

wisdom of the Creator than in the independent creation of different species.

If, taking this point of view, we were to explain the origin of the first terrestrial organisms, from which all the others are descended, as due to the action of a personal Creator acting according to a definite plan, we should of course have to renounce all scientific knowledge of the process, and pass from the domain of true science to the completely distinct domain of poetical faith. By assuming a supernatural act of creation we should be taking a leap into the inconceivable. Before we decide upon this latter step, and thereby renounce all pretension to a scientific knowledge of the process, we are at all events in duty bound to endeavour to examine it in the light of a mechanical hypothesis. We must at least examine whether this process is really so wonderful, and whether we cannot form a tenable conception of a completely non-miraculous origin of the first primary organism. We might then be able entirely to reject miracle in creation.

It will be necessary for this purpose, first of all, to go back further into the past, and to examine the history of the creation of the earth. Going back still further, we shall find it necessary to consider the history of the creation of the whole universe in its most general outlines. All my readers undoubtedly know that from the structure of the earth, as it is at present known to us, the notion has been derived, and as yet has not been refuted, that its interior is in a fiery fluid condition, and that the firm crust, composed of different strata, on the surface of which organisms are living, forms only a very thin pellicle or shell round the fiery fluid centre. We have arrived at this idea by