

Scripture the world be so very ancient, it is a pity that any misconception or prejudice should blind us to the interest of the fact. It has been said that geology is only less extensive than astronomy in the range of its discoveries. The compliment is just, but inadequate. While astronomy tells us of the extent of creation, geology informs us also of its antiquity; and the impression induced by surveying unnumbered worlds is scarcely more solemn or grand than that which we derive from reviewing unnumbered ages. We are awed in beholding nebular matter resolved into shining points, and in recognising each of these myriads of myriads of bright particles as a gorgeous sun and probable centre of attraction and illumination to encompassing planets. But if we lift a pebble from the sea-shore, and begin to decipher its characters, written by the finger of God himself, we have no relief from this awfulness. We pass from the abysses of space only to be lost in the abysses of duration, and we are transported by the retrospect into depths of the past, where all reckoning fails us, and the lapse of centuries is reduced to undiscernible insignificance. Where were we when these grains of