

multiplying into many genera, and swarming in countless myriads, as the Devonian ages wear on. Again, towards the termination of the latter appear the first reptiles, which, during the Carboniferous and Permian eras, reign as the master-existences of creation. But Palæozoic or ancient life passes away, and the Mesozoic or Middle period is marked, not only by countless forms, all specifically, and many of them generically, new, but by another wholly unknown, either as genus or species, during all the past. The little marsupials and insectivora appear 'perfect, after their kind,' and yet only the harbingers of the great mammalian period which is yet to come. In the volume of Creation, as in that of Providence, God's designs are wrapt in profound mystery until their completion. And yet in each it would appear that He sends a prophetic messenger to prepare the way, in which the clear-sighted eye, intent to read His purposes, may discern some sign of the approaching future.

Before we proceed, we must here, on behalf of the unlearned, and therefore the more easily misled, most humbly venture to reclaim against the use, on the part of men of the very highest standing, of the loose and dubious phraseology in which they sometimes indulge, and which serves greatly to perplex, if not to lead to very erroneous conclusions.

'In respect to no *one class* of animals,' says Professor Owen, in his last Address to the British Association, 'has the manifestation of creative force been limited to one epoch of time.' This, translated into fact, can only mean that the vertebrate type had its representative in the fish of the earliest or Silurian epoch, and has continued to exist throughout all the epochs which succeeded it. But the