

BE CONTENT.

It may not be our lot to wield
The sickle in the ripened field ;
Nor ours to hear, on summer eves,
The reaper's song among the sheaves.

Yet where our duty's task is wrought
In unison with God's great thought,
The near and future blend in one,
And whatsoever is willed is done.

And ours the grateful service whence
Comes, day by day, the recompense :
The hope, the trust, the purpose stayed,
The fountain, and the noonday shade.

And were this life the utmost span,
The only end and aim of man,
Better the toil of fields like these
Than waking dreams and slothful ease.

But life, though falling like our grain,
Like that, revives and springs again ;
And, early called, how blest are they
Who wait in heaven their harvest day !

—Whittier.

THE SIXTY-SIX BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

Dr. Gibson, in his admirable little volume on "The Foundations," which we lately noticed, speaks of the Bible, not as one Book, but as sixty-six books, and thereby disposes of a very common objection of unbelievers :

"We have to deal with the extraordinary perversity and unfairness, so common in our day, of treating the Scriptures as if the whole mass were only one book. Of all the unfair devices for weakening the evidences of Christianity this is perhaps the very worst. And the strangest thing about it is, that so many good Christians allow it, and even insist upon it. So great is the mischief arising from this, that it would almost seem a pity, that, even for convenience' sake, the sixty-six books were so constantly bound together in one volume. For not only is there the unhappy result of reducing the many witnesses to one, in the minds of unthinking people, but even of silencing and putting out of court that one. For such unreasoning suspicion is abroad about the Bible, that there are multitudes of people, and even some good Christian people, who would attach a great deal more importance to the statement of almost any author outside the Bible, than of any number of authors inside of it. Shew them a fact attested by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Paul and Peter, and they will say "O that is all in the Bible; give us something outside of the Bible and we will believe it." The Bible, in the first place, stands to them for a single author; and in the second place for a prejudiced author, one who has his own cause to bolster up; and accordingly a hundred confirmations within its covers are not so good as one from the outside would be. Is it not unreasonable in the extreme?"

"Let me suppose a case, in order to put the monstrous injustice in a clear light. Suppose that very soon after the invention of printing, some enterprising publisher had collected all the original materials of any value in regard to the history of the Roman republic and bound them together in one volume, which he issued to the world under the title of "The History of the Roman Republic;" and suppose further that it became so popular, that it was circulated first by hundreds, then by thousands, then by hundreds of thousands, and finally by the million, so that it came into almost everybody's hands. But in course of time, after all the world had become so accustomed to it in its form of a single volume, there sprang up a fashion of scepticism on the whole subject, and everything in the volume was regarded with suspicion; and accordingly the whole history of the Roman republic was called into question. Those who believed it called attention to the many different authorities who corroborated each other. "Here is Livy, who writes about it in Latin. Here is Dio Cassius, who writes about the same thing in Greek. Here are speeches of Cicero that relate to the same events. And here are poems of Horace that could not have been written unless these facts were so." But they were immediately put down, by triumphantly point-

ing out that all these different authorities were no authorities at all. Why not? Because that publisher and that bookbinder of the fifteenth century had published and bound them up together! That of course settled the question. In the first place it disposed of all the separate witnesses, of Livy, and Dio, and Cicero, and all the rest; for were they not all bound together in the same volume? And in the second place it disposed even of the single witness of the bound book, because it was the credibility of the book itself which was in question, and therefore all that was in the book must be ruled out as the testimony of an interested party. And so it came to pass that, from the single unfortunate circumstance of the scattered materials having been considered by this publisher to be worth collecting and publishing together, the evidence for the history of the Roman republic was actually wiped out of existence. It is to be hoped that what may remain of the archives of the first century of American history may never be bound up in one volume, however large, or perhaps the people of the great future, the twenty-ninth century, for example, may not believe we ever had any history at all!

Let us then by all means remember, when we are dealing with the subject of the Scriptures, that we are dealing, not with one book, but with sixty-six; not with a single volume, but with a library. Remember, further, that these sixty-six books are not links, but strands of evidence. There is, indeed, a golden chain of sacred history from Genesis to Revelation, so that, in a historical point of view, many of the books of the Bible are links. But, so far as the evidences of Christianity are concerned, they are not links but strands. This can be proved in a moment. The strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link; and if a single link be gone, the whole is useless. Now will any one pretend to say that, if it were proved that the Book of Esther had no divine authority, we should have to give up the Gospel of Matthew? Would there be no evidence for the divine authority of Christ if the Lamentations of Jeremiah had happened to have been lost? Why, there would be enough to establish the divine authority of Christ if we had nothing more than the four evangelists, and whatever of confirmation or elucidation comes from the sixty-two other books is just so much in addition. The Bible is not a chain of sixty-six links; it is a cable of sixty-six strands; and if there is such strength as we have found in four of them, what shall we say of the united strength of all the sixty-six?"

A TRUE LADY.

Wildness is a thing which girls cannot afford. Delicacy is a thing which cannot be lost or found. No art can restore the grape its bloom. Familiarity without confidence, without regard, is destructive to all that makes woman exalting and ennobling.

The world is wide, these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are all.

Nothing? It is the first duty of a woman to be a lady. Good breeding is good sense. Bad manners in a woman is immorality. Awkwardness may be ineradicable. Bashfulness is constitutional. Ignorance of etiquette is the result of circumstances. All can be condoned and not banish men and women from the amenities of their kind. But self-possessed, unshrinking and aggressive coarseness of demeanour may be reckoned as a State's Prison offence, and certainly merits that mild form of restraint called imprisonment for life. It is a bitter shame that they need it. Women are the umpires of society. It is they to whom all mooted points should be referred. To be a lady is more than to be a prince. A lady is always in her right inalienably worthy of respect. To a lady, prince or peasant alike bow. Do not be restrained. Do not have impulses that need restraint. Do not wish to dance with the Prince unsought; feel indifferently. Be sure you confer honour. Carry yourself so loftily that men will look up to you for reward, not at you in rebuke. The natural sentiment of man towards woman is reverence. He loses a large means of grace when he is obliged to account

her a being to be trained in propriety. A man's ideal is not wounded when a woman fails in worldly wisdom; but if in grace, in tact, in sentiment, in delicacy, in kindness, she would be found wanting, he receives an inward hurt.—Gail Hamilton.

PREACHER AND PEOPLE.

Sometimes one boasts of the other and sometimes the other boast of one; each have much cause to love. The preacher may have cause to complain of his people; the people may justly complain of the preacher.

Their mutual work is to build the Church of God. If the preacher is indolent, unfaithful, slow, time-serving or worldly, the zealous members have a right to complain. It is very harrowing to a devout congregation to have a slothful or inefficient minister. They have a right to hold him to account for any unfaithfulness.

It is painful for a conscientious pastor to have a slothful congregation. If the preacher in the fear of God, endeavours to build up the cause, sparing himself no pains to put forward the interests of the church, and is not heartily seconded by his people, they do a double wrong—they sin against their pastor, and they sin against their Saviour.

It is astonishing how dull many churches are on this point, how imperfectly they see the mutual obligations of preacher and people. They hang passive on his hands, waiting for him to mould and build them, without an effort upon their part. The preacher may run himself to exhaustion in pastoral work, and tax his wit to interest, instruct and edify his hearers, and they simply hear, indorse or disapprove, as mere idle spectators that have no special interest in what he is trying to do; and yet these same people profess to believe in God and Christ, in right and wrong, in heaven and hell! What! believe in heaven and hell, and yet unmoved and impassively hear the dread message of death from God's own ambassadors? It seems impossible they should believe these things. Their inaction contradicts their profession.

But the preacher believes, and, in proportion to the intensity of his convictions are his pains and regrets at the indifference of his people. His grief may be enough to give him restless nights, tears, headaches, haggard countenance and sickness; yet the people look on stolidly, and let him bear this burden week by week, year by year, and never move to his entreaties! It is cruel.

Not only are there such lifeless congregations, but there are those who will even complain of the preacher's zeal and enterprise. If he is ardent and pressing in his exhortations; if he entreats and admonishes, and reproves like one who felt a pastor's responsibilities, they get chafed and displeased, and pull back all the more for his urging. This is mean and cruel.

More than this. After all this unrequited labour, they will hold him responsible for the stunted and stagnant condition of the church. The preacher is to blame if the congregations are not large and the membership not increased! One of these chafed and delinquent members will be heard to say: "Oh! we need better preaching; when we get a better sort of preaching we will flourish." They change preachers, get another sort of sermon, and the same phlegmatic hearers make the same fruitless results.

Let our people learn that it is impossible for a preacher to build up a church and congregation without the co-operation of his people. They must rally to him, encourage him and encourage one another, talk up their church and their preacher, bring in hearers and welcome strangers, be punctual themselves, and give aid and cheer to all the work of the pastor.

Reader, are you an interested and helpful member, or a mere spectator of your pastor's work?—*St. Louis Christian Advocate.*

Do you say sin is too strong for you? It is not too strong for omnipotence that dwelleth in you. I don't want so much to be afraid of going to hell as to be afraid of sin. Let me be afraid of sin, and then I need not be afraid of going to hell.—*Rowland Hill.*