

material action, to suppose that the primeval system contained within itself the elements of every subsequent change, then is the primeval matter to the matured system of the world, as the seed to the plant, or the egg to the living creature. Following for a moment the last of these hypotheses—shall this embryo of the material world contain within itself the germ of all the beauty and harmony, the stupendous movements and exquisite adaptations of our system—the entanglement of phenomena, held together by complicated laws, but mutually adjusted so as to work together to a common end—and the relation of all these things to the functions of beings possessing countless superadded powers, bound up with life and volition? And shall we then satisfy ourselves, by telling of laws of atomic action, of mechanical movements, and chemical combinations; and dare to think, that in so doing, we have made one step towards an explanation of the workmanship of the God of nature? So far from ridding ourselves, by our hypothesis, of the necessity of an intelligent first cause, we give that necessity a new concentration, by making every material power, manifested since the creation of matter, to have emanated from God's bosom by a single act of omnipotent prescience.

Leaving, however, these subjects of lofty speculation, and retracing our steps from the first condition of created matter towards the order of things now going on before us, we see, from the form and structure of the solid masses on the surface of the earth, that many parts of it have been elaborated during successive periods of time; and if we cannot point out the first traces of organic life, we can find, at least, an indication of its