

Written for this Paper

A RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT!

It is at times a very difficult thing to determine the amount of consistency between profession and practice, between theory and action, between creed and custom. Men are formal; they are bound by platforms and catechisms; they subscribe mechanically to many things; they make promises, covenants, agreements, as a matter of course, and much of this is artificial, involuntary or because it is expedient.

So, human nature is fallible, unreliable and subject to disappointment in secular and in sacred things. There are times when circumstances rule, and times when men are faithless under favorable surroundings; changeable as the wind or weather, who can point an infallible judgment, or say what any given person will or may do in his general career? Can one even tell what he or she may do themselves under the stress of temptation or opportunity? Here, one steals for bread; there is one who with abundance and without reason is a kleptomaniac. Failure is written by some from pure "oustedness," and by others from sheer indifference. One counts "his word his bond;" a frivolous excuse answers another in the most sacred things. One will have a Pharisaic confidence in his immaculate self, and his neighbor thinks more meanly of himself than his enemy would dare to think. Men forget, ignore, defy responsibility and profession, as if no eye saw and no soul was affected save their individual selves. Example, honor, results are things not counted upon or considered of value or importance at all. Indeed—but why should poor humanity be analyzed and cauterized save that the "holding of the mirror up to nature," and showing "vice its own deformity," may lead to reflection, shame and reformation!

Of all sacred things, probably the marriage relation is the highest. But who has not been astounded at its irregularities, at the multiplicity of divorces, at the forgetfulness of its vows where separation never comes? The very atmosphere of modern society is charged with infidelity, and in religious circles there are appeals made for freedom which reflect seriously upon the common sense or upon the common honesty of the parties litigant. Who can or dare uncover this pandemonium of domestic life or lift the veil from the associate forms of licentiousness, debauchery and misery which fill this favored land? Who can stem the tide of sexual transgression which is laden with the "flotsam and jetsam" of broken hopes and violated promises and withered hearts? Where the family circle is contentious, divided, devoid of mutual respect and affection; where the very atmosphere thereof is laden with criticism, fault-finding and disobedience, can good seed germinate in such a climate, or can its inmates become renowned as considerate peace-makers, with mutual interest in and for each other? Will the household gods be love, peace, union and every good and perfect gift? Will the world be better or worse for the distribution of the individual elements of such a family? Will their

successors improve by experience, or will they simply repeat the spirit which may almost be said to be imbedded in the very nature of each one?

This lack of discipline, training and the true home spirit, is by many relegated to the schoolroom. Family failures are supposed to be rectified there; the teacher is expected to set aside the erroneous example and influence of years, to give polish to a piece of granite, and to soften hearts which have become "like the nether millstone." But the processes of the school are in our progressive times (?) more mental than anything else—to learn in routine the appointed studies without reference to a sanctified home life, a high-toned morality, or the duties one owes to another. There is no order save for the school room, no obedience save for the teacher, no consideration save so far as to preserve during the few brief hours of each day from annoyance; in the prescribed routine.

Morality and religion being ignored in the common or public schools, the responsibility is shifted to the churches and the minister, but this is for but a part of one day in seven, if that aid is counted upon at all. From a godless family few come who have respect for the Sabbath, respect for church services, or regard for the ministers thereof. So that character if unformed or malformed at home is subject to but little modification by the school or church; the drift toward intense selfishness and personal gratification becomes the outward manifestation of a chronic inward condition.

The contrarieties, divisions and the conduct of many professed religionists, are not alluring to youth or manhood when it is in this situation, and association with others of similar conceptions solidifies the spirit of irreligion or scepticism, of mild or virulent type, as the nature of the man or woman may determine. Follow if you will into all the walks of life. Many such are in the business world, speculative or legitimate. Being without balance, moral or religious; "lovers of themselves," they become hard, exacting, penurious and successful. Money becomes an idol; increase is their god, and if from accumulation they can extract pleasure or gratify a passion, all ambition centers there—the life that now is, is used irrespective of a future which possesses no value and commands no thought.

In every other department of life the outcome is but little different—the foundation was bad, the edifice unstable. Manhood is dwarfed, stunted and an abortion, for the noblest faculties have had no play. To be useful, to do good, to leave the world better than it was found, is not among the ambitions, simply from the defects of education and consequent perversion of the faculties, and subversion of the true end and aim of life.

Yet to the early years of every one there seems to come more or less of an ideal. Each one wants to be something, somebody, and to be successful, honored and exemplary. Few there are originally who aim at wickedness, who desire to be criminal, who "roll sin as a sweet morsel" under their tongues." Yet all men know better than they do, for "to every one is given a measure of the Spirit" to

profit withal, and the illumination which comes from that makes visible the weaknesses, shortcomings, defects, and to some extent the result of courses everywhere pursued. But its motions are stifled by circumstances, by surroundings, by drift. Stamina is not encouraged, moral integrity is not cultivated, religious sympathy and love of truth is comparatively dormant; and society—mankind—is simply saved by the culture that is, by those that are truly "the salt of the earth,"—by "a favored few," if this be no injustice.

Yet it is this innate and cultivateable ideal which makes progress possible, and it is individual incompetence, lack of will power or neglect, which marks "the difference between theory and practice, between profession and conduct, between creed and character;" and to discriminate between intent and infirmity, between desire and achievement, between motive and action, is to possess more than the wisdom of Solomon; it is to have the inspiration of Dailty which distinguishes between man and manifestation; and to estimate the moral and spiritual progress which is being made by any individual, is to "search the heart and try the reins" of the children of men, which is the prerogative of God Almighty, or those to whom He has specially committed the office of a judge. One act or a combination thereof does not always disclose the heart, and many apparent offenses will be condoned by the great tribunal. At the same time so long as men judge from appearance, "consistency is a jewel," and to secure this all effort and exertion, all will power and determination, all faith and prayer, supplemented by the inspirational influence of the Eternal Spirit, this special inheritance of the Saints, is needed for a rounded life and for a living example. By this, weak, trembling humanity will succeed and triumph, education will complete its perfect work, man will be glorified, God honored, and the ideal will have become a reality, or so far forced ahead that progress and righteousness will be established for ever and for ever.

IN THE MISSION FIELD.

42 ROLAND ROAD, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM, May 29, 1895.—After spending six months in Worcester-shire gaining many interesting experience, making some friends and every day finding something new to admire and interesting in the beauty of the Worcester-shire scenery, the winding Severn and historic Malvern hills scarred with earth works marking the battle grounds of the ancient Britons and Romans, I was becoming imbued with a growing pride in what we had "down in our district," when, at the council meeting of our January conference, I was appointed to labor in Northamptonshire, and shortly afterwards found myself absorbed in work with Brother J. S. Mousley distributing tracts in the quiet steady-going little town of Wellington, which has a population of about twenty thousand and people mostly engaged in the staple trade of boot and shoe manufacturing. It was a few days before I got used to the novelty of a town of this size with no daily news-