gone; its inspiration, the love of God to us, gone; its inward power, the love of God in the heart, gone; its highest expression, the praise of God, gone; its natural fruit, love to man for the Lord's sake, gone—then are gone all faith, all worship, all religious ordinances, and all the true springs of moral action.

VI.—*The Remnant of Religion.*

What, then, is left? A certain sentiment which, when closely considered, is no more than an emigrant may feel on nearing an unknown shore. The religious efficacy of a certain sense of mystery is the kernel of Mr. Spencer's system. "A sincere recognition of the truth that our own and all other existence is a mystery absolutely and for ever beyond our comprehension contains more of true religion than all

the dogmatic theology ever written."¹ A recognition of such mystery contains no religion at all. It would be as reasonable to say that it contained more science than all the treatises on natural philosophy ever written. A feeling that things are hopelessly beyond comprehension is one familiar to the most stupid men, and of religious effect it has absolutely none. With men a degree above the most stupid, it has the social effect of making them trust those who can comprehend what they cannot. But this one good effect of natural stupidity is reversed by unbelief in all its forms; for, if we really cannot comprehend a matter, or if we can be persuaded, on grounds however fanciful, to say that we cannot do so, unbelief then teaches us to refuse to look up to any being who can—teaches us to extend to the whole universe the limitations of our own intelligence. The mere curiosity and awe felt in contemplating great physical facts, if those facts are not invitations to seek out the Maker and Master of all finite things, are utterly destitute either of the religious power that elevates the soul above earth, or of that which fills the heart with charity towards men.

The single exercise of the soul which could arise out of this curiosity would be that occupation of the mind about an Unascertained Something with which we are familiar. Only by a wild straying from the

¹*First Prin.*, § 31.

signification of words can such an exercise, or the state of mind prompting it, be said to contain more true religion than Christianity: for that must be included in the expression "all the dogmatic theology ever written."

The confession that this sense of mystery will always remain, and that the occupation of the mind with something unknown will always follow, is the great concession to religion by which Mr. Spencer reconciles it to science. What he looks upon as the reduction from religion made by his assumed data includes: a Personal God, Creation, the relations of Creator and Creature, Providence and a Moral Ruler, the Future Life and all its corollaries, Revelation and all its doctrines and institutions. What is to reconcile Religion to this reduction is what has been said.

What he calls science is the sum total of ascertained scientific truths, augmented by his own conjectural structures of natural history. The amount of mystery about these last seems, to me, greatest as to how any man can expect others to accept them as more than tentative excursions into the inaccessible. The contrast is strong throughout his writings between the clearness of passages in which he expounds recognized science and the elaborate works of word-craft with which he imposes upon himself suppositious explanations when he undertakes either to lay down

a priori principles, or else to evolve by surmise cosmic processes. Analysed word by word, even his formula of evolution becomes mere volcanic dust in the sky, irradiated so as to look like bits of rainbow. To a perfect view, a nebula is definite as well as a globe; it is coherent, if not so closely; and it is to the full as heterogeneous, though to our eye more *uniform*. "Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."¹ This is not the place to enter on an examination of so wide a subject.

Leaving out of the question Mr. Spencer's accretions upon science, we need not trouble ourselves about reconciling religion and science, any more than about reconciling winds and waters. These two often appear to be in deadly conflict, and they are evermore being mixed up together, the winds being damp with water, the waters being driven of the wind. But they are both here; both in the proper places; and as to the ever-recurring conflict between them, it always comes right somehow. The deep waters of science are fringed by a surf of hypotheses and conjectures, and the firm ground of religion is fringed by a beach of

¹ *First Prin.*, § 369.

prejudices and philosophic theories. It is upon this that the breakers lash. Let the surf roar ; let the beach rattle and shift. The city of our habitation is on the dry land, upheld by the living Rock ; and "the waters will no more go over the earth."

If Positivism was minimized when its champion was pressed by his opponents, Agnosticism shares a like fate as Mr. Spencer quails before the terrible accusation of meaning by Religion something with a belief, a worship, and a moral code. What right, he cries, had people to speak of his worship of the Unknowable, of praying to the Unknowable, of devotions, of his religion bringing us comfort, or making good men and women? When had he spoken of such things? They were not to be found anywhere in his writings.

Just as we admit the perfect justice of this disclaimer, so do we see the perfect emptiness of what we were assured contained not only as much true religion as Christianity, but more. "I have proposed no worship ; I have said nothing about devotion, or prayer, or religious exercises, or hope, or consolation." All he had asserted was "the permanence of certain components in the consciousness which is concerned with what lies beyond the sphere of sense." If this is thought inadequate for the purposes of a religion, "I have said nothing about its adequacy or inadequacy'

This, then, it is to which we are led as the issue of laborious enterprises followed up throughout a lifetime in reconstructing heaven and earth, life and mind, man and society on the basis of a reconciliation between science and a religion without God. The basis was a bubble, and the bubble has indeed been blown till it has passed from the perceptible to the imperceptible. Few contrasts are odder than that between the absorption by Positivism of all government into the priesthood, and the abandonment by Agnosticism of all "concern," even to show how its religion would bear upon morals.

This disappearance of the vapour supposed to cover the moral nucleus of what was called a religion leads us back to the Object of Faith; and then we see how naturally a religion not concerned with morals springs from a belief in an Ultimate Reality that cares for nothing. He that thinks cannot worship what does not think. The soul is not made to look only downward, and the human soul must as necessarily look down on what does not think, feel, and will as must an eagle on no matter what bulk of hill. The living cannot worship the lifeless; for life is the light of men. He who foresees and in his own finite sphere foreordains, cannot worship that which knows neither past, present, nor future. The spirit of man is not to be bereft of its noble relations. As to this world, he is not buried sightless at its centre, but is

set on its surface, with an eye turned outward on the ocean of infinity, over which his spirit sweeps, but never travels alone. "Thou art there," and "there also," is the ever-recurring conclusion of its reasonings—is its consciousness ever welling up. If within itself it feels sparks of life, and light, and love, these did not come from the dead, the dark, the senseless; but from a Fountain of infinite life, and light, and love. When instead of this Father of Spirits you offer to the soul a cold shadow of existence, it says: This is not He whose image I bear, and by whose gift I enjoy, and plan, and rule.

Men now well up in years may remember having been taught as boys to recite a piece of Mrs. Hemans, in which a Spanish knight receives the king's promise that his imprisoned father shall be restored to him, and they set out together to meet the ransomed man. As the son kneels down before the mounted figure, and seizes the hand to kiss it, lo! it drops from his, dead, and when he looks up into the eyes, they are dead. He shudders, starts up, and cries: "This earth is not my sire." Such a shudder such a cry, such a recoil are wrung from the spirit of immortal man when, after being invited to behold the object of True Religion, the Infinite and Eternal Energy, it is set face to face with a spiritless, mindless, lifeless bulk.

VII.—*Final Results of Positivism and Agnosticism.*

Positivism before setting out named itself as if it were to be the philosophy of affirmations. Yet its first step was to lay the greater part of the universe under the interdict of one comprehensive negation, as "Inaccessible." Corresponding with this beginning its ultimate issue is in three portentous negations:—

Worlds without a Cause.

Society without Rights.

Religion without God.

Agnosticism named itself as if it were to be a philosophy of nescience; but commenced by showing that the nescience attached mostly to God, while knowledge culminated in man; yet even human science it confined to things of sense. Its issue is in a multitude of portentous negations, of which some of the most obvious are:—

Worlds without a Head.

A Universal Cause without foresight of effects.

Religion without an Object of Faith, without a Doctrine, without a Moral Code.

When we consider the vacuity of the religion of Agnosticism, and the eccentric parodies of the religion of Positivism, we might think they had been permitted that the futility of attempting to frame religion without a Living and True God might be displayed to all men. When much time has been spent