

It may be added here, that it was subsequently agreed to invite Bro. J. R. Stubbart, a Licentiate, and student in Acadia College, to labor in this field for the present as much as might be in his power. His labors are quite acceptable, and we work together in perfect harmony. After a violent snow-storm at the close of the year, when a horse could not travel across the Stronach Mountain, Bro. S. walked quite a distance, and thereby succeeded in fulfilling his appointments at Greenwood Square and Tremont.

The proposed Donation Visit came off on the 12th day of October last. The weather was favourable. Many kind friends assembled at the residence of the Pastor. After a satisfactory repast, kindly furnished by the good sisters, Rev. Obed Parker, by request, occupied the Chair, and Rev. Abraham Stronach presented the purse. He expatiated with evident pleasure on the uninterrupted unity, both in sentiment and in feeling, that had invariably existed between himself and the beloved brethren to whom he esteemed it a privilege to present the free will offerings of numerous constant and ardent friends. He affectionately referred to the benefit which had, by the blessing of Heaven, resulted to the Church from the prudent and faithful labors of the Pastor. After a brief reply, expressive of gratitude, and ardent attachment to the people, as also pleasure in the consideration of the harmony which had always been cherished between his ministering Brethren and himself, the Chairman—the hospitality of whose house had been long enjoyed—followed, in terms of fervent affection and high esteem, and, referring to the pleasure enjoyed in the receiving of former visits, extended a kind invitation for their continuance. In the absence of Rev. Henry Saunders, whom indisposition had compelled to leave the meeting, Wm. A. Tupper, Esq., of Scot's Bay, delivered the closing address. The exercises were terminated by an appropriate and earnest prayer. Kindly greetings were exchanged by the numerous attendants, who evidently enjoyed the season with delight.

The sums contributed, including previous and subsequent donations, handed in or pledged, amount to about \$200, of which more than half is in cash, and the rest in valuable articles. Some individuals gave as much as had been their annual subscriptions; and others have kindly expressed an intention to contribute as largely as ever.

With sincere desires for the temporal and spiritual welfare of those whose continued regard and good-will have been thus obligingly evinced, I remain, their grateful friend, and willing servant.

CHARLES TUPPER.
Aylesford, Jan. 10th, 1871.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE BIBLE AN AUTHORITY.

Dear Sir,—

Permit, it may be, a trespass on your time for a short period. The failure to discern the limits of revelation, allows its adversaries to lessen its authority in the minds of many. That there must of necessity be a limit, none can deny that admit the Infinite character of the Deity, and the finite nature of man. That this distinction is radical and not accidental is equally clear. If then, a limit exists, who but God has fixed that limit? The things not revealed are his chosen secrets, the things revealed belong to his creatures. See Deut. xxix. 29.

Our only safe guide in ascertaining the revealed is the Word of God. From that we are to learn what God has made manifest. To this extent the word is responsible, beyond this, that responsibility ceases.

One of the prominent mistakes of the present day in connection with this subject, is taking it for granted, the chronology of the Bible fixes the time of the creation of the world, and of man. The generally received opinion thereof is, that about six thousand years ago both were created. That this opinion should have been so general, is not to be wondered at, for the reason that some three hundred years ago, a chronology was arranged and attached to the text of the Bible, although but the compilation of a lad in his teens, it nevertheless was received as a diary of the work of creation. Now, it is not our intention to write one word for or against the correctness of this chronology, but merely to place it on a level with human not divine authority.

Men of talent have especially for the past half century, combatted this chronology. They have dug deep into the bowels of the earth, disinterred fossils and manufactur-

ed skeletons, that prove to many a reflecting mind, that both the earth and man here had an existence long before the period fixed by young Usher's Chronology.

More recently the "Philosophy of History" is said to have a bearing against the reputed age of the race of man. China and Egypt, in their records, are looked upon as presenting a claim to greater antiquity than has been claimed for the entire race.

We do not regret these researches except for the fact that the results are pressed into argument against the Mosaic record of creation; this itself would be comparatively harmless if the limit of revelation were justly regarded. The time of the creation is one of the things unrevealed. Chronologists have done but little to settle the question. Their researches have done little more than set the mind adrift on the broad sea of uncertainty. Speculations are becoming legion, one uprooting the other. If in their efforts they were successful in finding the true data, it would only prove other data wrong.

It would not at all affect the fact of creation, that rests upon the authority of revelation: "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." * * * so God created man in his own image." Surely Mr. Editor we do not need the "Philosophy of History" to teach us this fact, nor can the "Philosophy of History" disprove this fact, at most it can but unsettle the generally received chronology.

There is doubtless too much reason to fear, that the arguments used against the received chronology of the Bible, are employed to disprove the facts of the Bible. This mode of procedure is calculated to lead the unwary astray. Allow the writer to illustrate by throwing the arguments thus used into syllogistical form. The generally received opinion is that man was created about six thousand years ago.—Geology and the Philosophy of History it is said demonstrate that man has inhabited this earth for tens of thousands of years, therefore man was never created. Any school boy may see the illogical character of this mode of reasoning. Such, however are some of the arguments against the facts of the Bible.

It is said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The beginning of what? Not certainly the beginning of His own existence—this would be too gross an absurdity for the darkest shade of Pantheism. Nor yet, necessarily in the beginning of his works. For aught we know he may have created world after world before this we inhabit—but we presume the expression "in the beginning" refers to the time of the commencement of the creation of the heavens and the earth. Now the fact stated is this, God created, "the heavens and the earth" and he created them "in the beginning," but what the date of that beginning is, there is no record by his authority to determine, nor is it necessary to know the time in order to believe the fact. The man that would deny the fact that the sun sheds its radiance over the earth, because he does not know the time when it began to shine, or because some one has given the time under a doubtful or wrong date, would be accounted a fool or a madman. How much less is he a fool or madman that denies the creation of the world because he does not know the time of its creation?

The arrangement of the chronology of the Bible is only a human production, and only has human authority for its authenticity, the facts recorded in the Bible are divine productions, and are divinely guaranteed. These suffer not by any legitimate test.—It comes from the crucible undiminished and untarnished. No less brilliant than ever is that truth, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

REVERA.

For the Christian Messenger.

BAPTISM IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE:

BY THE REV. A. P. STANLEY, D. D., DEAN OF WESTMINSTER.

"What, then, was baptism in the Apostolic Age? The fewest words will most reverently tell what indeed it requires but few words to describe. We must place before our minds the greatest religious change which the world has seen or can see. Imagine thousands of men and women seized with one common impulse, abandoning, by the irresistible conviction of a day, an hour, a moment, their former habits, friends, associates, to be enrolled in a new society under the banner of a new faith. Conceive what that new society was—a society of 'brothers' bound by ties closer than any earthly brotherhood—filled with life and energy such as fall to the lot of none but the most ardent enthusiasts, yet tempered by a moderation, a wisdom, and a holiness such

as mere enthusiasts have never possessed. Picture that society, swayed by the presence of men whose very names seem too sacred for the converse of ordinary mortals, and by the recollections of One, whom, not seeing they loved with love unspeakable! Into this society they passed by an act as natural as it was expressive. The plunge into the bath of purification, long known among the Jewish nation as the symbol of a change of life, was still retained as the pledge of entrance into this new and universal communion—retained under the express sanction of Him, into whose most holy name they were by that solemn rite 'baptized.' The water in those Eastern regions, so doubly significant of all that was pure and refreshing, closed over the heads of the converts, and they rose into the light of heaven, new and altered beings. Can we wonder if on such an act were lavished all the figures which language could furnish to express the mighty change? 'Regeneration,' 'Illumination,' 'Resurrection,' 'a new creation,' 'Forgiveness of Sins,' 'Salvation'? Well might the Apostle say, 'Baptism doth even now save us,' even had he left his statement in its unstrictened strength to express what in that age no one could misunderstand. But no less well was he led to add, as if with a divine prescience of coming evils 'Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.'

Such was the Apostolic baptism. It is startling to witness the abrupt descent from the first century to the third, the fourth, the fifth. The rite was, indeed, still in great measure what in its origin it had been almost universally, the great change from darkness to light, from evil to good: the 'second birth' of men from the corrupt society of the dying Roman Empire into the purifying and elevating influence of the living Christian Church. Nay, in some respects the deep moral responsibility of the act must have been impressed upon the converts by the severe, sometimes the life-long preparation for the final pledge, even more than by the sudden and almost instantaneous transition, which characterized the baptism of the Apostolic Age. But gradually the consciousness, of this 'answer of the good conscience towards God' was lost in the stress laid with greater and greater emphasis on the 'putting away the filth of the flesh.' Let us conceive ourselves present at those extraordinary scenes, to which no existing ritual of any European Church offers the slightest likeness; when, between Easter and Pentecost, the crowds of catechumens poured into the baptisteries of the great basilicas; let us figure to our minds the strange ceremonies handed down to us in the minutest details by contemporary documents: the exorcism and exsufflation—the torch-light of the midnight hour,—the naked figures, plunging into the deep waters of the bath,—the bishop, always present to receive them as they emerged,—the white robes,—the anointing with oil,—the laying on of hands. Among the accompaniments of those scenes there were practices and signs which we have long ago discarded as inexpedient or indifferent, but which were then regarded as essential. Immersion, which is now retained only in the half-civilized churches of the East, or by the insignificant sect of Baptists, was then, even on death-beds, deemed all but absolutely necessary. The whole modern Church of Western Europe, according to the belief of those times, would be condemned as 'unbaptized,' because it has received, without the excuse of a sick-bed, nothing but the clinical or sick-bed aspersion." *Essays on Church and State*, pp. 34-36.

The Dean states in a Note, that "the cathedral of Milan is the solitary exception in the churches of the West where the old practice still continues."

The Rev. Dr. Malcom, now resident in Philadelphia, had the opportunity of verifying the Dean's statement. Thus he writes, in the *National Baptist* ;—

"Some years ago, while travelling in Europe, I visited Milan, the most famous city in Northern Italy; and of course went to see the *Duomo*, or cathedral, a building inferior only to St. Peter's at Rome. It is 500 feet long, 300 wide, and 355 high to the top of the dome. It has about 100 handsome spires, and is built entirely of marble. On the outside of the walls are 4,000 niches, each containing a statue. The interior is exceedingly grand; 50 huge pillars support the arches of the nave, and the windows, of stained glass, are superb pictures. While surveying the splendid interior, my attention was drawn to the entrance of a group of well dressed persons, bringing six or seven infants. I found there was to be a baptism; and drawing toward one of the recesses, to which the group were approaching, I observed a beautiful marble baptistery, standing on castors, looking like a high-post bedstead with crimson curtains. It was large enough for the baptism of an adult, and the water was about three feet six inches deep. Each infant was held by its nurse, while the priest, a noble-looking young man in canonicals stood beside the font, book in hand, reading the ceremony. This done he extended his hands to receive a baby, when an attendant loosened the child's robes at the neck, and stripped them entirely off at a stroke. There it was,—wrapped from neck to feet in white linen, stiff as a mummy. It was laid on the hands of the priest, who gracefully laid it in the water pronouncing the usual formula. Not one of the little things cried, and of course they could not struggle. As the company retired, I ventured to approach the priest, and inquired if he spoke French,—for I knew nothing of Italian. On his replying in the affirmative, I inquired how it was that he baptized thus. He replied

that it had ever been so, and that for centuries that part of Italy had refused adhesion to the Pope of Rome, on account of infant sprinkling. At length it was conceded that they might retain the mode which they had practiced from the first.

"I was of course highly gratified to witness this, to me, new evidence that immersion was the early and only mode of Christian baptism."

Two or three observations may be made.

1. Baptism in the Apostolic Age, according to Dean Stanley, implied a "religious change," and was administered by immersion. It was the adult baptism of our denomination.

2. In after-ages, infants were admitted to the ordinance, and still later, immersion was changed for sprinkling. With regard to infants, Dean Stanley refers (p. 42) to "the touching scene in the Gospel narrative, on which, and on which alone, the Liturgy rests the practice of infant baptism" (when the Saviour said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," &c., but neither baptized them nor commanded them to be baptized.) He deems the substitution of sprinkling for immersion to be right, because immersion is "inexpedient or indifferent."

3. The foundation-stone of the great apostasy was laid when professing Christians assumed the right to tamper with God's word, and to alter or add to his commands. Positive precepts are to be literally obeyed: we are not authorized to say of any mode of obedience, divinely enjoined, that it is "inexpedient or indifferent."

4. The Dean's sneer at the "insignificant sect of Baptists" is unworthy of him. He is generally so courteous and liberal that one might be disposed to regard this objectionable phrase as having slipped unwarily from his pen, were it not that the passage we have quoted is taken from an article written twenty years ago, and now reprinted.—Other articles in the same volume have been revised and amended. But the Dean allows himself to repeat in 1870 what he wrote respecting the Baptists in 1850. We are sorry for him. Has he forgotten that John Bunyan, and Dr. Gill, and William Carey, and Robert Hall, and John Foster, belonged to that "insignificant sect"?

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

MISS MATILDA HILSON.

Daughter of John and Margery Hilson, of Amherst, was called home on the 2nd day of December, 1870, at the age of 28 years.

Miss H. was a very amiable young woman; and highly esteemed by her relatives and acquaintances. A visit to the writer—her step grandfather—and while, in the Autumn of 1869, greatly endeared her to many persons in Aylesford, a short time before the commencement of her last sickness. During an illness of more than a year, at times extremely distressing, she was enabled to maintain remarkable patience, and submission to the divine will.—Entertaining a steadfast hope in her beloved Redeemer, she delighted to meditate and converse on the subject of death. "Desiring to depart and be with Christ." She remarked at one time to the Doctor in attendance, "If you should tell me, that I could not live till morning, it would give me greater pleasure than any thing you could say." She felt, indeed, that she had been a great sinner, and particularly regretted that she had spent so much precious time in reading romances and light trash, especially on the Lord's day; but she knew that Christ is a great Saviour, and was persuaded that He had pardoned all her sins. She said, if she lived, her life, so far as temporal things are concerned, should be devoted to the care of her parents. She manifested great anxiety about her brothers and youngest sister; but expressed a hope that God would answer her prayers on their behalf; and that they would all at last be one unbroken family in heaven. Several times before the last struggle sister H. was thought to be dying. When the Doctor told her, that she was just going, her face became radiant with joy, and she called all the family, and, taking each by the hand, with affectionate and impressive admonition, bade them farewell. She continued, however, some days after this in great distress. When a pious aunt suggested to her, that her continuance in this state might be for the spiritual good of her relatives, she replied, "Oh then, I am willing to suffer; but I want to see Jesus." On her asking her parents, if they were willing to let her go? and their answering, that as she suffered so much they were now willing, she said, "Dear Jesus! they are

willing to give me up: now do take your poor child home." At her request prayer was offered that she might have an easy passage out of the world. This prayer appeared to be graciously answered; for she passed easily away; and her joyous spirit undoubtedly obtained its fervent desire of admittance into the presence of her beloved Redeemer.—Communicated by Rev. C. Tupper.

WILLIAM GAULD,

Departed this life in the triumph of faith, Dec. 17th, after a lingering illness which he bore with christian patience, aged 41 years. Brother G. for many years took a deep interest in the cause of religion, and was ever ready to assist in the missionary enterprise. His diffidence prevented him from uniting with the church until about ten months ago, when he with his wife was enabled to profess his faith in the living Redeemer. He was baptized by Rev. J. Murray, and united with the Baptist Church at Pugwash, Bro. G. was also a zealous advocate of temperance in connection with the Sons of Temperance. The deceased leaves a sorrowing widow, six children, a large circle of relatives and friends to mourn their sad bereavement.—His funeral on the 19th was attended by a large and solemn congregation. The occasion was improved by the writer from Rev. xiv. 13: "Write, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord! yea, saith the spirit, they rest from their labours." May the God of providence sustain the bereaved family.

E. C. C.

MRS. LYDIA TUPPER,

The beloved wife of Mr. Prentice Tupper, and second daughter of Thomas Knowles, died at Milton, Queens County, December 8th, 1870, in the 35th year of her age.—Sister Tupper professed faith in Christ in the days of her youth, and united with the Baptist Church in Milton. She continued a worthy and much respected member until called to unite with the church triumphant. She was confined to her house many months by that wasting disease, consumption, but was greatly comforted by the presence of her Saviour, and often "desired to depart and be with Christ which is far better." She has left a husband, two children and many friends to mourn their loss. May they all be prepared to meet her in heaven.—Com.
Milton, Dec. 27th, 1870.

Missionary Intelligence.

BURMAH.

LETTER FROM MRS. HARRIS.

SHWATYEN, Aug. 3, 1870.

Fruits from former Labors.—A few days since a heathen came in who had never been here before. He was the bearer of a letter to Mr. Harris, from a young man who had spent a little time in the school here some two years ago, which was a request for books. On inquiry, we learned that the writer was a strict observer of the Sabbath, believing and preaching what he learned here. He had also taught the man before us to read, and he too, besides one other in the village, had, he said, decided to worship God. Mr. Harris provided him with small books, and he bought a Testament, (otherwise Mr. H. would probably have given him one, but we think when a sacrifice is made for obtaining a good thing it is more highly appreciated; so he went home bearing a light, the rays of which, we hope, will pierce through the darkness of some blind eyes, and reveal to them the existence of their Maker.

A company of men came in, not long since, from another place, some of whom seem convinced of their own errors, and ready to acknowledge the eternal God as their maker and ruler. There should be an earnest man devoted to the work of saving souls among them also.

Death of three pastors.—We feel deeply the loss of the three pastors whom God has so mysteriously removed from us, during the last year. Two of them were ordained men.

History of a native preacher.—The last one was teacher Dumoo. It is probably well known how he, distracted with grief at the sudden death of his wife and several children, left the only remaining one in the hands of wicked Burmans and fled away, neither knowing or caring whither he went. But an unseen Hand led him, and when some weeks had passed by, he was seen by Karen Christians, some two or three hundred miles away from his home, who told him of a balm for every wounded spirit. He gladly accepted of Jesus as the healer of sorrows, learned to read His holy