

The Reformers Retrospection.

When one looks out over the world of men, and perceives with the eye of knowledge and of history the somewhat loose and chaotic state of morality; the diversified characters composing the struggling mass of humanity; the undeveloped brain of the ignorant, the semi-wise and the polished hypocrite; the smooth and heartless scoundrel; the different classes of criminals; the cranks and intolerant fanatics, and harnesses himself to the car of development and progression, believing that it will move when he tightens on the traces of his logic, his ethical, moral or religious code his magnetic power and sublime eloquence, he may find his belief somewhat shaken by a disheartening failure. After years of labor it will seem to him that the grand old car has never budged; that its golden wheels have mired in the sloughs of immorality; that despite all of his self-sacrificing and heroic efforts the world of men and women daily grows worse.

Surely there are hours in the way-worn traveler's life, who has fought the good fight,—who has worn away the impulsive and chimerical gaze of rosy-eyed youth, and now sees with a clearer vision,—when the ultimate civilization and moral reformation of humanity seems so far away in the future that the brain grows weary in its contemplation.

Truly it is almost a heartless fight—a weary, dreary struggle—battling against the tide of crime and immorality that sweeps over our fair land. The thousands, aye, millions of ignorant human beings, being swirled on and on to their moral doom in its appalling vortex, makes the heart tremble with the crushing knowledge and to falter by the way of life, and to ask itself, why these awful things should be.

There are men and women who believe in a god with all power. They see these struggling human beings in this revolving vortex of crime and woe, they fall upon their knees and pray to God that crime and misery shall be no more—that he sweep it from the land. But when they arise they still hear the wails, the groans, the curses and screeches of men and women still being swept on to moral death and everlasting despair.

O, faith, thou art too weak, or the Christian's god hath no power to turn backward e'en the crooning zephyr's breath, though it bore sweet perfumes intermixed with malarial death.

When we learn that the Christian's god is powerless to stay the tide of crime, immorality, and woe, or that he wilfully turns a deaf ear to the misery of men, or that he ordains it or suffers it to be for

purposes hidden in his superlative wisdom; then we turn from him and seek the solution of moral salvation elsewhere, and then because we thus turn, we are heretics to the faith; but none the less do we grow weary and disheartened at times when we find the way rough and the road hard to keep.

It is well to sometimes stop and take stock and see if we have gained or lost. Let us count up and cast up the ledger of the past and see where we stand in the present, that we may be wiser in the ever unfolding future.

What have we done that has added one jot or tittle to the world's moral progress? If we have done nothing, then indeed are we nonentities in the great drama of life—we would not even show to be fools when its curtain was raised, acting the part of fools, but drones, of no use except for reproduction of our useless kind.

None of us are perfect, nor indeed can we be in this stage of our development. But if our lives have really been partly moral—more moral than wicked—if we have actually tried to live by the dictates of our conscience, and from year to year tried to educate our conscience to know the right, the good, the pure and the true, then have we been doing something toward the elevation of our race and have not lived in vain.

But, oh, when we contemplate the stupendous task of reforming the immoral dwarfs of humanity that breed and fester among us, we stagger and faint, and faint would rest in oblivion's dream to awaken when a brighter day shall dawn.

Yet we fill a niche in the mighty walls of time—are building for the future—and it is best that we try to build well. If the task seems hard it is but natural to sometimes stop and sigh and reflect that the material is rough, our hands tender and bleeding, and the building upon which we labor an unending structure that will take countless years to make it a temple within which gods may dwell.

And the Liberal reformer is but human, and his way of building different from the way of the world, therefore his task is harder and the more disheartening in the extreme. He is pushed from his place and ostracised by fanatics and the self-praised good men. Is it wonder he pauses and reflects on man's inhumanity to man? Is it wonder that he is sometimes tempted to plunge into the mad whirlpool of humanity and give up the struggle of reform; that he sometimes resolves to look out for number one regardless of the rights of his fellows!

Ah, but he is made out of humanitarian clay that will not be moulded by the potter's hand of wrong and crime, and in the darkest hour of despair his soul arises from their sickening depths of gloom and mounts upon the wings of love toward the undying star of hope in life's fair sky, and his arm becomes nerved to strike greater blows for the final emancipation of the race.—[C. M. Brown, in Independent Pulpit.

For the Sunday School.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

Will you kindly do a favor for my little daughter Clare? I read your news and notes in the issue of Nov. 18th to her and she was quite interested and said, "Papa let us move to Silverton so I can attend the Liberal University and the Secular Sunday school." "I know it would be nice," I said to her, "but papa is not able to go; I would if I could." Then she said, "I would like so much to see those little children because they learn just what you are teaching me every day, and we can't help them along unless we live there." "Oh yes, Clare, we can do good no matter where we live, if our motive is such as to be good and help to better the future." "How, dear papa?" "I will tell you, Clare. Here is fifty cents; go to the postmaster and get a money order. This is equal to two cents a week if you gave it every time at Sunday school for six months. When the six months is up, papa will give you fifty cents again, and by so doing you will do just the same as though you lived in Silverton." And away she went on a double-quick run to get the money order. "There it is,

papa," she said, panting and almost out of breath. "Now, Clare," I said, "this will help those children and thousands of others not yet born." "Oh, papa," she said, "you are so funny. How can it help children not yet born?" "I will tell you, dear. You see there are children born every day, and their fathers and mothers read the TORCH OF REASON and tell them of all these little things and the good derived from the Sunday schools, and will send them to the schools when they are old enough; and you see the more help we get to support the Sunday schools the merrier the children all are. No doubt the little boys and girls of Silverton all wonder who little Clare Stoll is and would like to see you, and perhaps in the near future we will move to Silverton and live among the people of our own belief, and then you can run and play with a lot of children like yourself. Won't that be fun?" "Oh, my, yes! I can hardly wait."

So find enclosed the money order for fifty cents, which please give to your Secular Sunday School and you will hear from us again. With good wishes to all the pupils and teachers of the Sunday school, I am, fraternally, DR. L. S. STOLL.

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