

not, of itself, insure one convert or disciple. It will still be true as of him : "Some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." Some, "ever learning will never come to the full knowledge of the truth." Not a few will become gospel-hardened, which is worse than sin-hardened. But Paul's duty was done irrespective of how many believe and obey. The limits of our commission and of our responsibility must coincide ; and because conversion is not our commission, for conversion we are not held accountable.

III. *The limits of our commission are the gauge of our success.*

We are constantly tempted by Satan, and by our own carnal hearts, to weigh in human scales and to measure by worldly standards, the results of our work. Not only in the world, but, alas ! in the church, the satanic spirit is abroad, that dares to ask that supremely selfish question : *Do missions pay?* In this inquiry lurks a latent heresy. It assumes that we are capable of estimating results ; still worse, it implies that our estimate of results may lawfully affect our obligation. Both these premises are radically unsound. The tendency is to walk not by faith but by sight, and to judge by appearances ; and, because it fosters this tendency, our whole system of statistical returns is misleading and perniciously liable to abuse. Is a minister of Christ to be judged by the number of converts he gathers in a given year or the amount of money he secures to the Boards?

Away with such standards of success ! The most important work upon the famous Eddystone is not visible, even at low tide. For a few hours each day patient workmen labored, anchoring to the rocks those immovable blocks on which rises and rests that symmetrical cone that Smeaton built. That work was slow and is now unseen ; yet, but for that work, there would be no "Laus Deo" graven on the face of that beacon which still stands, after 130 years, off Ramhead, "to give light and to save life." It was not the quick explosion at Hell Gate that cleared the channel ; but the long under-water toil of miners who wrought out of sight and hearing. The first fourteen years at Tahiti passed without one convert or sign of success ; yet on the work of those fourteen years rose the structure of Polynesian missions ! There were nearly fifty years of fruitless toil among the Telugus before the "Lone Star" at Ongole blazed forth like the sun ; but then in one year there were ten thousand converts, and the Lone Star became a constellation. Isaiah's barren ministry prepared the way for Paul's fruitful evangelism. Captain Allen Gardiner's death at Tierra del Fuego was the burial of a seed that in the next generation bore such fruit that even Charles Darwin declared that he "could not have believed that all the missionaries in the world" could have wrought such results.

God leaves none of His faithful servants to spend their strength for naught. Our work is his work ; it is from him, for him, with him, in