

ary spaces, there would soon be an end of the system. If the planet had moved in a fluid, as the Cartesians supposed, and if this fluid had been subject to the rules of friction which prevail in terrestrial fluids, their motions could not have been of long duration. The solar system must soon have ceased to be a system of revolving bodies.

But friction is neither abolished on the earth, nor active in the heavens. It operates where it is wanted, it is absent where it would be prejudicial. And both these circumstances occasion, in a remarkable manner, the steadiness of the course of nature. The stable condition of the objects in man's immediate neighbourhood, and the unvarying motions of the luminaries of heaven, are alike conducive to his well-being. This requires that he should be able to depend upon a fixed order of place, a fixed course of time. It requires, therefore, that terrestrial objects should be affected by friction, and that celestial should not; as is the case, in fact. What further evidence of benevolent design could this part of the constitution of the universe supply?

4. There is another view which may be taken of the forces which operate on the earth to produce permanency or change. Some parts of the terrestrial system are under the dominion of powers which act energetically to prevent all motion, as the crystalline forces by which the parts of rocks are bound together; other parts are influenced by powers which produce a perpetual movement and change in the matter of which they consist; thus plants and animals are in a constant state of internal movement, by the agency of the vital forces. In the former case rigid immutability, in the latter perpetual development, are the tendencies of the agencies employed. Now in the case of objects affected by friction, we have a kind of intermediate condition, between the constantly fixed and the constantly moveable. Such objects can and do move; but they move but for a short time if left to the laws of nature. When at