

destroyed. The older systems of morality started with a command or with what has been termed the form of morality, and followed this up with a simple definition of the substance or essence of morality: the spirit of love. Recent systems of morality start with a definition of what the essence of morality or the supreme good is—agreeing mainly on this point with the second half of Christian ethics—and then follow this up with an attempt to show how and why the ideal expressed therein assumes the form of a command, and how its realisation becomes a duty.

We see then how in this movement of thought there is inevitably involved a transition from what we may call the theological and theocratic to the anthropological and democratic point of view. The latter has in recent times received a philosophical name as the sociological. Formerly the centre of gravity of the ethical system was the Personal Deity, the Creator, Ruler, and Law-giver of the Universe; latterly, in the naturalistic schools of thought, the centre of gravity in the system of morals is Society, some social organisation, let us call it the liberal state. The anchorage used to be a firm belief in the Divine Being, it is now more and more being sought in a belief in humanity. So much have these two ideas changed places that in the later phase of Comte's philosophy Humanity receives the name of the *Grand-Être*. In moving from the one to the other pole of thought there is an intermediate stage, an attempt to base the moral system upon the individual human reason, upon an intuition or an axiom. This was practic-

16.
Centre of
gravity of
the ethical
system
changed.