

from the realm of a transcendent Heaven to a future Kingdom of God on Earth, toward which the historical process was aiming. This Millenium was no longer to be reached through death and salvation, but rather through the striving of mankind for improvement in time and space. What Carl L. Becker calls "The Heavenly City of Eighteenth-Century Philosophers" was built with many earthly bricks. If proof is needed, we have the enduring testimony of the Marquis de Condorcet, who when in 1793/94 facing death, proclaimed his undying faith in both "the future progress of mankind" and the predictability of the "future destiny of mankind from the results of history":

"The friend of humanity cannot receive unmixed pleasure but by abandoning himself to the endearing hope of the future... If man can predict, almost with certainty, those appearances of which he understands the laws; if, even when the laws are unknown to him, experience of the past enables him to foresee, with considerable probability, future appearances, why should we suppose it a chimerical undertaking to delineate with some degree of truth, the picture of the future destiny of mankind from the results of history?... In short, as opinions formed from experience, relative to the same class of objects, are the only rule by which men of soundest understanding are governed in their conduct, why should the philosopher be proscribed from supporting his conjectures upon a similar basis, provided he attributes to them no greater certainty than the number, the consistency, and the accuracy of actual observations shall authorize? Our hopes, as to the future condition of the human species, may be reduced to three points: the destruction of inequality between different nations; the progress of equality in one and the same nation, and lastly, the real improvement of man."

Condorcet's voice echoes the radical ideology of the period of the French Revolution, which in the 19th century gradually changed into the more sedate and scientific theory of evolution. To Darwin and Spencer, the future appeared as gradually and unnoticeably evolving from the past; and as the present became ever more acceptable to the prospering middle-classes, the intellectual spokesmen of the age conceived of the future as constituting but a bigger and better present. Hence, the growing number of scientists naturally limited their investigations to the past of man or to the ever recurrent present of nature. Though Comte might concern himself with the future, most scholars of the positivistic century consistently barred such concern from the halls of respectable learning; and it was only natural that the future should come to be monopolized by the "lunatic fringe" of the academic and literary world.

With all its scientific and technical dynamism, the Victorian period was an era of social stability when fundamental social change occurred too slowly for most people to be aware of it. As Whitehead puts it, down into the nineteenth century "the time-span of important change was considerably longer than that of a single human life". Small wonder then that the age-old view according to which the past, present, and future