

like priest" (Isa. xxiv. 2). But in all this there is no justification for the suspicion that the Levitical legislation was not behind them. Their failure in all cases to live up to it is sufficiently clear, and need not be denied. It is strikingly paralleled in the better furnished ministry of the Christian church. The purest and most dutiful Aaronic priest is only debtor to the confession of the noblest and most faithful servant of Christ: "I count not myself to have apprehended." The standard in both cases is planted far above the attainment, and in both alike proves thereby the divinity of its origin and the perfectness of its ends.

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## ARTICLE II.

### SOCIOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

BY REV. GEORGE MOOAR, D.D., PROFESSOR, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA.

THOSE writers who either coined the mongrel word, sociology, or have made the most use of it, regard it as the science which unfolds the laws in accordance with which the changes occur in human society. They maintain that if we take any given society, it has come to be what it is by the interplay of certain factors, internal and external, which are presumed to have existed at its origin, and which have mutually and progressively modified each other. The claim is further set up that these modifications have uniformly followed the terms of a certain formula, now become almost too familiar — that is to say, the given society "has passed from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity." That this is the order of changes is inferred from analogy. For society is an organism, and organisms all follow this order of evolution. The human individual has his genesis so. The original societies of primitive men therefore have been modified in this way. At first simple, rude, similar, the people composing the tribe, under the force of external circumstances, have been differentiated and fashioned

into more and more complex aggregates. This increasing complexity may be shown in a great variety of aspects, domestic, industrial, military, political. The process has been illustrated in Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* by a vast array of facts.

One follows these illustrations with a good deal of consent, and with a certain rare pleasure. For an ingenious classification, which brings apparent order into a mass of bewildering details, gives the sense of relief and gratifies the rational instinct for comprehension and unity. To have the very universe itself marshalled under one recurrent formula, which never fails to subordinate every phenomenon, constitutes a philosophic fascination almost inconsistent with philosophic calm. But no fascination lasts forever. All calms, too, on the intellectual sea are temporary.

Every one who has a philosophic spirit will naturally arouse himself and inquire after the bearing of these discussions on certain great interests which he and his co-workers have at heart. For though we have been told that "as tannery is not chemistry, so measures for the mitigation of evil in society are not social science"; yet benevolent enterprises may be regarded as the arts which are dependent on the new science.<sup>1</sup> Even the tanner may be instructed by the chemist. Especially since the illustrations in this field are derived very largely from the uncivilized races, it is not strange that one who is familiar with Christian missions should find himself querying what there is to learn, and what he seems to miss in this philosophy of society.

To be sure, it may be objected — the objection is almost thrown in his face: Why, you have the very bias which unfits you to discuss these social theories. You are committed to the attempt to transform society by the diffusion of a certain theological system. Of course, you prick your ears and take fright. Thus Mr. Spencer has said: "Speaking generally, then, each system of dogmatic theology, with the sentiments that gather around it, becomes an impediment in the way of

<sup>1</sup> E. L. Y. Preface to *Spencer's Descriptive Sociology*.

social science. The sympathies drawn out toward one creed, and the correlative antipathies aroused by other creeds, distort the interpretations of all the associated facts."<sup>1</sup> One good turn deserves another. It has been quite the fashion among certain religious teachers to quote Paul's words, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." How completely have the secular thinkers now turned the tables on us, as it were retorting: you, spiritual men, receive not the truths of science; they are foolishness unto you; neither can you discern them, for they are scientifically discerned. Both the quotation and the retort contain truth. Each is a coat which the one for whom it is fitted should put on. But in the field of social facts, biases are pretty generally distributed. If exclusion on this account is rigidly insisted on, the jury in this case will be hard to find. I cannot, therefore, think that because one, being asked, what periodicals he takes or reads, mentions in his list the *Missionary Herald*, he should be peremptorily challenged.

On the contrary, it should seem that one who is well acquainted with the facts brought out in the progress of missionary effort might be able to make some valuable suggestions in this department of scientific inquiry. Hardly any domain of knowledge can be mentioned which has not been enriched by missionaries. A mere glance, for example, at the so-called "Ely Volume,"<sup>2</sup> would confirm this statement; but that volume is only a single chapter in a work which should make a survey of the entire history of missions. As respects the ideas, customs, institutions of races comparatively unknown otherwise, no observers have been in a condition to make more accurate observations; few observers have been more competent. If one examine but cursorily the immense accumulation of sociological facts gathered in the works of Mr. Spencer, he will see that that writer has been under

<sup>1</sup> *The Study of Sociology*, p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> *Contributions of our Foreign Missions to Science and Human Well-being*. By Thomas Laurie, D.D.

large obligations to men who have labored in missionary fields. Authors like Ellis, Krapf, Moffat, Livingstone, have supplied information second to that supplied by no others.

It is obvious, too, that no other class of men can receive more light from this science. Men and women are constrained to go out into such populations as those along the Congo river for the express purpose of introducing a leaven which is to work within the society there till the whole is leavened. Is it not highly important to know the natural laws by which social transformations take place? Even leaven is not the only element in the making of good bread. The gospel itself is not the only force that works for the uplifting of mankind. The missionary, in order to do the best service for any race, needs to appreciate the various internal and external influences which have been operating to make that race what it is. He finds very curious and mysterious, perhaps revolting or ridiculous, usages and ideas prevalent. It should help to put him in quicker and larger sympathy with those who practise these usages and cherish these ideas to be able to trace the processes by which these peculiarities have come to be woven in with the corporate existence of the community. It is not enough to know what caste is in India; rather we do not know what it is except we see something of how it grew to be. It is easy to laugh at the Fung-shui superstition in China; but he is the wise teacher who has thoughtfully traced its origin and wide complication with the life of the Chinese people. The wide comparisons which sociology makes among communities very unlike in many respects, remote as well as near in space and in time, reveal to him the unity which exists with great phenomenal diversity. He is taught in what the unity consists, and what the influences are which have made the diversity. He is able to profit the better by the experience of his fellow-workers; for this deeper insight enables him to see that he is working in conditions of society, which though apparently very diverse, are yet really quite like those in which men have failed or been successful before him. Both himself and the secretaries of the great organi-

zations which manage our missionary enterprises need to get all the light they can as to the stage of development or degradation which any particular tribe has reached. For this may determine in no small degree the relative wisdom of beginning labor here or there. At least, it may assist the mind to judge more fairly of the different fruitfulness of labors, equally zealous and wise and patient. Results which are reached quickly in one nation may be long delayed or not reached at all in another. The precise hour has struck in one place; it has passed, or is yet to come elsewhere. How different are the conditions for the new evangelization necessary in the Hawaiian Islands in 1883, as compared with those under which the mission work was commenced there in 1820. Must not the stage of development which the Japanese have attained require methods not altogether similar to those which need to be employed in Bailunda or Bihe? Can we expect the renovated society in the two regions to take on the same forms?

Of course it hardly needs saying that sagacious missionaries have always been more or less mindful of the varying adaptation which is necessary in introducing the Christian faith into new lands. The entire Christian revelation which they would introduce is itself a continuous adaptation. Objectors are found even now who impugn its perfection and therefore its divine origin, for the very reason that customs and ideas were tolerated in the early ages — in the periods of the patriarchs, the judges, or even of David — which were not allowed by Christ. But the Master showed that Moses suffered one at least of these early usages, easy divorce, not because it was ideally the right thing, but because of the hardness of men's hearts; or, if we may adopt the reigning phraseology, on account of the less evolved conditions of the holy nation. It is one of the favorite corollaries of sociology that the religion, the government, the domestic relations, which may exist at any particular time among any particular people may not be, to be sure, ideally the best, but they may be relatively the best. They are such as are

fitted to the existing degree of development. Such a corollary may be abused. Still there is an obvious truth in it, to which legislators and all wise educators also, conform. This was Paul's principle. He became all things to all men, if by such conformity he might save some. Delicate questions arise here. Protestants accuse the Roman church of carrying the policy of accommodation so far as to degrade the gospel instead of uplifting the nations. The Jesuits have often pursued this policy to such an extent as to shock even the Roman sense of propriety. On the other hand, it has been cast as a reproach against some Protestant missions that the effort was made in them to change the South sea Islander into a New England Puritan of some extreme type. The problems which emerge in this connection need to be dealt with by a pure conscience and a good common sense. But within limits, which must not allow a compromise of principle, every missionary to the Greek becomes a Greek, to the Jew a Jew, to the Chinaman a Chinaman. What unscientific sagacity prompts, and what has been the method of divine revelation, is shown to be involved in the very laws of social evolution. When lectureships are more fully endowed in theological seminaries for the special training of missionaries, we can conceive no more interesting nor instructive course of lectures than would arise in a competent handling of such topics as have been now suggested.

But if it be cheerfully granted that this new science might contribute largely to the practical wisdom of those having to do with the missionary service, is it too much to claim that the great evangelical movement which has been in progress for eighteen centuries, and which has become in our century so world-wide in its sweep, not only can furnish items pertaining to the uncultured races, but may demand room within the science itself for its distinctive circle of facts and forces?

Thus far, the principal works which have gained a hearing in this line of research and theory have formulated the whole process of social changes in terms of matter and

physical force. The very idea of God himself is said to have been slowly worked up out of the crude fancy which primitive people have of a ghost. And this new idea of God is by a further extension of the same process to be finally resolved into an "Unseen Reality," of which nothing is known and with which man has no conscious communications. But Christian missions assume that man, as soon as he appears and wherever he appears, has the endowment of reason and will, and the capacity of apprehending God and of being like him, since man is the very image of God. They assume, therefore, not merely ignorance, inexperience, simplicity, but sin — the disposition in the race as such when they know to do good to choose to do something less worthy instead. They announce as the glad news that the Unseen Reality has revealed himself along the evolving generations in the conscience in nature, and that the height and fulness of that revelation is in the Saviour, Jesus Christ, and that through that Saviour comes to every trusting and penitent soul forgiveness of sins and power to rise into an eternal life.

Whether these assumptions are valid and this announcement trustworthy or not, it can be shown that they have played and are playing an important part in social transformation. That is to say, wherever these affirmations have been carried there has been set on foot a movement toward a higher civilization. To show that there is no over-claim made here, occasioned by the present writer's supposable bias, a remarkable paragraph may be quoted from a writer not supposed to be bent by that bias. Lecky says:<sup>1</sup> "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments and conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practise; and has exerted so deep an influence that it may truly be said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to re-

<sup>1</sup> *History of Morality*, ii. 2.

generate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and than all the exhortations of moralists." The favorite designation of the work of the missionary is that he preaches Christ. The phrase has become hackneyed, and often sounds hollow to the ear. Preaching Christ may sometimes be thought of as an insignificant function. But if what Lecky says here is true — and we may rather regard his representation defective than exaggerated — those men who bring to their darkened fellow-men this ideal character as a living friend and Saviour must be contributing the largest influence for social weal.

Now the impression made in reading the current treatises in sociology is that they need to be supplemented by some fuller recognition of the factors which distinguish the Christian system of thought. The tendency in applying so constantly a certain philosophy of evolution to this subject results in reducing the original factors in the problem to a minimum. The creationist is driven off the field, because he is said to begin with nothing on earth and everything in heaven. The other extreme, however, is to begin with nothing in heaven and as near to nothing as will do on the earth. But if in the investigation of the questions relating to so vast an area of facts as these in social science one start with matter alone, and make all the advance to come about by mere motion, it is inevitable that the system of explanation, however ingenious and wide-sweeping, will begin to give forth a metallic ring. The heavens will be brass and the earth iron. For though it is undeniable that the words used in all languages to designate spirit, personality, and even the Divine Being, are words having their roots in material objects, yet the human being himself, who so derives them, puts his own rationality and emotionality into them and they lose the merely metallic sound. Music comes into them. Speech itself, as well as music, is spiritual. But when a philosopher deliberately begins with disowning any higher faculties than the senses, and would show how the senses have somehow developed into what we may call by higher

names, we may seem to be going up simply through the process of evolution, but we do not go up except as something keeps coming in from within or above the ascending series. It has been pertinently suggested<sup>1</sup> how inadequate are all purely evolutionary explanations of the beauty in the vegetable and animal kingdoms. One "may account for bright colors in flowers as attracting insects, and for honey as the price of labor, but he cannot in this way cover up the emotional force of the flower in its very varied, very delicate, very beautiful combination of colors." We are obliged to assume a rational element as belonging to the rudiments of the world. In like manner, one who looks at the religious notions of uncivilized tribes follows with no little interest the solution which traces them all as connected with the fancy of a ghost. Many facts in the religious history of the race respond to that solution. But one drops the solution ere long as inadequate. Some nobler idea must have been in the human mind, however degraded. So of the idea of sin. Underlying the perplexing confusions which have attended the action of conscience, considered as merely a faculty of judgment, there belongs to human nature the conviction of guilt. The sociology which leaves out such conviction, or gives it small space or significance, must be deficient. Doubtless we all have felt at times how difficult it is, running in the grooves of physical analogy, to retain the idea of a spontaneous self-determination in the will. But taking counsel of our own conscious concrete selves, it is just as difficult to pronounce any other affirmation. If there are moments when the fine comparison of the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, Freedom is the drop of water in the piece of amber, might almost reconcile us to the necessarian doctrine; there are other and more numerous moments when we repeat with intensity the finer response of the Concord sage:

" So close is grandeur to our dust,  
 So near is God to man,  
 When duty whispers low, Thou must,  
 The youth replies, I can."

<sup>1</sup> Natural Theology, by John Bascom, p. 157.

But sociology is one thing when we conceive of human action as determined by social conditions alone, and quite another when we conceive of the social conditions as largely determined by spontaneous energies which the individual brings up from the mysterious depths of his own personality. It was characteristic of Lord Macaulay to put the antithesis, "It is the age that makes the man, and not man the age." But he was just as capable, on occasion, to point his antithesis the other way about; and it would have been as true in the latter as it was in the former way. Few men have more reason than the missionary to emphasize the tremendous power of circumstances and conditions over the will. Nowhere so much as among the people with whom he labors does he see how prostrate the individual is under disabilities which he inherits or which the custom of his country put upon him. Nevertheless the missionary has learned that the individual is still a power. He appeals to the power of choice in him, and there is a response. He appeals to his conscience, and the conscience carries home the sense of obligation and the conviction of guilt. At first sight of any uncivilized people, we are impressed with the fact that they all look alike; but intimate acquaintance dissipates that impression. Sociology, as is the manner of inductive science generally, deals with resemblances and delights in uniformities. It makes too little account of the solitary self. But mankind, in the view of the Good Shepherd and of the religion which proceeds from him, is not a mass only: although it is a flock, yet he knoweth the sheep by name, and leadeth them out. Christian missions lay their stress on this action of the individual man on himself and for himself; put him into immediate relations with God in Christ, and so build up a new society—the kingdom of heaven, in which if there be also evolution, it is under the law of love.

By reason of the strong tendency to resolve the original elements of humanity into so few elements, and to cut away any connection that is vital and formative with God, a favorite inference with certain sociologists is, that the changes in the

direction of a higher culture are slow; they must be slow. If any rapid changes in morality are reported, they are viewed with suspicion. What causes the baser forms of humanity to rise in the scale? The answer is "ages of social discipline." There is so much truth in this answer that it seems to be taken as one of the laws of nature which are inviolable. The phrase so often heard on Christian lips, "A nation born in a day," is reckoned an absurdity. Mr. Spencer treats the results claimed by missionary toilers in a very gingerly way. The sociological bias as strongly affects his judgment of their work as any theological bias could affect their appreciation of his social labors. Thus we read, "However great, therefore, may be the seeming change adventitiously produced in a people's religion, the anthropomorphic tendency prevents it from being other than superficial, — insures such modifications of the new religion as to give it all the potency of the old one, obscures whatever higher elements there may be in it, until the people have reached the capability of being acted upon by them, and so re-establishes the equilibrium between the impulses and the control they need."<sup>1</sup> As an illustration of his view of this matter, he quotes, elsewhere, what some observer among the Fijis had to say of the actions of some of those islanders when they were experiencing, as was said, "a visitation of the Holy Ghost." They were described as "roaring for hours together under the disquietude of their souls." Our philosopher therefore asks, Is it not clear that these Fijis had simply understood those parts of the Christian creed which agree with their own? His inference is that these savages simply took the punitive element in the Bible which harmonized with their own savagery, and left the merciful element with which they had no affinity, and which was "beyond their comprehension." The mode in which the Fiji Christianity is here estimated by this sociologist shows how much larger the element of theory is with him than the element of careful observation or induction. He is simply imposing his sociological creed upon the facts. He had not left

<sup>1</sup> Illustrations of Universal Progress, p. 445.

in his theory any causes possible to justify any surprising transformation in the character of the Fiji people. Yet such transformation has really taken place, which is certainly bad for the theory, but is very wholesome to the people, and encouraging to lovers of humanity everywhere. It is pertinent to put the real facts alongside of the social hypothesis. July 30, 1849, two English ladies having heard that the father of the late King of Fiji was ill at Bau, the site of the great heathen temple, and that fourteen women taken from a neighboring island were to be killed and eaten, put off in a canoe with the forlorn hope of saving them. On landing at the wharf, they learned that ten had already been served up; the shrieks of the last two greeted them as they came to shore. The ladies gained their point and the scenes of festivity for that day closed. An English visitor thirty years after looked at the stone in front of the temple on which the victims used to be dashed to pieces, and into the large oven where hundreds and perhaps thousands had been cooked,— then turned to different scenes, to the native preacher's house, the comfortable huts of the natives, and paid respects to the princess, granddaughter of the king whose feast has just been described. The princess had gone to class-meeting, of which she was leader, and the voice of Christian song filled the air which had been filled with shrieks thirty years before. Even as late as 1854, this princess's father was found, in honor of the old king's death, assisting in strangling the royal widows. Two were already strangled, and he was proceeding to dispatch the three others. Yet three years later this man was baptized, and has continued to honor the Christian name. Fourteen hundred schools, nine hundred native preachers, and hundreds of Christian families with the arts and industries of our nineteenth century attest the truth that social transformations may be wrought by Christianity, even on the very islands and in the very generation in which an inadequate sociological theory had declared it improbable, if not impossible.

Another case may be cited. Its facts belong among, per-

haps, the very lowest of the aboriginal populations of the globe, the Papuans of Australia. They have either never developed above the lowest religious and social conditions, or else have fallen, as Mr. Spencer allows many tribes have, from some higher point in the social scale. The ordinary civilization which commerce and mining carry, had only corrupted them still more, introducing licentiousness and drunkenness. After thirty-six years' labor, one man was baptized, in 1860. Since then a marked change has begun, and been carried forward. The wild people have been gathered into villages, and have adopted the usages and habits of civilized life. "When I looked," says the Moravian bishop Schweinitz, "at the photograph of Philip Pepper, a brother of the first convert, and heard his teacher's account of the impressive warmth with which he publicly proclaims the gospel and prays to God, I could hardly believe that this man had been a naked savage, squatting in the sand and roasting lizards for his food, joining his countrymen in the vilest abominations, and living for years in a state as near to that of the irrational creation as it is possible for human beings to reach."

Such illustrations as these are, indeed, but samples of a kind of influence which has been going out into the ruder nations of the earth from the beginning of the Christian church until now. In our own generation this influence has become greatly expanded. For there are now engaged in Protestant missions alone an army of four thousand eight hundred and seventy-one men and women of consecrated spirit who have gone to other lands than their own, having 28,574 native helpers, and the annual income of \$7,500,000. And our thesis is not that the sociologists have not accumulated important facts, nor that they have not got on the track of some valid generalizations, but that Christian missions disclose significant facts and forces which have not received due recognition.