

If a man were, by some extraordinary event, to find himself in a remote and unknown country, so entirely strange to him that he did not know whether there existed in it any law or government at all; he might in no long time ascertain whether the inhabitants were controlled by any superintending authority; and with a little attention he might determine also whether such authority were exercised with a prudent care for the happiness and well-being of its subjects, or without any regard and fitness to such ends; whether the country were governed by laws at all, and whether the laws were good. And according to the laws which he thus found prevailing, he would judge of the sagacity, and the purposes of the legislative power.

By observing the laws of the material universe and their operation, we may hope, in a somewhat similar manner, to be able to direct our judgment concerning the government of the universe: concerning the mode in which the elements are regulated and controlled, their effects combined and balanced. And the general tendency of the results thus produced may discover to us something of the character of the power which has legislated for the material world.

We are not to push too far the analogy thus suggested. There is undoubtedly a wide difference between the circumstances of man legislating for man, and God legislating for matter. Still we shall, it will appear, find abundant reason to admire the wisdom and the goodness which have established *the Laws of Nature*, however rigorously we may scrutinize the import of this expression.