

Messenger and Visitor

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Success.

Success is a word which is wont to stir the blood of young men. Every young man who is worth anything wants to succeed. But what do we mean by success, and who are they that succeed? Properly speaking, success is a relative term. It means the accomplishment of one's purposes. He who has brought to pass that to which he directed his efforts has succeeded in his undertaking. So far as the field of his endeavor was concerned he has achieved success. Success then may mean very little, or it may mean very much, it may imply a good thing or a bad thing. It may mean a triumph of right purpose and well-directed energy, or it may mean the triumph of things evil. Success when applied to a man's life-work, as well as when applied to some particular undertaking, is measured by the value of the end which one has set himself to accomplish. If the end sought is insignificant, so also will be the success; if the purpose is great, the success achieved in its accomplishment will be great also. The thing of paramount importance then is not *success* merely, but a purpose of so great and noble a character as to make success greatly worth while. The failure of some men is far more noble than the success of others, for it is far greater to fail in the endeavor to carry out a good and beneficent purpose than it is to succeed in an evil undertaking. No good purpose indeed ever fails absolutely of accomplishment, and no evil purpose ever succeeds absolutely; for

"Right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win."

There is no such thing as real failure to those who work for the right and for God.

The present age is sadly given to materialism. Men are wont to be dazzled by the wealth, the luxuries and honors offered as the prizes of worldly ambition. Strong, self-seeking, unscrupulous hands are ever being reached out after these things, and the acquisition of them is called success. The men who succeed in making themselves masters of wealth and the things which minister to ambition and luxurious living are regarded as *par excellence* the successful men of their generation. But surely there is a nobler standard of success, and one which we may hope will have for Christian young men a stronger attraction and a higher authority. For the example of a life conformed to that higher standard, can we do better than point to the man whose character and career we are having set before us in the Bible lessons we are studying from week to week? Paul accumulated no fortune. He won no positions of consideration in the eyes of the world. There was for him no luxurious living, nor even an old age of peace and repose. His life was one of incessant labor, hardship and persecution, terminated at last by a martyr's cruel death. Doubtless when the worldlings of Paul's generation talked about the "successful" men of the day, they did not think of naming the apostle of Christ as one of them. It may be quite true too that Paul did not achieve all he expected or see all he had hoped for brought to pass. But Paul had one grand, dominant purpose to which he gave himself with all the energy and fidelity of his being, a purpose which, linking him in closest fellowship to Jesus Christ, rendered his name and his work imperishable. Compare Paul's career with those of the men who in his day made money, arrived at honor and lived in luxury, and shall we say, in the light of the centuries that have come and gone, that those men achieved success, but Paul's career was a failure?

But some one will say, "It is too long to wait to realize one's purpose, we want something now."

The answer is—You do not have to wait to realize something. Paul did not. It was not merely anticipation of glory to come that he enjoyed. He knew that what he was doing was better worth doing than anything else in the world. He was never ashamed to have the light fall full and strong upon his life's purposes, and the life that he lived was a thousand fold nobler, richer and better worth living than those of his contemporaries who despised him as a fanatic or a madman. "But it is not given to every man to be an Apostle Paul or even a pioneer missionary of the Gospel." No, but it is open to everyone to ink himself in fellowship to Jesus Christ and live his life to the glory of God. And the life that is so lived, whether it be that of an apostle, or that of one who labors at the commonest tasks, shall never fail of the noblest reward. Those who win the reputation of success too often leave the world the worse, rather than the better for them having lived in it. But the men and the women who themselves live for the highest things, and train their children to follow in their steps, not only bless the world directly, but leave a heritage of blessing to the generation to come. These are the lives which are really the salt of the earth, and they indicate the success which is worthy of the name.

Love Supreme.

It is one thing to extol a virtue; it is quite another thing to practice it. It is comparatively easy to write a hymn or a homily in praise of Christian love, it is the supreme triumph of Christianity to make it the law of the daily life. In that thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians—our Bible lesson for the current week—Paul has written most eloquently of love, but his words here, as elsewhere, have so great value for us because his teaching was exemplified in his life. Paul—like the Christ whom he served—did not merely preach love, but lived it.

Love purifies and exalts the life. That which Paul here commends is not a blind, selfish, human passion. Nor is it a mere religious emotion which blossoms into effusive speech in the warm atmosphere of a religious assembly, but quickly shrivels under the influences which are met with in the every-day world. The love which the apostle commends is no such effervescent emotion, but an essential quality in the soul begotten of God. Vigorous with divine life, it is the grand motive principle of Christian living. This love is a practical virtue. It takes the world as it finds it. It does not expect impossibilities and is not discouraged in the presence of a great deal of ignorance, prejudice and moral crookedness. It may not be very demonstrative. It may at times seem cold or stern in contrast with the effusiveness in which the cultured world expresses or conceals its emotions. But it has regard for the weak brother. For his sake it is willing to forego its right to innocent enjoyments. It is patient with weakness and error. It is kind, acknowledging the large and intimate kinship with men which the divine fellowship in Christ involves. Love never prompts to boasting and conceit or moves men to an unbecoming assertion of their special rights and dignities. Rather it forgets self in seeking the welfare of others. It is slow to impute a wrong intention, it does not repay insult with insult, but seeks to overcome evil with good. It teaches its disciples not to approach their brother men in the spirit of prejudice and distrust, but in the spirit of confidence and good-will. It does not conclude that of any man or any community no good is to be expected, but believes all things, hopes all things, watching for good in a brother man with the solicitude with which the gardener regards a delicate plant or with the hopefulness of a mother watching for her child to outgrow some weakness or deformity.

Love is the thing of first importance. The vital element, the essential motive in the Christian life is love. All other virtues and endowments are of value only if they spring from it as a source or are controlled by it as a principle. All knowledge, however wonderful, all speech, however miraculous and eloquent, all faith, however mighty, all works of righteousness, however great and self-denying—

all are vain and dead without the vital inspiration of love. The great mistake which the Corinthian Christians were making, apparently,—a mistake which Christians have been only too prone to repeat in every place and in every age—was to give to something else the supreme place in their minds and lives, which belonged to love. They coveted the power to speak with tongues, the gift of prophecy and other miraculous endowments, and they were in danger of failing to recognize that there was a grace, greater and diviner than all these, which every Christian might cultivate.

Love is eternal. It shall abide forever. So also shall faith and hope. But love is greatest of all. There are modes of knowledge and of speech which belong to the present imperfect state and shall pass away with the coming of that which is perfect. But love never faileth. The thought and speech of the man are different from those of the child. We expect the boy as he grows up to outgrow his childish prattle and his childish ideas of things. But the love which bound him to parents and brothers and sisters in his childhood, let that not fail. To outgrow love is to become dwarfed in that which is most essential to his manhood. Great changes await us in our transition from this world to that which is to be. Our knowledge here and our prophesying are very partial and imperfect. We are like those who see things as they are dimly reflected in a mirror. The things upon which we turn our enquiring eyes are in part revealed and in part shrouded in mystery. The time comes when we shall no longer deal with shadows and reflections, but shall see face to face, seeing as we are seen and know as we are known. But the love which has united us to God and to God's children here, it shall not cease or fail, but as it bridges the transition from childhood to manhood and glorifies both, so shall it survive the transition from the earthly to the heavenly and be the vital atmosphere of the home above.

Editorial Notes.

—By a despatch from Rev. H. G. Mellick, we are informed that Rev. A. J. Vining, of Winnipeg, has been appointed Secretary and acting Superintendent of Baptist mission in the Northwest.

—Rev. A. J. Diaz, M. D., who has been called the apostle of Cuba and the story of whose conversion, labors and persecutions are widely known, being unable by reason of the war in Cuba to carry on evangelistic work in that country at present, has accepted an appointment from the America Baptist Publication Society to labor as colporteur and missionary among the Spanish speaking people of Mexico and it is hoped that there will be excellent results from his labors in connection with those of the workers of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society and those of the Southern Baptist Convention.

—A report having by some means got abroad that Mr. Dwight L. Moody was about to retire from active work and would be succeeded in his evangelistic labors by Rev. William Patterson of Toronto, Mr. Moody has written to the New York World denying the truth of the report. "I have absolutely no thought of retiring from the Lord's work," Mr. Moody says, "until I go to heaven. While life is so short and the need so urgent, I have no desire for retirement. The privilege of laboring in His vineyard has too many joys in this world and rewards in the next for me to voluntarily forgo it. . . . It would make me hang my head with shame to give up in the middle of the fight that is going on now."

—"Many a humiliating failure in life," says the Sunday School Times, "has resulted from overestimating first attainments. The first drops that fall into our cup appear to overflow it, and the impulse is to rush into print or before an audience, with what we are sure is a new and wonderful experience. To many a beginner in Bible study it seems that heaven has made an exception in his case, and has

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