

garment of immortality, may be privileged to watch the dawning life of new solar systems—their preparation for rational inhabitants, the gradual progress of these in adaptation for a higher state of being, and the final autumnal decay of their temporary habitation? And may we not suppose that regret for the extinction of these worlds, with all that was wonderful and beautiful in their organization, might be counteracted—just as is our regret when the rich verdure of the forest is dispersed by autumnal winds, and the glowing blaze of colour of September flower-beds is turned into blackness and decay by a night's frost—by the assurance that the seeming destruction we lament is only preparing the way for a fresher life, when spring shall come again? And as we might suppose the same phenomena going on simultaneously in different stages through a limitless universe—as indeed science teaches that they are *now* going on in the visible heavens—we may easily conceive that this grand sort of spring might be perennial—that in *some* portion of the universe there would at all times be room for the delight in a new and fresh creation, described in the most sublime of all poems—"when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." We may believe that they who would then be "heirs of all the ages" in a sense we cannot even conceive now, might, far from existing inactive amid absolutely changeless beatitude,—which seems to be the popular idea of heaven,—be ever finding from æon to æon new lessons to learn, new fields of knowledge to explore, new cause to adore, in inexpressible veneration, "the wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge."

These are, of course, only speculations, but they seem to be legitimate speculations, in accordance with the principle of continuity, and with our strong instinctive feeling that He who has called into existence so many and so beautiful forms of organized life, or the visible universe, is more likely to continue to evoke ever-varying beauty in that outward garment by which He reveals Himself to our physical senses, than to annihilate altogether this magnificent embodiment of His thought. As the forms of life even in our own planet seem almost infinite, may we not believe that an eternity would unfold to us ever new combinations, to excite our wonder and admiration? And as higher

intelligences than ourselves may, in this our narrow and bounded life, be ministering spirits to those who often sorely need ministration, so *our* interest in the formation and the life of new worlds may not be wholly a spectacular one; but it may even be the divine privilege of a higher state of being to have a never-ending mission of love to discharge to the younger brothers and sisters of the universal family.

Even Professor Clifford, in his "First and Last Catastrophe," admits that we cannot calculate back for ever the past history of the universe—that we *must* come to a point where all known laws of evolution fail—when, consequently, so far as our present knowledge goes, we come to what we must regard as an act of origination—what we should call a creative act; what *he* calls the "first catastrophe." Consequently, even he appears to admit that the "last catastrophe" by no means precludes the repetition of the originating act called the "first catastrophe." But a repetition of such "catastrophes" would be just the recurrence of evolution and dissolution, spring and autumn, on the grand scale we have suggested; and this as no "senseless bubble-play of Titan forces," but as the noble plan of an intelligent Designer, ever working out higher and higher types of life.

But we return to the argument of the authors of "The Unseen Universe," that the energy constantly going out from the visible universe into the invisible ether may afford a means of "investiture of present resources in order to keep a hold upon the past," and provide that material organ of memory which their hypothesis declares necessary to any conception of future intelligent existence. For if "each particle of existing matter must be a register of all that has happened," and as "every thought that we think is accompanied by a displacement and motion of the particles of the brain, then somehow—in all probability by means of the medium—we may imagine that these motions are propagated throughout the universe." A sweet poetess once sang regretfully that

"Earth and air no record keep  
Of parted strains."

But we know now that a record—of a kind—is kept of every occurrence, great and small. The author of a little *brochure* en-