

LECTURE IV.

GENESIS vi. 17. *And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven : and every thing that is in the earth shall die.*

ANOTHER point remains with regard to which the discrepancy between the belief that is held by some, at least, of the most eminent geologists, and the testimony of the word of God, as it is commonly understood, appears most serious and alarming : this is the historical fact of the Deluge.

Fifteen hundred years had nearly elapsed since the creation of man, and his fall into sin and sorrow : and now human depravity had grown to an awful magnitude. So far as we can form a judgment from the concise but emphatic terms of the history, it appears that universal discord prevailed, mutual injustice and exasperation, malignity, oppression, and cruelty. Such a habit of mind from men to their fellow-men, could not but break the bonds of society, destroy confidence and hope, and poison the springs of human happiness. Nor was it less certain, that such a state of mind and character would be associated with an impious contempt of the Creator and Supreme Ruler. The condemnatory testimony therefore is, "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." The expression "before God" denotes a contempt and defiance of the Divine Majesty. It is also evident that "the earth" is put, by a frequent scriptural metonymy, for the inhabitants of the earth ; whence it is reasonable to infer that the universal terms in our text have their proper reference to mankind, the