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In Memory of Prof. A. L. Graebner, D. D.

The readers of the QUARTERLY are acquainted with the sad fact that it has pleased Almighty God to remove from a wide sphere of activity our well-beloved and highly esteemed colleague, Dr. A. L. Graebner, professor in Concordia Seminary and editor of the THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY. Dr. Graebner was born at Frankentrost, Mich., July 10, 1849, and died at St. Louis, Mo., December 7 last. Funeral services were held December 11 in Concordia Seminary Hall and in Holy Cross Church, the speakers being Dr. F. Pieper of St. Louis, Mo., Prof. A. Pieper of Wauwatosa, Wis., Prof. J. Schaller of New Ulm, Minn., Rev. C. C. Schmidt of St. Louis, Mo., and Dr. H. G. Stub of Hamline, Minn. Dr. A. L. Graebner was a man of rare parts, a character of great firmness, a scholar of universal learning, a church historian of original research, a master of a fluent, dignified, and lucid English, a laborer of indefatigable energy, a Christian humble and grateful, and ever ready to serve his brethren, a valiant defender of the Christian faith, a champion especially of the *sola gratia* and the *sola Scriptura*, — a TRUE LUTHERAN THEOLOGIAN, whose death, in more than one sense, means a great loss to the Lutheran church of America.

F. BENTE.

THREE OF THE PRINCIPAL PROOFS FOR THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

The Bible lays claim to a distinction which no other book can boast. It claims God for its author, its sole author. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," it says 2 Tim. 3, 16. And what it means by this expression, "Given by inspiration of God," may be seen from the parallel statement 1 Cor. 2, 13: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with

spiritual." The *things*, or thoughts, set forth in the Bible are not St. Paul's, nor any other man's, they are God's, God the Holy Ghost's, they are *spiritual*—or, rather, Spiritual—things. And the *words* in which these things, or thoughts, are expressed are not St. Paul's, nor any other man's, they are God's, they are the Holy Ghost's, they are *spiritual*—or Spiritual—words. Thus "spiritual things" are "compared," or matched,¹⁾ "with Spiritual:" the Spirit's thoughts are expressed in the Spirit's words. The Bible is, both in substance and form, the Word of God; God is its sole author. This is what the Bible claims.

But the Bible not only *claims* divine authority for itself, it offers a great mass of *evidence* in support of its claim. It is compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, which all testify with one accord: The Bible is the Word of God. And their testimony is so clear, so strong, so convincing, so overpowering, that even the greatest skeptic, if he be an honest skeptic and duly investigate the matter, cannot refrain from admitting: Yes, indeed, the Bible *is* the Word of God.

On the following pages we purpose to enlarge upon three of the principal proofs for the divine authority of the Bible, to-wit: the miracles performed by the men that penned the sacred pages; the prophecies these men uttered and the accurate fulfillment of these prophecies; the Holy Spirit's testimony in the hearts of men. The line of argument which we shall adhere to is indicated more plainly in the following four theses:

I.

If it can be demonstrated that the men who penned the Bible performed miracles to establish the truth of their teachings, their teachings and writings must be true and, hence, divine.

1) See THEOL. QUART., vol. II, No. 3, p. 287 f.

II.

That the men who penned the Bible performed miracles *can be* A) *demonstrated* by their own writings, which are altogether reliable, and B) *corroborated* by the testimony of heathen authors.—Consequently their writings are true and, therefore, divine.

III.

The prophecies contained in the Old and the New Testament, and the accurate fulfillment of these prophecies, are further conclusive evidence of the divine origin of the Bible.

IV.

The only proof for the divine origin of the Bible that begets true faith (*fides divina*) in the Scriptures is the witness which the Holy Spirit, through the word of Scriptures, witnesses in the heart.

I.

If it can be demonstrated that the men who penned the Bible performed miracles to establish the truth of their teachings, their teachings and writings must be true and, hence, divine.

∴ Miracles are things which no one but God can do. If men would perform miracles, they must do them in the power of God; God must perform their miracles by them. If the writers of the Bible performed miracles, they must have done it in the power of God; God must have done their miracles by them. But in that case their teachings and writings, which they sought to establish by these miracles and for which they claim divine authority, must be true, and, therefore, divine. For who would suppose for a moment that God would do miracles to establish the truth and the divine authority of teachings which are neither true nor divine? Who would suppose for a moment that God, the God of holiness and truth, would do miracles for the confirmation of error and falsehood? There is none so foolish as

to entertain such a notion, though but for a moment. If it can be demonstrated that the writers of the Bible performed miracles to establish the truth of their teachings, their teachings and writings (which coincide with their teachings) must be true and, hence, divine.

II.

That the men who penned the Bible performed miracles CAN BE A) DEMONSTRATED by their own writings, which are altogether reliable, and B) CORROBORATED by the testimony of heathen writers. — Consequently their writings are true and, therefore, divine.

Remark.—If it be shown that the divine origin of the *New Testament* is established by miracles, performed by the writers thereof, it will not be necessary to repeat this mode of demonstration with regard to the *Old Testament*. For the divine origin of the *Old Testament* is vouched for by the New, 2 Tim. 3, 16. Hence if the *New Testament* is the Word of God, and, therefore, infallible truth, the *Old Testament* must needs be what the *New Testament* says it is, viz., the inspired Word of God. In the elaboration of this thesis, therefore, we shall, for brevity's sake, confine ourselves to the *New Testament*, and show that the writers of the *New Testament* performed miracles to establish the truth and the divine origin of their writings.

We say, then: That the writers of the *New Testament* performed miracles can be A) demonstrated by their own writings, which are altogether reliable, and B) corroborated by the testimony of heathen writers.

A) The books of the *New Testament* are altogether reliable. For 1) they are authentic, they are genuine, *i. e.*, the writings known as apostolic writings really were written by the apostles to whom they are ascribed; 2) they have come down to us in a state of integrity, in an uncorrupted and unmutilated condition; 3) they were written by eminently trustworthy people. —

1) They are authentic. — That the books of the New Testament are authentic, that they really were written by the men to whom they are attributed, is beyond dispute. For a) all such as were ever called and qualified to bear witness concerning them attest their authenticity; b) the books of the New Testament themselves prove by their style and their contents that they are authentic.

a) The strongest possible witness for the authenticity of a letter—if for any reason the writer of it be barred from testifying in his own behalf—is the recipient of such letter, especially if he know the writer and the writer's hand. If such a recipient of a letter whose authenticity is questioned declare that he received the letter in question from the person claiming to be its author, we are bound to receive his witness, provided we are minded at all to place any confidence in the testimony of a man. Now the writings known as apostolic were, for the greater part, written not to individuals, but to *whole churches*, and these whole churches *testify with one accord* that they received these writings from their professed authors. Tertullian writes: "Come now, you, who would indulge a better curiosity, if you would apply it to the business of your salvation, run over the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones¹⁾ of the apostles are still preeminent in their places,²⁾ in which their authentic writings³⁾ are read, uttering the voice and representing the face of each of them severally. Achaia is very near you, (in which) you find Corinth. Since you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi; (and there, too,) you have the Thessalonians. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get Ephesus. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have Rome, from which there comes

1) "*cathedrae.*"

2) "*suis locis praesident.*"

3) "*authenticae.* This much-disputed phrase may refer to the *autographs*, or the Greek *originals* (rather than to the Latin translations), or full *unmutilated* copies, as opposed to the garbled ones of the heretics. The second sense is probably the correct one."

even into our own hands¹⁾ the very authority (of apostles themselves).” (Tertullian, *On Prescription against Heretics*, ch. XXXVI. Quoted from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. The Christian Literature Publishing Co. Buffalo.—Footnotes in quotation marks are by the editor.—*J. A. R.*)

In Tertullian’s work, *Against Marcion* (Book IV, ch. V), we read: “Let us see what milk the Corinthians drank from Paul; to what rule of *faith* the Galatians were brought for correction; what the Philippians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians, read *by it*; what utterance also the Romans give, so very near²⁾ (to the apostles), to whom Peter and Paul conjointly³⁾ bequeathed the Gospel even sealed with their own blood. We have also *St. John’s* foster churches.⁴⁾ For although Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, the order (succession) of the bishops (thereof), when traced up to their origin, will yet rest on John as their author. In the same manner is recognized the excellent source⁵⁾ of other churches. I say, therefore, that in them (and not simply such of them as were founded by the apostles, but in all those which are united with them in the fellowship of the *mystery of the Gospel of Christ*)⁶⁾ that Gospel of Luke which we are defending with all our might has stood its ground from its very first publication; whereas Marcion’s gospel is not known to most people, and to none whatever is it known without being, at the same time,⁷⁾ condemned. It, too, of course,⁸⁾ has its churches, but specially its own—as late as they are spurious; and should you want to know their original,⁹⁾ you

1) Tertullian had been in Rome and seen the original manuscript of the Epistle to the Romans.

2) “*de proximo*. Westcott renders: ‘who are nearest to us.’”

3) “*et—et*. *N. B.* Not Peter’s. See there.”

4) “*alumnas ecclesias*. He seems to allude to the seven churches of the Apocalypse.”

5) “*generositas*.”

6) “*de societate sacramenti*, *i. e.*, Catholic Unity.”

7) “*eadem*.”

8) “*plane*.”

9) “*causam*.” (We should suggest *defense* as a better translation of *causa* in this connection, as in the phrase: *causam dicere*.—*J. A. R.*)

will more easily discover apostasy in it than apostolicity, with Marcion, forsooth, as their founder, or some one of Marcion's swarm. Even wasps make combs;¹⁾ so also these Marcionites make churches. The same authority of the apostolic churches will afford evidence²⁾ to the other Gospels also, which we possess equally through their means³⁾ and according to their usage—I mean the Gospels of John and Matthew—whilst that which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's,⁴⁾ whose interpreter Mark was." (Quoted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*.)

Then we have the testimony of persons who actually traveled from land to land, from place to place, to gain assurance in this matter. There are the disciples of the apostles, who were personally acquainted with some, at least, of the twelve, and some of whom had even sat at the apostles' feet, such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Barnabas, Hermas; and all of these men attest the authenticity of the New Testament. In the works of these disciples of the apostles the New Testament is referred to no less than 441 times, and they quote from every book of the sacred volume save the second and third epistle of St. John. That these two form an exception will occasion no surprise to him who considers their brevity. Matthew alone is represented by 100 quotations!

Furthermore, we have the records of men that sat at the feet of these disciples of the apostles: Cyprian, Justin, Clemens of Alexandria, etc., and *they* testify unanimously that the writings of the New Testament are genuine.

And what renders the testimony of these witnesses all the more weighty and valuable is the fact that they by no means lived at the same time or place. Tertullian lived in Africa, died A. D. 220; Clemens of Rome was an inhabitant of that city a hundred years previously; Irenaeus was

1) "favos." 2) "patrocinabitur." 3) "proinde per illas."

4) See Hieronymus. *Catal. Scriptt. Eccles.* C. 8."

made bishop of Lugdunum (Lyons) 178 A. D.; Justin Martyr lived in Palestine and was beheaded in Rome 165 A. D.

Finally, we have the testimony of the so-called *Codex Muratori*, a table of all the books of the New Testament, dating from the second century.

What weight the testimony of these people in favor of our sacred writings possessed can be seen from the fact that even the most hostile foes of the Christian religion dared not deny the authenticity of these writings. Grotius writes: "We say, then, that the writings concerning which no doubt has been entertained among Christians, and which are all published under some man's name, are, indeed, the writings of those authors whose names they respectively bear; because those earliest (witnesses), Justin, Irenaeus, Clemens, and subsequently others, laud these books under these very names; to which must be added that . . . neither Jews nor Gentiles have ever raised a controversy, as if they (the aforesaid writings) were not the works of those men whose they were said to be. As for Julian, he even confesses openly that those are indeed the writings of Peter, Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, which the Christians read under those names." And continuing, Grotius says: "That the writings attributed to Homer, or those ascribed to Virgil, really are the writings of these men, no sane person doubts, owing to the perpetual testimony for the latter on the part of the Romans, and for the former on the part of the Greeks. How much more shall we have to abide by the testimony concerning the authors of *these* books, given by almost all nations, many as the world contains." (H. Grotius, *De Verit. Rel. Christ.* Lib. III, § II. pp. 200. 201.)

b) The books of the New Testament, themselves, prove, both by their style and contents, that they are authentic or genuine. The *style* of these writings shows that they date from the age in which their professed authors lived. They are written in Hellenistic Greek, which was universally spoken at that time, and they employ the same manner of

speech that is found in Josephus, Philo, and other contemporaries of the apostles.

As to their *contents*, one need but consider how true, how correct, how accurate, are the innumerable, oft seemingly inconsequential, geographical, historical, and other data which they furnish, as, *e. g.*, how far it was from Jerusalem to Bethany, what lay to the east and what to the west, what brooks and rivers and seas were found in such and such places, how Paul converted the deputy of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus by name—one need but consider, we say, how true, how correct, how accurate, these and other innumerable, oft seemingly insignificant, data are, to see clearly that these books never could have been written by impostors, that published them under other people's names. Impostors would have erred in these matters a thousand times.

2) That the books of the New Testament are reliable is evidenced also by the fact that they have come down to us in an uncorrupted and un mutilated condition. That they have not been corrupted or mutilated is shown by the following: a) All existing Bibles agree with one another—a thing which were simply impossible if they had been corrupted or mutilated; b) all translations agree with the existing originals; c) all quotations found in the writings of either friend or foe, and, no less, those found in the expositions of entire books of the Bible, from the earliest down to the most recent times, likewise agree with the originals.

a) The Bible has been scattered through the world in billions of copies, and yet in all these copies we have the selfsame Bible. Yea, there are extant at the present time about 700 manuscripts, of the New Testament as many, even, as 3791.¹⁾ These manuscripts date from periods remote alike from the present and from one another. One canon, the *Codex Sinaiticus*, dates as far back as the fourth century—of the New Testament there are even two—and, at that, not to the end but to the beginning of that century,

1) Weseloh, *Das Buch des Herrn und seine Feinde*.

“about the time of the first Christian emperor,” as the discoverer of this ancient manuscript puts it.—But all these manuscripts agree with the Bible that we are familiar with. The various manuscripts and printed editions, particularly of the New Testament, present, indeed, a multitude of different versions or readings. But what text handed down from antiquity does not? Surely, if the Bible were to form an exception—the only one!—in that regard, its enemies would have some semblance of a case in accusing its friends and copyists of a gigantic conspiracy to falsify the text. The fact that all these various readings have been preserved proves that the original text has not been lost to Christendom. Furthermore, despite their great number a careful collation of these readings only serves to show that with all this variety of *wording*—and lettering and punctuation, we may add—the *doctrine* of the Bible remains unchanged. The Deists of England once prepared an edition of the Bible containing all those readings which they deemed the most suspicious, and lo! the teachings of the Bible were found to be unaltered. Tischendorf writes in his narrative of the discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript: “The late Prof. Moses Stuart, a learned biblical scholar and critic, gave this testimony to the general correctness of the present text of the Bible in the original languages: ‘Out of some eight hundred thousand various readings of the Bible that have been collated, about seven hundred and ninety-five thousand are of just about as much importance to the sense of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures as the question in English orthography is, whether the word *honour* shall be spelled with a *u* or without it. Of the remainder, some change the sense of particular passages or expressions, or omit particular words or phrases, *but no one doctrine of religion is changed, not one precept is taken away, not one important fact is altered by the whole of the various readings collectively taken.*’”¹⁾

1) Italics our own.

b) *Translations* of the Bible were prepared as early as the second century, and they have continued to multiply ever since. Yet, despite their numerousness, they all agree with one another and with the very oldest manuscripts, *i. e.*, all that deserve to be called translations. There is not an article of Christian doctrine that does not find clear expression, *e. g.*, in the Vulgate. God has not suffered His Word itself to be corrupted.

c) All *quotations* to be found in the books of either friend or foe, among them such as occur in expositions of entire biblical books, are in harmony with the texts that are extant. As for the quotations occurring in the books of friends of the Bible, it has already been stated that alone in the writings of the apostolic fathers the New Testament is quoted upward of 400 times. Besides these authors there are nine apologetic writers who, in the second century, defended the Christian religion against the attacks of its foes and, in order to do so, quoted such passages of Scripture as the enemy had assailed. And their quotations all agree with the existing texts.—The Council of Nice was attended by 318 bishops representing every part of the *οἰκουμένη*. In their deliberations these men naturally quoted from the New Testament. And lo, what wonderful harmony! Yea, what utter confusion, if their quotations had failed to agree!—Historians living in that age were frequently obliged to quote from the Bible, and their quotations are in keeping with the texts to which we now have access. Yea, the quotations made by the very foes of the Bible, such as Celsus, Porphyry, Manes—the last-named author could read neither Greek, Latin, nor Hebrew. The only language he understood was Syrian, and the only text he could quote from, the Syrian translation. And yet even *his* quotations—are faithful reproductions of the well-known biblical texts.

3) That the writings of the New Testament are altogether reliable is evident also from the fact that they were written by eminently trustworthy people. These men

a) were able to write the truth; b) they were willing to write the truth; c) they were compelled to write the truth.

a) They were able to write the truth; for they wrote about things their eyes had seen, their ears had heard, their hands had handled; things they had carefully explored, having had them delivered unto them by people "which from the beginning were eye-witnesses," so that they "had perfect understanding of all things from the very first;" things that were made known to them by immediate revelation from heaven. Matthew, John, Peter, and Jude, were of the twelve whom Jesus had chosen to be witnesses of His deeds and doctrines. Wherefore St. John writes: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, *and we beheld His glory*, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John 1, 14. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him," John 2, 11. 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; for the life *was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness*, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and *was manifested unto us: that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you*," 1 John 1, 1—3. And Peter: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, *but were eye-witnesses of His majesty*. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. *And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount*," 2 Pet. 1, 16—18. James was either one of the twelve or a near kinsman of Jesus. Paul could not be mistaken about his doctrine, seeing he had received it from Jesus Christ by immediate revelation, Gal. 1, 11. 12, and when he relates his own acts, he cer-

tainly speaks of things of which he had "perfect understanding." As for the records of St. Luke, they are based, partly, upon his own personal observation—a goodly portion of the Book of Acts—partly upon communications made to him by eye-witnesses, Luke 1, 1—4. Grotius writes: "If we credit Tacitus and Suetonius, when they tell us about things that happened many years before they were born, because we place confidence in their painstaking research: how much more ought we to believe *this* writer (Luke), who says he had perfect understanding of all things from the first, they having been delivered to him by them which from the beginning were eye-witnesses." Mark is said by Eusebius and Irenaeus to have been Peter's steady companion, and he certainly had every opportunity to carefully investigate the matters of which he wrote. In writing the Book of Revelation, John was at no disadvantage as compared with Paul. Nor was the author of Hebrews, as compared with Mark and Luke, cf. Hebr. 2, 3. 4. (The last remark is based upon the assumption that the Book of Hebrews was not written by an apostle.)

b) However, the writers of the New Testament were not only able to write the truth, they were also willing and minded to do so. Judging by the experiences they had undergone in the past while *preaching* their doctrines, what could they hope to gain by committing them to writing and thus making them accessible to all the world? Could they hope for wealth, honor, comfort, earthly advantages of any kind? Far from it. On the contrary. If their past experiences foreboded anything, they foreboded such things as these: Want, contempt, hatred, persecutions, imprisonment, all manner of abuse, yea, death itself. Nor were these things left to conjecture. Christ Himself had assured His apostles that such would be their reward at the hands of men. Now who can imagine a merchant, yea, a whole syndicate, that would barter in lies and frauds for the sake of such strange lucre? Furthermore, if they had been minded

to impose upon the credulity of the world, they surely would not have related so many disparaging things about themselves, such as their flight in Gethsemane, Peter's denial in the palace, his dissimulation in Antioch! And who can accuse these men of aught that would furnish a basis for the charge of willful deception?

c) Yea, the writers of the New Testament were *compelled* to write the truth. The historical portions of their writings—and their writings are largely historical—are filled with accounts of things that were well known to their very first readers. The miracles of Jesus, *e. g.*, were very generally known, so *very* generally known that neither Jew nor Gentile dared to call them in question. On the contrary, they freely acknowledged them. The Jews acknowledged them in their *Talmud*, and Josephus is credited with writing: "At this time Jesus lived, a wise man, if, indeed, he may be called a man. For he performed *wonderful deeds* and was a teacher of men that gladly received the truth. Even as many, both Jews and Gentiles, became his followers. *And this was the Christ*. Although Pilate, acting upon the charges made by the rulers of our people, had him crucified, yet they that had loved him from the first continued his faithful adherents. *For on the third day that followed he reappeared to them alive*. Even as the prophets of God foretold not only this, but a thousand other wondrous things concerning him." Celsus writes: "You believe that he (Jesus) was the Son of God, *because he HEALED the lame and the blind*." Julian says: "Except one be minded to number among the greatest deeds the healing of the lame and the blind and the deliverance of such as were possessed with devils, in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany." (Grot. l. c., p. 111.)—In view of this wide-spread fame that attached to the miracles of Jesus and to many other things which the apostles relate in their writings, it was not only unnecessary, it was downright impossible for these men to prevaricate. They were compelled to tell the truth.

Now these thoroughly reliable writings, whose authenticity, integrity, and credibility is so manifest, so palpable that none but a foolish or malevolent spirit can call them in question—these altogether reliable writings declare that their authors performed miracles to establish the truth and divine authority of their teachings. Mark 16, 20: "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following." Yea, they frequently give minute descriptions of such miracles: Acts 3, 1—10; cf. 4, 14—16; 5, 1—16; 9, 32—42; 14, 1—11; 16, 16—18; 19, 1—6; 19, 8—12; cf. vv. 13—16! 20, 6—12; 28, 1—6; 21, 7—9.

Thus we have demonstrated by their own writings that the apostles, the authors of the New Testament, performed miracles to establish the truth of their doctrine. And what has thus been demonstrated can be corroborated by the testimony of heathen writers.

B) Grotius writes: "In the times that closely followed it was never dared, by Jew or Gentile, to deny that these men performed miracles. Moreover, Phlegon, a freedman of the Emperor Adrian, has, in his annals, handed down the miracles of Peter to posterity." "The graves of the apostles were the scenes of such frequent miracles, and the witnesses thereof were so numerous, that even Porphyry was driven to acknowledge the matter." Koecher, the editor of this edition of Grotius, adds: "Not only Porphyry but also Julian." Touching Grotius' statement concerning Phlegon, however, Koecher remarks: "Grotius errs when he endeavors to summon Phlegon from the works of Origen as a witness in behalf of the miracles of Peter. He could better have summoned him as a witness of the foreknowledge of Christ and Peter. For this is what Origen says regarding the matter: 'Phlegon certainly admits frankly and freely in the thirteenth or, if I mistake not, in the fourteenth volume of his *Chronicles*, that Christ foreknew what was going to happen, *confounding Christ with Peter*, and he

testifies that whatever was foretold came to pass.''' (Grot. l. c. pp. 208. 209.) But is not foretelling what shall come to pass—is not that a miracle?

Thus we have demonstrated by the New Testament itself, and have corroborated by the testimony of heathen writers, that the men who penned the New Testament performed miracles to establish the truth and the divine authority of their teachings, and that, hence, their claim that their writings, and likewise those of the Old Testament, are the inspired Word of God, is fully and firmly established.

J. A. RIMBACH.

(To be continued.)
