

**GRAINS OF GOLD, OR
SELECT THOUGHTS ON
SACRED THEMES. THIRD
THOUSAND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649596270

Grains of Gold, or Select Thoughts on Sacred Themes. Third Thousand by American Unitarian Association

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

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BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
21 BROMFIELD ST.
1856.

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Board
205.2

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1854, by
THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts

Stereotyped by
HOBART & ROBBINS,
New England Type and Stereotype Foundry,
BOSTON.

PREFACE.

The following selections have been taken, by permission, from two volumes of sermons, entitled *THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT AND LIFE*, and *THE CHRISTIAN BODY AND FORM*, by Rev. Cyrus A. Bartol, junior pastor of the West Church, Boston.

Seldom have the discourses of a living divine been welcomed by a larger circle of instructed and gratified readers. They have found these works marked throughout by a deep insight into spiritual truth, a living and fresh earnestness, and a rare ability to spread over subjects, usually accounted dull, the bright colors of a rich and fertile imagination. The reverent and catholic spirit of their author is seen on every page, as is also his profound conviction of the necessity of religion for the light and peace of man's soul.

It is in the hope that the striking illustrations and choicely-expressed sentences, with which these sermons abound, may, through divine grace, unseal the fountains of a spiritual life in many hearts, that this little volume has been prepared. Taken up in the house, or by the way, in the spare moment of business, or the calm hour of retirement, it may whisper a thought which shall be like an angel-visit to the soul. As a present from parents and teachers to the young, or from friend to friend, it may add, to an endeared token of affection, the aroma of a gifted and devout mind. Those familiar with the sermons will find here, we doubt not, some of the passages which they had marked; while we shall expect that these Grains of Gold will lead many to the mine from which they have been gathered.

H. A. M.

Boston, May, 1854.

GRAINS OF GOLD.

PROOF OF CHRISTIANITY FURNISHED BY WHAT IT IS AND DOES. — A survey of the actual stature and bearing of our religion effines its truth, as well as does this perpetual inquiry into its historic sources, and following down the whole line of its descent. Some deference is certainly due, not only to documentary facts, but to vital power. The volcano, no less than an obscure groping among the strata of the earth, or conflict of geologic doctrines, is demonstration of the central fire. What Christianity is and does, furnishes its evidence; not only the circumstances of its origin or conditions of its progress, from the first century to the third, or from the third to the nineteenth. Preposterous is the ground taken by some, — a ground on which all human

life would stand still, — that the Gospel is to be allowed no acceptance till we can settle every difficulty concerning it, and resolve all doubts. “How,” says our sceptic, “did it get over that early chasm of unrecorded or imperfectly accessible and strangely-storied years?” Verily, my friend, it did get over, and is here among us to teach and to bless, however inexplicable or miraculous, as in other cases of preservation, may have been the escape. To deny it recognition till you can fix every point of its genealogy is like refusing to listen to a man’s wisdom, or admire his goodness, till you have followed down, on the herald’s list or the family chart, every point of his pedigree. Grant that there are hard passages in our faith, lists of names that cannot be reconciled, knotty queries; possibly places in revelation, as there are chasms and gulfs in nature, we may try in vain to fathom, or to link together, or bridge over. But, meantime, shall we not inspect the great qualities of

the religion, examine its intrinsic beauty, observe its internal strength, taste and cultivate its precious fruits? Shall we not walk about Zion, consider her bulwarks, mark her palaces, behold her towers, and, having compared her glory with all beside of ancient rearing or modern growth, tell it to the generation following?



BIGOTRY NOT THE ONLY SIN OF WHICH A PROFFESSED BELIEVER MAY BE GUILTY. — In undertaking to determine the particular features of our religion, there is, no doubt, danger of falling into uncharitable restrictions. There is a complexion of liberality, there is a gesture of magnanimity, in wholly waiving such an attempt, and leaving every one unmolested to decide or avoid any point of doctrine or observance at his pleasure. It looks generous to interfere with nobody, and odious to reduce the latitude of any man's freedom. But, after so stout a maintenance as we have had of