

race, both the physical and the moral ends of that awful visitation were answered.

Some writers have taken great pains in calculating the numbers of mankind at the epoch of the deluge, and they have brought out an amount for the human population immensely larger than that which has subsisted in any succeeding period, down to the present time. But apart from other errors in the statistical principles upon which they have proceeded, they appear to have overlooked two elements of calculation. The first is the apparent paucity of births which not obscurely shows itself in the genealogical table, (Gen. v. 3—28,) almost all the history left to us of the period from Adam to Noah. We may not irreverently conjecture that, in addition to other reasons, especially the preservation of a correct tradition concerning the most important religious truths, one motive in the plan of Providence for the longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs was, to compensate, by the length of individual lives, for the slowness of multiplication. The second consideration which those calculators have neglected, is the effect of moral depravity in diminishing the fecundity of the human species. There are facts in modern history which exemplify this principle. The rapid decrease of the population of the South Sea Islands, within little more than half a century, is a striking instance. Of such depopulation, there are two causes, the one, extreme licentiousness; the other, tyrannous, anarchical, and murderous cruelty. That the latter state of mankind existed in the antediluvian period, is expressly recorded (verse 11): and the former is not without intimation (verses 2 and 4), as indeed from the too well known tendencies of corruption in society, it may be very certainly inferred. The consequences would be, that few children would be born; many would die of diseases, or