

to light its long-concealed secrets ; even the very elements and first principles of things have become in a manner subservient to our will. It is a wondrous age of discovery and invention, and of the triumphs of mind over matter ; nor is this the least peculiar feature of the times— that there is scarcely an effort of ingenuity in combining and applying the ascertained powers and laws of nature that has not been brought to bear on general utility, by lessening labour or increasing enjoyment.

Surely this is a state of things in which we ought exceedingly to rejoice. The advancement of the human mind must ever be a subject of thankfulness and congratulation to all Christians. Religion has nothing to fear, but much to expect, from the progress of knowledge. That "ignorance is the mother of devotion," may be the maxim of a corrupt system that hates the light ; but the Gospel needs no such concealment. It shrinks not from the most rigid scrutiny. The more thoroughly its evidences are examined, the brighter and more convincing do they appear. Its doctrines contain nothing contrary to sound reason ; while they exhibit truths which the meanest intellect can comprehend, and present discoveries that elude the grasp of the mightiest minds. Its precepts are undeniably adapted to promote the true happiness of mankind. In a word, Christianity is a system of light and purity. It courts publicity and close investigation. During the darkness of the middle ages, its progress was checked by the prevalence of ignorance and superstition, and its splendid beauties concealed ; but the revival of literature was speedily followed by the Reformation, and that important change was accomplished by men as renowned for learning as for piety. Let us therefore rejoice that we are living in the period predicted by the prophet Daniel, "Many

shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Let us confess that we are bound to promote, by all the means in our power, the diffusion of general education. And let it be our ambition to join in the march of inquiry and truth ; to "seek and intermeddle with all wisdom ;" and to embrace every opportunity of increasing our own knowledge and becoming familiar with the numerous walks of learning and science.

Still, we must rejoice with trembling ; for we have seen in too many instances with what facility our corrupt nature can turn a blessing into a curse, and how powerful are the proud and unbelieving tendencies of the human heart. With these views, it is unquestionably the duty of thinking Christians to enquire seriously in what manner knowledge may be sanctified to the noblest purposes, and rendered serviceable to the great cause of Christianity. It is very important and useful, for instance, to point out the connection between sacred and profane history ; to gather illustrations of Scripture from the writings of travellers in eastern countries ; to watch the progress of discovery and art, in order to adopt such improvements as may most facilitate the expeditious and universal diffusion of religious knowledge ; to show how all the departments of science abound with proofs of the amazing wisdom and goodness of God, and that every particle of matter is so skilfully adjusted to its place and fitted to its functions, that there is neither deficiency nor excess ; now to arrest admiration by the magnificent works of the Most High, and now by the more minute and delicate operations of His hand ; to trace the analogies between the natural and the spiritual world, showing that the same God "worketh all in all ;" to explain how He "hath magnified his Word above all His name," and that the Gospel is ad-