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THE MATERIAL OF OUR THOUGHTS.

Besides the specific attempt to direct our thoughts for a limited period into "sacred channels of reflection, it is worth while to consider the staple of which they are composed when left to themselves. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Character is increased in those spontaneously moving impulses, more than in what is guarded and labored. And yet so great and so severe is the pressure of business and worldly care, that they necessarily give a color to one's daily thoughts. In the case, especially, of persons engaged in some one of the absorbing pursuits of life, there actually seems no room for serious thought. Woman, in the home, indeed, to annoy and try her, in the more tranquil occupations of home, finds time for those wholesome thoughts which so much more frequently result in leading her to the Saviour.

Yet even the busiest man has his moments of comparative leisure, so far as the mind is concerned; he has his street-walks and rides, his lunch at the eating-house, perhaps his wakeful moments in the night, which need not, surely, be wholly consumed with cares, and in which the leading topic of interest of his soul may and will come up for thought.

In the case of the true Christian there ought to be no difficulty in settling what the topic is. He surely has enough of the most elevating, refreshing, comforting matter to flow easily through his mind, and to fill those leisure moments. Even should cares multiply and troubles disturb, these pleasing thoughts may maintain their place in an otherwise troubled brain.

Such, indeed, should be the case. But what is the fact? Do our thoughts, when at liberty, tend naturally to the great and consoling verities of religion? Are we ever repeating to ourselves some precious portions of Divine truth? Does some important aspect of doctrine command our attention? Does some difficult passage of Scripture demand solution, and weave itself into different aspects with the changeable current of our thoughts? Does a personal Saviour seem near at hand, and do we sometimes seem to hear his tender tones, repeating to us the commands and counsels, the questions and the sweet consolations of the Gospel? Does grateful love for his marvellous work on our behalf sometimes fill every avenue of our spirits and melt all thought into affection? Do we sometimes find ourselves even wishing to depart and see with Christ, which is far better? How many days has any one of us lived upon the promise? Upon how many of our leisure moments has the thought of heaven thrown its lustre? When have we paced the streets of the crowded city as if of a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God?

Or, as the momentary pause in our worldly affairs allowed, has the thought of some scheme for the salvation of souls and the extension of Christ's kingdom slipped naturally in? Has some case of interest among family or friends involuntarily brought an exclamation to our lips for Divine aid? Has the spiritual condition of our neighborhood or our Church, or of some particular class of persons, in the Sabbath-school, or in the needful world without, commanded our vacant sympathies on the moment?

There are brief, meteor-like gleams of thought that play through the mind, mysteriously introduced by associations of likeness, of contrast, of locality, and of cause and effect, which equally betray its moral state. The handling of money may but awaken some men's acquisitiveness and strengthen their earthward tendencies. The Christian is easily led to think of the only incorruptible riches, and of how, in the wise use of the mammon of unrighteousness, he may make friends who shall receive him into the everlasting habitations. The life of the tillers of the soil is linked in ten thousand natural associations with the various aspects of Divine truth. Every stone laid by the builder, every contribution to the strength and staidness of the structure is suggestive of spiritual analogies to the workman.

In fact, there is scarcely any pursuit or any act of man, but under the guidance of Scripture, may be shown to be symbolical of higher spiritual truth, and may guide the wisest whose temper is not all earthly, to the most profitable thoughts.

Even our dreams are a key to our nature, characters and passions. When we lay down at Bethel with stones beneath his head and with the towering heights of Judah and of Ephraim as the last objects of his fading vision, it was not only

supernatural influences, we may be sure, which brought such a holy, heavenly vision before his slumbering soul. There was a mind prepared by penitent and devout worship; there was a calm sense of a present and forgiving God, as he sank to slumber amid that mountain amphitheatre, and beneath that pure, nocturnal sky of Palestine. Angels would scarcely have passed and repassed each other, up and down the mountain stairway in the dreams of a worldly-minded Esau. Doubtless there was a supernatural interposition here, but in proportion as God and divine things occupy our waking thoughts, we, too, may expect to find a Bethel even in our dreams.

SPIRITUAL ANTAGONISMS OF DARWINIANISM.

There is no doubt that Darwinianism must be classed with those speculative efforts which aim to exclude everything supernatural from our world. Following out a natural and necessary, but by no means supreme, tendency of the mind, to reduce all known facts to a system of natural causes and relationships, it has been the vice of speculation to endeavor to find in natural laws and forces a sufficient account of the fact and manner of the existence of all things. The effort has been to build up from the widely diverse facts of human knowledge and experience a complete, beautiful, self-sufficient COSMOS, in which everything either is or may be understood and reduced to logical system, or if not, may properly be dismissed from human consideration, as of no practical or scientific value.

Darwinianism thrusts far out of sight, and indeed practically ignores the idea of the creation. It will not hear of any supernatural interposition in forming any of the existing orders of living things. It is wrong for a Darwinian to speak of the creation of man or of beast. Possibly there was a single creative act, which, in ages far more remote than geological eras, even, would adequately represent, called into existence the formless germs which have, by inconceivably slow and gradual steps, and under purely natural influences, metamorphosed themselves into man. But man, as such, was never "created," no more than the ripe autumn fruit is created, which has gradually developed from the blossom of early spring.

A personal divine interposition at every great geological revolution, requiring a renewal of all the forms of animal life on the earth; a separate creative act for every distinct species, and a special act for the creation of a being of man's dignity and worth—these are among the primary elements of a spiritual belief. The attempt to remit to the province of mere law and force events so manifestly requiring Divine interposition, is unavoidably irreligious. So far from being natural, the supposition that nature is alone sufficient for these things is the most unnatural possible. Before the impassable chasms which yawn between different geological eras, and the wide differences prevailing between species, and especially before a being of such extraordinary attributes as man, mere natural law stands powerless. Only a hopelessly unspiritual mind, only a victim of grievous prejudice against religion, would insist on construing or perverting nature's lessons so as to cover the origin of species and of man himself.

It may indeed be said, Darwinianism no more shuts out God from the universe than does the nebular hypothesis. It requires Divine intervention at the remote commencement of that obscure germ of all subsequent life; and God may be regarded as the author of that and all that grew out of it; just as he is the author of the star-mist, out of which, without any further intervention, came suns and solar systems, in the view of many astronomers. It may be claimed that the nebular hypothesis and the theory of Darwin are not atheistical or irreverent, but far more profound in their views of the relations of God to the world than those commonly held by believers in supernatural interposition.

But whatever may be said of the once famous nebular hypothesis, the ready answer to all this is, that in Darwinianism the least possible part is given to the Creator in the existing order of things, while far the greater is given to nature and to forces viewed apart from Him. He makes a few characterless germs, and certain forces under certain circumstances, give us the vast variety of forms and of species which fill the world. "Development" and "Natural Selection" are the catch-words which shut out God from our sight. Nature is not only charged with the greatest part of the work, but with work which she is not doing now; which there is no evidence in human history or in geological records that

she ever did do, and for which she is clearly incompetent. Is not that a flying from God and a flouting of supernaturalism, which makes itself to nature as sufficient to bridge over the chasm from species to species, from mollusks to fishes, from fishes to reptiles, from reptiles to birds and beasts, and from the brute creatures to the moral, accountable being, man? What but a positive aversion to retaining God in their knowledge, what but a reprobate mind, could lead men to try to prove themselves brothers and descendants of the brute, rather than subjects of the direct special intervention of infinite power and infinite condescension? Amazing spectacle! Man breaking the golden links that bind his nature to God, and forging in the baleful fires of a false philosophy, the fetters of a black materialism to bind him to the brute! Even the utterances of a Shakespeare may shame such an ignominious attempt. "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god!"

How any one with a spark of godliness in his soul, or of theism in his philosophy, could travel so far from the simple and reasonable solution given by a supernatural creative act to these phenomena of our world, we cannot conceive. Only an atheistic bent of mind could possibly lead to such extraordinary and repulsive theories.

We have said nothing of the irreconcilable antagonism of these theories to Scripture; we have simply wished to show how hostile they are to the very groundwork of all religion. Yet we must advance upon Scriptural ground, at least in a general way. We ask, what place is there in the Darwinian scheme for such an event as the Incarnation? Is there not something shocking, almost blasphemous in the position which it ascribes to the Son of Man? Is such an exalted, sinless, divine-human personage a mere development; a growth from the mollusc, through the ape, through ordinary humanity to the position of Teacher, Guide and Redeemer of the race? Or what room is there in a race, in no essential specific character distinguished from the brute, for supernatural, divine occupancy, any more than there is in the brute himself? If Darwinians allow of the incarnation of the Son of God in human flesh, must they not admit the possibility of a brute incarnation of Deity also? In a word, is not their philosophy just what is needed to justify and recommend the base and absurd mythologies of the Egyptians, the Hindus and others, which actually represent the Deity as assuming the shape, or dwelling in the forms, of the lower animals? The Bible, indeed, teaches that the devil took up his abode in a serpent, and that only temporarily; while it reserves the glory and mystery of a true incarnation of God to man—man made a little lower than the angels.

It is with this hypothesis of Darwin, as with all mere science. It generalizes and generalizes, in its cold, callous way, until all sense of individual worth is in danger of being lost. Man is an almost indistinguishable item in an infinite series of beings. The product of all past efforts and tendencies of nature, he may be but a mere connecting link to higher forms of life, which shall stretch on and on, into a future as unfathomable and interminable as the past. What is there in the race, or in individuals of the race, to give them any special advantages in destiny or in relations with God, above the orders of being below them, but substantially identical with them?

Well may the believer in this theory fear to be overlooked. Well may Nature, with her inexorable blind onward movement, fill him with dread and despair.

So careless of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life.
"So careless of the type?" But no,
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, "A thousand types are gone;
I care for nothing—all shall give."

"Thou makest thine appeal to me;
I bring to life, I bring to death.
The spirit does not mean the breath.
I know no more."

O life, as futile then as frail!
What hope of answer or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.
Christianity individualizes the race; it dignifies and distinguishes it beyond comparison by its doctrine of the God-man. It brings every believer into the most intimate relations to God, and makes his care, trials, discipline and destiny an object of the most specific acts of Divine Providence. The omnipotent God who sways the whole universe, is yet the man Christ Jesus who was crucified, died, and was buried for our sins, and who is risen again and sits on the right hand of God to make intercession for us. The theory of development and natu-

ral selection could never allow so much to be made of a single race, or of the individuals of a race. One remorseless law must comprehend them all. Darwinianism, if it does not absolutely shut out both God and Christ from the world, makes it next thing to impossible to find place for either of them here. It is essentially material, grovelling, anti-Christian and anti-scriptural in character and tendency.

REACHING THE POINT AT LAST.

The true and just idea of reconstruction, we think, has just been suggested by Mr. Broomall, of this State, and adopted by the House of Representatives, in the following form:

Resolved, That the Committee on Territories be instructed to inquire into the expediency of reporting a bill providing territorial governments for the several districts of country within the jurisdiction of the United States formerly occupied by the once existing States of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas, and giving to all adult male inhabitants born within the limits of the United States, or duly naturalized and not participants in the late rebellion, full, equal political rights in such territorial governments. Adopted—yeas 107, nays 37.

Precisely the form which the initiatory movement for reconstruction should have taken eighteen months ago. We trust it is not too late to correct errors so serious, so dogmatically announced and so obstinately maintained, by substituting, at this late day, a plan so consonant to every demand of justice as this. There are some points of policy too plain to need that caution and delay, which the dignitaries of the Senate seem inclined to insist upon. Promptness is never so safe or so binding upon all, as in repairing glaring, grievous and dangerous wrongs. Delay to pass some such measure as Mr. Broomall's will be destructive rather than conservative of right.

"INFINITE PAIN."

This is a very singular and inappropriate expression to use of any earthly condition, or of the result of any temporal loss or calamity. Only some utterly overwhelming disaster, such as confused one's thoughts and disturbed the faculty of expression, could justify it, in a hasty writing. Yet we find it used in the leading editorial of a New York City religious journal of last week. It is there applied not to the perishing of multitudes of guilty sinners; not to the sad condition of the heathen world; not to the abandoned and miserable condition of myriads of the neglected and vicious poor of that city; not to its dreadful misgovernment, nor to the election of a pugilist and criminal to Congress and the rejection of Horace Greeley for the same office; not to the great unrepented, unpunished crime of a four years' rebellion, with its gratuitous horrors of Andersonville, Salisbury and Libby; not to the late horrors of Memphis and New Orleans; not to the immeasurable disgrace put upon the highest office in the gift of the American Republic by the vice and the treachery of its incumbent,—the "infinite pain" given to this journal arose from not one or all of these causes, but from the attitude of the loyal, freedom-loving, justice-seeking Congress, whose course has just been enthusiastically endorsed by 400,000 majority of the best, most pious, most patriotic citizens of the country. The positive and earnest demonstrations of that body of men, the purest that perhaps ever sat in Washington, has given the *Evangelist* "infinite pain!"

The *Evangelist* holds the leading place among the journals of our body, and in many respects deservedly so, but we are quite sure the bulk of our ministers and members are grievously misrepresented by such extraordinary utterances as this.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, N. L.

REV. T. J. SHEPHERD, D.D., PASTOR.

The services of reopening the improved and very beautiful audience-room of this congregation were attended, last Sabbath, by thronged congregations and were of exceedingly interesting character. The pastor preached in the morning from Mark xiv. 6, *She hath wrought a good work on me.* He was assisted by Rev. Charles D. Shaw, of Paterson, New Jersey, lately a member of the Church. The sermon in the evening, by Rev. Daniel March, D.D., of Clinton Street Church, was based on the Master's words, "I am not alone because the Father is with me," and was one of great beauty and impressiveness. He was assisted by the Rev. James Y. Mitchell, pastor of Coates Street Presbyterian Church, and by the Rev. Robert Adair, Secretary for Home Missions, both of whom were formerly of the church. An interesting incident to the occasion was the securing of pledges to meet an expenditure of \$6000 beyond

the first estimates and subscriptions. The pastor spoke in strong terms of commendation of the large and generous gifts to the enterprise by all the congregation. The accomplishment of such a work, with such hearty unanimity, is a beautiful thing done and we rejoice in it. It is but another evidence of the growing strength and influence of our denomination in this city.

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 10, 1866.

One week of the second session of the Thirty-ninth Congress has passed. The first week of a session usually accomplishes little beyond the greetings of Senators and members who have been separated for several months, the canvassing of hotels and boarding-houses, in the delusive hope of finding comfortable living, the reading of the President's message, the organization of the standing committees of the session, and the adjournment over until the next Monday. This is a memorable exception. The great measures of the session had been inaugurated in the House of Representatives on the very first day, before even the necessary time in communicating with the Executive and receiving in reply his annual message, had elapsed. These are the same men who, in July last, left the Capitol weary with the labors of a long and arduous session, disheartened at the division in the ranks of Union men, which seemed to have been accomplished, fearful lest in their carefully guarded and conciliatory measures, looking toward reconstruction on the basis of justice and right, they had gone further than the people would sustain them; and yet, they are not the same men. Any one who, to-day, looks from the galleries of our National halls of legislation, looks upon a body of men firm and unflinching, strong and self-reliant, in the proud consciousness that the nation has already given its approval of the work they are to accomplish. They are strong, too, in the unity of sentiment through which, on the Union side of the House at least, an unbroken front is presented. It is certainly a most remarkable fact, in these days of remarkable occurrences, that in the popular branch of the American Congress, the President has not a single representative, unless two of the recently elected Tennessee delegation may be counted as such. Every disaffected Union man has returned to his allegiance, and the Democrats have repudiated him as he has them. In the Senate, Doolittle, Dixon and Cowan remain unrepentant, and the Senate has very properly recognized their apostasy by transferring them from the head to the foot of the important committees on which they were placed.

The message of the President has excited no feeling here, and very little comment on the part of any one. It was known, in advance, that it would be merely a repetition of the old story, and there was not curiosity enough to hear it read to retain a respectable audience in the galleries. All those rumors, two or three weeks ago, that Andrew Johnson had made up his mind to bow to the will of the people, that he had recommended the Governors of the Southern States to adopt the Constitutional amendments, and that he had determined to recommend to Congress still more radical amendments, were circulated by those who did not know Andrew Johnson. Let any one who doubts call at the White House some day when he receives visitors and keep his eyes and ears open for five minutes and he may save himself any further speculation on the subject. I made such a call myself, a couple of days ago, having a matter of business to attend to, and was particularly impressed with the stolid lines of dogged determination that marked his expression of countenance, so exactly the reverse of the genial, sympathizing, unselfish man, to whom Mr. Johnson refers with such gusto as his "predecessor." The man whose "turn" for an interview preceded mine, closed his conversation with a good-natured wish that our national difficulties might all be adjusted harmoniously. "Yes," replied Mr. Johnson, the aforesaid lines perceptibly deepening, "I hope so. If they are not it will not be my fault. I am satisfied that the course I have adopted is the only one that can accomplish that result, and I shall adhere to it at all hazards."

There is much comfort in the reflection that our present national Executive is not an exception to those who are in the hands of an overruling Providence. And it is not difficult to see the evils that might have followed a disposition on his part to effect some sort of compromise with Congress. The hands of the latter are now free, and they will go on without embarrassment with the work of the Session, and

which, so far as now indicated, will be about as follows:—

1. To guard the nation at this critical juncture, against the corrupt use of the immense power of the Executive, during a nine months' vacation of Congress following the 4th of March next. To meet this danger, the House to-day passed a bill by a majority of four to one, convening the new Congress immediately on the expiration of the old.

2. To ascertain and lay before the country all the facts in connection with the terrible riot of the 8th of July at New Orleans, and especially the truth of the allegations of complicity in it by officers of the State and General Government. A Committee of Investigation for this purpose has already been appointed, of which Mr. Elliot or Mass., is chairman, who expect to leave the city in the course of the present week for New Orleans.

3. To ascertain the facts under which the railroads of the South, captured in war, having rendered incalculable aid in sustaining the rebellion, were without compensation or condition, restored to their rebel owners. A committee, of which Horace Maynard, of Tenn., is chairman, has been constituted to make the inquiry, and will visit such points in the South as are necessary to a full accomplishment of their purpose.

4. To place on record, with the sanction of official authority, the disastrous consequences to the rebellious States of the policy of reconstruction adopted by the President, and to devise such legislation as may be required to meet the refusal of the rebel States to adopt the Constitutional amendment. To accomplish this end the joint Committee on Reconstruction has been revived.

5. To inaugurate the actual consummation of the work of emancipation, by striking from the franchise laws of this District, over which Congress has exclusive control, the word "white." A bill for that purpose has already passed the House, and is expected to pass the Senate during the present week.

6. To take from the President the enlarged power of granting amnesty to rebels, conferred upon him during the rebellion. This was accomplished, so far as the action of the House was concerned, the first day of the Session, and will undoubtedly receive the sanction of the Senate.

F. H.

CARTER'S, SCRIBNER'S, AND TICKNOR'S GIFT-BOOKS.

Those searching for suitable gifts in this line will find in the lists of these publishers variety and richness, in connection with more substantial qualities, quite sufficient for the most diverse wants and tastes. We have before us a copy of Scribner & Co.'s "Cotter's Saturday Night," elaborately and profusely illustrated, printed on the heaviest and finest paper, and richly bound in Turkey morocco. It is a noble poem and worthy of the richest decorations of the engraver's and binder's art. Scribner & Co. deserve the meed of a large success for bringing it before the public with such captivating accessories. It is for sale, in various styles, by Smith, English & Co.

Carter & Brothers have an elegant edition of Bonar's "Hymns of Faith and Hope," with arabesque borders of the most artistic and beautiful designs. The typography and binding are in a high degree rich and tasteful. They also offer a small quarto volume, "The Prodigal Son," being a series of sketches upon the prominent points in that touching story, by the eloquent preacher, James Hamilton, D.D., of London, each point illustrated with an original full-page engraving, which is a study and a lesson in the design, and a pleasure in the execution. For sale at the Presbyterian House.

We have already noticed Messrs. Ticknor & Fields' "Flower de Luce" and "Maud Muller," smaller yet exquisite books, which, with several others from their house, may be found at Lippincott & Co.'s.

The list of M. W. Dodd, in our advertising columns, is of great interest and variety, embracing a new story by the author of the *Schönberg-Cotta* series, and many others.

PRESBYTERIAL FELLOWSHIP.

The two Presbyteries of Port Wayne (New and Old School), have appointed a joint meeting to be held in Wabash, Ind., on the 17th, 18th and 19th of the present month. They meet for prayer and other devotional exercises, with a special view to the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the members, their churches, and the families of their congregations. This is another of the late signs which betoken an approaching shower of salvation upon the country.