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“AUGUSTE COMTE’S
RELIGION OF HUMANITY.”

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL,

SUNDAY, 31 OCTOBER, 1880,

BY

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President (for the second time) of the Philological Society.

WITH AN APPENDIX OF NOTES,

Containing justificatory citations from Comte’s works, and from two unpublished private letters of Comte to the Author, with other matter.

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AUGUSTE COMTE'S RELIGION OF HUMANITY.

LAST May Mr. Conway delivered a discourse in this chapel on the question "What is the Religion of Humanity?" This discourse has been printed, and is doubtless well known to all whom I address. He commenced by saying that this phrase "has been much and vaguely used," and added that it came, he believed, "from the mint of positivism." (Note 27, p. 66). But there is not one word in the whole of his discourse which indicates either the sense in which Auguste Comte, the founder of positivism, understood the term Humanity, or in what manner he founded a religion upon that conception. It occurred to me therefore, when I was asked to supply the service on one of the Sundays during Mr. Conway's absence, that I should be meeting the wishes of many members of the congregation by giving an account of Comte's views, with which I have been acquainted almost ever since they were first published.

The only short systematic account which Comte

in French or English, may be procured of or through Messrs. Reeves & Turner, 196, Strand.

Isidore Auguste Marie François Xavier COMTE, who subsequently retained only the name of *Auguste* COMTE, was born on 19 January, 1798, at Montpellier, in the department of Hérault, France. He was the son of *Auguste Louis* COMTE, cashier of the general receivership of Hérault, and *Félicité-Rosalie* BOYER, his wife. He was at the College of Montpellier till he went to the *École Polytechnique* in 1814, but the whole of that school was dismissed for what was considered an act of insubordination (a protest against a répétiteur, or assistant lecturer, signed first by Comte), and he became a teacher of mathematics for bread. From 1818 to 1820, he was in friendly relations with the celebrated Claude Henri, Comte de Saint Simon (born 1760, died 1825), whose pupil Comte styled himself at the time, though he did not learn positivism from him, and subsequently considered these relations most unfavourable for the development of his conceptions. It was in May, 1822, that, attached to a little privately distributed pamphlet by Saint Simon, called *du Contrat Social*, of which 100 copies were printed, Comte added what he termed "a plan of the scientific works required for the reorganisation of society," reprinted in an edition of 1,000 copies in 1824, and then entitled "System of Positive Polity." This wonderful work of a young man of twenty-four, well justified its

English translation much condensed, but approved by Comte, was made by Miss Harriett Martineau. During the execution of this great work, he had to maintain himself by continuous labour as a teacher of mathematics, in which capacity I first heard of him as private tutor to a former Eton boy of my acquaintance at Paris in 1834, and I then became possessed of the first volumes of his *Positive Philosophy*. It was with the greatest difficulty that Comte managed to scrape together during this period some 10,000 francs or £400 a year. He used to compose the whole of one of his volumes on *Positive Philosophy*, in all its details, in his head without even making a note, and then, when he had leisure to write, he sat down and wrote it off, never correcting, and keeping only a few sheets in advance of the press. In 1842 Comte was separated from his wife, with whom, however, he long maintained an intimate correspondence. In 1844, Comte, who had long held two subordinate offices in the École Polytechnique, lost them both through a series of misfortunes which I cannot even advert to. Three Englishmen, Grote, Molesworth and Raikes Currie gave him temporary assistance. In 1849 his friends raised an annual subscription for him, the collection of which he took into his own hands when the rupture occurred between him and M. Littré, who had originated it, a rupture due to the different views which they took of Napoleon III.'s *coup d'état*. This subscription

complete his *Positive Polity* in 1854, and then began what he intended to be the complement of his labours, the *Positive Synthesis*, of which only the first volume appeared in 1856, containing *Positive Logic*, which is in fact a history and criticism of the whole of Mathematics as then known—much has been added since that time. Two of the remaining volumes of the Synthesis were destined to give an exposition of *Positive Morality*, of which one was to be on theoretical, and the other on practical morals. Of these, nothing but the titles of the chapters is preserved. (Note 2, p. 47.) Of the fourth volume all we know is, that it was to be a system of *Positive Industry*. After a painful illness, on the nature of which a difference of opinion prevails, Comte died on Saturday, 5 September, 1857. Since then his rooms at No. 10, Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, Paris, have been kept exactly as he left them, and the Positivist Society of Paris, under the direction of M. Laffitte, appointed principal executor under Comte's will, there holds its meetings, and performs the rites of the Religion of Humanity. The subsequent career of Positivism is detailed in a periodical appearing every two months, called *La Revue Occidentale*. For an English appreciation of Comte's two works, I must refer you to two articles by John Stuart Mill, reprinted from the "Westminster Review," entitled *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (Trübner, 1865). For French appreciations, reference

materially alter their views most probably, if admitted, but they are as much without it, as Christianity dispenses with the Olympic mythology of the Greeks. No Christian would now attempt to give an elaborate proof of the non-existence of the Greek and Roman Gods. He does not want them or care for them. (Note 4, p. 49.) And so the positivist does not want or care for the God of any description of Theists. But he is not like the old Christians, iconoclastic. He recognises all religions, past and present, with sedulous catholicity, and considers them all as transitional forms heralding in his own, or rather his Master's universal conception. The God of the Theist may or may not be demonstrable, but at any rate has not been demonstrated. The Supreme Being of the positivists, which is as far as possible from being a God, is not only demonstrable, but demonstrated; is not only possible, but actual; is not a mere subjective conception, but a real objective existence, and would so remain and be equally well fitted to command the reverence and govern the actions of men, even if there were a theistic God behind it. Such is the positivist view.

This Supreme Being is called Humanity, by which is not meant the bare abstraction of human nature, or organic as opposed to inorganic nature. It is an actual objective being, neither personal nor impersonal, but rather com-personal; of a duration, relatively to a

of actual co-operation in maintaining the common existence. (I am using Comte's own words as far as possible.) Although every man is by birth a child of Humanity, every man is not fit to be one of her servants (for Comte speaks of Humanity in the feminine, not merely from the accidental gender of the French noun, but for other reasons which I shall not have time to adduce). Many remain in a parasitic condition, tolerable only during education. Anarchical times, Comte adds, have made such sad burdens on Humanity to abound, and too often to flourish. And he quotes of them Dante's lines referring to—

Those that have lived without or praise or blame—,
 Speak not of them, but look and go thy way.
 (Che visser senza infamia e senza lode—
 Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa.)

But while these vegetables must be rejected from Humanity, Comte would include among her parts those worthy animals which contribute voluntarily to her existence. "Many horses, dogs and cattle are worthier than some men," says he. (Note 5, p. 50.)

Now in regarding this compound being, we naturally look first rather to the inter-connection of existing men, than to the past and future. But the present forms in fact a very small part of this being. Continuity is very much more important; society at any time depends very much more on the knowledge, feelings and arrangements which have been handed

“ God doth not need
Either man’s work, or his own gifts.”

But Humanity is powerless without the action of living men. Hence it becomes the business of each living cell of the great organism of Humanity to act consciously as its servant and coadjutor, using the liberal gifts which it has received from the past and passing them on increased, less and less as the receipts are more and more, but never diminished, to the future. By this means each individual has it within his power to become incorporated in the great compound Being whom he worthily serves.

This conception, which I have imperfectly sketched, has to become familiar before it becomes efficacious. We must continually feel that we are an existing part of Humanity, actuated by our dead predecessors and working for our unborn followers. We must feel that those who trust to their own action without the assistance of the dead are at best self-deceived, for every thought, every action, every premiss is in the first place inherited. If a great flood were to pass over the world, as was once imagined, and destroy all man’s work, but to leave man, and the mental inheritance of the race were thus to remain, the result of the teachings so preserved, would be that the work of restoration would proceed infinitely more rapidly than the original work of constitution. Again, the man who imagines that he works for himself alone, because he looks to his own gratification only as an end, is as much self-

of vessels at sea, and so forth. Granted, they assert, that at some future time it may be possible to render probable or certain that there is an intelligent power beyond Humanity, yet even then our first duties, our only really sensible and executable duties, will be towards this especial tellurian providence, Humanity. This, as I gather, is the real position of Comte's followers towards modern theists. But of course there is a difference between the reign of law and the reign of special arbitrary supramundane providence, between the acknowledgment of Humanity as the highest conceivable being, and the acceptance of a mystic undefined personality, quite independent of Humanity, in direct communion with each individual man. The positivists say in the old words "the non-apparent must be regarded as non-existent" (*de non apparentibus et de non existentibus eadem est lex*). The theists rejoin that to them this higher being *is* apparent and hence existent, and that this even interferes with the possible acceptance of Humanity as a secondary providence. This conclusion is, however, shown by acts performed to be rather theoretical than practical. As long as people revert to the records of the wisdom of their ancestors (and all bodies of laws and codes of religion belong to this category, as well as all records of science), instead of relying upon individual inspiration, whether as the result of prayer or merely spontaneous, and as long

are continually obscured by the variety of the concrete, can be satisfactorily traced or indeed traced at all. He established, then, as the foundation of his research, a progressive scale of the sciences, or hierarchy, as he terms it, beginning with the most simple and hence most generally applicable, and ending with the most complex and hence most limited in its area. Comte was professionally a mathematician, as I have already mentioned, and he begins his scale of the sciences with mathematics or the science of number and space, as the very simplest and most universal of conceptions. How he finds in their treatment the bases of all methods of reasoning, inductive as well as deductive, I must refer you to his books to learn, and especially to his treatise on algebraical geometry ("Traité élémentaire de Géométrie analytique à deux et à trois dimensions, contenant toutes les théories générales de Géométrie accessibles à l'analyse ordinaire," 1843), which is indeed quite unfitted for an examination cram book, but is full of contrivances for leading to the discovery of general principles of reasoning. To these he joined abstract mechanics, or the science of motion and rest. In these three branches, number, space, and motion, which have been entirely neglected in most philosophies, he finds the foundation of his own. He finds first the absolute unconditionality and invariability of primary relations, that uniformity of nature on which all our knowledge

the real basis of induction, which is not sufficiently brought out in its comparatively embryonic condition in pure mathematics. How carefully he considered the astronomy of observatories in this light must be studied in his popular astronomy (*"Traité philosophique d'Astronomie populaire ou Exposition systématique de toutes les notions de philosophie astronomique, soit scientifiques, soit logiques, qui doivent devenir universellement familières,"* 1844), containing the systematic exposition of many courses of lectures delivered by him, for which he had a great predilection. As a step in religion, in all schemes of religion, astronomic observation, aided by mathematics, has played a very great part. The modern names of Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo are sufficient to shew this. But for philosophy the great merit of observational astronomy was the discovery of uniformity in the midst of variety; the reduction, for example, of the strangely meandering, advancing and retrograding, apparent paths of the planets among the fixed stars, which earned them the Greek name of planets, that is, wanderers, into the single system of revolution about a central sun, one of the greatest intellectual efforts of Humanity, by which all its subsequent progress has been in great measure conditioned. Comte, however, also proceeds to mechanical astronomy, in which for the first time a universal law, gravitation, applying to every particle of matter tellurian or extra-

works. They investigate what are often called the general properties of matter, because they belong to all classes or numerous classes of matter, and not only to particular bodies. Comte died before the great theory of the conservation of energy had been worked out, shewing, in fact, that all these general laws were transmutable, and hence could only be considered as parts of one great whole.

The next science, chemistry, deals (not with general properties of all bodies, but) with particular properties of individual bodies, and was, in Comte's time, and hence in his philosophy, divided into two great branches, inorganic and organic, which recent research has tended to fuse, although the distinction is in so far real, that inorganic chemistry treats of the properties of many substances which are not known to form part of living beings, and organic chemistry of some of those only which are known to do so, and principally of carbon and its compounds. The whole conception of the science of chemistry has been so entirely remodelled of very late years indeed, that it is needless to give Comte's conclusions, more especially as he was not a chemist, but only a philosophical student. The great point of chemistry, however, was, that itself embracing all the other sciences named, it bridged the gulf between inanimate and animate nature, and by its numerous facts, and few general laws (as that of definite proportions, now much more

drew his celebrated distinction between the statical nature of society forming its order, and its dynamical nature forming its progress. The latter he develops by means of the historical method of logic, which, if he did not invent, he at least carried out for the first time on the widest scale. The following are the three laws which he here endeavours to establish, by an historical survey of the world and especially of what he terms the Western Republic, or the five principal European powers, France, Italy, Spain, Germany and England, with their Colonies, which he considers to have had common interests and responsibilities since the days of Charlemagne. (Note 10, p. 52.)

“Each intellect passes through three states, fictitious, abstract and positive (or theological, metaphysical and positive, as he elsewhere calls them) as respects all conceptions whatever, with a velocity depending on the generality of the corresponding phenomena.

“There is a similar progression for action, which is at first conquering, then defensive, and finally industrial.

“Society follows a similar course, and is at first domestic, then civic, and finally universal.” (Note 11, p. 52).

It need not be said that these laws have been widely disputed and constantly limited, and that perhaps the greatest follower in the path traced out by Comte, but by no means a follower of his theories, Mr. Herbert Spencer, views the matter in a materially different

recur at the proper seasons, the calendar was altered by Julius Cæsar, B.C. 45, and subsequently by Augustus, A.D. 1. This alteration not proving ecclesiastically sufficient for Christians, the calendar was again altered by Pope Gregory XIII., in A.D. 1582, and this alteration was adopted in England in 1752.

The French revolutionary calendar designedly broke with every ecclesiastical association, beginning the year with midnight of the day preceding the true autumnal equinox, arranging the months in thirty days, adding five or six supplementary days every year and doing away with the week altogether. The Romans reckoned from the building of Rome, a mythical era the Christians from the supposed birth of Christ, an equally mythical date ; the French revolutionists from, in our reckoning, 22 September 1792, the day on which Louis XVI. was deposed and the Republic proclaimed, which was certainly a real era.

Comte in altering the calendar determined to make it a record of the history of Humanity up to his time, intending that it should be further changed after his form of religion had been established. This he sanguinely estimated would happen within fifty years. He reckoned years from 1 January 1789, on the 14 July of which year the Bastille was destroyed (recently proclaimed as the national fête day of France). The present year 1880 is therefore 92 of Comte's era. But this is a temporary era. The final and conclusive era is

and the dogma thoroughly accepted and acted up to. It was certainly a magnificent conception in the true spirit of priesthood, and it has been wonderfully well carried out in the spirit of a French philosopher anxious to do justice to all whom he calls the types and servants of Humanity, but at the same time as a positivist inexorably blind to the merits of those whose work he considered as purely negative, such as the promoters of protestantism. I will rapidly explain the basis of this great elaboration, recommending every one who has an interest in the history of his race to study the translation in Dr. Congreve's Catechism.

The first five months are dedicated to pre-Christian times, the next two to the middle ages, and the last six to the modern preparation. I give the names of the persons from whom the months were named, with Comte's own reference to their representative character, forming the thirteen principal types of Humanity, and after each name, I give those of the four worthies to whom the seventh days in each week were respectively dedicated, forming the 52 secondary types. The week days, containing nearly 500 names, I pass over, from the mere pressure of time. You will recognise many of the names recently inscribed on the walls of this chapel.

ANTIQUITY. FIVE MONTHS.

1. MOSES (d. 1461 ?), or initial theocracy, with

7. CHARLEMAGNE (d. 814), or feudal civilisation, with *Alfred the Great* (d. 900), *Godfrey of Bouillon* (d. 1100), *Pope Innocent III.* (d. 1216), and *St. Louis* (or Louis IX. of France, d. 1270).

THE MODERN PREPARATION. SIX MONTHS.

8. DANTE (d. 1321), or modern epics, with *Ariosto* (d. 1533), *Raphael* (Sanzio, d. 1520), *Tasso* (Torquato, d. 1595), and *Milton* (d. 1674).
9. GUTENBERG (d. about 1468), or modern industry, with *Columbus* (d. 1506), *Vaucanson* (d. 1782), *Watt* (James, d. 1781), and *Montgolfier* (d. 1810). I may mention that the day of Comte's death, now observed by Positivists in Paris with great solemnity, including a meeting in Comte's apartments and a pilgrimage to Père la Chaise, where he is buried, was the Positivist Wednesday 24, Gutenberg 69, on the day Comte had dedicated to Duhamel du Monceau, a French botanist, agriculturist, and physicist (who died in 1782), and in the week he had placed under the protection of Montgolfier, the French papermaker, who made the first balloon ascent in 1783, and died in 1810. The other days in this week are dedicated—

13. BICHAT (d. 1802), or modern science, with *Galileo* (d. 1642), *Newton* (d. 1727), *Lavoisier* (d. 1794), and *Gall* (d. 1828).

Such was Comte's "Humanity of the Western Republic," the captains of the mighty roll of the dead, by whose help the living live. But the rank and file of this great and increasing army are not only partly celebrated by their sub-officers on the week days, but the supplementary day is given up as the universal festival of the dead, and the additional leap-year day (at first intended as a day of solemn reprobation of the two principal retrogressionists, in Comte's opinion, the Emperor Julian, called the apostate, and the French Emperor Napoleon I., with whom was at one time associated Phillip II. of Spain, see Note 14, p. 53.) was finally dedicated (in the concrete as in the abstract cult) to the festival of the Holy Women, the two thus fitly leading on to the principal positivist celebration, the Festival of Humanity on New Year's Day. (Note 15, p. 53.)

There can be no question, but that if such a cult as is implied by this calendar, could be actually carried out in practice, positivism would soon become a great religion. And in view of the yearly increase in the number of the great dead, who would be entitled to celebration, Comte proposed hereafter to replace this "concrete cult" as he termed it, by an "abstract cult" calling to mind all the principal social relations, both

is used by French writers, and especially by Comte, as synonymous with the so-called labouring or working classes, or receivers of wages.)

13. Industry, or practical power.

These four last relations are the basis of Comte's scheme of the society of the future. Taking as his ground work that there are three classes of mental action, emotional, contemplative and practical, he divided the human family into three parts, women, priests, and practitioners, the last part being again divided into the proletary or governed and the patriciate or governors. He laid down the rule that no priest should govern, and he has to my mind, illustrated the wisdom of that maxim, by his own attempts as a priest to govern the whole future of society. (See Note 20, p. 57.) The women were not to engage in any pursuit that was paid, they were to be home angels, and to be supported by the males of their family, and in default of the same by the state. Nothing could exceed Comte's devotion to women in this respect, nothing could have more exasperated him than the present attempt to give women an independant social position, and to make them competitors with men in practical, and even contemplative life, instead of subsiding into being man's "guardian angels." This was his own term for them, and he gave it a very peculiar significance. The cult of Humanity was to be public

her husband nursed him in his last illness. She now sleeps with him and Madame de Vaux, in Père la Chaise. In the dedication and final invocation to his positive polity, Comte has left a record of the nature of his prayers to Mdme. de Vaux, and M. Lonchamp in an essay on prayer, has given specimens of prayer for each day of the week. (Note 18, p. 56.) But it would be too long to quote from them, as there is still much to say.

Women were thus sentimentally at the head of the world, the substratum consisted of the practical workers and governors of the future republics, into which the great western republic was to be hereafter sub-divided. But these republics were to be absolutely despotic oligarchies, or rather triumvirates, each governing body being appointed by its predecessor, and none, under any circumstances, by the ignorant masses who had to be governed. Anything approaching to constitutionalism or parliamentary government was rejected as simply nonsensical, as almost a contradiction in terms. The governors at any time must be men of experience, chosen by their predecessors, the triumvirate being bankers especially, though how they could both bank and govern, even when France was divided into seventeen states, might be difficult to determine. (Note 19, p. 57.) But between these emotional and practical classes, was inserted the contemplative class of priests. These had to think for the whole

tion ; 5. Marriage ; 6. Maturity ; 7. Retirement ; 8. Transformation ; and 9. Incorporation. They deal with each individual man and woman, and every period of life and death, and even after death, and all in reference to the great doctrine of Humanity. 1. Presentation, replaces baptism, and has its two sponsors, and is accompanied by giving the child two names, one theoretical and the other practical, which he completes, after emancipation from wardship, by adding a third of his own selection. 2. Initiation, replacing confirmation, takes place at fourteen, when the child passes from the education of the mother to that of the priest, who directs all schools. It is during this period that he undergoes his special apprenticeship. At twenty-one he is, 3. "admitted" as a servant of Humanity, decides on his profession, and receives the sacrament of, 4. Destination, analogous to the present ordination of priests. This sacrament is made renewable, allowing of a change of profession. Then follows 5. Marriage, at twenty-eight years of age and not before, for a man. In the case of women, 3. Admission and 4. Destination coincide, because the destination of a woman is to marry, and her marriage takes place at twenty-one. This marriage is indissoluble even by death, unless one of the contracting parties has committed a crime involving deprivation of civil rights, as was the case with the husband of Mdme. de Vaux. Either surviving contracting party is in any other case

unworthiness, "the fatal burden is transported to the desert of the reprobates, to lie with the executed, the suicide and the duellist." The women, who seem to be excluded from incorporation, are to be individually included in that of the man with whom they are connected. "Around and sometimes," says Comte, "within each sacred tomb, the priest will have to unite in the name of the Supreme Being, all the personalities which worthily contributed to the services which Humanity rewards."

I am obliged to pass over much which is beautiful to believers in any creed, in the conceptions of the moral action of man towards his fellows as a servant of Humanity. But I must find time even now for some of Comte's great mottos, in which he endeavours to condense his whole system of thought and life—a system which certainly does not need all the wonderful amount of regulation that Comte, as high priest of Humanity, thought out and formulated in his latter days, of which what I have told you is but a meagre and most incomplete outline. I must give them first in French, for they cannot be properly Englished. The first is intellectual and defines the object of knowledge: *Savoir pour prévoir afin de pourvoir*, "know to fore-know, to be forearmed." That is, make your knowledge a means of foreseeing what will happen in order that you may be prepared against contingencies, so that *prevision* may lead to *provision*. Any know-

must remain, and the world will be different from what it was by the mere fact of their enunciation. Comte was a very great thinker, and he has set his mark on mankind. His followers in England are all men of intellect, mostly men who have earned a right to think for themselves by thought in other fields. They are, however, very few in number. I doubt whether the positivists of all nations assembled together would more than fill the room in which we are gathered. The doctrine is so immense, so varied, so incapable of being condensed into a few sentences which speak home to a man at once (for even its mottos require considerable explanation), and so opposed to all religious thought now existing, that its acceptance must be very slow. And its acceptance must also be very diverse. The books written by Comte alone far exceed the bible in extent, even the bible with a long commentary. They are extremely difficult books to read and grasp. Probably no two positivists really agree in detail, any more than any two christians. As a matter of fact the small number of English positivists is already divided into two camps, one of which is affiliated to the French headship, and the other not. Comte himself was of opinion that the conception of Humanity must be put in the foreground and everything subordinated to that. But a complete grasp of that conception is by no means easy. Nor is it possible to make it popular, so far as I can see. In

purposely said nothing (Note 24, p. 62). Comte boasts that his system should be always discussible. His regulations would make such discussions illusory. His Philosophy seemed to open up the universe to science. His Polity would confine the limits of inquiry to only part of the facts known even when he was alive. None of his followers, perhaps, since his "transformation," to use their technical term, recognise in any follower, even the excellent M. Laffitte, whom Comte himself designated, any power so to limit the acquisition of knowledge. We all know how much Humanity suffered from the long mastery of Aristotle, the greatest thinker that perhaps the world has known. Let us avoid such a mistake for the future, and treating Comte's works and thoughts as we should treat those of other men for whom we feel a profound respect, while retaining the liberty of differing from them in opinion, let us accept what is accurate, what is orderly, and what is progressive in Comte's religion of Humanity (Note 25, p. 65).

DISMISSAL.

Let us take with us an echo of the hymn just sung [see next page], the old knightly motto,

"Do thy duty, tide what may!"

APPENDIX OF NOTES.

NOTE 1, p. 8.—*Influence of Mme de Vaux*.—As the works of Comte are not in every one's hands, or even in many English libraries, I think it will be agreeable to the readers of my discourse, which has been printed at the request of the Committee of South Place Chapel, if I cite the words of the original on some points of importance. In this "Invocation," addressing Mme. Clotilde de Vaux, on the 24th July, 1854, as "Noble et tendre patronne," he says: "Mon ouvrage fondamental avait irrévocablement dévoilé l'existence composée et continue qui domine de plus en plus l'ensemble des affaires terrestres. Il avait même proclamé graduellement la prépondérance du cœur sur l'esprit, comme unique source, spontanée ou systématique, de l'harmonie humaine. La nature et la destinée du Grand-Être se trouvant ainsi révélées, il suffisait, pour instituer la religion universelle, qu'une sainte tendresse me rendit assez familier le principe fondamental où venait d'aboutir ma première vie. Voilà comment le dogme de l'Humanité surgit, à l'anniversaire initial de notre catastrophe, dans le cours décisif d'où dérive tout ce traité,"—*Politique positive*, iv. 546. See the end of note 24.

NOTE 2, p. 9.—*Chapter Headings of Comte's Positive Morality*. These are printed at length in Dr. Robinet's life of Comte, pp. 295-6, and are briefly as follows: Vol. 1, Theoretical Morals or Knowledge of Human Nature. Introduction on Primary and Secondary Philosophy and Theoretical Morals. Chapters on the Theories of: 1, the brain; 2, the Great Being; 3, Unity; 4, Life; 5, the Sentiments; 6, the Intellect; 7, Activity; Conclusion on Synthesis, Sympathy and Religion. Vol. 2: Practical Morals or

faire directement remonter notre gratitude. Car, une telle discontinuité morale, outre son injustice évidente, deviendrait aussitôt contraire à la principale destination de notre culte, en nous détournant de l'adoration immédiate, seule pleinement conforme à notre nature affective. Le régime provisoire qui finit de nos jours n'a que trop manifesté ce grave danger, puisque la plupart des remerciements adressés à l'être fictif y constituaient autant d'actes d'ingratitude envers l'Humanité, seul auteur réel des bienfaits correspondants. En un mot, notre reconnaissance doit considérer les produits, sans remonter aux matériaux, qui n'offrent presque jamais un mérite suffisant. Même dans l'ordre réel, il importe encore davantage au cœur qu'à l'esprit de ne franchir aucun intermédiaire essentiel. A plus forte raison, nos affections doivent-elles être encore mieux préservées que nos pensées de toute destination chimérique, quand leur véritable cours est devenu possible. Si l'adoration des puissances fictives fut moralement indispensable tant que le vrai Grand-Être ne pouvait assez surgir, elle ne tendrait désormais qu'à nous détourner du seul culte qui puisse nous améliorer. Ceux donc qui s'efforcent de la prolonger aujourd'hui la tournent, à leur insu, contre sa juste destination, consistant à diriger l'essor provisoire de nos meilleurs sentiments, sous la régence de Dieu, pendant la longue minorité de l'Humanité." *Politique Positive* ii, 57-8.

NOTE 4, p. II.—*The Religion of Humanity has no need to disprove Theism.*—"Les hypothèses indiscutables ne comportent pas plus de négation que d'affirmation. On les admet et les écarte, suivant les besoins qu'elles permettent ou cessent de satisfaire, sans les affirmer ni les nier. Voilà tout ce que le positivisme peut maintenant accorder à la croyance des purs déistes. Mais cette apparente concession se trouve essentiellement annullée par son extension nécessaire, et mieux méritée, aux thélogismes vraiment organiques, quelqu'ils soient, monothéiques, chrétiens, musulmans, ou juifs, et polythéiques, gréco-romains, indous, &c. Partout

avec un degré d'importance proportionné à la dignité de l'espèce et à l'efficacité de l'individu. Pour apprécier cet indispensable complément, nous n'avons qu'à supposer qu'il nous manque. On n'hésite point alors à regarder tels chevaux, chiens, bœufs, &c., comme plus estimables que certains hommes." *Catéchisme Positiviste*, pp. 30-1.

NOTE 6, p. 14.—*Rule of the Dead*.—"Ainsi, la vraie sociabilité consiste davantage dans la continuité successive que dans la solidarité actuelle. Les vivants sont toujours, et de plus en plus, gouvernés nécessairement par les morts : telle est la loi fondamentale de l'ordre humain." *Catéchisme Positiviste*, p. 32.

NOTE 7, p. 14.—*Unconscious Subjective Existence*.—This distinction of the "conscious" and "unconscious" subjective existences is, so far as I can remember, not indicated by Comte, who confines his definition to the "conscious" part. I considered it, however, important to note that every man is actually immortal in his effects on the world, by the mere fact of his having once lived objectively, and hence by communication or heredity having swayed the future. Otherwise I follow the *Catéchisme Positiviste*, pp. 32-3, very closely.

NOTE 8, p. 14.—*God's independence of Man*.—See *Imitation*, iv., 12, 3, "Tu mei indiges, non ego tui indigeo," which Comte quotes as the second line of Corneille's paraphrase, in the following stanza, referring to importunate prayer,

" Cette importunité n'est jamais incivile ;
Je te suis nécessaire et tu m'es inutile ;
Tu ne viens pas à moi pour me sanctifier,
Mais je m'abaisse à toi pour te justifier."

Comte, of course, does not quote the line from Milton on his own blindness, sonnet xix.

NOTE 9, p. 24.—*Comte's indebtedness to de Blainville*.—"Je dois ici spécifier directement que j'ai principalement choisi le

mode plus complexe de l'esprit scientifique. Mais, sans attacher à cette observation personnelle une importance exagérée, il demeure incontestable que le sentiment du progrès des sciences a pu seul inspirer à Pascal [b. 1623, d. 1662] cet admirable aphorisme, à jamais fondamental; 'Toute la succession des hommes, pendant la longue suite des siècles, doit être considérée comme un seul homme, qui subsiste toujours et qui apprend continuellement.' " *Philosophie Positive*, iv. 234.

NOTE 13. p. 28.—*The Calendar* is described in the special work, quoted in note 10, 4th ed., 1852, and in the *Pol. Pos.*, iv. 398-404, ed. 1854. Positivist years are found by subtracting 1788 from the Christian date.

NOTE 14. p. 33.—*The Reprobates*.—By a curious error when this discourse was delivered, I substituted the name of Voltaire for Napoléon. Comte has given up a day to Voltaire, (II Shakspeare) but only as a tragic poet. Thus he says (*Cal. Pos.* 4th ed. p. 17). "Dans l'élaboration d'un système destiné surtout à faire irrévocablement prévaloir l'esprit organique sur l'esprit critique, j'ai rigoureusement exclu tous ceux qui n'ont réellement que détruit, sans rien construire. On n'y trouvera donc ni Luther, ni Calvin, ni Rousseau; Voltaire n'y figure qu'au titre de poète tragique. Malgré leur utilité passagère ces services négatifs exigent trop peu de valeur intellectuelle, et supposent trop de vicieuses dispositions morales pour admettre une telle consécration personnelle." Philip II. disappeared from the *Reprobates* in the third ed. of the *Calendar*, and in *Politique Positive* iv. 404, the festival of Reprobation was altogether abolished with the words: "Après une modification décisive, suggérée par une réclamation féminine," (Miss Harriett Martineau, I believe.) "les dignes remontrances d'un positiviste britannique m'ont suscité des réflexions qui me déterminent à supprimer entièrement l'institution projetée."

. NOTE 15, p. 33.—*Letter of Comte on the Lives of the Worthies*

tially supplied by M. Pierre Laffitte's "Les Grands types de l'Humanité, appréciation systématique des principaux agents de l'évolution humaine," 2 vol. 8vo., price 10 francs, and in the *Revue Occidentale*, for 1st of May and 1st of September, 1880, M. Paul Foucart has given an appreciation of Sophie Germain, who is made an adjunct of Hegel for 27 Descartes. But both of these are too long for manuals. What is much wanted for positivism is a little book of 150 pages, closely printed, 20 being devoted to an introduction, and 10 to each month, namely 2 to each monthly and 1 to each weekly type, with 1 to the daily types of each whole week. Such a work would have an interest far beyond positivism, and would tend to give a concrete meaning to the term *Religion of Humanity*, which is much wanted. It is only the other day that Dr. Fraser, the bishop of Manchester, (roused to a knowledge of the existence of Positivism, most probably by the fact that Positivist services have recently been held at 175, Islington, Liverpool,) in a sermon on Atheism, spoke of "a certain *new* theory called the Positivist School of Philosophy." Such a method of speaking should not be possible. Besides such a manual, I had expressed a wish for a more popular and less systematic treatise than the Catechism. To this Comte replied in the letter just quoted: "Je pense comme vous sur l'utilité d'un manuel positiviste plus populaire et moins systématique que notre catéchisme, mais il ne peut émaner que d'une femme. Nous l'aurions déjà si je n'étais pas, depuis dix ans, objectivement privé de l'angélique collègue qui régénéra mon cœur, et par suite compléta l'essor de mon esprit."

NOTE 16. p. 36.—*Comte's Definition of Prayer*.—"Prier, c'est tout ensemble aimer et penser, si la prière reste purement mentale; tantôt aimer en pensant, et tantôt penser en aimant, suivant la disposition dominante. Mais si la prière devient aussi orale, selon sa vraie nature, alors prier constitue à la fois

3 Mercury, 4 Jupiter, 5 Venus, 6 Saturn, and 7 the Sun. But after the advent of the abstract cult, apparently, he wished to change the dedication, without changing their names, to 1 Homer, 2 Aristotle, 3 Cæsar, 4 St. Paul, 5 Charlemagne, 6 Dante, and 7 Descartes, as being the principal organs which effected the transition from theocracy to sociocracy. (*Politique Pos.* iv. 135-6.)

NOTE 19, p. 37.—*Mill on Comte's Governors*.—"In each state thus constituted, the powers of government are to be vested in a triumvirate of the three principal bankers, who are to take the foreign, home, and financial departments respectively. How they are to conduct the government and remain bankers, does not clearly appear; but it must be intended that they should combine both offices, for they are to receive no pecuniary remuneration for the political one."—*J. S. Mill*, "Auguste Comte and Positivism," 1865, p. 168.

NOTE 20, p. 38.—*Attitude of Modern Positivists towards Comte's Regulations for Social and Religious Organisation, and Comte's letter on the Introduction of Shelley's name in the Calendar*.—A well known Positivist, who was present when this discourse was delivered, thought I had much overstated the peremptory nature of Comte's suggestions for social organisation. He felt sure that Comte did not remotely claim to govern, and I quite agree that Comte did not in so many words lay claim to governing, or rather that as a priest he disclaimed so doing. But it seems to me from my long acquaintance with Comte's writings, that he considered it part of his office as High Priest, to lay down the principles of practical government, and prescribe the form that it should take, while in religious and educational matters especially, he meant what he said, and that with life and opportunity he would have had his injunctions strictly carried out. I think, moreover, that this view is borne out by certain incidents in Comte's relations to other thinkers, which I need

the second canto of the *Revolt of Islam*, containing a kind of anticipation of subjective immortality in the words of Cythna to Laon :

“ We part to meet again—but yon blue waste,
 Yon desert wide and deep, holds no recess
 Within whose happy silence, thus embraced
 We might survive all ills in one caress :
 Nor doth the grave—I fear ’tis passionless—
 Nor yon cold vacant Heaven : we meet again
 Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless
 Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain
 When these dissevered bones are trodden in plain.”

On this Comte observed “ Il faut maintenant vous témoigner ma reconnaissance spéciale pour votre communication des deux extraits du malheureux Shelley, dont j’ai déjà porté le même jugement que vous, quoique ses poésies me fussent entièrement inconnues jusqu’ici. Cette précieuse lecture m’a fait spontanément projeter d’accorder à cet infortuné génie une commémoration secondaire quand je réimprimerai le *Calendrier positiviste*. Quoique Byron y soit déjà pourvu d’un digne adjoint, il peut encore admettre celui-là, d’après une exception motivée, dont la même semaine [the week of Milton in the month of Dante] fournit un premier exemple en faveur de Bunyan, en adoptant une réclamation britannique. Le couple exceptionnel serait spontanément harmonique, vu l’analogie de malheur et de précocité, comme de génie, qui rapproche Shelley de notre éminente Elisa Mercœur, morte à 26 ans en 1835 [Shelley was drowned at 30 in 1822.] Ses poésies ne me sont pareillement connues que d’après les extraits que j’en ai lus publiquement gravés sur sa tombe, toujours entourée encore d’admirateurs des deux sexes. Je n’ai pas eu besoin, pour oser l’inscrire à notre calendrier, de

each side is terraced with a gallery below the terrace 4 m. wide and 6 m. high. The remaining 40 metres of length are cut off forming an oblong at the end 160 m. long and 40 wide. In this are two squares of 40 m. at each end for the vicarage and its garden, at the left side and the library and its garden at the right side. Then two oblongs 40 m. by 20 m. contain, next the vicarage, the Philosophical Presbytery, and next the library the Positivist School. The middle 40 m. contains the semicircular apse of the temple and two courts. From the diameter of the apse of the temple projects its great nave 80 m. long and 40 m. wide, with a total height of 50 m. The apse is divided from the nave by two walls which project 12 m. on each side. At the extreme end of the apse stands the Statue of Humanity. This presumably would resemble the Symbol of Humanity on the Religious Standard—personified by a woman of thirty, holding her child in her arms (“personnifiée par une femme de trente ans, tenant son fils entre ses bras,” *Politique Positive*; i. 387), and hence greatly resembling the usual figures of the Virgin Mary, but probably with a very different expression in her face. In front of this, but within the apse, there would be space for 1,000 women, in the midst of whom the priest would officiate. On each side the nave a space of 5 m. wide would be separated off, and divided into 7 chapels on either side, in groups of 4 nearest the entrance, and 3 nearest the apse, separated by an empty space of 5 m. These chapels are numbered from the entrance to the apse, Nos. 1 to 7 on the right on entering, and 8 to 14 on the left. Each of the first thirteen are dedicated to the patron of the corresponding month, and will each contain his statue, with busts of his weekly adjuncts, see above pp. 29-33. The 14th would be dedicated to the thirteen female saints (names not given), or to Héloïse (of Abélard memory) to whom with Dante's Beatrice is dedicated 19 St. Paul. The central part of the nave is to accommodate 5,000 men. An

s'applique ensuite au Monde, et doit se compléter en embrassant le destin," (*Syn. Sub.* p. 18.) The earth is therefore erected into a Great Fetish, having energy and will, but not intelligence, which is reserved for Humanity, and Fate is symbolised by space, called the Great Medium, having sympathy only. "Une inaltérable trinité dirige nos conceptions et nos adorations, toujours relatives, d'abord au Grand-Être, puis au Grand-Fétiche, enfin au Grand-Milieu. Fondée sur la théorie de la nature humaine, et sur la loi du classement universel, cette hierarchie offre un décroissement continu du caractère propre à la synthèse subjective. On y vénère au premier rang l'entière plénitude du type humain, où l'intelligence assiste le sentiment pour diriger l'activité. Nos hommages y glorifient ensuite le siège actif et bienveillant dont le concours, volontaire quoique aveugle, est toujours indispensable à la suprême existence. Il ne se borne pas à la Terre, avec sa double enveloppe fluide, et comprend aussi les astres vraiment liés à la planète humaine comme annexes objectives ou subjectives; surtout le Soleil et la Lune que nous devons spécialement honorer (note 18, p. 56). A ce second culte succède celui du théâtre [that is, abstract space,] passif autant qu'aveugle, mais toujours bienveillant où nous rapportons tous les attributs matériels, dont sa souplesse sympathique facilite l'appréciation abstraite à nos cœurs comme à nos esprits." (*Synthèse Sub.* p. 24.) All this was to have been developed in the two next volumes. The only existing first volume of the *Synthèse*, giving a criticism of mathematics without a single mathematical diagram or symbol, and full of historical references without the mention of a single name of author or book, so that it is extremely difficult to follow even for professed mathematicians, and written in a very peculiar style, the trick of which, when explained (*Synthèse* pp. 755-9), I find very disturbing to my own study, as it was evidently straining to the author himself, is probably seldom referred to by any Positivist, and its contents

NOTE 25, p. 45.—*Suggestions for the Popularisation of the Religion of Humanity.*—Comte's works already want re-editing and condensing. A reconstruction of his Philosophy in a much smaller compass even than Miss Martineau's abridged translation, and adapted to the advances that human knowledge has since made, and hence not a mere abstract, is very desirable.* And a complete re-writing of his Polity, with the excision of those parts which are now practically ignored (see notes 20 and 24), that is, of much of the preliminary discourse, and most of the fourth volume, and a reduction of the remainder to one volume, would be very desirable. The synthesis might be entirely neglected. Such is what appears advisable to me for those to undertake, who have the interests of the Religion of Humanity at heart. Christianity would never have existed if it had had in the first place to be drawn from the Bible and Testament. The sects of Protestantism show us clearly the effects of such study by those unqualified to pass a judgment, including, perhaps, even the greater number of Christian priests. Not one in a hundred thousand of those who might be led to exercise the Religion of Humanity could possibly peruse Comte's original works, either in French or any other language. Such a book, therefore, should be written by qualified existing Positivists as could "be understood of the people." Systematic language, which when not thoroughly familiar, veils thought, and which abounds in all Comte's later writings, should be avoided. Much must be laid down dogmatically as conclusions arrived at by Positivists, and especial care should be taken to avoid attributing them to the convenient abstraction, "Positivism." In short, something clear and hearty should be laid

* In the *Revue Occidentale* for the day after this discourse was delivered I saw advertised "La Philosophie Positive, par Auguste Comte, résumée par M. Jules Rig, 2 vol., in 8vo.," so that the same idea seems to have occurred in part to positivists in Paris.



