

latter may be easily made to speak for themselves. The definition, if the historian does his work faithfully, will follow, more or less modified by the relational aspect of the questions with which he is dealing.

In one sense there never was an era in civilisation in which there was not a marked tendency in individuals (a tendency as powerful in individual and social life as instinct in animals) to give up a certain proportion of individual powers, or rights, or privileges, for the purpose of their utilisation for the common good. And it may be as confidently asserted that, as long as human nature remains as it is, there never will be a period in future history when it will not be so. Whether the individual has rights or privileges conferred upon him by natural or divine law, or whether these follow as the necessary incidents of his position as a human being, in relation to society, is a discussion which has the same relation to history as metaphysics to the study of physics. So also with the discussion, whether or not the individual human being has only such rights and privileges as are conferred from time to time on him by such social authority or power as existed when he became associated with his fellow human beings in submission to some elementary form of order, or law, or community of action.

These (for the historian) are fruitless questions to follow. They suggest, however, two basic and conflicting principles, which are dividing opinions and are now contesting for the dominance and direction of the future of civilisation. The question may be put in a more concise form in order to illustrate it in its practical application to society