

deductions must and will continue to be based on the facts which these systems and formations furnish. Geologists of the higher order differ among themselves, on certain minutiae of their science, to nearly as great an extent as the Episcopalian differs in matters ecclesiastical from the Presbyterian, or the Baptist or Independent from both. But their differences militate no more against the great conclusions in which they all agree, than the theological differences of the Protestant churches against the credibility of those leading truths of Christianity on which all true churches are united. And one of these great conclusions respects the incalculably vast antiquity of the earth on which we dwell. It seems scarce possible to over-estimate the force and weight of the evidence already expiscated on this point; and almost every new discovery adds to its cogency and amount. That sectional thickness of the earth's crust in which, mile beneath mile, the sedimentary strata are divided into many-colored and variously-composed systems and formations, and which abounds from top to bottom in organic remains, forms but the mere pages of the register. And it is rather the nature and order of the entries with which these pages are crowded, than the amazing greatness of their number, or the enormous extent of the space which they occupy (rather more than five miles), — though both have, of course, their weight, — that compel belief in the remoteness of the period to which the record extends. Let me attempt elucidating the point by a simple illustration.

In a well-kept English register, continuous from a distant antiquity to the present time, there are many marks demonstrative of the remoteness of the era to which it reaches, besides the bulk and number of the volumes which compose it, and the multitude of the entries which they contain. In an earlier volume we find the ancient Saxon character united to that