

tinued, calmly, paying no attention to the embarrassing interruption.

"Now, whether it was because she was astonished by such goin's on, or whether she felt sort o' cramped in her legs after sleepin' so long in one position, I don't know, but the very next thing the cow did was to jump over the moon. That's what I told you in the first place. It was all the same cow.

"Almost anybody else would have stopped to look at such a jump as that, but Jack and the Maiden All Forlorn paid no attention to it at all. And while the cow was gone they started right off to get married.

"There! I've got that old harness done at last. Now we'll go 'nd hunt fur eggs."

"Why, Mr. Natty!" Mildred cried out in protest. "That isn't all, is it? I've been waiting all this time for you to get to Cinderella!"

"Cinderella? Oh, why—well, you see, punkins ain't ripe yet!" said Nat, with solemn seriousness.



Sunday Afternoon

"Shall the Son of Man Find Faith on the Earth?"

By Samuel H. Bishop, D.D.

Howbeit when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? Luke xviii., 8.

Every great spirit has, at some time, to ask itself the questions: Is the life I am living worth my while? Is the work I am doing something which reaches beyond me into the future? Am I concerning myself with something that is temporary, enduring only while my life endures, or with something that is eternal? What will be the result of my work and of my life? Lesser spirits ask the question: Shall I be remembered after I am dead? This last question seems weakly sentimental, but it is in lesser degree, according to the measure of him who asks it, the same question that the greater spirit asks; and it reveals evidence of the kinship of the race, of something in every mind, great as well as small, which lies at the basis of human effort and inspires human progress. And there is an element of pathos in the question which gives to every one who asks it a kind of greatness, because it implies some desire to be and to do something worthy of remembrance. It is interesting to see how the forms of the question grade.

The lowest form is concerned only with the person: Shall I be remembered after I am dead? The next higher form is concerned with the work and with the person: Is the work I am doing eternal, so that I shall share the nature of my work? The highest form, the divine form, is concerned only with the work: Is the work so great, so rich, so valuable, that, no matter what becomes of me, it must go on forever, it must result in an eternal fruitage? This is the form of the question as our Lord asks it: "Howbeit when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" And the pathos in the question comes out of the fact that our Lord's energies and life were spent in the work of inspiring and of developing faith on the earth. There are two or three incidental thoughts which are suggested by this fact. Jesus Christ had a purpose for which he was living. Life is existence plus purpose; and life will never be complete unless the purpose be as broad as the existence. It is the element of purpose which differentiates living from lasting. An existence without a purpose is a question to which there is no answer, a half to which there is no complementary half, a key for which there is no lock. Purpose is equilibrium and at the same time momentum, center of gravity and also the principle and the power of upward movement.

Another incidental thought is that each man's purpose should be a little larger, a little heavier, than he. Environment always contributes a little of its nature to the small-

est individual in it. Large circumstances, large opportunities, give a kind of largeness to him who can use them. The inland lake that is brought into connection with the ocean will soon become salt: the larger gives character to the smaller. You get a sense of infinity within you when you stand at night in some place in which you can see a vast expanse of sky flaming with light from myriads of worlds and suns, whose distances from each other and from yourself you cannot even conceive; and when the lightning plays from under the horizon, you get a sense of kinship with something which is beyond the veil that circumscribes your human sight. So purpose, as it is larger, should be heavier, than self—that is, should add intensity to living. An excess of weight on one side of a balance-scale sends the other side up, and if the length of the cross-bar were infinite, the uplift would be infinite. An intense purpose acts externally in uplifting life; it also acts internally. A projectile that is to carry far must have a density or weight that shall bear a certain mathematical relation to its size. Lead is used for rifle-balls because its density or weight is great and its spatial displacement is small. That is what is meant by calling purpose the momentum of the soul.

Then, large and intense purpose will always have a future reference. The essence of immortality is an endless purpose in the soul. Immortality is not merely continued existence; it is continued activity. It is not sufficient that you keep on living. You must live in those who follow you. George Eliot neglected a part of the idea of immortality, but she had a firm grasp on another part of the idea when she said:

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues. . . . This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow.

And so it is because our Lord had a large and intense purpose in his life—that of perpetuating faith—that the question was for him immensely important, and the answer to it correspondingly important. "Howbeit when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" And, in view of the fact that Christianity has been in the world nearly nineteen hundred years, and has controlled and inspired the majority of the strongest minds of the race, in view of the verification which history confessedly gives to many of its postulates, the question is important for us. Whether we will or no, Christianity pervades and dominates the richest part of our lives. Our lives are inextricably intertwined and bound up with it. Men must have a purpose in life to the working out of which their energies are bent, they must have a religious purpose; for religion is only another word for the origins of moral life; and as Christianity is the best-known form of religion, we cannot but ask, Is it the permanent form? In the transition to larger and better systems which our thought is making, in the evolution of the human mind, are we to find a higher religion? or have we found the final religion? and is the evolutionary process all contained within it? And, my friends, I think if we would be profoundly at rest, quietly happy in our belief; if we would work whole-heartedly, work with all the energies of our souls, we must honestly answer this question. There is an instinct in us, a demand of our natures, all-powerful, all-controlling, that, in the sphere of religion at least, we work for final ends. Hence the fact that Christianity has forced all the other religions of the world to make the claim to finality. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . with all thy mind," means, Thou shalt search for the truth, and to know the *whole* truth shalt thou bend thine energies.

But note that, when our Lord asks the question, he uses the word faith: not creed, not doctrine, but faith; and so we ask ourselves, What is faith? It seems to me the best

definition we can find is: Faith is receptivity of God. It is not merely a creed, not merely a concrete expression of intellection. It never can be limited. It never can be perfectly or definitely expressed. As God is infinite, faith always must have a future reference, a future content. And out of this great definition there come minor definitions: Faith is a higher knowledge, a "winged intellect," as says another; it is insight into the permanent; it is the substance of things hoped for, the tendency toward perfection, the capacity of mind in which eternal life begins in us. Faith is the gift of God in the best sense, because it is through faith as openness of mind and heart that God gives himself. Ah, then, says the sentimentalist, the man who is intellectually a sluggard, the man who wants religion without theology, the man who dreams but does not think, the man who wraps his intellectual talent up in a napkin and cheats God out of his rightful interest—I am right: faith is a sentiment, a feeling of trust in God that does not require any intellectual effort. No, my friend, you are no nearer right than the dogmatist who says, Faith is a true creed, a correct systematic theology; or than the moralist who says, Faith is blind obedience. Faith is something larger than any of these: it is all of them. Faith is receptivity of God, and God in your soul works out there his thought, his love, his will; and so you become a thoughtful man, a loving man, an obedient man. That man has the best, the largest, faith who thinks most scientifically, most truly; whose thinking takes concrete expression, and yet who never supposes his thinking to include all of knowledge; who trusts most completely, and yet most reasonably; who obeys most willingly, and yet whose obedience is the glad result of deep insight into the very life and work of God. Ah, my friends! let us never forget that true faith always has its intellectual expression, though never a complete expression; that great sentiment always has its theory; that worthy obedience is always rational obedience.

"Howbeit when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" I think we are now ready to answer, Yes! In the very best sense of the word, the Son of man, when he cometh, shall find faith on the earth. As long as man is conscious of his insufficiency, his incompleteness, as long as man recognizes that he has not realized the fullness of his own life, so long there will be aspiration, tendency toward the perfect, polarity of his nature toward God's nature; and that is the very essence of faith. But here comes the subjectivist—the man who relies implicitly on his own reason, who separates himself from the reason and from the consciousness of other men; the spiritist, the man who says, "Oh, yes, that is just what I believe! I don't care about the literal meaning of the things I see and hear. Give me the spiritual significance. Form is nothing; spirit is everything." Ah, my friends! I am pleading to-day for the scientific, the factual, in religion. I bow unreservedly with the scientist to a *fact*. I yield, and we must always yield and answer frankly and honestly to the man who asks us: "What are the objective facts which are universal and upon which the scientific men can get hold?" Individual spiritual experience is a fact—a fact unquestionable for him whose experience it is; but it is neither objective nor universal. Human souls are in an important sense spiritually non-conductors. Spiritual experience is not transmittible. It is good only for him who is the subject of it. The richest, deepest spiritual experiences cannot be put into words. Great Christian souls have great secrets to keep. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." But there must be something objective, something factual, of which those who have not the spiritual experience can get hold, and by means of which they can make spiritual experience possible for themselves. By way of illustration, I get a deal of comfort in studying the methods of certain scientists, who, in their investigations of nature, work on the basis of absolute materialism. They rigorously exclude from their calculations every supposition or theory which cannot be verified as a fact by the numerous observations and experiments of more than one observer. Indeed, the dominant scientific method to-day is that of quantitative

measurement. And yet if you and I were to ask some one of these very men who so rigorously exclude from the realm of scientific reality everything which cannot be made the subject of careful observation and experiment, "What is this world which you are studying, and to whose physical laws you yield such thorough submission?" he might totally deny the existence of a material world, and say it is only the phenomena of mind.

And, my friends, spiritual religion, even though its deepest content is beyond sense, beyond intellect, beyond scientific demonstration, must never be separated from scientific reality; it must always have a formal, an intellectual, an objective reality. So, as God comes more and more into the mind and heart of man, there must always be a stimulation of the intellect; and as men think, they formulate their thoughts. Hence there will be creeds; not cast-iron, not dogmatic creeds to blind our eyes to the truth, but living symbols which point and help us onward to the great truths of God. Spiritual religion has an intellectual basis. Trees which branch and leave widely and gloriously in the air root deeply and broadly in the ground. A wise temple or cathedral architect keeps the lines of his aerial structure well within those of the base. You may walk with your head among the stars if your feet are on the ground. The sky above us looks to be spherical because the earth is spherical. If it be true that the universe is an adamant solid, even the spirits and the angels walk on a material substance.

That is the best Biblical interpretation which is most vitally in touch with the textual criticism of the Bible. The most exalted and spiritually minded man I ever knew is one whose scholarship is the severest and most minute. A great thought is a collection of little thoughts. That is the most spiritual religion which takes most careful cognizance of the literal element, but always remembers that the literal is not the whole of religion. As soon as knowledge becomes perfect it becomes literal. It is because knowledge is not complete that there is room for faith. Faith is literal knowledge become symbolic and prophetic. That which has been is that which in larger and better form shall be. Ah yes! when the Son of man cometh, he shall find faith on the earth. As God is infinite, the possibilities of progress are also infinite; and faith is the assurance, the substance, of everlasting possibilities in the life of God. And that will mean the permanence of the knowledge already gained. The truths of the creed will survive, the great historic facts of religion, of Christianity, will stand forever true, types and symbols realizing themselves over and over again in new and greater truths as men shall be able to bear them; insight becoming sight, faith verifying its object into knowledge and flying on in prophecy to the beat of the excelsior song that rings on the measureless mountains of God. And, my friends, the question is a personal appeal to you and to me. Are we seeking to perpetuate the faith? Have we open minds? Are we striving to know the truth, to feel the truth, and to obey the truth?



Redemption in Christ¹

By Lyman Abbott

It is difficult to interpret this passage in so brief a compass as is allowed by the conditions of these Sunday-school lesson papers without subjecting one's views to serious misinterpretation. To avoid this, if possible, let me say in a preliminary paragraph that I understand salvation to be synonymous with character, and redemption to be deliverance not primarily from penalty, but primarily from sin; that I believe Jesus Christ has come into the world as the Son of God to deliver mankind from sin and to furnish salvation—that is, to develop in those that trust in him a character like his own; though this salvation is afforded partly by the trust which he teaches, partly by the example which he sets, partly by the influence which he exerts, but

¹ International Sunday-School Lesson for October 8, 1893.—Romans iii., 19-26.