

Hence arises a motive of the greatest force to quicken our endeavours to diffuse every where just principles for understanding the figurative language of Scripture. We cannot but be affected by the prevalence of ignorance and misconception on this point; and the consequent influence of those misconceptions upon the formation of religious sentiments and their practical results. The eloquent profusion of striking Scripture-language, in sermons and treatises and poems, yet without the accompaniment of just caution and correct interpretation, has made many enthusiasts and many infidels; and not a few have rushed *from the one extreme to the other*. The unexplained ascription of human forms and passions to the Deity leads some to breathe the atmosphere of a piety imaginative and picturesque indeed, but degrading to its glorious Object and nursing most pernicious fancies in its subjects: and it helps forward another class in their injurious conceptions of the attributes and government of God; for these are ideas which they are very ready to accept, as a bolstering up of secret skepticism. In their own minds, they put upon the adorable One a garb of unreasonable, turbulent, and changeful passions; instead of representing him as the Being all whose attributes are PERFECTIONS, fixed and invariable *principles* of rectitude and wisdom. Thus, the pure character and the reasonableness of moral obedience, and the inviolability of the law that requires it, are thrown out of sight; the necessity of a Divine Saviour is therefore hidden from view; the whole econ-

*ous.*—They allow the full claims of the human mind, to assign spaces and periods which transcend the flights of the loftiest imagination: yet they talk of the arrogance of the Geologist in pretending to maintain that, millions of years ago, the world was going on, governed by the same physical laws which prevail now, and replete with vegetable and animal life in all its varied forms of perfection and adaptation to a state of things of which the existing order is only one of a series of gradual and regular changes." Prof. Powell's *Connexion*; pp. 67, 69.