

him ; and hence there can be no failure, but we must never attempt to gauge our success by apparent results. If faithful, our reward is sure, though "all day long" we stretch forth pleading hands "to a disobedient and gainsaying people." The Master himself was "despised and rejected of men ;" "he came unto his own possessions and his own people received him not." "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." But the fact is we are incapable of measuring our own success. To estimate results requires omniscience, omnipresence, eternity. In all work there are three stages : preparatory, intermediate, ultimate ; the preparatory is often the most tedious and prolonged, where the ultimate is most glorious. Man, noblest of animals, is most helpless at first and slowest to develop. The fields of the world that have yielded the greatest harvests have been longest in the preliminary tillage. God's true missionary goes where he sends him and does what he bids him ; and he succeeds, though all he may do is to plow up the hard ground and gather out the stones and leave a fair field for the sower. And in God's eyes many a man who, by the armful or wagon-load, brings sheaves to the garner, is only reaping from others' sowing.

IV. *The limits of our instructions set limits to our field and work.*

Christ says : "The field is the world," and no part of it is to be left untilled and unsown. If we wait to "convert" our hearers, we shall never put our working force into the whole field. *Just here has been the great mistake of the church even in her missionary era !* Christ's principle is DIFFUSION ; our practice is CONCENTRATION. We emphasize conversion, while he emphasizes evangelization ; and so our human philosophy counsels us *to convert as we go, and so increase the converting force.* The effect is that we keep tilling a few little corners of the world-field, sowing them over and over, until the soil loses power to yield, while tracts a thousand miles square have never yet borne the tread of the sower ! Even disciples are asking, "Are there not heathen enough at home, that we send the flower of our youth to the ends of the earth ? "

But who was He who said, "Go ye into all the world ? " There will always be heathen at home, and in our churches too—the worst sort of heathen, who have heard so long without heeding that the word will never bear fruit in their hearts. No soil in equatorial Africa is half so hard for the gospel-plow as the respectable sinners in our home congregations. London has to-day a thousand more missionaries than the whole church supports on the foreign field ; and so long as we hold that our commission is to convert men rather than to preach the gospel to all men, this radical error will confront us in our methods. But so soon as we accept our mission and commission as world-wide evangelization, leaving to our Commander the time and way of the