

## THE TRUE IDEAL OF LIFE.

A vicious element that pervades much of the advice and exhortation given to the young is that the standard of success set before them, at which they are urged to aim, is so largely outward and material, appealing to what is merely worldly and selfish in them. From platform and pulpit, in day school and Sabbath School, the young are told of the success to which they may attain, and are pointed, for their encouragement and example, to men who have "risen" in life from porters to preachers, from boot blacks to barristers, from lumbermen to lawyers, from rail splitters to rulers, from errand boys to merchant princes.

Now if a boy has a desire for larger duties and greater responsibilities than those of his present lot in life, and capacity to do and bear them, by all means let him take hold of them if the way be open. It is but the acceptance from Providence of a larger trust. But the wrong to the young consists in setting before them the false idea that such men are more truly successful and more worthy to be imitated than others who have remained in a narrower sphere. Life may be a notable one among men and yet be an utter failure so far as success in all that makes up true manhood is concerned.

The truly successful life is that which has so lived, and used its opportunities, that at its close it has the most of what it can take with it to another life. A man at life's end finds, as a result of life, two things, what he has and what he is. What he has, is largely the result of what he has done for himself. What he is, is the result of his loving, unselfish doing for others. What he has he leaves behind. What he is goes with him. The successful life is that which results in large store of the latter, while the life which results only in wealth or position or influence among men is an utter failure.

James and John were looking for that kind of success when they sought

the highest offices from Christ. But He told them that greatness in His Kingdom was not after this fashion, but that he who made himself lowliest and humblest in spirit and tried to do the most good to the most people that he could, to be servant of all, was really the greatest, because the largest in heart, the most like Christ.

Our young people should be taught that the true ideal of a successful life is not in getting away from so-called lowly position and work, but in filling one's place faithfully in that position. They should be taught that the boy who stays at home in what may seem humble life, and in loving helpfulness makes comfortable a parent's closing years, is living a more truly successful life, developing a grander character, than his brother who with merely ambition to shine, goes out and becomes prominent in the world of wealth or power. They should be taught that the boy who learns a trade and works at it all his life, and by his example and public spirit helps to make of his neighbors good citizens, with a true ideal of their duties in civil and political life, is as worthy a model for them to follow as the boy who goes to college, wins honors, is sent to parliament, and makes laws for the land. They should be taught that the country boy who settles on a small farm and by his life and work as a church member, S.S. teacher, or elder, helps to keep up the little church in the neighborhood, as a centre of religious life, may be as true a success, as worthy an example, as his brother who enters the ministry and sways multitudes from the pulpit of some metropolitan church.

The evil results of false teaching along this line are hard to estimate. Few, at best, can follow the examples so constantly set before the young as patterns of success,—for the prominent places are few and the obscure places many;—and the tendency is to lead them to regard all else as comparative failure and to create a discontent which injures their own characters and unfits them for real usefulness in life.