

That being granted, the one portion of this community that manufactures is not more civilized than the others. It is the failure to see that the purely accidental unit—the nation—is merely a stepping-stone to the ultimate community in which the whole world shall be united, that has led Mr. Stephens astray. If Free Trade were everywhere established, and commerce thus developed to the utmost, war would be made more and more difficult. This would not be the millennium, but it would help towards it. If Mr. Stephens would only recognise that nations are but aggregates of individuals, and that whether the taxes are collected together and expended from London, Washington, Ottawa, and Mexico separately, or gathered together in one of these merely, so long as the amount is the same that is collected and expended, it matters nothing.

What Mr. Stephens concludes with is worthy of attention. He says that when we find it (Free Trade) is to the advantage of the adviser, the fair presumption is that his interests prejudice his judgment. This remark does not affect me in the least, as I have not a single near relative or connection engaged in manufacture or trade, so have no interest whatever in Canadian Free Trade, save the interest every sensible man ought to have in his fellow-subjects and the desire that they should act wisely for themselves. It is different with those who manufacture protected goods. Blank ruin stares them in the face if the protection is withdrawn, and therefore Canadians ought to be chary how they listen to advice from such tainted quarters. I wonder if Mr. Stephens never heard the maxim laid down: That only is a just transaction in which both parties are the better for it. Granted that this is true, then it may quite easily be the case that Free Trade may be advantageous to both Britain and Canada, as likewise to the United States, so there would be no risk in listening to British advice in the matter.

One thing more and then I have done at present. Mr. Stephens says that political economy cannot be an exact science because Free Traders have changed their maxims. That seems a *non sequitur*. He may mean that change of view as to the answer to given problems proves that political economy is not an exact science. All I can say is, if that reasoning holds, then not even mathematics can claim to be exact. With his extensive reading, Mr. Stephens cannot fail to be aware of the famous quarrel between the two Bernoulli as to the solution of a mathematical problem, and how neither Leibnitz nor Newton would venture to decide which was right. Certainly astronomy would never have a chance of being reckoned exact. In fact, if Mr. Stephens' reasoning held good, no science capable of advance could be called exact. Political economy certainly most nearly deserves the title of an exact science of any science of human nature. It certainly goes on the assumption that man's only motive is enlightened selfishness, and man has an infinity of other motives; yet this would no more make political economy other than an exact science than does the fact that all fundamental problems of mechanics representing impossible cases prove that mechanics is not an exact science. No one could prove experimentally Newton's first law of motion, the case put has no existence. Yet from that and such like problems can principles be drawn that enable us to weigh the planets and predict their courses.

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"SCIENTIFIC RELIGION."

If by a "moral interregnum," as Mr. Goldwin Smith puts it, we are to understand a lapse of power in the outward and visible religious sects which have hitherto conserved the moral guidance of the people, it is possible to comprehend that these may cease to reign. But, in its true sense, a "moral interregnum" is a thing impossible. The Sun of the natural world may by the ignorant be supposed to cease to exist every time a thick cloud hides it from view. So, too, those men who have clouded over the "Sun of Righteousness"—that source of all Life and Light to the spiritual universe—with self-evolved vapours of error, darkness and confusion, may come to believe and mourn that the source of power has withdrawn its influences utterly, and ceased to reign in their heavens. Both judge only according to appearance, and their judgment is therefore not righteous. The moral universe from which, or through which, the life or will of man is derived, is ever prior; the mental and natural are but the result. The will, the interior life, the soul, the moral part of man (each term is synonymous with the other), never ceases to rule in all his actions; and the one source or origin of that will or life can never for a moment cease to influence, to warm, to enlighten. Arbitrarily to control, is to destroy freedom of will—is to put an end to life. It is destruction—not salvation. Yet never in all the ages has there been, nor will there be, a "moral interregnum." There is "a something outside of ourselves which (always) makes for righteousness."

Still, the fact remains that what orthodoxy calls "a moral interregnum" is already upon us. The attractiveness and controlling power of a religion which appeals to selfishness, and urges men to "come and be saved" for the sake of self, has ceased to influence. Men ask, what is salvation? and why should such a mote in the sunbeam as I be "saved" from amid the myriads of other motes? Tell me of a salvation for humanity, how I can help to save others, and I will listen. Show me how to leave the world better for the life I

have lived; the wiser for the mental strength I find within myself—how it got there I know not!—the more comfortable in its conditions for the new comers who are to follow because of the practical work of my hands; and the religion you speak of will become interesting at least. It may then possibly rouse me, too, along with my fellows—may save something of the man in me, from the brute instincts of which I find myself possessed.

So we find the foremost minds of this age disregarding religion, so called, studying instead, what sham scientists call "the conditions of our environment," more correctly described as the laws of being revealed in nature, and striving to evolve true theories for practical life from the external phenomena of matter and of mind. Herbert Spencer's "Data of Ethics" is his latest effort in that direction,—a direction towards which all his powers have been continually bent. He has succeeded in evolving from the depths of his moral consciousness, a sort of sublimated selfishness which finds its line of wisdom on the plane of least resistance. He asserts that the conduct which entails the least suffering upon self is the conduct which also gives the least suffering to others, and is therefore right. This law of evolution in the direction of the line of least resistance is insisted upon so much by Mr. Spencer that he almost loses sight of freedom of choice—of free will, free life—in the animated forms of matter which he calls men. They do possess undoubtedly perfect freedom to adopt the line of greatest resistance (as well as that of least), and with the whole force of will meet the miseries it entails, till they grow callous, and come rather to like it. Man can evolve if he chooses, a "rejoicing in iniquity." That there has been already a good deal of this kind of evolution is inevitably presupposed by Mr. Spencer's own theory. It is evolution out of that state which is the special aim of the laws of evolution Mr. Spencer evolves. It is precisely because that truly great, because truly good, philosopher loves his fellows that he is able to perceive, by pure force of the good will given him, that the line of least resistance to natural law is also the path to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Did not his will desire that result it could create no thought, no vision, akin to it. Mr. Spencer goes so far as to admit that "a rationalized version of the ethical principles of the current (Christian) creed may ultimately be acted on." That keen perception of truth which distinguishes the "Bystander," very justly criticises "that it hardly consists with certain theories about the evolution of the sciences that the true principles of the crowning science of Ethics should have been discovered in a wholly unscientific age by a peasant of Galilee. Evolution may serve his (Mr. Spencer's) scientific imagination in place of a future life. The unscientific and unimaginative will hardly sacrifice the lust of the hour to a remote vision, which after all, if it is ordained by evolution they may leave evolution to bring to pass."

Still, Herbert Spencer, now as ever, is sincere in his study of facts, and in his aim towards goodness in the affairs of daily life; and by him, therefore, there comes a ray from the Sun of Righteousness, piercing the clouds of error banked up by man-made morality, showing to man that compliance with the natural laws of being inherent in their constitution is salvation, and that very happiness for which man was made.

Nor are we wanting in lesser Herbert Spencers in Canada. Mr. W. D. Le Sueur, of Ottawa, in the January number of the *Canadian Monthly*, says: "Life may be considered as a science that has its laws, or as a game that has its rules. He who would make satisfactory progress in the science must familiarize himself with, and guide himself by, what is already known; he who would play the game successfully must learn the rules." This is quite Spencerian; and quite "Positivist" enough to satisfy Frederic Harrison himself. Mr. Le Sueur's article is largely devoted to combating the position taken by a certain "G. A. M." that "the Apostolic doctrine of the Cross can alone keep the world from becoming altogether corrupt."

Here he touches the kernel and cause of the revolt from existing creeds perceptible in pure and high minded men of science in this age,—a revolt deplored by many as the harbinger of a "moral interregnum." The reason for such revolt is plain on the surface for those who care to look. The Apostolic doctrine, being uninspired, and not the Divine Word itself, does not so lucidly permit the clear shining of that love and wisdom which are God, and flow forth from God, as do the Gospels; and Apostolic writings, therefore, are more easily perverted to support almost any creed the will of man may care to plume itself upon having discovered. Yet St. Paul gives "the Apostolic doctrine of the Cross" in one sentence: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself"—unto Himself, not to another. Such language means surely, if it means anything, that Jehovah lived in, and shone through, the humanity with which He clothed Himself, in word and deed. How He accomplished this reconciliation He Himself tells us: "I am not come to destroy (the law), but to fulfil (the law)"—to fill full with His own life every tittle of the possibilities contained in a human existence—to fill it full with the very life of God, which is law—the law of the universe, celestial, spiritual, mental, natural. On each plane of existence—material, mental, spiritual, celestial or heavenly—God's will, God's life, the love and wisdom which are His divine essence and form, are the same precisely, differing only in degree of manifestation. He ultimated His life on the lower or material plane of existence that He might reach, touch, and save men, by the power