

In the first place, the divisibility and molecular constitution of matter, seem to prove beyond a doubt, that it cannot have *eternally* existed in its present state.

Although we can form no idea of what matter would be, without its molecular properties ; there is yet nothing in these properties which can induce us to believe, that they are *necessary* to the mere *existence* of matter. On the contrary, we have seen, that matter possesses qualities, (those of gravitation), of a more primordial kind ; to which its molecular properties are apparently secondary or subordinate. But if these subordinate properties be not necessary to the existence of matter, matter might *possibly*, at some time, have existed without them. Now this very possibility seems incompatible with eternal existence ; for what *can* happen, *may* have happened, at some period : the eternal (passive) existence of matter, therefore, ought to involve incapability of change. Hence, as the molecular constitution of matter, cannot be shown to be *necessary* to the existence of matter ; that molecular constitution cannot be *proved* to be eternal : moreover the difficulty of such a supposition is exceedingly increased, when we consider the characteristic property of matter in the molecular state ; viz. *the endless repetition of exactly similar parts*. It is to be observed also, that the above remarks apply to the supposition of only *one* form of matter ; but we shall see hereafter,