

shining region, dry referring to the countries parched with heat, *the right hand*.

“Under the whole heavens he directeth it, [the thunder;] and its light [the lightning] unto the wings of the earth.—Where wast thou at my laying the foundations of the earth? Narrate [it;] since thou possessest full understanding. Who applied measuring rods to it; since thou knowest? Upon what were its bases let in? Or who laid a stone for its corner?—He shaketh the earth out of its place, and the pillars thereof tremble.*—He will collect [the dispersed people] from the four wings of the earth.”†

The belief with regard to the figure of the earth, that it is an extended plane, was current among the Christian fathers: but they in general disapproved and avoided attention to physical subjects. By slow degrees, the general doctrine of a globular form made its way among men; but to a much later date, that of the immobility of the earth was strenuously maintained. Considerably within the last two centuries, that opinion was the general belief of all denominations of Christians. Most persons know that threats, persuasions, and a short imprisonment subdued Galileo, and brought him to make a solemn recantation of the Copernican doctrine; and he had to endure the penal sentence of imprisonment for life.* It

* Job xxxvii. 3; xxxviii. 4–6; ix. 6; closely translated.

† Is. xi. 12; and compare Ezek. vii. 2.

‡ Yet let not a wrong use be made of the example of Galileo. It has been very properly observed, that many a system-maker, “when a check is offered to his crude and inconclusive conceptions,—fancies himself another Galileo, and glories in his imagined martyrdom. Yet no case was ever more exaggerated than that of Galileo: and, even assuming it at its worst phase, it was rather the fault of the age than of the individuals engaged in it. How many really wicked attacks have been levelled at sacred things, from the days of Galileo to the present, and successfully refuted by divines laudably on the watch to preserve the purity of that faith which has been entrusted to them; and yet, how small praise has been