

TO DR. WILLIAM SWEETSER.

CAMBRIDGE, January 1, 1860.

My dear Sweetser,—Never did I expect (but a few years ago) to make it a date, and yet there it is. It is upon us, not only a new year, but a new decade, and the last I shall ever shake hands with. It behooves me, therefore, to make the best possible use of it, and get as much innocent enjoyment out of it as I may; and you have aided me in this by the very kind letter that you have just sent me, and which I take in the light of a most acceptable new year's present.

First, it gives me great pleasure to see that you and Mrs. Sweetser are passing on in such a comfortable, quiet, healthful way together. Whatever you may say about "life being hardly worth the possession," there are *spots* of it when it is a great good, and the consciousness of enjoyment is worth taking great pains to attain. At any rate, I am willing to hold on at present, and I hope you will stop and keep me company. I would that you were a little nearer, that we might exchange fresh thoughts without this artifice of writing, to which I have a constitutional antipathy. . . .

I am now reading a book that I think will make as great a noise as that made a few years ago by the "Vestiges of Creation." It is "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, etc.," by Charles Darwin, M. A. Mr. Darwin is a correspondent of my friend, Dr. Gray, and Gray says—as indeed his book bears witness—that he is a very thorough naturalist, having been devoted to the study, under the most favorable circumstances, in London, for many years, during many of the last of which he has been elaborating his theory by experiments on plants and animals, and collecting information by correspondence with naturalists everywhere. The result is this book of about five hundred pages, as the precursor of a more complete treatise. I have not yet finished the present volume, but as far as I have read it seems to me a very able work in support of the "Development Theory." Many of his views are quite new to me, and indeed he claims for them the honors of a discovery as *his theory*. He will certainly succeed in setting *afloat* the old "Plan of Creation" in the organic world, if he does not destroy it. The tendency of the work is most decidedly *atheistical*, or *pantheistical*. I hope and trust that it will be searchingly reviewed by some great and *broad* naturalist, for in this way only can we

expect any approach to truth from the conflict. If the *little priests* will let it alone, I shall be glad. A good American edition is promised in a fortnight. You cannot fail to find in it matter for many an hour's cogitation.

Ever truly yours,

DANIEL TREADWELL.

Soon after this letter to Dr. Sweetser, Mr. Treadwell took part with his friend, Dr. Asa Gray, in a discussion of Darwin's treatise on the "Origin of Species," upon its natural theology, and its influence upon the argument from design: "Is Darwin's Theory Atheistic or Pantheistic?" It was first printed in the American Journal of Science and Arts, September, 1860, and again by Dr. Gray in his "Darwiniana," in 1876.