

here one and there another; he came to where the body was gathered together in sweet and sacred communion, and there he found the communion which he wanted and bestowed the communion they sought. You can be a Christian without belonging to the Church; but when you go out through this open door, and turn your back on this bread and this wine and this communion and fellowship, you will not, cannot, share in the music that trembles in our hearts, or in the gladness that fills our souls, or in the fellowship that binds us together. You cannot look forward to the glory of our common victory, because you have not shared in our common household, our common battle, our common sense of the Divine presence, and our common communion with the God we love. I will not urge upon you joining the Church as a duty; I will not pretend that it is necessary as a safeguard; but the Church flings open its doors, and if you count it a privilege to enter into this household of faith, to join this army of the ages, to be a part of the glorious Body of Christ, to be the Bride of the Lamb, it will welcome you to the fellowship of the household of God.



## The Father of the Faithful<sup>1</sup>

By Lyman Abbott

Abraham has passed into history with the designation of "Father of the Faithful." Dim and indistinct is his figure, little do we know about him, seemingly insignificant are his achievements; he died owning nothing in the land of promise except the grave of his wife, the Church and the nation which he had hoped to found still a remote prospect, to be realized in history only after centuries of waiting. Nevertheless, his name is pre-eminent among the heroes of history. His fame has gone far beyond the bounds of his own nation. Hebrew, Mohammedan, Christian, unite to honor him. Paul recognizes in him not only the father of the Jewish people, but the father of that great, invisible company of believers who are bound together by their spiritual faith. And ever since, by men as well as by God, his faith has been "reckoned to him for righteousness."

What, then, was this faith of Abraham?

It certainly was not a creed, long or short. He knew nothing concerning what we are accustomed to call the essential Christian doctrines. He knew nothing concerning either the Church or the Bible, for neither existed. He knew nothing concerning Christ, for as yet there were no definite promises of a personal Messiah out of which faith could construct a creed. Of course he knew nothing concerning Atonement, Regeneration, Inspiration, Trinity. He lived in a pagan land; was brought up to worship the sun and moon and stars; grew dissatisfied, as many another devout pagan has done; found it impossible in that land to attain to a truer worship; felt the heart-hunger for a God of righteousness, and determined to satisfy it, cost what it might; took his family, gathered his substance together, and started on a migration, "not knowing whither he went;" knowing only this, that he was determined to find a better worship, a truer religion, a more satisfying life, a holy God; and assumed that if he sought first of all the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all other things would be added unto him.

As his faith was not a dogma, nor the acceptance of a dogma, so neither was it merely trust. He did not propose to himself to "stand still and see the salvation of God." Trust is passive; faith is active. Or, rather, trust is faith passive when it cannot act. The passenger has faith in the captain, and trusts that if the captain is on deck all will be well, and so goes quietly to sleep. The watch has faith in the captain, and paces the deck and keeps watch in obedience to the captain's orders. I am a believer in faith-cure. So, when I am sick, I send for the most experienced and able physician I can find, and use the remedies God has stored up in nature; for faith consists, not in lazily doing nothing and trusting all to God, but in

actively doing everything which he has put it into my power to do.

Faith, says the Apostle, is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." It is spiritual vision. It is not a belief that there is an invisible; it is a perception of the invisible. In faith we look not upon the things that are seen, but upon the things that are unseen. And this perception cannot be distinguished from appreciation. You may see a picture and not appreciate it, but you cannot see the *beauty* in the picture and not appreciate it. Seeing is appreciating. Faith in a friend is not believing that he is a friend, it is appreciating the qualities in him that deserve, and therefore receive, our affection and esteem. Faith in Christ is not trusting that he will do everything for me, and therefore thinking I have nothing to do, nor is it believing that he lived and died, or that he lived that he might be my example, and died that he might be my Saviour. It is seeing his beauty, his glory; it is appreciating him; it is wishing to be like him; it is believing what he says, because *he* says it; it is, therefore, obeying him when he tells us to do something, and trusting him when he promises to do something for us.

Let us try to analyze this faith of Abraham, and see what light it sheds on the nature of faith in our own time.

He was dissatisfied with the pagan worship, the veneration of material things. He had a soul above idolatry—that is, the worship of symbols. He was discontented with himself and the life that he was leading. The spirit of reverence within him called for something more. The voice of God is rarely heard by the self-satisfied soul. The first accent of faith is heard in Tennyson's lines:

O for a man to arise in me,  
That the man that I am might cease to be!

He felt a longing for something higher and better. He wanted to go in search of it. He felt himself in darkness, and saw a light, or at least felt a need of light. Like one groping in the catacombs and seeing in one direction a glimmer, he was ready to go toward that glimmer, however feeble and flickering it might be. The second experience of faith was his:

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead thou me on!  
The night is dark, and I am far from home:  
Lead thou me on.

He obeyed this voice divine. How it came to him we do not know. How it comes to us we do know: sometimes in the inaudible voice within; sometimes interpreted by a prophetic voice without; sometimes by an incident, a providence, a startling and revealing event. He "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." If he had been, it would have died out of his life. Paul declares that God will give eternal life to all them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality. Such a seeker was Abraham. In this seeking was his faith.

This seeking cost him something. He took up his cross to follow the voice divine. He was self-exiled for conscience' sake. That he remembered and loved his native land and his kinsfolk is evidenced by a pathetic incident. In his old age he made his servant swear to go back to that land and those kinsfolk to get a wife for his son. From all these sacred associations he cut himself off, that he might follow the summons that came he scarce knew from whom, to go he knew not whither. The faith that was difficult for him is made easy for us; for the inaudible voice is translated into audible speech, and the invisible presence into a historical personage. He followed he knew not whom, and scarcely why. We know whom we follow, and whither, and for what life-service.

### QUESTIONS

How do you suppose God spoke unto Abraham? Give illustrations from history of others who have forsaken all that they might follow and find God. Does anything signify as to the date of this narrative by the phrase, The Canaanite was then in the land? (Verse 6.) See Heb. xi., 8, and then answer the question, What light on the nature of faith does Abraham's migration throw?

<sup>1</sup> International Sunday-School Lesson for February 4, 1894.—Genesis xii., 1-9.

## The Religious World

### Hard Times and Missionary Boards

The hard times are making themselves painfully manifest in the great decrease in contributions to the treasuries of the various missionary societies. It ought not to be so, but the fact is that people usually begin to economize first on their gifts to missionary and charitable objects. The pressure of the times is severe not only in this country, but in Europe. The London Missionary Society was greatly embarrassed a few months ago, and we have heard nothing of improvement in its financial condition. The last number of the "Evangelist" contains a letter from Dr. Gillespie, which shows that the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions is threatened with a debt of \$127,000; that it is almost impossible to curtail the obligations already incurred, and that the demands for enlargement from the field are pressing and almost imperative. The American Board reports a decrease of over \$14,000 during the first four months of the financial year. The Baptist Missionary Union shows a falling off of not far from \$80,000 during the last year, when the receipts are compared with those of the year before. The Methodist Episcopal Church began the present year with a deficit of \$109,000. These are startling figures, and they must never be read without remembering how terribly the missionaries, who are never paid more than a bare subsistence, must suffer by the slightest reduction in appropriations. With such a dark outlook from many societies, it is pleasant to be able to report that the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Mission Boards of the Reformed Church, of the United Presbyterian Church, and of the Church of the Disciples, actually announce an advance in their usual receipts. We do not know whether there are any special causes for the difference in these reports, but it is a great pleasure to know that the cry of retrenchment is not being heard in all our societies. There are many reasons why it should be heard last in our gifts for missionary objects. Not only are the missionaries themselves unable to bear a cutting down of their salaries, but ground is lost which may take years to regain.

**A Missionary Conference** the Board rooms of the Methodist Episcopal Foreign Missionary Board in New York on Wednesday, January 17. Every missionary society in the United States and Canada was invited to send representatives, and, if we are correctly informed, sixteen foreign missionary societies from as many different denominations were present in the persons of their delegates. The object of the Conference was the interchange of opinions concerning the best methods to be pursued in the foreign missionary service. We believe that this was the second Conference of the kind which has been held. Such meetings show that the denominations are realizing, as they did not in the past, that the kingdom of God can be advanced only by the co-operation of all branches of the Church. Such meetings cannot be held without the absurdity of sectarian divisions becoming more and more evident. The Rev. Dr. F. F. Ellinwood, of the Presbyterian Board, was Chairman of this Conference, and the Rev. Dr. S. L. Baldwin, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was the Secretary. The list of papers was as follows:

How to Awaken and Maintain Intelligent Missionary Spirit in the Home Churches. The Rev. J. O. Peck, D.D.

The Development of Self-supporting Churches on the Foreign Field. (a) The Importance of this Measure. The Rev. J. N. Murdock, D.D. (b) The Best Means of Securing this End. The Rev. S. W. Duncan, D.D.

The Means of Securing Missionary Candidates of the Highest Qualifications. The Rev. Henry N. Cobb, D.D.

The True Relation of Mission Boards to Colleges on Mission Ground. The Rev. F. F. Ellinwood, D.D.

Practical Provision for Missionaries; as to Outfits, Houses, Salaries, Furloughs, Support of Children. The Rev. A. Sutherland, D.D.

Resolutions were adopted for the appointment of committees to make investigations and propose some plan at the next Conference by which missions in foreign lands may be made self-supporting. Such meetings as this ought to result in denominational comity on the foreign mission field. The evil effects of denominationalism are nowhere more apparent than when half a dozen

different denominations are competing for the allegiance of heathen who cannot even understand the distinguishing traits of the various churches. Not only at home, but abroad, the cry for some kind of practical Christian union is rising all along the line.

### The Death of Father Corrigan

The echoes of the great controversy in the Roman Catholic Church have hardly died away before there comes to us the news that the Rev. Dr. Patrick A. Corrigan, who was such a determined opponent of Bishop Wigger and of Cahenslyism in the Church, has passed from the earth. During his illness we are informed that there was a complete reconciliation between him and Bishop Wigger. It is well known that their relations had for a long time been seriously strained. Father Corrigan was fifty-eight years old, and was one of the most aggressive and brilliant priests in the Roman Catholic Church. He was a vigorous supporter of Archbishop Ireland and the liberal and progressive element in the Church. He was intensely American in his sympathies. From the moment Herr Cahensly proposed that German Catholics in this country should have German Bishops, and Catholics of every nationality Bishops of their own people, Father Corrigan was outspoken in his denunciation of the plan. The great work of his life was in Hoboken, where he built a very handsome church and one of the finest school-houses in the whole country, and where he gathered one of the largest congregations of any Catholic church in New York or vicinity. He has been a positive force in his own Church and among others than Catholics throughout the State and the Nation.

### The Day of Prayer for Colleges

A circular has been sent to the various churches, signed by President Merrill E. Gates, Mr. Cleveland H. Dodge, and Mr. Cyrus H. McCormick, calling attention to what has been done by the College Young Men's Christian Association, and the significance of the movement as it is shown by its extent and results. Its influence has gone into many lands. It has branches in Ceylon, Japan, China, and, indeed, almost all the mission fields, as well as in Germany, Scandinavia, Great Britain, and France. There are five hundred and fifty Associations, numbering over thirty thousand students, in twelve countries. In America during the sixteen years of its history over twenty thousand students are reported as having through its agency become Christians, and three thousand are reported as having been chiefly influenced by the Association to enter the ministry. Over six hundred and thirty students have gone to the foreign mission field through the influence of the missionary department of the Association. To organize this work twenty-five men are needed in America and foreign lands. The gentlemen signing the appeal suggest that a collection for this cause should be taken on the Day of Prayer for Colleges, January 25, or at the weekly meeting nearest to it. This appeal is seconded in a letter from Dr. Alexander McKenzie, of Cambridge, who says: "The proposal to take special collections in aid of this work on the Day of Prayer for Colleges commends itself to me as appropriate and necessary." We add our cordial indorsement to the hearty words of Dr. McKenzie.

**The Rev. T. E. Clapp, D.D.** In a recent number of The Outlook we mentioned briefly the resignation of the Rev. T. E. Clapp, D.D., from the First Congregational Church of Portland, Ore., to accept a call to Manchester, N. H. We feel that this fact is worthy of more than a passing notice. Dr. Clapp has been pastor in Portland for about eight years. During that time there has been a net gain in the membership of 137 per cent., the present membership being 673. At a meeting of the church held on January 4 strong resolutions concerning the resignation of Dr. Clapp were adopted by the church. They recognize his leadership in the denomination in the Northwest, and gratefully bear testimony to his great service in all good work in the church and community. In peculiarly significant terms the pastor's wife is linked with himself in the commendation contained in these resolutions. Few people at the East realize what a magnificent country has been opened in the Northwest, and how much of