The Curve of the Rational Age

THE PRESENT age of mankind may be characterised from this point of view of a graded psychological evolution of the race as a more and more rapidly accelerated attempt to discover and work out the right principle and secure foundations of a rational system of society. It has been an age of progress; but progress is of two kinds, adaptive, with a secure basis in an unalterable social principle and constant change only in the circumstances and machinery of its application to suit fresh ideas and fresh needs, or else radical, with no long-secure basis, but instead a constant root questioning of the practical foundations and even the central principle of the established society. The modern age has resolved itself into a constant series of radical progressions.

This series seems to follow always a typical course, first a luminous seed-time and a period of enthusiastic effort and battle, next a partial victory and achievement and a brief era of possession, then disillusionment and the birth of a new idea and endeavour. A principle of society is put forward by the thinker, seizes on the general mind and becomes a social gospel; brought immediately or by rapid stages into practice, it dethrones the preceding principle and takes its place as the foundation of the community’s social or political life. This victory won, men live for a time in the enthusiasm or, when the enthusiasm sinks, in the habit of their great achievement. After a little they begin to feel less at ease with the first results and are moved to adapt, to alter constantly, to develop more or less restlessly the new system,—for it is the very nature of the reason to observe, to be open to novel ideas, to respond quickly to new needs and possibilities and not to repose always in the unquestioning acceptance of every habit and old association. Still men do not yet think of questioning their social principle or imagine that
it will ever need alteration, but are intent only to perfect its forms and make its application more thorough, its execution more sincere and effective. A time, however, arrives when the reason becomes dissatisfied and sees that it is only erecting a mass of new conventions and that there has been no satisfying change; there has been a shifting of stresses, but the society is not appreciably nearer to perfection. The opposition of the few thinkers who have already, perhaps almost from the first, started to question the sufficiency of the social principle, makes itself felt and is accepted by increasing numbers; there is a movement of revolt and the society starts on the familiar round to a new radical progression, a new revolution, the reign of a more advanced social principle.

This process has to continue until the reason can find a principle of society or else a combination and adjustment of several principles which will satisfy it. The question is whether it will ever be satisfied or can ever rest from questioning the foundation of established things, — unless indeed it sinks back into a sleep of tradition and convention or else goes forward by a great awakening to the reign of a higher spirit than its own and opens into a suprarational or spiritual age of mankind. If we may judge from the modern movement, the progress of the reason as a social renovator and creator, if not interrupted in its course, would be destined to pass through three successive stages which are the very logic of its growth, the first individualistic and increasingly democratic with liberty for its principle, the second socialistic, in the end perhaps a governmental communism with equality and the State for its principle, the third — if that ever gets beyond the stage of theory — anarchistic in the higher sense of that much-abused word, either a loose voluntary cooperation or a free communalism with brotherhood or comradeship and not government for its principle. It is in the transition to its third and consummating stage, if or whenever that comes, that the power and sufficiency of the reason will be tested; it will then be seen whether the reason can really be the master of our nature, solve the problems of our interrelated and conflicting egoisms and bring about within itself a perfect principle of society or
must give way to a higher guide. For till this third stage has its trial, it is Force that in the last resort really governs. Reason only gives to Force the plan of its action and a system to administer.

We have already seen that it is individualism which opens the way to the age of reason and that individualism gets its impulse and its chance of development because it follows upon an age of dominant conventionalism. It is not that in the pre-individualistic, pre-rational ages there were no thinkers upon society and the communal life of man; but they did not think in the characteristic method of the logical reason, critical, all-observing, all-questioning, and did not proceed on the constructive side by the carefully mechanising methods of the highly rationalised intelligence when it passes from the reasoned perception of a truth to the endeavour after its pure, perfect and universal orderly application. Their thought and their building of life were much less logical than spontaneously intelligent, organic and intuitive. Always they looked upon life as it was and sought to know its secret by keen discernment, intuition and insight; symbols embodying the actual and ideal truth of life and being, types setting them in an arrangement and psychological order; institutions giving them a material fixity in their effectuation by life, this was the form in which they shaped their attempt to understand and mentalise life, to govern life by mind, but mind in its spontaneously intuitive or its reflectively seeing movements before they have been fixed into the geometrical patterns of the logical intelligence.

But reason seeks to understand and interpret life by one kind of symbol only, the idea; it generalises the facts of life according to its own strongly cut ideative conceptions so that it may be able to master and arrange them, and having hold of an idea it looks for its largest general application. And in order that these ideas may not be a mere abstraction divorced from the realised or realisable truth of things, it has to be constantly comparing them with facts. It has to be always questioning facts so that it may find the ideas by which they can be more and more adequately explained, ordered and managed, and it has always to be questioning ideas in order, first, to see whether
they square with actual facts and, secondly, whether there are not new facts to suit which they must be modified or enlarged or which can be evolved out of them. For reason lives not only in actual facts, but in possibilities, not only in realised truths, but in ideal truths; and the ideal truth once seen, the impulse of the idealising intelligence is to see too whether it cannot be turned into a fact, cannot be immediately or rapidly realised in life. It is by this inherent characteristic that the age of reason must always be an age of progress.

So long as the old method of mentalising life served its purpose, there was no necessity for men in the mass to think out their way of life by the aid of the reason. But the old method ceased to serve its purpose as soon as the symbols, types, institutions it created became conventions so imprisoning truth that there was no longer a force of insight sufficient to deliver the hidden reality from its artificial coatings. Man may for a time, for a long time even, live by the mere tradition of things whose reality he has lost, but not permanently; the necessity of questioning all his conventions and traditions arises, and by that necessity reason gets her first real chance of an entire self-development. Reason can accept no tradition merely for the sake of its antiquity or its past greatness: it has to ask, first, whether the tradition contains at all any still living truth and, secondly, whether it contains the best truth available to man for the government of his life. Reason can accept no convention merely because men are agreed upon it: it has to ask whether they are right in their agreement, whether it is not an inert and false acquiescence. Reason cannot accept any institution merely because it serves some purpose of life: it has to ask whether there are not greater and better purposes which can be best served by new institutions. There arises the necessity of a universal questioning, and from that necessity arises the idea that society can only be perfected by the universal application of the rational intelligence to the whole of life, to its principle as to its details, to its machinery and to the powers that drive the machine.

This reason which is to be universally applied, cannot be the reason of a ruling class; for in the present imperfection of
the human race that always means in practice the fettering and misapplication of reason degraded into a servant of power to maintain the privileges of the ruling class and justify the existing order. It cannot be the reason of a few pre-eminent thinkers; for, if the mass is infrarational, the application of their ideas becomes in practice disfigured, ineffective, incomplete, speedily altered into mere form and convention. It must be the reason of each and all seeking for a basis of agreement. Hence arises the principle of individualistic democracy, that the reason and will of every individual in the society must be allowed to count equally with the reason and will of every other in determining its government, in selecting the essential basis and in arranging the detailed ordering of the common life. This must be, not because the reason of one man is as good as the reason of any other, but because otherwise we get back inevitably to the rule of a predominant class which, however modified by being obliged to consider to some extent the opinion of the ruled, must exhibit always the irrational vice of reason subordinated to the purposes of power and not flexibly used for its own proper and ideal ends. Secondly, each individual must be allowed to govern his life according to the dictates of his own reason and will so far as that can be done without impinging on the same right in others. This is a necessary corollary of the primary principle on which the age of reason founds its initial movement. It is sufficient for the first purposes of the rational age that each man should be supposed to have sufficient intelligence to understand views which are presented and explained to him, to consider the opinions of his fellows and to form in consultation with them his own judgment. His individual judgment so formed and by one device or another made effective is the share he contributes to the building of the total common judgment by which society must be ruled, his little brick in appearance insignificant and yet indispensable to the imposing whole. And it is sufficient also for the first ideal of the rational age that this common judgment should be effectively organised only for the indispensable common ends of the society, while in all else men must be left free to govern their own life according to their own reason and will.
and find freely its best possible natural adjustment with the lives of others. In this way by the practice of the free use of reason men can grow into rational beings and learn to live by common agreement a liberal, a vigorous, a natural and yet rationalised existence.

In practice it is found that these ideas will not hold for a long time. For the ordinary man is not yet a rational being; emerging from a long infrarational past, he is not naturally able to form a reasonable judgment, but thinks either according to his own interests, impulses and prejudices or else according to the ideas of others more active in intelligence or swift in action who are able by some means to establish an influence over his mind. Secondly, he does not yet use his reason in order to come to an agreement with his fellows, but rather to enforce his own opinions by struggle and conflict with the opinions of others. Exceptionally he may utilise his reason for the pursuit of truth, but normally it serves for the justification of his impulses, prejudices and interests, and it is these that determine or at least quite discolour and disfigure his ideals, even when he has learned at all to have ideals. Finally, he does not use his freedom to arrive at a rational adjustment of his life with the life of others; his natural tendency is to enforce the aims of his life even at the expense of or, as it is euphemistically put, in competition with the life of others. There comes thus to be a wide gulf between the ideal and the first results of its practice. There is here a disparity between fact and idea that must lead to inevitable disillusionment and failure.

The individualistic democratic ideal brings us at first in actual practice to the more and more precarious rule of a dominant class in the name of democracy over the ignorant, numerous and less fortunate mass. Secondly, since the ideal of freedom and equality is abroad and cannot any longer be stifled, it must lead to the increasing effort of the exploited masses to assert their down-trodden right and to turn, if they can, this pseudodemocratic falsehood into the real democratic truth; therefore, to a war of classes. Thirdly, it develops inevitably as part of its process a perpetual strife of parties, at first few and simple in
composition, but afterwards as at the present time an impotent and sterilising chaos of names, labels, programmes, war-cries. All lift the banner of conflicting ideas or ideals, but all are really fighting out under that flag a battle of conflicting interests. Finally, individualistic democratic freedom results fatally in an increasing stress of competition which replaces the ordered tyrannies of the infrarational periods of humanity by a sort of ordered conflict. And this conflict ends in the survival not of the spiritually, rationally or physically fittest, but of the most fortunate and vitally successful. It is evident enough that, whatever else it may be, this is not a rational order of society; it is not at all the perfection which the individualistic reason of man had contemplated as its ideal or set out to accomplish.

The natural remedy for the first defects of the individualistic theory in practice would seem to be education; for if man is not by nature, we may hope at least that he can be made by education and training something like a rational being. Universal education, therefore, is the inevitable second step of the democratic movement in its attempt to rationalise human society. But a rational education means necessarily three things, first, to teach men how to observe and know rightly the facts on which they have to form a judgment; secondly, to train them to think fruitfully and soundly; thirdly, to fit them to use their knowledge and their thought effectively for their own and the common good. Capacity of observation and knowledge, capacity of intelligence and judgment, capacity of action and high character are required for the citizenship of a rational order of society; a general deficiency in any of these difficult requisites is a sure source of failure. Unfortunately, — even if we suppose that any training made available to the millions can ever be of this rare character, — the actual education given in the most advanced countries has not had the least relation to these necessities. And just as the first defects and failures of democracy have given occasion to the enemy to blaspheme and to vaunt the superiority or even the quite imaginary perfection of the ideal past, so also the first defects of its great remedy, education, have led many superior minds to deny the efficacy of education and its power
to transform the human mind and driven them to condemn the
democratic ideal as an exploded fiction.

Democracy and its panacea of education and freedom have
certainly done something for the race. To begin with, the people
are, for the first time in the historical period of history, erect,
active and alive, and where there is life, there is always a hope of
better things. Again, some kind of knowledge and with it some
kind of active intelligence based on knowledge and strengthened
by the habit of being called on to judge and decide between
conflicting issues and opinions in all sorts of matters have been
much more generalised than was formerly possible. Men are be-
ing progressively trained to use their minds, to apply intelligence
to life, and that is a great gain. If they have not yet learned to
think for themselves or to think soundly, clearly and rightly, they
are at least more able now to choose with some kind of initial
intelligence, however imperfect as yet it may be, the thought they
shall accept and the rule they shall follow. Equal educational
equipment and equal opportunity of life have by no means been
acquired; but there is a much greater equalisation than was
at all possible in former states of society. But here a new and
enormous defect has revealed itself which is proving fatal to the
social idea which engendered it. For given even perfect equality
of educational and other opportunity, — and that does not yet
really exist and cannot in the individualistic state of society, —
to what purpose or in what manner is the opportunity likely to
be used? Man, the half infrarational being, demands three things
for his satisfaction, power, if he can have it, but at any rate the
use and reward of his faculties and the enjoyment of his desires.
In the old societies the possibility of these could be secured by
him to a certain extent according to his birth, his fixed status and
the use of his capacity within the limits of his hereditary status.
That basis once removed and no proper substitute provided, the
same ends can only be secured by success in a scramble for the
one power left, the power of wealth. Accordingly, instead of a
harmoniously ordered society there has been developed a huge
organised competitive system, a frantically rapid and one-sided
development of industrialism and, under the garb of democracy,
an increasing plutocratic tendency that shocks by its ostentatious
grossness and the magnitudes of its guls and distances. These
have been the last results of the individualistic ideal and its
democratic machinery, the initial bankruptcies of the rational
age.

The first natural result has been the transition of the rational
mind from democratic individualism to democratic socialism.
Socialism, labouring under the disadvantageous accident of its
birth in a revolt against capitalism, an uprising against the rule of
the successful bourgeois and the plutocrat, has been compelled to
work itself out by a war of classes. And, worse still, it has started
from an industrialised social system and itself taken on at the
beginning a purely industrial and economic appearance. These
are accidents that disfigure its true nature. Its true nature, its real
justification is the attempt of the human reason to carry on the
rational ordering of society to its fulfilment, its will to get rid of
this great parasitical excrescence of unbridled competition, this
giant obstacle to any decent ideal or practice of human living.
Socialism sets out to replace a system of organised economic
battle by an organised order and peace. This can no longer
be done on the old lines, an artificial or inherited inequality
brought about by the denial of equal opportunity and justified
by the affirmation of that injustice and its result as an eternal
law of society and of Nature. That is a falsehood which the
reason of man will no longer permit. Neither can it be done,
neither can it be done, it seems, on the basis of individual liberty; for that has broken
down in the practice. Socialism therefore must do away with
the democratic basis of individual liberty, even if it professes to
respect it or to be marching towards a more rational freedom. It
shifts at first the fundamental emphasis to other ideas and fruits
of the democratic ideal, and it leads by this transference of stress
to a radical change in the basic principle of a rational society.
Equality, not a political only, but a perfect social equality, is to
be the basis. There is to be equality of opportunity for all, but
also equality of status for all, for without the last the first cannot
be secured; even if it were established, it could not endure. This
equality again is impossible if personal, or at least inherited
right in property is to exist, and therefore socialism abolishes — except at best on a small scale — the right of personal property as it is now understood and makes war on the hereditary principle. Who then is to possess the property? It can only be the community as a whole. And who is to administer it? Again, the community as a whole. In order to justify this idea, the socialistic principle has practically to deny the existence of the individual or his right to exist except as a member of the society and for its sake. He belongs entirely to the society, not only his property, but himself, his labour, his capacities, the education it gives him and its results, his mind, his knowledge, his individual life, his family life, the life of his children. Moreover, since his individual reason cannot be trusted to work out naturally a right and rational adjustment of his life with the life of others, it is for the reason of the whole community to arrange that too for him. Not the reasoning minds and wills of the individuals, but the collective reasoning mind and will of the community has to govern. It is this which will determine not only the principles and all the details of the economic and political order, but the whole life of the community and of the individual as a working, thinking, feeling cell of this life, the development of his capacities, his actions, the use of the knowledge he has acquired, the whole ordering of his vital, his ethical, his intelligent being. For so only can the collective reason and intelligent will of the race overcome the egoism of individualistic life and bring about a perfect principle and rational order of society in a harmonious world.

It is true that this inevitable character of socialism is denied or minimised by the more democratic socialists; for the socialistic mind still bears the impress of the old democratic ideas and cherishes hopes that betray it often into strange illogicalities. It assures us that it will combine some kind of individual freedom, a limited but all the more true and rational freedom, with the rigours of the collectivist idea. But it is evidently these rigours to which things must tend if the collectivist idea is to prevail and not to stop short and falter in the middle of its course. If it proves itself thus wanting in logic and courage, it may very
well be that it will speedily or in the end be destroyed by the foreign element it tolerates and perish without having sounded its own possibilities. It will pass perhaps, unless guided by a rational wisdom which the human mind in government has not yet shown, after exceeding even the competitive individualistic society in its cumbrous incompetence. But even at its best the collectivist idea contains several fallacies inconsistent with the real facts of human life and nature. And just as the idea of individualistic democracy found itself before long in difficulties on that account because of the disparity between life’s facts and the mind’s idea, difficulties that have led up to its discredit and approaching overthrow, the idea of collectivist democracy too may well find itself before long in difficulties that must lead to its discredit and eventual replacement by a third stage of the inevitable progression. Liberty protected by a State in which all are politically equal, was the idea that individualistic democracy attempted to elaborate. Equality, social and political equality enforced through a perfect and careful order by a State which is the organised will of the whole community, is the idea on which socialistic democracy stakes its future. If that too fails to make good, the rational and democratic Idea may fall back upon a third form of society founding an essential rather than formal liberty and equality upon fraternal comradeship in a free community, the ideal of intellectual as of spiritual Anarchism.

In fact the claim to equality like the thirst for liberty is

1 These hesitations of social democracy, its uneasy mental poise between two opposing principles, collectivistic regimentation and democratic liberty, may be the root cause of the failure of socialism to make good in so many countries even when it had every chance on its side and its replacement by the more vigorous and ruthlessly logical forces of Communism and Fascism. On the other hand, in the northernmost countries of Europe a temporising, reformist, practical Socialism compromising between the right regulation of the communal life and the freedom of the individual has to some extent made good; but it is still doubtful whether it will be allowed to go to the end of its road. If it has that chance, it is still to be seen whether the drive of the idea and the force it carries in it for complete self-effectuation will not prevail in the end over the spirit of compromise.

2 In the theory of communism State socialism is only a passage; a free classless Stateless communal life is the eventual ideal. But it is not likely that the living State machine once in power with all that are interested in its maintenance would let go its prey or allow itself to be abolished without a struggle.
individualistic in its origin,—it is not native or indispensable to the essence of the collectivist ideal. It is the individual who demands liberty for himself, a free movement for his mind, life, will, action; the collectivist trend and the State idea have rather the opposite tendency, they are self-compelled to take up more and more the compulsory management and control of the mind, life, will, action of the community—and the individual's as part of it—until personal liberty is pressed out of existence. But similarly it is the individual who demands for himself equality with all others; when a class demands, it is still the individual multiplied claiming for himself and all who are of his own grade, political or economic status an equal place, privilege or opportunity with those who have acquired or inherited a superiority of status. The social Reason conceded first the claim to liberty, but in practice (whatever might have been the theory) it admitted only so much equality—equality before the law, a helpful but not too effective political equality of the vote—as was necessary to ensure a reasonable freedom for all. Afterwards when the injustices and irrationalities of an unequalised competitive freedom, the enormity of the gulfs it created, became apparent, the social Reason shifted its ground and tried to arrive at a more complete communal justice on the basis of a political, economic, educational and social equality as complete as might be; it has laboured to make a plain level on which all can stand together. Liberty in this change has had to undergo the former fate of equality; for only so much liberty—perhaps or for a time—could survive as can be safely allowed without the competitive individual getting enough room for his self-assertive growth to upset or endanger the equalitarian basis. But in the end the discovery cannot fail to be made that an artificial equality has also its irrationalities, its contradictions of the collective good, its injustices even and its costly violations of the truth of Nature. Equality like individualistic liberty may turn out to be not a panacea but an obstacle in the way of the best management and control of life by the collective reason and will of the community.

But if both equality and liberty disappear from the human scene, there is left only one member of the democratic trinity,
brotherhood or, as it is now called, comradeship, that has some chance of survival as part of the social basis. This is because it seems to square better with the spirit of collectivism; we see accordingly the idea of it if not the fact still insisted on in the new social systems, even those in which both liberty and equality are discarded as noxious democratic chimeras. But comradeship without liberty and equality can be nothing more than the like association of all — individuals, functional classes, guilds, syndicates, soviets or any other units — in common service to the life of the nation under the absolute control of the collectivist State. The only liberty left at the end would be the “freedom” to serve the community under the rigorous direction of the State authority; the only equality would be an association of all alike in a Spartan or Roman spirit of civic service with perhaps a like status, theoretically equal at least for all functions; the only brotherhood would be the sense of comradeship in devoted dedication to the organised social Self, the State. In fact the democratic trinity, stripped of its godhead, would fade out of existence; the collectivist ideal can very well do without them, for none of them belong to its grain and very substance.

This is indeed already the spirit, the social reason — or rather the social gospel — of the totalitarianism whose swelling tide threatens to engulf all Europe and more than Europe. Totalitarianism of some kind seems indeed to be the natural, almost inevitable destiny, at any rate the extreme and fullest outcome of Socialism or, more generally, of the collectivist idea and impulse. For the essence of Socialism, its justifying ideal, is the governance and strict organisation of the total life of the society as a whole and in detail by its own conscious reason and will for the best good and common interest of all, eliminating exploitation by individual or class, removing internal competition, haphazard confusion and waste, enforcing and perfecting coordination, assuring the best functioning and a sufficient life for all. If a democratic polity and machinery best assure such a working, as was thought at first, it is this that will be chosen and the result will be Social Democracy. That ideal still holds sway in northern Europe and it may there yet have a chance of proving that a
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successful collectivist rationalisation of society is quite possible. But if a non-democratic polity and machinery are found to serve the purpose better, then there is nothing inherently sacrosanct for the collectivist mind in the democratic ideal; it can be thrown on the rubbish-heap where so many other exploded sanctities have gone. Russian communism so discarded with contempt democratic liberty and attempted for a time to substitute for the democratic machine a new sovietic structure, but it has preserved the ideal of a proletarian equality for all in a classless society. Still its spirit is a rigorous totalitarianism on the basis of the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, which amounts in fact to the dictatorship of the Communist party in the name or on behalf of the proletariat. Non-proletarian totalitarianism goes farther and discards democratic equality no less than democratic liberty; it preserves classes — for a time only, it may be, — but as a means of social functioning, not as a scale of superiority or a hierarchic order. Rationalisation is no longer the turn; its place is taken by a revolutionary mysticism which seems to be the present drive of the Time Spirit.

This is a symptom that can have a considerable significance. In Russia the Marxist system of Socialism has been turned almost into a gospel. Originally a rationalistic system worked out by a logical thinker and discoverer and systematiser of ideas, it has been transformed by the peculiar turn of the Russian mind into something like a social religion, a collectivist mystique, an inviolable body of doctrines with all denial or departure treated as a punishable heresy, a social cult enforced by the intolerant piety and enthusiasm of a converted people. In Fascist countries the swing away from Rationalism is marked and open; a surface vital subjectivism has taken its place and it is in the name of the national soul and its self-expression and manifestation that the leaders and prophets teach and violently enforce their totalitarian mystique. The essential features are the same in Russia and in Fascist countries, so that to the eye of the outsider their deadly quarrel seems to be a blood-feud of kinsmen fighting for the inheritance of their slaughtered parents — Democracy and the Age of Reason. There is the seizure of the life of the community
by a dominant individual leader, Führer, Dux, dictator, head of a small active minority, the Nazi, Fascist or Communist party, and supported by a militarised partisan force; there is a rapid crystallisation of the social, economic, political life of the people into a new rigid organisation effectively controlled at every point; there is the compulsory casting of thought, education, expression, action, into a set iron mould, a fixed system of ideas and life-motives, with a fierce and ruthless, often a sanguinary repression of all that denies and differs; there is a total unprecedented compression of the whole communal existence so as to compel a maximum efficiency and a complete unanimity of mind, speech, feeling, life.

If this trend becomes universal, it is the end of the Age of Reason, the suicide or the execution — by decapitation or lethal pressure, *peine forte et dure,* — of the rational and intellectual expansion of the human mental being. Reason cannot do its work, act or rule if the mind of man is denied freedom to think or freedom to realise its thought by action in life. But neither can a subjective age be the outcome; for the growth of subjectivism also cannot proceed without plasticity, without movement of self-search, without room to move, expand, develop, change. The result is likely to be rather the creation of a tenebrous No Man’s Land where obscure mysticisms, materialistic, vitalistic or mixed, clash and battle for the mastery of human life. But this consummation is not certain; chaos and confusion still reign and all hangs in the balance. Totalitarian mysticism may not be able to carry out its menace of occupying the globe, may not even endure. Spaces of the earth may be left where a rational idealism can still survive. The terrible compression now exercised on the national mind and life may lead to an explosion from within or, on the other hand, having fulfilled its immediate aim may relax and give way in calmer times to a greater plasticity which will restore to the human mind or soul a more natural line of progress, a freer field for their self-expanding impulse.

In that case the curve of the Age of Reason, now threatened with an abrupt cessation, may prolong and complete itself; the subjective turn of the human mind and life, avoiding a premature
plunge into any general external action before it has found itself, may have time and freedom to evolve, to seek out its own truth, its own lines and so become ready to take up the spiral of the human social evolution where the curve of the Age of Reason naturally ends by its own normal evolution and make ready the ways of a deeper spirit.