

When the furious storm rageth through the firmament, when the heavens are dark with tempests, when thunder rolls and lightnings fly, the soul of man in his primitive state, his theological frame of mind, is filled with awe.

To his trembling exclamation, What is that? he gets for answer: The thunder is the voice of God! Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

He holds the lightnings in the hollow of His hand! They are the thunderbolts of His wrath! His terrible vengeance! Who may abide the day of His coming!

This is Comte's theological stage.

By and by, after man begins to acquire positive or real knowledge of the phenomena of nature by means of observation, experience and reflection, his first step out of the theological slough of despond is to consider it the essence of things which acts in this manner.

When a storm is raging he conceives that the spirit of nature is abroad and permeates the warring elements.

This is Comte's metaphysical stage.

Eventually along comes Franklin with his kite and compels the lightning to come down from the clouds to his feet to obey the behests of science.

This is the positive or real stage of Comte's positive philosophy

It is evident that the positive philosophy is a preliminary phase of thought leading to the popular prevailing evolution philosophy of the present day, the ultimate results of which Haeckel summarises.

It clearly follows from the multitude of testimonies that establish the truth of the evolution philosophy that the mental differences between the lowest men and highest animals are less than those between the lowest and highest men.

And if together with this we take into consideration the fact that in every single human child mental life develops slowly, gradually, step by step from the lowest condition of animal unconsciousness.

Need we still feel offended when told that the mind of the whole human race has in like manner gone through a process of slow, gradual and historical development.

Can we find it degrading to the human soul that by a long and slow process of differentiation and perfecting, it has very gradually developed out of the soul of vertebrate animals.

This objection which is at present raised by many against the evolution philosophy is quite incomprehensible. Our ancestors may be a great honor to us, but it is much better if we are an honor to them.

The evolution philosophy explains the origin of man and the course of his historical development in the only natural manner.

We see in his gradually ascending development out of the lower vertebrata, the greatest triumph of humanity over the whole of the rest of nature.

We are proud of having so immensely outstripped our animal ancestors, and derive from it the consoling assurance that in future also, mankind as a whole will follow the glorious career of progressive development, and attain a still higher degree of mental perfection.

When viewed in this light, the theory of descent, as applied to man, opens up the most encouraging prospects for the future, and frees us from all those anxious fears which have been the scarce-ows of our opponents. It is the true gospel, the glad tidings to man of deliverance from the degrading superstitions of theology.

We can, even now, foresee with certainty that the complete victory of the evolution philosophy will bear immensely rich fruits; fruits which have no equal in the whole history of the civilization of mankind.

The first and most complete result, the entire reform of biology, will necessarily be followed by a still more important and fruitful reform of anthropology.

From this new theory of man, there will be developed a new philosophy, not like most of the airy systems of metaphysical speculation hitherto prevalent, but one founded upon the solid ground of comparative zoology. A beginning of this has already been made by the great philosopher Herbert Spencer.

Just as the perfecting of the evolution philosophy first opens up to us a true understanding of the real universe; so its application to practical human life must open up a new road towards moral perfection.

By its aid we shall at last begin to raise ourselves out of the state of social barbarism, in which, notwithstanding the much vaunted civilization of our century, we are still plunged.

Compared with our wondrous progress in physical science and its practical applications, our system of government of administering justice, of national education, and our whole social and moral organization remains in a state of barbarism.

This social and moral barbarism we shall never overcome by the artificial and perverse training, the one-sided and defective teaching, the inner untruth, and the external untruth of our present state of civilization.

It is above all things necessary to make a complete and honest return to nature and to natural relations. This return, however, will only become possible when man sees and understands his true place in nature.

He will then no longer consider himself an exception to natural laws, but begin to seek for what is lawful in his own actions and thoughts, and endeavour to lead a life according to natural laws.

He will come to arrange his life with his fellow creatures, that is the family and the state, not according to the laws of distant centuries, but according to the rational principles deduced from knowledge of nature.

Politics, morals, and the principles of justice, which are still drawn from all possible sources, will have to be framed in accordance with natural laws only.

An existence worthy of man, which has been talked of for thousands of years, will at length become a reality.

The highest function of the human mind is perfect knowledge, fully developed consciousness, and the moral activity arising from it.

Know thyself, was the cry of the philosophers of antiquity to their fellow-men who were striving to enoble themselves.

Know thyself is the cry of the evolution philosophy, not merely to the individual, but to all mankind.

And whilst increased knowledge of self becomes in the case of every individual man a strong force urging to an increased attention to conduct.

Mankind as a whole will be led to a higher path of moral perfection by the knowledge of its true origin, and its actual position in nature.

The simple religion of nature which grows from a true knowledge of her and of her inscrutable store of revelations will in future enoble and perfect the development of mankind far beyond that degree which can possibly be attained under the influence of the multifarious religions of the churches of the various nations resting on a blind belief in the vague secrets and mythical revelations of a sacerdotal caste.

Future centuries will celebrate our age, which was occupied with laying the foundations of the evolution philosophy, as the new era in which began a period

of human development, rich in blessings; a period which was characterized by the victory of free enquiry over the despotism of authority, and by the powerful ennobling influence of the evolution philosophy.

This article is published in pamphlet form, price 15c. or \$10 per 100. Also uniform in style and price, "The Evolution Philosophy," and the "The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer."

## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

THE FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL.—From the comments of some of our contemporaries on the receipt of the first number of *The Freethought Journal* published by Messrs. Cooke and Hargrave, Managing Editors, Toronto, we were inclined to consider the articles it contained unfit for the perusal of moral beings. We have the issue of 13th Oct. before us, and while we tell our readers frankly that the writers for this Journal, openly profess they are infidels of the Tom Paine stamp, and hold the author of *The Age of Reason* as their standard bearer, we must admit that the Editorial and contributed articles are written by men of learning and scientific research. We quite agree with the *Journal* in the severance of Church and State, and the non-enforcement of religious views upon any class of the community, but we by no means desire our readers to consider our views in accordance with the articles of faith of the "Freethinkers." \* \*—*News, L'Original*.

FREETHOUGHT—The *Journal*, conducted by the Freethinkers of Toronto, shows evidence of able management and editorial writing. We endorse but a small moiety of the ideas advanced in our contemporary, but we can, as liberals in more than politics, appreciate some of the arguments advanced by those who are prominently identified with the publication. It is well printed and edited.—*Kingston British Whig*.

THE FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL is the title of a new weekly which has been lately started in Toronto, and of which the first two numbers have reached us. Its typographical appearance is handsome, and its editorial management is marked by good taste and judgment. Its motto is, "In things demonstrated and certain, unity, in whatsoever may be doubted, free diversity; in all things charity." Its tone is marked by candor and moderation, and must commend itself to the common sense of all. Published by Cooke & Hargrave, Toronto, at \$2 per year.—*Iroquois Times*.

## THE TWO APPRENTICES.

Two boys were apprentices in a carpenter shop. One determined to make himself a thorough carpenter; the other "didn't care." One read and studied, and got books that would help him to understand the principles of his trade. He spent his evenings at home reading. The other liked fun best. He often went with other boys to have a "good game." "Come," he often said to his shopmate, "leave your old books; come with us. What's the use of all this reading?"

"If I waste these golden moments," answered the boy, "I shall lose what I shall never make up."

While the boys were still apprentices, an offer of \$2,000 appeared in the newspapers for the best plan for a State House, to be built in one of the Eastern States. The studious boy saw the advertisement, and determined to try for it. After a careful study he drew out his plans, and sent them to the committee. We suppose he did not really expect to gain the prize; but still he thought "there is nothing like trying."

In about a week after a gentleman arrived at the carpenter's shop, and enquired if an architect by the name of Washington Wilberforce lived there.

"No," said the carpenter; "no architect, but I've got an apprentice by that name."

The young man was summoned and informed that his plan had been accepted, and that the two thousand dollars were his. The gentleman then said the boy must put up the building; and his employer was so proud of his success that he willingly gave him his time and let him go.

The studious young carpenter became one of the first architects in the country. He made a fortune, and stands high in the estimation of everybody; while his fellow apprentice can hardly earn food for himself and family by his daily labor.