

Conditioned. The Unconditioned, though it exists, is not an object of knowledge, not even to the extent that Kant conceived it to be—viz., as a limiting idea and regulative principle. To accept it as such is, in Hamilton's opinion, the great error of the Kantian philosophy, which opened the door to the vagaries of Kant's successors, who attempted to superimpose upon the existing knowledge of the Conditioned—*i.e.*, upon the only knowledge that is possible—a higher kind of knowledge, the knowledge of the Unconditioned or Absolute. Hamilton's criticisms are directed as much against Schelling and Hegel and their pupil Victor Cousin in France, as against that philosophy in England which starts from the knowledge we possess in the mathematical and physical sciences, and aims at penetrating by their methods into the region of mental and moral phenomena, as Mill hoped to do. For, according to Hamilton, our moral ideas are based upon the Unconditioned, which we approach only by faith, and upon the idea of freedom, through which the human being is elevated beyond the laws of a purely natural order.

On a larger scale than Sir John Herschel had attempted in England, an exposition of the leading ideas and methods of the exact and natural sciences was attempted about the same time by Auguste Comte in France. In many respects the influences which governed the early development of Comte's mind were similar to those which made themselves felt in the case of John Stuart Mill. Both had a precocious development; the ideas attained in childhood, which in the case of most, even of the great, thinkers are characterised

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A. Comte.