

Thracian tribe, who, in the year 520 B. C., dwelt in Prusias, which built their settlements under similar conditions. Now there does not seem any valid reason for supposing these Helvetians to be greatly older than the inhabitants of the mountain lake of Pœonia, except that from relics fished up from their sites they are identified with the stone period. But this identification, instead of proving that these lacustrine people are so much more ancient than the Prasiens of Herodotus, rather militates, in our judgment, against the extreme antiquity of the men of stone. Perhaps, after all, they were no older than the Prasiens.

We cannot, however, enter more at length into the scientific part of the subject; but its bearing upon the Bible records must be obvious upon the least reflection. Our Scriptures have most certainly a chronology; and it is evidently put forward prominently as an important part of the revelation. Now although in our day we cannot be sure that any scheme of computation is the right one, we may be positive that the race of Adam cannot have existed less than 6,000, nor much more than 8,000 years. An antiquity for man extending into the ninth millennium would not be decisively antagonistic to the inspired word. Surely the geologists will not be so unreasonable as to ask for more. But we trust that the remarks we have made sufficiently show how far we are from thinking that a case has been made out for extending the popular reckoning. Nothing in Sir Charles Lyell's book has shaken our conviction that 6,000 years afford "ample space and verge enough" for all the real facts which it accords. We see, or think we see, very large and gratuitous assumptions, and theories fabricated out of the most slender materials; places in the inductive chain of reasoning where slight errors of calculation lead to preposterous results; thousands of years postulated for what might have been deposited in a few centuries; too little allowance made for extraordinary events and changes which historic times have shown us do occur without any cause we can trace; and in general, as in the case of the Nile mud, a computation for all the past upon the basis of the present rate of increase. The whole undoubtedly concludes the antiquity of man; but if by the antiquity of man be meant a continuous and unbroken existence ascending beyond the received chronology, we must beg leave to withhold our faith, on the ground that it is "not proven." We know, indeed, but little of the pre-historic ages, but graver objections lie against their being exorbitantly long than any that can be drawn from the sacred volume.

In truth, the Scriptures give us a compact, consistent, and altogether credible account of Adam and his descendants, and of the dealings of God with them. They tell us, moreover, that Eve was the mother of all living. We are therefore, it seems, shut up to the conclusion that when our first parents were created they might have said, "Nos duo turba sumus;" there were no other human beings besides themselves. But the Scriptures nowhere tell us, or require us to believe, even by inference, that God never created any other race of men except our own. However strong the impression may be, it is not grounded upon any part of revelation. This fact should be duly weighed, that we may not, as religious persons, refuse men of science a candid hearing, in our zeal for the credit of the sacred oracles. Their credit, we say emphatically, is in no degree involved; and if the geologist should find proofs of man ten or twenty thousand years ago, the only just inference would be, that before Adam was formed the world had been peopled by a prior, and as the remains appear to disclose, an inferior race.

Our object in writing this paper will be obtained if we have succeeded in showing that this question, which in itself is deeply interesting, is not one that affects our religious faith, however it may be further investigation be determined. We do not see in Sir Charles Lyell's work even a promise of proof that our present chronology must be disturbed or modified. But let not religious men commit over again the old error arising from the mischievous propensity which seems inherent in some minds, to make the Scriptures a perfect and infallible magazine of science. They would be so, undoubtedly, if to teach science were any part of their design. But it is far otherwise. The Bible has hitherto persistently refused to uphold any dogma that science has discarded, and those who have held by it, though from the purest motives, have only exposed themselves to shame. On the present occasion it will be wise to let the investigations go on without theological resistance. Truth is sure to conquer, and men of science are not infidels. Conclusions will not be embraced if they are not certainly true; but if they are true they ought to be accepted, and we have said enough to prove that the Scriptures do not forbid them.

## Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JUNE 10, 1863.

### Missionary Work.

THE sufferings and experience of missionaries to the heathen are the common property of the Christian church. A recital of the former excites the warmest sympathy and interest in every Christian heart. The wisdom gained by every Christian body in prosecuting the great commission of our Lord, is required by every other in furthering their part of the vast field. The wisdom which is gained by experience, whether it be our own or that of others, is the most valuable. Especially is it so when by it we are enabled to more profitably employ efforts in the evangelization of the world.

Our readers have had accounts of the death of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, in the island of Erromanga, some time since, and will be interested in any further particulars concerning the sad termination of that devoted man and woman.

We have seen, for some time, by our New South Wales exchanges, that the Rev. A. W. Murray, formerly a Presbyterian missionary in the South Sea Islands, but now Baptist minister at Sydney, New South Wales, was about to publish a work entitled "Missions in Western Polynesia." We find by the *Home and Foreign Record* that in it he has given some further particulars respecting Mr. and Mrs. Gordon's death, as follows:

"From Joe I obtained a full account of the massacre of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon. From Mana I received substantially the same account before leaving Aneiteum. It is as follows:—Two days before, that is on Saturday, the 18th of May, Joe, who belongs to the family of Waris, the principal chief of the Bay, was informed by his relations that the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were in danger, and requested to warn Mr. Gordon, and try and induce him to remove with his family from the place at which he was then living, and again reside on the Mission ground; as living where he now was, he was entirely at the mercy of any tribe that might be disaffected towards him. Joe consulted with Mana, and they went in company to Mr. Gordon the same evening, told him what they had heard and advised immediate removal. Mr. Gordon treated the matter lightly, as if he did not believe the report, which probably he did not; told them not to fear; that if it were the will of God that they should be killed, it would be well; and that it was good for them to remain where they were. On the afternoon of the following day, which was Sabbath, Joe and Mana went to Mrs. Gordon and talked to her of their danger; they told her that they had heard from a party who was friendly to them, that the murder of herself and Mr. Gordon had been talked of publicly at a feast, which had been held some time before, at a distant village, as a thing fully resolved upon. Mrs. Gordon went as Joe and Mana supposed, to consult with Mr. Gordon on the subject, and there the matter ended for that day. On the following morning (Monday the 10th day of the massacre, at the close of the morning school Mr. Gordon was accustomed to keep school regularly with the domestics,) Mr. Gordon told eight of the lads of his family, among whom were Joe and Mana, to go down to the Bay, and cut thatch for a dwelling house, which he was engaged in building, about half way between the Bay and the house, in which they were then living. Two lads remained, one of whom Mr. Gordon directed to stay with Mrs. Gordon to cook, and the other to go with him to assist in his work at the new house. The lads objected to Mr. Gordon's proposal, and suggested that half their number should go with him to work at the house, and that the other half should stay with Mrs. Gordon in case an attack should be made upon them. To this Mr. Gordon would not consent, so the two lads did as directed; eight went to cut thatch, one accompanied Mr. Gordon and one remained at home. There was a girl also with Mrs. Gordon. Mr. Gordon told the lads that went for thatch not to return early, but to continue at their work and get a large quantity of thatch, and come home when the sun is low. But for this they would in all probability have returned before the attack, as they had great apprehensions that something would take place that day, though they had no certain information that such would be the case. While engaged in their work they expressed their fears to each other, and some proposed that they should go home early, notwithstanding Mr. Gordon's injunction to the contrary. This was overruled by others, so they continued at their work as directed.

"About noon a party of natives consisting of nine adults and a boy, came to the house from a place named Bunkhill. Among the party was a chief of the name of Loua, but the principal actor in what followed was a man named Nahobili. The party having gone into the house, Nahobili asked Mrs. Gordon where Mr. Gordon and the young men of the family were. She told him that the lads had gone to cut thatch, and that Mr. Gordon was at work at the new house. Mrs. G. asked them if they were hungry, and offered them a piece of cold meat which she had in the safe. This they refused. She then asked if she should give them cocoa-nuts and fish-hooks. Mrs. Gordon asked them what their errand was. They answered that they wished cloth to cover themselves, as they intended to

come to worship on the following Sabbath. She told them that they had better go to Mr. Gordon for that, upon which they arose to leave. When they had gone a little distance, Mrs. Gordon called after them, enquiring whether they had come to kill herself and Mr. Gordon; the adults made no reply, but the boy called out, as if in jest, that such was the case. The lad who had remained at home with Mrs. Gordon heard the whole conversation between her and the Bunkhill party. He thinks she did not hear the boy's reply to her question about killing herself and Mr. Gordon, as the party were on the move down the hill. He thought the boy was jesting.

The party went as if they intended to go direct to the place where Mr. Gordon was at work, but they all concealed themselves in the bush by the way, except Nahobili, who went alone to Mr. Gordon. He was closely followed by the lad from Mr. Gordon's family, who had been left at home; Mrs. Gordon had sent him with Mr. Gordon's dinner. Thus he and the lad who had been assisting Mr. Gordon were present, and were witnesses of all that took place between Mr. Gordon and Nahobili, till they left together to go to the house. Nahobili was armed with a hatchet.—One of Mr. Gordon's lads remarked to him, that Nahobili was a bad man, and that he had killed a great many people. Upon this Mr. Gordon took the hatchet out of his hand, asking him why he killed people, also remarking that it was very bad to kill people, and that he should not do so. He hung down his head and made no reply.—Mr. Gordon returned the hatchet. Nahobili then said that he wished cloth for himself and his companions, as they intended to come to worship on the following Sabbath. Mr. Gordon took a chip of wood, wrote on it a request to Mrs. Gordon to give them a yard of cloth each, and offered it to Nahobili, telling him to take it to Mrs. Gordon and she would give him what he wanted. Nahobili refused the chip, and begged Mr. Gordon to go with him to the house, stating that they had brought there a sick man, whom they wished him to see and give medicine to.—Mr. Gordon had sat down at a little distance, and undone the parcel containing his dinner and was about to commence eating; but when he heard about the sick man, he consented to go with Nahobili. So he tied up his dinner again and gave it to Nahobili to carry, telling him to go on before. At this juncture Mr. Gordon unhappily sent away his own two lads to cut some wood of which he was in want, telling them to fetch the wood and wait till he should return after dinner. Nahobili refused to go foremost, requesting Mr. Gordon to do that, which he did. They had not proceeded far towards the house, when a man who had been concealed in the bush, sprang out and aimed a blow at Mr. Gordon with a hatchet. He raised his arm to ward off the blow, and received a slight wound. He then ran, pursued by Nahobili. His progress was soon obstructed by a steep place in the path, covered with loose stones. While in the act of ascending this height, his savage pursuers overtook him. Nahobili struck him a severe blow on the back, near the loins, inflicting a deadly wound. He fell, and a second blow on the neck from the man who first struck him put an end to his life. His death must have been instantaneous, as the spine was severed, as were also the principal arteries of the neck.

"One of the men, named Ubel, now rushed on towards the house to complete the dreadful tragedy. Mrs. Gordon had heard a noise, and she and the girl who was with her had gone outside in consequence. She asked the girl what the noise was; whether it was the lads who had gone to cut thatch returning or what? Ubel passed round behind the servants and the cooking house, which were in the rear of the dwelling house, and came stealthily behind Mrs. Gordon, and struck her a severe blow in the side with a hatchet. He struck her a second blow on the neck, and all was over. Her liberated spirit was with that of her martyred husband before the throne. Happily she knew not what had befallen him till she reached that world where they grieve no more.

"The servant girl witnessed the murder of Mrs. Gordon. Terror stricken she fled down to the Bay where the lads were at work, with the fearful intelligence. The lads felt as if paralysed. Good faithful Joe and Mana made an effort and led the way.—They made all possible haste, lest the bodies should be carried off to the oven. They found Mr. Gordon's body at the rise in the path where he fell. Four of them returned with it to the Bay. The other four went and brought the body of Mrs. Gordon."

We had marked another passage concerning an important feature of our own missionary work—the employment of Native Agency in connection with missionary labor—but find the above occupies so much space that we must defer the remainder till another opportunity.

### Ministers' Wives.

EVERYBODY has some opinion as to what sort of person a minister's wife ought to be. Many church members, and others, both male and female, will judge, and sometimes give expression to that judgment as to whether the minister has just the sort of woman suited to manage his household affairs. Perhaps there are fewer persons who take into consideration what the peculiar difficulties of the minister's wife are, in the way of being just that perfect angel they would prescribe for their pastor's help-meet.

However imperfect a person may be himself, he looks for perfection in the minister, and, if possible, a little more in the minister's

wife. No allowances are made, and instead of applying the golden rule, they often consider themselves bound to publish the worst things said of her. Instead of covering what she does with the mantle of charity, they too often make no scruples in applying their censures for what, in themselves or others, they would deem perfectly harmless. They do not bear in mind that the position she occupies is peculiar, and that her trials are often such as fall to the lot of but few other women. We believe that, with very few exceptions, they are, as a class, amongst the most perfect of human beings.

The Rev. Dr. Liefchild was, a few years ago, one of the most popular and useful Congregationalist ministers in London. A memoir of him by his son, J. R. Liefchild, A.M., is just published.

The following brief summary of his early life is from the May number of the *Baptist Magazine*:

"The parents of Dr. Liefchild were Christian people—the father a Wesleyan, the mother with a leaning to Calvinistic views. He was born at Barnet, February 15, 1780. His early education was slender. 'I learnt no language but my own, and that not very perfectly. Neither in arithmetic nor in any other school attainment—not, as I felt, for want of capacity, but want of application, and of a sense of the value of such pursuits.' The years of his early life he has described as fraught with religious convictions, attended by not a few escapes from threatening disaster, and shielded by parental wisdom from exposure to vicious influences. At St. Albans, whither he went to enter upon business as a cooper, the young man was brought to decision for Christ, and united himself with the Wesleyans in that town. A subsequent removal to the great metropolis was the step in Providence which introduced him to the ministry. After preaching his trial sermon before the City Road Chapel authorities, and being accepted as a local preacher in their ranks, his views very decidedly inclined to the Calvinistic, rather than the Arminian theory of conversion, and he accordingly obtained admission to Hoxton Academy. An unusual amount of preaching in his student-days augured the complexion of his future career. Rowland Hill wished John Liefchild to be one of his curates, but balancing Mr. Hill's eccentricities, and an invitation already received from Kensington, the latter was chosen as the sphere of his first pastorate. During sixteen years of earnest preaching and consistent life, Mr. Liefchild was privileged to witness the growing prosperity of his church and congregation in the old Court suburb. In the year 1824, an invitation to Bridge Street Chapel, Bristol, was unexpectedly received, and ultimately accepted. He notes three reasons for inclining to accept it. 'First, the relaxing air of Kensington; then the fear he had of not being able to find new texts and new matter for the pulpit; and next—I should have said first and foremost—the 'call' appeared to be entirely providential.'

"On the 16th May, 1831, in spite of numerous remonstrances and efforts to retain him at Bristol, Mr. Liefchild was publicly recognised as pastor of Craven Chapel, Golden Square. This was the sphere of his most extensive usefulness. The plain, square, capacious building was soon thronged with devout and delighted audiences. The ardour of youth was now blended, not lost, in the ripeness of maturity. Always faithful to the doctrines of the Cross, pleasingly various in the selection of topics of discourse, pathetic in manner, direct and forcible in appeal, commanding in appearance, eloquent in speech, free from all offensive mannerism, Dr. Liefchild exhibited most of the essentials of a good and a great preacher."

We shall never forget a visit to Craven Chapel on the occasion of a public examination of the excellent Sabbath School belonging to that church. Mr. Liefchild refused to listen to any of the prepared exercises, and in a most interesting conversational style questioned the scholars on the facts and doctrines of Holy Scripture. When the children failed to answer his question, he turned to the congregation and familiarly asked them to reply, which they did simultaneously.

But our design in this brief article is not with Dr. Liefchild so much as to call attention to his wife, and some of the troubles she had to endure. We doubt not many Nova Scotia minister's wives have had similar experience, and often need the kind consideration of the brethren and sisters. The author of the volume referred to says:—

"While my parents agreed admirably over the Bible, they sometimes differed materially over the account-book. My father's heart was large, but at this time his means were small; and what my mother complained of was, that he did not hold the latter fact in constant remembrance. She knew that he was a good preacher, and experienced that he was a bad financier. He abhorred all figures but those of speech, and the latter were too unsubstantial for the support of a household. He thought of his study and not of his kitchen—except at meal-times. He would prefer any book to his bank-book (a figure of speech, for in truth he never required one); and though not to be accused of extravagance, he certainly was chargeable with some thoughtlessness. This change he would not acknowledge, or he would convert it into a commendable freedom from parsimony. Not only did he retain the same habits to the end of his days, but, curiously enough, he retained his