

facts of science, especially geological science, and the testimony of the Holy Scriptures.

A few more instances will be useful: but they shall be briefly mentioned.

“Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars; if thou be able to number them.—So shall thy seed be.—In multiplying I will multiply thy seed, as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore.”* Here we have two similitudes, to represent the great increase of a national population; a population which, in the most flourishing times of Israel and Judah, cannot be estimated as having reached to more than eight or nine millions. Yet it is represented by two comparisons, which lie in opposite extremes. The one falls immensely short. With a little skill and perseverance, Abraham might have counted all the stars visible, even in his fine climate. They could scarcely have amounted to fifteen hundred. But the second object of comparison presents a number which the most advanced arithmetic could with difficulty write in figures, and which would many times exceed the number of human beings that have ever lived upon the face of the globe. Will any one say, that these are not figurative expressions, peculiarities of idiom; which must be interpreted by the rule of common sense, the one by extending, the other by contracting?

A mode of expression to be interpreted upon the same principle is that of representing a long period of time, in relation to the history of mankind, by “a thousand generations:”† whereas all the generations of the human race, from Adam to the present hour, cannot exceed two hundred.

2. Concerning atmospheric phenomena, a few things are to be noticed.

* Gen. xv. 5; xxii. 17. † Deut. vii. 9. 1 Chron. xvi. 15. Psa. cv. 8.