

We have some remarkable examples of this; and a very notable one is the celebrated question of the existence of *Antipodes*, or persons inhabiting the opposite side of the globe of the earth, and consequently having the soles of their feet directly opposed to ours. The doctrine of the globular form of the earth results, as we have seen, by a geometrical necessity, from a clear conception of the various points of knowledge which we obtain, bearing upon that subject. This doctrine was held distinctly by the Greeks; it was adopted by all astronomers, Arabian and European, who followed them; and was, in fact, an inevitable part of every system of astronomy which gave a consistent and intelligible representation of phenomena. But those who did not call before their minds any distinct representation at all, and who referred the whole question to other relations than those of space, might still deny this doctrine; and they did so. The existence of inhabitants on the opposite side of the terraqueous globe, was a fact of which experience alone could teach the truth or falsehood; but the religious relations, which extend alike to all mankind, were supposed to give the Christian philosopher grounds for deciding against the possibility of such a race of men. Lactantius,¹⁰ in the fourth century, argues this matter in a way very illustrative of that impatience of such speculations, and consequent confusion of thought, which we have mentioned. "Is it possible," he says, "that men can be so absurd as to believe that the crops and trees on the other side of the earth hang downwards, and that men there have their feet higher than their heads? If you ask of them how they defend these monstrosities—how things do not fall away from the earth on that side—they reply, that the nature of things is such that heavy bodies tend towards the centre, like the spokes of a wheel, while light bodies, as clouds, smoke, fire, tend from the centre towards the heavens on all sides. Now I am really at a loss what to say of those who, when they have once gone wrong, steadily persevere in their folly, and defend one absurd opinion by another." It is obvious that so long as the writer refused to admit into his thoughts the fundamental conception of their theory, he must needs be at a loss what to say to their arguments without being on that account in any degree convinced of their doctrines.

In the sixth century, indeed, in the reign of Justinian, we find a writer (Cosmas Indicopleustes¹¹) who does not rest in this obscurity of

¹⁰ *Inst.* l. iii. 22.

¹¹ Montfaucon, *Collectio Nova Patrum*, t. ii. p. 113. Cosmas Indicopleustes. *Christianorum Opiniones de Mundo, sive Topographia Christiana*.