

matter, which will necessarily have taken the figure of a ring, whose plane must be nearly the same as that of the equator of the planet; and this quantity of matter having been detached from the vicinity of the equator of Saturn, must have lowered the equator of that planet; whence, notwithstanding its rapidity, the diameters of Saturn cannot be so unequal as those of Jupiter, which differ from each other more than an eleventh part.

However great the probability of what I have advanced on the formation of the planets and their satellites may appear to me, yet, every man has his particular measurement, to estimate probabilities of this nature; and as this measurement depends on the strength of the understanding to combine more or less distant relations, I do not pretend to convince the incredulous. I have thought it my duty to offer these ideas, because they appear to me reasonable, and calculated to clear up a subject, on which, however important, nothing has hitherto been written; for the impulsive motion in the planets enter at least as one half of the composition of the universe, which gravity alone cannot unfold. I shall only