

**Nature.**

Nature, so far as we can discern, without passion and without intention, forms, transforms, and re-transforms forever. She neither weeps nor rejoices. She produces man without purpose, and obliterates him without regret. She knows no distinction between the beneficial and the hurtful. Poison and nutritious, pain and joy, life and death, smiles and tears are alike to her. She is neither merciful nor cruel. She cannot be flattered by worship nor melted by tears. She does not know even the attitude of prayer. She appreciates no difference between poison in the fangs of snakes and mercy in the hearts of men. Yet religious people see nothing but design everywhere, and personal, intelligent interference in everything. They insist that the universe has been created, and that the adaption of means to ends is perfectly apparent. They point us to the sunshine, to the flowers, to the April rain, and to all there is of beauty and of use in the world. Did it ever occur to them that a cancer is as beautiful in its development as is the reddest rose; that what they are pleased to call the adaption of means to ends, is as apparent in the cancer as in the April rain? How beautiful the process of digestion! By what wonderful contrivances the entire system of man is made to pay tribute to this divine and charming cancer. See by what admirable instrumentalities it feeds itself from the surrounding quivering, dainty flesh! See how it gradually but surely expands and grows! By what marvelous mechanism it is supplied with long and slender roots that reach out to the most secret nerves of pain for sustenance and life! What beautiful colors it presents! Seen through the microscope it is a miracle of order and beauty. All the ingenuity of man cannot stop its growth. Think of the amount of thought it must have required to invent a way by which the life of one man might be given to produce one cancer? Is it possible to look upon it and doubt that there is design in the universe, and that the inventor of this wonderful cancer must be infinitely powerful ingenious and good? Man has no ideas, and can have none, except those suggested by his surroundings. He cannot conceive of anything utterly unlike what he has seen or felt. He can exaggerate, diminish, combine, separate, deform, beautify, improve, multiply and compare what he sees, what he feels, what he hears, and all of which he takes cognizance through the medium of the senses; but he cannot create. Having seen exhibitions, of power, he can say, omnipotent. Having lived, he can say, immortality. Knowing something of time, he can say, eternity.

Conceiving something of intelligence he can say God. Having seen exhibitions of malice, he can say devil. A few gleams of happiness having fallen athwart the gloom of his life, he can say, heaven. Pain, in its numberless forms, having been experienced, he can say, hell. Yet all these ideas have a foundation in fact, and only a foundation. The superstructure has been reared by exaggerating, diminishing, combining, separating, deforming, beautifying, improving or multiplying realities, so that the edifice or fabric is but the incongruous grouping of what man has perceived through the medium of the senses. It is as though we should give to a lion the wings of an eagle, the hoofs of a bison, the tail of a horse, the pouch of a kangaroo, and the trunk of an elephant. We have in imagination created an impossible monster. And yet the various parts of this monster really exist. So it is with all the gods that man has made. Beyond nature man cannot go, even in thought—above nature he cannot rise—below nature he cannot fall.—Ingersoll.

**Creeds of Presidents.**

Foundry church, Washington, will be the church which Mr. McKinley will attend after his inauguration. He will be the third Methodist among the presidents of the United States. There have been, besides, eight Protestant Episcopalians, six Presbyterians, two Unitarians, one Christian, and one Freethinker.

Washington used to go to one or another of the Episcopal churches in Philadelphia. John Adams was the first president at Washington. He was a Unitarian, and, as there was not a church of his denomination in the capital in those days, he did not identify himself with any place of worship.

Thomas Jefferson believed with Thomas Paine that man should be guided by his own reason rather than by the reason of others; therefore he didn't go to church. Madison went to St. John's church. Monroe evolved some of his famous doctrine while sitting in the same pew Madison had used. In 1819 St. John's set apart pew No. 1 for the especial use of the president of the United States.

John Quincy Adams, like his father, was a Unitarian. He, with others, founded the Unitarian church, whose congregation met in the building now used by the police court. Jackson went to the Presbyterian church on Four-and-a-half street, which was built in his term of office, and to St. John's church. Van Buren went to St. John's. William Henry Harrison, whose grandson was also president, went to the F street Presbyterian church, now Willard's hall. The F street congregation has lost its identity

by joining the New York Avenue church.

Tyler went to St. John's Episcopal church. Polk to the F street and to the Four-and-a-half street Presbyterian churches. Buchanan went to St. John's. The tall, gaunt figure of President Lincoln was seen on Sundays in a pew of the York Avenue church. Johnson attended St. John's. Grant made the fame and wealth of the Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal church by his regular attendance there.

Hayes went to the Foundry church. Mrs. Hayes was active in all church affairs. Her church life in Washington was as plain and simple as it was in her home out in Ohio.

Garfield attended the Vermont Avenue Christian church, and preached occasionally from its pulpit. Arthur went to St. John's. Cleveland has been a regular communicant at the Four-and-a-half street Presbyterian. President Harrison attended the Presbyterian church of the Covenant in Connecticut avenue. New York Press.

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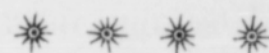
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