

# *Catechism of Positive Religion*

*Or Summary Exposition of the Universal Religion in  
Thirteen Systematic Conversations Between a Woman and  
a Priest of Humanity*

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## **PREFACE.**

“IN the name of the Past and of the Future, the servants of Humanity—theoricians and practicians—come forward to claim as their due the general direction of this world, in order to construct at length the true Providence, moral, intellectual, and material; excluding once for all from political supremacy all the different servants of God—Catholic, Protestant, or Deist—as at once belated and a source of trouble.” With this uncompromising announcement, on Sunday, 19th October 1851, in the Palais Cardinal, after a summary of five hours, I ended my third *Course of Philosophical Lectures on the General History of Humanity*. Since that memorable conclusion, the publication of the second volume of my *System of Positive Politics* has lately manifested directly how appropriate is such a social destination to the philosophy which is able to suggest the most systematic theory of the human order.

“We come forward then, avowedly, to deliver the West from an anarchical democracy and from a retrograde aristocracy, so to constitute, as far as practicable, a true Sociocracy, one combining wisely, in furtherance of the common regeneration, all the powers of man, each in every case brought to bear according to its nature. In fact, we Sociocrats are no more democrats than aristocrats. In our eyes the respectable mass of these two opposite parties represents, though on no system, on the one hand solidarity, and on the other continuity, between which Positivism establishes on a deep foundation a necessary subordination, the substitute at last for their deplorable antagonism. But whilst our

policy rises equally above these two incomplete and incoherent tendencies, we are far from equally condemning in the present the two parties which represent them. During the thirty years of my philosophical and social career, I have ever felt a profound contempt for that which, under our different governments, bore the name of *the Opposition*, and a secret affinity for all constructive statesmen. Even those who would build with materials evidently worn out seemed to me constantly preferable to the mere destructives, in a century in which general reconstruction is everywhere the chief want. Our official conservatives are behindhand, it is true, but our mere revolutionists seem to me still more alien to the true spirit of our time. They continue blindly, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the negative direction which could only suit the eighteenth, without redeeming this stagnation by those generous aspirations after a universal renovation which distinguished their predecessors.

Hence it is that, though the popular sympathies are instinctively with them, power constantly passes to their opponents, who at least have recognised the impotence for organising of the metaphysical doctrines, and seek elsewhere for principles of reconstruction. "With the majority of these last, their retrograde attitude is, at bottom, but a provisional choice of the least evil as against an impending anarchy, without any real theological convictions. Though all statesmen seem for the moment to belong to this school, we may assert confidently that it only supplies the formulas indispensable for the co-ordination of their empirical views, whilst waiting for the more real and stable connection to spring from a new doctrine of universal applicability.

Such is certainly the only temporal governor of real eminence of whom up to the present time our century can boast, the noble Czar who, whilst he gives his immense empire all the progress compatible with its actual condition, preserves it by his energy and prudence from useless ferment. His sagacity, however empirical, leads him to see that the West alone is charged with the glorious and difficult mission of laying the foundations of human regeneration, which the East has subsequently and peaceably to appropriate as it shall rise. He seems to me to be even conscious that this immense elaboration was reserved specially for the great Western centre, the spontaneous action of which, though of necessity disorderly, is the only one which should always be respected, as absolutely indispensable to the common solution. The habitual agitation of all the remainder of the West, though more difficult to restrain than that of the East, is in reality almost equally prejudicial to the natural course of the final regeneration, for it tends without ground to displace its principal centre, which the whole of the past fixes in France.

Our situation in the West so excludes the simply revolutionary point of view that it reserves for the opposite camp the production of the maxims which best express it. Not forgetting the memorable practical formula,<sup>1\*</sup> the author of which was a democrat fortunately without literary training, it is among pure conservatives that the most profound political sentence of the nineteenth century had its birth—*To destroy you must replace*. The author of this admirable sentence, equally excellent in expression and thought, presents, however, nothing remarkable in point of intellect. His only real recommendation is a rare combination of the three practical qualities—energy, prudence, and perseverance. But the constructive point of view so tends at present to enlarge conceptions, that, given a favourable situation, it can by itself suggest to an intellect of small depth a really profound principle, which is adopted and systematically developed by Positivism.

Be this as it may, the retrograde nature of the worn-out doctrines which our conservatives provisionally employ, must disqualify them absolutely for directing political action in the midst of an anarchy which had its origin in the irremediable weakness of the old beliefs. The West can no longer submit its reason to the guidance of opinions which evidently admit of no demonstration; nay, which are radically chimerical, as are all opinions derived from theology, even if reduced to its fundamental dogma. All now recognise that our practical activity must cease to waste itself on mutual hostilities, in order peaceably to develop our drawing out in common the resources of man's planet. But still less can we persist in the state of intellectual and moral childhood in which our conduct rests only on motives which are absurd and degrading. Without ever repeating the eighteenth century, the nineteenth must always continue its work, realising at length the noble aspiration of a demonstrated religion directing pacific activity.

Now that our circumstances set aside every simply negative tendency, the only ones of the philosophical schools of the last century really discredited are the illogical sects whose predominance was necessarily very short. The incomplete destructives, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, who thought that they could overthrow the altar and preserve the throne, or the converse, are fallen without possibility of rising, after ruling, such was the destiny allotted them, the two generations which prepared and achieved the revolutionary explosion. But, ever since reconstruction has been the order of the day, the attention of men reverts more and more to the great and immortal school of Diderot and

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<sup>1</sup> \* *Il faut faire de l'ordre avec du desordre*—Your materials are disorder, with them you must organise order. -M. Caussidiere.

Hume, which will really give its stamp to the eighteenth century, connecting it with the seventeenth through Fontenelle, and with the nineteenth through Condorcet. Equally emancipated in religion and politics, these powerful thinkers necessarily tended towards a total and direct reorganisation, confused though its conception must then be. All of them would now rally in support of the only doctrine which, basing the future on the past, at length lays a perfectly firm foundation for the regeneration of the West. It is from this school that I shall always consider it an honour to be descended in a direct line through my leading precursor, the eminent Condorcet. On the other hand, I never expected anything but hindrances, intentional or not, from the belated relics of the superficial and immoral sects sprung from Voltaire and Rousseau.

But with this great historical stock I have always connected whatever of real eminence came from our latest adversaries, whether theological or metaphysical. Whilst Hume is my principal precursor in philosophy, Kant comes in as an accessory; his fundamental conception was never really systematised and developed but by Positivism. So, under the political aspect, Condorcet required, for me, to be completed by De Maistre, from whom, at the commencement of my career, I appropriated all his leading principles, which now find no adequate appreciation except in the Positive school. These, with Bichat and Gall as my precursors in science, are the six immediate predecessors who will ever connect me with the three fathers of the true modern philosophy—Bacon, Descartes, and Leibnitz. Carrying on this noble genealogy, the Middle Ages, intellectually condensed in Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon, and Dante, place me in direct subordination to the eternal prince of true thinkers, the incomparable Aristotle.

Retracing our steps as far as this true fountain-head, we feel deeply that, since the adequate extension of Rome's dominion, the more advanced populations are vainly seeking for an universal religion. Experience has made it quite clear that no supernatural belief can satisfy this ultimate longing. Two incompatible Monotheisms equally aimed at this necessary universality, without which Humanity could not follow her natural destiny. But their opposed efforts only resulted in their mutually neutralising each other, so as to reserve this attribute for doctrines susceptible of demonstration and admitting discussion. For more than five centuries, Islam renounces the conquest of the West, and Catholicism abandons to its eternal rival even the tomb of its pretended founder. These vain spiritual aspirations have not even been able to extend over the whole territory of the old temporal rule, divided with an almost equal division between the two irreconcilable Monotheisms.

The East and the West, then, must seek, apart from all theology or metaphysics, the systematic bases of their intellectual and moral communion. This long-expected fusion, which must afterwards gradually embrace the whole of mankind, can evidently only come from Positivism, that is, from a doctrine whose invariable characteristic is the combination of the real with the useful. Long limited to the simplest phenomena, its theories have there produced the only really universal convictions which as yet exist. But this natural privilege of the Positive methods and doctrines cannot for ever be confined to the domain of mathematics and physics.

First developed in the sphere of natural order, it thence passed naturally to the Vital order, whence it has lately extended finally to the human order, collective or individual. This decisive completeness of the Positive spirit now does away with every pretext for preserving, by artificial means, the theological spirit, which has come to be, in modern Europe, as disturbing as the metaphysical, of which it is both historically and dogmatically the source. Besides, the moral and political degradation of the theological priesthood had long precluded any hope of restraining, as in the Middle Ages, the vices of the doctrine by the instinctive sagacity of its best interpreters.

Instinctively abandoned henceforward to its natural decay, the monotheistic belief, Christian or Musulman, deserves more and more the unfavourable judgment which, during the three centuries of its rise to power, it elicited from the noblest statesmen and philosophers of the Roman world. Not able at that time to judge the system but by the doctrine, they hesitated not to reject, as the enemy of the human race, a provisional religion which placed perfection in detachment from earth.

Modern instinct reprobates still more strongly a morality which proclaims that the benevolent sentiments are foreign to our nature, which so misunderstands the dignity of labour as to refer its origin to a divine curse, and which makes woman the source of all evil. Tacitus and Trajan could not foresee that, for some centuries, the wisdom of the priesthood, aided by favourable circumstances, would so far check the natural defects of such doctrines, as to draw from them, provisionally, admirable results for society. But now that the Western priesthood has become hopelessly retrograde, its belief, left to itself, tends to give free scope to the immoral character which is inherent in its anti-social nature. It deserved the respectful treatment of prudent conservatives only so far as it was impossible to substitute for it a better conception of the world and of man—a conception entirely dependent on the slow rise of the Positive spirit. But this laborious initiation being now complete, Positivism definitively eliminates Catholicism, as every other form of

theologism, by virtue even of the admirable social maxim above quoted.

After fully satisfying the intelligence and the activity, the Positive religion, ever impelled by the reality which characterises it, has extended in due form even to feeling, which is henceforth its principal domain and becomes the basis of its unity. We see no reason to fear then that any true thinkers, theoretical or practical, can at the present day, as in the early days of Catholicism, fail to see the superiority of a real and complete faith, which, far from being social by accident, shows itself such by its inherent nature. For the rest, it is for the nascent priesthood of Positivism and for all its true disciples, by their conduct as men and citizens, to secure on grounds of experience a due appreciation of its excellence, even from those who cannot directly judge its principles. A doctrine which shall always develop all the human virtues, personal, domestic, and civic, will soon be respected by all its honest opponents, whatever may be their ungrounded predilection for an absolute and egoistic synthesis, as opposed to a relative and altruistic one.

But, to establish this crucial competition, it was necessary first to so condense Positivism that it may become really popular. This is the particular object of this small exceptional work, for which I interrupt, for some weeks, my great religious construction, of which the first half only is as yet accomplished. I had thought at first that this valuable episode should be postponed until the entire completion of that immense work. But after writing, in January 1851, the Positive theory of human unity, I felt sufficiently forward to allow me to introduce such an interlude after the volume in which that theory forms the first and most important chapter. Growing, as I worked out that capital volume, this hope became mature when I wrote its final preface. I realise it to-day, before I begin the construction of Dynamical Sociology, which will be the special subject of the third volume of my *System of Positive Politics*, to be published next year.

Due to the unexpected ripeness of my principal conceptions, this resolution was greatly strengthened by the fortunate crisis which has just abolished the parliamentary regime and instituted a dictatorial republic, the two preliminary conditions of any true recreation. It is quite true that this dictatorship by no means wears as yet the character set forth as essential in my Positivist Lectures of 1847. What it most wants is to be compatible with full freedom of exposition and even of discussion—a freedom absolutely indispensable for spiritual reorganisation, not to say that it alone can reassure us against all retrograde tyranny. But under one form or other, this necessary complement will before long be attained, which seems to me to involve, as the preceding phases, one last violent crisis. Once attained, its advent on empirical grounds will soon

determine the peaceful creation of the systematic triumvirate which gives its form and expression to the temporal dictatorship put forward, in the Lectures above mentioned, as the government adapted to the organic transition. Without, however, waiting for these two new phases of our revolutionary experiment, the actual dictatorship already permits the direct propagation of renovating thought. The freedom of exposition which as a natural consequence it brings to all really constructive thinkers as breaking at length the sterile sway of the talkers, naturally acted as a special invitation to me to direct the thoughts of women and proletaries towards the basis of thorough renovation.

This work, then—an episode—by furnishing a systematic basis for the active propagation of Positivism, necessarily forwards my principal construction, for it brings the new religion to its true social audience. However solid the logical and scientific bases of the intellectual discipline instituted by Positive Philosophy, its severe regime is too antipathetic to our present mental state for it ever to prevail without the irresistible support of women and the proletaries. The urgent need of it can only be soundly appreciated by these two social masses, which, alien to all pretension to teaching, can alone enforce on their systematic chiefs the encyclopedic conditions demanded by their social office. This is why I was bound not to shrink from introducing into the popular language philosophical terms which are absolutely indispensable, terms not created by Positivism, but of which it has systematised the meaning and fostered the use. Such are, in particular, two pairs of essential value as characteristic formulas, first *Static* and *Dynamiic*, then *Objective* and *Subjective*, without which my exposition would remain inadequate. Once properly defined, especially by their uniform use, their judicious employment greatly facilitates instead of obscuring philosophical explanations. I do not scruple in this work to consecrate expressions which the Positive religion must at once pass into universal circulation, considering the high importance of their use from the intellectual and even the moral point of view.

Thus led to compose a true Catechism for the Religion of Humanity, I had first to examine, on rational principles, the form always adopted for such expositions, the dialogue. I soon found in it a fresh instance of the happy instinct by which practical wisdom often anticipates the conclusions of sound theory. Fresh from the special work of constructing the Positive theory of human language, I felt at once that since expression should always issue in communication, its natural form is the dialogue. Further, as all combinations, even physical, and still more logical, are binary, the dialogue admits, under pain of confusion, only one interlocutor. The monologue is in reality adapted only to

conception, limiting itself to the formal expression of its process, as if one were thinking aloud, without reference to any hearer. When language is used not merely to assist the investigations of the reason, but to direct the communication of its results, then it requires a fresh shape, specially adapted to this transfer of ideas. Then we must take into account the peculiar state of the listener, and foresee the modifications which the natural course of such exposition will call for. In a word, the simple statement must thus become a real conversation. Nor can its essential conditions be satisfactorily met except by assuming one single and clearly determined interlocutor. But if this type is judiciously chosen, it may, for ordinary use, adequately represent every reader; since indeed it were not possible to vary the mode of exposition to meet the exigencies of each individual, as may be done in actual conversation.

A discourse, then, which is in the full sense didactic, ought to differ essentially from one simply logical, in which the thinker freely follows his own course, paying no attention to the natural conditions of all communication. Still, to avoid the great labour of recasting one's thoughts, in general we limit ourselves to laying them before others as we originally thought them ; though this rough method of exposition largely contributes to the scanty efficacy of most of our reading. The dialogue, the proper form for all real communication, is reserved for the setting forth of such conceptions as are at once important enough and ripe enough to demand it. This is why, in all times, religious instruction is given in the form of conversation and not of simple statement. Far from betraying a negligence excusable only in cases of secondary importance, this form, rightly managed, is, on the contrary, the only mode of exposition which is really didactic: it suits equally every intelligence. But the difficulties attendant on the new elaboration which it requires justify our not adopting it for ordinary communications. It would be childish to aim at such perfection for any instruction not of fundamental interest. On the other hand, this transformation for the purposes of teaching is only practicable where the doctrines are sufficiently worked out for us to be able to distinctly compare the different methods of expounding them as a whole, and to easily foresee the objections which they will naturally elicit.

Were I bound here to point out all the general principles applicable to the art of communication, I should dwell on the improvements admissible in regard to style. Especially devoted to the expression of feelings, poets have always felt how superior is verse to prose for that expression, to render artificial language more esthetic, by bringing it nearer to natural language. Now, the same reasons would equally apply to the communication of thoughts, if we had to attach as much



importance to it. Conciseness of language and the aid of imagery, the two essential characteristics of true versification, would be as appropriate for perfecting the exposition of thought as the expansion of feeling. So, perfect communication would require not merely the substitution of dialogue for monologue, but also that of verse for prose. This second improvement in teaching, however, must be still more of an exception than the first, because of the additional labour it requires. It presupposes even a greater maturity in the conceptions to be expressed, not only in their interpreter but also in the audience, which has, by an effort of its own, to fill up at once the gaps left by poetical concision. This is why several admirable poems are still only in prose, the imperfection of the form being at the time excusable, where the subject was not generally familiar. An analogous motive acts more strongly against putting into verse any religious catechism. But the reality and spontaneity which distinguish the Positive belief will enable it in time to introduce this last improvement into its popular exposition, when that belief shall begin to spread sufficiently to admit of conciseness and imagery. Only provisionally, then, need we feel limited in it to the substitution of the dialogue for the monologue.

In accordance with this special theory as to the didactic form, I was led not only to justify previous practice, but even to improve upon it, so far as concerns the interlocutor. By leaving the hearer completely undetermined, the dialogue became extremely vague, and as such even almost illusory. Having placed on rational grounds the empirical adoption of the dialogue, I soon felt that it would remain incomplete, and if incomplete inadequate, so long as it was not clear who the second person was, at least to the author. Unless you set before you a real, although in the immediate instance, an ideal communication, you cannot draw out to the full, till the inherent advantages of such a form. Then you institute a real conversation, as distinct from a statement thrown into dialogue.

Applying at once this clear principle, I naturally chose the angelic interlocutress who, after only one year of direct living influence, has been now for more than six years subjectively associated with all my thoughts as with all my feelings. It is through her that I have at length become for Humanity an organ in the strictest sense twofold, as may any one who has worthily submitted to woman's influence. Without her I should never have been able practically to make the career of St. Paul follow on that of Aristotle, by founding the universal religion on true philosophy, after I had extracted the latter from real science. The constant purity of our exceptional connection, and even the admirable superiority of the angel who never received due recognition, are

moreover already fully appreciated *by* nobler minds.

When, four years ago, I revealed this incomparable inspiration by the publication of my *Discourse on the System of Positivism*, she could at first only be judged by its intellectual and moral results, thenceforward appreciable by the sympathetic heart as by the synthetic mind. But last year the three introductory pieces, which will ever be the distinctive feature of the first volume of my *System of Positive Politics*, enabled all to directly appreciate this eminent nature. Hence, when I recently published the second volume of the same treatise, I was already able to openly congratulate myself on the touching unanimity of marked sympathy which both sexes feel towards the new Beatrice. These three public antecedents dispel at once all doubt as to my sainted hearer, with whom the duly prepared reader is sufficiently acquainted for our conversations to possess their own peculiar and immediate interest.

Such a catechumen meets perfectly all the essential conditions of the best form of teaching. Superior though she was, Madame Clotilde de Vaux was yet so early snatched from me that it was impossible sufficiently to initiate her in Positivism, the point to which her own wishes and efforts tended. Before death broke off finally this affectionate instruction, pain and grief had seriously impeded it. When I now accomplish subjectively the systematic preparation which I could hardly enter upon during her life, my angelic disciple brings with her nothing beyond the primary dispositions to be found in most women, and even in many proletaries. In all those souls which Positivism has not yet reached, I presuppose solely, as in my eternal companion, a profound desire to know the religion which can overcome the modern anarchy, and a sincere veneration for its priest. I should even prefer for readers those in whom no scholastic training interferes with the spontaneous fulfilment in fair degree of these two previous conditions.

All who know my general institution of the true guardian angels, already sufficiently explained in my *Positive Politics*, are aware, moreover, that the principal female type becomes in it habitually inseparable from the two others. This sweet connection holds good, even in the exceptional case which presents to me in combination, in my pure and immortal companion, the subjective mother my second life presupposes, and the objective daughter who should have added grace to my transient existence. From the time that her invariable reserve had so purified my affection as to raise it to the level of her own, all I aspired to was the openly avowed union which should follow on a legal adoption, suitable to our disparity in age. When I shall publish our noble correspondence, my last letter will give direct evidence of this holy project, the only one which, under our respective destinies, was compatible with repose and

happiness.

It is then without effort that I proceed to use in this catechism the personal designations habitually used in religious instruction. More even than the priesthood of theology does the priesthood of Positivism require in its priests complete maturity, most particularly by virtue of its immense encyclopedic preparation. This is why I have fixed the ordination of the priests of Humanity at forty-two, the age at which the development of the body and the brain is completely ended, as is also the first social life. The names of *father* and *daughter* become then peculiarly appropriate as between the teacher and the catechumen, in conformity with the old etymology of the word priest. By using them here, I naturally approximate to the personal relations amid which I should have lived had it not been for our fatal catastrophe.

But this concentration of the holy conversation on the presiding angel ought not to conceal from the reader, any more than from myself, that my two other patronesses take constantly an appropriate though silent part in it. The venerable mother and the noble adopted daughter, whose subjective influence and objective service I have elsewhere explained, will always here be present to my heart when my intellect shall be duly feeling the dominant impulse. For the future become inseparable, these three angels are so my own that their constant cooperation has lately suggested to the eminent artist, whom Positivism now claims with pride, an admirably esthetic inspiration, which converts a mere portrait into a picture of profound meaning.

A didactic conversation on this plan renders my own labour easier as well as that of my reader. For such a public exposition comes very near the private explanations for which my sainted companion would have naturally asked me had our objective union lasted longer, as is already clear from my philosophical letter on Marriage. The very period of the year at which I accomplish this pleasant task recalls with peculiar force her own unsuspected wishes, during our incomparable year, for a methodical initiation. I have only then to carry myself back seven years to conceive, as actually spoken, that which I must now develop subjectively, by placing myself, in 1852, in the situation of 1845. But this effort of transposition brings with it the precious compensation that I am able to give a better idea of the angelic ascendancy which I can only adequately characterise by combining two admirable verses, respectively meant for Beatrice and Laura-

Qnella che innraradisa la mia mente \*  
Ogni basso pemier dal cor m'avulse.  
She who doth imparadise my soul (*Cary*)  
Tore from my heart every low thought.

This accomplishment of an initiation prompted by affection brings it moreover into fuller agreement with the paternal feelings which finally prevailed towards her who will always be associated with me as at once disciple and colleague. Her age having become fixed, in obedience to the general law of the subjective life, mine exceeds it more and more, so as even now to allow only filial images. This more perfect continuity of our two lives perfects also the whole harmony of my own nature. In thus explaining the Positive constitution of human unity, I am developing and consolidating the fundamental connection between my private and my public life. The philosophical influence of the angel who inspires me becomes then as complete and as direct as it ever can be, and consequently beyond dispute in the eyes of all. I venture then to hope that, to enable me to testify my just gratitude, the nobler minds will soon by their due aid supply the deficiency of which I am profoundly conscious in the midst of my best daily prayers, as was Dante in regard to his sweet patroness-

Non e l'affezion mia tanto profonda  
Che basti a render voi grazia  
per grazia.

-*Par.* iv. 12r.

Affection fails me to requite thy grace

With equal sum of gratitude. —CARY's *Translation*.<sup>2</sup>

But this gratitude of the public must, equally with my own, embrace the two other guardian angels who complete the presiding female influence over me. However distant, alas! the imposing memory of the perfect Catholicism which swayed my noble and tender mother, it will always be an incitement to me to give precedence, more than in my youth, to the constant cultivation of feeling over that of intellect and even of activity. On the other hand, were a too exclusive sense of the necessity of basing all real public virtue on private goodness to lead me to undervalue the importance of civic morality, an importance inherent in it and directly its own, I should soon correct myself by the admirable sociability of my third patroness. I undertake this episodic work, then, under the especial assistance of all my angels, although two of them can only co-operate silently, without prejudice to their personal claims to the veneration of all.

Looked at from a more general point of view, this form of teaching tends directly to convey a strong impression of the character of the religion to be taught. For, of itself, it brings out the fundamental nature of the Positive system which, aiming above all at the systematic discipline of all the powers of man, rests principally on the constant

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<sup>2</sup> Dante, *Par.* xxviii. 3. t Petrarch, *Sonnet* lxxxvi. 8.

concurrency of feeling with reason to regulate activity. Now, this series of conversations always represents the heart and the intellect as combining in religious union to moralise the material power to which the world of action is necessarily subjected. In that world the woman and the priest are, in fact, the two indispensable elements of the true moderating power, which is at once domestic and civic. In organising this holy coalition in the interests of society, each constituent proceeds here in conformity with its true nature: the heart states the questions, the intellect answers them. Thus the very form of this Catechism points at once to the great central idea of Positivism: man thinking under the inspiration of woman, to bring synthesis into constant harmony with sympathy in order to regularise synergy.

The adoption of this method for the new religious instruction shows that it addresses by preference the sex in which affection predominates. This preference, quite in accordance with the true spirit of the final regime, is in an especial manner adapted to the last transition, in which every influence recognised by the normal state must always work with greater strength, if with less regularity. The better proletaries are likely, it seems to me, ere long to welcome heartily this short but decisive work; yet it is more suited to women, especially to women without instruction. They alone can fully understand the preponderance that ought to be given to the habitual cultivation of the heart, so borne down by the coarse activity, both in speculation and action, which prevails in the modern Western world. It is solely in this sanctuary that, at the present day, we can find the noble submissiveness of spirit required for a systematic regeneration. During the last four years, the reason of the people has suffered profoundly from the unfortunate exercise of universal suffrage; it had previously been preserved from the constitutional sophisms and Parliamentary intrigues of which the rich and the literary class had had the monopoly. Developing a blind pride, our proletaries have thought themselves able to settle the highest social questions without submitting to any serious study. Though this deterioration is much less in the southern populations of the West, the resistance of Catholicism sheltering them against the metaphysics of Protestantism or Deism, the reading negative books is beginning to spread it too much even there. I see none anywhere but women, who, as a consequence of their wholesome exclusion from political action, can give me the support required to secure the free ascendancy of the principles which shall in the end qualify the proletaries to place their confidence aright on points of theory as well as on points of practice. Besides, the deep-seated mental anarchy justifies this special appeal of the Positive religion to the affective sex, as it renders more necessary

than ever the predominance of feeling, the sole existing preservative of Western society from a complete and irreparable dissolution. Since the close of the Middle Ages, the influence of women has been the sole though unacknowledged check on the moral evils attaching to the mental alienation towards which the West more and more tended, especially its centre—France. This chronic unreason being henceforth at its height, since there is no social maxim but succumbs to a corrosive discussion, feeling alone maintains order in the West.

But feeling even is seriously weakened already by the reaction of the sophisms of the intellect, these being always favourable to the personal instincts which are, moreover, the more energetic of the three sympathetic instincts which belong to our true cerebral constitution, the first and last are much weakened, and the intermediate nearly extinct, in the majority of the men who take an active part at present in Western agitation. Penetrate to the interior of existing families, and you find how little strength attachment has left, in the intercourse which should foster it most. As for the general kindness, so much vaunted at present, it is more an indication of hatred of the rich than of love of the poor. For modern philanthropy too often expresses its pretended benevolence in forms appropriate to anger or envy. But the social instinct of most constant use, as affording the only immediate basis of all true discipline of man, has suffered even more than the two others. The deterioration in this respect, most traceable in the rich and educated, spreads even among proletarians, unless a wise indifference divert them from the political movement.

Still, veneration can continue to exist in the midst of the wildest revolutionary aberrations; it is indeed their best natural corrective. I learnt this formerly by personal experience during the profoundly negative phase which necessarily preceded my systematic development. At that time enthusiasm alone preserved me from a sophistical demoralisation, though it laid me peculiarly open for a time to the seductions of a shallow and depraved juggler. Veneration, at the present day, is the decisive mark which distinguishes the revolutionists susceptible of a real regeneration, however behind they may be in point of intelligence, especially among the Communists who are without instruction.

But, though in the immense majority of those who are negative we may still discern this valuable symptom, in the majority of their chiefs it is certainly not found, the existing anarchy giving everywhere a temporary predominance to bad nature. These men, absolutely insusceptible of discipline, despite their small number wield a vast influence, which infects with the ferment of

subversive ideas the heads of all who are without firmly-rooted convictions. There is no general remedy at present for this plague of the West except the contempt of the people or the severity of the governments. But the doctrine which alone will secure the regular action of these two safeguards can at the outset find no commanding support but in the feeling of women, soon to be aided by the reason of the proletariat.

Without the due intervention of women, the discipline of Positivism would not succeed in driving back to the last ranks these pretended thinkers who speak with decision on sociological questions though ignorant of arithmetic. For the people, still sharing in many respects their worst faults, is incapable as yet of supporting the new priesthood against these dangerous talkers. At least, I can, for the moment, hope for no collective assistance except from the proletarians who, standing aloof hitherto from our political discussions, are not the less instinctively attached, as women are, to the social aim of the great revolution. These two classes form the milieu prepared for this Catechism.

Over and above the general reasons which should in this place direct my attention chiefly to women, I was long ago led to look principally to them for the triumphant advent of the solution of the Western problem indicated by the whole Past.

In the first place, it would be absurd to propose to end without them the most thorough of all human revolutions, whilst in all previous revolutions they took a very large share. Were their instinctive repugnance to the modern movement really invincible, that would be enough to ensure its failure. It is the true source of the strange and fatal anomaly which forces retrograde chiefs on progressive populations, as though idiocy and hypocrisy were to supply the official securities for Western order. Till Positive religion has sufficiently overcome this resistance of women it will not be able, in its treatment of the leading partisans of the different belated systems, to give free scope to its decided and just reprobation of their mental and moral inferiority.

Those who at the present day deny the innate existence of the disinterested affections lay themselves open to the just suspicion of rejecting on this point the demonstrations of modern science only because of the radical imperfection of their own feelings. As they pursue no good, however trifling, but from the lure of an infinite reward or from the fear of an eternal punishment, they prove their heart to be as degraded as their intellect evidently is, considering the absurdity of their beliefs. And yet, by the tacit adhesion of women, the direction of the West is still intrusted to those whom such characteristics will exclude,

and wisely, from all the higher functions, when Positivism shall have duly systematised the reason of mankind.

But the Religion of Humanity will soon strip the retrograde party of this august support, which it retains solely from a just horror of anarchy. For in spite of adverse conceptions resting on previous association, women are well disposed to value aright the only doctrine which in the present day can thoroughly combine order with progress. Above all, they will recognise the fact that this final synthesis, while it comprehends every phase of our existence, better secures the supremacy of feeling than did the provisional synthesis which sacrificed to it the intellect and the activity. Our philosophy comes into perfect agreement with the tendencies of women by ending the encyclopedic scale with morality, which, as science and as art, are necessarily the most important and the most difficult study, condensing and controlling all the others. Giving at length full scope to the feelings of chivalry, which in earlier times were compressed by the conflicts with theology, Positive worship makes the affective sex the moral providence of our species. In that worship every true woman supplies us in daily life with the best representative of the true Great Being. 'The Positive regime constituting', on systematic principles, the family as the normal basis of society, ensures the due prevalence therein of the influence of women, at length become the supreme private authority on the common education. On all these grounds, the true religion will be fully appreciated by women, as soon as they grasp adequately its leading characteristics. Even those who at first should regret the loss of chimerical hopes will not be slow to feel the moral superiority of our subjective immortality, so thoroughly altruistic in its nature, as compared with the old objective immortality, which could never be other than radically egoistic. The law of eternal widowhood, the distinctive feature of Positivist marriage, would be enough to form, on this point, a decisive contrast.

The better to incorporate women into the Western revolution, its last phase must be looked on as having naturally for them a deep and special interest, in direct relation with their own peculiar destiny.

The four great classes which substantially constitute modern society, were destined to experience in succession the radical convulsion required at first for its final regeneration. It began, in the last century, with the intellectual element, which rose in successful insurrection against the whole system based on theology and war. The political explosion which was its natural result took its rise soon after in the middle classes, who had long been growing more eager to take the place of the nobility. But the resistance of the nobility throughout Europe could only be overcome by calling in the French proletariat to the aid of its new



temporal chiefs. Thus introduced into the great political struggle, the proletariat of the West put forward irresistible claims to its just incorporation into the modern order, as soon as peace allowed it to make its own wishes sufficiently clear. Still this revolutionary chain does not yet include the most fundamental element of the true human order. The revolution in regard to women must now complete the revolution which concerned the proletariat, just as this last consolidated the revolution of the middle classes, sprung originally from the philosophical revolution. Then only will the modern convulsion have really prepared all the essential bases of the final regeneration. Till it takes in women, it can only result in prolonging our lamentable oscillations between retrogression and anarchy. But this final complement is a more natural outcome of the whole of the antecedent phases than any one of them is of its predecessor. It connects most closely with the popular phase, as the social incorporation of the proletariat is evidently bound up with and dependent on, the due enfranchisement of woman from all labour away from home. Without this universal emancipation, the indispensable complement of the abolition of serfage, the proletary family cannot be in a true sense constituted, since in it women remain habitually exposed to the horrible alternative of want or prostitution.

The best practical summary of the whole modern programme will soon be this indisputable principle—*Man ought to maintain woman*, in order that she may be able to discharge properly her holy function. This Catechism will, I hope, make sensible the intimate connection of such a condition with the whole of the great renovation, not merely moral, but also mental, and even material. Influenced by the holy reaction of this revolution in the position of women, the revolution of the proletariat will by itself clear itself of the subversive tendencies which as yet neutralise it. Woman's object being everywhere to secure the legitimate supremacy of moral force, she visits with especial reprobation all collective violence: she is less tolerant of the yoke of numbers than of that of wealth. But her latent social influence will soon introduce into the Western revolution, under its two other aspects, modifications less directly traceable to it, but not less valuable. It will facilitate the advent to political power of the industrial patriciate and of the Positive priesthood, by leading both to dissociate themselves once for all from the heterogeneous and ephemeral classes which directed the transition in its negative phase. So completed, and so purified, the revolution of the West will proceed firmly and systematically towards its peaceful termination, under the general direction of the true servants of Humanity. Their organic and progressive guidance will completely set aside the retrograde and anarchical parties, all persistence in the theological or metaphysical state being treated as a weakness of brain

incapacitating for government.

Such are the essential conditions which represent the composition of this Catechism as fully adapted to its most important office, in the present or for the future. When the Positive religion shall have gained sufficient acceptance, it will be the best summary for constant use. For the present it must serve, as a general view, to prepare the way for its free acceptance, by a successful propagation, for which hitherto there was no systematic guidance available.

Taken as a whole, this episodic construction expresses, even by its form and conduct, all the great intellectual and moral attributes of the new faith. There will be felt in it throughout a worthy subordination of the reason of man to the feeling of woman, in order that the heart may bring all the powers of the intellect to the most difficult and important teaching. Its ultimate reaction should then secure respect for, and even the extension to others of, my own private worship of the incomparable angel from whom I derive at once the chief inspirations and their best exposition. Such services will soon render my sainted interlocutress dear to all truly regenerated spirits. Henceforward inseparable from view, her glorification will constitute my most precious reward. Irrevocably incorporated into the true Supreme Being, her tender image supplies me, in the eyes of all, with its best impersonation. In each of my three daily prayers, the adoration of the two condenses all my wishes for inward perfection in the admirable form in which the sublimest of Mystics foreshadowed in his own way the moral motto of Positivism—(*Live for others*)—

May I love Thee more than myself, nor love myself save for Thee.  
*Amem te plus quam me, nec me nisi propter te l*  
*-Imitatio Christi, iii. 5, 82, 83-(ed. Hirsche.)*

## **AUGUSTE COMTE,**

*Founder of the Religion of Humanity.*

PARIS, 25<sup>th</sup> CHARLEMAGNE 64

(SUNDAY, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1852).

*P.S.* To increase the usefulness of this Catechism, I add to its preface an improved edition of the short catalogue which I published, 8<sup>th</sup> October 1851, with the view of guiding the more thoughtful minds among the people in their choice of books for constant use. It is a service which at the present time could only originate with the Positive priesthood, by virtue of its encyclopedic character, thus brought into distinct light.

The damage both to intellect and morals everywhere resulting from irregular reading, should sufficiently indicate at the present time the increasing importance of this short synthetical work. Though the collection has not yet been formed, each can without difficulty even now collect in one shape or other its separate parts.

### **HINT TO THE READER**

To facilitate the study of this Catechism, the author advises the reader to devote at first two weeks to it, allowing a day for each conversation. Two hours a day will suffice for reading in the morning, and reading again in the evening, each of the fourteen chapters, the Preface included. After this general introduction, the reader will be able to go back upon the several dialogues at his pleasure, till he has made them his own.

# INTRODUCTION.<sup>3</sup>

## ***GENERAL THEORY OF RELIGION.***

### **CONVERSATION I.**

***The Woman.***-I have often asked myself, my dear father, why you persist in designating as a religion your universal doctrine, though it rejects all supernatural belief. But on reflection I considered that this term is given in common use to many different and even incompatible systems, each of which claims it exclusively, whilst no one of them has at any time been able, taking the whole of our species, to reckon up as many adherents as opponents. This led me to think that this fundamental term must have a general acceptation, radically independent of every special faith. If so, I conjectured that, keeping close to this essential meaning, you might so denominate Positivism, in spite of the greater contrast that exists between it and the previous doctrines, which openly avow that their mutual differences are as serious as the points in which they agree. Still, as this explanation seems to me yet far from clear, I ask you to begin your exposition by explaining, in direct and precise language, the radical sense of the word *Religion*.

***The Priest.***-This name, my dear daughter, has, in fact, by its etymology no necessary connection with any of the opinions that may be used for attaining the end to which it points. In itself, it expresses the state of perfect *unity*, which is distinctive of our existence, both individual and social, when all its parts, moral as well as physical, habitually converge towards a common purpose. Thus the term would be equivalent to the word *synthesis*, were it not that this last, not by force of its composition, but by nearly universal custom, is now limited entirely to the domain of the intellect, whilst the other embraces all the attributes of man. Religion, then, consists in *regulating* each individual nature, and in *rallying* all the separate individuals; which are but two distinct cases of one problem. For every man, in the successive periods of his life, differs from himself not less than at any one time he differs from others ; so that the laws of permanence and participation are identical.

Such harmony, for the individual or society, not being ever fully attainable, so complicated is our existence, this definition of religion delineates, then, the unchanging type to which tends more and more the totality of human effort. Our happiness and our merit consist, above all, in drawing as near as possible to this unity, the gradual development of

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<sup>3</sup> The Roman numerals attached to the headings indicate the series of the thirteen conversations, the Arabic the divisions of each part of the work.

which is the best measure of real progress towards individual or social perfection. As the various attributes of man come into freer play, the more important becomes their habitual concert, but at the same time the more difficult, were it not that their evolution tended of itself to make us more susceptible of discipline, as I will explain to you shortly.

The value always set on this synthetical state naturally concentrated attention on the method of attaining it. Thus men were led, taking the means for the end, to transfer the name of *religion* to whatever system of opinions it represented. But however irreconcilable these numerous beliefs at first sight appear, Positivism brings them into essential agreement, by referring each to the purpose it answered in its own time and country. There is, at bottom, but one religion, at once universal and final, to which all the partial and provisional syntheses more and more pointed, so far as their respective conditions allowed. These several empirical efforts are now succeeded by the systematic development of human unity; for it has at length become possible to constitute this unity, immediately and completely, by virtue of the sum total of our unsystematic preparations. Thus it is that Positivism naturally removes the mutual antagonism of the different antecedent religions, by taking as its own peculiar domain that common ground on which they all instinctively rested. Its doctrine could never be universally received were it not that, despite its anti-theological principles, its relative spirit secures it, by the nature of the case, strong affinities with every form of belief that has been able for a time to guide any part whatever of Humanity.

***The Woman.***-*Your* definition of religion will satisfy me completely, my father, if you can succeed in clearing up the serious difficulty which seems to me to arise from its too great comprehensiveness. For, in defining our unity, you take in the physical as well as the moral nature. They are, in fact, so bound up together that no true harmony is possible if one tries to separate them. And yet I cannot accustom myself to include health under religion, so as to make moral science, in its full conception, extend to medicine.

***The Priest.***-*And* yet, my daughter, the arbitrary separation which you wish to perpetuate would be directly contrary to our unity. It is due solely to the inadequacy of the last provisional religion, which could not discipline the soul save by giving into profane hands the management of the body. In the ancient theocracies, the most complete and most durable forms of the supernatural regime, this groundless division did not exist; the art of hygiene and of medicine was in them always a mere adjunct of the priesthood.

Such is really the natural order which Positivism comes forward to

restore and to consolidate, by virtue of the completeness which characterises it. The art of man and the science of man are each of them indivisible, as are the several aspects of their common object, all parts of which are in unbroken connection. No sound treatment of either body or mind is possible, now that the physician and the priest study exclusively the physical or the moral nature; not to speak of the philosopher, who, in our modern anarchy, wrests from the priesthood the domain of the intellect, leaving it that of the heart.

The diseases of the brain, and even many others, daily prove the powerlessness of all medical treatment limited to the lowest organs. It is quite as easy to see the inadequacy of every priesthood which aims at guiding the soul whilst taking no account of its subordination to the body. This separation, which is in two ways anarchical, must then cease, once for all, by a wise reincorporation of medicine into the domain of the priesthood, when the Positive clergy shall have adequately fulfilled its encyclopedic conditions. In fact, the moral point of view is alone able to secure active obedience for hygienic injunctions, alike whether they concern the individual or society. This is easily verified by the fruitlessness of the efforts made by Western physicians to regulate our diet, now that it is no longer under the control of the old religious precepts. Men will not generally submit to any practical inconvenience solely on the ground of their personal health, where each is left to judge for himself; for we are ten times more sensible of actual and certain annoyance than of distant and doubtful advantages. We must appeal to an authority higher than any individual, to establish, even on the most unimportant points, rules of real efficacy, resting then on a social judgment which never admits uncertainty.

***The Woman.***-Now that I have thus surveyed, in all its extent, the natural province of religion, I would know, my father, what are its general conditions. It has often been represented to me as depending solely on the heart. But I have always thought that the intellect has also its part in it. Could I gain a clear idea of the parts respectively assigned the two?

***The Priest.***-A right judgment on this point, my daughter, follows from a searching examination of the word *religion*, perhaps the best in point of composition of all the terms used by man. It is so constructed as to express a twofold connection which, if justly conceived, is sufficient to summarise the whole abstract theory of our unity. To constitute a complete and durable harmony, what is really wanted is to *bind together* the within by love and to *bind it again* to the without by faith. Such, generally stated, is the necessary participation of the heart and the intellect as regards the synthetical state, individual or collective.

Unity implies, before all, a feeling to which all our different inclinations

can be subordinated. For our actions and our thoughts being always swayed by our affections, harmony would be unattainable by man if these last were not co-ordinated under one paramount instinct.

But this internal condition of unity would be inadequate, did not our intelligence make us recognise, outside of us, a superior power, to which our existence must always submit, even whilst modifying it. It is in order that we may be the better subjects of this supreme rule, that our moral harmony, as individuals or as societies, is especially indispensable. And conversely, this predominance of the without tends to regulate the within, by favouring the ascendancy of the instinct most easily reconciled with such necessity. Thus, the two general conditions on which religion depends are naturally connected, especially when the external order can become the object of the internal feeling.

***The Woman.***-In this abstract theory of our unity I find, my father, a radical difficulty, in regard to the moral influence. In considering the internal harmony, you seem to me to forget that our personal instincts have unfortunately greater energy than our sympathetic tendencies.

Now, their preponderance, which seems calculated to make them the natural centre of our whole moral existence, would on the other hand make personal unity almost incompatible with social unity. Yet the two unities not having been found irreconcilable, I need fresh explanation to show that they are in themselves entirely compatible.

***The Priest.***-Herein you have, my daughter, directly raised the grand problem of man's existence, which is, in fact, to secure the gradual predominance of sociability over personality, whereas personality is naturally predominant. The better to understand the possibility of this, we must begin by comparing the two opposite forms which our moral unity seems naturally to admit, according as its internal basis is egoistic or altruistic.

You just now used the plural in speaking of our personality, and by so doing involuntarily bore witness to its radical inability to constitute any real and lasting harmony, even in a being cut off from society. For this monstrous unity would require not merely the absence of every sympathetic impulse, but also the preponderance of one single selfish instinct. Now this is only found in the lowest animals, where all is referred to the instinct of nutrition, especially when there is no distinction of sex. But everywhere else, and particularly in man, this primary want once supplied, there is scope for the prevalence in succession of several other personal instincts, the nearly equal energy of which would neutralise their conflicting claims to the entire command of our whole moral existence. Unless all submitted to affections resting on outward objects, the heart would be for ever agitated by internal

conflicts between the impulses of the senses and the incitements of pride or of vanity, etc., supposing that cupidity proper should cease to reign, together with the purely bodily wants. Moral unity, then, is impossible, even in a solitary existence, for every being under the exclusive dominion of personal affections, which prevent his living for others. Such are many wild beasts, whom we see, allowing for times of temporary union, usually oscillating between a disorderly activity and an ignoble torpor, from their not finding outside of themselves the chief motors of their conduct.

***The Woman.***-I understand now, my father, the natural coincidence between the true moral conditions on which the individual and those on which the collective harmony depends. Still, however, I have the same difficulty in conceiving of the strongest instincts as habitually yielding.

***The Priest.***-Your difficulty, my daughter, will easily disappear if you observe that altruistic unity does not, as egoistic unity, require the entire sacrifice of the inclinations which are contrary to it in principle, but merely their wise subordination to the predominant affection. When it condenses all sound morality in the law of *Live for others*, Positivism allows and sanctions the constant satisfaction in just degree of the several personal instincts, as being indispensable to our material existence, which is always the foundation for our higher attributes. Consequently it blames, however estimable the motives may often be, any austerities which, by lessening our strength, make us less fit for the service of others. The social purpose in the name of which it recommends attention to ourselves should at once ennoble and regulate such attention, whilst we avoid equally excessive care and culpable negligence.

***The Woman.***-But, my father, this very sanction of the egoistic inclinations, constantly stimulated as they moreover are by our bodily wants, seems to me still incompatible with an habitual supremacy of our weak sympathetic feelings.

***The Priest.***-And therefore, my daughter, this moral improvement will always form the principal object of the art of man, the constant efforts of which, both individual and collective, bring us nearer and nearer to it, but never attain it completely. This progressive solution of your difficulty depends entirely on social existence, in accordance with the natural law which develops or restrains our functions and our organs in proportion to their exercise or disuse. In fact, domestic and civic relations tend to compress the personal instincts, from the struggles which they occasion between individuals. On the contrary, they favour the growth of our benevolent feelings, the only ones that admit of a simultaneous development in all a development by its nature continuous,



as the mutual stimulus is continuous, although necessarily limited by the aggregate material conditions of our existence.

This is why the true moral unity can only satisfactorily exist in our species, social progress appertaining exclusively to the best organised of the races capable of society, except so far as others join it as free auxiliaries. Still, though such a harmony cannot be developed elsewhere, it is easy to trace its principle in many higher animals, which even furnished the first scientific proofs of the natural existence of the disinterested affections. If this great conception, at all times a presentiment of universal experience, had not been so long in taking a systematic form, no one would at the present day tax with sentimental affectation a doctrine which may be directly verified in so many species inferior to our own.

**The Woman.**-*This* satisfactory explanation leaves me, my father, only one last general elucidation to wish for, as regards the intellectual conditions of religion. Athwart the incoherence of the various special beliefs, I do not clearly apprehend what constitutes the essential province of faith; yet faith must admit of a sense common to all systems.

**The Priest.**-Practically, my daughter, our faith never had but one and the same main object: namely, to form a conception of the whole order under which man lives, so as to determine our relation generally to it. Whether we assigned it to fictitious causes or studied its real laws, our object was always to understand this order which is independent of us, so the better to submit to it and the more to modify it. Every system of religious doctrine necessarily rests on some explanation or other of the world and of man, the twofold object at all times of our thoughts, whether speculative or practical.

The Positive faith sets forth directly the real *laws* of the different phenomena observable, whether internal or external; *i.e.*, their unvarying relations of succession and resemblance, which enable us to foresee some as a consequence of others. It puts aside, as absolutely beyond our reach and essentially idle, all inquiry into *causes* properly so called, first or final, of any events whatever. In its theoretical conceptions it always explains the *how*, never the *why*. But when it is pointing out the means of guiding our activity, it on the contrary makes consideration of the end constantly paramount; as the practical result is then certainly due to an intelligent will.

Yet though vain in its direct results, the search after causes was at the outset no less indispensable than inevitable, as I will explain to you more particularly, as a substitute and preparation for the knowledge of laws, a knowledge which presupposes a long introduction. In the search for the

*why*, which could not be found, men ended by discovering the *how*, which had not been the immediate object of inquiry. Nothing is to be really blamed but the childish persistence, so common still with our literary men, in the attempt to penetrate to causes when laws are known. For as these last alone have any relation to our conduct, the search after the others becomes as useless as it is chimerical.

The fundamental dogma, then, of the universal religion is the proved existence of an unchangeable order to which all events of every kind are subject. This order is at once *objective* and *subjective*: in other words, it concerns equally the *object* contemplated and the *subject* contemplating. Physical laws in fact imply logical laws, and the converse. If our understanding did not of itself obey any rule, it would never be able to appreciate the external harmony. The world being simpler and more powerful than man, order in man would be still less compatible with disorder in the world. All positive belief, then, rests on this twofold harmony between the object and the subject.

Such an order can be shown to exist, but it can never be explained. On the contrary, it supplies the only possible source of all rational explanation, the essence of which is the bringing under general laws each particular event, which thus comes within the sphere of systematic precision, the only distinctive aim of all true science. And therefore the universal order was not recognised so long as arbitrary wills were in the ascendant, for to them men naturally at first attributed all the most important phenomena. But it was recognised at last in reference to the simplest events, in defiance of contrary opinions, on the evidence of experience constantly recurring and never belied, and from the simpler the recognition gradually extended to the more complex. Not till our own time has this extension reached its last domain, by representing as always subject to invariable laws the highest phenomena, those of the intelligence and of society—a point still denied by many cultivated minds. Positivism was the direct result of this final discovery, the completion of our long initiation and, as such, necessarily closing the preliminary era of human reason.

***The Woman.***—My father, the Positive faith on this first glimpse seems to me very satisfactory for the intelligence, but scarcely favourable enough to the activity, which it seems to place under the control of inflexible destinies. And yet, since you often say that the Positive spirit had its origin, in all cases, in practical life, it can hardly be in contradiction with it. I wish a clear conception of their agreement in general.

***The Priest.***—To attain it, my daughter, all you have to do is to correct the instinctive judgment which leads you to look on natural laws as not susceptible of modification. Whilst phenomena were attributed to

arbitrary wills, an absolute fate was a conception necessary to rectify an hypothesis directly incompatible with any efficient order. Later, the discovery of natural laws tended to uphold this general disposition, because it related first to astronomical phenomena, which are entirely out of the reach of man's interference. But in proportion as the knowledge of the natural order extended, it was regarded as essentially modifiable, even by man. It becomes the more so as its phenomena become more complicated, as I will explain to you shortly. At present this idea extends even to the order of the heavens, its greater simplicity allowing us more easily to conceive improvements, with a view to correcting a spirit of blind respect, though our weakness in regard to physical means for ever precludes our effecting them.

In all events equally, even the most complex, the fundamental conditions admit of no change; but in all cases also, even the most simple, the secondary arrangements may be modified, and most often by our intervention. These modifications in no way interfere with the invariability of the laws of nature, because they never can be arbitrary. Their nature and degree are always determined by appropriate rules, which complete the domain of science. Entire immutability would be so contrary to the very idea of *law*, that it in all cases expresses constancy perceived in the midst of variety.

Thus the natural order always amounts to a fatality admitting modifications, which becomes the indispensable basis of the order we create. Our true destiny is then a compound of resignation and action. This second condition, far from being incompatible with the first, rests directly upon it. A judicious submission to the fundamental laws is the only means of preventing all our purposes, of whatever nature, from becoming vague and uncertain; the only means, therefore, of enabling me to introduce a wise interference, in accordance with the secondary rules. This is how the dogmatic system of Positivism directly sanctions our activity, which no theological synthesis could include. The development of activity even becomes the chief regulator of our scientific labours in regard to the order of the world and its various modifications.

***The Woman.***-After such an explanation I have yet, my father, to apprehend how the Positive faith can be brought into full harmony with feeling, to which it seems to me by nature diametrically opposed. I understand, however, that its fundamental dogma supplies a strong basis for moral discipline in two ways; first, by bringing our personal inclinations under the control of an external power; secondly, by awakening our instincts of sympathy to make us more wisely submit to or modify the necessity which presses on us all alike. But allowing these

valuable attributes, Positivism still does not as yet offer me enough of direct stimulus to the holy affections, which, it would seem, should constitute the chief province of religion.

**The Priest.**-I confess, my daughter, that hitherto the Positive spirit has offered the two moral disadvantages attendant on science, the puffing up and withering, by encouraging pride and by turning from love. These two tendencies will always be sufficiently strong in it to habitually require systematic precautions, of which I will speak later. Still in the main, on this point, your reproach is the result of an inadequate judgment of 'Positivism, which you look at solely in the state of incompleteness it still exhibits in the greater number of its adherents. They limit themselves to the philosophical conception which is the offspring of the scientific preparation, not going on to the religious conclusion which alone summarises this philosophy as a whole. But complete the study of the real order of nature, and we see the Positive doctrine finally concentrate around a synthetic conception, as favourable to the heart as to the intellect. The imaginary beings whom religion provisionally made use of inspired lively affections in man, affections which were even more powerful under the least elaborate fictions. This valuable aptitude could not but seem for a long period alien to Positivism, from the immense scientific introduction it required. So long as the philosophical initiation only extended to the inorganic order, nay, even to the vital order, it could only reveal laws which were indispensable for our action, without furnishing us with any direct object for enduring and common affection. But it is no longer so since the completion at length of this gradual preparation by the special study of the human order, both individual and collective.

This last step condenses the whole of Positive conceptions in the one single idea of an immense and eternal Being, Humanity, whose sociological destinies are in constant development under the necessary preponderance of biological and cosmological fatalities. Around this real Great Being, the prime mover of each individual or collective existence, our affections centre by as spontaneous an impulse as do our thoughts and our actions. Its mere idea suggests at once the sacred formula of Positivism-Love *for principle, and Order for basis; Progress for end.* Always founded on the free concurrence of independent wills, its compound existence, which all discord tends to dissolve, sanctions by its very notion the constant predominance of the heart over the intellect, as the sole basis of our true unity. Thus it is that henceforth the whole order of things is summed up in the being who studies it and is ever perfecting it. The growing struggle of Humanity against the sum of the necessities under which it exists offers to the heart no less than to the intellect a

better object of contemplation than the necessarily caprice is omnipotence of its theological precursor. More within the reach of our feelings and our conceptions, by virtue of an identity of nature which does not at all preclude its superiority to all its servants, such a Supreme Being powerfully arouses them to an activity the aim of which is its preservation and amelioration.

***The Woman.***-Still; my father, the constant physical labour necessitated by our bodily wants seems to me directly in opposition with this tendency to affection in the Positive religion. For such activity it seems to me must always, in the main, wear a character of egoism, extending even to the scientific efforts it evokes. Now this would be enough to prevent the predominance in fact of an all-pervading love.

***The Priest.***-I hope, my daughter, soon to make you see that it is possible to radically transform this egoism originally attaching to human labour. In proportion as man's industrial action becomes more and more collective, it tends more and more to the altruistic character, though the impulse of egoism must ever remain indispensable to its first beginnings. For, each habitually labouring for others, this existence develops of necessity the sympathetic affections, when it is rightly appreciated. All that is wanting, then, to these toilsome sons of Humanity is a complete and familiar consciousness of the true nature of their life. Now this will be the natural result of an adequate extension of Positive education. You would even now be able to trace this tendency, if pacific activity, still subject to no systematic discipline, were as regulated as the soldier's life, the only life hitherto organised. But the great moral results obtained formerly as regards this last, and of which there are still traces even in its present gradation, sufficiently indicate what the industrial life allows. Nay, we must expect from the instinct of construction sympathetic influences of greater directness and completeness than those of the instinct of destruction.

***The Woman.***-Guided by this last indication I begin, my father, to master the general harmony of Positivism. I already see how in it the activity, naturally subordinate to faith, can also submit to love, which at first sight it seems to reject. If so, your doctrine seems to me at length to fulfil all the essential conditions of *religion*, according to your definition of the term, since it is adapted equally to the three great divisions of our existence—loving, thinking, acting—which were never before so perfectly combined.

***The Priest.***-The more you study the Positive synthesis, the more you will feel, my daughter, how far its reality renders it more complete and efficacious than any other. The habitual predominance of altruism over egoism, in which lies the great problem for man, is in Positivism the

direct result of a constant harmony between our best inclinations and all our labours, theoretical as well as practical. This life of action, represented by Catholicism as hostile to our inward growth, becomes in Positivism its most powerful guarantee. You apprehend now the contrast between two systems, the one of which admits, while the other denies, the existence in our nature of the disinterested affections. The bodily wants, which seemed destined always to keep us apart, may for the future lead to a closer union than if we were exempt from them. For acts develop love better than wishes; and besides, what wishes could you form for those who wanted nothing? We may also see that the type of real existence peculiar to Positivists necessarily surpasses, even in regard to feeling, the chimerical life promised to the disciples of theology.

*The Woman.*-To complete this introductory conversation, I beg you, my father, to explain shortly the general division of religion; its several main constituents you will treat later.

*The Priest.*-This division, my daughter, is a consequence of a just appreciation of the whole of the existence which religion has to direct. The worship, the doctrine, and the life, respectively concern our feelings, our thoughts, and our actions. Our religious initiation must begin with the worship which, by revealing to us, synthetically, Humanity, cultivates the feelings adapted to the mode of existence she prescribes. After this, in the doctrine is set forth the scientific construction which has for its object to explain the order on which all rests, and the Great Being who modifies that order. Lastly, by the life we regulate directly the conduct of each human being. In this way Positive religion embraces at once our three great continuous constructions, Poetry, Philosophy, Politics. But everything in that religion is subordinate to morals, be it the growth of our feelings, the development of our knowledge, or the course of our actions, so as to make morals our constant guide in our threefold search after the beautiful, the true, and the good.

## CONVERSATION II.

### THEORY OF HUMANITY.

*The Woman.*-Our first conversation, my father, has left me a sense of alarm at my profound incompetence as regards the "great argument" on which you are entering. Since the doctrine of the universal religion is one and the same thing as the Positive Philosophy, my mind seems too weak, or at any rate too unprepared, to grasp its explanation, however simple you may make it. I bring with me nothing beyond a full confidence, a sincere respect, and an active sympathy for the doctrine which seems

calculated, after so many failures, at length to overcome our modern anarchy. But I fear that something more than these moral dispositions is needed for me to enter with any chance of success on so difficult a study.

*The Priest.*—Your uneasiness, my daughter, calls for some introductory remarks, which I hope will soon reassure you. Our sole object here is to effect, for the new religion, a general exposition equivalent to that which formerly taught you Catholicism. This second operation ought to be even easier than the former, for not only is your reason now mature, but the doctrine is, by its nature, more intelligible as always demonstrable. Remember, besides, the admirable maxim which our great Moliere put into the mouth of the man of taste in his last masterpiece—

Je consens qu'une femme ait des clartes de tout;  
—*Femmes Savantes*, Act i. sc. 3—

I consent that a woman should have clear ideas on all subjects—and remark further that what was then, “I consent,” would be now, “It is fitting.”

In strict truth, the priesthood and the public had always the same intellectual domain, allowing for the difference of cultivation, which was systematic in the one case, quite unsystematic in the other. This essential agreement, without which no religious harmony would be conceivable, in Positivism becomes at once more direct and more complete than it could ever be in theologism. The true philosophic spirit consists in reality, as simple good sense, in knowing what is, in order to foresee what shall be, with a view to bettering it where possible. One of the best Positive precepts even denounces as faulty, or at any rate premature, every systematisation not preceded and prepared by a sufficient spontaneous development. This rule is an immediate consequence of the dogmatic verse by which Positivism characterises our existence as a whole—

Act from affection, and think to act.

The first half answers to the spontaneity, the second to the systematisation which follows it. Action, unguarded by reflection, may occasion many inconveniences, but nothing else can, as a general rule, supply the raw material for effectual meditation, which will allow us to act better.

Consider lastly, that no intellect can abstain from forming some opinion on the order of the world, whether external or human. You now know that religious dogma always had the same essential object, with this single general difference—that the knowledge of laws henceforth takes the place of the inquiry into causes. Now, illusory hypotheses as to

causes cannot seem to you more intelligible than real notions upon laws.

Women and proletaries, for whom this exposition is chiefly meant, cannot and ought not to become professors, neither do they wish it. But all need sufficient mastery of the spirit and the method of the universal doctrine to enforce on their spiritual chiefs an adequate scientific and logical preparation, the necessary foundation for the systematic exercise of the priestly office. Now, this discipline of the intellect is, at the present day, so contrary to the habits resulting from our modern anarchy, that it never could prevail unless enforced by the public of both sexes on those who claim to guide its opinion. This social condition will always give a great value to the general spread of religious instruction, over and above its proper object of guiding the conduct of men, whether as individuals or as societies. But this service becomes, at the present day, of capital importance, as the means of finally terminating the anarchy of the West, the prominent characteristic of which is the revolt of the intellect.

Could this Catechism but convince women and proletaries that their would-be spiritual guides are radically incompetent to deal with the high questions of which the solution is in blind confidence left them, it would largely help to calm the West. Now this unanimous conviction can, at the present day, spring only from a sufficient appreciation of the final doctrine, such as to place beyond dispute the general conditions of its systematic cultivation.

As for the difficulties which now frighten you in this indispensable study, you attach too little weight, as to overcoming them, to your excellent moral dispositions. No existing school would hesitate to pronounce authoritatively that the intellect thinks at all times as if the heart were not. But women and proletaries have never lost sight of the powerful reaction of the feelings on the intellect—a reaction explained at last by Positive Philosophy. Your sex in particular, whose pleasant but unconscious task it was to hand down to us, as far as was possible, under the pressure of modern anarchy, the admirable habits of the Middle Ages, recognises daily the error of the metaphysical heresy which separates these two great attributes. Since, according to the beautiful maxim of Vauven argues, the heart is necessary to the intellect for its most important inspirations, it must also aid in understanding their results. Its powerful assistance is peculiarly available for moral and social conceptions; for in them, more than elsewhere, the sympathetic instinct can aid the spirit of synthesis, whilst without that aid its greatest efforts could not overcome their difficulties. But it may also be of use in the lower theories, by virtue of the necessary inter-connection of all our real speculations.



Of the two fundamental conditions of religion, love and faith, the first should certainly take the first place. For though faith be well adapted to strengthen love, the inverse action is stronger as more direct. Not only does feeling preside over the spontaneous inspirations required originally by every systematic creation, but it sanctions and assists this creation, when it has once felt its importance. No woman with experience is unaware of the too frequent inadequacy of our best affections when not aided by firm conviction. This word *convince* would suffice, if we look to its etymology, to recall the power deep-seated beliefs have to strengthen the within by binding it to the without.

Lastly, the intellectual deficiency which alarms you at this point rests on the usual confusion of instruction with intelligence. Your familiarity with, and admiration for, the unrivalled Moliere have not kept you from the common error in this respect, an error carefully kept up by our Trissotins of all professions. And yet we ought to blush at being in the present time behind the Middle Ages, when all could appreciate the profound intellectual eminence of persons who were very unlettered. Have you not sometimes found in such people more real capacity than in most professors? Now more than ever is instruction really necessary only to construct and develop science, which should always be so framed as a whole as to be directly within the reach of all sound intellects. Otherwise our best doctrines would soon degenerate into dangerous mystifications. This deviation, natural to all theoreticians whatsoever, can only be effectually checked in them by a due surveillance on the part of the public of both sexes.

***The Woman.***-Encouraged by your introduction, I ask you, my father, to begin the systematic exposition of the Positive doctrine by a more direct and complete explanation of its universal principle. I already understand that your conception of the true Great Being by its very nature condenses the whole real order, not only human but external. This is why I feel the want of a clearer and more precise definition as regards this fundamental unity of Positivism.

***The Priest.***-To reach it, you must first, my daughter, define Humanity as *the whole* of human beings, past, present, and future. The word *whole* points out clearly that you must not take in all men, but those only who are really assimilable, in virtue of a real co-operation towards the common existence. Though all are necessarily born children of Humanity, all do not become her servants, and many remain in the parasitic state which was only excusable during their education. Times of anarchy bring forth in swarms, nay, even enable to flourish, these sad burdens on the true Great Being. More than one of them has recalled to you the energetic reprobation of Ariosto, borrowed from Horace, (Ep. i.

2. 27):

Yennto al mondo sol per far letame:

-*Sat.* iii. 33. Born upon the earth merely to manure it :  
and, still better, the admirable condemnation of Dante—

Che visser senza infamia e senza lodo.

Cacciarli i ciel per non esser men belli, Ke lo profondo inferno li  
riceve,

Ch' alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d' elli.

Kon ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa.

-*Inferno*, iii. 36-51.

Who lived without or praise or blame . . . . .

Heaven drove them forth,

Not to impair its lustre, nor the depth

Of Hell receives them, lest the accursed tribe

Should glory thence with exultation vain.

Speak not of them, but look and pass them by.

—CARY's *Translation*.

So you see that, in this respect as in all others, the inspiration of the poet was far in advance of the systematic view of the philosopher. Be this as it may, if these mere digesting machines are no real part of Humanity, you should, as a just compensation, associate with the new Supreme Being all its worthy animal auxiliaries. All useful habitual cooperation in forwarding the destinies of man, when given voluntarily, raises the being which gives it into a real element of this composite existence, with a degree of importance proportioned to the dignity of its species and its own service. To estimate rightly this indispensable complement of human existence, let us imagine ourselves without it. We then do not hesitate to look on many horses, dogs, oxen, etc, as more estimable than certain men.

In this primary conception of human concert, our attention is naturally directed to solidarity rather than to continuity. But though the latter is at first less felt, because it requires a deeper examination to discover it, it is an idea which must ultimately predominate. For the progress of society comes very soon to depend more on time than on space. It is not today only that each man, as he exerts himself to estimate aright his indebtedness to others, sees that his predecessors as a whole, in comparison with his contemporaries as a whole, have much the larger share in that indebtedness. The same superiority is manifested, in a less degree, in the most remote periods; as is indicated by the touching worship then always paid to the dead, as was beautifully remarked by Vico.

Thus the true social existence consists more in the continuity of

succession than in the solidarity of the existing generation. The living are, by the necessity of the case, always and more and more, under the government of the dead: such is the fundamental law of the human order.

To grasp it more fully, we must distinguish two successive lives in each true servant of Humanity: the one, temporary but conscious, constitutes life properly so called; the other, unconscious but permanent, does not begin till after death. The first, being always bodily, may be termed *objective*; especially in contrast with the second, which, leaving each one to exist only in the heart and mind of others, deserves the name of *subjective*. This is the noble immortality, necessarily disconnected with the body, which Positivism allows our *soul*, preserving this valuable term to designate the sum of our intellectual and moral functions, without any allusion to a corresponding entity.

According to this lofty conception, the true human race is composed of two masses, both of which are always essential, while the proportion between them is constantly varying, with a tendency to strengthen the power of the dead over the living in every actual operation. If the action and its result are most dependent on the objective element, the impulse and the rule are principally due to the subjective. Largely endowed by our predecessors, we hand on gratuitously to our successors the whole domain of man, with an addition which becomes smaller and smaller in proportion to the amount received. This necessary gratuitousness meets with a worthy reward in the subjective incorporation by which we shall be able to perpetuate our services under an altered form.

Such a theory seems at the present day to be the last effort of the human intellect under systematic guidance; yet its germ, anterior to all such guidance, is always traceable in the most remote forms of man's evolution, and was already recognised by the most ancient poets. The smallest tribe, nay, even every family of any consideration, soon looks on itself as the essential stock of this composite and progressive existence whose only impassable limits, in space or time, are those of the normal constitution of the planet it occupies. Though the Great Being is not yet sufficiently formed, its most extensive conflicts never concealed its gradual evolution, which, rationally judged, supplies now the only possible basis of our ultimate unity. Even under the Christian egoism, which dictated to the stern St. Peter the characteristic maxim, "*As strangers and pilgrims,*" we see the admirable St. Paul even then by feeling anticipating the conception of Humanity, in this touching but contradictory image, "*We are every one members one of another.*" It devolved on the Positivist principle to disclose the one trunk to which, by the law of their being, belong all these members; which were instinctively

confounded.

**The Woman.**-I feel compelled, my father, to admit this fundamental conception, whatever difficulties it still presents. But I am frightened at my own insignificance in presence of such an existence, the immensity of which reduces me to nothing more completely than did of old the majesty of a God with whom, though feeble, I felt myself in some definite and direct relation. Now that you have mastered me by the ever-growing preponderance of the new Supreme Being, I need to have re-awakened in me the just consciousness of my individuality.

**The Priest.**-This will follow, my daughter, from a more complete appreciation of the Positive doctrine. It is sufficient if we see that, whilst Humanity as a whole always constitutes the principal motor of all our operations, physical, intellectual, or moral, the Great Being can never act except through individual instruments. This is why the objective part of the race, notwithstanding its increasing subordination to the subjective, must always be indispensable for the subjective to exercise any influence. But on analysing this collective participation, we find it ultimately the result of the free concurrence of purely individual efforts. Herein we have what should raise each worthy individuality in presence of the new Supreme Being more than could be the case in respect to the old. In fact, this latter had no real need of any of our services except to give him vain praises, the childish eagerness for which tended to degrade him in our eyes. Remember this conclusive verse of the *Imitation* :-

I am necessary to thee, thou art useless to me.

Tu mei indiges :

Non ego tui indigeo.

-*Imitatio Christi*, iv. 12, 38, 39 (ed. Hirsche).

Doubtless but few men are warranted in thinking themselves indispensable to Humanity: such language is only applicable to the true authors of the principal steps in our progress. Still every noble human being may and should habitually feel the utility of his personal cooperation in this immense evolution, which must cease at once should all the individual cooperators have simultaneously disappeared. The development, and even the preservation, of the Great Being must then always depend on the free services of its different children, though the inactivity of any one in particular, generally speaking, admits of an adequate compensation.

This summary exposition of the fundamental dogma of our religion enables me, my daughter, now to proceed to the explanation, first in the general, then in detail, of the Positivist worship. The study of it will make you feel, I hope, that the poetical power of Positivism is certainly

on a level with its philosophical, though it has not produced as conclusive results.

## EXPLANATION OF THE WORSHIP.

### CONVERSATION III.

#### THE WORSHIP AS A WHOLE.

*The Woman.*-The two preceding conversations, my father, have cleared up for me the theory of religion and the conception of Humanity, the centre of the whole Positive system. I ask you now to teach me directly to love better, in order to know better, and to serve better, the incomparable Goddess whom you have revealed to me, and into whom in the end I hope to deserve incorporation. In such a subject our conferences may assume the character of real conversations. I shall only inter·upt your teaching in order to throw light on, or set forth more fully, points on which you do not sufficiently dwell. I even hope to take an active part by anticipating some of your explanations, thus rendering your exposition more rapid without detracting from its completeness. For in the worship we enter the domain of feeling, where the inspiration of woman, though it keep its empirical character, can really aid the priesthood in its construction.

*The Priest.*-I rely greatly, my daughter, on this spontaneous co-operation to shorten this part of our Catechism as compared with the two following. But in order to make the best use of your present disposition, his new conversation, which concerns merely the worship in general, must begin by a systematic general plan of our religion, though you are already familiar with it.

As all combinations, physical even, and still more logical, must always be binary, as is pointed out clearly by the etymology of the word, the rule is applicable necessarily to any division whatever. The fundamental division of religion obeys it naturally, by partitioning out the domain of religion between love and faith. Wherever evolution, individual or collective, follows its normal course, love first leads us to faith, so long as the growth is spontaneous. But when it becomes systematic, then the belief is constructed to regulate love. This leading division is equivalent to the true general distinction between theory and practice.

The practical domain of religion necessarily again breaks up into two, as a consequence of the natural distinction between feelings and acts. The

theoretical part corresponds to the intelligence only, the sole possible basis of belief. But the practical part embraces all the rest of our existence, quite as much our feelings as even our acts. Universal custom, prior to all theory—and such custom is the best rule of language—gives a direct sanction to this view, by designating as religious *practices* the habits which relate to worship, quite as much as, if not more than, those habits which more particularly concern the regime. This apparent confusion rests on a basis of profound though empirical wisdom, through which the people, and particularly women, early learnt, as the priesthood learnt, that the perfecting of our feelings is a more important and difficult task than the immediate improvement of our actions. Our love never becoming mystic, Positive worship normally forms part of the practical domain of the true religion; we love more in order to serve better. But on the other hand, from the true religious point of view, our acts may always have an essentially altruistic character, since the main object of religion is to dispose us and teach us to live for others. Inspired by love, our actions in return tend to develop love. Directly visible in the case of intellectual improvement, when rightly guided, this natural faculty extends even to material progress, provided it proceed on right principles. This is why the regime, under its religious aspect, appertains to the domain of love as much as does the worship.

These two principles, which make our worship practical, our regime affective, yet without ever confusing them, could not be discovered whilst religion remained theological. Then the worship and the regime were thoroughly heterogeneous, one having God for its object, the other man. The worship rose above the regime only because the second of the two beings was necessarily subordinate to the first. Both were essentially egoistic in character, in accordance with the thoroughly individual constitution of a faith which never could be reconciled with the existence in our nature of the benevolent instincts, an existence allowed by Positivism alone. Under the older faith, the division between the regime and the worship was as marked as that which separates the worship from the doctrine; so that the general plan of religion became unintelligible, as a result of our just dislike to ternary combinations.

In the final state, on the contrary, the divisions of religion are as favourable to the reason as to the feelings. In it the doctrine differs from the worship and the regime much more than these last differ from one another. It is in this way that the ordinary constitution of religion again becomes ternary, but become so by a division which is still binary, its main division being completed by a single subdivision, heretofore absurdly placed on a level with it. These three constituent parts together ultimately form a regular progression, such is the natural homogeneity of

its different elements. It leads without effort from love to faith, or the reverse; according as we take the subjective or the objective course, in the two most important periods of religious initiation, respectively under the direction of woman or the priest. To idealise the doctrine in order to idealise the regime, such was always the destination proper of the worship, which thus becomes capable of representing the whole of religion. Its study will make you sensible, I hope, that the poetic capacity of Positivism is really on a level with its philosophic power, though not as yet able to produce such conclusive results.

***The Woman.***-A very natural eagerness to enter at once on the direct study of our worship made me, at the outset, overleap, my father, the general preamble you have just set before me. I now feel how much I needed it in order to gain a clear conception of the plan of religion, of which I had previously not sufficiently coordinated the three parts. This valuable explanation, however, seems to me now so complete, that I hope to study immediately the whole system of the worship to be paid to our Goddess.

***The Priest.***-We adore her not as the older God, to compliment her, my daughter, but in order to serve her better, by bettering ourselves. It is important here to recall this normal aim of the Positive worship, in order to anticipate or correct the tendency to degenerate into mysticism, to which we are always liable under a too exclusive attention to the feelings, as it disposes us to neglect, or even to forget, the acts which they should govern. With my greater tendency to system, I am more prone than you to such an error, the practical evils of which would be soon pointed out by your instinctive wisdom, which would even remedy them in a degree by some happy inconsistency in theory. It is of particular importance for me to avoid this mistake in the present conversation, for by its more abstract and general character it makes it more easy and more serious. Your corrections, drawn from experience, would always ultimately bring me right, I doubt not, but often too late; so as at times to lay me under the necessity of laborious efforts to repair the error.

With this precaution constantly in view, let us look on the whole worship as having for its object to form a systematic connection between the doctrine and the regime by idealising both. As for the doctrine, the worship completes it and condenses it, by rendering the conception of Humanity at once more familiar and more imposing, through an ideal presentation of it. But, as type of the regime, the worship must tend directly to ameliorate our feelings, never losing sight of the modifications they habitually undergo from the three stages of human life-personal, domestic, and social. At first sight, these two general modes of apprehending and instituting the worship may seem

irreconcilable, yet a natural agreement arises from the aptitude inherent in a worthy idealisation of the Great Being to consolidate and develop the love which is the basis of its whole existence. If so, the original difference in no way tends to break up the worship into two separate domains--one belonging exclusively to the intellect, the other to feeling. Such a division would be ordinarily as impracticable as the distinction generally drawn between algebra and arithmetic, which can really stand alone only in very simple cases, and these mostly of our own making; and yet the two, though constantly mixed, are never confused. This comparison gives a fair idea of the closeness of the connection which naturally binds together the two aspects, intellectual and moral, or theoretical and practical, under which we are justified in viewing either the whole Positive worship or each of its parts. But, in spite of the spontaneousness of their connection from the nature of the religious system to which both relate, to combine them wisely is really the chief difficulty to be one with in instituting our worship. For the worship is able, as the doctrine, and even more, to degenerate into mysticism or empiricism, according as generalisation and abstraction are in excess or defect. Now these two contrary errors produce, in the moral point of view, equal evils; for the social efficacy of man's feelings is equally impaired by their becoming too refined or too coarse.

*The Woman.*—The better to estimate this general difficulty, I may—may I not, my father—bring it down to the difficulty of rightly instituting the subjective life, on which of necessity rests the whole Positive worship, whether we view it intellectually or morally. Our Great Being is formed much more by the dead in the first place, than by those to be born, than by the living, most of whom even are only its servants, without the power, at present, of becoming its organs. There are but few men, and still fewer women, who admit of being satisfactorily judged in this respect before the completion of their objective career. During the greater part of his actual life each one has it in his power to balance, and even far to overbalance, the good he has done by the evil he may do. So the human population is essentially made up of two kinds of subjective elements, the one determinate, the other indefinite, between which its objective element, though more and more diminished in importance, alone forms an immediate and close connection. If so, I see that, to represent to us the true Great Being, Positive worship must largely develop in each of us the subjective life: which, by the way, it seems to me, will render it eminently poetic. At the same time such practices, in which thought works chiefly by the aid of images, become very apt for the direct cultivation of our best feelings.

The intellectual condition then appears quite compatible with the moral



aim, on the principle which you have just given me. But this necessary means seems itself to raise a new general difficulty. For I hardly see how it will be possible to institute, still more to secure unanimous assent to, the daily realisation in private or in public of the subjective life, and yet its universal practice becomes indispensable for our religion. No doubt the entire regeneration of education will procure us, on this point, immense resources, which it is difficult to estimate at the present time. Nevertheless, I fear that these resources will always be too weak to overcome the difficulty; one on which the Past seems to me to offer, directly at least, no ground for general hope.

*The Priest.*-On the contrary, my daughter, I hope soon to dispel your uneasiness, natural though it be, by a judicious survey of this long initiation, now finally ended, as is clearly shown by the very construction of this Catechism. It is impossible, in fact, to mistake the natural and universal capacity of our species for living a subjective life, when we see such a life, under different forms, prevail with it during forty centuries. The emancipated now know that during this immense probation the brains of all were habitually under the sway of beings purely imaginary, though believed to have a real and distinct existence. But the various theologians are almost as convinced on this point; since each belief judges so of all the others; yet the supporters of those others, put together, were always in a strong majority, especially in the present dispersive state of supernatural belief. Each one thinks illusion the rule, his own fiction the single exception.

So prone are we to the subjective life that it is more prevalent the nearer we ascend to the simple age of full spontaneity, individual or collective. The greatest effort of our reason consists, on the contrary, in so subordinating the subjective to the objective that our mental operations may represent the external world, in the degree required by the position we occupy, whether for action or submission, in relation to its unalterable predominance.

This normal result is obtained, in the individual as in the species, only in the period of complete maturity, and it constitutes the best sign of that maturity. Though this transformation tends radically to change the conduct of the human understanding, it will never prevent our developing the subjective life, even beyond all the needs of Positive worship. We shall always need a certain discipline to keep within due limits our natural disposition to substitute in excess the within for the without. You need feel, then, no serious uneasiness on this head; unless you judge man, as he will be, by the present tendency of scientific specialities to crush the imagination and to wither the heart; whereas this is only one of the natural symptoms of modern anarchy.

The only essential difference between the new and the old subjectivity must lie in this, that the new will be fully felt and acknowledged, no one ever confusing it with objectivity. Our religious contemplations will consciously be carried on internally; whereas our predecessors made a vain effort to see without them what had no existence but within, always on the understanding that they might fall back on the future life for the ultimate realisation of their visions. This general contrast is easily condensed by confronting boldly the two ways of conceiving the principal subdivision of the intellect. In the normal state, contemplation, even when inward, is easier and less eminent than meditation; for in it our intellect remains nearly passive. In a word we contemplate in order to meditate, because all our important studies always are concerned with the without. To theologians, on the contrary, meditation must have always seemed less difficult and less exalted than contemplation, at that time made the highest effort of the understanding. They only meditated in order to be able to contemplate beings which were always eluding them. A familiar sign will soon mark this distinction for the greater part of the private worship. For the Positivist shuts his eyes during his private prayers, the better to see the internal image; the believer in theology opened them to see without him an object which was an illusion.

***The Woman.***-Although this conclusive explanation dispels at once my previous uneasiness, I still continue, my father, to look on the institution of the subjective life as the capital difficulty in Positivist worship. Only, the new subjectivity now appears to me always to admit of being satisfactorily reconciled with the deep reality which distinguishes our faith. But this agreement, it seems to me, must require special and unceasing efforts.

***The Priest.***-You have duly apprehended, my daughter, the essential condition which I must now fulfil. For the best contrast is drawn between the worship and the regime, if we assign them, as their respective domains, the subjective and the objective life. Though each is at one and the same time connected with both, the subjective evidently prevails in the worship, the objective in the regime. Nothing is more adapted to characterise the higher dignity of the worship as compared with the regime; by virtue of the necessary preponderance of subjectivity over objectivity throughout the whole of man's existence, even the individual; and still more the collective existence.

***The Woman.***-Your systematic sanction of my unaided conclusion induces me, my father, now to ask you in what consists the true theory of the subjective life. Though it is impossible here to do more than give an outline of such a doctrine, its fundamental principle seems to me absolutely indispensable. No Positivist can do without a general

explanation of this point; for his worship, public or private, will require it for almost everyday use, as a preventive against any degeneration into mysticism or empiricism.

*The Priest.*-To satisfy your legitimate desire, my daughter, conceive of the fundamental law of the subjective life as ever consisting in its due subordination to the objective. The without never ceases essentially to regulate the within, whilst it nourishes and stimulates it; as well in regard to the life of the brain as to our bodily life. Let our conceptions be as fantastical as they may, they always bear in an appreciable degree the impress of this involuntary dominion, though it becomes less simple and even less complete, in proportion as it is more indirect. All this is a necessary consequence of the indisputable principle which I shall explain to you when expounding the doctrine, and on which I have rested our whole intellectual theory, dynamical as well as statical, thus connected with the fundamental system of biological conceptions.

The order we make never being anything but the perfecting the order we find, and that mainly by developing it, we feel here, as everywhere else, and even more than elsewhere, that our true liberty is essentially the result of a due submission. But in order properly to extend to the subjective life this general rule of the objective, you must begin by examining under this fresh aspect the natural constitution of the universal order. For all the laws which form it are far from being equally applicable to the subjective life. To make your ideas more definite, I will specify only the simplest and most common case, namely, when we employ the subjective worship to bring back as in life one whom we have loved. Without this precise determination, in which the heart aids the intellect, it would be easy to go astray in the study of such a domain.

But all the ideas formed in this way in reference to our most private and most easily appreciated worship, will be easily applied, with fit modifications, to the rest of sociolatry.

*The Woman.*-I thank you, my father, for such consideration, which I feel to be indispensable to me. This doctrine is as new as it is difficult, for this attractive problem could not be stated even, under the reign of supernatural beliefs, which forbade us to represent to ourselves our dead otherwise than in a mysterious condition, generally left vague. Such a state allowed of no analogy on essential points between us and them. Supposing us free from all uneasiness as to their ultimate fate, we could never form for them a subjective life which made every one guilty of impiety in giving to the creature the affection due to the Creator. But if this affecting question is peculiar to Positivism, not less does the general answer appertain to it, as having alone revealed the true laws of man's intellect, of which you have already given me a glimpse. I grasp, then, at

once the general method of subjective worship and its normal basis, which converts this ideal existence into a simple prolongation of the real. But would you explain to me directly the modifications which such prolongation allows.

*The Priest.*-They consist, my daughter, in the suppression, or at least in the neglect, of all the lower laws, so as to allow fuller predominance to the higher. During the objective life, the dominion of the outer world over the world of man is as direct as it is unbroken. But in the subjective life, the outward order becomes simply passive, and no longer prevails except indirectly, as the primary source of the images we wish to cherish. Our beloved dead are no longer governed by the rigorous laws of the inorganic order, nor even of the vital. On the contrary, the laws peculiar to the human order, especially the moral, though not excluding the social, govern, and that better than during life, the existence which each one of them retains in our brain. This existence, thus purely intellectual and affective, is composed essentially of images, which revive at once the feelings with which the being snatched from us inspires us and the thoughts which he occasioned. Our subjective worship is reduced, then, to a species of internal evocation, the gradual result of an exertion of the brain performed in accordance with its own laws. The image always remains less clear and less vivid than the object, in obedience to the fundamental law of our intellect. But since the contrary is often the case in diseases of the brain, a judicious culture may bring the normal state nearer to this necessary limit, far beyond what could be believed possible hitherto, so long as this beautiful domain remained vague and dark.

To determine more exactly this general subordination, observe that the subjective evocation of the loved object is always connected with the last objective impressions he left us. This is most evident as to age, which death withdraws from all increase. Our premature losses are thus found to invest the object of our affections with eternal youth. This law, from the original adorer, extends of necessity to his most remote adherents. No one will ever be able to represent to himself, after Dante, his sweet Beatrice otherwise than as at the age of twenty-five. We may think of her as younger, we cannot imagine her older.

The objective and the subjective life then differ fundamentally in this, that the first is under the direct control of physical laws, the second under that of moral laws ; the intellectual laws applying equally to both. The distinction becomes less marked when we see that, in both cases, the more general order always prevails over the more special. For the difference is then limited to the mode in which we estimate the generality, measured first by the phenomena, then by our conceptions, as will be explained when we are studying the doctrine.

Be this as it may, this necessary preponderance of the moral laws in the subjective life is so congruous to our nature that it was not merely involuntarily respected, but known and appreciated, at the earliest dawn of man's intelligence. You know, in fact, that the empirical outline of the great moral laws was long anterior to any full recognition of the lowest physical laws. Whilst the fictions of poetry set aside without scruple the general conditions of the inorganic order, and even of the vital, they conformed with admirable exactness to the leading ideas of the social, and still more of the moral order. Men found no difficulty in admitting invulnerable heroes, and gods who took any shape at pleasure. But the instinct of the people, as the genius of the poet, would at once have rejected any moral incoherence-if, for example, a writer had ventured on attributing to a miser or a coward, liberality or courage.

***The Woman.***-By the light of your explanations, I see, my father, that in the subjective worship we may neglect physical laws in order to cling more closely to the moral, the real knowledge of which is to perfect so greatly this new order of institutions. Our imagination easily frees itself from the most general conditions, even of space and time, provided that the human requirements are always respected. But I would know how we are to use such liberty, so as to facilitate our attainment of the main end of subjective worship, that is to say, the cerebral evocation of the beings dead to us.

***The Priest.***-So stated, my daughter, your question is easily answered, so evident is the observation, that the better to concentrate our strength on this holy object, we must divert none of it on superfluous modifications of the vital, nor even of the inorganic order. Be careful, then, to retain all the outer circumstances which were habitual to the being you adore. Use them even to reanimate more effectually its image. You will find on this point, in the *System of Positive Politics*, an important remark: "Our personal memories become at once clearer and more sure, when we fix definitely the material environment before we place in it the living image." I even advise you in general to break up this determination of the outward into its three essential parts, always proceeding from without inwards, according to our hierarchical principle. This rule of worship consists in fixing with precision, first the place, then the seat or the attitude, and lastly the dress, belonging to each particular case. Though the heart may at first be impatient of the delay, it soon acknowledges its deep efficacy, when it sees the loved image gradually acquire by these means a strength and a clearness which at first seemed impossible.

These operations, which are essentially aesthetic, are more easily understood by comparing them with the operations of science, by virtue of the necessary identity of the chief laws of both. In strict truth,

Science, when it tells us beforehand of a future often distant, ventures on a still bolder effort than that of art when it would call up some cherished memory. Our brilliant successes in the former case, though there the intellect derives much less aid from the heart, authorise us to hope for more satisfactory results in the other, wherein alone we have the certainty of arriving at a solution. It rests, to say the truth, entirely on our knowledge of the laws of the brain, of which our conceptions are still so confused. Our astronomical previsions, on the contrary, depend most on the simplest and best known of external laws. But whilst this distinction is sufficient to explain the inequality of our actual success in the two cases, it shows it to be simply provisional.

“When the higher laws shall be sufficiently known, the Positive priesthood will draw from them results more precious, and susceptible of greater regularity, than those of the most perfect astronomy. For the previsions of astronomy become uncertain, and often unattainable, as soon as the planetary problems become very complicated, as we see almost always in the case of comets. Without justly incurring the charge of chimerical presumption, the providence of man can and ought to aspire to give more regularity to the order which is most amenable to its action, than can prevail, as regards the majority of events, in the order which obeys only a blind fatality. The greater complication of the phenomena will ultimately yield, in these high cases, to the paramount sagacity of the modifying agent, when the human order shall be sufficiently known.

*The Woman*-I feel, my father, that to subordinate the subjective to the objective is at once the constant obligation and the chief resource of Positive-worship. You have made me quite understand that, far from withdrawing ourselves from this necessary yoke, we ought freely to accept it, even when we might neglect it. For this full submission makes our subjective life much easier, at the same time that it economises all our most valuable strength. But I do not see, from this point onwards, in what consists our own action in this inner existence, which yet ought, it seems to me, in its own way, to become even less passive than the outer.

*The Priest*.-It consists, my daughter, in idealising almost always by subtraction, and rarely by addition, even when in adding we observe all proper precautions. The ideal must improve upon the real, or it is inadequate morally; herein lies its normal compensation for its great inferiority in clearness and liveliness. But it must ever be subordinate to the real, otherwise the presentation would be untrue, and the worship would become mystical; whereas by a too servile adherence to reality it would remain empirical. Our rule avoids equally these two contrary deviations. It is naturally indicated by our tendency to forget the defects

of the dead in order to recall only their good qualities.

So regarded, see in it only a particular deduction from the dogma of Humanity. For if our Divinity only incorporates into herself the really worthy dead, she also takes away from each the imperfections which in all cases dimmed their objective life. Dante had, in his own way, a presentiment of this law, when he formed the beautiful fiction in which, to prepare for blessedness, the soul drinks—first of the river of oblivion, then of Eunoe, which restores only the memory of good. Add, then, to the beings you take as types but very secondary improvements, so as never to change their true character, even outwardly, and still more morally. But give free scope, though always with prudence, to your natural disposition to clear them of their different faults.

*The Woman.*—So, my father, the true theory of the subjective life makes our worship ultimately leave the external order as it is, to concentrate with greater effect on the human order our chief efforts after inward improvement. The noble existence which perpetuates us in others becomes thus the worthy continuation of that by which we deserved this immortality; the moral progress of the individual and of the race is ever the most important aim of both lives. The dead with us are freed from the laws of matter and of life, and they leave us the memory of their subjection to these laws only that we may recall them better as we knew them. But they do not cease to love, and even to think, in us and by us. The sweet exchange of feelings and ideas that passed between us and them, during their objective life, becomes at once closer and more continuous when they are detached from bodily existence. Although under these conditions the life of each of them is deeply mingled with our own, its originality, both morally and mentally, is in no way impaired thereby, when it had a really distinct character. We may even say that the chief differences become more marked, in proportion as this close intercourse becomes more full.

This Positive conception of the future life is certainly nobler than that of any theologians, at the same time that it alone is true. When I was a Catholic, my most fervent belief never prevented my feeling deeply shocked on studying the childish conception of blessedness which we find in a father of such high moral and intellectual excellence as St. Augustine. I was almost angry when I found him hoping some day to be free from the laws of weight, and even from all wants connected with nutrition, though, by a gross contradiction, he kept the power of eating what he liked, without any fear, it would seem, of becoming inordinately fat. Such comparisons are well adapted to make us feel how greatly Positivism perfects immortality, at the same time that it places it on a firmer footing, when it changes it from objective to subjective. Still, clear

as the superiority is, it does not prevent my regretting in the old worship the great institution of prayer, which does not seem to me compatible with the new faith.

*The Priest.*-Such an omission, my daughter, would be extremely serious, if it were real; since the regular practice of prayer, private or public, is the capital condition of any worship whatever. Far from failing therein, Positivism satisfies it better than Catholicism: for it purifies this institution at the same time that it develops it. Your mistake on this point arises from the low notion still formed of prayer, which is made to consist above all in petitions, too often for external objects, in accordance with the profoundly egoistic character of all theological worship. For us, on the contrary, prayer becomes the ideal of life. For to pray is, at one and the same time, to love, to think, and even to act, since expression is always a true action. Never can the three aspects of human life be united with so intimate a union as in these admirable effusions of gratitude and love towards our Great Goddess or her worthy representatives and organs. No interested motive any longer stains the purity of our prayers.

Still, as their daily use greatly improves our heart and even our intellect, we are warranted in keeping in sight this valuable result, without fearing that such a degree of personality will ever degrade us. Though the Positivist prays especially in order to give free expression to his best affections, he may also ask, but only for a noble progress, which he ensures almost by the asking. The fervent wish to become more tender, more reverential, more courageous even, is itself in some degree a realisation of the desired improvement; at least by the sincere confession of our actual imperfection, the first condition of the subsequent improvement. This holy influence of prayer may extend, moreover, to the intellect, were it only by urging us to new efforts to improve our thinking. On the contrary, to ask for an increase of wealth or power would, in our worship, be a practice as absurd as it is ignoble. We do not envy the theologians the unlimited command over the external order which they hope to obtain by prayer. All our subjective efforts are limited to perfect as far as possible the human order, at once nobler and more susceptible of modification. In a word, Positivist prayer takes complete possession of the highest domain formerly reserved for supernatural grace. Sanctification with us systematises more particularly the progress which previously was looked on as alien to all invariable laws, although its pre-eminence was already felt.

*The Woman.*-Accepting this explanation as decisive, I beg you, my father, to point out to me now the general method suited to Positivist prayer.

*The Priest.*-For that, my daughter, you must distinguish in it two



successive parts, the one passive, and the other active, which concern respectively the past and the future, with the present for connecting link. Our worship is always the expression of a love springing from and developing through an ever-increasing gratitude. All prayer then, private or public, ought to prepare us by commemoration for effusion, this latter usually lasting half the time of the former. When a happy combination of signs and images has sufficiently rekindled our feelings towards the being we adore, we pour them forth with real fervour, which soon tends still further to strengthen them, and so to make us more ready for the concluding evocation.

***The Woman.***-Satisfied with these hints, I ask you, my father, to complete your general examination of our worship, by directly explaining its fundamental influences on our highest improvement. Although I feel them profoundly, I could not define them so as to secure a fair judgment upon them. This is why I ask you, on this point, for a systematic explanation, as a guide, first in my own practice, and next in my legitimate efforts to convert others.

***The Priest.***-*Though* our worship improves the heart and the intellect simultaneously, it is important, my daughter, to examine separately its reaction on our moral state and its influence on our intellect.

The first is an immediate consequence of the chief law of animal life. For worship is always a real *exercise*, and even a more normal exercise than any other; as is shown by ordinary language, here, as elsewhere, the faithful picture of human existence. Such a view of it is in the highest degree indisputable when prayer is complete, that is to say, when it is oral as well as mental. In fact, we bring into play in expression, whether by sounds, or by gestures or attitudes, the same muscles that we do in action. So every true expression of our feelings has a tendency to strengthen and develop them, in the same way as when we perform the acts which they suggest.

I ought, however, on this point, to guard against a dangerous exaggeration, by urging you never to confuse these two great moral influences. Notwithstanding the similarity of their most important laws, in no case can they be looked on as equivalent. By universal experience, fully confirmed by our cerebral theory, acts will always have more weight than expression, not merely in the external result, but also in our inward improvement. Still, second to the practice of good actions, nothing is more adapted to strengthen and develop our best feelings than their due expression, supposing it become sufficiently habitual. Now, this general means of amelioration is ordinarily more within our reach than even action, which often requires materials or circumstances beyond our reach, so as at times to confine us to barren wishes. It is by virtue of

their being thus accessible that the practices of worship come to be, for our moral progress, a valuable supplement to active life, which is, moreover, fully compatible with them, such is the perfect homogeneity of the Positive religion.

***The Woman.***-Understanding now the moral influence of our worship, I need, my father, more full explanations as to its reaction on the intellect, which is by no means so clear to me.

***The Priest.***-*Keep* distinct, my daughter, its two main cases, according as its efficacy is limited to art or passes to science.

From the first point of view, the power of the Positive worship on the mind is direct and striking, first as regards the general art, and even afterwards as regards the two special arts of sound or form. Poetry is the soul of the worship, as science is of the doctrine, and industry of the regime. Every prayer, private as well as public, becomes in Positivism a real work of art, inasmuch as it expresses our best feelings. As its spontaneous character must never be departed from, every Positivist must be, in some respects, a kind of poet—at least for his own personal worship. Though its forms should become fixed in order to secure more regularity, they will originally in all cases have been drawn up by him who uses them, or he will find that they have no great efficiency. Besides, this fixedness is never complete, since it affects only the artificial signs, which by their uniformity bring out better the spontaneous variations of our natural language, always, whether musical or mimic, more aesthetic than the other.

This poetical originality will be largely developed when the regeneration of education shall have sufficiently trained all Positivists in the conceptions, and even in the compositions, it requires, as I will point out to you in the third part of the Catechism. Then the general art will always derive fitting assistance from the special arts; since all will then be familiar with singing, the essential basis of music, and with drawing, the general source of the three arts of form—painting, sculpture, or architecture. Lastly, in the construction of his worship, each will generally introduce special ornaments, chosen with judgment from the aesthetic treasure of Humanity. Though additions of this kind seem limited to public worship, private worship may adopt them frequently and with profit, provided it borrows with discretion and moderation. True poets having at all times given expression to the leading feelings of our unchanging nature, their productions are often in sufficient consonance with our own emotions. When this agreement, without being complete, is nearly so, we may find in what we borrow from the poets more than the mere intellectual merit of a more perfect expression. We find in them, in particular, the moral charm of a personal sympathy.

The older the ornaments, the better they suit us, as they sanction our affections by this spontaneous agreement, not merely with the great poet, but also with all the generations which in succession that poet has aided in the expression of their feelings. But the full efficacy of this valuable aid depends on its always remaining quite secondary, though the degree in which it is admitted must vary as the cases vary, as I will shortly point out to you.

***The Woman.***-Before you explain to me the influence of the Positive worship on science, would you, my father, clear up a serious difficulty naturally arising from the preceding explanation. Worship and poetry seem to me, in our religion, to melt so entirely one into the other, that their simultaneous growth would appear to require a priestly class quite distinct from that which develops and teaches the doctrine. I feel that this separation would become very dangerous by establishing an unmanageable rivalry between the two bodies, to decide which should have the ultimate direction of the realm, both being equally competent. So serious does such a conflict seem to me that you must settle it, under penalty of radically compromising the general organisation of our priesthood, thus incapacitated from presiding over private life and still more over public life. But, on the other hand, I do not see how we can quite avoid it, as poetic culture and philosophic study seem to require wholly different treatment.

***The Priest.***This mistake, which it is very important to correct, constitutes, my daughter, one of the chief results of modern anarchy, which tends throughout to disperse our strength by a lamentable specialism, as absurd as it is immoral. In the normal state, it is only practice that really admits of specialism, as no one can do everything. But as each must embrace the whole range of conception, scientific culture must, on the contrary, always remain indivisible. Its division is the first sign of anarchy. So thought the ancients under the theocracy, the only complete organisation as yet. When in it the poet separated from the priest, its decline began.

Though the genius for philosophy and the genius for poetry cannot ever, at one and the same time, find a high destination, intellectually they are completely identical in nature. Aristotle might have been a great poet, Dante an eminent philosopher, had the times in which they lived called for less scientific power in the one or less aesthetic power in the other. All these scholastic distinctions were invented and upheld by pedants who, themselves without any kind of genius, could not even appreciate it in others. Mental superiority is always similar as between the several careers of man; the choice of each is settled by his position, especially his position in time; for the race always rules the individual.

The only important difference that really exists in this respect arises from the services of philosophy being naturally continuous, whereas the services of poetry are necessarily intermittent. Great poets alone are of value, even intellectually, but still more morally; all the others do much more harm than good : whereas the humble philosophers can be made of real use when they have honesty, good sense, and courage. Since art has for its main object to develop in us the sense of perfection. It never tolerates mediocrity; true taste always implies lively distaste. From Homer to Walter Scott, we have had in the West but thirteen poets really great, two ancient, eleven modern, including even three prose writers. Of all the rest you could not name more than seven who could or should be read daily. As for the rest, doubtless they will be almost completely destroyed, as equally hurtful to the intellect and the heart, when the regeneration of education shall have allowed us to extract all useful documents, especially the historical. There is no opening, then, in sociocracy less even than in theocracy, for the foundation of a definite class exclusively devoted to the cultivation of poetry. But the priests, whose habitual character is the philosophical, will become for the time poets, when our Goddess shall stand in need of fresh effusions for general use, which may then suffice, during several ages, both for public and private worship. Minor compositions, naturally more frequent, will be generally left to the spontaneous impulses of women or proletaries. As for the two special arts, the long apprenticeship they require, particularly the art of form, will compel us to devote to them some select masters, whom the Positive education will, in its natural course, point out to the directing priesthood. They will become true members of the priesthood, or remain merely pensioners, according as by nature they are more or less synthetical.

***The Woman.***-After this elucidation you may pass at once, my father, to your last general explanation of the efficacy of the worship. Its aesthetic power seems to me evident. But I do not see in what can consist its scientific influence.

***The Priest.***-In a better general development, my daughter, of the universal logic, always based on the due cooperation of signs, images, and feelings towards assisting the mind in its working. The logic of feeling is more direct and energetic than any other, but its method is deficient in precision and pliancy. Eminently accommodating and sufficiently numerous, artificial signs make up, by these two properties, for the inferiority in logical power due to the weakness and indirectness of their connection with our thoughts. But this sum of intellectual aids must receive its complement from images, which indeed alone can satisfactorily give it, as being intermediate by their nature. Now, it is

especially in reference to this normal bond of our true logic that the worship should be efficacious, though it also develops the two other constituents. In this respect, the child who prays rightly is exercising more healthily his meditative organs than the haughty algebraist who, from a deficiency of tenderness and imagination, is really only cultivating the organ of language, by the aid of a special jargon, the legitimate use of which is very limited.

This remark affords a clear glimpse of the most important scientific result of the Positive worship. It thus touches only the method properly so called, very slightly the doctrine; allowing for the moral, nay, even the intellectual notions, naturally furnished us by our religious practices. But the method will always have more value than the doctrine, as feelings have more value than acts, morals than politics. The scientific labours hitherto accumulated have for the most part hardly more than a logical value : they often teach us notions that are useless, and at times even worse than useless. Although this provisional contrast will become much weaker, when an encyclopedic discipline shall have delivered us from all the rubbish of academies, the true logic will always stand higher than science properly so called, more particularly for the public, but also for the priesthood.

***The Woman.***-All that remains, my father, is to ask you what is to be the special object of the two other conversations you promised me on the Positive worship. However much I may feel that we have not thoroughly explored this fair domain, I do not see to what point in it we are now to direct our efforts.

***The Priest.***-You will see this, my daughter, if you consider that our worship, if it is not to fail utterly, must be first private, then public. These will be the respective objects of the two following conversations. But before we proceed to them, it is desirable to bring your attention generally to bear directly on this great subordination, on which depends after all the chief efficacy of the Positive religion.

The better to grasp it, look on these two worships as addressed respectively, the private to Woman, the public to Humanity. You will then feel that our Goddess can have no sincere worshippers but those who have prepared themselves for her august worship by the steady practice of private homage daily due to her best organs, her subjective organs especially, but also to her objective. In a word, the true Church has ever for its original basis the simple Family, still more in the moral order than from the purely social aspect. The heart can no more avoid this first step, retained afterwards as an habitual stimulus, than the intellect can disdain the lower steps in the encyclopedic scale in its rise to the highest, which constantly enforce on it the need of renewing its

strength at the fountain-head.

It is the constant practice of private worship that more than anything else will ultimately distinguish true Positivists from the false brethren with whom we shall be burdened as soon as the true religion shall prevail. Without this mark, an easy hypocrisy would soon usurp the consideration due only to the sincere worshippers of Humanity. Between Her and the Family, we shall even have to develop the normal intermedium originating in the natural feelings, at present vague and weak, which bind us specially to the Country properly so called. The impossibility of rightly cultivating these intermediate affections otherwise than in associations of moderate extent, will ever be the best ground on which to rest the reduction of the large existing states to simple cities with their due adjuncts—a process I shall have to explain to you later.

## CONVERSATION IV.

### PRIVATE WORSHIP.

*The Woman.*-It seems to me, my father, that private worship, as private life, must be composed of two very distinct parts, the one personal, the other domestic, the separation of which seems necessary for its explanation.

*The Priest.*-This natural division, which I was bound not to mix up with the main division of the worship, settles, my daughter, in truth the plan of our present conversation.

Two great institutions of sociolatriy, the one relating to the true guardian angels, the other to the nine social sacraments, will in it characterise respectively, first our personal, then our domestic worship. The reasons for making the latter depend on the former are, in lesser degree, essentially similar to those which represent the whole private worship as the only solid basis of the public. More inward than any other, personal worship alone can sufficiently develop firmly-rooted habits of sincere adoration, without which our domestic ceremonies, and still more our public solemnities, could have no moral efficacy. Thus sociolatriy institutes, for the heart of each, a natural progression, in which individual prayers duly pave the way for the collective ceremonies, through the regular intermedium of the domestic consecrations.

*The Woman.*-Since the private worship is thus made the primary basis of all our religious practices, I beg you, my father, to explain to me directly its real nature.

*The Priest.*-It consists, my daughter, in the daily adoration of the best

types which we can find to personify Humanity, taking into account the whole of our private relations.

The whole existence of the Supreme Being resting on love, which alone unites in a voluntary union its separable elements, the affective sex is naturally its most perfect representative, and at the same time its chief minister. Never will art be able worthily to embody Humanity otherwise than in the form of Woman. But the moral providence of our Goddess is not exerted solely through the collective action of your sex upon mine. This fundamental source is especially the result of the personal influence that every true woman is unceasingly putting out in the bosom of her own family. The domestic sanctuary is the continual source of this holy impulse which can alone preserve us from the moral corruption to which we are ever exposed by active or speculative life.

Without this private root the collective action of woman on man would moreover have no permanent efficacy. It is within the family also that we gain an adequate appreciation of the affective sex, for each can only really know the types of it with which he lives in close intimacy.

Thus it is that, in the normal state, each man finds around him real *guardian angels*, at once ministers and representatives of the Great Being. The secret adoration of them, strengthening and developing their continuous influence, tends directly to make us better and happier, by ensuring the gradual predominance of altruism over egoism, through the free play of the former and the compression of the latter. Our just gratitude for benefits already received thus becomes the natural source of fresh progress. The happy ambiguity of the French word *patron* marks sufficiently this twofold efficacy of the personal worship, in which each angel must be equally invoked as a protector and as a model.

***The Woman.***-This first general view leaves me, my father, too uncertain as to what the personal type is; it might apparently be taken indifferently from each of the greater family relations.

***The Priest.***-*We* must really, my daughter, duly combine three of them for the worship of angels to have its full effect. This plurality is indicated in our doctrine by the plurality of the sympathetic instincts, each of which answers specially to a leading female influence. The mother, the wife, the daughter, must in our worship, as in the existence which it idealises, develop in us respectively veneration, attachment, and benevolence. As for the sister, the influence she exercises has hardly a very distinct character, and may in succession be connected with each of the three essential types. Together they represent to us the three natural modes of human continuity, as regards the past, the present, and the future; as also the three degrees of the solidarity which binds us to our

superiors, our equals, and our inferiors. But the spontaneous harmony of the three can only be satisfactorily maintained by observing their natural subordination, which ought habitually to give the supremacy to the maternal angel, yet so that her gentle presidency never impair the influence of the other two.

For the main object of this private worship, which, as a general rule, concerns the maturity of each worshipper, one of the three feminine types has most frequently become subjective, whilst another still remains objective. This normal mixture increases the efficacy of such homage, in which the strength and clearness of the images are thus better combined with coherence and purity of the feelings.

***The Woman.***-Your explanation seems to me very satisfactory, yet I feel, my father, that it leaves a great void as to my own sex, whose moral wants it appears to neglect. Yet the tenderness which is our especial distinction cannot free us from the need of such habitual cultivation.

***The Priest.***-You have, my daughter, an easy and legitimate solution of this grave difficulty in the plurality of the angelic types, when otherwise it would be insurmountable. In fact, the principal angel alone must be common to both sexes, each borrowing from the other the two angels that complete the institution. For the mother has, for both sexes equally, a preponderance, not merely as the main source even of our physical existence, but still more as normally presiding over the whole of our education. To her, then, as the common object of adoration, your sex adds the worship of the husband and the son, on the grounds assigned above for mine as regards the wife and daughter. This difference by itself is enough to meet the respective wants which require a patronage specially adapted, to develop in the one case energy, in the other tenderness.

***The Woman.***-Notwithstanding the attraction this great institution even now has for me, still I find in it, my father, two general imperfections, whether as not using all our private relations, or as not having sufficiently foreseen the too frequent inadequacy of the natural types.

***The Priest.***-These two difficulties disappear, my daughter, if you take into account the several subordinate types which naturally connect with each of our three chief types, by virtue of conformity of feelings and the similarity of the tie. Around the mother we group naturally first the father, and sometimes the sister, then the master and the protector, besides the analogous relations which may be largely increased in number within the family, and still more without. Extend the same method to the two other types, and we form a series of adorations, less and less close to us, but more and more general, the result being an



almost insensible transition from the private to the public worship. This normal development enables us also to supply, as far as possible, exceptional deficiencies, by substituting, in case of need, for one of the primary types its best subordinate. In this way we can subjectively recreate families whose composition is defective.

***The Woman.***-After this complementary explanation, it only remains for me, my father, to ask you for some more precise explanations as to the general system of prayers adapted to this fundamental worship.

***The Priest.***-It requires, my daughter, three daily prayers: on getting up, before going to sleep, and in the midst of our daily occupations whatever they be. The first, longer and more efficacious than the other two, begins each day by the due invocation of the guardian angels, which alone can dispose us to the habitual right use of all our powers. In the last, we express the gratitude owing to this daily protection, so as to secure its continuance during sleep. The mid-day prayer should for a time disengage us from the impulses of thought and action, in order to penetrate both more fully with that influence of affection from which they always tend to withdraw us.

This object at once indicates the respective times of the three Positivist prayers, and even the mode of their performance. The first, prior to all work, will be said at the domestic altar arranged in agreement with our best memories, and in the attitude of veneration. But the last should be said when in bed, and as far as possible be continued until we fall asleep, the better to ensure a calm brain when we are least protected from evil tendencies. The hour for the intermediate prayer cannot be so accurately stated, as it must vary with individual convenience; yet it is important that each one, in his own way, should fix it very strictly, thereby attaining more easily the frame of mind it requires.

The respective length of our three daily prayers is also pointed out by their proper object. It is fitting, in general, that the morning prayer be twice as long as the evening, the mid-day half as long. When the private worship is completely organised, the chief prayer naturally occupies the whole first hour of each day. It does so especially from the division of its opening portion into two, each as long as the concluding; the commemoration common to all the days of the week being made to precede that which is proper to each separately. The result is the division in practice of the morning prayer into three equal parts, in which precedence is given respectively, first to images, then to signs, and last to feelings. The two other prayers do not admit of the same proportion between commemoration and effusion. Whilst in the morning, effusion in all lasts only half as long as commemoration, the ratio is inverted in the evening, and equality marks the mid-day prayer. You will find no

difficulties in these minor differences. But I ask you to observe that, as follows from these indications when combined, the total length of our daily worship only reaches two hours, even for those who are led to repeat during the night the prayer of mid-day.

Every Positivist, then, will devote to his daily personal improvement less time than is now absorbed by bad reading and by useless or pernicious amusements. There alone takes place the decisive growth of the subjective life by our identifying ourselves more and more with the Being we adore, whose image, gradually purified, becomes more clear and vivid with every new year of worship. By these secret practices each prepares himself to feel aright the awakening of sympathy, which will be a result of the publicity which belongs to our other sacred rites. Such a combination of moral faculties will, I hope, enable the rules of sociolatrie to overcome, in the best of both sexes, the present coarseness of Western manners. Ordinary and uncultivated minds still regard as lost all time not occupied by work in the common sense. In the cultivated classes, there is already a recognition of the value inherent in purely intellectual exertion. But since the close of the Middle Ages, there has been a universal forgetfulness of the direct higher value of moral cultivation properly so called. Men would almost blush to devote to it as much time as the great Alfred allotted to it daily, without in any way impairing his admirable activity.

To complete this special theory of the daily prayers, I must point out to you the unequal share assigned in them to the ornaments, always mere adjuncts, borrowed with discretion from the aesthetic treasures of Humanity. By their nature they are more adapted to aid effusion than commemoration. As such their aid is more available in the evening than in the morning. But its special purpose is to relieve us from original effort which we usually find impracticable in regard to the intermediate prayer, in which the effusion at its close may consist almost entirely in a judicious choice of passages from the poets. When singing and drawing shall have become as familiar to all as speaking and writing, this help from without will more fully satisfy our internal wants, in the too frequent languor of our best emotions.

***The Woman.***—Now that I understand our private worship, I am endeavouring, my father, to anticipate you as to the constitution of the domestic worship properly so called. But I cannot, of myself, as yet form a satisfactory idea of it. I quite see that the domestic, like the private worship, can institute a constant adoration of the types common to the whole family. So also it can reproduce for this elementary society the collective invocations which the public worship addresses directly to Humanity.

These two kinds of religious practices, under the natural priesthood of the head of the family, are susceptible no doubt of a high moral influence. Still something is wanting to stamp on our domestic worship a character quite its own, so that it be kept distinct from either of those between which it is to be the intermediary.

***The Priest.***-The institution of the social sacraments fulfils, my daughter, this necessary condition. It is through it that the domestic worship is strongly marked off from the two others, at the same time that it affords them a natural transition. It consists in consecrating all the successive phases of private life by connecting each with public life. Hence our nine social sacraments:- *Presentation, initiation, admission, destination, marriage, maturity, retirement, transformation*, and lastly, *incorporation*. Their unchanging succession forms a series of preparations by which, during the whole of his objective life, the worthy servant of Humanity proceeds, in a gradual course, to the subjective eternity which is ultimately to constitute him a true organ of the Goddess.

***The Woman.***-Though the normal limits of this Catechism preclude you, my father, from a really complete explanation of all our sacraments, I hope you will be able in it to give a sufficient idea of each.

***The Priest.***-By the first, my daughter, the final religion gives systematic consecration to every birth, as all the preliminary religions instinctively did. The mother and the father of the new scion of Humanity come to present it to the priesthood, which receives from them a solemn engagement to prepare the child properly for the service of the Goddess. This natural guarantee is completed by two additional institutions, which Positivism thinks it an honour to borrow in germ from Catholicism, developing it in a social spirit. An artificial couple, to be chosen by the parents, but with the approbation of the priesthood, freely offers the new servant of the Great Being a fresh protection, mainly spiritual, but it need temporal, all the special witnesses concurring. He also receives from his two families two special patrons, the one a theoretician, the other a practitioner, whom he will complete at the time of his emancipation, by taking a third name, derived, as the other two, from the consecrated representatives of Humanity.

In the ancient civilisation, this first sacrament was often refused, especially to those who were judged incompetent for the destructive activity which then prevailed. But as modern social life more and more finds a use for natures of every order, the *presentation* will almost invariably be accepted by the priesthood, allowing for cases too exceptional to need prevision.

The second sacrament is termed *initiation*, as marking the first dawn of

public life, when the child passes at fourteen from its unsystematic training under the direction of its mother, to the systematic education given by the priesthood. Till then the advice of the priest was given to the parents only, whether natural or artificial, to remind them of their essential duties during the first period of childhood. But now the new being receives directly the counsels of religion, destined specially to forearm his heart against the injurious influences too often attendant on the intellectual training which he is to undergo. This second sacrament may be put off, and sometimes, though very seldom, refused, if the home education has not succeeded to the extent required.

Seven years later, the young disciple, first presented then initiated, receives, as the consequence of his whole preparation, the sacrament of *admission*, which authorises him freely to serve Humanity, from whom hitherto he received everything, giving nothing in return. All civil codes have recognised that it is necessary to put off, and even to refuse, this emancipation in the case of those whom an extremely defective organisation, uncorrected by education, condemns to perpetual infancy. A more accurate judgment will lead the priesthood to measures of equal severity, the direct consequences of which will never extend beyond the spiritual domain.

This third sacrament makes the child into the servant without being able as yet to mark out his special career, often different from what was supposed during the practical apprenticeship which coincided naturally with his scientific education. He alone can properly decide on this point, as the result of trials freely made and prolonged for a sufficient time. Hence the institution of a fourth social sacrament, which at twenty-eight, allowing for a delay, either at his own request or enjoined, consecrates the *destination* thus chosen. The old worship offered us the rudiment of this institution only in the case of the highest functions, in the ordination of priests and the coronation of kings. But Positive religion must always give a social institution to all the useful professions, with no distinction of public and private. The humblest servants of the Great Being will come to receive in her temple from her priests the solemn consecration of their entrance on their co-operation, whatever form it take. This is the only sacrament that admits of a true repetition, which, however, must always be an exception.

***The Woman.***-I understand, my father, this series of consecrations prior to *marriage*, itself to be followed by our four other sacraments. As for this chief sacrament, which alone gives completeness to the whole series of man's preparations, I already know the main points of the Positivist doctrine. Above all, I sympathise most deeply with the great institution of eternal widowhood, long looked for by the hearts of all true women.

Besides its importance for the family and even for the state, it alone can sufficiently develop the subjective life for our souls to rise to the familiar representation of Humanity, by means of an adequate personification. All these precious notions had I made almost my own before I became your catechumen. I know also that you will return to this subject, from another point of view, when explaining the regime. We may then enter on the last series of our consecrations.

***The Priest.***-*First*, however, my daughter: we must settle the normal age for the chief social sacrament. As marriage is to follow, and not precede, the particular destination, men cannot be admitted to it as a religious ordinance till they have accomplished their twenty-eighth year. The priesthood will even advise the government to extend the legal veto of the head of the family to the age of thirty, the better to guard against any precipitation in the most important of all our private actions. For women, the sacrament of destination necessarily coincides with that of admission, their vocation being always known and happily uniform. They are therefore ready for marriage at the age of twenty-one, an age, moreover, which gives better security for harmony in marriage. These lower limits of age must not be lowered for either sex, save on very exceptional grounds, which the priesthood must thoroughly weigh, on its moral responsibility. But in general no higher limits should be fixed, though women should almost always marry before twenty-eight, men before thirty-five, when married life shall have taken its right constitution.

***The Woman.***-The first of the sacraments after marriage seems to me, my father, sufficiently explained by its mere definition. You had already made me observe the general coincidence of the full development of the human organism with the completion of man's social preparation, about the age of forty-two. I am here thinking only of your sex, as it alone is concerned with the sacrament of *maturity*. The vocation of woman is at once too uniform and too fixed to admit either of the two consecrations that precede and follow marriage.

***The Priest.***-*Though* you have, my daughter, grasped without help from me the true nature of our sixth sacrament, you would hardly be able, if you stopped at this point, to appreciate duly its peculiar importance. During the twenty-one years which separate it from the seventh, the man is living his second objective life, on which alone depends his subjective immortality. Till then our life, mainly preparatory, had naturally given rise to mistakes at times *of* a serious character, but never beyond reparation. Henceforth, on the contrary, the faults we commit we can hardly ever fully repair, whether in reference to others or to ourselves. It is important, then, to impose solemnly on the seryant of Humanity the

stern responsibility on which he is entering, with special reference to his peculiar function, now clearly determined.

**The Woman.**-For the next sacrament I see, my father, no other purpose but to mark the normal termination of the great period of complete and direct action of which the sixth consecration marked the beginning.

**The Priest.**-On the contrary, my daughter, the sacrament of *retirement* is one of the most august and best determined of our sacraments, when we consider the last fundamental service which is then rendered by each true servant of Humanity. In the Positive arrangements, every functionary, especially every temporal functionary, always names his successor, subject to the sanction of his superior, and allowing for exceptional cases of moral or mental unworthiness, as I shall shortly explain to you. You see at once that it is the only means of satisfactorily regulating human continuity. When the citizen at sixty-three, of his own free will, withdraws from an activity which he has exhausted, in order to have scope in future for his legitimate influence as an adviser, he solemnly exercises this last act of high authority, and by so doing places it under the control of the priesthood and the people, which may lead him to modify it in a noble spirit. With the rich, this transfer of office is completed by the transmission, in accordance with the same rules, of that portion of the capital of the race which forms the working-stock of the functionary, after he has made provision for his own personal wants.

**The Woman.**-Now, my father, I see the full social bearing of our seventh sacrament, in which I saw at first only a kind of family festival.

As for the eighth, I am now familiar enough with the true religion to understand of myself in what it consists. It is to replace the horrible ceremony in which Catholicism, freed from all check on its anti-social character, openly tore the dying person from all human affections, to place him alone before the judgment-seat of God. In our *transformation*, the priesthood, mingling the regrets of society with the tears of the family, estimates justly as a whole the life that is ending. First securing, where possible, the reparation of evil, it generally holds out the hope of subjective incorporation, but without ever committing itself to a premature judgment.

**The Priest.**-As your appreciation of the last objective sacrament is adequate, my daughter, I have now to explain to you the final consecration.

Seven years after death, when all disturbing passions are sufficiently quieted, the best special documents remaining yet accessible, a solemn judgment, the germ of which sociocracy borrows from theocracy, finally decides the lot of each. If the priesthood pronounces for *in-corporation*, it

presides over the transfer, with due pomp: of the sanctified remains which, previously deposited in the burial-place of the city, now take their place for ever in the sacred wood that surrounds the temple of Humanity. Every tomb in it is ornamented with a simple inscription, a bust, or a statue, according to the degree of honour awarded.

As to the exceptional cases of marked unworthiness, the disgrace consists in transporting in the proper way the ill-omened burden to the waste place allotted to the reprobate, amongst those who have died by the hand of justice, by their own hand, or in duel.

***The Woman.***-These clear indications as to the nine social sacraments leave me, my father, a general regret as regards my sex, which does not seem to me sufficiently considered. Still, I in no way object to our natural exclusion from three of these consecrations, since it rests on grounds which are in the highest degree honourable to women, whose quieter life requires less religious attention. But I cannot conceive that the subjective paradise should not admit those whom our religion proclaims most apt to deserve it. I do not, however, see how, in the general, we should share in personal incorporation, which seems to me only to be possible as a result of public life, and public life is rightly forbidden our sex, except in very rare cases.

***The Priest.***-*You* will supply, my daughter, this serious omission by considering that the incorporation of man is to include all the worthy auxiliaries of every true servant of Humanity, not even excepting our animal associates.

The chief function of woman being to form and perfect man, it would be as absurd as unjust to honour a good citizen, and neglect to honour the mother, the wife, etc., to whom his success was mainly due., Around and at times within each consecrated tomb, the priesthood will consequently be bound to collect in the name of Humanity, all the individuals who took a worthy part in the services such tomb rewards. Although your sex, by its superior organisation, tastes more keenly the pure enjoyment that results from the mere formation and exercise of good feelings, it should never renounce its claim to just praise, much less to the subjective immortality which it so thoroughly appreciates.

***The Woman.***-*After* this complementary explanation it only remains for me, my father, to ask you wherein lies the obligation for each to receive our different sacraments.

***The Priest.***-*They* must always, my daughter, be purely optional, so far as any legal obligation is concerned, without ever imposing more than a simple moral duty, a duty demonstrated in our education and sanctioned by opinion.

The better to preserve this purely spiritual character, the chief condition of their efficacy, our sacraments must have side by side with them parallel institutions, established and maintained by the temporal power, as alone to be required in each case. Its judgment, less discriminating and less strict, will dispense with the religious rites for those whom they might alarm, and who can yet render society services which it would be a pity to lose or impair.

For instance, we must not consider as anarchical, though of revolutionary origin, the institution of civil marriage, as a necessary preliminary to the religious, from which it may legally dispense. The contrary custom arose from an usurpation on the part of Catholicism which Positivism will never imitate. Those who revolt from the law of widowhood, which yet is essential to the performance of a Positivist marriage, need to contract a civil union to preserve them from vice and secure the legal status of their children. The same holds good, in lesser degree, for most of the other social sacraments, especially admission and destination. The priesthood ought, in case of need, to urge the government to institute legal rules with the object of moderating the just strictness of our religious prescriptions, the persistently free observance of which will never have any other reward than that of conscience and opinion.

## CONVERSATION V. PUBLIC WORSHIP.

*The Woman.*-When entering on the direct study of our public worship, I should submit to you, my father, the answer which I have already given of myself to superficial but honest criticisms, directed against this solemn adoration as a whole. It is urged that each Positivist is glorifying himself when paying honour to a being which is of necessity composed of its own worshippers. Our private worship is in no way open to this reproach: it applies solely to the direct worship of Humanity, especially where the homage is collective. But we can easily repel it by the true idea of the Great Being which is predominantly subjective in its composition. They who testify their gratitude to her are in no way assured, in general, of their final incorporation. They have only the hope of this reward, because they count on deserving it by a worthy life, the judgment on which always rests with their successors.

*The Priest.*-Your correction is fully in agreement, my daughter, with the true spirit of our public worship, in which the present glorifies the past the better to pre- pare the future, naturally putting itself out of sight



before the two immensities. Far from stimulating our pride, these solemn prayers tend unceasingly to inspire us with a sincere humility. For they make us profoundly conscious to what a degree, despite our best collective efforts, we are incapable of ever rendering to Humanity more than a very small part of what we have received from her.

**The Woman.**-Before you explain to me the general outline of this public worship, would you, my father, give me some sufficient idea of the temples in which it is to be performed? As for the ministering priesthood, I feel that its essential constitution will be adequately stated in your exposition of the regime.

**The Priest.**-Our temples, my daughter, cannot at present be adequately conceived. For, as architecture is the most technical and the least aesthetic of all the fine arts, each new synthesis reaches it more slowly than any other art. Not till our religion be not only thoroughly worked out, but also widely spread, can the public wants indicate the true nature of the edifices which suit it. Provisionally then, we shall have to use the old churches, in proportion as they fall into disuse; though this inevitable preliminary ought to last a less time in our case than in the case of Catholicism, which, for several centuries, was confined to polytheistic edifices.

The only general indication that can at present be given on this point relates to site and direction, even now determined by the nature of the Positive worship. Since Humanity is essentially composed of the dead who deserve to live after death, her temples must be placed amid the tombs of the elect. On the other hand, the chief attribute of Positive religion is its necessary universality. In all parts of the earth, then, the temples of Humanity must turn towards the general metropolis, which for a long time, as the result of the whole past, must be Paris. Thus Positivism turns to account the happy if rudimentary conception of Islam in respect of a valuable institution, wherein the common attitude of all true believers brings out more fully the touching solidarity of their free homage.

This is all I have to tell you as to our sacred buildings. As for the arrangement of their interior, all we need at present observe is the need of reserving the chief sanctuary for women duly chosen; so that the priests of Humanity may always find themselves in the midst of her best representatives.

**The Woman.**-This last remark leads me, my father, to complete my former question, by asking you what will be the symbols of our Goddess. As the decision regards painting and sculpture, it should even now be more attainable than that of our temples, the two first arts of

form being more rapid in their motion than the third.

**The Priest.**-*In* truth, my daughter, the nature of the Great Being leaves now no room for hesitation as to its plastic representation. In painting or sculpture, the symbol of our Goddess will always be a woman of thirty with her son in her arms. The pre-eminence, religiously, of the affective sex ought to be the prominent feature in this emblem, in which the active sex should remain placed under its holy guardianship. Though groups with more figures might render the presentment more complete, it would not be synthetic enough to come into really common use.

Of the two modes adapted for the expression of this normal symbol, sculpture is suitable for the image fixed in each temple, in the midst of the nobler women, and behind the sacred desk. But painting is preferable for the movable banners which are to head our solemn processions. Whilst their white side will present the holy image, the sacred formula of Positivism will occupy the green, turned towards the procession.

**The Woman.**-*As* the last of my introductory questions, I ask you, my father, to explain the sign which in ordinary use may suffice to represent this characteristic formula.

**The Priest.**-*We* get it, my daughter, from our cerebral theory, as I shall carefully explain when we study the doctrine. We may repeat our fundamental formula whilst placing the hand in succession on the three chief organs of love, of order, and of progress. The first two adjoin one another, the last is only separated from them by the organ of veneration, the natural cement of the whole they form; so that the gesture may become continuous. When the habit is sufficiently formed, we soon suppress the words—the expression by gesture is enough. In fine, as the rank of the cerebral organs indicates fully their functions, the sign, at need, is reducible to the mere succession of the corresponding numbers in the cerebral table (*see Conversation* viii.) Thus it is that, without any arbitrary institution, Positivism is already in possession of signs for common use more expressive than any of those adopted by Catholicism and Islam.

**The Woman.**-*Now*, my father, I ought not any longer to delay your direct exposition of the system of public worship.

**The Priest.**-*You* will find it, my daughter, fully expressed in the table I here offer you (*Table A*). This part of our worship, as the two preceding portions, has two objects: to make us better understand and better live the life which it represents. We must then, idealise first the fundamental ties which constitute that existence, then the indispensable preparations which it requires, lastly the normal functions which go to make it up.

Such will be respectively the objects of the three systems of monthly festivals which are to fill the Positivist year, divided consequently into thirteen months of four weeks, with one complementary day consecrated to the dead in the aggregate.

You already know the four fundamental classes--affective, speculative, patrician, and plebeian—which are essential to society in its normal form. As for the preparatory stages, we cannot, without confusion, condense them more, so profound are the intellectual and social differences, which must always distinguish fetichism, polytheism, and monotheism, even in the spontaneous initiation of every Positivist. With regard to the primary ties, we must certainly begin by celebrating the most universal, and then honour each of the private affections which alone can ensure it a real consistency. Now these elementary relations are really five in number: marriage, the parental, filial, fraternal, and domestic relation; ranking them, in obedience to our hierarchical principle, by the increase in generality and decrease in intimacy.

The number of the Positivist months, though at first sight paradoxical, becomes then sacred when we enter into its religious grounds. Repeated experience has moreover shown that it can easily prevail when the faith on which it rests prevails. Again it is for the universal religion alone to establish the regularity in point of time attained by our exact division of each month into four weekly periods. However great the practical advantages of such an arrangement, they would not secure its adoption, were it not that the needs of our worship dispelled the hesitation always attendant on mere business reasons.

***The Woman.***-At the first general view of the sociolatic table, I see, my father, no serious difficulty in it except as regards the domestic relation, the importance of which seems to me exaggerated, when it is placed among the fundamental ties.

***The Priest.***-Such an objection reminds me, my daughter, that by birth you are a northern, although happily preserved from Protestantism. For the southern nations of the West retain, in this respect, more perfectly the true human feelings, so nobly developed in the Middle Ages.

So far from domesticity being destined to pass away, it will become more and more important, clearing itself more completely of all the original servitude. When completely voluntary, it furnishes many families with the best means of rendering worthy service to the Great Being, by affording her true servants, philosophical or practical, an aid which is indispensable. This share in promoting the public good, though indirect, far more complete and less uncertain than that of most whose co-operation is direct. It may also better cultivate our best feelings. We form

too restricted an idea of it when we confine it to certain classes. In all ranks of society, above all in the proletariat, every citizen passed through this condition so long as his practical education lasted. We must then idealise domesticity as the complement of the family ties and the starting-point of the civic relations.

*The Woman.*-My heart wanted, my father, nothing but this rational correction to rise above the anarchical

prejudices which prevented me from fraternising as I ought with the noble types, especially among women, which this position, so little understood, often presented. Your wholesome explanation leaves me only the wish for one last general one, in respect to the other extreme in our scheme of sociolatriy. The respective positions of the patriciate and proletariat seem to me there reversed. Political considerations may rank them so, according to the order of material power; but religion, which classes by moral worth, ought, it seems to me, to arrange them differently.

*The Priest.*-You forget, my daughter, that in the Positive religion there must always be an exact correspondence between the worship and the regime. But I easily excuse your mistake from the nobleness of its motive. I have myself at times thought as you do, from allowing too much weight to the extreme imperfection of the actual patriciate, so often unworthy of its high social destination. Real superiority of the brain] whether intellectual or still more moral, is at the present day more common in proportion among the classes which have been preserved from an education and power which degrade.

Still, though we must carefully take into account this undeniable exception when organising the transition of the West, we must be able systematically to put it aside when constructing the abstract worship of Humanity, destined mainly for the normal state. If we looked too much to the present and not enough to the future, we should certainly be led to place even the priesthood below the proletariat; for its actual imperfection greatly exceeds that of the patriciate, whether one judges it as it exists among the ruins of theology or in its rudimentary state in metaphysics and science.

In the Positive worship, as in the normal existence which it idealises, the worthy patrician stands higher as a general rule than the true plebeian, as much in true nobleness as in real power. When we rank the classes of men by their capacity to represent the Great Being, the importance and difficulty of the peculiar services of the patriciate, as the education they require and the responsibility they involve, always place it above the proletariat. It is in the very name of such classification that the wisdom

of the priesthood, duly aided by the sanction of women and the support of the people, must remind the patricians, singly or collectively, of their eternal social duties, when they come to neglect them seriously. But these extraordinary remonstrances would miss their main object if the normal worship did not pay sufficient honour to the necessary ministers of our material providence. By placing the proletariat at the lower extremity of the social scale, the worship will remind us that its characteristic aptitude to control and correct all the powers of society is derived especially from a situation which is essentially passive, and which displays no marked tendency. Our sacred synopsis, as the regime it embodies, must then insert the two great powers, the spiritual and the temporal, between the two masses, women and proletarians, which react uninterruptedly on their sentiments and conduct. Were the patriciate lowered, the Positive harmony would be infringed quite as much in sociolatry as in sociocracy.

***The Woman.***-I am sufficiently familiar already with the public worship as a whole for you to explain to me, my father, your division by weeks of the thirteen monthly commemorations. This final development, which will leave no one of our weeks without its general festival, must strongly support the moral aim of the great worship, thus recurring under widely varied yet always convergent aspects.

***The Priest.***-Before I enter on this explanation, I should, my daughter, say that Positivism retains unchanged the established names for the days of the week. I had thought of substituting others, but I have abandoned the project, which will leave no other trace but a successful essay, some touching domestic prayers, adapted to connect the public with the private worship, and composed by M. Joseph Lonchampt, for each day of our week. The old names have the advantage of recalling the whole of the past in its three stages, fetichist, polytheist, and monotheist.<sup>4\*</sup>

To make our worship completely regular, it was necessary that each day of any week whatever should always hold the same place in the year. This invariability is obtained by affixing no weekly name, first to the complementary day with which every Positivist year ends, then to the additional day which follows it if it is leap year, according to the rule adopted, in the West. Each of these two exceptional days is really sufficiently marked by its festival. With this precaution, our calendar holds good for all years—a point as important for the regime as for the worship.

***The Woman.***-I grasp, my father, the full moral efficacy of such invariability, by which any day what-ever of our year might receive, as

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<sup>4</sup> \* See *Pos. Pol.* vol. iv. pp. I 35, 404 ( I 20, 35 I, E. Tr.)

the last day does, a purely religious name; a result which Catholicism never attained but by exception.

*The Priest.*-This preliminary settled, I may, my daughter, begin to state directly in their order the ceremonies appointed for the seventh day in all our weeks. The sociolatrical table shows you how each monthly commemoration is subdivided into four weekly festivals. All I have to do, then, is to give reasons for this division and to make it clear by some summary explanations.

Our first month, dedicated to Humanity, needs little in this respect. After opening the Positivist year by the most august of all our solemn rites, this direct festival of the Great Being has its completion in the four weekly festivals, in which we respectively appreciate the several essential degrees of the social union. They are ranked according to the decrease of extension and the increase of intimacy in the collective relations. The first festival glorifies the bond of religion, the only one that can be universal; the second, the connection due to old political relations which have disappeared, but not without leaving a considerable community of language and poetry. In the third, we celebrate directly the effective union springing from the free acceptance of one common government. The fourth honours the least extended, but the most complete of civic relations, in which the constant proximity of habitation brings us nearest to the intimacy of the family.

To give its full value to the month of marriage, its first solemnity glorifies the conjugal union in its fulness, at once exclusive and indissoluble, even by death. In it the priesthood brings home, both to heart and intellect, the general advance of this admirable institution, the primary basis of all human order, by delineating each of its essential phases, from the primal polygamy down to the Positivist marriage.

In the following festival is honoured the voluntary and perpetual chastity which weighty moral or physical reasons may enjoin on a noble couple. The capital object of marriage, the mutual improvement of both sexes, comes out more clearly in such an exceptional union; without its obliging them, however, to renounce the affections that concern the future, always within their reach by a judicious adoption. There will also be brought into suitable relief its tendency to control at length human procreation, while inherited disease is not allowed to preclude the benefits of marriage.

The third week of this month ends with honouring the exceptional unions in which a disparity, of ten not without excuse, does not exclude the main benefit of marriage, especially when the habits of the final state shall limit the difference to age. Lastly, the fourth festival honours the

posthumous union which will often be a result of the normal constitution of human marriage, the deepest pleasures of which are strengthened and developed by the purification and constancy attendant on subjective love.

One explanation will suffice for our three following months, their weekly subdivisions being naturally the same. For the most important, its first half is devoted to the paternal relation in its complete form, first involuntary, then adoptive; its second half to the incomplete paternal relation which, in every regular society, results from spiritual authority or temporal patronage. Hence spring, in a descending order, the four normal degrees of paternal affection, respectively honoured in the four weekly festivals of the third Positivist month. Now the same distinctions and gradations necessarily recur in the case of the filial and fraternal relations, thus dispensing with any fresh explanation for the fourth and fifth months.

As for the sixth, it honours, first, permanent domesticity, which will always mark off a very numerous but a special class, then the analogous position in which every man as a rule finds himself during his practical training. The first case clearly requires an important subdivision, the practical distinction being the residence; according as the domestic relation is complete, as in the case of the servant proper, or incomplete, as in that of the clerk, who has simply to perform a certain office. When the manners of the normal state shall have made domestic service, especially that of women, consistent with the full development of the family affections, Positive worship will make the moral superiority of the first position deeply felt, for in it the devotion is purer and more living. The same distinction is applicable, though in a less marked degree, to temporary domesticity, and is there again determined by the dwelling. Hence the last two festivals of the sixth month, respectively devoted to pages and to apprentices, according as the masters are rich or poor.

***The Woman.***-All these details as to the different fundamental ties offer me, my father, no difficulty. But I fear lest my weakness in history prevents my fully understanding the second series of social festivals. For the preparation of man as a whole is as yet only very imperfectly known to me.

***The Priest.***-That is enough, my daughter, to enable you even now to understand in outline the succession of the three preliminary states mentioned in our synopsis of sociolatriy. But as for the weekly division of each of them, you will, it is true, hardly be able to enter into it till after the two historical conversations with which this Catechism will end. I limit myself, therefore, to the co-ordination of the chief divisions, recommending you to complete it for yourself when you shall have

gained the requisite knowledge.

The fictitious synthesis, in all cases based on the search after causes, may take two different forms, according as the wills to which events are attributed inhere in the bodies themselves or in external beings, habitually beyond the reach of our senses. Now the direct form, which is more spontaneous than any other, constitutes the initial fetichism; whereas the indirect distinguishes the theologism which follows it. But this last state, more alloyed and less lasting than the first, offers in succession two distinct constitutions, according as the gods are many or are-condensed into one. Theologism, which after all but forms an immense spontaneous transition from fetichism to Positivism, takes its rise from the one as polytheism and leads to the other by monotheism. Complete this mental advance by the corresponding social progress, and the whole initiation of man finds adequate expression, as you will soon feel.

You will then be able to see how well adapted is our second series of social festivals to pay due honour to all the essential phases of this long preparation, from the first upward movement of the smallest tribes down to the twofold development of the modern transition. This full celebration of the past of man in twelve weekly festivals is a consequence of the historical condensation which the abstract worship by its nature allows.

***The Woman.*** -We can then, my father, now enter on the last sociolatrical series. The month dedicated to the moral providence offers me no difficulty, so clearly marked is the distinction between the types of woman assigned to its four weekly festivals. But I am at a loss as yet as to the subdivision of the sacerdotal month.

***The Priest.*** Take for your guide, my daughter, the different forms or degrees of the Positive priesthood, ranked according to their increasing completeness. This great ministry calls for a rare union of the moral qualities, active no less than affective, with intellectual capacities, both for art and science. If, then, these last alone are remarkable, their possessors, after proper cultivation, must remain, perhaps for ever, mere pensioners of the spiritual power, without ever aspiring to be incorporated into it. In these cases which are fortunately exceptional, the finest genius for poetry or philosophy cannot supply the place of tenderness and energy in a functionary who must habitually be animated by deep sympathies and who has often to engage in difficult struggles. This incomplete priesthood allows for the due cultivation of all true talent without detriment to any social function.

As for the complete priesthood, it requires, first, a preparatory stage,



beyond which the candidate will not proceed if, in spite of the announcement of his vocation, he does not successfully pass through the proper noviciate. After this decisive trial, at thirty-five he obtains the true and definitive priesthood, but exercises it for seven years in the subordinate position, which marks the vicar or substitute. When he has worthily gone through all the phases of our encyclopedic teaching, and even entered upon the other priestly functions, he reaches at forty-two the chief degree, becoming irrevocably a priest in the fullest sense. Such are the four classes of theoreticians which are honoured respectively by the weekly festivals of the eleventh month.

***The Woman.***-The next, my father, requires no particular explanation. Though not familiar with active life, its definite character enables me to understand fairly the normal division of the patrician body into four essential classes, in accordance with the decreasing generality of functions and the increasing number of functionaries. Perhaps even, in our anarchical time, women are more apt than the proletarians, and still more than their teachers, to appreciate rightly this natural hierarchy, as they are more thoroughly preserved from disturbing passions and from sophisticated views. I am glad, then, that the four weekly festivals of our twelfth month yearly honour. and by honouring moralise, these several necessary forms of the material power, on which rests the whole economy of society. But I am not so clear as to the subdivision of the last month.

***The Priest.***-It depends, my daughter, on the generality which attaches naturally to the proletariat, in which all the great attributes of Humanity require a distinct ideal expression. This immense social mass—the necessary stock of all the special classes—is mainly devoted to active life, the direct subject of the first weekly festival of the plebeian month. After this active proletariat, we must pay a separate tribute to the affective proletariat which necessarily accompanies it. This special tribute to the proletarian women can alone give due completeness to the general celebration of the types of women, considered in the tenth month from a point of view which embraced all classes, but viewed here in their popular manifestation. The third festival of our thirteenth month should picture worthily the contemplative proletarian, especially the artistic, or even the scientific, who, not able to gain admission into a priesthood of necessarily limited numbers, yet feels himself more the theoretician than the practitioner. We shall have at times to compassionate these exceptional types, and in all cases to respect them, in order to turn them to good account by wisely guiding their instinctive tendencies. From them principally must come the general control of the proletariat over the special powers, whereas the general impulse it ought to give

requires more active natures.

Finally, the last festival of our popular month makes reference mainly to mendicity, temporary, or even permanent. The best social order will never entirely preclude this extreme consequence of the imperfections inherent in practical life. So the idealisation of our social state would be incomplete unless the priesthood closed it with a just appreciation of this exceptional existence. Where there is adequate justification and worthy conduct, such an existence may often deserve the sympathy, at times even the praise, of all honourable minds. More fluctuating than any other, this complementary class naturally connects with all ranks of society, which must in turn draw from it and feed it. It thus becomes well qualified to develop the general influence of the proletariat on all the powers of society. There would then be as great improvidence as injustice in not giving mendicants a separate idealisation.

***The Woman.***-As for the complementary day, I understand, my father, why Positivism transfers to the end of our year the collective commemoration of the dead, happily introduced by Catholicism. This touching commemoration, the insertion of which would have disturbed the normal economy of our public worship, is its proper completion as a whole and a natural preparation for its annual recurrence. It was fit that the festival proper of the Great Being should be preceded by the glorification of all its organs without exception.

The additional day in leap-year is equally easy. My sex having it scarcely ever in its power to deserve an individual and public apotheosis, the abstract worship, without degenerating into a concrete worship, was bound to pay this honour collectively to the women worthy of an individual celebration. The ideal expression of human existence is thus completed by glorifying the right use of the various exceptional powers which woman's nature admits, when its distinctive character is not impaired thereby.

***The Priest.***-As you have of yourself, my daughter, satisfactorily finished the explanation of our public worship, the first part of this Catechism is quite complete. We must now proceed to the study of the doctrine, which, as the worship itself, is a direct preparation for the regime—the ultimate end of the whole Positive initiation.

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[*Conversations VI-XII not included here.*]