

John Stuart Mill in this country or such as has been further developed by more recent thinkers, especially on the Continent.

If we may thus define the unification arrived at by Spencer as a unification of method or thought rather than as a unification of knowledge, we must further define it as a unification of scientific thought in which religious thought is left out of consideration. And this limitation of the range of Spencer's speculation becomes still more evident if we note how far Spencer has succeeded in solving the further problem, the reconciliation of science and religion. This is accomplished by eliminating religion, both as a psychological phenomenon and as a definite doctrine, altogether from the region of philosophical discussion. Both remain things lying outside the realm of the philosopher. Their existence is not denied, nor does Spencer assume towards them any polemical or aggressive attitude such as has been so characteristic of Continental materialism. His doctrine of slow change in the world of ideas, as well as in that of nature, prevents him from expecting any immediate effect or change in matters of opinion and belief. Having accordingly passed over the religious problem in the form in which it appeared as the central question in the idealistic philosophy of Germany, Spencer instead places at the centre of his speculation, as Comte did before him, the social problem. The greater part of his writings, the early as well as the latest, are occupied with this. His unifying principle of thought is finally put to the test in the construction of a social philosophy, such as I have dealt with in an earlier chapter.

68.  
The social  
problem  
central as  
with Comte.