

It were easy to extend observations of this kind, and to produce other causes of obscurity in the various figures which are employed in the page of inspiration. The truth is, that similar difficulties present themselves in all the classical productions of antiquity; and it would have been a strong argument against the genuineness of the Scriptures, had they been wanting in that style of speaking and thinking which was peculiar to the times in which they were written.

There is only one more remark on this subject to which the attention of the reader is particularly requested; and that is, the difficulty of conveying the true import of a figure in a translation. Let the reader take a French book, and, regardless of the idiom of the two languages, and of the different class of figures employed by them, let him translate literally, and how much would he lose of the beauty and, in many cases, of the sense of the original!

Now in a translation of the Bible there is less liberty allowed to the imagination, and even judgment of the translator, than in any other book. His business is not to embellish, and not even to give his own explanation of passages, but to put his reader in possession of the plain work of God. He must not sacrifice correctness to beauty; he must not aim at what he thinks the spirit of the passage, while he neglects the letter; because, in so doing, he may have missed its true meaning; he may have mistaken the nature of the allusion, and then he entails his own mistake upon posterity. But if he translates accurately, though the passage may be obscure to himself and to his readers, yet perhaps the information brought home by some traveller who has observed the customs of eastern nations, or