

pose of his creation. The terrible element of sin was introduced into man's nature, and thus confusion and perplexity are introduced at the very beginning, and make it almost hopeless to pursue the study of the work of the Spirit in man. It is no longer His creative but His renewing or restoring work that we must consider. And in considering it we have lost the model, the ideal according to which He created man, and to which He seeks to restore him. Happily in Jesus Christ we have the design of man's creation set before us, and so can understand to what end the Spirit now works. This we shall study in a subsequent paper. Meanwhile, let us notice that there is in man's original creation an element of the divine nature, a sonship of God. And however much that nature may have been perverted, its elements are still there.

Man's soul is not a desert, but a fair garden prepared for flowers and fruits, the soil of which has been changed. Such a one I have seen, where the neighborhood of chemical works had vitiated the atmosphere and impregnated the soil. Some flowers were still struggling to come up, showing sometimes the leaf, sometimes the bud, seldom the whole flower. Certain weeds seemed to find more congenial growth there, but the garden had not been originally prepared for them.

This truth, that the creative work of the Spirit still survives in man, is one of the greatest practical importance for us. It is the human basis of all spiritual work, missionary or evangelistic. Without it we cannot understand the past religious history of man, or his future possibilities. All the various religions of the world are witnesses alike of the creative work of the Holy Spirit in man, and of how that work has been ruined by sin. They are so many expressions of the yearning of man's spirit after God for whom he was created. In some individual souls the ruin of the Spirit's creation seems to be but slight. Among the heathen there have been individuals who seem to have had a vision of God, a sense of His law, that has made them appear like complete columns standing amid a mass of ruins a witness to what the structure once was. Some of them have done a work of restoration to a certain extent, recalling men to a sense of the existence of God, like Mohammed, or of the nature of His law, like Buddha. But in the very best of them there is a sense of incompleteness which prevents their work from satisfying man's aspirations or exercising a permanent effect upon him. In others the ruin is so complete, the moral and spiritual sense so deadened, that it is impossible to realise that there ever was any work or trace of the work of the Spirit there. But there always is the craving that needs to be satisfied. When we see crowds of devotees worshipping the most hideous of idols with the most senseless or loathsome rites, we may see evidence that the original creation

the Spirit is not yet entirely annihilated. That idol is not the object for which this instinct of worship was implanted. Nor are these rites the mode of expression which suits it. They are perversions; but perversions which can never satisfy the soul. Thus all the religions of the world are a witness to the creative work of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men, a witness that they are capable of knowing and worshipping the true God. This capability will indeed avail nothing unless the Spirit does a fresh work in them. But it is the basis of that work. In bringing the soul to worship God in Christ, He is bringing it back to that purpose for which He originally created it. And we, in preaching the Gospel to the heathen, are preaching to those who by their very creation as men have power to understand and receive it; and we are using the means which God has intrusted to us to work along with the Spirit in restoring the original creation.

It is the same in evangelistic work at home. Here we have to deal not with the perversion of religion, but with the absence of religion. In some cases we seem to have not the witness which even the worship of an idol bears to the original work of the Spirit. Yet in speaking even to the most degraded in our slums, we are speaking to those in whom the Spirit has implanted capabilities of receiving the truth. However much the work of the Spirit in them may have been defaced, and their capabilities filled with sin, these still exist, and we may always speak to them as to those who can understand us, and who have deep in their nature a divine principle to which we can appeal.

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore.

This constitutes the ground of hope that the most degraded may be raised and the most abandoned reclaimed. And if it is only the Holy Spirit Himself that can accomplish this restoration, we may hope that He will accomplish it. His creative work is there already, and it is this work of His own that He has to restore. The

creative work of the Spirit is the basis of our appeal in teaching men the truth, His renewing work is the power to which we look to bless our words.

Thus it is that in man we find traces of the Holy Spirit; but they are broken, confused, perverted. We see aspirations which fail to find their object, powers diverted from their true sphere. A life which constantly fails of its original purpose. What was this purpose? How does the Holy Spirit restore it? These are the questions we have yet to consider.

True Faith.

If we would translate saving faith, such faith as is illustrated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, into a modern equivalent, we might call it faith in the victory of the good, in [the victory of holy love and of self-surrender to the blessed purpose of God in Christ.

What a change would be produced in our ordinary lives if even in this sense we were men of faith? Take it in the simple sense of faith in the possibilities of life for ourselves, if we only embrace the promises of goodness and of God. Most of us accept a poor idea of what is possible for us to be or do. We live by conventional standards, and do not realize how rich and helpful life can be made through love, hope, and faith in God. Such a want of faith paralyzes effort. "It was easy enough for Abraham," we say, "to whom God gave a distinct command, to rise up and go forth from Mesopotamia." But what do we know of the nature of that voice which spoke to him? Are we sure that it was more distinct or more authoritative and personal than the voices which speak to ourselves every day—the voices of purity or of kindness and self-sacrifice which whisper to us of the right path, the right act, the right thought, the right word? It should be ours to embrace the Divine promises that come to us in these ordinary ways, and to live by self-surrender to them. It is thus we can be true children of Abraham, and inheritors of his faith and blessing.

Life brings untold possibilities of good to each of us, but what we need is faith in these, especially when we are immersed in the petty details, the drudgeries, the coarser passions, and trials which daily come to us. We need this faith in a Divine calling and in the promise of God, when the world and the flesh and the devil appeal to our sloth or to our self-indulgence, and we are tempted to take the low standard of the world, and to be, as they say, "no better than others." It is then we need faith in Christ, and, at whatever cost, to surrender ourselves to the vision which he vouchsafes of what is right and true and good. It may be hard just then to obey, to take this particular cross, to lay aside the indulgence that fascinates, and to turn at once from the tempter to the Saviour; but in so doing lies the way of faith and victory. It is more difficult to act under the highest principle when life brings little stimulus to heroism, and when its interests are monotonous or petty, than when we are aroused by the trumpet voice of great events or startling dangers. Salvation in the most real sense will come by such daily faith that shrinks not from the demands which a true embracing of the promises always brings.—*Sunday Magazine*.

The Use of Sorrow.

Sorrow is interwoven into the fabric of life; God sends tears. These tears were for a divine purpose. But they are not the expression of his wrath; they are not the special messengers of a divine indignation; He does not pick you out and send a burden upon you for a specific purpose. No, He puts humanity into a world of sorrow, because sorrow is the method by which character is to be developed. We are in the world in order that out of the processes to which we are subjected, including pain, the manifestation of the sons of God may be wrought; we are in the world that out of a lower order we may be brought up, step by step, into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God; and the only steps by which the liberty of that glory can be won are steps of sorrow. Grief is God's educator. Trouble is God's minister to manhood. Therefore it is that Paul, looking for sorrow and upon death sometimes as though it were an enemy, says, I am not afraid of him; and sometimes says, you cannot separate me from the love of God, I hold fast to that; and sometimes says, Come in, I welcome you, I am glad that you have come, because you are going to render me real service, and sometimes opens the door and goes out to sorrow and says, Come, I want you, I follow after, if that I may be conformed unto the death of Christ, and may have participated in his suffering. It is because this black-hued angel carries in his hand a gift that Paul wants—the gift of a divine manhood.—*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*