

The Church Guardian.

Upholds the Doctrines and Rubrics of the Prayer Book.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."—Eph. vi. 24.
"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude: 3.

Vol. IV.—No. 50.]

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 1883. WINNIPEG.

[One Dollar and a Half a Year.]

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.

In Jewish and Christian writings the work of creation is spoken of, in accordance with the language of the Mosaic cosmogony, as having been consummated in *six days*; but a consistent interpretation of the record will prevent our committing the error involved in regarding the Mosaic days as literal days of twenty-four hours each.

"And God called the light *day*, and the darkness He called *night*. Plainly it is not the length of time, but the appearance, the phenomenon of light, which is for the first time called day. Then the term is used for a period, with its antithetical parts "And the evening and the morning were the first day."

What was the night? Darkness. What was the day? Light. How long were the day and the night? We are not told. St. Augustine, the father of systematic theology, asks, "What mean these days—these strange sunless days? Does the enumeration of days and nights avail for a distinction between the nature that is not yet formed, and those which are made, so that the they called morning *propter speciem*, and evening *propter privationem*?" ("De Genesi ad Literam," lib. ii. ch. 14). They are days which belong to a higher chronology than our twenty-four hour standard.

This was the doctrine of such Christian Fathers as Irenæus and Gregory Nazianzen, Basil and Origen, and was held by Jewish doctors and Christian Fathers for fifteen hundred years. And in later times we find Lord Bacon, Stillingfleet, Henry More, Calmet, and others, offering similar views; and this not as a concession to the discoveries of science, but long before geology existed as a science, or the now prevalent mode of attack against the Scriptures had been inaugurated under the auspices of certain of the disciples of physical induction. A true conception of the nature of the first day must lead to a correct apprehension of the succeeding ones up to the "seventh day," when God "rested." Did God rest, as we rest, because He was tired after "all His works which He had made," or did He not rest in the sense of *to cease doing*—the sense in which the word "rest" is here used? May He not have ceased from works of origination and formation to begin His labor of love and mercy, as the Conservator, as well as Creator, of all things? And this is the fundamental question of our "day," i. e., this age. Upon the mental attitude assumed in relation to this question must depend our systems of philosophy and religion.

As all truth is one, so it is believed that an ultimate harmony is possible between the revelations of scripture and of nature, which will become more and more evident as the work of the devout and learned men in the ranks of investigators—philosophic theologians and scientists—who successively are giving their best powers to it, progresses toward an insight of first principles. But it should ever be borne in mind that the sacred Record professes to teach theology, and not a method of science.

It was written for all time, to declare God unto man, and to reveal just so much as is necessary to man's salvation. Its language is anthropopathic, the Divine idea being accommodated to a human analogy, that man may conceive, not what God is, but what His relation is to the world; and we must beware of a literalism which shall condition the infinite by finite measures to human comprehension, like the Jews, who required a sign from without, when they should have looked into their own hearts for it.

The literal interpretation of isolated passages of Scripture is referred to by "G. W. T." in the query, "Was it not the Jewish idea that the earth is stationary, anchored in the water?" Many, but not fatal, are the mistakes which a too rigid adherence to the *letter* of the sacred Word, both in the original and the existing translation, have led to; but these are but prepossessions, which, standing or falling under a more critical test, shall not affect the integrity of the inspired Book. "The earth moves"—the Bible says not that it does or does not move. Aristotle averred that a vacuum could not exist, and proved that if it did motion in it would be impossible; whereas, though a perfect vacuum has proved in its way as great a chimera to physicists as perpetual motion, Copernicus and Galileo, and a noble array of followers, have opened up to our view the sublime solar panorama, in which spectacle and spectator are alike in motion for a mutual behoof.

The Bible predicts the final destruction of the world, and passing away of the present order of things. Less than a century ago, Laplace and Lagrange, two brilliant astronomical lights, by a most careful mathematical process, became satisfied of the eternal continuance of the solar system. Recent discoveries, however, more especially the correlation of the various forms of force, with the theory of the "dissipation of energy," go to show the computations of Laplace and Lagrange to have been based on erroneous assumptions, and that this vast machine was not made for eternity, and must inevitably come to a standstill. Tyndall, Littrow, Helmholtz, Balfour, Stewart, Sir William Thomson, Sir John Herschel, and Whewell, predict from physical laws the slowly but surely approaching dissolution of the universe. These are but a few observations pointing to the relative positions occupied in the judgment of thoughtful minds by the Bible and science, and are submitted for the columns of your paper as having been suggested by the communication referred to above. The Bible and the people it brings so solemn a message to—the Christian and the merely philosophic thinker—the human and the Divine—have never been radically opposed, and in God's love and all-mercifulness they never shall be.—*Selected.*

THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES AS TO THE "FORTY DAYS."

A cardinal principle meets one at the outset. What is the meaning of the words "kingdom of God?" As Churchmen we have a ready solution. The idea on which the Church is founded is that of a divine institution. It is one which concerns spiritual things. Its laws and sanctions bind the conscience. It has to do with spiritual verities. But that in nowise forbids it to be a human society, or denies to it visible and formal institutions. The theory of non-Churchmen, for the most part, is that these, since they have been found necessary, and, in fact, inevitable, is that they are the outgrowth of merely abstract principles, and that every age and gathering of believers can of right reproduce them according to its own needs and tastes.

The theory of Churchmen is that these are part and parcel of a divine society, and that they were ordained by the Lord Himself, and at this time committed to His Apostles, under the dread solemnity of His appearances to them after His resurrection.

That non-Churchmen partially are untrue to their own theory is very evident. That they ob-

serve Baptism and the Lord's Supper and a form of ministry really depends on something more than their reverence for Holy Scripture. If the New Testament were put into the hands of an intelligent people who had hitherto been set apart from the human race, they would hardly of themselves devise and institute either of these ordinances.

Say what they will, the practical pressure of a Christendom which stands on the right faith has compelled the advocates of independency to continue observances which they never would have invented. They justify themselves from Scripture; but they would not have furnished themselves with the sacraments did not these really stand on a very different authority from scriptural inferences.

The Churchman rightly reads the New Testament as the record of what the Apostles *did*, and finds exceeding comfort in the conviction that they were acting by their Master's direction. The Bible is not an oracle to be submitted to the varying interpretations of men, but a history which sustains and authorizes the acts of the founders of the Church by showing the source from which they spring, viz., the personal revelation of Jesus Christ, the Lord.

The Scriptures, brief as they are, which treat of the forty days of the Lord's reappearance are, therefore, deserving of the closest study. Every word means much. It is, too, very needful that the student should put himself in a position to comprehend the changed situation of these disciples, and be able to see how the very briefest commands and declarations became inspired with the fullest meaning. For there can be no doubt that to this time also is owed the existence of the Christian Scriptures, and that the impulse to record the words and acts of Jesus was in some shape given them, although there is no record thereof. Else the New Testament, taking rank with the Old, and written by Jews educated in the loftiest reverence for the ancient book, becomes an impossible anomaly or an incredible presumption. There are two facts to be ever borne in mind—first, that Jews, rejecting as uncanonical everything from the days of the prophet Malachi dared to add the gospels and epistles to the sacred volume; secondly, that the Church, with their sanction, dared to accept the same, while rejecting other pious and unobjectionable writings of the same age from all companionship with its own Scriptures.

THE BRITISH CHURCH.

GILDAS, the earliest British historian, who wrote in A.D. 540, fixes the date of the introduction of Christianity into Britain in the year of our Lord 58. That such was the case before the defeat of Boadicea, the brave queen of the Britons, A.D. 61, we have the authority of the above historian.

That the tidings of the Gospel were proclaimed by the Apostles to the Celtic nations (of which Britain was one) is affirmed by Irenæus, Eusebius, Theodoret and Nicephorus testify that the glad sounds went forth into Britain by the mouth of some of the Apostles.

We learn from Tacitus and Martial, that Pomponia Græcina and Claudia Rufina, two British ladies, were at Rome A.D. 56, in which year St. Paul was sent thither. Tacitus also relates that in the following year the former of these ladies was accused of a "foreign superstition," as her teacher, St. Paul, had been (Acts xxv. 19) so accused before her.