

Aristotle, the disciple of Plato, and tutor of Alexander, (called the Great,) tried to discover the figure and magnitude of the Earth; he proved it of a spherical form by its circular shadow on the disc of the Moon, in eclipses. Calisthenes, who attended Alexander to Babylon, found observations for 2,000 years previous to his visit, and sent them to Alexander. Pythagoras taught the true system of the Universe, 500 years B. C., which after the lapse and errors of many centuries, was revised by Copernicus, and is now settled on the basis of proofs that can never be disturbed; the only opposition that Copernicus found was from Tycho Brahe, a celebrated Danish astronomer. His system nearly resembles that of Ptolemy the Egyptian. In defence of Tycho it may be stated, that though he adopted an erroneous theory, he was actuated by pious motives, and that he rendered great service to Astronomy by the correctness and number of his observations. John Kepler was the pupil of Tycho, and a man of a truly original and admirable genius, who by his great sagacity, superior talents and industry, has made discoveries of which no traces can be found in the annals of antiquity. Galileo was contemporary with Kepler, and from the results of their united labours, Newton and others were afterwards enabled to establish the most complete theories of the Planetary motions. Though Galileo clearly proved the annual and diurnal motion of the Earth, his doctrine was declared heretical by an assembly of Cardinals; and though not only venerable for his years, but excellent in reputation, he was condemned to perpetual incarceration, for believing and divulging truths which strictly accorded with the order of Nature, and which he believed to have been written with the finger of the Almighty. In the year 1642 he died, after suffering much misery, regretted by the learned and liberal of all Europe. The tribulation in which the great Kepler lived, or rather starved, forms a most painful contrast to the eminent services he performed to science. The pension allotted to him, trivial in itself, was always in arrear; and although the three Emperors whose reigns he adorned, directed their ministers to be more punctual in their payments, the non-payment was a