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MORALITY.

BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.

Morality depends not upon any system of faith; it requires no miraculous evidence; it is independent of theological dogma; no supernatural influence can heighten its beauty; no ecclesiastical influence can strengthen its obligations; it is confined to no one country, limited to no one age, restricted to no one form of faith, the exclusive possession of no one class, sect, order, nation or race of men; it requires no written decalogue, needs no single individual authority; theology cannot add to it, neither can it take from it. It has its indestructible basis in the nature of man as a feeling, thinking, acting being, and in society as an aggregation of such beings, with the manifold relations and the acknowledged rights and duties that spring therefrom.

Empires rise and perish, religions grow and decay, special forms of civilization appear and give way to other types; but, amid all the mutations of human existence, the nature of man remains essentially the same, and as through all these changes the social condition overlastingly persists, morality can never be without a foundation as broad and deep and enduring as humanity itself. It changes not, but, as Cicero says, it is "the same at Rome and at Athens to day and to-morrow; alone eternal and invariable, it binds all nations and all times." Its highest standard is the enlightened reason of man. The better man understands his nature, and the more he is capable, by reason of intelligence and culture, of comprehending the object of society and his relations thereto, the better understanding he will have of the principles of morality.

Theologians could have no idea of moral qualities unless they had discovered them in humanity. They are observed in man, and as in him they are admired in contrast to opposite qualities, they are ascribed to God; and these theologians having invested God with human qualities and denied to man what they have borrowed from him with which to invest God before they could form any conception of him as a moral being, most ungratefully, as well as inconsistently, declare there can be no morality independently of their theological system and book revelation. Of course it is nothing to ignore the fact that, before either the one or the other appeared, society existed and nations flourished essentially the same as they do to-day.

One would suppose, from the claims which are frequently made, that there was no morality before the Christian era; that men were entirely wanting in knowledge of what is right and in the disposition to do it; in short, that all men were thieves, robbers and murderers before they heard of Jesus Christ!

The morality of the advanced nations to day is commonly called *Christian morality*; but only with the same disregard of truth which is implied in denying the existence of virtue and goodness before Christ and outside of Christendom. *The morality of this age does not owe its existence to any religion, to any book, to any historic character*, however much or little any one of these has influenced mankind. Our present conception of morality has grown through many centuries of human experience, and exists now only because, by many mistakes and much suffering, man has learned its adaptedness to his wants. It is the result of the combined influence of our natural character and education. To ascribe it to the dominant religion were as absurd as to attribute the enlightenment of the ancient Greeks to their mythology, or the enlightenment of the Saracens of Spain in the ninth and tenth centuries, when darkness enveloped Christian Europe, to Mohammedanism.

The fact is, with the advancement of the human mind, with discoveries in science and progress in morality, believers in *all* systems of religion modify their views so as to adjust them to the new order of things, always claiming, in ancient and in modern times, in Egypt, India, Greece, Rome, Turkey, England, America, that they find authority for the new ideas or reforms (after they

become established) in their sacred books or religious systems. Soon they claim these religions are entitled to exclusive credit of having produced the beneficent changes which they have been powerless to prevent. Thus, while the Bible teaches the subordination of woman in plain and unequivocal language, sanctions and authorizes human slavery, and consigns to unresisting submission to their condition the subjects of oppressive governments, to-day the orthodox believers deny the plain signification of the Bible on these points, and claim that it has been effective in the destruction of all kinds of political and social bondage; this, too, in spite of the fact that its most zealous advocates, within the memory of men who are yet young, were quoting its texts to show the wickedness of the reforms which they now have the hardihood to claim as the outgrowth of that book! Those portions of a religious system or book revelation which are shown to be false, or which come to be repudiated by the enlightened moral sense of the age, are absolutely ignored, or twisted out of their obvious and natural meaning. By keeping in the background the teachings of the Bible which have been outgrown, by giving prominence to the precepts of morality which are attached to all systems of religion, by stamping them all as *Christian*, although they were known and practiced before Christianity was ever heard of, theologians impress the masses with the conviction that the Bible and the Christian religion are the foundation of all virtue, and the only hope of the world. It then presents the theological dogmas—which have nothing whatever in common with morality, which, indeed, have been the faith, the sincere, unquestioning faith of multitudes of the most cruel and vicious men of all ages since they have been taught, and demand their acceptance from purely moral considerations!

Making all allowance for the fact that transitional periods, such as the present, are always characterized by grave inconsistencies which imply no dishonesty, it is difficult to believe that in these common representations regarding Christianity and morality there is not a good deal of disingenuousness and selfish disregard of the rights of those who will not sustain the theologians in the religious doctrines they advocate, and the advocacy of which with them is a business, a profession by which they sustain themselves and have consideration among men.

The following, from the pen of our old friend Phillips Thompson ("Jimuel Briggs,") appeared in the *Boston Traveller* :—

EDITOR OF THE TRAVELLER.—The Rev. Joseph Cook, in the prelude to his lecture of last Monday, exulted over the sale of the Paine Memorial Hall by the mortgagee, in consequence of the accumulation of demands which the receipts were insufficient to satisfy. This is fair enough from the Orthodox stand-point, and I suppose the Infidel sentiment of the community would regard the sale of a church under similar circumstances with feelings not unmingled with complacency. But there is one which will strike the impartial observer as hardly in accordance with good taste, and certainly in striking contrast with the spirit of early Christianity—the reference to the comparative poverty of Infidels in a sneering fashion, as though it were a disgrace to them! Infidels are poor as a rule—and their infidelity is largely the cause of it—because even in this age of free opinion, the expression of Infidel sentiments in many places means social and business ostracism, and closes the door at once to many avenues of wealth. That it does so is a guarantee of the conscientiousness of men who are willing to make the sacrifice, and it ill becomes one who makes such high sounding professions of sincerity and earnest conviction to sneer at those whose acceptance of the unpopular side proves their honesty of purpose. There was another utterance which came with a very ill grace from a member of a class who are by law the favored pensioners on the earnings of their fellow citizens. When Mr. Cook ridicules the idea of the infidels of Boston being unable to keep Paine Hall, he should remember that among the items of constant expense, as quoted by himself, is \$1,000 for taxes. By an unjust legal discrimination the churches are exempt from taxation. A yearly tax of \$1,000 would bankrupt half the churches in Massachusetts, as Mr. Cook very well knows. When the parsons and the churches have the common honesty to pay for

the privileges they enjoy at the hands of the State and municipal governments, it will be time for them to ridicule the failure of Infidels to support their organizations. Mr. Cook frequently disavows the title of "Rev." He probably is not so eager to decline the exemption privileges attaching to the ministerial status. Did he pay taxes while in pastoral charge at Lynn? and does he pay them now on the receipts from his lectureship? With regard to his slander on the dead I say nothing. When he has the courage to venture out of his "coward's castle" in Tremont Temple and meet in fair debate Ingersoll, Underwood, or some other Infidel champion, his rehash of the lies a thousand times refuted may be worth some consideration. But he dare not do it for the life of him.

Boston, Nov. 8, 1877.

P. T.

CANADIAN FREETHOUGHT CONVENTION.

A mass Convention of the Freethinkers of Canada will be held in Albert Hall, on Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 22nd and 23rd, 1878, when it is hoped a very large number of the Freethinkers of Canada will be present for the following reasons :—

1st. Honest Freethinkers are now debarred from seeking their just rights in any Canadian Court of Law, or from any place of honor or emolument requiring the taking of the Christian oath, whilst the dishonest hypocrite by taking the oath prescribed by law may cheat or despoil the Freethinker, whose very honesty has been a bar to success.

2nd. The immense amount of Church property exempt from taxation in Canada, and consequently receiving to that extent aid and support from the State, makes it incumbent upon Freethinkers to take measures for the entire separation of Church and State. At present this is only so in theory, for the simple fact that millions of dollars of extra taxation are paid by the people that should be paid by the Church, conclusively shows that practically there is now in Canada the closest union between Church and State.

3rd. The exclusion from our public schools of every shade of Theology that the children of all may receive the best practical and secular education, without the introduction of the Bible or other sectarian books. In a community of mixed religious beliefs every good citizen should bestir himself to obtain this end.

4th. For the more thorough organization of the Freethought element of Canada, whereby the Freethinkers of the Dominion may become united and known to each other. The Freethinkers of Canada are sufficiently numerous to make their wishes respected in the councils of the country, and therefore the fault is theirs if they do not procure the remedies for their legal, social and other disabilities their position, numbers and influential character at once demands. In union there is strength.

In making the above call for the second convention of the Freethinkers of Canada, the officers of the Canadian Freethought Society are not unmindful of the fact of the thoroughly independent character of Freethinkers generally. Unlike the members of religious bodies they do not give play to the mere emotional part of their humanity, and consequently there is always absent from their proceeding every element of blind enthusiasm. But in asking for thorough union of Freethought its promoters are only asking for the propagation and continuance of that which has only just sprang into life from the smouldering ashes of former persecutions. Let the Freethinkers of the Dominion testify by their next convention that Freethought in Canada is a living entity, worthy of the respect of its numerous enemies, and prepared to claim for ever the esteem and gratitude of its many friends.

J. ICK EVANS, Pres. C. F. S.

W. J. R. HARGRAVE, Cor. Sec.

We may search in vain the Roman history before Constantine or a single line against freedom of thought, and the Imperial Government furnishes no instance of a prosecution for entertaining an abstract doctrine.—*Review*.

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TORONTO, NOVEMBER 20TH, 1877.

We direct the attention of our readers to the announcement in this issue of a mass convention of Freethinkers to be held in this city January 22 and 23, 1878. Some very important business will be brought before the Convention for consideration, and we hope our friends will attend in large numbers. One of the most important questions the Convention will be called upon to decide, is whether the JOURNAL shall be continued as a weekly or a monthly, and to devise means to put it upon a permanent basis. Religious weekly papers, with less than half the number of our adherents, receive a generous support. The weakest sect on the continent would consider it a disgrace to allow one of their papers to go down for want of support, and we trust the Freethinkers of the Dominion will not be less enthusiastic in the cause of truth than the religious public are in the cause of error. All who are in sympathy with us are cordially invited to be present.

We sincerely regret to inform our readers that our earnest, honest, and aged friend, D. M. Bennett, of the *Truth Seeker*, New York, has been arrested for the crime (!) of blasphemy. It seems that another Christian crusade against the Infidel is about to be inaugurated. Mr. Bennett is unable to meet the expense of a protracted and costly trial, and calls on his friends to help him in his hour of need, and assures them that the money will be returned to them in case it is not absolutely required to meet the cost of the trial or to make up the amount of a fine that may be imposed. Mr. Bennett will be as good as his word, and our Canadian Freethinkers should do all they are able to do, and at once. We do not know who may be struck down next. Address D. M. Bennett, *Truth Seeker*, New York, or Cooke & Hargrave, this office. All amounts entrusted to us will be duly forwarded and acknowledged in both *Truth Seeker* and JOURNAL.

The Liberal Congress held at Rochester, N. Y., October 26, 27 and 28, at which we were present, was, so far as concerned the business on hand, an entire success. The President, Mr. Francis

E. Abbott, in his opening address said the United States Government had neglected three most important duties; first, total separation of church and state, secondly, national protection for national citizens; and thirdly, universal education. Resolutions based on these three propositions were passed unanimously and with enthusiasm. The eleventh resolution adopts a platform for the Presidential campaign of 1880, and is as follows:

RESOLVED, That, postponing to future conventions the addition of such planks on other issues as future events may render necessary or expedient, the National Liberal League now adopts, as its political platform for the presidential campaign of 1880, these three great national principles of overshadowing importance:—

“(1.) Total separation of Church and State, to be guaranteed by amendment of the United States Constitution; including the equitable taxation of Church property, secularization of the public schools, abrogation of Sabbatarian laws, abolition of chaplaincies, prohibition of public appropriations for religious purposes, and all other measures necessary to the same general end.

“(2.) National protection for national citizens, in their equal civil, political, and religious rights: to be guaranteed by amendment of the United States Constitution, and afforded through the United States courts.

“(3.) Universal education the basis of universal suffrage in this secular republic: to be guaranteed by amendment of the United States Constitution, requiring every State to maintain a thoroughly secularized public-school system, and to permit no child within its limits to grow up without a good elementary education.”

We fully concur with the Convention that the objects set forth in the resolution are worthy of our best efforts to obtain (and they are as applicable to the Dominion as to the United States), and though we have no opinion to offer as to the expediency of forming a separate political party in the United States, we think the Freethinkers of Canada can attain their objects sooner by remaining and using their influence within the parties now in existence than by forming a new one. Although the delegates were, almost without exception, in accord regarding the business programme, they were far from being so on other questions. Judging from the applause their speakers received, the delegates and audience were largely composed of Spiritualists. There was a noticeable absence of some of the most prominent Freethinkers, Colonel Ingersoll, B. F. Underwood, Horace Seaver, Thoron C. Leland, and Josiah Mendum. D. M. Bennett was present, but did not occupy the platform, though it was announced several times during the Convention that he would do so. There was no lack of speakers, however. Among those who spoke from the platform were the President, Mr. Abbott, Dr. T. L. Brown, H. L. Green, Judge McCormack, Professor Toohy, Hon. Elizur Wright, Elder Evans, Mrs. Watson, Professor A. L. Rawson, and Mrs. Clara Neyman. Judge McCormack said he was proud to be a Spiritualist, and asserted that “death was but a circumstance in life.” It appears to us that Spiritualists are as dogmatic on the platform as any theologian could possibly be in the pulpit.

After the singing of a rather doleful hymn by the audience, Mrs. C. L. Watson, who claimed to be under the influence of a spirit, delivered a two hours sermon, prefacing it by a prayer to the “Spirit of Truth.” Hon. Elizur Wright read a paper on “republican taxation,” which was excellent and was well received. Elder F. W. Evans preached from Revelations, chap. xiii., first and eleventh verses. Prof. Rawson gave his autobiography, which was very amusing. J. Ick Evans expressed sympathy with the objects of the Convention. Dr. Brown and H. L. Green

both addressed the Convention ably and earnestly. The last speaker was Mrs. Clara Neyman, of the Society of Humanity, New York. Those in charge of the programme certainly followed the example of Christ at the Marriage Feast by reserving the best to the last. Mrs. Neyman, though a German, speaks English fluently, and her appearance, address, and purity of language are rarely excelled. We are informed that she intends entering the lecture field as a Freethought speaker, and we predict that she will not lack profitable engagements. She has but to be heard to be appreciated. We would give our readers an abstract of her paper but prefer to publish it in full in our next issue. Altogether we came away from Rochester pleased with our visit.

We cannot agree with our friend Mr. Evans when he says—as he does in his article on superstition and cupidity—“that the world should feel grateful that scientists and philosophers can pursue their studies of nature without fear of priestly fanaticism or mob ignorance,” and again when he says that “thinking men and women can now safely pursue their study of the natural laws of the universe with no heavier penalty than the withdrawal of favours by the fanatic.” Should we feel grateful that Mrs. Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh are now under sentence in England for studying the laws of pro-creation and endeavoring to impart knowledge on that subject to the world? Should we feel grateful that the stripes on the back of that “honest man and good physician,” L. J. Russell, of Bell County, Texas, were inflicted by a Christian mob? Should we feel grateful that D. M. Bennett, of New York, is under indictment for blasphemy through a minion of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Anthony Comstock? We confess we are unable to see anything to be grateful for unless it be that Christians can now only legally fine and imprison for what they once could and did punish with death; but what Christians could formerly do by law they now do, as in the case of Dr. Russel, without law, but nevertheless with impunity. Until every law which forbids men to think and speak freely upon all scientific and religious subjects is swept from our statutes, the freedom of which Englishmen and Americans are so wont to boast, is as mythical as are the stories of the Jews.

B. F. Underwood, Esq., who is so well and favorably known by Canadians, will be in attendance at the Convention to be held in Albert Hall, Toronto, January 22 and 23, 1878, and will lecture on the evenings of above dates, and on the evening of the Sunday previous. After the Convention he will be open to engagements in any part of Canada, and we hope our friends will avail themselves of the opportunity to secure his services. Communications may be addressed to him at this office in our care.

We are pleased to be able to announce to our readers that two well known writers and thinkers—Mrs. Elmina D. Stonker of Virginia, and William Emmette Coleman of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas—have consented to become contributors to this JOURNAL.

We have a goodly number of communications which we are compelled to hold over for a future number.

B. F. Underwood lectures at Nevada, Ohio, November 26, 27, and 28. And at Riverton, Ill., December 1st and 2nd.

SUPERSTITION AND CUPIDITY.

Superstition is an ignorant dread of some unseen influence which takes form in the mind of man in accordance with the education, or want of education, by which his infancy has been surrounded. In the absence of a true knowledge of natural forces, man’s reason is obliterated in a belief in ghosts, hobgoblins, fairies and other supernatural excrescences that frighten his unbalanced mind. These make him the victim of increasing apprehension of the visit in his earthly affairs of some spirit of good or demon of evil, but chiefly the latter. He strives to cajole the one by adulation, whilst by form or faith he hopes to cheat the other. Cupidity is also a leading principle in primitive man, and is always wedded to the most unscrupulous in civilized nature; and this faculty making an early discovery of the superstitious susceptibility of human ignorance made it the stepping stone to priestly power and personal aggrandisement. Not only can a prince commander lead an army of ignorant fanatics against the lives of nations, but the priestly few can always command the respect of the fanatical many merely by the enchantment surrounding a religious mysticism. But a few years since, the superstitious dread of a greased cartridge in India enabled the princes and priesthood of Delhi to sacrifice thousands of lives in the abortive attempt to recapture their lost power in the superstitious East, and millions of lives have been sacrificed upon the same altar of blind superstition, led by insinuating cupidity. Perhaps in the East we have the purest fanaticism in the world, but wherever we look, whether into ancient or modern history, the same aspect meets our view. Christian slaughtered Saracen, receiving in turn the contempt with which the Moslem always looks upon the hated Gior, and amongst Christians themselves they not only extracted the teeth of their elder brother the Jew, but they made endless raids upon each other, just as the priesthood of each contending sect chose to “let slip the dogs of war.” But a short distance in the vista of time in the past, brings us to the days of the burning of witches, hanging of heretics, wheel, rack, and thumbscrew. Even in the present day how often we meet that self-complaisant but ignorant fanatic, who believes he has (what he vulgarly calls) got religion; mark the silent contempt with which he views his more intelligent neighbour, whose enlightened enquiry has emancipated him from the withering thralldom of ignorant fanaticism. The feeling of the fanatic always is, that he is the recipient of special favours of the Holy Ghost, or that the God that, if anything, must be to the commonest understanding Omnipotent, Omniscient and all pervading in mercy and justice has filled him with a heavenly essence not obtained by his fellow man. How little the world dreams of the vast debt of gratitude it owes to the leaders of Freethought and full enquiry in all ages; to the host of martyrs to philosophical reasoning, and scientific research, that have given their great lives, not for money, but for pure love of the race. Should the world not feel grateful that the present age is so fruitful of scientific and philosophic minds, and that Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, Mill and others, could pursue their studies of nature without fear of priestly fanaticism or mob ignorance. Thinking men and women can now safely pursue their study of the natural laws of the universe with no heavier penalty than the withdrawal of favours by the fanatic, whose deluded mind should only excite their pity, whose insane claim to the receipt of a ghostly gift should bestir the better informed to increased efforts to instruct the bigoted and to unburden the fanatical.

J. ICK EVANS.

Men say their pinnacles point to heaven. Why, so does every tree that buds, and every bird that rises as it sings. Men say their aisles are good for worship. Why, so in every mountain glen and rough sea-shore. But this they have of distinct and indisputable glory,—that their mighty walls were never raised, and never shall be, but by men who love and aid each other in their weakness.—*Ruskin.*

THE ANTAGONISM OF CHRISTIANITY TO SCIENCE.

BY WILLIAM EMMETTE COLEMAN.

Christianity has been the deadly opponent of science in every age, and is now the great organized superstition of the nineteenth century. Every advance in scientific induction or philosophic deduction made since the inauguration of the "Christian Dispensation," has been won only in the teeth of Christianity, and despite its persistent opposition and protest.

Jesus and the Apostles were totally deficient in the realms of science and philosophy; in which, however, the Jews never attained any proficiency till after their dispersion among the various peoples of the earth, they being sadly behind all other nations of antiquity in that respect. The Bible has scarcely a scientific fact in it, save those patent to the most ordinary observer, the people producing it having devoted to theology those powers of mind, which, if exercised in the direction of scientific research and invention, would have redounded far more to their benefit, usefulness, and credit in the scale of nations. So far as we can gather, Jesus and the Twelve had no conception of the beauties of scientific truth, the tendency of their whole teachings being of such a nature as to discourage everything like industry or research, physical or mental. Paul warned his converts against philosophy, and the entire early Christian Church steadfastly set its face against all knowledge except that contained in the Scriptures or held by the Christian faith.

The Church neglected all learning save ecclesiastical, ignored all science, destroyed all books and manuscripts of which it could possess itself except those pertaining to Christianity and its legends; the study of classical literature, with its wealth of historic, philosophic, and poetic treasure, being either expressly forbidden or tacitly buried out of sight. The remnant of the famed Alexandrian Library not destroyed during the siege of Julius Cæsar, was burned in A. D. 390, by order of Theophilus, Christian Patriarch of Alexandria; while during the Middle Ages book-burning was a favorite Christian amusement. The monks defaced the old manuscripts to copy on them the psalms of a breviary or the prayers of a missal. The conquering barbarians were taught that to destroy works of art and literature was a Christian virtue. As late as the sixteenth century twelve thousand copies of the Talmud were cast into the fire at Cremona; and Pope Gregory VII. ordered that the library of the Palestine Apollo (a treasury of literature formed by successive emperors) should be given to the flames.

From the time of the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire till the revival of learning by the Mohammedan Moors in the tenth century, intellectual darkness reigned supreme over all Christendom. Councils forbade the reading of secular books; the physical sciences were unqualifiedly condemned, their cultivation being deemed incompatible with the performance of religious duties; the Greek schools of medicine were closed; and it was rarely that a layman could be found able to sign his name, while even among the priests but few were capable of addressing a common letter of salutation to one another.

It is to the irruption of the Saracens in Spain, and to their contact with Christendom by this means and through the Crusades, that we owe the revival of letters, learning, literature, in Christian Europe. The various branches of science and philosophy were assiduously cultivated by these "Infidel dogs;" schools, libraries, colleges, were established by them in every important town; and Latin, Greek, and Persian literature was sought after and translated into Arabic. The Royal Court itself was largely composed of teachers, translators, commentators, and philosophers. Astronomy, Physics, Medicine, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Architecture were sedulously advanced, and many new discoveries and improvements made therein, of which we of the present century now reap the benefit.

All through the Dark Ages of Europe, when Christianity ruled with absolute sway over all the land, as it never reigned before and never will again, the Church exerted all its power to keep the

world in blinding darkness, waged relentless war on knowledge, set a premium upon ignorance and its attendant vices. This appalling nescience the Saracens, by the magnificence of their scientific and educational acquisitions, aided by a few restless, enquiring minds of the Christian world, succeeded in dispelling at length, giving an impetus to the acquisition of knowledge and the diffusion of education that has, from that time to this, swelled on in a resistless tide, rising higher and higher with each successive wave.

It is a significant fact, that the Dark Ages,—in which the whole of Europe was wrapped in brutish ignorance, enveloped in intellectual and moral gloom the most profound, with barely here and there a ray of light piercing the midnight blackness,—was synchronous with the complete domination of the Christian Church over all classes,—from king to peasant, from emperor to serf, all, all, acknowledged and bowed before the awful majesty of the Church, which dethroned monarchs, uprooted dynasties, and ruled with an iron hand in every department of life. In the lowly cottage hut or in the stately palace court, in the cloister's sacred haunt, or in the baron's feudal hall, with vassal and knight, retainer and noble, in all, through all, over all, the Church held sovereign dominion paramount,—was all in all.

Despite the advance in civilization, Christianity has been ever true to its primal instinct,—the suppression of knowledge; and every new discovery in science, every innovation upon established forms of thought, has been stubbornly resisted from age to age. Roger Bacon was imprisoned ten years for his scientific investigations; the writings of Copernicus, the father of modern Astronomy, were condemned and he excommunicated, even Martin Luther calling him an "old fool;" Galileo was forced to renounce his scientific theories, and was dogged by the familiars of the infamous Inquisition till his death. Geology was ridiculed and denounced, and its promulgators opposed at every step; and the great leaders in scientific thought at the present day, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, and others, the master minds of the age, are villified, misrepresented, and antagonized so far as the Church (now comparatively fettered, fortunate) dares to go. "The real injury," says B. F. Underwood, "done to the race by the Christian superstition in opposing the study of science, keeping back its discoveries and inventions, and preventing the diffusion of its influence among the people, can never be estimated." Let us be thankful that we live in an age of skepticism, criticism, doubt, investigation, rationalism, freethought, intellectual and moral advancement, philosophic analysis, and scientific progress!

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kansas, U. S. A.

CASKET OF GEMS.

What a satisfaction it must be to know that there is not the least necessity for any one to be a Christian! our welfare in this life, or in the next, does not in the slightest degree depend upon it. You can be a Philosopher, as Humboldt was, and be no Christian, as he was none; you can be a poet, with Shelley; a philanthropist, with Henry C. Wright, who had long cast off the Christian name and the Christian pretence; you can be a good father or mother, a good citizen, a lover of man, and a doer of right, a practitioner of temperance and every virtue, and yet be no Christian. And a man may be a thief, drunkard, murderer, adulterer, hypocrite, and brute, and yet be a Christian in the only sense in which any man can be a Christian.—*Wm. Denton.*

Facts are all I ask for, and facts I mean to have, even if in obtaining them, every loved and cherished theory I ever held is torn up and rooted out. Once I believed in fairies, and longed for the purse of Fortunatus, and the wishig cap that obtained for its wearer whatsoever he desired. Once I believed Santa Claus a veritable being who came down sooty chimneys and filled the stockings of children with toys and goodies. Once I believed in a God who heard and answered prayer, and watched over us with parental solicitude. Oh! how sweet and pleasant it was to think one eye never slept, one arm was always ready to save; but when

these chimeras were proved to be but fictions of the imagination, and not real facts and identities, I was compelled to abjure them because I valued *truth* and *reality* more than all else.—*Elmina D' Slenker.*

Feeling, as I do, daily comfort in the knowledge of some things which I should once have shrunk from supposing, it would be weak—as foolish as cowardly—ever again to shrink from knowing anything that is true, or to have any preferences whatever among unascertained matters of speculation or fact.—*Harriet Martineau.*

The great world is full of happiness. It pervades all animal and insect life, and culminates in the human race, to its fullest perfection. True happiness is a *gradual development*, and we therefore find, that if we live good and virtuous lives, we grow happier and happier each coming year. The enjoyment of the child is near akin to that of the dog or the horse, because it is an unrealized happiness, depending upon physical, rather than intellectual sensations. With added years we accumulate knowledge, and learn to appreciate the higher, the more elevating, and more refining sources of happiness, and are continually building up, upon the sweet precious memories of the past, so that by the time old age is reached, we shall have acquired such a wonderful store of treasured blissful experiences, that by simply glancing back over them they will thrill us with the most exquisite enjoyment.—*Elmina D. Slenker.*

For Science, the volume of inspiration is the book of Nature. Confronting all, it needs no societies for its dissemination. Infinite in extent, eternal in duration, human ambition and human fanaticism have never been able to tamper with it. On the earth it is illustrated by all that is magnificent and beautiful, on the heavens its letters are suns and worlds.—*Draper.*

Cultivate in thy heart a love for, and an appreciation of the beautiful. To be always delving and digging to obtain the mere means of subsistence, or even to pile up wealth, is degrading and debasing humanity almost to the level of the brute creation. We must fill up the odd moments with some ennobling, refining, or purifying employment. Poetry, music, art, literature, floriculture or anything æsthetic—anything that will waken in the mind lovely enchanting or beautiful pictures. Each one who admires and adds to the amount of beauty already in the world, benefits not only himself, but all others with whom he comes in contact, by lifting them up into a higher and nobler plane of existence.—*Elmina D. Slenker.*

To reject consecrated opinions needs a consecrated mind. The moving impulse to such rejection is faith; faith in reason, faith in the mind's ability to obtain truth.—*O. B. Frothingham.*

The wise teachers of to-day are generous, tolerant, charitable and forgiving. They seek not to force their ideas upon others, but ask each one to read, ponder, search and examine for himself, and accept only that which will bear the test of the severest scientific scrutiny. They say, go as far as possible in search of bottom facts, but do not then stop and bar up the way to further progress for thyself and others by saying thou has reached a God, a great First Cause, but rather pause, confess thy ignorance, and then wait for developments and revelations of the future, leaving the unknown for debatable ground.—*Mrs. E. D. Slenker.*

FRIENDLY OPINIONS.

FRIEND EDITOR,—I have received No. 2 of FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL, and am really very much pleased with its contents. There is so much solidity about it. The writers of the various articles seem to feel as if they were standing upon solid ground and know whereof they speak. Underwood in the opening article well sustains his character as a close reasoner and deep thinker. He is mild, courteous and gentlemanly, and gives excellent substitutes for the belief and practices of theology. "Enemies of Society," by Hargrave, is fine and will be read more than once by all who appreciate good, substantial arguments. It covers a great deal of ground, and covers it well too. The paragraph on prayer is a telling blow to the poor priest-ridden dupes, who imagine any effort of

living beings can change or alter even one of the great irrevocable facts of nature, a single effect that is the foredoomed result of a previous train of causes as old as eternity. How grand is the tribute to Tyndall and the other great scientists of the age, who have given the cause of fact and truth so much superiority over that of myths and fables, either by silently ignoring the whole system of Christian mythology, or giving it a sharp, significant rap over the head, as was done by Tyndall in his "Germ Theory" and the proposition of his prayer gauge, and in the radical utterances of his Belfast Address. The closing sentence of Hargrave, that "future ages will look back upon dead Christianity as the most selfish system of religion that ever existed," upsets all previous claims which it has put forth as being the greatest, noblest and most self-sacrificing system of religion the world has ever known or CAN KNOW; just as emphatically as does D. M. Bennett's "hour with the Devil" place that much abused personage in the front ranks of the world's benefactors, instead of leaving him longer to occupy the position of scape-goat for all the accumulated sins and errors and crimes which the whole world of humanity has ever been guilty of.

Mr. William Sisson's account of the Wolcott meeting proves by its short, terse, telling sentence that he is well calculated to write substantial items in a plain, practical, common-sense manner. R. B. Butland deserves the thanks of all readers for his condensed collection of the very valuable and well chosen ideas and sentiments he has culled for us from so many sources of the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. To us Liberals who live, as it were out of the world, and far from book stores and libraries, and are too poor to buy such books, these extracts are really invaluable.

All lovers of Goethe will read with pleasure Dumdog's article on that great thinker, author and poet. Allen Pringle conclusively proves that free will is entirely a misnomer and a myth, and that we always act from the strongest motive at the time of action, and consequently have no will to do otherwise. His closing illustration fully proves this to the satisfaction of any reasonable being who has not been blinded by superstition and dogma. He also, in his obituary notice of S. F. Wilson, furnishes one more link in the chain of evidence, by showing how calmly and philosophically the Infidel of to-day closes his eyes in his long last sleep; that all the horrors told of the death beds of Paine, Voltaire, and other noted Infidels of the past are base Christian slanders and fabrications. The short items are all very readable, and notices of the press courteous and complimentary. So on the whole, though working against the current of public opinion, it is evident that the JOURNAL is making good headway, and is destined to be a power in the land.

Very respectfully,

ELMINA D. SLENKER,

Snowville, Pulaski Co., Va.

The Christian Sabbath, Nov. 11th, 1877.

TO THE EDITOR.—DEAR SIR,—It is very pleasant to note the steady development of Liberal ideas in Canada, manifest in the formation of new societies, in the deliverance and success of Freethought lectures, and last, but not least, in the entrance of Freethought into public life via your JOURNAL, the most prominent feature of the general advance.

I hope a great deal for our paper; there is a great deal for it to do. Among Liberals such a channel of communication was most desirable for mutual encouragement and support. But most of all is needed a sheet that we can put into the hands of our Christian friends with the assurance that while our own imperfectly understood opinions will therein be clearly set forth, their conscientious scruples will be treated with as much respect as is possible to use in the battle for the ultimate triumph of the truth. Perhaps the success of the enterprise will depend on the observance of the last mentioned condition. We believe that in the Liberal ranks of to-day are to be found in a high degree of development the noblest attributes of humanity. I do want to have the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL generally read, and to see these attributes shining forth in this country, and through its columns, winning success and popularity for it by forces which lend grace and charm to argument.

Pray excuse this free expression of my thoughts and believe me

Yours very truly,

HULL, P. Q.

F. HARMER, JUN.

PORT HOPE, Oct. 31st, 1877.

EDITOR JOURNAL.—I wish to express the pleasure and gratification your second number of the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL afforded me. "Enemies of Society" is just splendid; I am happily disappointed in the writer's ability; I never read a better article, and I have to congratulate him on his success. I am pleased to see so many favorable comments; nothing more, however, than it deserves. Articles by

Underwood, Butland, Dumdog and Pringle will bear the closest scrutiny.

Fraternally yours,

WAL. SISSON.

CONSTRUCTIVE FREETHOUGHT.

BY ALLEN PRINGLE.

The *Canadian Monthly* for October, in discussing the question "is the world getting better or worse," in the "Round the Table" department, has the following:—

"The Christian theory of the universe and of man's destinies is being more feebly presented from year to year; that is to say, more and more adulterated in order to diminish the appearance of conflict with 'modern thought.' But the result of this is to rob it in a large measure of its directive virtue, for men will not be controlled by any doctrine that comes to them with an uncertain sound. On the other hand 'modern thought' is slow to furnish a synthesis of its own. It has an admirable power of tearing down; its guerilla soldiery make havoc of old ideas here and there and everywhere; but as yet it has hardly begun the work of construction. Consequently society is left to drift about with but little clear moral guidance, and with a comparatively feeble sense of moral responsibility. It is much to be desired that 'modern thought' may get through the critical and dispersive stage as quickly as possible, and begin to furnish us with the affirmations, the binding truths that we so much need. If once more we could have a common basis of belief and education, the progress society would make in organization and general well-being would be, I fully believe, something of which at present we can have very little idea. Certainly nothing can be less favorable to social advancement than such a conflict between superstition and scepticism as constitutes the most salient feature of the civilization of to-day."

This is very liberal and true, but it seems to me the writer rather under-estimates the extent of the formative or constructive process which is now going on in "modern thought." The iconoclastic stage may be said to be about past in the theological department. True, the world is perhaps not yet fully cognizant of the fact, but it is nevertheless true that the "destructive criticism" is fairly before it in most effectual form. And the grand scientific synthesis and utilitarian philosophy arising in the place of superstition may also be said to be already before us, so rapidly is it accumulating and taking possession of the highest thought and aspiration of the age. The "affirmations" have been made, and the binding truths are before us. The universe is the all in all. Man is a portion of the universe, as "in matter we see the promise and potency of all forms and qualities of life." Man, to be good and to be happy, must get himself in right relations with that existence of which he is a mode. The *fiat* has gone forth that whatever is for our best good and for the best good of our fellows is *right* and *moral*, whether sanctioned by the bibles, the religions, and the gods or not. Virtue brings its own reward and vice its own punishment, independently of arbitrary rewards and punishments in an assumed future. Man must do right simply because it is right and for his highest good, and not from the ignoble motive fear of hell. Philosophically, these generalizations cover the whole ground, and ethically include the whole duties and functions of man. The details are being worked out and are already given to the world.

True it is, however, that some great minds (James Fitzjames Stephen for example) are sorely perplexed, halting and hesitating. A great difficulty looms up before them. They see clearly enough the "havoc" the "destructive criticism" has made on every hand, and the tottering condition of the old systems, but they are evidently afraid of the consequences of an entire demolition. They still cling to the theological assumption that belief in a God and a future of rewards and punishments is essential to the preservation and maintenance of morality and the social bond. All the other dogmas of superstition they have given up as gone, but these they would fain retain, though at the same time acknowledging that there is no positive evidence of the existence of the one or the

truth of the other. They seem to lose sight of the fact that these beliefs have signally failed in the past to hold men to the right, and that the thousands to-day without such belief are as exemplary in every way or more so than those holding it. And, though the advent of the new order were accompanied by a *temporary* loosening of the moral and social bonds, it would be *only* temporary. For this result has attended almost all great changes and reforms in the world, whether such changes were essentially good or bad, and hence the temporary loosening of moral restraints which may attend the induction of 'modern thought' is, judging from the lessons of history, what may be expected, but will be no evidence of the ultimate inutility or unsoundness of the reform. But, no matter what the results to society—temporary or permanent—may be, if these long-cherished beliefs are not true, or do not rest upon any good evidence, they will and *must* sooner or later disappear from the mind of man. The "basis" the world must look to for its future "well-being" is fact, knowledge, science in its most comprehensive sense. The natural and tangible *must* take the place of the supernatural and intangible. We can readily understand how universal education will accomplish vastly more for man than all the theologies and creeds have ever done. We do not mean education in the conventional sense, but education which will enable us to place ourselves in harmonious relations with external nature, with the universe. This of course involves a knowledge of *ourselves* mentally and physically, and a knowledge of our environment—of all the conditions which affect us and with which we are in contact. This is really the highest education, and this is what will ultimately prove the salvation of the race. With this knowledge human beings will adjust themselves to their environment. They will have health by understanding and observing the conditions upon which it depends.

The old proverb, *mens sano in corpore sano*, (a sound mind in a sound body), will then be the rule instead of the exception as now. They will not then take into the system what inflames the blood and excites the passions. Much of the crime in the world results from depraved physiological conditions, instead of the "total depravity" of the mind as the religionist claims. Science has established that the brain is the instrument of the mind, and that the reaction and sympathy between mind and organization are so close that the condition of the one is dependent upon the health and normal condition of the other. If a man's blood is inflamed, and brain goaded by liquor and tobacco, and a hundred other unphysiological practices contrary to nature, no belief in creeds and confessions, God or immortality, will avail to save him from crime. On the other hand the rightly educated individual, who adjusts himself or herself to nature, keeps his blood pure by correct habits of life, and his mind free and healthy by observing the conditions on which mental and moral health depends, will not be vicious in habit or immoral in conduct, though he have no belief in creed or dogma, in God or future rewards and punishments. With such education human pro-creation and propagation will be guided by enlightened reason and knowledge, instead of as now by ignorance and passion, and no more children will be brought into the world than parents can properly feed, clothe and educate. The consequence will be that the child will be born with good tendencies and normal instincts, instead of as now with depraved propensities and vitiated appetites. All the poverty, misery, squalor, degradation and crime which now result from ignorance will then disappear as the causes disappear. Like produces like, and if the parental and other conditions are favorable—normal—it is according to the invariable mode of nature that the child will be favorably organized. Such a child, reared physically, mentally and morally as the parents will then *know how* to rear it, will inevitably grow up a healthy, useful and moral member of the community, independent and without the aid or restraints of creeds. Such, in the nature of things, cannot become vicious and immoral in action.

Does theology, belief, creed, or confession impart such knowledge to the world? No! And they have shown themselves to be utterly impotent in the absence of such knowledge to restrain vice and crime and elevate man. Let us then substitute science for

theology, knowledge for faith, self-reliance and work for unavailing prayer, universities of learning for churches of show and forms, and the nice will improve, yea *must* improve. Religion has had its chance and what has it done for the world? (Of course I mean dogmatic religion, not the moral precepts which it has appropriated, and which are the common property of mankind, and which are essentially a part of no religion.) It may have done some little good but vastly more harm. It has caused human blood to flow in torrents—more than all other causes combined.

Sweeping as this charge is, it is fully supported by history. Religion has kept the mind of man in bondage and fear. We can now do without it. Let us study the useful and natural instead of the visionary and supernatural. Let us have morality in the place of creeds, charity in the place of sectarianism. In the place of the Thirty-nine Articles and the Westminster Confession let us have Carpenter's Physic and Trall's Hygiene. For "election" and "predestination" give us equality and fraternity. In a word, let us exchange the fictions and myths of the supernatural for the great truths and realities of the natural, by which we are surrounded and which concern us most.

SELBY, November, 1877.

MARK TWAIN'S LATEST.

How an Irreverent Old Salt Interpreted the Story of Elijah and the Prophets of Baal.

One trip the Captain had a clergyman on board, but did not know he was a clergyman, since the passenger list did not betray the fact. He took a great liking to the Rev. Mr. Peters, and talked with him a good deal; told him yarns, gave him toothsome scraps of personal history, and wove a glittering streak of profanity through his garrulous fabric that was refreshing to a spirit weary of the dull neutralities of undecorated speech. One day the Captain said, "Peters, do you ever read the Bible?"

"Well—yes."

"I judge it ain't often, by the way you say it. Now, you tackle it in dead earnest once, and you'll find it" pay. Don't you get discouraged, but hang right on. First, you won't understand it; but by and by" thing will begin to clear up, and then you wouldn't lay it down to eat."

"Yes, I have had heard that said."

"And it's so, too. There ain't a book that begins with it. It lays over 'em all, Peters. There's some pretty tough things in it—there ain't any getting around that—but you stick to them and think them out, and when once you get at the inside everything's plain as day."

"The miracles, too, Captain?"

"Yes, sir! the miracles too. Every one of them. Now, there's that business with the prophets of Baal; like enough that stumped you?"

"Well, I don't know but—"

"Own up now; it stumped you. Well, I don't wonder. You hadn't any experience in raveling such things out, and naturally it was to many for you. Would you like to have me explain that thing to you and show you how to get at the meat of these matters?"

"Indeed I would, Captain, if you don't mind."

Then the Captain proceeded as follows: "I'll do it with pleasure. First, you see, I read and read, and thought and thought, till I got to understand what sort of people they were in the old Bible times, and then after that it was all clear and easy. Now this was the way I put it up concerning Isaac and the prophets of Baal. There was some mighty sharp men among the public characters of that old ancient day and Isaac was one of them. Isaac had his failings, plenty of them, too; it ain't for me to apologise for Isaac; he played it on the prophets of Baal, and like enough he was justifiable considering the odds against him. No, all I say is, 'twan't any miracle, and that I'll show you so'st you can see it yourself.

"Well, times had been getting rougher and rougher for prophets—that is, prophets of Isaac's denomination. There was four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal in the community, and only one Presbyterian—that is, if Isaac was a Presbyterian, which I reckon he was, but don't say. Naturally the prophets of Baal took all the trade. Isaac was pretty low spirited, I reckon, but he was a good deal of a man, and no doubt he went prophesying around, letting on to be doing a land office business, but 'twan't any use; he couldn't run any opposition to amount to anything. By and by things got desperate with him; he sets his head to work and thinks it all out, and then what does he do? Why, he begins to throw out hints that the other parties are this and that and 't'other—nothing very definite, may be, but just kind of undermining their reputations in a quiet way. This made talk, of course, and finally got to the King. The King asked Isaac what he meant by his talk. Says Isaac, 'Oh, nothing particular; only, can they pray fire down from heaven on an altar? It ain't much, may be, your Majesty, only, can they do it? That's the idea.' So the King was a good deal disturbed and he went to the prophets of Baal, and they said, pretty airy, that if he had an altar ready they were ready, and they intimated he'd better get insured, too.

"So next morning all the children of Israel and their parents and the other people gathered themselves together. Well, here was the great crowd of the prophets of Baal packed together on one side, and Isaac walking up and down all alone on the other, putting up his job. When time was called, Isaac let on to be comfortable and indifferent: told the other team to take the first inning. So they went at it, the whole four hundred and fifty, praying around the altar, very hopeful, and doing their level best. They prayed an hour—two hours—three hours,—and so on, plumb till noon. It wasn't any use; they hadn't took a trick. Of course they felt kind of ashamed before all those people, and well they might. Now, what would a magnanimous man do? Keep still, wouldn't he? Of course. What did Isaac do? He aggravated the prophets of Baal every way he could think of. Say's he, 'You don't speak up loud enough, your god's asleep like enough, or may be he's taking a walk, you want to holler, you know, or words to that effect; I don't recollect the exact language. Mind, I don't apologize for Isaac; he had his faults.

"Well, the prophets of Baal prayed along the best they know how all the afternoon, and never raised a spark. At last, about sundown, they were all tuckered out, and they owned up and quit.

"What does Isaac do now? He steps up and says to some friends of his there, 'Pour four barrels of water on the altar!' Everybody was astonished; but the other side had prayed at it dry, you know, and got whitewashed. They poured it on. Says he, 'Heave on four more barrels!' Then he says, 'Heave on four more.' Twelve barrels, you see, altogether. The water run all over the altar and all down the sides, and filled up a trench around it that would hold a couple of hogsheads—'measures,' it says—I reckon it means about a hogshead. Some of the people were going to put on their things and go, for they allowed he was crazy. They didn't know Isaac. Isaac knelt down and begun to pray; he strung along and strung along about the heathen in distant lands, and about the sister churches, and about the state and country at large, and about those that's in authority in the government, and the usual programme, you know till everybody had got tired and gone to thinking about something else, and then, all of a sudden, when nobody was noticing, he outs with a match and rakes it on the under side of his leg, and puff! up the whole thing blazes, like a house afire! Twelve barrels of water? Petroleum, sir, petroleum! that's what it was!"

"Petroleum, Captain?"

"Yes, sir; the country was full of it. Isaac knew all about that. You read the Bible. Don't you worry about the tough places. They ain't tough when you come to think them out and throw light on them. There ain't a thing in the Bible but what is true; All you want is to go prayerfully to work and cipher out how't was done."—*Atlantic for November.*

DELUSIONS.

BY W. M'DONNELL.

Every man deals with some delusion as if it were a reality. The most clear-sighted who has all confidence in his own unaided vision may, nevertheless, have some mist before his eyes which he cannot see, and he may have walked along all his life time in a shadow without ever once suspecting that it was not the clearest sunshine. The isthmus which fancifully connects the material world with some vast cloud-continent beyond is a mirage near which so many fondly linger, as if looking midway from the seen to the unseen, or wavering in doubt as to the proper choice between that which is real and that which is imaginary.

Delusions affect families, communities, and nations, as well as individuals. We have families full of silly pretension as to their lineage, which boast of their "blue blood" derived perhaps solely from some progenitor who was a successful knave, and then, overlooking their ignoble origin, foolishly fancy themselves superior to those around them. We have communities—especially the religious ones—which claim authority to dictate to all others, exhibiting contempt or even hatred for those who dare to differ from them; and imagining that some ecclesiastical structure which they may have raised, is founded on a rocky truth, while in reality it is but a glittering vanity elevated upon a mountain of error. And there are nations which vaunt of their liberty, their wealth, their power and their civilization, while they may have partial laws, despotic rulers, unjust distinctions and privileges, and a large ignorant pauper population; and while professing to uphold freedom and humanity, may connive at oppression, and be barbarous in resentment.

Men in fact can be seen in every direction dallying with delusions and following shadows. There are none so positive as those who are half right, and, with this possession, it is almost impossible to convince them that they are wholly wrong. Upon half-righteousness has been established wholesale iniquity; and, as the fanatical are but midway between virtue and vice, the world has had to suffer bitterly from the wild excesses of zealots.

No delusions impose on mankind to such an extent as those which arise from extraordinary religious fervor; and whole communities may be thereby affected. The Jesuits, perhaps above all others, offer an example of what uncontrolled enthusiasm can lead to, for in satisfying their religious yearning they suppress almost every human impulse, and, are fully of the belief, that in order to do their duty and fulfil certain extraordinary vows, they must subdue natural affections, they must cheerfully take up the cross laid before them, leave parents, brethren, and friends, with the greatest indifference, and, without the slightest murmur, go to the remotest part of the earth as teachers or missionaries. No other society, secular or religious, demands such prompt obedience and has such mute submission. No dread of personal suffering must alarm them, and no thought of self must ever interfere to prevent a ready compliance with the demands of a superior. And yet, though feared and distrusted by Catholic and Protestant alike, these men persist in their teaching, and continue on their way under the impression that they are in the path of divine duty and upholders of the most sacred truth; and while nations, communities, and individuals reproach them for being wily and deceitful, and despise them, as well as the Dominicans, for being the Thugs and Fakirs of Christianity, onward still they go in their appointed way, like a moral pestilence from land to land, never suspecting that they are deluded, or that they are or have been in any respect the missionaries of evil.

The name of Jesuit, like that of Jew, is by many accounted as a term of reproach. The Jews have been despised for their alleged greed, the Jesuits have been denounced for their plotting propensities and deceit; their history being one of the most remarkable paradoxes connected with true ethical science or moral philosophy. To do evil that good may come seems to have been one of their most established maxims, and, unless the revelations made even by Catholics concerning them are not the veriest fabrications, this maxim must be the key to most of the perfidious actions of this

celebrated society; and the paradox is further illustrated by the union of great learning, great superstition, and great despotism in the same treacherous and intolerant body.

Among the prominent accusations brought against the Jesuits they are charged with the most profound duplicity, it has been made clear that while professing one code they have practised another; and it is alleged that, in addition to their public and avowed objects and constitutions, there exists for the guidance of their hidden actions, and for the private direction of the thoroughly initiated, a secret code entitled, "*Monita Secreta*," and the notoriety they have gained for designing and intermeddling in religious and social, as well as in political matters, has drawn upon them the suspicion and frequently the antipathy of different governments. Paschal, a distinguished Catholic writer, exposed and ridiculed their dangerous casuistry and disregard of principle in his Provincial letters, the Jansenists a Catholic society were their bitter opponents, and Catholic as well as Protestant nations have been obliged to suppress and often to expel a religious body of men whose great learning and abilities were too often used to incite discontent and rebellion against the very rulers that had offered them shelter and protection; more than once the outcry against them became very great, so strong in 1873 that even Pope Clement XIV. had to suppress the society in Rome, in the Papal States, and "in all the States of Christendom." In many countries they subsequently managed to get re-established, and in many they still hold good their position; but subjected, as they deservedly have been, to expulsion—what they claim to have been persecution—and more cautious as they may now at times be, their aims are still the same, and unless carefully watched they would destroy Liberty and make mankind the veriest slaves of a corrupt and intolerant system.

Those who love freedom of opinion and who detest religious despotism in every form must ever be on the alert, for if there are Protestant as well as Catholic popes, there are also Protestant priests who, to a certain extent, are as designing and as dangerous against freethought and free speech as those who claim to be the genuine successors of Ignatius Loyola.—(From an unpublished work.)

TWO PREACHERS.

BY MISS SARA A. UNDERWOOD.

Two preachers touched my soul one night;
Both woke within me earnest thought;
One charmed my Fancy's airy flight,
One bitter anguish wrought.

The first, 'neath frescoed, fretted roof,
With flowers making sweet the air,
On ornate dais stood aloof,
And uttered praiseful prayer.

He thanked his God, in mankind's name,
For light, for life, for home, and friends,
For all that through our sensuous frame
A thrill of gladness sends.

And then he spoke, in choicest phrase,
Of fruitful earth and glorious heaven,
Of love that guardeth all our ways,
Of pardon freely given.

And, listening in a cushioned pew,
Wrapped in a dreamful, dazy mist
Of music, lights, and warmth, I grew
A sudden optimist.

Wealth, beauty, grace, and culture rare,
Proud faces fashioned fair by fate,
Filled up the pews—no hint was there
Of misery, want, or hate.

The world was fair—and God did reign.—
So ran my musings glad and sweet,
As at the organ's grand refrain
We surged into the street.

Into the street! 'Twas here I found
The preacher who spoke words of woe;
The stars shone fierce above—around
All things were draped in snow.

And bitter was the north wind's rage,
Yet thin-clad forms went hurrying on,—
Forms bent with toil, disease, and age,
From whom all joy seemed gone.

And baby-voices begged for bread,
And voices rude made night more drear,
With oaths enforcing words of dread:
I wondered—was God near?

And maddened men went reeling by
To homes where wives, with inward moan,
Hushed childhood's quick, impatient cry
And hunger's fretful tone.

And by the street-lamp's flickering glare
I glimpses caught of faces bold,—
Girl-faces, whose defiant stare
Their dismal story told.

From sights and sounds like these—not creeds—
Did this strange preacher preach to me,
His sermon was on human needs;
His name—Humanity!

And this the moral that he drew;
That man for man in larger sense
Become—what Heaven fails to do—
A loving Providence.

—Boston Index.

"FREE WILL" AND "FREE MORAL AGENCY."

(Continued.)

BY ALLEN PRINGLE.

The will is either caused or uncaused. If uncaused it is the result of chance, the reign of law is deficient and cause and effect not universal. If caused it is governed by inflexible law, and hence is not free. (We believe the term "law of nature" to be a misnomer, but use it in a popular sense. We do not think "laws" were ever impressed upon matter. By law of nature we mean nature's method of operating. When we observe uniformity in the processes of nature, and that like causes, other conditions being the same, always produce like effects, we say laws of nature, but it is simply uniformity of sequence, and this is inseparable from and a necessary concomitant of matter.) Since then all the phenomena and processes of nature have their adequate causes, the human will can be no exception, but comes under the universal order, and hence is in all cases the necessary result of the existing conditions. Thought, feeling, emotion, will, are all the result of the molecular motion of the brain. This motion is involuntary—beyond our control. We can never predicate the next idea from the present one. We cannot tell what the next thought to arise in our minds will be. We cannot determine the next feeling or motive. There may be, it is true, a concatenation of ideas. We may have what we call consecutive thought, coherent ideas, which we may deem the result of a concentration of the mind by the action of the will, but the connected thought is as necessary a result of the existing conditions as the disconnected thought is a necessary result of other and different conditions. In response to impressions from our environment—the external world—the brain acts, and consciousness is the result. We cannot tell why molecular motion of the brain results in thought. We cannot tell how it is equivalent to consciousness; we simply know the fact.

Professor Tyndall says. "I hardly imagine that any profound thinker who has reflected upon the subject exists who would not admit the extreme probability of the hypothesis that for every fact of consciousness, whether in the domain of sense, of thought, or of emotion, a certain definite molecular condition is set up in the brain, that this relation of physics to consciousness is in-

variable, so that given the state of the brain, the corresponding thought or feeling might be inferred." Will it be said we voluntarily produce the molecular condition, and hence ultimately control or produce the resulting thought or motive? This would be a very far-fetched conclusion. We voluntarily take food, it is true, into the stomach, which is assimilated and nourishes the brain, thus indirectly contributing to its action; but why do we take the food? Simply in obedience to an alimentive desire which is as natural as nature herself. We do not create the alimentiveness. It is born with us. The infant will essay to gratify it before the senses are all fairly awakened to the external world. The action of the brain is therefore outside the control of the will, being more mechanical or automatic in character than consciously directed. Descartes says: "I have clear evidence that the nervous system acts mechanically without the intervention of consciousness, and without the intervention of the will; it may be in opposition to it." In an address delivered before the British Association at Belfast in 1874 Professor Huxley says: "When we talk of the lower animals being provided with instinct and not with reason what we really mean is that, although they are sensitive, and although they are conscious, yet they do act mechanically, and that their different states of consciousness, their sensations, their thoughts (if they have them), their volitions (if they have them), are the products and consequences of the mechanical arrangements. I must confess that this popular view is to my mind the only one which can be scientifically adopted. * * * Undoubtedly I do hold that the view I have taken of the relations between the physical and mental faculties of brutes applies in its fullness and entirety to man."

The automatic action of the brain was not only strongly held by Descartes, but is to-day by the best thinkers and most eminent biologists Professor Huxley, citing Descartes on this point approvingly, says: "But Descartes noticed not only that under certain conditions an impulse made by the sensory organ may give rise to a sensation, but that under certain other conditions it may give rise to motion, and that this motion may be effected without sensation, and not only without volition but even contrary to it." In the presence of these great biological facts what becomes of the hypothesis of the theologian that man's will is "free" when it is thus scientifically established that every thought, emotion, impulse or will which we experience is inexorably caused and has its origin in the molecular motion of the brain, and when such motion is *automatic* rather than *volitional*. Each individual has a certain organization and environment, and it is in accordance with these that he thinks, feels and acts, and that he *must* think, feel and act.

As an illustration of the spontaneity of mental impulses which control our acts let us suppose a case: Suppose you are very fond of a bit of good venison, and in your market round you happen to spy a choice piece apparently. Immediately you desire to get it. Through the sense of sight an impression is made upon the brain producing molecular motion, and hence the desire. You approach the stall to buy. You ask the price, and all is satisfactory. But just as you are about to accomplish your desire to get it, in close contact your sense of smell instantly informs you that the meat which looked so choice to the eye at a distance is tainted—advanced in decomposition. Your strong desire of a moment before to possess and eat it is at once changed into strong aversion. Your sense of smell has suddenly galvanized your brain into another and different motion of molecules, and now you do not want it at all—repugnance has taken the place of desire. No thinking person not wedded to preconceived opinions can fail to see the inevitable logic of this simple fact and its correlative implications. Who will contend that there is really any freedom of will in this case, i. e., in the motives or impulses experienced? It is admitted that the mere act of going to buy the venison and the act of going away without buying were free, but that is not the question. The question is, were the motives which produced the acts free? Had you control over them? Did you *originate* of your own free will first the impulse to possess the venison and then the disinclination to take it? No one will venture to affirm here. The impulses arose *instinctively* and you obeyed them *necessarily*. When you

first saw the venison the molecular motion of your brain created the desire to possess, and over this subjective process you had no control, nor volition in its production. It was as necessary a result of the conditions as that two and two make four. The same applies with equal force to the aversion which succeeded the desire. You had no control over it. Your sense of smell acting instinctively produced the impression on your brain.

This action of your brain was not the result of your behest or will. It was mechanical. It immediately gave rise to the feeling of aversion, and what did you do or could you do in the case but obey the impulse? This is true of the whole of the activities of the five senses covering the whole ground of sensation and perception. Equally does it hold in the province of reason and reflection. We must accept the strongest evidence of our senses, and the strongest intellectual evidence of our minds. For instance, if I am asked the color of a piece of paper which appears to me white I answer white, and no argument, persuasion or coercion will avail to change my mind until the object shall appear to me to be some other color. When, in some cases, the reason corrects false appearances to the senses, the true conclusion arrived at is as necessarily accepted as the false appearance was in the absence of the evidence to the contrary. We believe, for example, from appearances through the senses, that the sun moves round the earth until we become convinced by abstract thought that such is not the case. There is no freedom of will in either state. In the first we involuntarily accept appearances through the senses, and in the second we as involuntarily reject the appearances as false through the higher faculties of reason. There are many adult persons in civilized life who do not yet believe that it is the earth and not the sun that moves. Why? Because they have only accepted such evidence as has been presented, or such as their minds are capable of receiving. They believe what appears to their senses to be true, not being able intellectually to grasp the mathematical demonstration of its falsity. Bailey says:—"Every proposition presented to the mind, the terms of which are understood, necessarily occasions either belief, disbelief or doubt."

Necessarily occasions, remember, independently of our will. If it be the latter, viz, doubt which is occasioned, further reflection and light may result in certainty. And the ultimate conclusion, whatever it may be, is as necessarily occasioned as the preceding doubt was. If I place my hand upon ice I get the impression of cold. Let the "free-will" advocate do the same, and then try by the exercise of his "free will," to persuade himself that the ice is not cold. He will doubtless exclaim that this test is as absurd as it is unfair! It is neither, for this reason:—If he is "free" to change his intellectual convictions by the exercise of his will he can likewise change his physical impressions by the aid of his will. He claims that he is free to believe or disbelieve a given proposition or doctrine when presented to his mind. Now, if he can by the exercise of his "free will" believe what appears to his reason as untrue, he can also, by the exercise of his "free will," disbelieve the physical impression of cold when he places his hand upon the ice. The one would be no more nor less absurd than the other.

(To be continued.)

SELBY, November, 1877.

NOTES AND EXTRACTS.

BY R. F. UNDERWOOD.

The morality of the New Testament, it is often claimed, is evidence of its superhuman origin. But it has been shown time and again that every moral sentiment in that book was taught ages before it was written, in Egypt, in India, in Greece and Rome. The golden rule, the forgiveness of enemies, the brotherhood of man, the fatherhood of God, self-examination, renunciation, were all old doctrines and teachings when Jesus lived. He never taught one new doctrine or precept, and the clergy ought to know it and have the candor to admit it. Jesus probably never made any

claim to originality in the moral precepts he taught. But from the pulpit statements one would suppose that men never knew what the forgiveness of enemies, doing good for evil, and examining their dispositions and motives meant until Jesus opened his mouth.

Much has been said and written about the prophecies of the Bible. The Freethinker has a right to demand evidence that any Bible prophecy appealed to in proof of inspiration was uttered or recorded before the event predicted occurred; that the event was beyond the power of man to foresee; that the prophecy has not been changed to correspond with the event; that the account of the event has not been modified to conform to the prophecy; that the prophecy is in clear, unambiguous language, and does not admit of application to different events. Are there any such prophecies in the Bible?

The following passage is from Buckle's "History of Civilization in England:" "Yet it is evident that until doubt began, progress was impossible. For, as we have clearly seen, the advance of civilization solely depended on the acquisitions made by the human intellect, and on the extent to which those acquisitions are diffused. But men who are perfectly satisfied with their own knowledge will never attempt to increase it. Men who are perfectly convinced of the accuracy of their opinions will never take the pains of examining the basis on which they are built. They look always with wonder, and often with horror, on views contrary to those which they inherited from their fathers; and while they are in this state of mind it is impossible that they should receive any new truth which interferes with their foregone conclusions. On this account it is, that although the acquisition of fresh knowledge is the necessary precursor of every step in social progress, such acquisition must itself be preceded by a love of inquiry, and therefore by a spirit of doubt; because without doubt there will be no inquiry, and without inquiry there will be no knowledge. For knowledge is not an inert and passive principle which comes to us whether we will or no; but it must be sought before it can be won; it is the product of great labor, and therefore of great sacrifice. And it is absurd to suppose that men will incur the labor and make the sacrifice for subjects respecting which they are already perfectly content. They who do not feel the darkness will never look for the light. If on any point we have attained to certainty we make no further inquiry on that point, because inquiry would be useless or perhaps dangerous. The doubt must intervene before the investigation can begin. Here, then, we have the act of doubting as the originator, or, at all events, the necessary antecedent of all progress. Here we have that skepticism, the very name of which is an abomination to the ignorant, because it disturbs their lazy and complacent minds, because it troubles their cherished superstitions, because it imposes on them the fatigue of inquiry, and because it rouses even sluggish understanding to ask if things are as they are commonly supposed, and if all is really true which they from their childhood have been taught to believe"

Mrs. Elizabeth Denton, wife of the well-known Spiritualist, Wm. Denton, says.—"To my apprehension Spiritualism and Christianity rest on the same basis, viz., an unproven assumption. * * * But the hypothesis of a continued, conscious, individualized spirit existence, independent of the material form, I regard not only as unproven but as unprovable by any method of which we are at present cognizant. * * * Nor can I see that we are safe in declaring these phenomena (such as may be genuine) due to any force outside of ourselves, until we can either trace them to the source from whence they emanate, or truthfully assert that we have at last compassed all the possibilities of the human individual, and know that they are due to none of these." She adds that "there must be men and women with warm hearts and earnest, honest purposes who will fearlessly look this question in the face, and dare to know the truth, though it cost them many a fondly cherished hope"—*The Evolution*.

The following, from Smollett, gives some idea of the inter-

perance and wretchedness that were prevalent in England about 1735:—"The populace of London were sunk into the most brutal degeneracy by drinking to excess the pernicious spirit called gin, which was sold so cheap that the lowest class of the people could afford to indulge themselves in one continued state of intoxication, to the destruction of all morals and order. Such a shameful degree of profligacy prevailed that the retailers of this poisonous compound set up painted boards in public, inviting people to be drunk for the small expense of one penny; assuring them that they might be dead drunk for two-pence, and have straw for nothing. They accordingly provided cellars and places strewed with straw, to which they conveyed those wretches who were overwhelmed with intoxication. In these dismal caverns they lay until they recovered some use of their faculties, and then they had recourse to the same mischievous potion; thus consuming their health and ruining their families, in hideous receptacles of vice, resounding with riot and execration."

The following paragraph, referring to medieval homage to women, is from a contribution to *Harper's Magazine* by James Parton:—"The ill-opinion entertained of women by men during those ages of darkness and superstition found expression in laws as well as in literature. The age of chivalry! Investigators who have studied that vaunted period in the court records and law-books tell us that respect for women is a thing of which those records show no trace. In the age of chivalry the widow and fatherless were regarded by lords, knights, and "parsons" as legitimate objects of plunder, and woe to the widow who prosecuted the murderers of her husband or the ravagers of her estate! The homage which the law paid to women consisted in burning them alive for offences which brought upon men the painless death of hanging. We moderns read with puzzled incredulity such a story as that of *Godiva*, doubtful if so vast an outrage could have ever been committed in a community not entirely savage. Let the reader immerse himself for only a few months in the material of which the history of the Middle Ages must be composed, if it shall ever be truly written, and the tale of *Godiva* will seem credible and natural. She was her lord's chattel; and probably the people of her day who heard the story commended him for lightening the burdens of Coventry on such easy terms, and saw no great bardship in the task assigned to her. People read with surprise of Thomas Jefferson's antipathy to the poems and novels of Sir Walter Scott. He objected to them because they gave a view of the past ages utterly at variance with the truth as revealed in the authentic records, which he had studied from his youth up."

Here is an extract of a letter from a friend who went to the Black Hills: "Had you been with me you could have learned how to get rich where there is no money—rich in experience and washed gravel. You might have added to your stock of information that which at some future time would be of inestimable value. You might have added to your geographical lore by becoming practically acquainted with a great country that no geographer who has any regard for his reputation will hereafter dare place upon his atlas. You might have realized—what you and I have always regarded as fiction—the truth of Milton's description of the 'little unpleasantness' that once occurred between Satan and Michael wherein they hurled mountains at each other, &c. Some of those black sombre hills dropped into *Dacotah* and God didn't deem them of sufficient value to have them replaced. Deadwood, that gorgeous metropolis of the hills, with its broad streets (about 10 feet wide) paved with gold, you would readily have recognized as being the veritable *New Jerusalem* spoken of by "old uncle St. John" the Revelator, whom we always believed a crazy, old coot. You would have encountered a style of high-toned living in the hills, the luxuriant exuberance of which would have startled you. The daily diet—ambrosia and nectar—of the Olympian dieties was mere hash compared with the precious freight usually conveyed through the almighty canal of the average *Black Hills'* boarder. That classic Greek dish mentioned so often by Homer in his *Odyssey*, is the chief table staple of the hills; and its consumers

are not all Greeks either. I think the dish is called 'sow-belly.' The hygienic qualities of the country are of a superior order, consisting chiefly of wholesome gulch water filtered through admirably arranged carcasses, forty-rod whiskey, cyprian loveliness, diarrhoea and pistol practice."

COMTE'S POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY.

A Digest.

BY R. B. BUTLAND.

From Comte, John Stuart Mill, H. G. Lewes, Harriet Martineau, M. Cazelles, Spencer, and others.

By discarding from his philosophy every pre-judgment that is not scientific; by banishing across the frontiers the problems of substance and cause which human intelligence is incapable of solving; by basing on experience the whole doctrine of the general science which unites the special sciences, and, above all, by co-ordinating positive knowledge according to a law of evolution into a series, the gaps whereof are skillfully covered by hypotheses that reason may accept, and that reason does not contradict; by all these features, and by the last especially, Spencer presents to us one of the most complete types of the philosophical spirit of the nineteenth century.

To authors who maintain this class of doctrines, or at least such of them as are considered fundamental, it has been the custom for some years past to give the name of positivists, and they have been regarded as the disciples of Auguste Comte.

The public, from the midst of which this powerful mind had gathered with difficulty a small circle of followers, had allowed him to live, think and die, without giving to his work the attention it deserved, and without cherishing toward him personally any feelings but those of utter indifference.

A few years after Comte's death the opinion kept gaining ground in the scientific and philosophical world that Comte's Positive Philosophy would entirely supersede and replace Christianity and the old beliefs of mankind.

Afterward, and without very close consideration, Comte received credit for the grand movement of contemporaneous thought which he did not create, and which appeared to pursue another route than that he would have wished it to follow.

This term "positivists" is admirable, it applies well to that general group of thinkers, savants, and even mere amateurs, who base their general ideas on the positive sciences as a whole, and regard as insoluble the problems that the positive sciences can do nothing to explain.

Still it cannot be said that these savants and thinkers belong to Comte's school. A school supposes a master who has founded it, and disciples whose chief care is to reproduce faithfully the master's ideas of processes, allowing themselves more or less liberty in details.

Here we have certainly bold lines, fundamental doctrines, but points of divergence cannot be called details. Besides, the grand lines on which there is agreement were traced out already before Comte.

If, then, it was well to give the name of positivists to all those who adopt those essential principles, it was wrong to connect them with Comte, as if they were his disciples: and he was their master. A confusion would arise from such thoughtlessness that would misrepresent their respective attitudes.

In spite of the resemblances, and analogies and agreement on essential points between the ideas of Comte and the writings of divers contemporary authorities who adhere to Spencer's synthetic, experimental, evolution philosophy, there exists a profound disagreement on points that are especially characteristic of the philosophy of Comte.

Hence the protests that have appeared from all quarters, especially from John Stuart Mill, who writes with a good nature, growing out of an acceptance of many of Comte's views, from Herbert Spencer, whose impatience is mingled with a profound respect for the illustrious thinker he differs from, and from Huxley, whose assaults go to the extent of injustice.

What Comte meditated was a systematic classification of our knowledge, that might serve in the interpretation of classes of phenomena that have not been studied in a scientific manner; a lofty idea worthy of all praise.

Comte revived the conception of Bacon (so astonishing at an epoch when knowledge was so little advanced), it contemplated nothing less than an organization of the sciences in a vast system, in which social science should appear as a branch of the tree of nature.

In the place of a vague, indefinite conception Comte has given a definite, carefully studied conception of the world. He has displayed a reach, a fertility and an originality of mind truly great, as well as a rare power of generalization.

Comte's Positive Philosophy was an immense progress; it marks an epoch in the evolution of human intelligence.

They who reject Comte's peculiar doctrines, and adhere to positivism as it was before Comte, possess in common with him opinions that the great has bequeathed to the present; but this adherence should not be reckoned in favor of the doctrines peculiar to Comte. Such is the position of Spencer, and of the main body of the scientific philosophers of to-day.

Comte himself always taught that the positive method in philosophy had

been developing for ages, and was an inheritance common to all men of science.

The principles that compose this common heritage are the relativity of all knowledge, and its corollary, the principle that forbids recourse to metaphysical entities for the explanation of phenomena, and finally the fixedness of the laws of nature.

One of the fundamental principles of Comte's system is that the development of philosophy, like the development of organic life, has been through the slow additions of thousands upon thousands of years, for humanity is a growth, as our globe is.

Also that to obtain better empirical laws we must not rest satisfied with noting the progressive changes which manifest themselves in the separate elements of society, and in which nothing is indicated but the relation of fragments of the effect to corresponding fragments of the cause.

It is necessary to combine the statical view of social phenomena with the dynamical; considering not only the progressive changes of the different elements, but the contemporaneous condition of each, and thus obtain empirically the law of correspondence, not only between the simultaneous states, but between the simultaneous changes of those elements.

This law of correspondence it is, which after being duly verified, will become the real scientific derivative law of the development of humanity and human affairs.

John Stuart Mill says: In the difficult process of observation and comparison, which is here required, it would evidently be a very great assistance if it should happen to be the fact that some one element in the complex existence of social man is pre-eminent over all others as the prime agent of the social movement; for we could then take the progress of that one element as the central chain to each successive link, to which the corresponding links of all the other progressions being appended, the succession of the facts would by this alone be presented in a kind of spontaneous order, far more nearly approaching to the real order of their situation than could be obtained by any other merely empirical process.

Now the evidence of history and the evidence of human nature combine by a most striking instance of consilience to show that there really is one social element which is thus predominant and almost paramount among the agents of the social progression.

This is the state of the speculative beliefs which by any means men have arrived at concerning themselves and the world by which they are surrounded.

It would be a great error, and one very little likely to be committed, to assert that speculation, intellectual activity, the pursuit of truth, is among the more powerful propensities of human nature, or fills a large place in the lives of any, save decidedly exceptional individuals.

But notwithstanding the relative weakness of this principle among other sociological agents, its influence is the main determining cause of the social progress, all the other dispositions of our nature which contribute to that progress being dependent upon it for the means of accomplishing their share of the work.

Thus, to take the most obvious case first, the impelling force to most of the improvements effected in the arts of life is the desire of increased material comfort, but as we can only act upon external objects in proportion to our knowledge of them, the state of knowledge at any time is the impassible limit of the industrial improvements possible at that time. And the progress of industry must follow and depend on the progress of knowledge.

The same thing may be shown to be the truth, although it is not quite so obvious, of the progress of the fine arts.

Further, as the strongest propensities of human nature (being the purely selfish ones, and those of a sympathetic character which partake most of the nature of selfishness), evidently tend in themselves to disunite mankind, not to unite them, to make the rivals, not confederates; social existence is only possible by a disciplining of those more powerful propensities, which consists in subordinating them to a common system of opinions.

The degree of subordination is the measure of the completeness of social union, and the nature of the common opinions determines its kind.

But in order that mankind should conform their actions to any set of opinions, those opinions must exist, must be believed by them.

And thus the state of the speculative faculties, the character of the propositions assented to by the intellect essentially determines the moral and political state of the community, as we have already seen that it determines the physical.

These conclusions deduced from the laws of human nature are in entire accordance with the general facts of history.

Every considerable change historically known to us in the condition of any portion of mankind has been preceded by a change of proportional extent in the extent of their knowledge, or in their prevalent beliefs.

As between any given state of speculation and the correlative state of everything else, it was almost always the former which first showed itself, though the effects, no doubt, reacted potently upon the cause.

Every considerable advance in material civilization has been preceded by an advance in knowledge, and when any great social change has come to pass a great change in the opinions and modes of thinking of society had taken place shortly before.

Polytheism, Judaism, Christianity, Protestantism, the negative philosophy of modern Europe and its positive science, each of these has been a primary agent in making society what it was at each successive period, while society was but secondarily instrumental in making them; each of

them (so far as causes can be assigned for its existence) being mainly an emanation, not from the political state of the period, but from the state of belief and thought during some time previous.

The weakness of the speculative propensity has not therefore prevented the progress of speculation from governing that of society at large.

It has only, and too often, prevented progress altogether where the intellectual progression has come to an early stand for want of sufficiently favorable circumstances.

From this accumulated evidence we are justified in concluding that the order of human progression in all respects will be a corollary deducible from the order of progression in the intellectual convictions of mankind, that is from the law of the successive transformations of religion and science.

COMTE'S LAW OF THE THREE STAGES OF THOUGHT.

Comte's central and governing doctrine is that the whole human race, like the individual man, necessarily passes through three intellectual stages.

The variations of human opinion, says Comte, have never been purely arbitrary, they obey a law that causes every theoretical conception to pass through three successive stages.

1. THE THEOLOGICAL STAGE.

The first by a pure mental fiction gives to the absolute cause of events concrete forms, a supernatural origin is sought for all phenomena, this is the theological stage.

2. THE METAPHYSICAL STAGE.

The second gives to the same absolute cause an abstract and purely ideal form; the sensuously supernatural is set aside as incredible, and an effort is made to demonstrate the existence of abstract forces or entities, supposed to inhere in various substances, and capable of engendering phenomena. This is the metaphysical stage.

3. THE POSITIVE OR REAL STAGE.

Finally, the third abandons the search after the "origin and destiny of the universe," "the knowledge of the interior causes of phenomena" and devotes itself merely to discovery of their "effective laws," that is to say their relations of succession and similitude.

In the positive or real stage of human intelligence (or soul) the mind affirms the futility of theological and metaphysical inquiries, abandons all vain search after the causes and essences of things.

Restricts itself to the observation and classification of phenomena and to the discovery of the invariable relations of succession and similitude which things bear to each other; in a word, to the discovery of phenomena. This is the positive or real stage.

1. The first or theological stage has gone on from concentration to concentration, and has reached the highest perfection it is susceptible of, when it has substituted the providential action of a single God for the varied play of the numerous independent Gods that had been imagined in primitive times.

The theological, which is the original spontaneous form of thought, regards the facts of the universe as governed not by invariable laws of sequence, but by single and direct volitions of gods, real or imaginary, possessed of life, intelligence and individuality.

In the infantile state of reason and experience individual objects were looked upon as animated.

The next merges this multitude of divinities in a single God, who made the whole universe in the beginning, and guides and carries on its phenomena by his continued action, or, as others think, only modifies them from time to time by special interferences.

2. The second or metaphysical stage, which closely follows the first, substituting for a God a creation of Reason, pursues in its turn the same path towards unity, and arrives at perfection when all the unities are combined in one unity, regarded as the only source of all phenomena.

The next step is the conception of invisible beings, each of whom superintends and governs an entire class of objects or events.

The mode of thought which Comte terms the metaphysical accounts for phenomena by ascribing them not to volitions, either sublunary or celestial, but to realized abstractions.

In this stage it is no longer a God that causes and directs each of the various agencies of nature, it is a power, or a force, or an occult quality, considered as real existences inherent in but distinct from the concrete bodies in which they reside, and which they in a manner animate.

Instead of Dryads presiding over trees, producing and regulating their phenomena, every plant or animal has now a vegetative soul.

At a later period the vegetative soul has become a plastic force, and still later a vital principle.

Objects now do all they do because it is their essence to do so, or by reason of an inherent virtue.

Phenomena are accounted for by supposed tendencies and propensities of the abstraction nature, which, though regarded as impersonal, is figured as acting on a sort of motives, and in a manner more or less analogous to that of conscious beings.

Aristotle affirms a tendency of nature toward the best, which helps him to a theory of many natural phenomena.

The rise of water in a pump is attributed to nature's horror of a vacuum. The fall of heavy bodies and the ascent of flame and smoke are construed as attempts of each to get to its natural place.

Many important consequences are deduced from the doctrine that nature has no breaks.

In medicine the curative force of nature furnishes the explanation of the recuperative processes which modern physiologists refer each to its own particular agencies and laws.

3. The third stage, the positive or real, in which the mind confines its search to the marks of relations, traces facts to more general facts, whereof they are but particular cases, these to others more general still, so that its perfection towards which it tends incessantly (although quite probably it will never reach it) would consist in the power to represent the different observable phenomena as particular cases under a single general fact, like that of gravitation for example.

The positive or real explanation of facts has substituted itself step by step for the theological and metaphysical as the progress of inquiry brought to light an increasing number of the invariable laws of phenomena.

Comte was the first who ever attempted the complete systematization of the positive or real mode of thought, and the scientific extension of it to all objects of human knowledge, and in doing this he has displayed a quantity and quality of mental power, and achieved an amount of success which is simply marvellous.

The generalization which belongs to Comte, and in which he has not been at all anticipated, is that every distinct class of human conceptions passes necessarily through all these stages, beginning with the theological, and proceeding through the metaphysical to the positive or real.

The metaphysical being a mere state of transition, but an indispensable one, from the theological mode of thought to the positive or real.

Which is destined finally to prevail, by the universal recognition that all phenomena without exception are governed by invariable laws, with which no volitions either natural or supernatural interfere.

When men believe that if you wish for something on seeing a piebald horse the wish will be realized; when they believe that if thirteen people sit down together to dinner one will die before the year is out; when they believe that if any one be bitten by a dog he will suffer hydrophobia should the dog be afterward attacked by that disease; when they believe that a peculiar conjunction of the stars will rule their destinies; in all these and similar instances peoples minds are in the theological stage; they conceive nature as indefinitely variable.

History is crowded with examples of this conception. In poetry, in literature, in daily life we constantly find traces of this primitive spontaneous mode of conceiving of things.

To take an illustration, in the camp of Agamemnon an epidemic breaks out, the men die by scores; but as the dreadful arrows of death are invisible, a terrified army attributes the pestilence to the anger of offended Apollo, who avenges an insult to his priest by this "clanging of the silver bow."

This explanation, so absurd in our age, was acceptable to the facile acquiescence of that epoch, and expiatory peace offerings were made to the offended deity in a case where modern science with its sanitary commission would have seen bad drainage or imperfect ventilation.

But to prove that the theological stage is not thoroughly and universally passed, we need only refer to the monstrous illustrations of our own days, when learned men, the teachers of our own people, gravely attributed the cholera to God's anger at England's endowment of the Maynooth Roman Catholic College.

There was a church in Sienna which had often been injured by lightning. A conductor was set up in defiance of the "religious world," wherein it was regarded as the "heretical stake." A storm arose, the lightning struck the tower, crowds flocked to see if the church was spared, and lo! the very spiders webs upon it were unbroken.

Here we see science correcting the mischievous prejudices of theology.

The same tendency to look beyond the fact for an explanation of the fact, to imagine an agency superadded to the phenomena is visible in the metaphysical period.

The notion of invariableness is admitted, and to explain it some "entity" or "principle" is imagined.

Thus Kepler imagined that the regularity of planetary movements was owing to the planets being endowed with minds capable of making observations on the sun's apparent diameter, in order to regulate their motions so as to describe areas proportioned to their times.

When men put up prayers for rain in fine weather they are acting upon the theological conception that these phenomena are not the resultant of invariable laws, but of some variable will.

The clergyman refusing to pray for rain "while the wind is in this quarter" naively rebukes the impropriety of the request.

In the final and positive stage men accept nature as she presents herself, without seeking beyond the facts for fantastical entities.

It was formerly believed that basilisks existed in cellars which had been long closed; they were invisible, but their look killed whoever it fell upon.

Since it has become more generally known that fermentation is produced by noxious air whose weight causes it to accumulate in low places, we recognize the destructive agent and drive it away by means of fresh air.

There you have an example of the two conceptions, metaphysical and positive; the one seeking its explanations in an unknown entity, basilisk; the other in known laws of nature's processes.

History shows us the gradual dispersion of superstitions and fantastic creeds before the light of certainty which science carries everywhere.

In the positive stage the invariableness of phenomena under similar conditions is recognized as the sum total of human investigations; beyond the

laws which regulate phenomena it is idle to endeavor to penetrate.

So completely are men in the theological and metaphysical stages with respect to the science of society, that ignoring all laws and conditions of growth and development, they almost universally believe in the absurd notion of a political change being wrought by an alteration in the government or by the adoption of some scheme or constitution.

For example, they believe that all that is necessary to make society republican is to adopt republican forms, not seeing that when these forms of government are given to a nation instead of growing out of the national tendencies and ideas, they are merely new names given to old realities.

The belief is a remnant of the old theological mechanical conceptions which suppose man to be external to the social organism instead of being an integral portion of it.

We must replace this mechanical by a dynamical conception, and understand that the social organism has its laws of growth and development like the human organism.

COMTE'S CLASSIFICATION OF THE SCIENCES.

One of Comte's conceptions is that of the unity of all human knowledge. He viewed the whole of the sciences, physical and social, as branches of one science, to be investigated on one and the same method.

To say that the sciences are one and that the method should be one may seem at first sight more like a truism than a discovery.

But on inquiry it will be found that before Comte, although a general idea of the connection of the physical sciences was prevalent, yet to judge from Mrs. Somerville's work, or Sir John Herschell's discourse, it was neither very precise nor very profound.

No one had thought of a social science issuing from the physical sciences and investigated on the same method.

In fact, to talk of moral questions being reduced to a positive science will even now by many be regarded as absurd.

Men use the phrases "social science," "ethical science," etc., but they never mean thereby that ethics forms one branch of the great tree, rising higher than the physical sciences, but rising from the same root.

On the contrary, they interpret ethical phenomena by metaphysical or theological methods, and believe history to be under the governance not of laws, but of caprice.

Although to some persons it may not at first sight be obvious how a mere classification of the sciences can be not merely a help to their study, but in itself an important part of a body of doctrine; it is a fact nevertheless, and the classification of the sciences forms a very important part of Comte's positive philosophy.

Comte classifies the sciences commencing with the study of the simplest and most general phenomena, and proceeding successively to the most complex and most particular.

Thus arranging the sciences according to their dependance on each other.

Comte points out that all the sciences have been evolving, developing, leading each out of another from the most general to the most particular, from the most simple to the most complex.

Beginning with the most general and the most simple science of all, astronomy, and ending with the most particular and most complex of all, sociology.

At the root, the base of the series, we find mathematics, not so much as a science as a method of thought for all the other sciences.

We find naturally growing out of astronomy and leading into chemistry the science of physics, it being more complex than astronomy and more simple than chemistry.

Growing out of chemistry, and leading into psychology, is the science of biology; more complex than chemistry, and more simple than psychology.

Growing out of psychology is sociology, the most particular and most complex of all the sciences.

Comte's later writings seem to indicate that had his life been prolonged he would have enlarged this encyclopedic series by adding morals and religion.

Growing out of sociology and leading into religion is the science of morals, more complex than sociology and more simple than religion, which is the most complex of all the sciences.

Comte's classification of the sciences is as follows:—1, mathematics; 2, astronomy; 3, physics; 4, chemistry; 5, biology; 6, sociology; 7, psychology; we may add 8, morals; 9, religion.

Each category depends on that which goes before it, and in its turn serves as an introduction to that which comes after.

It is a scale in which each category of facts represented by the corresponding laws systematized in the abstract sciences, is more general and more simple than that which immediately follows.

This order of decreasing generality correlative with an increasing complexity constitutes the unity of philosophic doctrine, and gives to Comte's classification of the sciences a homogeneity such as no other attempt has ever presented.

Parallels to Comte's three stages of the evolution of human intelligence are the social state passing from the military to the industrial by an intermediate reign of the legists.

Morality:—1, personal; 2, domestic; 3, social.

The organs in Embryology:—1, primitive; 2, provisional; 3, permanent.

Theology:—1, fetichism; 2, polytheism; 3, monotheism.

The social state:—1, hunters; 2, pastoral; 3, agriculturalists.

The working of Comte's law of the three stages of thought or intelligence is clearly seen in the progressive manner in which the human mind has regarded electrical phenomena.

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.

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