

"A religion is a form of belief, providing an ultra-rational sanction for that large class of conduct in the individual where his interests and the interests of the social organism are antagonistic, and by which the former are rendered subordinate to the latter in the general interests of the evolution which the race is undergoing." Christianity, which is the spirit of love and compassion, and which teaches the doctrine of human brotherhood, has been the moral power by which European civilization has been developed. Society has advanced "by the deepening and softening of character that has taken place among the Western peoples." The lower classes of society have gained, chiefly, by concessions granted to them by the higher classes. "There is a tendency to strengthen and equip at the general expense the lower and weaker against the higher and wealthier classes of the community."

"The end of this evolution of society under the inspiration of Christianity will be not the abolition of the struggle for life, but the equalization of the conditions under which men struggle." "The rivalry of existence must continue, humanized as to conditions it may be, but immutable and inevitable to the end." "Legislation," however, "will secure to *all* the members of the community the right to be admitted to the rivalry of life, as far as possible on a footing of equality and opportunity."

Such are the fundamental principles and the conclusion of this most interesting and able book, which asserts that "Science stands dumb before the problems presented by society as it exists around us," and which affirms that Christianity is the power by which society is now being developed and its problems are being solved. This affirmation and the historic facts by which it is supported constitute the chief value of the book.

I would not write a word to lessen the number of its readers, but I take advantage of its appearance and of its contents to call attention to some false and to some true principles of social evolution. The author of this book, in common with men whose thinking is dominated by the Malthusian theory of population and the Darwinian law of the struggle for existence, lays undue emphasis upon certain facts in nature and overlooks certain other facts of equal prominence and of greater social significance.

1. The Malthusian theory of population is a hypothesis based upon an arithmetical calculation of possible increase, and not upon historic facts of actual increase. It may be true that idle and barbarous men who attempt to live without labor tend to multiply beyond the limit of the food supply, but it has not been proved that industrious and inventive men will thus multiply. Men differ from all animals in possessing the power to multiply the means of subsistence. The followers of Malthus, however, commonly argue as though population were a variable quantity and bread and raiment were fixed quantities. No great historic nation has ever perished through overpopulation,