

adopted by the human mind. Either we must believe these combinations to have been original, that is to say, that the ingredients have had no separate existence and properties, till the art of chemistry found the means of disuniting and insulating them ; or view the existing aggregations of matter, as results of combination of the separate elements, produced by some change of conditions. If the former view be adopted, there is no room for further discussion ; if the latter, an inexhaustible source of intellectual exertion is opened, and all the mysteries of nature are subjected to the scrutiny of man.

There may be persons who view this as a matter of no importance, and would, perhaps, be content to save themselves the trouble of inquiring into the works of creation, by the indolent belief that the world was made as we see it, its complicated phenomena not produced by appropriate laws of causation, but the result of an immediate fiat of Deity. As far as regards the reverential thoughts due to the Divine Lawgiver of nature, it may appear, on a first view, unimportant whether we admit the creation of the complicated phenomena, visible in the structure of the globe, by an immediate act of Almighty Power, or produced from some former condition in the same elements by the agency of intermediate laws of causation ; but, on careful examination, it will certainly be found otherwise.

If it be true and demonstrated, that in the existing economy of nature all phenomena (whether they appear to our imperfect conceptions simple or complicated) are the result of invariable appointed laws, acting under definite conditions ; if it appear that, in our own time, the phenomena of mechanical, chemical, and vital action among the elements and masses of matter are analogous to those of which monuments remain in the crust of the earth ; if the laws which are known to govern and to correspond accurately to the modern effects stand in the same relation to those