

The laws of matter were ordained for the working of the machine. The former, that is, the dispositions, make up the framework, or what may be termed the apparatus of the system. The latter, that is, the laws, uphold the performance of it.

10. Now the tendency of atheistical writers is to reason exclusively on the laws of matter, and to overlook its dispositions. Could all the beauties and benefits of the astronomical system be referred to the single law of gravitation, it would greatly reduce the strength of the argument for a designing cause. La Place, as if to fortify still more the atheism of such a speculation, endeavoured to demonstrate of this law—that, in respect of its being inversely proportional to the square of the distance from the centre, it is an essential property of matter. La Grange had previously established—that but for such a proportion, or by the deviation of a thousandth part from it, the planetary system would go into derangement—or, in other words, that the law, such as it is, was essential to the stability of the present mundane constitution. La Place would have accredited the law, the unconscious and unintelligent law, that thing according to him of blind necessity, with the whole of this noble and beautiful result—overlooking what La Grange held to be indispensable as concurring elements in his demonstration of it—certain dispositions along with the law—such as the movement of all the planets, first in one direction, second,