

*perpetual motion on the earth.*” Helmholtz says: “A time will come when the comet will strike the sun; and a similar end threatens all the planets, although after a time the length of which baffles our imagination to conceive it.” Mayer contemplates the precipitation of asteroidal and planetary masses upon the sun. Comte says: “In a future too remote to be assigned, all the bodies of our system must be united to the solar mass, from which it is probable that they proceeded.” Rorison, defending the Mosaic account of creation, admits, speaking of the earth: “It was once all nebula; it will yet, if left to physical agencies, collapse into an exhausted and extinguished sun.” Watson says: “If we grant that the retardation of the comets arises from the existence of an ethereal fluid, the total obliteration of the solar system is to be the final result.”

This, then, is the conclusion of science. So far as we have been able to acquaint ourselves with the laws which regulate the movements of the planetary bodies, the duration of the present order of the solar system *is finite*. Nothing but an *infinite miracle* can save it from destruction. That such a miracle will be wrought we have no warrant for assuming. From the very beginning of its career, so far as we can judge, the history of matter has been wrought out in accordance with methods which we style the “laws of Nature.” These methods have never been abandoned, and there is not a particle of evidence furnished by science that they ever will be abandoned until they shall have completed their work. Whether the forces of matter be viewed as inherent powers or as “immediate divine agency,” the argument from induction, in which the doctrine of a final catastrophe rests, is an argument possessing strength beyond the power of arithmetic to express.

It is true that the final catastrophe is removed to the