

If some original cause adjusted the orbits of the planets to their circular form and regular arrangement, we can hardly avoid including in our conception of this cause, the intention and will of a Creating Power. We shall consider this argument more fully in a succeeding chapter; only observing here, that the presiding Intelligence, which has selected and combined the properties of the organic creation, so that they correspond so remarkably with the arbitrary quantities of the system of the universe, may readily be conceived also to have selected the arbitrary velocity and direction of each planet's motion, so that the adjustment should produce a close approximation to a circular motion.

We have argued here only from the *regularity* of the solar system; from the selection of the single symmetrical case and the rejection of all the unsymmetrical cases. But this subject may be considered in another point of view. The system thus selected is not only regular and symmetrical, but also it is, so far as we can judge, the only one which would answer the purpose of the earth, perhaps of the other planets, as the seat of animal and vegetable life. If the earth's orbit were more eccentric, as it is called, if for instance the greatest and least distances were as three to one, the inequality of heat at two seasons of the year would be destructive to the existing species of living creatures. A circular, or nearly circular, orbit, is the only case in which we can have a course of seasons such as we have at present, the only case in which the climates of the northern and southern hemispheres are nearly the same; and what is more clearly important, the only case in which the character of the seasons would not vary from century to century. For if the eccentricity of the earth's orbit were considerable, the difference of heat at different seasons, arising from the different distances of the sun, would be combined with the difference, now the only considerable one, which depends on the position of the earth's axis. And as by the motion