

# FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL

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IN ALL THINGS

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DARWIN—HUXLEY—TYNDALL.

BY ALLEN PRINGLE.

Within the last year or two we have had published in the *Toronto Weekly Globe* portraits and biographical sketches of these three eminent scientists; and this fact constitutes one of the unmistakable signs of the rationalistic tendencies of this age—a tendency which is not confined to the cultured classes, but permeates the commonality of the people. A few years ago no newspaper could mention Darwinism or the name of Darwin without denunciation or cheap ridicule. They would tell us that according to Darwin "man came from a monkey," we had a "baboon for our great grandfather," etc., and this stuff readily passed muster not only as good wit but crushing argument. Nor was the bad wit and worse logic confined to country editors and local preachers, but the same stock was vigorously vended by the respectable theologian and quasi theologico-scientist.

These things are now, however, quite changed. We find the names at the head of this article commanding respect, if not admiration, almost everywhere. In publishing the portraits and sketches of these scientific rationalists the *Globe* (which, by the way, will hardly be suspected of any partiality towards "infidelity") has not one word of disparagement or derogation. Of Darwin it says:

"The name of Mr. Darwin is more familiar to the general public than that of any other living natural philosopher, not even including Tyndall or Huxley, while he is second to none in the amount and importance of the contributions he has made to physical science. He is noted for the possession of a pre-eminent degree of that faculty of observation on which all true scientific progress is based. \* \* \* He has furnished to the world a

larger collection of new and valuable facts in natural history than any other observer, except, perhaps, Linnaeus, and even his most pronounced opponents make no attempt either to underrate the value of his labors or question his sincerity and single-mindedness as a philosopher. The system which goes by his name, and of which he is to some extent only the unconscious author, has hosts of adherents in many lands, even more on the continent of Europe than in either Great Britain or America. \* \* \* As might be expected, Mr. Darwin's eminent services in the cause of science have been amply recognized by the various home and foreign scientific societies, of several of which he is a member, and from more than one of which he has received honorable marks of distinction."

Of Prof. Huxley, whose portrait and sketch appeared last April, the *Globe* says:

"A high authority has told us that the man who makes two blades of grass to grow where only one grow before deserves better of mankind and does more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together. Like most aphorisms from the same source, this saying is pregnant with truth, and commends itself to the judgment of all who read it. And if the principle be sound, the subject of this sketch has been a greater public benefactor than many whose names are more frequently at the tip of the public tongue. In an age eminent for scientific discovery and research, Thomas Henry Huxley has won a position second to that of no man of his age. \* \* His style, both as a writer and as a lecturer, is remarkable for clearness and terseness of expression. \* \* Most persons whose minds are free from bias recognize in him an honest expounder of a rational faith, the first object of which is the discovery of truth. \* \* He is a bold and fearless thinker, who is not to be turned aside from plain scientific conclusions at the bidding of any man. \* \* While many may doubt the accuracy of some of his conclusions, no one can doubt that they have been conscientiously arrived at, and that they legitimately follow from what scientific men regard as fixed premises."

Of Tyndall, who appears in the issue for May 17, 1878, the *Globe* thus speaks:

"In common with his friend Prof. Huxley, he possesses in a