

fess to identify it. That was the hankering after a gratification of animal appetite, in despite of a prohibition which the transgressors knew to have proceeded from infinite goodness; it was the giving credit to an unknown pretender, in contempt of the divine veracity: but the studies of Natural Philosophy, (though, like every other of God's beneficent gifts, they may be and awfully are abused by ungrateful men,) are, in themselves, only a proceeding in the spirit of the divine declarations; "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.—Remember that thou magnify his work which men behold.—Through desire, a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom."* The Bible, in numerous places, directs us to the contemplation of God, under the especial aspect of displaying his perfections by his doings; and it affixes no limitations of time or place to the objects of such contemplation. The works which the Infinite Being has wrought, and the ways in which he governs his own creation, may, in a sound and obvious sense sanctioned by the inspired apostle, be called *a revelation of HIM*; "because that which may be known of God (*τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ*) is manifest in them."† It cannot be held excusable, in any to whom he has given the means of studying this manifestation of himself, to neglect that duty, or to oppose and decry those who endeavour to perform it. This study is, not the rival, but the valuable assistant, of

* Ps. cxi. 2. Job xxxvi. 24. Prov. xviii. 1. This last passage is one of those in the Old Testament which, on account of the extremely elliptical character of the Hebrew style, is attended with difficulty. The following paraphrastic translation is submitted as strictly conveying the sense of the original. "For gratifying a laudable desire, a recluse student diligently explores and zealously contends for all elevation of knowledge."

† Rom. i. 19.