

joyments of the divine beneficence may be abused, by some kind or other of an association with unworthy principles, or a subserviency to wrong pursuits. But does any man abandon these blessings on that account ; or declaim against them as sinful, or in their own nature pernicious ? The oppugners of philosophy do not act so with their own favourite enjoyments. They ought to reflect that the pursuits which they misunderstand and misrepresent, and then decry, are no other than obedience to the divine command, "Consider the works of God :—remember that thou magnify his work which men behold." If, to any attainments which we may make in the study of physical objects, we do not add sincere love and devotion and obedience to the Lord of nature and grace, the blame is our own ; and no slight blame and guilt it is. But let not the good principles be condemned for the bad practice. Does it not so much the more become sincere Christians, to labour to "add to their faith—knowledge ;" to acquire, so far as they have opportunity, that true science which diffuses innumerable benefits among men, unfolds many of the divine glories, and is the proper handmaid of vital piety ?

3. Though our interpretations of the word of God must rest upon their own intrinsic evidence, in grammatical construction, suitableness to the connexion, and agreement with other parts of Scripture ; still it is a useful assistance, in cases of difficulty, to know what sentiments have been entertained, and expositions given, by persons whose opportunities of knowledge, and whose character for learning and judgment, constitute a reasonable presumption that they have not taken up opinions from supine ignorance, unexamined custom, or any other prejudice. Upon this ground, therefore, and not because we attribute to the sentiments of uninspired men any commanding authority, I bring some instances, to show to our opponents that it is not a novelty in the Church of