

beyond what a fair study of our material may warrant, or to infer that such primitive types must necessarily have been of low grade, or that progress in varietal forms has always been upward. The occurrence of such an advanced and specialised type as that of *Dadoxylon* in the Middle Devonian should guard us against these errors. The creative process may have been applicable to the highest as well as to the lowest forms, and subsequent deviations must have included degradation as well as elevation. I can conceive nothing more unreasonable than the statement sometimes made that it is illogical or even absurd to suppose that highly organised beings could have been produced except by derivation from previously existing organisms. This is begging the whole question at issue, depriving science of a noble department of inquiry on which it has as yet barely entered, and anticipating by unwarranted assertions conclusions which may perhaps suddenly dawn upon us through the inspiration of some great intellect, or may for generations to come baffle the united exertions of all the earnest promoters of natural science. Our present attitude should not be that of dogmatists, but that of patient workers content to labour for a harvest of grand generalisations which may not come till we have passed away, but which, if we are earnest and true to Nature and its Creator, may reward even some of us.

Within the human period great changes of distribution of plants have occurred, chiefly through the agency of man himself, and we have had ample evidence that plants are able to establish themselves and prosper in climates and conditions to which unaided they could not have transported themselves, as, for instance, in the case of European weeds naturalised in Australia and New Zealand. There is, however, no reason to believe that any specific change has occurred to any plant within the Pleistocene or modern period.