

imagine, when those who have pro-
tested against such reckless state-
ments will be thought to have done
some service to religion as well as to
science.

I trust that the foundations of
theism and of the Christian religion
rest upon firmer foundations than the
so-called "immutability of species".

Believe me to be, with sincere regard,

Yours faithfully

(signed) Asa Gray—

Botanic Garden, Cambridge
May 18, 1873—

My dear Prof. Dawson,

Your letters, particu-
larly your last one, of the 13th. inst.
under it not improper or presuming
on my part, as I trust you will think,
to suggest that you also have some-
what to consider—

I cannot object to your main-
taining the hypothesis that each
every existing plant and animal
form has been directly created, (or
mediately created, if you see a dif-
ference) out of the soil, — pure hypothe-
sis though it be, and one which
"from the nature of the case can
never be directly proved." It is natural

that you should hold such
hypothesis as long as you believe
it to be possibly tenable -

But what I may ask you very
seriously to consider is, whether you
are prepared to bear the responsi-
bility you assume in maintaining
& teaching that no hypothesis of the
derivation of existing "specific" forms
from previous ones more or less like
them can logically be theistic and
religious - How far any such hypothesis
may be probable or tenable in view of
the ~~present~~ evidence is not the question
raised, but a far more momentous
one.

Consider what the "younger men
who learn of you" will be likely to

think when they come to discard,
as the best informed ones probably
will after a while, your scientific
views on this subject, but still, per-
chance, confide in your dictum that
the doctrine of the derivative origin
of one species from another cannot
logically stop short of "blank materialism",
destructive both to science and religion,
and even - - to morals and social
organization."

There will be "a heavy penalty to
pay," but there are two sides to the
question as to who is to pay a part
of it. What I said, in the last
paragraph of the Dubuque address
"we need not here consider" is neverthe-
less worthy of consideration -

The time is not very distant, I



Gray, Asa. 1873. "Gray, Asa May 18, 1873 [Gray to J. W. Dawson]." *Asa Gray correspondence*

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