

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 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 unseen world where it is no longer the exception but the eternal rule. In a still higher sense, then, than that in which matter and force testify to a Creator, organization and life, whether in the plant, the animal, or man, bear the same testimony, and exist as outposts put forth in the succession of ages from that higher heaven that surrounds the visible universe. In them, too, Almighty power is no doubt conditioned or limited by law ; yet they bear more distinctly upon them the impress of their Maker, and, while all explanations of the physical universe which refuse to recognise its spiritual and unseen origin must necessarily be partial and in the end incomprehensible, this destiny falls more quickly and surely on the attempt to account for life and its succession on merely materialistic principles.

Here again, however, we must bear in mind that creation, as maintained against such materialistic evolution, whether by theology, philosophy, or Holy Scripture, is necessarily a continuous, nay, an eternal, influence, not an intervention of dis-