

but ignorant of the evidences and the divine grandeur of religion, and unhappily averse to a free examination of them. How must such persons be confirmed in their prejudices, and in the sinful condition of mind which is the substratum of those prejudices, when they hear Christian ministers declaiming against the knowledge of what they are convinced is certain and valuable truth: and reviling the only possible means of attaining that knowledge! It is not *just*: for the sciences and all their investigations for which we are pleading, are not the “philosophy and vain deceit” against which the apostle gives a solemn warning. That was no other than a compound of Oriental and Grecian doctrines; referring to the mind of man and to invisible beings, founded, not upon observation and experiment, but on the play of imagination and the dictates of assumed authority: it was an impostress under the name of philosophy, entangling men in a web of idle and visionary speculations, destitute of evidence, having no practical applications, and opposing itself to that purest reason which is displayed in the authority and grace of the gospel. The Natural Philosophy of our times is of the opposite character, as to both its constitution and its tendency. It consists in the honest *searching out* of the works of Jehovah, in obtaining the facts of sensible nature, in admitting nothing as data without adequate evidence, and in receiving no conclusions till they have been substantiated by the most cautious reasoning: and if its proper effects be not counteracted by our own perverse depravity, it leads to a devout veneration of God, and to practical benefits without number to ourselves and our fellow-creatures. This philosophy may be abused: and so may any of the gifts of God; health, strength, property, family, education, talents, the esteem of our friends, the advantages of our social position, and even our heavenly religion itself. All our en-