

of the early study of astronomy among the Chaldeans, it has been observed, Alexander the Great, when he entered Babylon, found, upon inquiry, astronomical observations, some of which had been made about two thousand years before. This noble study, the patriarch Abraham, who was a native of Chaldea, is supposed to have, in an eminent manner, promoted. The knowledge collected from the traditional history of creation, the contemplation of the heavens and the earth, the experience of preceding generations, and the various gradual discoveries of the attributes and purposes of the Deity, which had been, by the long-lived patriarchs, transmitted from age to age; he, no doubt, was solicitous to diffuse among his co-temporaries. In the contemplation and study of the works of creation and Providence, the devout part of mankind, of every age and country, have found equal profit and pleasure. Does it not seem to have been the constant practice of the patriarch Isaac, at every approach of night, and re-appearance of the heavenly luminaries, to retire to the field for contemplation? *Isaac, says the sacred historian, went out to meditate in the field at the eventide.* Was it not a view of the starry heavens that suggested to the devout Jewish monarch, the following pious ejaculations; *When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, can I forbear to exclaim, Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?* Celebrating the wonders of creation, the sweet psalmist of Israel elsewhere sings thus—*To him who alone doeth great wonders—to him that by wisdom made the heavens—to him that made great lights; the sun to rule by day; the moon and stars to rule by night.*

From Chaldea or Egypt, or, perhaps, both, the study of astronomy passed into Phenicia, and from Phenicia to Greece. The period at which this science was first cultivated among the Greeks, cannot be ascertained. Intimations of it, however, occur in the writings of Hesiod and Homer, who flourished almost nine hundred