

of Solomon, to hear his wisdom.”* This cannot be reasonably understood of any kind of resort but that of embassies and complimentary visits, from sovereigns and states within such a distance, as might have appeared immense in those times, but which was small compared with even the then inhabited parts of the earth. The queen of Sheba was, we may think undoubtedly, the principal of these visitants. Our Lord himself condescended to use the style of the Jews, in saying of her, that “the queen of the south—came from the uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon.”† Yet her country was on either the Eastern or the Western side of the Arabian Gulf, about twelve or fourteen hundred miles south of Jerusalem, a mere trifle compared with distances familiar to us in our days.

Passages are numerous, in which the phrase “all the earth” signifies only the country of Palestine.‡ In a few places it denotes the Chaldean empire :§ in one, that of Alexander.||

From these instances of the scriptural idiom in the application of phraseology similar to that in the narrative concerning the flood, I humbly think that those terms do not oblige us to understand a literal universality ; so that we are exonerated from some otherwise insuperable difficulties in Natural History and Geology.¶ If so much of the earth was overflowed as was occupied by the human

* 1 Kings x. 24.

† Matt. xii. 42.

‡ Deut. xxxiv. 1. Is. vii. 24 ; x. 14. Jer. i. 18 ; iv. 20 ; viii. 16 ; xii. 12 ; xl. 4. Zeph. i. 13 ; iii. 19. Zech. xiv. 10.

§ Jer. li. 7, 25, 49.

|| Dan. ii. 39.

¶ Dr. George Young, though his ideas concerning the flood appear to my humble judgment to be very extravagant, feels the necessity of maintaining that “*all, every one, the whole, and such like expressions, are very often used to denote a great many, or a large proportion.*” Script. Geol. p. 72.