

opinion upon our views of the government of the world, till the opinion itself should have assumed a less indistinct and precarious form. It can be no charge against our doctrines, that there is a difficulty in reconciling with them arbitrary guesses and half-formed theories. We shall, however, make a few observations upon this *nebular hypothesis*, as it may be termed.

2. If we grant, for a moment, the hypothesis, it by no means proves that the solar system was formed without the intervention of intelligence and design. It only transfers our view of the skill exercised, and the means employed, to another part of the work. For, how came the sun and its atmosphere to have such materials, such motions, such a constitution, that these consequences followed from their primordial condition? How came the parent vapour thus to be capable of coherence, separation, contraction, solidification? How came the laws of its motion, attraction, repulsion, condensation, to be so fixed, as to lead to a beautiful and harmonious system in the end? How came it to be neither too fluid nor too tenacious, to contract neither too quickly nor too slowly, for the successive formation of the several planetary bodies? How came that substance, which at one time was a luminous vapour, to be at a subsequent period, solids and fluids of many various kinds? What but design and intelligence prepared and tempered this previously existing element, so that it should by its natural changes produce such an orderly system?

And if in this way we suppose a planet to be produced, what sort of a body would it be!—something, it may be presumed, resembling a large meteoric stone. How comes this mass to be covered with motion and organization, with life and happiness? What primitive cause stocked it with plants and animals, and produced all the wonderful and subtle contrivances which we find in their structure, all the wide and profound mutual dependencies which we