

spirit to a remote point of space, whence you may contemplate the planetary or solar system. Suppose the earth unknown to you. Consider it not as the land of your birth and habitation. Consider with ultra terrestrial eyes the planets that revolve round the sun, the focus of life. If you suppose the phenomenon of existence; if you imagine that some of the planets are to be inhabited; if some one should tell you that life is about to select a few of these ten magnificent globes (the eight planets with the sun and moon) to commit to them the germ of its productions, do you think, honestly, that you would select that small globe, the earth, without having previously endowed those other magnificent worlds with the marvels of animated creation? No, indeed! for the earth, when seen at a distance, in an impartial spirit, possesses no marked pre-eminence in the planetary system that you should thus give it the preference, and, from an astronomical point of view, the other planets are as well adapted to receive life. Furthermore, God has neither created rational life, nor has He organized it, to be subservient to matter; on the contrary, God has created and organized matter for the sake of rational life, or intellect. The Almighty created matter first of all, namely, earth, water, air and other elements, then light; he divided the waters from the earth, raised the mountains, dug the valleys and the deep beds of the sea; peopled the earth the air and the water with beasts, fowls and fishes; then, and then only, He created man. Until then the universe was like a beautiful but silent harp; man was the skilful hand destined to cause its harmonious cords to vibrate. And, lo! life abounds everywhere in every shape and form. Not only the earth has its more than eleven hundred millions of inhabitants, the forests and the deserts their numberless wild animals, the air its countless tribes of birds, but every drop of water has its three or four hundred animalculæ; our very blood swarms with these multitudinous and imperceptible creatures. A tumor is but a lump of microscopic worms; the juices of plants, their leaves, the most fragrant flowers, are so many receptacles of these minute beings. What is the phosphorescence

of the sea but life in motion? Billions of phosphorescent worms live in water. Many millions of animalculæ can be seen in a square foot of some kinds of stone; the same with regard to clay. Let a piece of clay rot away; let animal flesh be decomposed, and lo! life springs out of it. Death engenders life. Now, considering that God has accumulated life, as it were, in the waters, the earth, the air, stones and plants—everywhere; is it possible to suppose that these gigantic planets, larger and fairer than the earth, prepared and organized as it was for life, are doomed to everlasting barrenness, and that death alone and the silence of endless ages shall exercise their sway over them? It is not probable; else man may feel prompted to say God's wisdom is not equal to the might of His arm.

Neither faith nor reason forbids us to believe in the plurality of inhabited worlds. We may give full scope to our imagination. We are at liberty to multiply astronomical civilizations; proclaim that in the starry plains and valleys there are countless tribes and nations, and all degrees of physical and moral temperature, provided we acknowledge God the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of all these rational beings. Suppose this to be the case, are these persons less or perhaps more perfect than ourselves? Are they divided into hierarchies like angels? and do we occupy the first, or the tenth, or the last place in that biological gradation? No one can say; but this I know: our lot is fair and sublime enough that we should not, like egotistical children, love our heavenly Father any the less, because he has given us new brothers in regions unknown. On the contrary, we should thank and praise him since he has given us distant brothers who perhaps glorify and love him more perfectly than we; for, to each of these inhabited worlds, God, indeed, could make the necessary revelation; his word as well as his presence reaches all the existing spheres. The supposition itself that the inhabitants of these distant regions may have been infected with the leprosy of sin does not become a serious objection. Has not the atoning effect of our Saviour's death reached millions of men who lived and died thousands of