

almost to idolize those to whom they were indebted for any weighty benefits, or to whom they looked up as inventors of useful arts, or masters of hitherto occult sciences. Gratitude, indeed, demands that great and original geniuses, whom God has enriched with extraordinary talents, by the due exercise of which they have become benefactors of the human race, should be loved and valued highly for their services; but when we look only at the instrument, and see not the hand of Supreme Benevolence that employs it for our benefit, we then overvalue man and undervalue God; putting the former into the place of the latter, and making an idol of him; and if any will not worship this idol, a clamour is raised against them, and they are almost persecuted. Our great philosopher himself complains of this tendency to overvalue individuals as the cause and source of great evils to science: he considers it as a kind of fascination that bewitches mankind.*

Since the time of Bacon, philosophers and inquirers into nature have for the most strictly adhered to his rule, if such it may be deemed; and, with the exception of a single sect, who perhaps have gone too far in an opposite direction,† have made little or no inquiry as to what is delivered in Scripture on physical subjects, or with respect to the causes of the various phenomena exhibited in our system, or in the physical universe: but surely it is a most interesting, as well as novel field of study, for the philosopher to ascertain what has really been revealed in Scripture on these great subjects. The opinions of the ancients upon this head

* *Rursus vero homines a progressu in scientiis detinuit, et fere incantavit reverentia antiquitatis, et virorum, qui in philosophia magni habiti sunt, autoritas. — Itaque mirum non est, si fascina ista antiquitatis, et authorum, et consensus, hominum virtutem ita ligaverint, ut cum rebus ipsis consuescere (tanquam maleficiati) non potuerint. Nov. Organ. l. i. aphor. 84.*

† The Hutchinsonians.