

pathetic as well as of selfish emotion, and he notes that in human history the former, for which he has coined the word Altruism, gradually gains the upper hand over the latter, *i.e.*, over Egoism. But he does not enter on any psychological or critical analysis of this remarkable compound of human nature, but takes for granted that what he considers to be an observed fact in human history, the growth of the altruistic feelings, is an indication of what ought to be, or rather of what will be.¹ Consistent with his early announcement that all practical policy—including, of course, his later spiritual cult—can only consist in furthering and facilitating tendencies in human nature which have been historically discovered, he elevates the ethical principle of altruism into the position of a supreme moral precept or command: “live for others.” He thus introduces into the religion of humanity the great central idea of

¹ Mill in his criticism of Comte's scheme of reorganisation, notices a break in the continuity of Comte's ideas, inasmuch as the “comprehensive view of the progress of human society in the past,” is not used as a “basis of practical recommendations” for the future. “. . . we fail to see any scientific connection between his theoretical explanation of the past progress of society and his proposals for future improvement” (*Auguste Comte and Positivism*, 2nd ed., 1866, p. 118). It is however possible in the light of the more recent developments of Positivism to look upon this break of continuity in Comte's speculation in a more favourable way. Comte saw clearly that ever so complete a knowledge of what is and has

been, and ever so clear a foresight of the future (if such were possible), does not bring with it an obligation to promote or expedite by personal effort this natural process. It was the object of the later labours of Comte to emphasise the feeling of duty and obligation and to establish sanctions and a supreme authority. An exclusive acceptance of the earlier teaching of Comte such as Littré represents necessarily implies an extinction of the sense of moral obligation. Co-operation could be recommended merely as a means of more efficiently and more rapidly gaining the mastery over the natural forces, which is an important but not the highest aim of human progress. (See on this also *supra*, p. 485.)