

From the Church.

## SCIENCE AND REVELATION.

THE progress of human science has been retarded by many and great obstacles. Among these is the operation of the idea that it is unfavourable to the cause of Divine truth. Assuming that certain views of the Scriptures must be correct, and that these are opposed by the statements of modern philosophy, its abettors have been aspersed, and in some cases stigmatized as absolutely deistical.

A memorable instance of this kind occurred in the history of Galileo. In the use of the telescope he had constructed, as the first astronomer in whose hands such a gift was placed, he made many and important discoveries, all of which furnished fresh arguments in favour of the system as described by Copernicus. Ambitious to propagate the truths he contributed so powerfully to establish, he anticipated that they would be received with gratitude by all. But he had mistaken the character of the age, and the disposition of his species. The very system which had been discovered by a humble ecclesiastic, yet patronized by a bishop, published at the expense of a cardinal, and even warmly sanctioned by the pope, was doomed, after the lapse of a hundred years, to the most violent opposition, as subversive of the doctrines of the Christian faith.

Galileo was summoned to appear at Rome, to answer for the opinions denounced as heretical, and, after a mild sentence, pursued his former course. Before six years had elapsed, he published his dialogues, the concealed object of which was to establish the opinions he had been compelled to promise to abandon, hoping, by the mode he adopted, to escape notice. For nearly a year this was the case; but when it was seen that the obnoxious tenets were every day gaining ground, he was again cited before the tribunal of the Inquisition.

The decree was issued in consequence, that his work should be prohibited; that he should be condemned to prison during pleasure; and that during the three following years, he should recite, once a week, the seven penitentiary psalms. Most humiliating to himself, and degrading to philosophy, was the result. At the age of seventy, on his bended knees, and with his right hand resting on the Evangelists, did he avow his present and past belief in all the dogmas of the Romish church; abandon, as false and heretical, the doctrine of the earth's motion, and of the sun's immobility, and pledge himself to denounce to the Inquisition any other person who was even suspected of heresy! The church to which he thus abjectly engaged to adhere, has ever been the opponent of knowledge; for ignorance has proved the mother of its devotion. No wonder need therefore be felt at the forging or the imposition of its iron bands. The only matter of surprise is, that this patriarch of philosophy did not prefer truth to life. One ray of light falling on the thick darkness in which his persecutors were shrouded, might have revealed the fact that the Scriptures speak of the heavenly orbs as they appear to be, and that they are designed not to imbue us with philosophy, but with pure religion. Were physical science indeed a fit subject for revelation, it is difficult to conceive at what point a limit to it could have been set. A communication of so much only of astronomy as was known to Galileo would have seemed imperfect after the discoveries of Newton; and that of the science of Newton would have appeared defective to La Place. If, too, light were thrown on this department of science, why should it not be on others? And thus the requirement which some venture at least tacitly to make, is that of a full development of all the mysterious agencies that uphold the mechanism of the material world.

It is affirmed on Divine authority, that if all that Jesus said and did had been recorded, "the world itself would not contain the books that would have been written." The hyperbole employed shows that such a history could not have been available; and assuredly this would have been the case with such a physical record. The very idea is dazzling and overwhelming. It might indeed be suited to more exalted beings; and the study of such a revelation will most probably form one of the engagements of the redeemed above. But the Bible is just what we want: "a lamp to

our feet and a light to our path;" and he who follows in the path it illumines, shall not err.

In dependence on that Holy Spirit by whose inspiration "all Scripture is given," it is for us to make it our study; wishing well, at the same time, to the advancement of true knowledge in every form. Only let there be the accumulation of incontrovertible facts, and in reference to these, just and accurate reasonings: and to error alone can the issue be detrimental. Truth, which would prove fatal to the church of Rome, is the glory of the church of the living God.

## TOO LATE!

SINNER! so long as thou standest on *this side* the grave, it is never too late for thy repentance. Such is the holy comfort which streams from Christ's words on the cross. IT IS TOO LATE! O words of horror, already fallen like God's thunder on many a heart of man. See that father, who rushes out of a house in flames, thinking that all his beloved ones are around him. He counts one—*one dear head is yet missing—he flies back—It is too late!* is the moaning sound that strikes his ear; the walls fall in amidst a rushing stream of flame, and he sinks lifeless to the earth.

But who is this that presses through the gloom of the night, on a breathless steed? It is a prodigal wanderer of the way of sin—he would fain hear for: the lips of his dying father the words, "I forgive thee;"—look! he has reached the place—yet a moment, and he has reached the door—*It is too late!* shrieks the voice of his mother—those lips are dumb for ever! and he falls swooning in her arms.

Behold you that victim on the bloody scaffold—and that headman who whets the murderous steel. The multitude stand hushed and shuddering. But lo! who is he that yonder comes in sight on the distant eminence, making signs of joy? It is the King's courier—he brings a pardon!—comes nearer and nearer—"Pardon, Pardon!" resounds, first softly, and then with increasing loudness among the crowd—*It is too late!* that guilty head has fallen!

Yea, how fearfully, since the earth has stood, has rung upon many a human heart that penetrating sound, *It is too late!* O, who can depict to me the consternation that shall be, when, on the limit which divides time from eternity, the voice of the righteous Judge shall utter, *It is too late!* Long have the wide gates of the kingdom of heaven stood open; long have its messengers cried, one after another, "*To-day, to-day, if ye will hear his voice.*" O man! man! how shall it be when the gates shall once be shut, with dread clangor—*forever!* Therefore, strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able: when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.—*Thouck.*

## UNIVERSALISM.

## LAMENT OF A CHAMPION OF UNIVERSALISM.

MR. BALFOUR proceeds, in the next place, to show the improbability of much advance in the publishing line, and to give some account of his own sad experience. "Few, if any, among Universalists, have published more books of this kind than myself." But, "so far from my publications being a profit to me, they have only been a bill of expense, and much perplexity, in addition to all my labour in writing them—so much, that I have been tempted to curse the day I ever published a book." (The day is coming when he will curse it bitterly!) "Many Universalists seem to feel little interest in reading and improving themselves as to their professed faith." (Why should they? they have learned to think for themselves.) "What is still more painful, some, not a few, have got my books, and either from want of honesty, or carelessness, have forgotten to pay for them." "Who will be such a fool as I have been," (truly!) "to publish books on Universal Salvation, if this is the way their labours are to be rewarded? I AM HEART-SICK OF IT; and to be told, my books have contributed much to the rapid spread of Universalism, has no tendency to remove this kind of sickness." Hence, he concludes that

there is but poor encouragement to write such books, and that thus one great means of spreading their tenets will be discontinued. How strong must be the love of the people for their religion, when their poor abettors, who labour night and day to build them up in the faith, in spite of the English Bible and the orthodox, must pay their own expenses, and die with a broken heart! If such has been Mr. Balfour's experience—a man who has deserved more of the sect than any other man—what must be the fate of the "lesser lights"?—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

## JEWISH SECTS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

## THE SADDUCEES.

THE sect of the Sadducees derived its name from Sadok, a pupil of Antigonus Sochemus, President of the Sanhedrin, or Great Council; who flourished about two hundred and sixty years before the Christian era, and who inculcated the reasonableness of serving God disinterestedly, and not under the servile impulse of the fear of punishment, or the mercenary hope of reward. Sadok, misunderstanding the doctrine of his master, deduced the inference that there was no future state of rewards or punishments. Their principal tenets were the following: 1. *That there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit,* (Matt. xxii. 23. Acts xxiii. 8.) and that the soul of man perishes together with the body. 2. *That there is no fate or overruling providence, but that all men enjoy the most ample freedom of action; in other words, the absolute power of doing either good or evil, according to their own choice; hence they were very severe judges.* 3. *They paid no regard whatever to any tradition, adhering strictly to the letter of Scripture, but preferring the five books of Moses to the rest.* It has been conjectured by some writers, that they rejected all the sacred books but those of Moses, because Jesus Christ preferred to confute them out of these. But this hypothesis is no proof; for, though Josephus frequently mentions their rejecting the traditions of the elders, he no where charges them with rejecting any of the sacred books; and, as he was himself a Pharisee, and their zealous antagonist, he would not have passed over such a crime in silence. It is further worthy of remark, that our Saviour, who so severely censured the Sadducees for their other corruptions, did not condemn them for such rejection.

In point of numbers, the Sadducees were an inconsiderable sect; but their numerical deficiency was amply compensated by the dignity and eminence of those who embraced their tenets, and who were persons of the first distinction. Several of them were advanced to the high priesthood. They do not, however, appear to have aspired, generally, to public offices. Josephus affirms, that scarcely any business of the state was transacted by them; and that, when they were in the magistracy, they generally conformed to the measures of the Pharisees, though unwillingly, and out of pure necessity; for otherwise they would not have been endured by the multitude.

(To be continued.)

GOG AND MAGOG, the accurate chronologer, Dr. Hales, thinks, are the general name of the northern nations of Europe and Asia, or the districts north of Caucasus, or Mount Taurus, colonised by Gog, or Magog, another of the sons of Japheth, called, by the Arabian geographers, Jajue and Majuje. Gog rather denotes the people, Magog the land. Thus Balaam foretold that Christ would be "a king high, or than Agag," or rather "Gog;" according to the more correct reading of the Samaritan Hebrew text and of the Septuagint version of Numbers xxiv. 7; and Ezekiel, foretelling a future invasion of the land of Israel by these northern nations, Meshech, Tubal, and Togarmah, styles "Gog their chief prince," and describes their host precisely as Scythian or Tartarian: "coming out of the north, all of them riding on horses;" "bows and arrows" their weapons; "covering the land like a cloud, and coming like a storm," in the "latter days." (Ezekiel xxxviii. 1-17.) He also describes their immense slaughter, in the valley of the passagers on the east of the sea, thence called the valley of Hamon Gog, "the multitude of Gog." (Ezek. xxxix. 1-22.)