

strictly and severely literal. Or, in other words, whether we are, with learned and solid divines of the olden time, such as Poole and Stillingfleet, and with many ingenious and accomplished divines of the passing age, such as the late Dr Pye Smith and the Rev. Professor Hitchcock, to regard these passages as merely metonymic ; or, with Drs Hamilton and Kitto, to regard them as strictly literal, and to call up in support of the literal reading an amount of supposititious miracle, compared with which all the recorded miracles of the Old and New Testaments sink into insignificance. The controversy does not lie between Moses and the naturalists, but between the *readings* of theologians such as Matthew Poole and Stillingfleet on the one hand, and the *readings* of theologians such as Drs Hamilton and Kitto on the other. And finding all natural science arrayed against the conclusions of the one class, and in favour of those of the other, and believing further, that there has been always such a marked economy shown in the exercise of miraculous powers, that there has never been more of miracle employed in any one of the dispensations than was needed,* I must hold that the theologians who believe that the Deluge was but co-extensive with the moral purpose which it served are more in the right, and may be more safely followed, than the theo-

* The following excellent remarks on the economy of miracle, by Chalmers, bear very directly on this subject :—“ It is remarkable that God is sparing of miracles, and seems to prefer the ordinary processes of nature, if equally effectual for the accomplishment of his purposes. He might have saved Noah and his family by miracles ; but He is not prodigal of these, and so He appointed that an ark should be made to bear up the living cargo which was to be kept alive on the surface of the waters ; and not only so, but He respects the laws of the animal physiology, as He did those of hydrostatics, in that He put them by pairs into the ark, male and female, to secure their transmission to after ages, and food was stored up to sustain them during their long confinement. In short, He dispenses with miracles when these are not requisite for the fulfilment of his ends ; and He never dispenses with the ordinary means when these are fitted, and at the same time sufficient, for the occasion.”—*Daily Scripture Readings*, vol. i. p. 10.