

aggregation of energy in the visible universe, with reference to the introduction of life, with reference to the soul of man, with reference to the heavenly gifts of genius and prophecy, with reference to the introduction of the Saviour himself into the world, and with reference to the spiritual gifts and graces of God's people, all these spring not from sporadic acts of intervention, but from the continuous action of God and the unseen world, and this we must never forget is the true ideal of creation in Scripture and in sound theology. Only in such exceptional and little influential philosophies as that of Democritus, and in the speculations of a few men carried off their balance by the brilliant physical discoveries of our age, has this necessarily partial and imperfect view been adopted. Never indeed was its imperfection more clear than in the light of modern science.

Geology, by tracing back all present things to their origin, was the first science to establish on a basis of observed facts the necessity of a beginning and end of the world. But even physical science now teaches us that the visible universe is a vast machine for the dissipation of energy; that the processes going on in it must have had a beginning in time, and that all things tend to a final and helpless equilibrium. This necessity implies an unseen power, an invisible universe, in which the visible universe must have originated and to which its energy is ever returning. The hiatus between the seen and the unseen may be bridged over by the conceptions of atomic vortices of force, and by the universal and continuous ether; but whether or not, it has become clear that the conception of the unseen as existing has become necessary to our belief in the possible existence of the physical universe itself, even without taking life into the account.

It is in the domain of life, however, that this necessity becomes most apparent; and it is in the plant that we first clearly perceive a visible testimony to that unseen which is the counterpart of the seen. Life in the plant opposes the outward rush of force in our system, arrests a part of it on its way, fixes it as potential energy, and thus, forming a mere eddy, so to speak, in the process of dissipation of energy, it accumulates that on which animal life and man himself may subsist, and assert for a time supremacy over the seen and temporal on behalf of the unseen and eternal. I say, for a time, because life is, in the visible universe, as at present constituted, but a temporary exception, introduced from that un-