

CORRESPONDENCE.

[The name of Correspondent must in all cases be enclosed with letter, but will not be published unless desired. The Editor will not hold himself responsible, however, for any opinions expressed by Correspondents].

To the Editor of the Church Guardian:

SIR.—The article upon "The Making of the New Testament" in your issue of the 30th of October, extracted from an American Sunday School Magazine, contains so much that is injuriously overstated, so much that is at variance with facts, and so much that is unsound in principle, that I must ask your permission to say a few words upon it.

The object of the article is stated to be, "to remove the Bible from the place popularly assigned it in Protestant Christendom without its taking hurt (in the process) or superstructure, built upon it trembling" (Query? "Tumbling"?)

The writer does not explain what the false position is in which the Bible is placed, and what the true position to which it ought to be removed. He professes, however, to state certain facts about the Bible which will prove that its present position is false. Let us examine these alleged facts.

1. The Church was established, its organization complete and the best part of its missionary work done "before it had any Bible at all." (The italics in quotations are those of the article.)

These vague statements convey no definite idea of time, though the impression they give is of a long period. To say that "the best part of the Church's Missionary work was done before she had any Bible at all" betrays a very strange conception of the Church's Missionary work. A little lower down the writer adds, "The whole of the New Testament came into existence after the Church had been planted." Let us follow this clue. "The first of the New Testament Books written (he says) was St. Mark," "then St. Matthew, then St. Luke." "Next in order of time," he proceeds, "came the fourteen letters of St. Paul," the one first written being First Thessalonians. So, St. Mark, he tells us, was written "after St. Peter's death." Now what follows from this? St. Peter and St. Paul were put to death on the same day; so all St. Paul's letters were written after his own death! What can you make of such slipshod work as this? And yet it is only a fair specimen, as we shall see, of the entire article.

However, as "the whole of the N.T. came into existence after the Church had been planted," it is clear that the planting of the Church was complete before First Thessalonians saw the light. Now all agree that this was in the year A.D. 52, twenty-two years after the Lord's Ascension. This vast period, then, dwindles down to something less than 22 years. By the planting of the Church this writer understands 22 years' work in Jerusalem, and one short missionary tour of St. Paul, that is, the work among the Gentiles barely begun, or not begun at all, if St. Mark was written two years earlier.

But long or short, all this time "the Church had no Bible at all." What then, had become of the Old Testament? Did the Church cast it aside? The writer tells us that "the Church is builded, not upon a book; but upon a person," as if the two were inconsistent. And yet that Divine Person does not hesitate to build His own claims upon a book. "The Scriptures testify of Me." "Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me; but if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe My words?" "All things must be accomplished which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me." When, then, the writer says, "the Church was established, its organization complete, and the best part of its missionary work done before it had any Bible at all," does he not strangely forget that it had a Bible, the

Bible to which our Saviour appealed, the Bible of which St. Paul says, that it is "able to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus," and that by it "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

In his second paragraph, the writer says that "the modern notion of a missionary, as a man who goes to the heathen with a Bible in his hand from which to enlighten the Pagans, was inconceivable to the early Christians." On the contrary, this was exactly what every early missionary did,—he went with the Bible, the Old Testament, in his hand as the instrument of their instruction. Is it possible that this fact can escape any thoughtful readers of the New Testament,—that the Apostles claimed, in all their preaching, the obedience of their hearers to their Lord not only on the ground of the facts of His life to which they bore personal witness, but also on the ground that "to Him gave all the Prophets witness"? To forget the part which the Old Testament played in the planting of Christianity is in every way hurtful. It is not too much to say, that the appeal of the Apostles in addressing non-believers was quite as much to the Scriptures as to their own personal witness. Let any thoughtful person read through the specimens given us of the first sermons of the Apostles in Acts ii, iii, iv, x, xiii, and judge whether it was not so. These sermons were addressed indeed in the first instance to Jews, but those addressed to Gentiles were not very different. Indeed it may be doubted whether, so far as the New Testament records extend, there was practically any pure preaching to Gentiles, to Gentiles I mean unmixed with Jews. The sermon on Mars Hill was evidently quite unique. "Moses in every city had them that preached him to the Synagogue every Sabbath day"; and in the Synagogue Christian missionary work began. The preacher to the Gentiles was St. Paul, and from his letters addressed to Churches composed most purely of Gentile converts,—letters saturated with references to the Old Testament, into the meaning and force of which it is evident his readers were expected to enter,—it is clear that his teaching to Gentiles as well as Jew was based upon those Scriptures which he declares able to make all men wise unto salvation. Canon Westcott well says, and well may say, that to the first Christians, "the Old Testament, interpreted as it was to them in the light of the Gospel, was both doctrinally and historically a complete Bible."

It is a curious commentary upon the astounding assertion of the article I am criticising that "in the work of propagandism (of the gospel in the early Church) the Bible was no part of the machinery," that since writing the above, while looking into Archdeacon Norris's delightful little *Key to the Acts of the Apostles* for a date, I should have chanced upon an essay in the Appendix, elaborately proving this very point, that "the only way to account for the marvellous success of the Apostles in winning the Gentiles to Christ is the appeal that they were able everywhere to make to the fulfilment of O.T. prophecy." And it is a still more curious commentary on the rash assertion that "the notion of a missionary with a Bible in his hand for the instruction of the Pagans was inconceivable to an early Christian," that the very earliest glimpse we get in post-apostolic writings of Christian missionaries in immediate succession to the Apostles (in the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98-117) sets them before us as doing this very thing with the *New Testament*,—"Zealously striving to preach Christ to those who were still ignorant of Christianity, and to deliver to them the Scripture of the Divine Gospels."

With your permission I will continue my review of the article in your next issue.

HENRY ROE.

Bishop's College, 5th Nov. 1889.

Our English translation of the Aramaic phrase conveys but little of the depth of tenderness of the original. If it were rendered "My little pet lamb, awake," it would come much nearer the meaning of the original.

And its beauty is greatly enhanced when we know that it was the common term of endearment with which loving Syrian mothers awoke their children from an unusually prolonged sleep. It was therefore a household word—a term belonging to the nursery—to the innermost circle of home. By this endearing appellation the Good Shepherd aroused the sleeping soul.

Nineteen centuries have passed since the Saviour spoke these words, but they are as full of meaning now as they were then, to every girl who has ears to hear. "Talitha Cumi"—My child, arise, get up from any slothful habit, from any frivolous, idle, selfish habit you have formed. My little lamb, mount up, be better this year than you were last year. Let His voice reach your innermost heart and awake you from the sleep of indifference.

People are often puzzled about religion, and mystify themselves with problems which they fancy must be solved before they can become religious. There can, however, be little difficulty in understanding the only religion that a girl need much care to have. That is a very simple thing, for it begins and ends with a serious attempt to obey the Good Shepherd's words. "My little lamb, I say unto thee, arise." If a girl loves and tries to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, let her do so in a girl's way, and in a girl's place, and her face, instead of becoming long and sad, will reflect the bright happiness of her heart. Girls will be, and ought to be, girls; and a girl need not cease to be a girl because she is a Christian. She ought to play games, and amuse herself like a real girl. But in all, she ought to show the spirit of Christ. She ought to be cheerful, good-tempered, and industrious. She ought to be free from frivolity and selfishness. She ought to have a horror of everything spoken or written that is in the smallest degree impure. She ought to be gentle, kind and generous. She ought not to be ashamed to say that she refuses to do something, because it is wicked and she fears God. She ought to take no part in the ridicule of sacred things, but meet the ridicule of others with a bold statement that for the things of God she feels the deepest reverence.—*St. Stephen's Chronicle.*

CONTEMPORARY CHURCH OPINION.

The Irish Ecclesiastical says:—

We venture to ask our fellow churchmen whether it be wise, dignified, and charitable, to be always shrieking on the subject of approximating to Rome. It does not argue any great confidence in us to allow ourselves to be put in a panic by a stray perversion. There will always be exchanges. Chillingworth 'verted. Why should we get into an ecstasy of delight over Father Connellan, or into despondency over one departed? We ought to have more quietness and confidence. Are we not aware that, while it may not be in our minds to do so, we are really paying a compliment to Rome by these constant expressions of fear and aversion towards her. They really have a very bad effect: they make us more or less ridiculous; they are a confession of weakness; we ought to have more manliness and charity than to make them. Rome is not always shrieking against us on religious grounds. We are tolerably familiar with her principles and practice. When Father Connellan went over, she wisely made no row or uproar, passed no synodical resolution, made no reference to the matter in any Episcopal utterance. Some of us can never rest, a Bishop must be drawn, a synod convulsed, the secular press appealed to, and all this, perhaps, about something that would die a natural death if only wisely left alone.