

random spot where the first impulse was given—a similar treatment for each of the satellites, with this peculiarity in the comets, their being struck either with more unequal force in proportion to their distance from the sun, or in a more acute direction to the radius vector of their orbits. These make up as it were the few simple contingencies on the union of which the mechanism of our celestial economy was framed at the first, and is upholden afterwards. It is because so few, that there is more room for the supposition that their combination might have been fortuitous—and hence astronomy is not the best medium through which to prove the agency of an intelligent Creator—although in the language of Dr. Paley if this can be proved by other means, it shows beyond all other sciences the magnificence of His operations.

15. In the proportion that we lessen the number of contingent things which enter into any useful combination—we weaken the argument for its having originated in design, or in a designing cause. Had both the rotatory and the projectile motions of a planet required three impulses—that is, two equal and opposite forces to spin it round its axis, and then a progressive force to set it forward—this would have afforded all the stronger evidence for the hand of a God. But these two motions, as well as the inclination of the axis to the plane of the orbit, can all be ensured by one impulse in a direction oblique to the planet's surface. This in so far attenuates the argument for a divine agency having been concerned in the putting together of this marvellous framework. But