

date of revelation, belong to a forbidden province?" He brings no reason in support of his assertion: he adduces no evidence in its favour from the divine oracles: he does not pretend to give us any ground whatever for the reception of it. Can he have expected that any man will receive this dictate, upon his pronouncing of it? Geology unrolls to the eyes of men a glorious book of the works and ways of divine power and providence. Are we to behold these objects; and then turn aside, refusing to inquire, or to hear other persons inquire, concerning their nature and relations, their causes and consequences? Can we persuade our fellow-men to yield obedience to such a prohibition? Will the unbelieving and irreligious submit to it? Will they retire from the threshold of the temple, after they have been permitted to look in and gain a glance of its grandeur; and will or can they repress every desire of entering to explore its treasures? There are, unhappily, men well acquainted with the natural sciences, but who are disgracefully, because wilfully, ignorant of the real nature of religion, and the grounds of claim which it has on their understandings and their hearts: how will such as they treat this ban of an unproved authority? Will they not regard the futile prohibition as involving an unequivocal confession, that the book of revelation will not endure to be confronted with the book of nature? Or will religious persons, the sincere believers in the authority of the Bible, give in their adherence to it? Will they, can they, shut their eyes and silence their understandings; and suppress the risings of reason and admiration and piety? Can they strike dead the desire for knowledge which the wise and good Creator has implanted in man? Widely different is a simple desire of knowledge, regulated by rational and religious considerations, from that principle of the first transgression with which some unreflecting persons pro-