

LECTURE V.

2 PETER II. 5. *God spared not the old world,—bringing the flood upon the world of the ungodly.*

IN this sentence of the holy apostle, it is manifestly declared, that the design of the deluge was to inflict a deserved punishment upon that generation of men, whose awful impiety had defied the power of the Most High, and scorned his mercy. This defining of the object warrants the conclusion, that whatever amount and extent of the diluvial waters would suffice to execute the sentence of excision, would also be adequate to fulfil the moral purpose of the Righteous Judge in ordaining this infliction. If the universality of the flood extended to the human race, “the world of the ungodly,” it is all that is requisite to satisfy the purpose of the visitation.

In the last lecture, we had set before us some account of the mistaken views which had been extensively entertained concerning the effects of the deluge, as supposed to have left their permanent impressions upon the surface of our globe: and we listened to the opinions of some of the most illustrious naturalists and geologists in favour of that hypothesis, under different modifications.

But the lapse of not more than ten years has brought a vast collection of observations to bear upon this interesting subject: and I conceive it may, with the strictest truth, be said that the annals of science, or of literature, or of theology, do not present a nobler instance of fairness and mental integrity, than was shown by the most perfect geologists that our country, or any other, can boast, in yielding up a favourite and long cherished opinion, to which they had committed themselves in the most