

life in all communions with the differences of their dogmatic creeds, and the vital importance attached by each communion to its own. Meantime science, having achieved her emancipation from authority, has made prodigious progress, and acquired vast influence over the life of man. Thus religion in her weakness and her fetters has been brought into contact and into contrast with science in her strength and freedom: and no wonder that to exclusively scientific minds the domain of spirit should seem the last stronghold of unreason, which it will be the crowning triumph of science to subdue. Great men of science, indeed, like all great men, know the limits of their own sphere. But the lesser men of science, who, to tell the plain truth, have often no more largeness of mind or breadth of cultivation than an ingenious mechanic, grasp eagerly at the sceptre of the moral world.

Comte, the real though disclaimed author of the "Westminster" philosophy, was placed in a position which exposed him to all these influences in the highest degree. As a Frenchman, he lived in the midst of political despair. He saw religion only in the aspect of French ultramontaniam, and had no alternative before him but that of French scepticism, which he pardonably preferred. Rational Religion he had never beheld. His cultivation had evidently been almost exclusively scientific, and his course of Positive Philosophy is a perfect representation of the tendencies of exclusively scientific minds when unprovided with a rational theory of the moral world and a rational religion. He goes through the physical sciences; arrives at that which is beyond science; and impatient of the limit set to his course, tries to bridge over the gulf by laying it down, dogmatically and without proof, that the moral—or, as he chose to call it, the sociological—world differs from the physical only in the greater complexity of its phenomena, and the greater difficulty, consequent on that complexity, of resolving its phenomena into their necessary laws.

There can scarcely be a doubt that Comte, towards the end of his life, by which time he had been abandoned by Mr. Mill and all his rational disciples, was insane. Nor is it difficult to detect the source of his insanity. It was egotism, uncontrolled by the thought of a higher power, and, in its morbid irritation, unsoothed by the influence of religion. The passage in which he says that having at first been only an Aristotle, he, through his affection for a female friend, became also a St. Paul, has been often quoted. But it is not a more rampant display of egotism than the passage at the beginning of his "Catechism," in which