

ed; for it may be shown that the contrary involves a contradiction. But there is no contradiction in supposing that a body's motion should naturally diminish, or that its weight should increase in removing further from the earth's centre.

Thus the properties of matter and the laws of motion are what we find them, not by virtue of any internal necessity which we can understand. The study of such laws and properties may therefore disclose to us the character of that external agency by which we conceive them to have been determined to be what they are; and this must be the same agency by which all other parts of the constitution of the universe were appointed and ordered.

But we can hardly expect, with regard to such subjects, that we shall be able to obtain any complete or adequate view of the reasons why these general laws are so selected, and so established. These laws are the universal basis of all operations which go on, at any moment, in every part of space, with regard to every particle of matter, organic and inorganic. All other laws and properties must have a reference to these, and must be influenced by them; both such as men have already discovered, and the far greater number which remain still unknown. The general economy and mutual relations of all parts of the universe, must be subordinate to the laws of motion and matter of which we here speak. We can easily suppose that the various processes of nature, and the dependencies of various creatures, are affected in the most comprehensive manner by these laws;—are simplified by *their* simplicity, made consistent by *their* universality; rendered regular by *their* symmetry. We can easily suppose that in this way there may be the most profound and admirable reasons for the existence of the present universal properties of matter, which we cannot apprehend in consequence of the limited nature of our knowledge, and of our faculties. For, compared with the whole extent of the universe, the whole aggregate of things and relations