

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.  
Luthardt's Apologetical Discourses.

Translated from the German for the Christian Messenger, by Prof. D. M. Welton.

FOURTH DISCOURSE.  
The Creation of the World.

VI.  
The more we look about us in the sphere of Geological inquiry, the more do we stumble upon hypotheses, unsolved problems and a diversity of opinions. It is probably an exaggeration when Lichtenberg judges that nine tenths of the 50 hypotheses of the earth's formation which he enumerates pertain more to the history of the human mind than to the history of the earth; but the rash haste with which, after a few years, one attempt at explanation follows another, and the great uncertainty and diversity of view which still prevail in fundamental questions, must be admitted by all. I will adduce only a few of the most important of these hypotheses. While Cuvier believed that the formation of the crust of the earth—the shiftings of its strata, the risings and sinkings, the elevations and depressions of its surface—could only be explained by the theory of a violent revolution of the earth, which others think must have been produced by present forces, in the operation of which a real Creative hand, working according to design, must be recognized—a theory which has been widely propagated and especially improved and established by Agassiz—; on the other hand the school of Lyell which most persons now regard as authoritative, teaches that from the beginning the same laws have been working and in the same manner as at present, and that consequently immense periods of time must have elapsed in which the silent and slowly working forces could have produced those many and great changes whose memorials we find in the bosom of the earth; against which others again are unable to discover anything noteworthy in this incalculable duration and contingency, but sudden and violent catastrophes and highly endowed formations instead, just as in the formation of individual men the first months before and after birth effect a progress which at a later time whole years and even decades fail to accomplish. While some, as Darwin and his followers, maintain that the entire manifoldness of organism is developed from one or several small primitive forms by gradual changes succeeding each other through vast periods of time till they culminate in man, others see herein only an "arbitrary" and "unscientific" hypothesis, which is wholly unwarranted by facts, and they teach on the contrary that in the sphere of organic life new formations have been introduced. While it was declared a few years ago as settled, that the great flood, which, according to the results of geological research, preceded the present form of the earth, took place before the existence of man, and has nothing in common with the great flood of which the traditions of the nations and the Scriptures speak, this declaration finds no confirmation in natural science, for from remains found in the gravel beds of Abbeville, &c., or bone remains at Aurignac and such like, we are obliged to assume that man was upon the earth at the time of that flood, so that those traditions are confirmed, and the time must be dated further back concerning which there is such a fluctuation of opinion that, while Cuvier is satisfied with 5 or 6 thousand years, waits on the contrary, in his learned work on the *Anthropology of Natural Races* (1859, I. 336) allows us to choose between 35,000 and 9 million years as the time of man's existence on earth! These examples are sufficient to show how greatly Geology has failed to come to universally accepted results in those questions in which the Bible is concerned. Until such results are reached no final comparison between natural science and scripture can be instituted, and every overhasty attempt at harmonizing them must prove more harmful than beneficial. Let us then confine ourselves to what, in the present condition of things, is practicable.  
It is especially important at the outset to fix the right point of view. It

cannot be too often repeated that the Bible is no text-book of Astronomy or Geology, but a record of religion, that it is not its function to answer the questions of the natural philosopher or make their examination unnecessary or more easy, but to appease our religious concern. So the account which it gives of the creation of the world is not a scientific one, but a religious. We must not accordingly expect to find in it what it was not intended to contain.

The first thing then to be said is, that the world has been created by God. Geology begins with chaos, fluctuating and fermenting. Whence this chaos is, Geology does not know. Scripture goes back beyond the chaos of Geology and says that God created the first matter out of which this well ordered and beautifully-fashioned world was gradually formed. This is a proposition which Geology does not touch upon, which it has no means of either establishing or denying, it lies beyond the science of Geology; but it is a proposition of religious interest and on this account of fundamental importance.

In the second place the Bible says to us that life upon the earth, the world of plants and animals had a beginning, and that through the joint working of natural forces and the creative activity of God. God spake: "Let the earth bring forth," "Let the water bring forth," and, "God created." And of a beginning of organic life natural science also speaks to us, and it confesses itself—at least the more thoughtful—unable to explain the origin of the same except on the supposition of a high creative Power.

For the Christian Messenger.  
The Convention Scheme.

Our denominational work was defined by the action of the last Convention at Truro. That action demands our most serious consideration. None surely interested in the welfare of the churches, can be indifferent to any proposition, having reference to the employment of means for the more vigorous prosecution of all the departments of our Christian work. To such the course struck out by the Convention must be peculiarly gratifying, even though they may not approve of the plan adopted, since it affords an evidence, of the arousing of the energies of the denomination in these maritime provinces to a greater perception of its responsibilities.

To the minds of many this new departure is full of promise. Whether their fond hopes shall be realized must depend upon the churches to answer. When the great heart of the brotherhood beats true and strong, any plan will succeed; when it does not, any system will prove a failure.

Some have an aversion to whatever is new. They prefer to work in the old line. One excellence of the plan proposed is that it allows to all the choice of method. A plan, it is true, is suggested, but that is not the specialty. The emphasis is laid upon the sum to be raised. That we all wish to be as large as possible. It is an effort to raise the standard of Christian liberality, and to show how much more may be done by the system of frequent giving. Those who would keep their gifts to the Lord's treasury at the minimum will not be pleased with any proposal that may look to an increase in the amount of their benefactions, but quite otherwise with those who are anxious to do all they can for the furtherance of the cause of God.

The Convention scheme is very simple. We hear complaints respecting the numerous demands that are made for money. "It is nothing but Give, Give." To these complainers we would say, Carry your complaint to God. He will be just when man is not—Say, "Lord, thou art giving, giving, we tire of thy gifts, stay thine hand, and leave us to our own resources." But yet it may be presumed that some, faithful ones are perplexed by the variety of the objects that are presented before them. By the plan proposed this confusion is avoided. Of course, one is still at liberty, if he choose, to name the specific object of his benefaction, but in either case the money is entrusted to able hands, tried, proved and approved, to hands that have toiled without other reward than a consciousness of the divine approval and blessing. These men are the choice

of the assembled wisdom of the denomination and are worthy of confidence.

I need not name the various objects that are embraced in our work. The number might be greatly enlarged. What we have undertaken is of paramount importance. Pastors must be trained for our churches; feeble interests must be fostered and sustained; the gospel must be given to every section of our country, and to every class; the heathen too must be cared for. Their blood will be required at our hands, if we suffer them to perish without any effort for their salvation; those who, as pastors and evangelists, have spent their strength in the service of the churches, have just claims for support, when laid aside from active service by infirmity or old age.

Is the amount sought to be raised too large—\$36,000 dollars from as many church members—or from a constituency of one hundred—or one hundred and fifty thousand? How much do we spend for tobacco? How much on useless ornaments and fine furniture? How much on luxuries that we had better be without? No, brethren, the sum is small enough—that furnishes no ground for complaint.

Some churches will however say, "We cannot raise a dollar for every name we have upon our books." Some will say "We cannot give our own pastors an adequate support; and some "We have a struggle for bare existence." It is true that some cannot do what they would; and, true also, that some will not do what they can, and hence our repeated failures in doing the work that God has laid upon us. But how different would be our position if all our wealthy brethren would do their just proportion, if all our wealthy churches would give of their abundance, and if all our poorer ones would do the measure of their ability! When they come to this standard there will be no lack. Brethren let us make an honest trial. Let us do just what God requires of us, who shall exact more?—and we shall accomplish a work that will fill the land with rejoicing, and all heaven with praise. Dusky hands that from across the sea are now stretched imploringly towards us, will be lifted towards the skies in grateful prayer, that shall bring down upon us clouds of blessings, to witness to the truth of revelation. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth,"—"The liberal soul shall be made fat"—We shall together rejoice in the progress of the truth in our own land and great shall be the peace and prosperity of Zion.

M. P. F.

Extracts from Reports

OF W. M. A. SOCIETIES FOR 1879, AS READ AT THE ANNIVERSARY MEETING.

*Pine Grove, Annapolis Co.*—Another year has almost closed. Our Heavenly Father has spared us to present again a brief history of our Society. Part of the present year was fraught with much discouragement, but we are glad to be able to say that a somewhat brighter day has dawned, our membership has increased to 16.

Our Treasurer has remitted to the Treasurer of the Central Board the sum of \$19.50. We trust the apparent want of earnestness and interest may be but as the darkness that precedes the dawn, and that the stirring appeals of our brothers and sisters in the East may meet a response in many hearts where hitherto they have been disregarded.

*Melvern Square.*—Our monthly meetings have been seasons of interest, and we hope of spiritual blessings; several of our members are subscribers to the "Link" and other missionary papers. Although we cannot report a large addition to our numbers during the year, there is no decrease. For this we would render a tribute of thanks to our Heavenly Father, and pray that in the future we may be more devoted to the evangelization of those who are without the Word of Life.

*Wolfville.*—It is satisfactory to be able to state that during the past year our meetings have been regularly maintained, and also, that the average attendance shows a marked improvement. Our membership has increased from 33, as reported for 1878, to 40.

Ten of our members subscribed last year for the "Missionary Link," and all express much satisfaction with this little paper. By the persevering efforts of

our President, Mrs. DeBlois, this number has been largely increased, and we now have the pleasure of reporting 27 subscribers for the coming year.

*Parrsboro.*—With a feeling of sadness we report our little society, for instead of increasing, we are growing less. Several have moved away, and so few seem to be interested in the work of the Lord either at home or abroad. We have met, two or three of us, almost every month, and some earnest prayers from loving hearts have gone up to Him who has said, "if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything, that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven;" and we wait the answer.

*Hillsburg.*—We regret that we have no marked advance to report, yet we are glad that through all our discouragements we still maintain an existence. Our membership for the year has been 20, our remittances \$22.

*Milton, Queens Co.*—Our Society is small, only numbering 12 members. We take the "Link," and generally read some extracts from it at our meetings which are kept up regularly.

*Deerfield.*—We have tried ever since our organization to keep our Society moving along, and though we have had difficulties and discouragements such as most societies have to contend with, our numbers have not decreased. We now number 16. Our sisters love the "Missionary Link." There are 15 copies taken.

*Hantsport.*—We can all say we have the same interest in the missionary cause, we have always had since our sisters left our shores for the foreign field. It has been increased and intensified from time to time as we read the missionary intelligence sent to us by them. Our Monthly Concerts bring the subject before the church, and the people are being educated to sustain missions, and keep alive an interest in the same. We find pleasure and profit in reading the "Missionary Link," and will try and promote its circulation, feeling conscious it is destined to advance the cause through the information it imparts.

*Clarence.*—We are still holding on our way, and in reviewing the past, we have abundant reasons for gratitude to our kind Father in Heaven for His great goodness towards us. While on the one hand our hearts have been saddened by being called upon to say farewell, probably till we meet in the better land, to our loved President, Mrs. J. Brown, on the other hand we have been gladdened by the addition of five new members, and amongst that number, one who we feel cannot fail to add much to the interest of our meetings, the wife of our Pastor, Mrs. J. Eaton, (formerly Miss DeWolf). We trust her coming amongst us may be the means of awakening in all our hearts a deep interest in the cause of missions. Our meetings during the year have been interesting and well attended as usual, and the "Missionary Link" comes to us as a welcome guest.

*Newport.*—We are so scattered that we cannot meet as often as we would like, yet we feel encouraged, as our numbers increase, and our meetings are interesting. We all feel deeply for the welfare of our dear sisters who have gone to the foreign field and trust their labors will be blest, and their hearts encouraged in seeing many of the heathen who know nothing of a Saviour, brought to Jesus and testify of His great love wherewith he hath loved them.

*Amherst.*—There has not been much change with us during the year. We now have 65 members. Our meetings for prayer and social conversation on Missions have been kept up, and we have had some profitable seasons. We feel a special interest in Miss Hammond, as well as the sisters of our own Province who have sacrificed so much for the good of others, and pray that they may be eminently useful in winning souls to Christ. Are much interested in perusing Missionary intelligence contained in the "Link" and hope that it may have a still wider circulation.

*Hammond's Plains.*—We number 18 members at the present time. We regret to say death has taken from us one of our number during the past year, one whom we miss very much, as she was a regular attendant at our meetings, and an active member. Our meetings are

still held regularly, and lively interest is felt. Our sisters, we believe, work with the feeling that at home as well as abroad can the faithful Christian find abundant opportunity to spend or be spent for the good of perishing souls.

*Falmouth.*—Ever since this society was organized, now nearly 10 years, we have kept up our meetings regularly, throughout the year, with the exception of last winter, when it was found impracticable; our faithful President, Mrs. Harding, though advanced in life is always present, and though we are few in number, yet the promised blessing has not been withheld, and our remittances bear an average proportion with other societies. At our last meeting a renewed determination was felt and expressed, to persevere and keep up our meetings during the winter at private houses. We felt we could not and would not be deprived of the luxury of aiding our missionaries in their glorious work.

*Canning.*—We have during the year met monthly to pray for missions and missionaries and read missionary intelligence. These meetings have been found to be of great spiritual advantage, bringing us into greater sympathy with workers in foreign lands, nearer to each other and nearer to God. The attendance is small, sometimes there are only enough present to enable us to claim the promise of Christ to meet with us.

It is evident these meetings have a beneficial reflex influence; for those who pray most earnestly for the conversion of those abroad pray and labor the most earnestly for the conversion of those at home.

We take eight copies of the *Link* and value it highly.

For the Christian Messenger.  
A Tour in Newfoundland.

Dear Editor,—

Entertaining as I had for many years a strong desire to visit Newfoundland and preach the gospel in that Island, the short missionary tour thither in the Summer of 1875, by Dr. McDonald and myself, under the direction of the Board at Yarmouth, was prosecuted with great interest by us; but my time and work there were too limited to satisfy the intense longing of my heart. In our report to the Board we recommended the establishment of three Missions on that Island at as early a day as possible; and we hoped the Board would be placed in a position to commence one mission at least without much delay. But with an empty treasury and numerous calls for help from interesting fields in Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, and P. E. Island, which could only be inadequately met, it came at last to be apparent that there existed no immediate prospect of the Board undertaking any missionary work in Newfoundland.

Nevertheless, my desire to visit that country again and preach the gospel there did not become less as time passed, but rather grew in intensity; and my connexion with the *Christian Visitor* having terminated, and my health restored, I resolved early last Summer, providence permitting, and without waiting for the slow movements of Boards and Churches, to go forth thither in the name of the Lord, and do what I could in the few months that yet remained for safe and easy travel. Having attended the Drawing Room of the Governor General and the Princess Louise in this city on the evening of August 7th, and shown my loyalty to our beloved Sovereign, the Queen, I set out per train next morning on my tour to Newfoundland. We reached Oxford, N. S., about 3 o'clock, P. M., where I remained a few hours to see my son, Rev. J. J. Armstrong, and my daughter, Mrs. McKeen. Early next morning I resumed my journey to Halifax, where we arrived about 10 o'clock, A. M. Having exchanged greetings with the *Christian Messenger*, as you know, I left at 6 o'clock, P. M., on the 9th of August in the steamer "Cortes," of the Cromwell Line, Capt. Bennett, Master. Bro. C. Whidden, of Antigonish, had kindly offered me a free passage from that port, for which he has my thanks; but for several reasons steam was preferred. I was very fortunate in my choice. The "Cortes" is a good large vessel with excellent accommodations and good officers. Capt. Bennett is a noble specimen of a sailor, a real gentleman and a true Christian. He treated