

this question seems capable of unfolding, is too awful for the eye of reason; and, however its discussion might magnify our conviction of the infinite power and goodness of the Creator, is not to be approached perhaps without culpable presumption.

Let us therefore return to considerations more appropriate to the character of human knowledge: and, having referred to the effects produced by heat on various forms of matter, let us inquire what facilities nature has placed within our reach for the purpose of exciting and maintaining heat itself. The chemist in his laboratory, surrounded by the numerous and various agents which he is constantly employing, can never have any difficulty in producing the vestal element. By concentration of the sun's rays he may inflame any combustible substance: by compression of common air in a small cylinder of glass, or metal, he may ignite a piece of fungus, or inflame a piece of phosphorus, attached to the extremity of the piston which is employed to compress the air. He may instantaneously produce flame by pouring concentrated nitric acid on oil of turpentine, or on certain saline compounds; by the simple trituration of phosphorus, or other chemical agents; by directing a small stream of inflammable air on minute particles of platina loosely aggregated in a state somewhat resembling sponge; or, not to accu-