

uses of common life, than to a complete survey of the universe. It is in no way unlikely that the whole duration of the solar system should be a period immeasurably great in our eyes, though demonstrably finite. Such enormous numbers have been brought under our notice by all the advances we have made in our knowledge of nature. The smallness of the objects detected by the microscope and of their parts;—the multitude of the stars which the best telescopes of modern times have discovered in the sky;—the duration assigned to the globe of the earth by geological investigation;—all these results require for their probable expression, numbers, which so far as we see, are on the same gigantic scale as the number of years in which the solar system will become entirely deranged. Such calculations depend in some degree on our relation to the vast aggregate of the works of our Creator; and no person who is accustomed to meditate on these subjects will be surprised that the numbers which such an occasion requires should oppress our comprehension. No one who has dwelt on the thought of a universal Creator and Preserver, will be surprised to find the conviction forced upon the mind by every new train of speculation, that viewed in reference to Him, our space is a point, our time a moment, our millions a handful, our permanence a quick decay.

Our knowledge of the vast periods, both geological and astronomical, of which we have spoken, is most slight. It is in fact little more than that such periods exist; that the surface of the earth has, at wide intervals of time, undergone great changes in the disposition of land and water, and in the forms of animal life; and that the motions of the heavenly bodies round the sun are affected, though with inconceivable slowness, by a force which must end by deranging them altogether. It would therefore be rash to endeavour to establish any analogy between the periods thus disclosed; but we may observe that they *agree* in this, that they reduce all things to the