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A Song of Thanksgiving

"Tell . . . how great things the Lord hath done for thee." - Mark 5:19.

IT IS through the Psalms chiefly that the saint of God finds utterance for the praise and thanksgiving of a gratitude filled heart. Thus has the Lord wisely provided means of expression for the pent-up emotions within. In this connection, Luther has well said:

"Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? There you look into the heart of all the godly, as into a beautiful garden, as into heaven itself. What delicate, sweet, and lovely flowers are there springing up of all manner of beautiful, joyous thoughts toward God and His goodness! On the other hand, where do you find more profound, mournful, pathetic expressions of sorrow than the plaintive Psalms contain? The Psalter forms a little book for all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find Psalms and sentiments which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake alone; so expressed as he could not express them himself, nor find nor even wish them better than they are. In the other Books we are taught both by word and by example what we ought to do; this not only teaches, but imparts both the method and the practice with which to fulfill the word, and to copy the example. For we have no power of our own to fulfill the law of God, or to copy Christ; but only to pray and to desire that we may do the one and copy the other, and then, when we have obtained our request, to praise and give thanks. But what else is the Psalter, but prayer to God and praise of God; that is, a book of hymns? Therefore the most blessed spirit of God, the Father of orphans, and the Teacher of infants, seeing that we know not what or how we ought to pray, as the Apostle saith, and desiring to help our infirmities, after the manner of schoolmasters who compose for children letters or short prayers that they may send them to their parents, so prepares for us in this Book both the words and feelings with which we should address our Heavenly Father, and pray concerning those things which in the other Books He had taught us we ought to do and to copy, that so a man may not feel the want of anything which is of import to his eternal salvation. So great is the loving care and grace of our God toward us, who is blessed forevermore."

With this testimony of Luther's all Christians agree; for regardless from what point of view any church has contemplated the scheme of its doctrine, by whatever name they have thought good to

designate themselves, and however opposed to each other in church government or observance of rites, we find them all, by harmonious and universal consent, adopting the Psalter as the outward form by which they express the inward feelings of the Christian life.

From among the many beautiful expressions of praise and thanksgiving we have chosen for consideration the 30th Psalm which perhaps was composed after the Psalmist's recovery from a sickness which had nearly proved fatal. The circumstances which called it forth are no longer clear to us. But what child of the Lord can consider these words of warm gratitude without his heart burning within him at the thought of his own "many benefits" received from the "Giver of every good and perfect gift."

"I will extol Thee, O Lord; for Thou hast lifted me up,
And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.
O Lord my God,
I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.
O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave:
Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." - Ver. 1-3.

Is not this descriptive of our own experience? Do we not remember "the hole of the pit whence we were digged"? We "who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Eph. 2:1-3.) "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." (Titus 3:3.) And what of our many foes who so frequently triumphed over us; those "works of the flesh," the enemies within the fortress so graphically presented in Galatians 5:19-21? "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." (Rom. 6:21.) Yea, our feet were almost gone; our steps had well nigh slipped. We looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but found none. - Psa. 73:2; 69:20,

Then "this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." For "He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death." "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." For "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to -come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." - Psa. 34:6; 102:19, 20; Titus 3:4-7; Eph. 2:4-7; 1 Cor. 15:54-57.

"Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His,
And give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

For His anger endureth but a moment; In His favor is life:
Weeping may endure for a night,
But joy cometh in the morning." - Ver. 4, 5.

Sing praise ("sweep the strings" or "make music" -Rotherham) unto Jehovah for "praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) Again, "Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely." (Psa. 147:1.) "I waited patiently (suffering, intensely, with earnest longings, an intensity of feeling which amounted to real suffering) for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." - Psa. 40:1-3.

In its highest and truest significance, Praise is the instinctive outburst of adoring worship that rises from a pure spirit at the knowledge and vision of an Infinite, Self-existent, All-Creative, and Sovereignly Ruling God, a God of Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and Truth. It occupies a higher vantage-ground than Thanksgiving, since it represents reverent homage and appreciative adoration for God in Himself, as He is in His eternal, glorious, perfect, and blessed Being, utterly without thought of the good He bestows upon the worshiping, recipient creature. The offering of Praise, therefore, is the one spontaneous act of the true saint, unaffected by promise of good and uninfluenced by expectation of return for service. As thus unmixed with any thought of self, Praise is the highest expression of honor to God, and it brings the purest and loftiest element into the Christian's communion with God. In both Testaments it is characterized as an "offering" or "sacrifice" by which God is glorified. (Psa. 50:14, 23; 107:22; Heb. 13:15.) Joined with the tenderer and sweeter note of Thanksgiving for ineffable and unlimited "goodness and mercy," Praise is the one revealed employment of the sinless, and redeemed hosts in the Heavenly Presence. (Rev. 5:7-14.) "Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Sion." - Psa. 65:1.

The "remembrance of His holiness" means literally "His holy memorial" ("celebrate His holy memorial" - Darby) and refers probably to the passage (Exod. 3:15), "This is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations." God's name is His revelation of Himself, in all His various attributes of love, wisdom, power, holiness, truth, righteousness. God's memorial is that great history of redemption, which was, so to speak, the setting up of a monument to His glory, on which all these attributes were inscribed. The Revised Version brings out the precise thought in translating: "Give thanks to His holy memorial name."

The things of this Psalm are of continual interest. They do not belong to any one time or any one type of experience. Some of the notes in it are suitable to home and family and individuals through all the years of their history. Eminently so is the fifth verse, which tells us of the bitter and the sweet, the dark and the light, which run in various distribution, along human lives. The underlying doctrine is the great fact that "God is love," that love runs through all, rules over all, explains all.

Here is a reason why God is to be praised-because He manifests Himself in love, not in wrath; or if in wrath, but for a moment. Love directs all. Rotherham renders this verse, "For there is a Moment in His anger, a Life-time in His good-pleasure (or favor); in the evening cometh Weeping to lodge, but by the morning 'tis a shout of Triumph (or joy)." The parallelism is carefully preserved in each member-"anger . . . favor"; "a moment . . . a life-time"; "evening . . . morning"; "weeping . . . joy." Weeping is described under the image of a wayfarer who comes in at evening to lodge for the night. The suddenness and surprise of gladness, on the other hand, in the morning, are beautifully represented by the simple "at dawn, a shout of joy," without a verb. Just as the sun in Eastern lands, without any long prelude of twilight to announce his coming, leaps, as it were, in a

moment above the horizon, so does the light of God's love dispel in a moment the long night and darkness of sorrow. From Isaiah we quote a beautiful parallel passage: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." (Isa. 54:7, 8.) And in the greater picture of the Restitution day which the Psalmist's words bring to mind, with what thrilled hearts do we in foretaste picture the glorious revealing, through His Christ, of the great God of the Universe, whose righteous and holy character will then be made manifest to all humanity. In that new "heaven and earth," God's blessings abundantly poured forth upon astonished mankind will result in the wiping away of all tears from their eyes and will more than offset their experience under the terrible Night of Weeping: - Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:4; Isa. 35:10; Isa. 25:6-9.

"And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.
Lord, by Thy favor Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong;
Thou didst hide Thy face; I was troubled. I cried to Thee, O Lord;
And unto the Lord I made supplication:
What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?
Shall the dust praise Thee? shall it declare Thy truth?
Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be Thou my helper." - Ver. 6-10.

In their times of trial God's people in all ages have been brought to feel their entire dependence on Him. In days of flowing prosperity we have little sense of that dependence. As the Psalmist expresses it here: "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. We are very apt to dream, when things are well with us, that they will always be so, and never otherwise. "Tomorrow shall be as this day." Yet prosperity is more pleasant than profitable to us. Though in show it look like a fair summer, it is indeed a wasting winter, and spendeth all the fruit we have reaped in the harvest of sanctified affliction. For we are never in greater danger than in the sunshine of prosperity. It is rare to receive much of this world, and not as the prodigal to go afar off; 'tis hard to keep close to God in prosperity, when we rave much of this world to live upon and content ourselves with; to live upon God and make Him our content and stay, as if we had no other life nor livelihood but in Him. We are very apt in such a case to let go our hold of God, discustom ourselves to the exercise of faith, abate and estrange our affections from God.

It is more common to pray for strength to endure through times of adversity and suffering than for strength to endure through times of prosperity and gladness. Yet it is these latter times of buoyant self-reliance that are most full of peril. It is not in those perilous ways when every step gives fresh evidence that without our Leader we are lost, that we are most likely to turn away from Him. That supreme peril comes rather when we walk in the open plain, and have forgotten the serpents that lurk among the flowers. For every soul that is harmed by adversity, ten are harmed by prosperity. Yet you will find a hundred persons who pray against that adversity which so often brings men closer to God, where you will find one who prays against that pleasant prosperity which too often lures men away from God and from their own best future.

And how deceiving is that prosperity! When the days run smoothly, "involving happy months, and these as happy years," all seems certain to continue. But a change comes over our life. Ill-health fastens on us death invades our circle; relatives bring us into deep waters; our means of living fail; we are plunged into a very wilderness of woe. How falsely we judged when we thought that it was by its own inherent stability our mountain stood strong! No; it was solely the result of God's favor, for all our springs are in Him; the moment He hides His face we are most grievously troubled. Sad but salutary experience!

"Thou didst hide Thy face and I was troubled." What soul can be deserted and not be afflicted? All the world does no good without the favor of God. As all the stars, though they shine together, do not dispel the darkness of night; so no creatures can comfort us sufficiently when God hides His face. His absence cannot but be lamented with greatest grief, whose presence the soul prizeth above all earthly joy.

"O! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes."

How moving is the Psalmist's plea to his God in verses 8 and 9! And yet his prayer for prolonged life was not offered with the view of any earthly possession or enjoyment, but only- with a view to the honor of God. He dreaded death as being an end of praise to God. His plea is, what would my life-blood avail if Thou shouldst send me to the grave? If I may live I shall praise God and witness to His truth before the 'living, and this will avail to the glory and honor of God. But, cut down in death, my lips are dumb thenceforth as to any testimony for God in the land of the living. Essentially the same reasoning appears in Psalm 6:5 and 88:10-12 and Isa. 38:18, 19.

Every better spirit, just in proportion to its thoughtfulness and nobility, is saddened as it compares performance with aspiration and work with aim. There are times when the words of God's most believing children about this fleeting life, and the shortness of our time for doing God's appointed work, run in the mould of the Psalmist's. There was a point of view from which life presented itself to our Lord Himself as a golden day, and death as a cheerless night. "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

As we ponder our own brief span, our "fleeting breath," well may we repeat the poet's words: "What need hath God of this poor clay?"

Thank God for the assurance that we shall not lie silent in the grave, but in the glorious Age of the future we shall show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light-Him whose workmanship we now are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We therefore, with the Psalmist, ask aright for life when we have in view that we may live and praise Him.

"Lord, be Thou my helper." In every duty, in every conflict, in every trial, in every effort to promote the Lord's cause, in every season of prosperity, in every hour we live, this short prayer is suitable. If the Lord help us, there is no duty which we cannot overcome; there is no difficulty which we cannot surmount.

"Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;
Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girdeth me with gladness;
To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever." - Ver. 11, 12.

To bless God for mercies is the way to increase them; to bless Him for miseries is the way to remove them. No good lives so long as that which is thankfully improved; and no evil dies so soon as that which is patiently endured. The concluding words of this Psalm raise a responsive chord in our hearts: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." - Isa. 61:10.

"To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee." This word "glory" is also found in Psalm 16:9 and signifies "tongue," and is so translated in the quotation of this verse found in Acts 2:26. As light is the glory of fire (Exod. 24:17), so speech is the glory, the bright shining of the intellect. "Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee." (Psa. 63:3.) For what have we to do in the world as once and again His creatures, anew created unto good works, but to exercise ourselves in those, and by those to advance His glory? That all may return

to Him from whom all is, as the rivers run back to the sea from whence they came. Of Him and through Him, and therefore for Him are all things. "I will sing of Thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of Thy mercy in the morning; for Thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto Thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defense, and the God of my mercy. I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all Thy marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in Thee: I will sing praise to Thy name, O Thou Most High." - Psa. 59:16, 17; 9:1, 2.

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

"O, how can words with equal warmth
The gratitude declare
That glows within my inmost heart?
But Thou canst read it there.

"Through all eternity, to Thee
A grateful song I'll raise.
And my eternal joy shall be
To herald wide Thy praise."

-W. J. Siekman.

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 2:8-10

"Ye are complete in Him." - Col. 2:10.

IN THE preceding verses Paul has exhorted to faithfulness to Christ. In the verses now being considered the same points are covered, but more forcefully. A note of warning is sounded. The brethren are in danger, and he states clearly (a) the nature of the noxious influences threatening them, and (b) their one means of safety. "Beware lest any man spoil you [a] through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after [b] Christ." He mentions no names, not caring to specify the opponents to whom he alludes, although they were doubtless well known both to him and to the friends in Colosse to whom he wrote. "Beware lest **any** man make a spoil of you." Other instances of this expression may be seen in the following passages: 1 Cor. 11:16; 15:12; 2 Cor. 3:1; 10:2; 11:20, 21; Gal. 1:7, 9; 2 Thess. 3:10, 11; 1 Tim. 1:3, 6; 6:3, 21.

It is not some imaginary ill, some "straw man" that he combats, not a vague and uncertain threat of future invasion, illustrated by conditions in some distant ecclesia, but a menace to their spiritual welfare that is present with them at the very moment of his writing. This "any man," this "**somebody**" unnamed, without a doubt would be talking of his lofty ideals, his noble motives, his eagerness to deliver them from the bondage of ignorance, leading them into the freedom of refreshingly new theories, or perhaps only into flowering fields of rhetoric. And indeed this "somebody" may sincerely feel that he has been sent to be their deliverer, divinely appointed to instruct them in the truths that had been revealed only to himself. No deception is more insidious than self-deception. (2 Tim. 3:13, R. V.) "In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines, the precepts of men [either self-invented or borrowed]." - Matt. 15:9, Diaglott; - Isa. 29:13-16.

If this teacher really believes in himself, the danger is many times greater. It is not our province, nor the Apostle's, to pass judgment on him, either excusing or condemning. But even if that were the Apostle's privilege or duty, at this moment another matter engages his attention. However much his words may wound the "somebody" who would lead them astray, however much that one may plead innocence and sincerity of motive, never, if the Apostle can prevent- it, will those dear brethren of Colosse be led into captivity with cords about their necks like a band of Assyrian slaves-for that is the picture brought to our mind by Paul's language, made realistic to us by the monuments that providence has preserved for us.

"Philosophy" is a word to conjur with. Its mesmeric influence has lulled to sleep many an unwary Christian. The many truths that have been taught by the numerous systems, offered under that title by those who like Pythagoras, the first of the Greeks to call himself a philosopher, are "lovers of knowledge for its own sake," are no excuse for forgetting that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." "The Lord knoweth the seasonings of the wise, [even the wisest] that they are vain [in the final outcome]. Wherefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours." Why seek counsel elsewhere? (1 Cor. 3:19, 20. R.V.) "Beware of the leaven of the -Pharisees and of the Sadducees"-and of all who like them supplement the divine Word with human reasonings. - Matt. 16:11.

"From **among yourselves** shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (Acts 20:30. R.V.) "False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." (Mark 13:22.) "Do not forget your former leaders, the men who brought you God's message. Remember how they ended their lives

and imitate their faith." "You must not be carried away with strange varieties of teaching. The true way to steadfastness of heart is through God's mercy." (Heb. 13:7, 9 - Goodspeed.) "There must be also heresies [margin, "sects"] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11:19.) "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To whom be the glory both now and for ever. Amen." - 2 Pet. 3:17, 18, R.V.; see also 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

It is manifest from the Scriptures just quoted and from others of similar import that the sacred writers are not opposing a love of wisdom and knowledge, but the pursuit of knowledge merely that one may have knowledge-a useless pampering of fleshly pride. Much worse, however, is the case when both the purpose and the object of the search are vain, empty, when one seeks only self-glory and acquires only the "profane, empty sounds, and contradictions of that falsely-named knowledge." -(1 Tim. 6:20, Diaglott.) There were few of his day who were willing to accept Paul's appraisal of their philosophical systems, but time has vindicated his charge of "vain [empty] deceit." All philosophers recognize the fallacies of the systems of the past, but how few even suspect that their own reasonings will soon join all those of the past as only interesting evidence that men are "riot able to think anything of themselves."

"As the term philosophy stood in high repute among the Gentiles, the Jews of this time affected it, and both Philo and Josephus use the word to express the whole of the Mosaic institutions. . . . The Jewish philosophy, such as is found in the Cabala, Midrashim, and other works, deserves the character of vain deceit, in the fullest sense and meaning of the words."

That there is truth to be had outside the Bible, no one can deny. Every bird, every tree, every flower, every star, every cloud in the heavens has something to tell of God's wisdom. But we learn of His glory not from man's speculations regarding these but from the few facts that may be known. Herein lies the secret of the emptiness of Grecian, Jewish, and present-day philosophies. Like the Pharisees, one must leave the commandment of God, "holding fast the tradition of men," if he would wind through all the labyrinth of their so called reasonings. This expression of our Master (Mark 7:8) gives us reason to believe that Paul in using this same phrase has reference especially to Jewish "traditions"; and probably there was a similar limitation in his mind when speaking of the "rudiments of this kosmos," for his use of the phrase in Galatians 4:3 seems definitely to refer only to the rituals of the Jewish religious, services of which the new dispensation is a far-surpassing antitype. The "A B C's" (rudiments) -of this present evil world have no more allurements for the seeker after saving truth who has once heard and fully appreciated the voice of "Him that speaketh from heaven," than have those out-moded types.

Love of the Truth the Touch-stone

"In order that all those may be judged who believed not the truth, but approved the iniquity" (2 Thess. 2:12, Diaglott), a false system began to be formed in the Apostle's day and has grown into the mighty system that has been the envy of and model for all false systems. The victims caught in these modern snares, evidently "admitted not the **love of the** truth in order that they might be saved." (2 Thess. 2:10, Diaglott.) What clearer evidence could there be of not being willing to cultivate a love of truth than to devote one's time to what is admittedly error? or has an unreliable foundation? or to accept a system of teaching without even testing its foundation? or to substitute a religion of form and doctrine for the devotion of a heart truly consecrated to God and His righteousness?

"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you a first-fruit for salvation, in sanctification of spirit and belief of Truth: to which He called you by our glad tidings for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm, and retain the instructions you were taught." - 2 Thess. 2:13-15, Diaglott.

"And not after Christ" (Col. 2:8) - here is the unfailing test as to whether the "love of truth" is of the heart or of the head, of "this present order" or of "the world to come." ("Love of wisdom" [applied truth] is the literal meaning of the word philosophy.) The word "after" does not have the thought of following either at a distance or near by, but "in accordance with." The wisdom of the world and even the "first principles" must be left behind in order to "go on unto the perfection" of knowing and being in full accord with Christ. (Heb. 6:1-6.) There was nothing wrong with the rites and ceremonies that were given to the Jews, the "rudiments of this order," nor is there anything wrong with the "first principles" taught us of God, but the plan of God for those with whom He deals, at least in the present time, is one of progression -- the Christian therefore must "go on unto perfection," building "he superstructure of "gold, silver, and precious stones," a character likeness "after Christ," the "pattern showed **us**."

"Because in Him dwells all the fulness of the deity bodily." (Col. 2:9, Diaglott.) The King James and the Revised Versions use the word "godhead" instead of "deity" in their translations, and that would be just as satisfactory a translation if it were not that for most minds the word "godhead" has a mysticism suggestive of the trinity. Actually it means just what the Greek word does. The Century Dictionary, for its first definition gives: "The state of being God or a god; divine nature; deity; divinity." Thayer's definition of the Greek word is: "deity, i.e., the state of being God, godhead"; while Liddell and Scott give it: "Godhead, divinity, divine nature." Shakespeare, who was writing at the time the King James Version was being prepared, applies this title to Cupid. Evidently at that time no thought of the trinity had been injected into the Word.

Trinitarian Theory Disproved

The statement of this verse that in Jesus dwells all the fulness of divinity has been to careless thinkers ample proof of that portion of the trinitarian doctrine that makes the Father and the Son one individual. The idea of oneness in this sense would never have confused any one if our Lord's prayer that the Church might be one **even as** He and the Father are one, had been kept in mind. (John 17:22.) Similarly, remembering Paul's prayer (Eph. 3:19) that the Church may be "filled with all the fulness of God," should convince any one that there is no justification for using Colossians 2:9 to bolster the unscriptural trinitarian theory. Paul is assuring the brethren who have a sincere desire to be "rooted and built up in Him" that the world has absolutely nothing to offer them even in the best of its philosophies and traditions; because the little of good there is in these, if one could endure the "weariness .of the flesh" that a searching of the volumes of his day would entail, would not make one "complete, for completion is to be found only in Christ Jesus. "In Him [not in traditions and philosophies] dwelleth all the fulness of the divine nature bodily, and in Him ye are made full." Under the Mosaic arrangement Jehovah's glory and presence with Israel were feebly represented by a supernatural light in the Most Holy. In the one word "bodily" Paul tells that for the Christian the types and shadows have been superseded by the actuality. The body, long upon the horizon, casting its shadow "afar off," has after four thousand years of waiting revealed itself. (1 John 1:1-4.) "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." (Col. 1:19.) "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace [that is, His fulness is received gradually, day by day, not miraculously in a moment]." (John 1:16.) And the process is to be persisted in "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the personal [Rotherham] knowledge of the Son of God [in whom dwells all this fulness bodily], unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13.) Yea, "to know

even that which surpasses knowledge-the **love** of the anointed One; **so that** [by having this surpassing knowledge] you may be filled with **all** the fulness of God." - Eph. 3:19, Diaglott.

Language is used so carelessly by people in general that "filled" and "fulness" may mean anything approaching that actual condition. This is not, however, the usage of the inspired writers. The word Paul uses means nothing less than "filled to the brim," as we found in considering Colossians 1:24. The use of this word implies that the emptying is as total as the filling. Herein is victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; and there is no other way, no other name under heaven given **amongst** men that can accomplish it. In all man-made philosophies and traditions the world and the Adversary have had their hand, and so add to our bondage instead of releasing from it. He who turns to these contaminated sources for his inspiration must know little of Him who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15); "In Him are hid **all** the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3.) "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

If one would have the fulness of the Vine, he must be grafted into the Vine. His life must be the life of the Vine. From thence must come all his strength. And to yield the richest fruitage possible, there must be an uninterrupted flow of that life into the branch. This is the thought in the figure of being "rooted in Him. But we are also "built up in Him"; and of this figure it may be explained: "If thou wert pure and upright, surely now He would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase." (Job 8:6, 7.) "So the Lord blessed the latter end of job more than his beginning." (Job 42:12.) "Enlarge the place of thy tent [dwelling] and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." - Isa. 54:2, 3.

To the mind that: knows Christ's fulness, the emptiness of all the traditions and philosophies the world has to offer is apparent with a vividness of which other minds can know nothing. The only way to know His fulness is to partake of it. "And ye are complete [filled to the brim] in Him." It is profitable to make frequent examination of our vessels to discover what we find in them: Are they filled with an assortment of things of more or less worth, or filled to the brim with that which is indisputably His filling out reasonings His, our plans His, our activities His? Are we in thought, word, and deed living Christ? Can we truly say:

"Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted;
Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard;
Not I, but Christ, in every look and action,
Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word."

How do our "traditions" compare with those of the Jews? Are we more faithful than they to our "circumcision"? (Rom. 2:29.) Are we more particular than they about our "washings" -- our personal cleanliness as new creatures, and our fastidiousness regarding the food that is served to us? Is it more important that the brethren who serve our food do so with the elegance of "men and of angels," than that they "be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"? Are we any more careful than those Jews to bring all the sacrifice the Lord requires, to bring **all** our treasure into the storehouse -any more prompt in bringing in the first-fruit? Are we present at every feast in our Jerusalem? Are we more strict in observing the Sabbath rest in our hearts-that rest into which they were unable to enter because of "an evil heart of unbelief"? (Heb. 3:10-12) Are the words of the Lord so precious to us that they are prominently before us as "a sign upon our hand," as "frontlets between our eyes," so that we "talk of them in our homes," "by the way"-at all times the absorbing theme? Do we "love the Lord with **all** our heart, mind, soul, and strength"? (Deut. 6:4-

9.) "The law was but a shadow of good things to follow," but it is very profitable to trace its shadows to the reality which is ours and discover whether we do indeed have something more substantial and more prized than had they who devoted their lives to those shadows.

The One with whose fulness we are filled is "the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10), for "by Him all things are and were created," "by Him all things consist." Paul does not enlarge upon the point, nor explain why he mentions this phase of Christ's fulness in alluding to our filling. His treasures are infinite. Our finite **minds** can only cry out when contemplating Him and His fulness "Such knowledge is too great for me." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit: for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, **the deep** things of God." Would you know God? Let others turn to the broken and empty cisterns, but let us turn to Him, the Head of all principality and power, in whom all fulness dwells, and be found "complete in Him," -- "filled to the brim."

"All who were privileged to attend the convention in Milwaukee were richly blessed, for the Lord was with us. A spirit of love and good fellowship prevailed, and the brethren who ministered spoke on subjects of vital importance now, when so many trials are being experienced by the Lord's people.

"The discourse on John 17:21 brought to our attention our Lord's prayer that unity might exist among His brethren. All those who have His spirit of course have this same desire for unity and are more closely united to all who are His brethren. Jesus showed His unity with His Father by His 'delight to do His Father's will.' At the close of His life He prayed, 'Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.' He did not seek the glory for Himself, but that He in turn could revert the glory to God. When the Lord's followers catch this spirit of the Master, there will be a oneness, a unity, that will enable such to rejoice when the Gospel is preached, as did the Apostle, even though it be of envy and strife'-'notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.' May God reveal our hearts to us that we may not seek for unity with self, but for unity with the spirit of Christ. We are all partners of His grace; we have no more to bring to God than does our brother. We must all build upon the one foundation -- Christ.

"Another helpful discussion was on the great love of God as manifested in His condescending to notice us -- imperfect human beings, and call us to be His heirs -- joint-heirs with **His** Son. It is not because of works of righteousness or our worthiness, for 'not many noble are called,' but because of His great love. This should make us very humble. The various steps of progress in the Christian way were outlined, showing how after turning from evil and sin we learn the law of justice; going on, we are able to endure grief, suffering wrongfully, taking it patiently; then we learn to rejoice in suffering; to return good for evil; to 'love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us.' Surely the search-light of God's Word is turned on our own hearts as we meditate on such admonitions.

"The importance of being upright in life and having pure motives was impressed on our minds by a talk on Psalm 24, verses 3 and 4. This uprightness is to be inwrought, become a part of one's being -- loving righteousness for righteousness' sake-only such 'shall ascend into the hill of the Lord' or 'stand in His holy place.'

"Our share in the sufferings of Christ and how it is esteemed by the Lord was the subject of another helpful talk -- showing how the Church is identified with Christ in suffering and in glory

'bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus'--'planted in the likeness of His death,' 'raised in the likeness of His resurrection'; that the sacrifice of the Church, which is made holy and acceptable through Christ, gives her a share in the work of reclaiming the race, and in blessing all the families of the earth.

"The subject of 'The works of the law,' and 'the hearing of faith' (Gal. 3:2), brought us helpful lessons for our day. Even Peter, who had been with the Lord and was so greatly used by Him in upbuilding the saints and opening the door to the Gentiles-even he deflected for a time, impressing the thought that while the Lord has provided prophets, apostles, teachers, we must 'prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.' The members of Christ are bound together by 'that which every joint supplieth' -- each one is necessary -- yet Christ is the Head. Do we look to Him for our guidance, or do we look to some human agency?

"Three testimony meetings added to the enjoyment of the convention, as also the beautiful music rendered by those gifted in song and otherwise.

"The closing talk on 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ' brought us all very close. Surely the hours spent together were most profitable and edifying, and our hearts responded to the Psalmist's words: 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' "

The Milwaukee Convention

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The Inspiration of the Bible

Extracts from a lecture by H. L. Hastings before the Massachusetts Annual Convention of Y. M. C. A. Associations

THE QUESTION as to the inspiration of the Bible is not a question raised by me. It is a question that is already up for discussion through the length and breadth of this land. What are we to do with this Book? How are we to regard it? Is it the best book in the world, or the worst? Is it a true book, or is it a false one? Is it God's book, or man's?

Over and over again this Book says, "Hear ye the word of the Lord." Now, the message is the word of the Lord, or it is a lie. It is the word of the Lord, as it professes to be, or else it is a cheat, a swindle, a humbug, a fraud.

To illustrate: A man tells me that Jesus of Nazareth was a good man; but then, there were other men just as good.

But while *you* say, "He was simply one of many remarkable men," *He* says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world;" and again, "I leave the world, and go to the Father." *He* says, "O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which *I had with Thee before the world was.*" Now, do you say He was a good man and yet *He told lies*? What is your idea of a good man? I do not believe that a good man lies; and I do not believe that a man who lies is a good man. Perhaps *you* do, and if so, you were brought up in a different way from that in which my father brought me up. So I do not believe that a book packed with lies from one end to the other, is a good book; and I do not want any one to come and tell me that Jesus Christ was a good man, and the Bible is a good book, but neither of them tell the truth. I join issue there. This Book is what it professes to be, or it is a swindle; Jesus of Nazareth was what He professed to be, or He was an importer.

Suppose a man comes to town and represents himself as the son of a British nobleman. He is well-dressed and has plenty of money; but after a while they find out that he is the son of a blacksmith, down in the next town. Now I do not want you to tell me how well he behaves, what fine broadcloth he wears, or what a perfect gentleman he is in all his department. The fact is that he is a liar, a fraud, and a scamp. He has come under false colors, and palmed himself off on the community under false pretenses; and the more good things you may say about him the less I think of him; because if he is such a well-educated gentleman, he knows better than to be going around as a fraud, and deceiving the people. So we must accept Jesus of Nazareth and His claims entirely, or else we must reject the whole Gospel as an imposture, and as the grandest, most stupendous fraud the world has ever known.

Now, do not be fooled by this talk about the Bible being "a good book," and yet just like many other good books. There is not another like it in the world. Let us look at some of its peculiarities:

Here is one: The Bible is a book which has been refuted, demolished, overthrown, and exploded more times than any other book you ever heard of. Every little while somebody starts up and upsets this Book; and it is like upsetting a solid cube of granite. It is just as big one way as the other; and when you overturn it again, it is right side up still. They overthrew the Bible a century ago, in Voltaire's time entirely demolished the whole thing. "In less than a hundred years," said Voltaire, "Christianity will be swept from existence, and have passed into history." Infidelity ran

riot through France, red-handed and impious. A century has passed away. Voltaire's old printing press, it is said, has since been used to print the Word of God; and the very house where he lived has been packed with Bibles from garret to cellar, as a depot for the Bible Society. Up to the year 1800, from four to six million copies of the Scriptures, in some thirty different languages, comprised all that had been produced since the world began. Eighty years later, in 1880, the statistics of eighty different Bible societies which are now in existence with their unnumbered agencies and auxiliaries, report more than 165,000,000 Bibles, Testaments, and portions of Scripture, with two hundred and six *new* translations, distributed by Bible societies alone since 1804; to say nothing of the unknown millions of Bibles and Testaments which have been issued and circulated by private publishers throughout the world. For a book that has been exploded so many times, this book yet shows signs of considerable life.

I hear of a man traveling around the country exploding this Book and showing up "The Mistakes of Moses," at about two hundred dollars a night. It would be worth something after hearing the infidel on "The Mistakes of Moses," to hear Moses on the mistakes of the infidel.* When Moses could talk back, he was rather a difficult man to deal with. Pharaoh tried it, and sank like lead beneath the waves. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and it is said were buried in the Red Sea. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram tried it, and went down so deep that they have not yet got back. But now Moses is dead, and it is easy to abuse him. It does not take a very brave beast to kick a dead lion.

* It would be interesting to hear a military leader and legislator, like "Moses the man of God," who, after he was eighty years old, commanded for forty years an *army* of six hundred thousand men, emancipating, organizing, and giving laws to a nation which has maintained its existence for more than thirty stormy centuries, give his candid opinion concerning "the mistakes" of a "Colonel" of cavalry, whose military career is said too have included one single engagement.

But, after all, this Book seems to stand abuse, and thrive upon refutation. A few months ago some learned men, after working for a number of years on the revision of the New Testament, finished their work. Having inserted a few modern words instead of others which had become obsolete, made some slight corrections of errors in translation, and rectified from ancient manuscripts some little errors which had been made by copyists in transcribing the Book, at last the Book was announced as ready to be issued on a certain day. What was the result? Why, men offered five hundred dollars to get a copy of that Book a little in advance of its publication; and the morning it was published the streets of New York were blockaded with express wagons backed up and waiting for copies of that Book which had been refuted, exploded, and dead and buried for so many years. Millions of copies of that Book were sold as fast as they could be delivered. They telegraphed the whole of that Book from New York to Chicago, for the sake of getting it there to print in a newspaper twenty-four hours in advance of the mail.

A dead book, is it? They would not pay for telegraphing the greatest infidel speech ever delivered in this country. This old Book seems to show some signs of life yet.

It outlives its foes. If you could gather all the books written against it, you could build a pyramid higher than Bunker Hill Monument. Now and then a man goes to work to refute the Bible; and every time it is done, it has to be done over again the next day or the next year. And then after its enemies have done their worst, some of its professed friends torture and twist and misrepresent it. It lives through all that. Infidels have been at work for nearly eighteen hundred years, firing away at it, and making about as much impression upon it as you would shooting boiled peas at Gibraltar.

The fact is, this Book has come into the world, and it seems to have come to stay. It is in the world, and I do not know how you are to get it out. One hundred years ago you might have found that Book in twenty or thirty translations; but now you can find it in from between two and three hundred different versions, most of which have been made in this last progressive, intellectual, nineteenth century. All over the globe it goes; touch any shore and you will find the Book there before you.

Every one knows that where this Book has influence it makes things safe. Why is this? If it were a bad book, we should expect to find it in the hands of the worst men. If it were a bad book, you would expect a man to have a revolver in one pocket and a New Testament tucked away in another.

What makes the Book so different from all other books? Whose book is it? Who made it? Infidels have the strangest ideas of that subject. I recollect in Marlboro, Mass., I read in a paper an article written by an infidel, which stated that the Council of Nice in the year 325, compiled the New Testament. They had a lot of Gospels and Epistles, genuine and spurious, and no one could distinguish between the two; so they put them all on the floor, and prayed that the good ones might get up on the communion table and the bad ones stay on the floor; and that was the way the present New Testament was compiled.

And that very statement can be found in infidel books now published in Boston. This writer said that this account rested on the authority of Papias, an early Christian Bishop. I replied in a lecture, that there was one difficulty about that story—that Papias was dead and buried a hundred and fifty years before the Council of Nice was held. The man rose to explain, and said that this was not the right Papias, but that it was another Papias, an obscure Christian Bishop of the fourth century. I told him I thought he was obscure, so obscure that no one ever heard of him before or since. On investigation it was learned that a German dominie, named John Pappus, preacher in Strausburg, and a professor at Munster, who died in 1610, discovered this story in an old Greek manuscript entitled "Synodikon," which was written by some one down in the dark ages, about the year 900; for it relates things which occurred as late as 869, or five hundred years after the Council of Nice was dead and buried. And this story, written nobody knows when, where, or by whom, has been swallowed, believed, and published by infidels far and near, as an account of the origin of the New Testament.

I have on one of my library shelves, between twenty and thirty volumes, containing about twelve thousand pages of the writings of different Christian authors who wrote *before* A. D. 325, when the Council of Nice was held. These books are full of Scripture. Those writers had the same books which we have; they quoted the same passages which we quote; they quoted from the same books from which we quote.

Origen, who wrote a hundred years before the Council of Nice, quotes five thousand seven hundred and forty five passages from all the books of the New Testament; Tertullian, A. D. 200, makes more than three thousand quotations from the New Testament books; Clement, A. D. 194, quotes three hundred and eighty passages; Irenaus, A. D. 178, quotes seven hundred and sixty-seven passages; Polycarp, who was martyred A. D. 165, after having served Christ eighty-six years, in a single epistle quoted thirty-six passages; Justin Martyr, A. D. 140, also quotes from the New Testament; to say nothing of heathen and infidel writers like Celsus, A. D. 150, and Porphyry; A. D. 304, who referred to and quoted multitudes of the very passages now found in the Scriptures which we have. Indeed, Lord Hailes, of Scotland, having searched the writings of the Christian Fathers to the end of the third century, actually found the *whole of the New Testament*, with the exception of less than a dozen verses, scattered through their writings which

are still extant; so that, if at the time of the Council of Nice every copy of the New Testament had been annihilated, the book could have been reproduced from the writings of the early Christian Fathers, who quoted the book as we quote it, and who *believed it*. And now infidels talk about the Council of Nice getting up the New Testament. You might as well talk about a town-meeting getting up the Revised Statutes of the State of Massachusetts, because they happened to say they accepted or received them. The Council of Nice did nothing of the kind. *The books of the New Testament* were received from the Apostles who wrote them, and were carefully preserved, and publicly read in the churches of Christ long before the Council of Nice was held.

Says Tertullian; A. D. 200, "If you are willing to exercise your curiosity profitably in the business of your salvation, visit the apostolic churches, in which the very chairs of the Apostles still preside in their places; in which their very *authentic letters are recited*, sounding forth the voice and representing the countenance of every one of them. Is Achaia near you? You have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia you have Philippi and Thessalonica; if you can go to Asia you have Ephesus, but if you are near to Italy we have Rome."

These apostolic churches received the Gospels at the hands of men who wrote them; and the Epistles were given and signed by men whom they well knew. Paul wrote, "The salutation of me, Paul, by *mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle, so I write.*"

Now, what did these writers testify? They testified things which they knew. The Apostle John did not say, "That which we have dreamed, imagined, or guessed at, that thing do we declare unto you;" but "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life." (1 John 1:1.) This was their testimony. They testified that they *saw* Christ in His life and in His death; that they saw Him after His resurrection, and they knew these things and testified of them. They preached Christ, who had died and risen again. These Apostles suffered the loss of all things, and imperiled their very lives in proclaiming truth; and they left their testimony on record in this Book. Then, the Apostles quote from the Prophets, and the Prophets quote from the Psalms, and refer to the law which was given on Mount Sinai; and so we go back from book to book, until we reach the book of Genesis, and that does not quote from anybody or anything. You have then reached the fountain head.

"But," says one, "I think the Bible may be a true history." So you think it an easy matter to tell the truth, do you? I wish you could make other people think so. Suppose you go and read a file of the newspapers published just before the last election, and see if you do not think it requires divine inspiration to tell the truth, or even to find it out after it is told. Truth is mighty hard to get at, as you can see by perusing the daily papers on the eve of an election.

There are certain things in the Bible which, to my mind, bear the impress of divinity. A skeptic will tell you what a race of sinners we read about in the Bible! Do you suppose that if the Bible had been revised by a committee of eminent divines, and published by some great religious society, we should ever have heard of Noah's drunkenness, of Jacob's cheating, or of Peter's lying, cursing, or dissembling? Not at all. The good men, when they came to such an incident, would have said, "There is no use in saying anything about that. It is all past and gone; it will not help anything, and it will only hurt *the cause.*" If a committee of such eminent divines had prepared the Bible, you would have got a biography of men whose characters were patterns of piety and propriety. Sometimes a man writes his own diary, and *happens to* leave it for some one to print after he is dead; but he leaves out all the mean tricks he ever did, and puts in all the good acts he can ever think of; and you read the pages, filled with astonishment, and think, "What a

wonderfully good man he was!" But when the Almighty writes a man's life he tells the truth about him; and there are not many who would want their lives printed if the Almighty wrote them.

When the Lord undertakes to tell His story of a sinful man, He does not select a poor, miserable beggar, and show him up; He does not give even the name of the guilty woman who bathed the Savior's feet with her tears; *but* He takes King David from the throne and sets him down in sackcloth and ashes, and wrings from his heart the cry, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out all my transgressions." And then when he is pardoned, forgiven, cleansed, and made whiter than snow, the pen of inspiration writes down the dark, damning record of his crimes, and the king on his throne has not power nor wealth nor influence enough to blot the page; and it goes into history for infidels to scoff at for three thousand years. Who wrote that?

A book which tells the faults of those who wrote it, and which tells you that "there is none righteous no, not one," bears in it the marks of a true book; for we all know that men have faults and failings and sins, and among all the men described in that Book, *every man* whose life is recorded has some defect, some blot, save one, and that is "the man Christ Jesus."

Men say there are difficulties and absurdities and errors and contradictions in the Bible. After speaking once in the city of Boston, an infidel came to me and told me that the Bible was not true, for there was that story which Moses told about the quails. Israel lusted after flesh, and the Lord sent them quails to eat, and they fell by the camp a day's journey on each side, or over a territory forty miles across, and they were two cubits deep on the ground, and the Israelites ate them for about a month. I have in my possession an infidel paper which was published in Boston, in which there is about a column of arguments and figures on this "quail story," giving an estimate of the number of bushels of quails that were piled *up* over the country, and showing that when they were divided among the six million Israelites, each Jew would have 2,888,643 bushels of quails, which they were to eat during the month, giving each poor Israelite 69,620 bushels of quail to eat at each meal, during the month; and therefore the Bible was not true! I answered that the Bible did not say any such thing. He insisted that it did. "Well," said I, "find it!" He could not find the place; so I turned over to the eleventh chapter of Numbers, and there read that instead of the birds being packed like cordwood on the ground, three feet deep, the account says that the Lord brought the quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were "two cubits *high*," or about three feet high upon or above the face of the earth. That is, instead of flying overhead and out of reach, they were brought in about three feet high, where any one could take as many of them as he chose. And this skeptical friend had got the birds packed solid, three feet deep, over a territory forty miles across. As if some one should say that *a* flock of geese flew as high as Bunker Hill Monument, and we should insist that they were packed solid from the ground up, two hundred and twenty-one feet high! This is a sample of the arguments to prove that the Bible is not true!

The Book, to my mind, bears the marks of inspiration in the foresight which it exhibits. This Book foretells things. You cannot do that. You cannot tell what will be next year, or next week. "The spirits" cannot tell who will be the next president. They may tell a great many things that are past. They may tell you who your grandmother was, and may copy the inscriptions on your grandfather's grave-stone, and may tell things which were written in the family record. They may reveal many things in the past -- for the devil knows about the past-but they cannot foretell the future.

The revelations of prophecy are facts which exhibit the divine omniscience. So long as Babylon is in heaps, so long as Nineveh lies empty, void, and waste; so long as Egypt is the basest of kingdoms; so long as Tyre is a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; so long as

Israel is scattered among all nations; so long as Jerusalem is trodden under foot of the Gentiles; so long as the great empires of the world march on in their predicted dieted course-so long we have proof that one omniscient mind dictated that Book, and "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man."

We call this Bible a book, but here are sixty different books, written by thirty or forty different men. A man e may say, "I do not believe in the Book of Esther." Well d what of that? We have sixty-five others left. What will *n you* do with them? A man says, "I find fault with this e chapter or with that." Suppose you do? If you were on trial for murder and had sixty-six witnesses against you, suppose you impeach one of them, there are sixty-five left; impeach another, and you still have sixty-four left; impeach another, and you have sixty-three-enough to hang you up if you are guilty. Do you not see that you cannot impeach this Book unless you do it in detail? Each Book bears its own witness, and stands by itself on its own merits; and yet each Book is linked with all the rest. Blot out one, if you can. I am inclined to think it would be difficult to do this. This Book is built to stay together; it is inspired by one Spirit.

The authorship of this Book is wonderful. Here are words written by kings, by emperors, by princes, by poets, by sages, by philosophers, by fishermen, by statesmen; by men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the schools of Babylon, trained up at the feet of rabbis in Jerusalem. It was written by men in exile, in the desert, and in shepherd's tents, in "green pastures" and beside "still waters." Among its authors we find the fisherman, the tax-gatherer, the herdsman, the gatherer of sycamore fruit; we find poor men, rich men, statesmen, preachers, exiles, captains, legislators, judges-men of every grade and class. The authorship of this Book is wonderful beyond all other books.

And what a book it is -- filled with law, ethics, prophecy, poetry, history, genealogy, sanitary science, political economy. It contains all kinds of writing; but what a jumble it would be if sixty six books were written in this way by ordinary men. Suppose, for instance, that we get sixty-six medical books written by thirty or forty different doctors of various schools, believers in allopathy, homeopathy, hydropathy, and all the other opathies, bind them all together, and then undertake to doctor a man according to that book! What man would be fool enough to risk the results of practicing such a system of medicine? Or, suppose you get thirty five editors at work writing treatises on politics, and then see if you can find any leather strong enough to hold the books together when they have got through.

But again, it took fifteen hundred years to write this Book, and the man who wrote the closing pages of it had no communication with the man who commenced it. How did these men, writing independently, produce such a book? Other books get out of date when they are ten or twenty years old: but this Book lives on through the ages, and keeps abreast of the mightiest thought and intellect of every age.

Suppose that thirty or forty men should walk in through that door. One man comes from Maine, another from New Hampshire, another from Massachusetts, and so on from each state, each bearing a block of marble of peculiar shape. Suppose I pile up these blocks in order until I have the figure of a man, perfectly symmetrical and beautifully chiseled, and I say, "How did these men, who had never seen each other, chisel out that beautiful statue?" You say, "That is easily explained. One man planned that whole statue, made the patterns, gave the directions, distributed them around; and so, each man working by the pattern, the work fits accurately when completed." Very well. Here is a book coming from all quarters, written by men of all classes, scattered through -a period of fifteen hundred years; and yet this Book is fitted together as a wondrous and

harmonious whole. How was it done? "Holy men of God spake as they were moved .by the Holy Ghost." One mind inspires the whole Book, .one voice speaks in it all, and it is the voice of God.

Again, I conclude that this Book has in it the very breath of God, from the effect that it produces upon men. There are men who study philosophy, astronomy, geology, geography, and mathematics, but did you even hear a man say, "I was an outcast, a wretched inebriate, a disgrace to my race, and a nuisance in the world, until I began to study mathematics, and learned the multiplication table, and then turned my attention to geology, got me a little hammer, and knocked off the corners of the rocks and studied the formation of the earth; but since that time I have been as happy as the day is long; I feel like singing all the time, my soul is full of triumph and peace; and health and blessing have come to my desolate home once more." Did you ever hear a man ascribe his redemption and salvation from intemperance and sin and vice to the multiplication table, or the science of mathematics or geology? But I can bring you, not one man, or two, or ten, but men by the thousand who will tell you, "I was wretched; I was lost; I broke my poor old mother's heart; I beggared my family; my wife was broken-hearted and dejected; my children fled from the sound of their father's footstep; I was ruined, reckless, helpless, homeless, hopeless, until I heard the words of that Book!" And since that Word entered his heart he will tell you that hope has dawned upon his vision; that joy has inspired his heart; and that his mouth is filled with grateful song. He will tell you that the blush of health has come back to his poor wife's faded cheek; that the old hats have vanished from the windows of his desolate home; that his rags have been exchanged for good clothes; that his children run to meet him when he comes; that there is bread on his table, fire on his hearth, and comfort in his dwelling. He will tell you all that, and he will tell you that the Book has done the work. Now, this Book is working just such miracles, and is doing it every day. If you have any other book that will do such work as this, bring it along. The work needs to be done; if you have the book that will do it, bring it out. But for the present, while we are waiting for you, as we know this Book *will* do the work, we propose to use it until we can get something better.

Christians sometimes try to defend the Word of God, but it is its own best witness and defender. The best thing for us to do is to bring out the Word of God, and let "the word of the Spirit" prove its own power, as it pierces "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."

The Book is its own witness. It bears its own fruits and tells its own story. It is a sorrowful fact that you can hardly go into a prayer-meeting but you are likely to hear a quotation from Scripture that is not in the Bible and never was. You may hear, "In the midst of life we are in death," from the Prayer-book; "He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," from an old romance; "God unchangeably ordains whatsoever comes to pass," from the Catechism; accompanied by passages misquoted, misunderstood, and misapplied, which show that the people do not study their Bibles and do not understand them. We need to *read* the Bible, to search it, study it, believe it, and obey it, and we shall find that it is the Word of salvation to the perishing, and that it is filled with sanctifying power.

But, says one, "I do not understand the Bible. I read it, but I cannot make anything of it." "How do you read your Bible?" "Oh, I read a chapter now and then! I read it here and there." Suppose your boy comes home from school and says, "I can't make anything of this arithmetic; it is all dark to me." You say to him, "How did you study it?" "Oh, I read a little at the beginning, and then I turned to the middle and read a little here and there, and skipped backward and forward. But I don't understand it; I can't see into it."

You say to him, "My son, that is not the way to understand arithmetic. You must begin with the simplest elements, and master every principle, learn every rule, solve every problem, and thus the whole book will open to you as you go on."

Take the Bible, and read it from beginning to end, and *see how it comes out!* You will find it the grandest and most thrilling story the world has ever known. Begin at the beginning, and read until you find out who is the hero of the story. You will find that the presence of one Person pervades the whole book. If you go into the British navy-yard, or on board a British vessel, and pick up a piece of rope, you will find that there is one little colored thread which runs through the whole of it -- through every foot of cordage which belongs to the British government -- so, if a piece of rope is stolen, it may be cut into inch pieces, but every piece has the mark which tells where it belongs. It is so with the Bible. You may separate it into a thousand parts, and yet you will find one thought-one great fact running through the whole of it. You will find it constantly pointing and referring to one great Personage-"the seed of the woman" that shall crush the serpent's head; the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; the seed of David, who shall sit on David's throne, and reign forever; the despised and rejected sufferer, the "man of sorrows," "the Christ of God," born in Bethlehem, crucified on Calvary, rising triumphant from Joseph's tomb; ascending to sit at God's right hand, and coming again to judge the world and reign as King and Lord of all forever. Around this one mighty Personage this whole Book revolves. "To Him give all the Prophets witness;" and this Book, which predicts His coming in its earliest pages, which foreshadows His person and His ministry through all its observances, types, and sacred prophecies, reveals in its closing lines the eternal splendors which shall crown and consummate His mighty work.

God's Word declares the end from the beginning. It is not only the chart which guides every weary wanderer to His own eternal rest, but it is the record of the great plan and purpose of the Almighty. It unfolds God's everlasting purpose, as manifested in Jesus Christ; and if one will read three chapters at the first of the Bible and three at the end, he will be struck with the correspondence which there exists.

At the beginning of the Bible we find a new world: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." At the end of the Bible we find a new world: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." At the beginning we find Satan entering to deceive and destroy; at the end we find Satan cast out "that he should deceive the nations no more." At the beginning, sin and pain and sorrow and sighing and death find entrance to the world; at the end, there shall be no more pain nor sorrow, no sighing, and no more death. At the beginning, the earth, for man's transgression is cursed with thorns and thistles; at the end, "there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." At the beginning, we find the tree of life in paradise, from which the sinner is shut away by a flaming sword, lest' he eat and live forever; at the end, we find the tree of life again "in the midst of the paradise of God," and the blessed and the blood-washed ones *have a right to* the tree of life, and "enter in through the gates into the city." At the beginning, man was beneath the dominion of death and the grave; at the end, "the dead, small and great, stand before God," the sea gives up its dead, and death and hell are destroyed in the lake of fire. At the beginning, the first Adam lost his dominion over earth, and was driven out of the garden of Eden in shame and sorrow; at the end, we find the second Adam, victorious over sin and death, enthroned as King and Lord of all, and reigning in triumph and glory forever.

Now, when you get the plan of this Book, you find that it is something more than a book of detached sentences, good maxims, and comforting words. It is a Book which unfolds the divine

purpose, and reveals not only the way of salvation, but it marks the pathway of the people of God through this wilderness, and reveals the destiny of the world and the church.

When we look at these facts we *see* that this is no man made book. When Columbus discovered the river Orinoco, some one said he had found an island. He replied: "No such river as that flows from an island. That mighty torrent must drain the waters of a continent." So this Book comes not from the empty hearts of impostors, liars, and deceivers; it springs from the eternal depths of divine wisdom, love and grace. It is the transcript of the Divine Mind, the unfolding of the divine purpose, the revelation of the divine will. God help us to receive it, to believe it, and be saved through Christ. - W. T. *Reprints, R458-R462, March, 1883.*

Encouraging Words

[The following letter is from the soldier boy mentioned in a letter published in our last issue.]

Dear Brethren:

I arrived home last Friday and feel I cannot thank God enough for all His loving kindness to me. I would not recall my experiences at camp if I could. It seems so easy to feel that one is reconciled with his Maker and yet err. I have thought for many years that I was in harmony with God, but I have found through reading, studying, and prayer that I had only a glimpse of what was right. Now, through the precious blood, I feel assured of my salvation from sin, and realize a deeper inward joy and peace than I ever knew before.

It seems that "our little prayer group" of which my parents wrote you, ranging from five to eight in number, who had prayer services out in the woods near our hospital, got very close to God. . . The men recovering from various physical ailments, operations, etc., in army hospitals, have much time to meditate, and oftentimes are in an attitude to reason on higher and better things. I am enclosing a contribution which I trust may be used to send some truth literature to some of these boys, and I pray it may be blessed by our Lord to help and encourage them. Thank God they will all have an opportunity some day to know Him and accept His merciful provision for their salvation.

With much Christian love,
Your brother in the Faith,
W. R. F. -- Kans.

Recently Deceased

Mr. Forrest Wallace, Bellingham, Wash. - (August).
Mr. J. M. Boyett, Jacksonville, Fla. - (September).
Mrs. H. Nicholson, Crary, N. Dak. - (September).
Mrs. John Rennie, Ulster Park, N. Y. - (September).
Miss Helen Mundy, Santa Barbara, Cal. - (October).
Mr. Wm. Palmer, Bellingham, Wash. - (October).