

affected the surface of our globe, was a violent inundation, which overwhelmed great part of the northern hemisphere, and that this event was followed by the sudden disappearance of a large number of the species of terrestrial quadrupeds, which had inhabited these regions in the period immediately preceding it. I also ventured to apply the name *Diluvium* to the superficial beds of gravel, clay, and sand, which appear to have been produced by this great irruption of water.

“ The description of the facts which form the evidence presented in this volume, is kept distinct from the question of the identity of the event attested by them, with any deluge recorded in history. Discoveries which have been made, since the publication of this work, show that many of the animals therein described, existed during more than one geological period preceding the catastrophe by which they were extirpated. Hence it seems more probable, that the event in question, was the last of the many geological revolutions that have been produced by violent irruptions of water, rather than the comparatively tranquil inundation described in the inspired narrative.

“ It has been justly argued, against this attempt to identify these two great historical and natural phenomena, that as the rise and fall of the waters of the Mosaic deluge are described to have been gradual, and of short duration, they would have produced comparatively little change on the surface of the country they overflowed. The large preponderance of extinct species among the animals we find in caves, and in superficial deposits of diluvium, and the non-discovery of human bones along with them, afford other strong reason for referring these species to a period anterior to the creation of man. This important point, however, cannot be considered as completely settled, till more detailed investigations of the newest members of the Pliocene, and of the diluvial and alluvial formations shall have taken place.”*

My next citation is from an equally distinguished philosopher, the correspondent ornament of the University of Cambridge. Though the passage be long, its importance for our present object and its comprehensiveness in relation to others, not to mention the felicity of its expression, render any apology unnecessary.

“ At our former Anniversary I ventured to affirm, that our diluvial gravel was probably not the result of one, but of many succes-

* Bridgewater Treatise, Vol. I. p. 94.