

in his later speculation, but without any conspicuous success: whereas Spencer leaves it altogether outside of his system, though he does not denounce it in the categorical manner so prevalent and so repellent with some extreme schools of thought on the Continent.

35.
The
scientific
and the
social
interests.

What is characteristic both of Comte's and of Spencer's system is the entry of the scientific spirit as opposed to the metaphysical, and the recognition of the growing importance of the social problem. Neither of these two sides of modern thought—neither the scientific nor the social—had been distinctly recognised in the idealistic movement which culminated in Hegel, though we find in Fichte's later writings and addresses distinct beginnings of a philosophy of human society. The idealistic systems were essentially philosophies of religion in the sense which I have so frequently emphasised: they aimed at establishing a reasoned creed which should satisfy the highest demands of the modern educated European mind, and they were religious in the further sense that they desired to absorb, to incorporate, and to interpret not only the moral, but essentially also the spiritual truths of Christian faith.

They were, however, primarily neither philosophies of science nor philosophies of society. Beginnings of the former are, indeed, contained in Kant's earlier writings, but they date from a time when what we now term science or exact reasoning was limited almost entirely to the Newtonian philosophy. Nevertheless, as Fichte's later writings exhibit the first signs of an appreciation of the social problem in Germany, so Kant's earlier writings mark the first beginning in Germany of a