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H. B. Smith*

The Problem of the Philosophy of History.

AN ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY

OF YALE COLLEGE,

JULY 27, 1853.

BY HENRY B. SMITH,

PROFESSOR IN THE NEW YORK UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

[REPRINTED FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY REVIEW, JUNE, 1854.]

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THE subject of this Essay, the Problem of the Philosophy of Human History, and the conditions of its right solution, cannot, perhaps, be more appropriately introduced, than by recalling one of the most significant legends of mediæval Europe, as illustrated in one of the most vivid creations of the modern school of German art. Kaulbach, in his picture of the Battle of the Huns, brings before our vision a wide plain, strewed with the corpses of Huns and Romans, who had fallen in a sanguinary contest, while the whole upper air is depicted as filled with living combatants, whose mysterious strife is lighted up only by the dim rays of the pale queen of night. The legend runs, that so fierce was the hostility of the Teutonic and the Latin races, that even the bands of death could not restrain their lust for strife. Even the perturbed spirits of the slain, after the sun had set, left their mangled bodies, to prolong the deadly struggle in the open sky above the ensanguined field of Mars. The perpetuity of the feud of these historic races, at this juncture of times, the angle of modern civilization, is bodied forth in the boldness of the legend. But it also seems to inti-

mate another fact; that battles fought in the material, are renewed in the spiritual sphere. They end not with the defeat or victory of the hour. They come up again with a wider scope, and under a clearer sky.

And thus may this Battle of the Huns be to us an apt image of what is perpetually recurring in respect to all the great battles in the annals of our contesting race. One of the objects of the historic page is to call up the spirits from the realm of the shadowy past, to make their conflicts live again in the minds of the present, that we may see in a rarer atmosphere the elements and the meaning of the struggles in which they ignorantly fought for us. Thus, though

All changes, nought is lost; the forms are changed,
And that which has been is not what it was,
Yet that which has been, is.

The turmoil and dust of the conflict pass away; conflicting passions illustrate permanent principles; the successive contests of races tell us of the victories of truth, and the progress of righteousness. And so human history becomes, in the eloquent description of Cicero "the test of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the rule of life, the messenger of antiquity."

One of the peculiar characteristics of the speculations of the nineteenth century, as compared with those of the eighteenth, is seen in the attempts made to understand the present, and even to predict the future, by means of the past. The most remarkable revolution in the method of investigation is probably to be found in the sphere of historical research. To the vain imagination, nurtured by the popular philosophy of the last century, that we are to make all things new, has succeeded the conviction, so well expressed by the inscription on an ancient coin, that "time discovers the riches of antiquity." Even the sciolist has learned to say, with Sir Matthew Hale, "that truth is the daughter of time." That contempt of history, which used to be esteemed the beginning of wisdom, is now seen to be the end of folly. Many a dream of the future has vanished like an unsubstantial pageant, while the forms of the past have come to assume an immortal honor. That superficial egotism which prated of the sovereignty of the individual,

is supplanted by that wiser humility which tells us that "all the world is a wiser man than any man in the world." The individual is seen to be but the nursling of Humanity, and the present as the product of the past. The atomic theory of the race is superseded by the dynamic, thus giving the only condition under which history can assume the dignity of a science. It is studied not as an aggregate of atoms, but as a complex of powers. The race is viewed in the Christian aspect of its unity, and not in the infidel aspect of a mere flock of individuals. It is imaged forth, now, as the life of one man, in its successive periods of youth, of manhood, and of maturity; now, as a growth, through all its stages, like that of a tree with its blossoms and its fruit; again, as a constant ascent in a spiral, steadily aspiring, in spite of alternations, to a high consummation; or, yet again, as the orderly development of one consecutive plan, embracing all nations and races in their progress towards some adequate ultimate end. What is called its antiquity, is seen to be but its youth; *antiquitas sæculi, juvenus mundi*; and its most youthful races are recognized as its most mature, having the heritage of the past. And the object of the whole historic course, the grand historic problem of the destiny of the race; what is it for? whither doth it tend? is inquired after with an earnestness which betokens its importance.

And accordingly we find the so-called philosophy of history assuming an unwonted space in the meditations of the contemplative, as well as in the dreams of the ardent. Every leading tendency of the times, philosophical, religious, political, moral, and even literary and æsthetic, attempts to justify itself on historic grounds, to construct its philosophy of history. Not mere abstract reason and right are appealed to, but also the concrete testimony of history. The European absolutist and democrat are equally confident on historic grounds. Gervinus is subjected to judicial accusation for lighting that dry light in which he showed that the course of history has been ever, through aristocracy and monarchy, to a democratic rule, in the land in which Schlegel was applauded for teaching, that the supremacy of the Roman Catholic hierarchy is the sense and aim of the historic course. ✓ ?

Roman Catholic literature, under Bonald and Demaistre in France, Möhler and Moliter in Germany, Balmes in Spain, Wiseman and Newman in England, has planted itself on this field of investigation, as on no other. By the great modern Protestant theologians and historians, especially of Germany, the very sphere of controversy with the enemies of our faith has been transferred, from the speculative to the historic domain; and our political and social theorists also feel the necessity of finding at least the fulcrum for their levers in that which has been and is. It is almost unconsciously assumed, that every legitimate speculation in respect to government and society, must authenticate its claims by the sure word of history, ere it can be received as a prophecy. Nor is this tendency excluded even from the purely speculative sciences; for from Schelling to Hegel, we have elaborate attempts to show that the whole of history has been ever laboring in the throes of birth with their systems, as the best progeny of time.

This characteristic of modern thought, which has led it to throw itself so resolutely upon the solution of the historic problem of the race, is not accidental, and therefore it is not likely to be transient. It is not the product of enthusiasm alone, nor has it been dissipated in mere imaginations. It is rather to be regarded as a legitimate product of that movement of the human mind, inaugurated by the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The most general characteristic of that movement, as exemplified, though not exhausted, in its religious reforms, may be said, perhaps, to have been the application of the inductive, in distinction from the too exclusively logical, method of investigation to all the spheres of human knowledge. We call Bacon the father of the Inductive Philosophy, but his service consisted in applying to the study of nature that very method which all the leading reformers had previously applied to the Church and to theology. They only went back to the authentic facts and documents to get at the laws and principles of ecclesiastical authority; they went back from the later to the earlier Fathers, and from these to the original source in the Divine Word. And so Bacon bid men go to nature, to study its authentic records, if they would know what nature was. Thus Descartes taught men to study the mind, if they would know the mind. To know what anything is, you must study that thing

itself; first the facts, and then the laws and principles. From the facts learn the laws, and by the laws read the facts—this is the substance of that inductive method which was applied in successive order to the church, to nature, to the mind, to politics, and which is now, in a natural and necessary order, engrossing attention in social inquiries. And last and most difficult of all, it is applied to the solution of the historic problem of the race; in the facts of history to find its laws, and by its laws to read its facts, and to attempt to forecast its destiny. The very pressure of the inductive philosophy leads us to this high inquiry, and it has come up last in order, not only because man must have had a history before he can have a philosophy of history, but also because this is the central stream into which all these other investigations flow.

Of the possibility of such a philosophy of history grave doubts are indeed entertained. The vastness of the problem is confronted with the littleness of our knowledge. The fact that history moves in the sphere of human freedom, leads many to say with Kant, "that even if one should find that humanity has been always advancing, no one could say but that it might to-day begin to decay; for that we have here to do with free beings to whom we may indeed prescribe what they ought to do, but of whom we cannot predict what they will do." And it further seems improbable, that any one could have both that scope of knowledge and that scope of generalization, which are essential in the working out of so broad an investigation. Will not the very pressure of the inquiry force from the brain its own coinage, rather than the image and superscription of the reality itself? And has the race run so far in its course, that we can see the end from the beginning, and that a definitive solution of its historic destiny is possible? While it may be true, as Dugald Stuart argues, that the largest generalizations about human affairs are of the readiest application, is it not also true, that they are to be made with the utmost reserve, since they can only be made with the utmost difficulty?

And to these general scruples are added, the doubts especially of Protestant Christians, as they see how the extreme conservative and the extreme radical tendencies of the day, the Romanist on the one hand and the infidel on the other, have

been most prodigal of such theories. The latter assumes that the day of Christianity is past, that its night has come, and that "through the shadow of that night" the world is "sweeping into a new and younger day," to be ushered in by reorganization of society in church and in state. The Romanist as confidently maintains, that the ultra-montane view of the Church is the central idea in human history and destiny. And both equally predict and labor for the extermination of our Protestant Christianity. And so it is hardly strange, when history is made to read only such lessons, that many wise men are made willing, in faith, to let the historic problem work itself out, as it is most surely doing, without their aid or comfort.

But if Christian and Protestant men neglect such investigations, will not many ardent minds lend a willing ear to the bold generalizations of both papist and infidel? Will not many an imagination be set on fire by the dream of a splendid hierarchy, or by the vision of an occidental republic? And did not alchemy precede chemistry; and did not astrology anticipate astronomy?

And while we fear, as well we may, the presumption of grappling with the historic problem itself, and propounding a solution of it, are we not, by this sketch of the nature and present state of these investigations, prompted and authorized to ask: What is the real problem of investigation in the philosophy of history? What are the conditions of the right solution of that problem? And in what sequence of historical events must that solution be found, if at all? To such preliminary inquiries as these, it may be the part of wisdom, and not of arrogance, to give an earnest heed. And even if Protestant Christianity is too reverential to attempt a definite solution of the historic problem, there may at least be a vital necessity for its showing, that the theories of its two instinctive foes are premature, and not conformed to the demands of science in this high region of research.

What, then, is the real problem which the philosophy of history attempts to solve?

The philosophy of history proposes to treat history as a branch of science. It takes for granted, that history is susceptible of a scientific exposition; that from the study of its facts,

we can come to a knowledge of its laws and principles. It supposes, also, that only through the facts, can we come to a knowledge of its principles; that in a legitimate way the inductive method can be applied to these facts; and that the induction must precede the deduction, or the application of the historic laws to any future possible cases. The inquiry, then, is the same in kind with that in any other branch of philosophy. It may be more difficult, the causes more complex, and the mass of facts greater; but the process of investigation must be the same as in all the inductive sciences, and that is, from the facts learn the principles, and by the principles read the past, and, if possible, forecast the future.

The facts of human history do indeed cover a long tract of time, and a large sphere of space. They constitute one vast, progressive, connected series of events, having the earth for its material basis, time for its condition, moral freedom for its essential element, and the final destiny of the race for its end. They are the product of human freedom, but so far as they are facts, they have come out of the region of mere possibility into that of reality, and are proper subjects of investigation. Supernatural elements may be intermingled with the natural, but still, as extant in history, we may lawfully inquire for their origin and aim. This body of facts comprises whatever has been done or suffered by man's myriad tribes, so far as the record has survived, from the beginning until the most recent times. And it is with this body of facts, that the philosophy of history has to do; and, as a philosophy, the question it has to answer about them is one and simple, however difficult may be the answer; and it is this: What is the destiny of the race, as that is contained in, and may be inferred from, the whole history of the race? The historic problem is without significance, unless it be understood as seeking for the rational grounds, order and ends of that which has actually occurred in the history of the race.

Many of the so-called philosophies of history have chiefly failed, from not keeping in view the only legitimate object of their investigation. They have not let history explain itself, they have laid their own theories to the judgment of it. They have not sought to infer the destiny of man from his

actual history; but they have prophesied his destiny, and by their prophecy misinterpreted his history.

Who, for example, from the actual facts of history could infer, with Auguste Comte, that the destiny of man was to form a republic with positive science as its means of regeneration? This is not an induction, but the speculation of a phantasiast. In point of fact, just so far as any theory about human destiny is not a legitimate inference from the facts of that history, taken in their integrity and widest scope, just so far does that theory fail to respond to the one legitimate inquiry in the philosophy of history, which is, as we have said, simply and solely this: What is the destiny of the race, as that is contained in, and may be inferred from, the whole history of the race?

Having thus stated what we conceive to be the legitimate purport of the historic problem, we are prepared for our central inquiry: What are the essential conditions of a right solution of the historic problem?

Here, then, is a vast, prolonged, intermingled, continuous series of historical facts, by whose light we are to attempt to read the problem of human destiny. We ask for the essential conditions of doing this aright. These conditions are chiefly four: (1.) That our philosophy of history be the legitimate reading of the whole history itself. (2.) That to this history it assign an adequate law of progress. (3.) An adequate end or object. (4.) An adequate author.

1. The first essential condition, we claim, of a true philosophy of history is, that it be a legitimate generalization from the mass of the historic facts themselves. Our theory must be the burden and the song of the whole history of humanity. It must be the one universal language and consent of all races, kingdoms and tongues. It must be the accord of their varied notes, and the harmony of their discord. If it be not this, it fails in the very first requisite of all proper science. It must be to human history what the "Kosmos" of Humboldt attempts to be to that wonderful Nature, which is but the theatre of this sublime series of facts; and which the more meditative brother of that same Humboldt had in mind, when in his "Correspondence" he speaks of "wishing to form a picture of humanity, to which all nations and ages should be seen to have been con-

tributing," and which he there describes by three successive stages of culture ; that in which we view objects in their wholeness, but unanalyzed ; that in which we analyze their parts, but lose the sense of their unity ; and that in which we see them again in their unity, illuminated and illustrated by the scientific analysis. And a like vision of the history of the race was that which swept before the august mind of Pascal, when he said, "that the succession of men in all the ages may be regarded as one man, who lives always, and who learns continually." So great is the problem of human history, that its solution demands of us an image, a representation, an organic reproduction of the whole life and growth of the race, in its successive nations and stadia, and in all its permanent interests.

Vital as is this condition to a right philosophy of history, yet it is one which is frequently violated in the most ambitious attempts. It excludes, of course, any theory which is applicable only to a portion of that history, or to any single race thereof, or to any arbitrary and partial series of its facts. It relegates all those speculations which contemplate only a future reorganization of society, as the proper end and philosophy of humanity, into the regions of imagination, whence they had their origin ; they may be good as prophecies, but they are bad as a philosophy of history, for they are no induction from its authenticated facts. They would have been just as credible, and probably more so, had there never been any history at all.

And it is in the light of this condition of a right solution of the historic problem, that its grandeur, as well as difficulty, is disclosed to us. For it is a problem in respect to all the tribes of the race which have played an historic part, to all the nations, so far as they have influenced the general interests of humanity. It is a problem which has respect to the whole human family in the successive stadia of its progress ; in all the acts and scenes of that grand drama, disclosed in the successive annals of our race, from its infancy in the plains of Central Asia, through its migratory course, south and north, yet ever westward ; in its conflicts of races and nations around all the shores that skirt that memorable middle sea, the boundary of three continents ; in its yet intenser strife in Central

Europe, its mastery of the shores and islands of the Atlantic, and its adventurous progress, freighted with the treasures and experience of the past, to this, our western world, whither are ever gravitating, as never to another centre, all races, tongues and tendencies. In the solution of this problem, a part must be assigned to the vast oriental despotisms of the East; to the golden Assyria, imaged as a winged lion, to the silver Persia, depicted as a mighty bear, to brazen Greece, that leopard with wings, and to iron Rome, for which no symbol of a beast might stand in the old prophetic word; to the progeny of Shem which has given its stability, and to the descendants of Japhet, who have given its impulse to the main historic stream; to Judæa, whence came forth the law; to Rome the Papal, as well as Rome the Pagan, and to the empire of the Germans, as well as of the Latins; to the conflicts of the Imperial and Papal power in the mediæval times, and of the hierarchy and monarchy with popular and religious rights in our latest era; and that alone can be the right solution which shall show us how, through all these nations, stages, contests, the race has been advancing in its youth, its manhood, and its maturity, in its material, its social, its civil, its artistic and its religious interests, under the dominion of a law and in relation to an end, which are comprehensive enough to be the law and the end of the whole historic evolution.

This view of the grandeur and comprehensiveness of the historic problem, may at least restrain us from lending a willing ear to any proposed solution of it which is not conformed to the first requisite of a correct theory, which is, that it be a legitimate induction from the whole history itself.

2. Equally imperative is our second condition of a true philosophy, and that is, that it should recognize and give us an adequate law of progress in the development of the race.

The learned and versatile Chevalier Bunsen, in his recent work upon Hippolytus, truly remarks, "that the human race does not only continue to exist like other animal races, by the succession of generations, but advances in and through them, by families, tribes and nations, and in ever enlarging orbits of development." And it is only under the general idea of pro-

gress, of growth, that we can conceive of the construction of a real philosophy of history. All that is subject to time, and endowed with life, also grows. There is a law of growth to every living thing. The modern historian is indebted to the natural philosopher for the introduction of this idea into the sciences. It has made a revolution in the science of nature, and also in the science of history. While in its perversions we may find the license, yet in its just application we may also find much of the glory of modern science.

Many good and wise men are indeed repelled from this whole idea of development, by the use which they see to be made of it in most of the infidel speculations. In their reaction, they would destroy the abuse by annulling the use of the whole conception. Rebelling against the notion that any real progress has been made in modern society, some of them go so far, as with certain scriptural expositors, to put the Millennium in the middle ages. In all our material prosperity they see only the acceleration of the velocity of an impending catastrophe. But over and through the catastrophe, do they not also hold to a real Providence which overturns, that it may overrule, and which overrules for its own progressive ends? And does not their faith thus affirm the law, which their doubt denied? And do not both their faith and their doubt suggest the inquiry, not as to whether the race exists under a real law of progress, but, what is the real character of that law? Is it a law of merely continuous growth, or of growth through conflicting agencies?

That the law under which the human race exists is not one of bare progress, like the development of a tree from the seed, or of an animal from the embryo, but is a law of progress through conflict, of "progression by antagonism," as Lord Lindsay calls it, is one of the most patent and conspicuous facts forced upon us by the survey of human history. It is not conflict alone, it is not progress alone, it is such a conflict as involves progress, it is such progress as has the strife and adjustment of contending agencies for its perpetual condition.

In reading the records of history we do indeed, to speak with Milton,

feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce ;

but also the progress of a victorious Providence,

out of evil still educing good,
And better, thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression.

An organizing power is at work in all its crises ; over all its chaos broods the spirit that of old did move upon the face of the waters, giving birth to that fair order of the earth, at whose unequalled vision the sons of God did shout for joy.

The antagonisms which we find in our own moral culture, are but the reflex, or rather, the embodiment, of those which exist in human history. As with each one of us, so with the race. The powers of light and the powers of darkness, Ormuzd and Ahriman, contend within us and for us. That which is imaged forth in the light of day and the darkness of the night ; that which is embodied in the polar forces of the subtlest natural agents, that which is exemplified in the intimate and central powers of attraction and repulsion, under which all nature lives and grows, is repeated in a higher sphere in the whole history of our race. As the harmonies of nature are but the equilibrium of contending agencies, and its peace is purchased by its elemental strife, so are the harmonies of histories and also its peace worked out through its antagonizing forces : so that, if we would learn the rhythm of nature, of history, or of the human soul, we must learn it as the resultant of its struggling powers. And he who would read the law of human progress, without its antagonisms, might also tell the geologist how the world was shaped in its order, without the contest of Neptune and of Vulcan.

Progress through conflict, antagonisms working out a higher unity, is the inmost law of our species. It is seen in the transition from the Jewish to the Christian economy ; it is involved in the very genius of Christianity as a redemptive system ; it is corroborated by our faith in the final victories of that system ; it is read in its deepest meaning by all who are growing in knowledge or virtue in what Plato calls life's "immortal bat-

tle." And thus, while the mere idea of progress is not only superficial but perilous, the recognition of the pervading law of progress through conflict, is an essential condition of the true philosophy of human history.

3. But in order that this law receive its most definite expression, and be exempt from abuse, we need also to add another inquiry, and that is, what is the aim of this progress of race, what is the end to which this law is tending? And accordingly we say, that the third condition of a right philosophy of history is, that it gives us an adequate end or consummation of this whole historic progress through conflicts.

Schelling has remarked, "that there can only be a history of such beings as have before them an ideal, which can never be realised by the individual alone, but only by the race as a whole." And the vision of such an ideal, as the end of the historic course, is necessary to the completion of our idea of history. As illustrating the same conception, we may recall those pregnant words of Cicero, "*omnia sunt, sed tempore absunt,*" all things are, but absent in time as yet; they really exist, and they are at last to be manifested in time also. There is a comprehensive end of the whole historic course, which has been working in it from the beginning, for which the nations have been laboring in their toilsome career, for which the earth and all that therein is, was formed and doth subsist. And in the philosophy of human history, the inquiry after this end, this consummation, is central and imperative, for the very heart of that philosophy is in this question, What is the destiny of the race, as inferred from the history of the race? It is comparatively easy to take any single nation and tell its separate part in the epic of the nations, but the question here is of a broader generalization, including the past as well as the still struggling races, and asking, why have they all lived, to what have they been tending? It is unphilosophical, now, in meeting this inquiry, to put at the end of the race some speculative plan or object, which has never yet existed in it, but which it is imagined will at last grow out of it. This is to trample upon all the rules of the inductive philosophy. To be of any scientific value, our idea of the destiny of the race must be a legitimate inference from its actual course, must be seen to be contained in it, in germ, in type, in successive growth.

And with no uncertain sound the voice of history here teaches, that its consummation can only be found, as the moral interests of the race become superior to the material and natural, and as its spiritual interests predominate over the merely moral and natural.

The history of the world, and our own moral consciousness, are consulted in vain, if they do not teach us, that justice and righteousness are to be prevalent in human society. The history of the world is the judgment of the world, emphatically in the sense, that moral laws have controlled, in the long run, the destinies of States, and determined the cause of the race. Human history is thus a faithful and solemn moral teacher, serene and unimpassioned, yet severe in justice. It has been described as "philosophy teaching by example," and the chief philosophy it exemplifies is moral wisdom. Little cares she for the petty strifes and parties of the hour, for her lessons are of "those truths which perish never," of brotherhood, of justice and of rights.

What the wisest moralists as well as the righteous and loving hearts of every age have believed in and foretold, the coming of that time in which injustice shall bow to righteousness, and man as man be honored; in which civilization shall have its blessings for the many, and morals give the outward form as well as the inward law to human life; this vision of the wise, this hope of the best, is enforced, if not by the uninterrupted, yet by the prevalent testimony and prophecy of the history of mankind. Slowly, yet irresistibly, is the sense of brotherhood triumphing over the hostilities of races, the arts of peace over the lust for war, justice over oppression, rights over despotism, and benevolence over selfishness. Men have fought in succession, with legions, with the phalanx, with the scimitar, with the rigid bow and serried pike, with guns and bayonets, with cannon and rifle—so stern was the needed discipline, that they might come to the arbitrament of reason and of justice. Through oriental caste and despotism, the license of the Greek democracy, the iron imperial power of Rome, the perilous luxury of monarchies and the aristocracy, passive obedience to kings and hierarchies, has the race made its suffering course toward the blessings of representative government and religious

liberty. Through the conflicts of race with race, of the sons of Shem with the sons of Japheth, of Asiatic with European prowess, of the Latin with the German stock, of the Celt with the Saxon, have we fought our way to the knowledge of the Christian principle that the race is one brotherhood, and that freedom shall yet be given unto all. Each of the greatest battles of the race has been a step in the progress of human rights; for Europe was saved from Asiatic despotism on the plains of Arbela; the Christian nations triumphed over Attila, the Scourge of God, at Chalons; the cross over the crescent under Charles Martel at Tours; England's free isle was made secure at Hastings; her European influence was the fruit of Blenheim's fight; and on the field of Saratoga our own land was made more free to us and all whom want or hope are driving to our shores. The dawning civilization of the East, was as when the sun at early light salutes the top of here and there a summit; that of classic times was as when some single spots are bathed in brightness, shadows lingering all around; the civilization of mediæval Europe covers wider zones, but the loftiest peaks still cast the deepest shadows; while that to which we are advancing is as when the noon-day sun, full high advanced, scatters its brightness broad-cast, not only enlightening the surface, but penetrating the mass, so that nothing is hid from the heat thereof. And thus do the lessons of human history illustrate what has been well termed the "natural probability of a reign of justice."

And for our best instruction it embodies its teachings in those illustrious examples, the praise of all times,—“the *mag-norum virorum imagines*,” whom Seneca calls the “*incitamenta animi*,”—making them to live again in our very souls, inspiring and elevating. “There cannot be,” said Guizot, speaking of Calvin, “a great *moral*, though there may be a political revolution, without its being concentrated in some great personage.” For us and our example have lived and died those “stars that in earth's firmament do shine.” We call them dead, but they are immortal. Abraham is yet the father of the faithful, and still is Aristides just. Plato is our ideal in philosophy, and we burn with the fire of Demosthenes. The trumpet call of Luther to spiritual freedom resounds in our ears, and our Puritan

fathers exhort us to contend for civil and religious rights. Our patriotism becomes warmer when communing with Washington, our philanthropy is enlarged by the life of Howard. Martyrs still whisper in our ears their dying confessions; the recorded deeds of faithful charity bear fruit a thousand fold, and the cup of cold water becomes in history a spring whose waters never fail. And thus does the historic page give us the very immortality of our race, so that we, however humble, may be inspired by converse with the heroes, the sages and saints of all times. "Even in their ashes live their wonted fires." That the sparks of all the sciences are buried in the ashes of the law, was the boast of a great jurist, and the sparks of every thing that animates the human heart are buried in the ashes of history. As in the calmness of a serene night we gaze into the firmament and see worlds on worlds unnumbered rise, and look upon them all as if here and present, and are thus filled with an adoring sense of the grandeur of the material frame; so in the calm and wise pages of historic contemplation, come out before us, one by one, the lights of other and of distant days, burning with unfading lustre, shaping themselves into constellations and galaxies, purer and brighter than when worn and stained by their earthly conflicts, illuminating our way, elevating our aspirations and deepening our adoring sense of the pricelessness and immortality of truth, of justice and of right.

But in its attempt to forecast the destiny of the race from its history, the necessities of the historic problem carry us to a yet higher point of view than that of human brotherhood, justice and rights. For, as we have said, it not only teaches us that moral ends will come out superior to material and selfish interests, but also that all merely human and temporal ends are to be subordinated to those which are spiritual and eternal. To understand the orbit of the earth we must take the sun as our centre; to understand the course of history we must look at it from those supernal heights, whence we can see its spiritual and eternal bearings.

And this claim is not made alone on theological grounds; it is strictly philosophical; it comes up in the attempt to spell out the meaning of the syllables of recorded time. The temple at Delphi which contained the inscription, "Know Thyself,"

bore also other and more mysterious letters, which many suppose should be rendered, "Thou art." And the annals of the race are written over with a hand-writing, which we in vain attempt to refer to a human original. Its oldest traditions are not of a primitive barbarism, but of a primeval estate of culture. "I regard the original condition of mankind as one of culture," are the words of one of the profoundest of modern philosophers. Vast ancient ruins, in their silence, point back to lost arts and an unwritten revelation. Faith in a revelation has been at the foundation of every great people of ancient or of modern times, and has been their hope and their stay. That old Jewish inspiration, secluded in the ancient world, when it came forth into the historic current gave to it its law and its course. The turning point between ancient and modern history was in the faith of an Incarnate God. All the great crises in human history have been judgments upon a corrupt or superstitious faith and the inauguration of a purer worship, evidences of "God's blessing breathed upon the fainting earth." The supernatural order, centering in the facts of sin and of redemption, and looking forward from time into eternity, has always gleamed through and presided over the natural in the actual faith of the race; and that can only be a real philosophy of history which recognizes the validity and supremacy of those spiritual wants and aspirations, which, like the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, have led the progressive hosts of the human family in their continuous and unreturning march, from one encampment to another of their onward course. And the philosopher who tries to explain the temporal without the eternal, the natural without the supernatural, must expurgate from earth's records the words that tell its deepest sorrows, its highest joys, its only concurrent testimony.

Just as in the last analysis, the very necessities of thought compel us to bind together the finite and the infinite, and to view the temporal as embosomed in the eternal; so do the necessities and testimony of history carry us back to a divine justice and love, and the revelation of a divine and spiritual kingdom, as the substratum and support of all that has been transacted in the history of our earth.

Only in the vision of such a kingdom, where the supremacy

of man's spiritual wants is insured, can we find an end comprehensive enough to receive into itself the sum and substance of the whole historic course. Only then is the third condition of a true philosophy of history met and answered, that is, that it assign to the human race an adequate destiny.

4. But these three conditions of a right solution of the historic problem being met—that it take in all the facts, and give an adequate law, and an adequate consummation to the course of the history—should we then have satisfied all the needs of a scientific inquiry? We think not, until we have added one other condition, and that is, that we give to human history an adequate author.

idea Aristotle, after defining philosophy as the science of causes, goes on to say, that of causes there are four kinds, which he calls the material, the formal, the final and the efficient. This analysis of causes has been ~~ever~~ contemned; and it certainly employs the word cause in a somewhat wide sense, though in the thing itself Aristotle was wiser than his objectors. Expressed in our phraseology, he may be interpreted as meaning, that in order to know any thing philosophically, scientifically, we must know these four points: first, its matter, (material causes), second, its peculiar structure and laws, (which he calls its formal causes); third, its use or end, (its final cause); and fourth, its origin, (its efficient cause). To know it under these four aspects is to know it scientifically; and this analysis seems to be at once subtle and profound. And so we say, that to have a science of human history, we must not only have the body of its facts, the law of its growth, the end which it aims at, but also its efficient cause, the energy which has made it what it is. We are compelled to inquire after a power and wisdom adequate to bring into being and carry on that drama which human history displays before our eyes.

The problem is this: Here is a history of countless numbers of free and rational beings, placed upon an ample theatre, living in successive races and periods, through whom as the almost unconscious agents, a vast plan, reaching already through some six thousand years of time has been working itself out towards its consummation. Nations have risen and fallen, and their growth and their decay have helped on the plan. Great

men have played their brief part upon the stage, "taken the instant by the forward top," and on their

quick'st decrees
The inaudible and noiseless foot of time
Has stolen ere they could effect them :

and yet through them has been effected a sublimer purpose, and carried on a mightier plan than any one of them has ever mastered. "They've nursed the pinion that impelled the steel," they knew not whither. They have acted freely, and their very caprice and wilfulness have been worked by an o'er-mastering wisdom, into that web, whose woof no hand of man has held, and whose web and woof together have made up, one grand, consecutive, advancing history. The scroll of time has been slowly unrolled, each nation, each man, has written upon it, as he thought he would, his own brief record, and then it was rolled up, and others came and wrote; and when it is all unrolled and read, we find thereon one epic, the connected history of God and man.

Is not here the grand underlying mystery of earth's history? such a combination of freedom with necessity, such a pre-established harmony in the co-working of such multitudinous facts and instruments; such a rational order growing out of such apparent lawlessness and unconscious agencies? Some have quarried the stones, others with toil drawn them to their site, this and that one has fitted here and there a block into its place, and the edifice has risen up in glory and majesty, and the work is still going on, and no one knows just what the end shall be, no sound of a hammer is heard, and no master builder has been seen by any of the workmen, and yet the edifice is there, a sublime plan visible in its still unfinished towers, chapels, statues, pinnacles, buttresses, arches, to its stately roof, and its spire surmounted with the cross, which is also laid at its foundation! And as we behold its parts, significant of such superhuman wisdom, they all seem to ask us, Who is this master-builder? Who struck these foundations so deep into the solid earth, and raised these walls in their majestic strength, and clothed the temple within and without with such order and grace?

For the completion of our idea of the philosophy of history do we not need to add an adequate author, the builder and the master of this sublime plan of humanity? Must there not somewhere have been wisdom and power enough to make the plan and ordain the instruments, to marshal this long procession of the nations, through victory and disaster, patiently and wisely using them, planting and supplanting, guiding them over continents and oceans, using all their powers and passions, their changeful hopes and fears, as the means of carrying them on to that consummation which may be grand enough to receive into itself the trophies and heritage of all nations, kingdoms and tongues? And is not thus human history, in its very essence, religious, testifying of God, leading us unto Him in awe and worship? Is not the human race, to use the bold figure of De Maistre, attached to the throne of the Eternal by a supple chain, which holds without enslaving us, and which in the most perilous times of revolution is not broken but abruptly shortened? If the geologist may tell us of chasms in the order of the globe, which only a divine power could have bridged; if the astronomer, as he "unwinds the eternal dances of the sky," reads us a lesson from the celestial spheres, of a superhuman wisdom; if the zoologist finds a type running through the animated orders of creation, pointing back to an archetype in the divine original; does not human history also show its gulfs, where nations have been submerged, and yet which have been bridged over by a wise power, so that the catastrophe of the race has been not its extinction, but its means of resurrection? does it not reveal a sublime order of all its hosts, where the most erratic still "serve the law they seem to violate?" and also, more than any plan or type in nature, does it not offer the spectacle of a grand, advancing and victorious plan, not yet completed, and demanding, more than anything in the order of mere nature, the idea of a wise and powerful author? And thus, does not history, more even than nature, testify to the being and perfection of a great First Cause? Can we meet and solve the problem of human history, by supposing some abstract idea, or blind law, or unconscious substance as the ultimate author? Here is one consecutive plan, working, growing, for some six thousand years! Has an idea or a substance made this plan? Can anything ac-

count for it, excepting a living, personal, omnipotent and omniscient author? Can any view of human history, excepting the theistic, meet the conditions and exigencies of the historic problem? Are we not right in making it a condition of the true philosophy of history, that it should give us an adequate author for the whole historic course?

We have thus attempted to set forth the most essential conditions of a right philosophy of history, the preliminary requisitions to be made upon any theory which claims to solve the problem of human destiny. However brilliant may be the theory, it will not wear the insignia of a legitimate science of history, unless it conform to these four requisitions, that it present us with a scheme running through the whole of that history, under a regular law, towards an adequate consummation, upheld by a wise and powerful author. Or, in other words, the real historic problem of the race can be solved only in an economy in which the facts of human history, the law of its growth, the end at which it aims, and its author, all concur and work together. Only with such a scheme can we have an entire unity in our philosophy of history, only such a scheme truly answers the inquiry, What is the destiny of the race as inferred from the history of the race?

In the light of these scientific requisitions let us glance for a passing moment at the most noted systems of the philosophy of history, alluding only to their general import. Bossuet, the eagle of Meaux, in his *Universal History*, discourses chiefly of Providence as seen in the Jewish and the Roman Catholic churches; the Italian Vico, in his "*New Science*," points out a law of "Returns" for each individual nation, whereby it grows and declines, not definitely insisting upon any general plan for the race; in the fervid cauldron of the French Revolution, phantastic visions of perfectibility were generated, which have left only a rack behind. In Herder's genial and affluent *History of Humanity* we have a wider scope, and the description of a higher culture, as exemplified in the social and artistic life at Weimar. But it is in Schlegel, in Comte and in Hegel, that we find the problem grasped more firmly, and the solution presented more boldly. Schlegel may be taken as the representative of the Roman Catholic view of history, Comte of the

scientific, and Hegel of the pantheistic. Schlegel views the race under the aspects of the fall and of redemption, in its battle of sin with holiness, but his theory limits redemption to the Roman Catholic communion, and he is obliged to exclude almost the whole of modern history, excepting the Holy Alliance, from the onward progress of the race. Comte finds in human history three eras, the Metaphysical, the Theological and the Scientific. The two former have passed, and what remains to be done is the subjugation of nature through the positive sciences, under the auspices of his philosophy, which leaves us only the knowledge of nature, and denies all knowledge of God. His disciples tell us that the age of theology is past, while England, Germany, Holland, France and Russia are stirred as they have not been for two centuries with theologic warfare. In Hegel's philosophy of history we have the most complete scientific attempt to construct a scheme, running through the whole course of time. The idea of rational freedom in a well-ordered state is the key-note of history, giving to it a law of progress as well as an end to be aimed at. The East, he says, knew that one man is free; the Greek and Roman world that some men are free; the modern world that all are free. In this system the conditions of a right theory are conformed to, in the attempt to bring the whole series of facts under one general idea, that of freedom, under a law of progressive growth, and having respect to a common destiny for the race. But that destiny is too vaguely stated, and the theory assigns no adequate author for the events of time, giving us only an abstract, unreal pantheistic substance at the basis, "affecting godhead." And when Hegel asserts that the end of human history is in Europe, and that the height of human freedom is to be found in Prussia, to all the dwellers in the New World he seems but "to put into circumscription and confine" both history and freedom.

Such is a bare outline of some of the most noted systems of the science of history; and if we have not noticed the dreams of the socialists and radicals, who look for an entire reorganization of society, it is because these theories, contemplating the future and not the past, cannot pretend to be a philosophy of history, for in them we have no inference from the past, but

only a vision of the future. As far as a science of history is concerned, they do, as Shakspeare says, but "smother function in surmise," and to them nothing really "is, but what is not."

Coming back, after this partial digression, to our main inquiry, we ask, whether such a solution of the historic problem is possible, as shall give us an economy, to which the empires and crises of humanity do all refer; which has had an orderly growth under the law of progress through conflicts; which is capable of embracing all the great interests of the race, subordinating the natural to the spiritual; and which holds the whole historic drama under a wise and sure guidance toward its adequate consummation? If there be such an economy, in it must be garnered up the destiny of our race, in it is to be found the philosophy of human history.

Take, then, a historic chart of the globe and trace the progress of the human family in its geographic course from East to West, all round the earth; from its origin in the heart of Asia; in both its northern and southern irruptions through the European continent; in its succession of contesting nations around the Mediterranean and on the shores of the Atlantic; across the Atlantic to our own continent; and here still ~~even~~ *over* westward to our Pacific coast; and through all this geographic march of the nations, encircling the globe, simply ask, what common history has been advancing, what one institution or economy running through and leading the whole race; and to this question there is but one possible answer; and that is, that through the whole history of our earth, as its centre and very soul, runs the history of the Kingdom of Redemption!

Repeat this process with the great historic empires and states which have sprung into successive being, and ask, for whom was the ancient world prepared; whom did the Jewish people bear in their loins; for whose victorious sway was the whole Roman empire made ready; who is the centre between the ancient and the modern world; who subdued the Roman empire unto Himself, and ruled in both its eastern and its western portions; whose name charmed into civilization the rude German tribes, and has been at the heart of the culture of every modern European state; and to whom was this land

dedicated in its historic prime, and whose faith has it spread with its growth through all our borders; and to these questions respecting human empires we get a kindred response, and that is, they all take their law and course from Him, who is the divine head of this same Kingdom of Redemption!

If there be any possibility of a true philosophy of human history, if the necessary conditions of such a philosophy are any where realized, they are so, and only so, in the Christian view of human history, in the idea of a divine kingdom, established in the world for its redemption from sin, and looking for its full consummation in an eternal state of being. The history of our earth in its most complete and comprehensive view is the history of that divine kingdom, whose central idea is well described by England's immortal dramatist, in the words,

Why all the souls that are, were forfeit once,
And he that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy.

In the idea of this kingdom, and, so far as we can see, in this alone, do we find realized all the conditions of a right solution of the historic problem. It meets the first of these conditions, since it can be historically traced through all the records of our earth; it is enstamped upon them, forming at once their strength and their glory; it has run its course through every nation, and also survived the greatest of states; and it is now wider spread than ever before. It meets the second of these conditions, and also explains it; for the progress of this divine economy has been a perpetual growth through perpetual conflicts, of which the highest moral antagonism, that of sin and holiness, has been the elementary source, and into which all other conflicts may be resolved. And though states and nations have often been retrograde, and even, to borrow a striking figure, almost literally condemned to death, because sinful, yet still has advanced both by them, and in spite of them, in immortal vigor, that one kingdom of our Lord. And it also fully meets, as does nothing else, the requisitions of the third condition, for it sets before the human family a grand and glorious consummation, in which the natural and the moral interests, while retaining their integrity, and themselves fully developed,

are also made subordinate to the spiritual and eternal welfare of mankind, thus satisfying wants which nature cannot meet, and answering the high questions of our fate to which mere reason and ethics are dumb; and in this way does this divine kingdom set before the whole race an adequate destiny, comprising the highest purposes of infinite justice and benevolence. And this kingdom of redemption, being God's own work and plan, also fully meets the last condition of a right solution of the historic problem, for it assigns an adequate author to the whole historic drama. And being God's plan, all things in it concur and work together; we have one sublime system of things. The facts of history, its law, its aim and its author together make up one scheme: and in this scheme of history the grandeur of the mass of the historic facts is pervaded by a law of progress running along through the whole line of the facts, conducting to an issue commensurate with the greatness of the facts and the sweep of the law, and the facts, the law and the end are presided over by a power adequate to produce what is greatest and best for both God and man.

On strictly philosophical grounds, then, we are forced to seek the true exposition and idea of history in the Kingdom of Redemption. Here only do we find all the conditions of a right solution of the historic problem fully met. The genius of human history is identical with the genius of Christianity. The annals of the race cannot be constructed into an organized unity, there cannot be found in them the successive ~~upholding~~ *upholding* of a consecutive plan, unless it be in the growth of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Here is the "*aliquid inconcussum*" amid the fluctuations of the ocean of human life. We know not how any disbeliever in the reality and final supremacy of the Christian faith, can read the history of his race, and not be bewildered, if not convinced, by the vision.

Try to get the angle of vision in which all the lines of historic time converge; there is but one such angle, and it opens an unequalled scene. Spread out the historic canvass, and in its very centre see One sacred Form—for only one of all who have trod our earth, and borne our nature, can be imagined as having a rightful claim to that historic throne—wearing the crown of universal empire upon his suffering and victorious brow.

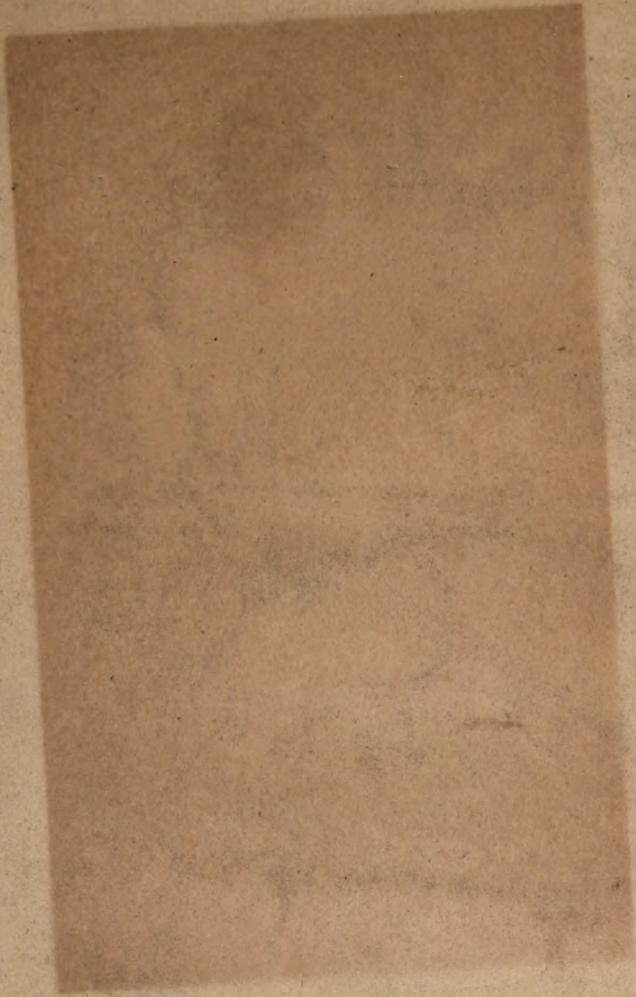
The light that streams from Him, a calm, divine effulgence, not generated from earthly sources, lends brightness to all that throng around Him, recognizing his regal and beneficent dominion. The whole background of this immortal canvas, which a divine hand has limned, is filled with those, who, with upturned prophetic gaze, await his coming; the progenitor of our race, to whom was given the first evangelic promise, Abraham, the father of the faithful, Moses, the leader and lawgiver of Israel, the long line of Judea's kings, with David as its crown, and of Judea's prophets, most sublime in Isaiah; while standing more remote, yet still expectant, are the representatives of the vast heathen nations, which, by a divine providence, had in many ways been prepared for that glorious Advent, being congregated in one vast empire, pervaded by one predominant speech. And before Him, and all around Him, is gathered the glorious company, the goodly fellowship of those, who for eighteen centuries in every clime have received from Him the very law of their spiritual life. There are Paul, and John, and Peter, who, with words of fire and promise, kindled the beacon lights among the nations; there is the imperial Cæsar, who unfolded the radiant cross as the harbinger of victory; there are the Eastern and the Western monarchs of the riven Roman empire, equally confessing the name of Jesus; Christian bishops and patriarchs, lordliest amongst them, those of Constantinople and Rome, bring the homage and fealty of the greatest ancient cities; Leo is there, with adoring gaze, while shaping the ruins of the Western empire, and by his side is standing a rude German warrior, awed into submission to the faith; Charlemagne represents the ninth century, the beginning of mediæval times, bearing the crown placed upon his brow in the name of Christ; Hildebrand, the most ambitious of pontiffs; Aquinas, the subtlest of scholastics; Bernard, the most zealous of mystics; Wycliffe and Huss, the progenitors of reform, as well as the knights of a Christian chivalry, Godfrey and Richard of the Lion Heart, and the adventurous explorers of new continents, all meet in that throng, and continue the succession of the faith, through the struggling light and darkness of these middle ages, and all the light they wear is cast upon them from that reverend, central form. And those, too, that may stand on this historic pic-

ture, as the impersonations of the kingdoms, tendencies and centuries that since have been; Luther, Calvin, Fenelon and Edwards, as divines; Bacon, Descartes and Schelling, in philosophy; Michel Angelo, Raphael, Milton, Shakspeare, Haydn and Mozart, in the various spheres of art; the combatants in the conflicts engendered by the Reformation; Spain's haughty monarch, ruling Europe's destiny in the sixteenth century; the king of France, prevalent in the seventeenth; England's royal line, triumphant in policy in the eighteenth; and the freer image of Liberty that stands for our own Republic, the wondrous growth of the present age; these forms, which live upon the historic canvas, can you group them all around any other centre, or see them truly in any other light, than that of Him, who is the centre of the Kingdom of Redemption, the rightful monarch of our earth?

It is He who has ruled historic times, and given them their shape and their law; it is He who has carried the race through the crises of its destiny, that in the consummation of that destiny it might be drawn closer to Himself. The divine right of popes, of kings, and of the people, has been in succession contended for, that the divine right of the Great Head of the Church might be seen to be the rallying-place, and the watchword, for the family of man, in its progress towards the end for which it was made.

And of this vision of human history, it is the triumph and seal, that it is not an imagination or a theory, but the open face of history itself, the legitimate summary and rendering of its facts. And in this point of view it contains the sum, and forms the conclusion of our argument. For Christianity, as has been well said, in its inmost spirit and highest sense, is historical. Its truths are truths of fact, inscribed upon the surface, looking out from the heights and up from the depths of all the annals of our race, so that the whole of human history, according to Edwards' unrivalled scheme, becomes one body of divinity, presenting to us an untroubled mirror of the wisdom of God, and the image of his goodness. And thus is human history the very theodicy of God, a grander apology for the Christian faith than the wisdom of a Butler, or the genius of a Pascal, ever framed. ✓

Is it given to man to know anything more sublime than this spectacle of the building up of the city of God? Through the fickle fortunes of men we read the calm and sure order of an unchanging plan; in the growth and decay of states, we trace the unhasting yet unresting progress of a kingdom, ordained ere time began, to be completed when time shall be no more. It is the transfiguration of the history of our globe, in which a divine glory breaks through and irradiates all that is mortal and transient. In the human race are fulfilled the prophetic intimations, which have been found in the work of creation itself; through his six days of travail and conflict, man is prepared for the full glories of a Sabbath of eternal rest.



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