

Why Live An Inferior Life?

By Rev. W. G. Hughes of Statesville, Evangelist for Baptist N. C. Mission Board Who Has Just Concluded a Revival at Calvary Baptist Church of Elizabeth City

In the mad rush of life I see a representative character from every class coming forth to play his part in the great game. Playing poor or well they soon retire, giving their place to others, who carry the game on and on. The question for us to decide is, how shall I play this game? What part will I have in this great game of life? Will I merely be a "back stage" or will I play my part as a bright star? The question is to fail or succeed. Which? We must push on toward success or failure. Why not success? Ten years ago I stood on a street corner and looked at a young man as he dug in a ditch. "Did you finish High School?" I asked the man.

"By gosh no" was his reply. "What's education to a man who has a strong body?" he added. "Well my boy, you will change your mind some day. Later in life you will wish you had gone to school and made something of yourself." The boy looked at me with a silly smile as if he thought I was a fool. Five years later I saw the same man. This time he was rolling a cart up and down the streets gathering the trash.

"Well old man, I see you have not been promoted," I said. He hung his head in shame and rolled his cart on down the street. A school mate of mine came to me one day and told me that he was going to stop school. "It is all foolish to stay here in school when you can get out and have a good time and make money," he said. But I told him I was going to stay there until I finished. His story was that of many who lose the spirit of education while young.

On the other hand we find a great many people who have finished their education standing idly by and watching the great machine of life and industry move on. This class is, by far, worse than the uneducated. If we fail to use our talents we commit a great sin. This is a great trouble with many of the college graduates of today. They fail to use their talents. The person who has the ability to do a thing, and fails to do it, is ten times worse than the person who has no ability.

In 1865 Daniel Dyer, of Collinsville, Conn., found a turtle and carved his initials and date on the shell. In 1921 he found the same turtle under a haystack only about one hundred yards from where he found it fifty six years ago. Everyone should ask himself this question. Am I living an inferior life. We have a great many turtle graduates today. They have their names carved on diplomas, but they never get anywhere or accomplish anything.

Sometime ago a young lady came home from college. She had made good in school, and graduated with the highest honors. When she went into her room she put her diploma in the desk drawer. Several weeks later she became sick and died. Years later her mother found the "unused diploma."

"What a pity," she said, as she looked through her tear stained eyes, at the diploma. This truly was a pity, but there is something worse and that is for a boy or girl to work hard in school and finish and live on without using their education to benefit mankind. The person who puts his knowledge into practice is the one who really amounts to something. Unused talents soon decay.

The world is crying for men and women who are really efficient. We have a surplus of the emotional type mean well but have no efficiency. To become leaders of men you must be efficient. You must have the power to do that for which you are built to do. If you fail to do that for which you are built to do, you have no efficiency. Some men have a great deal of what we call education, but no efficiency and therefore, they never get anywhere and the world never knows about them. You might ask what is efficiency? It is doing things, not wishing you could do them, or wondering if you can do them. "It is knowing how to apply theory to practice, turning defeat into experience and using it to achieve success." "It is ability to amass one's personality at any time or place and the elimination of weakness, regret, worry and fear." "It is self-reliance, clothed with modesty, persistence plus politeness and the hand of steel in the velvet glove." Efficiency is alertness, presence of mind, readiness to adjust one's self to the unexpected. "It is purpose, practice, patience; the measure of a man; the ability to use one's passions, likes, dislikes, habits, education, mind, body and heart and not to be used by them." If you expect to rise above the aver-

age run of man you must link energy with efficiency and work with all your might, always striving for the higher things. You must not forget that there is always room at the top. The day of specialization is upon us and the day of the "Jack at all trades" has failed forever. There was a time when a man could follow several trades at the same time. But that day has gone and a new day has dawned upon us, a day of specialization. You must learn to do one thing and do that with all your might. Someone has said, "I am only one, but I am one. I can't do everything, but I can do something and what I can do I ought to do and what I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do."

The world recognizes the person who does the thing in his line the best. It is the man who is prepared and equipped for his business who gets the trade. No one would care to risk his life with an inexperienced surgeon. No one cares to trade with the merchant who keeps a dirty store and who is not polite to his customers. No one cares to be taught by an inefficient teacher. No one cares to ride with an inexperienced driver. Even in the lowest forms of work skilled labor is preferable. It isn't so much what you do as how you do it. Be the best in any profession you choose.

It is the person who keeps everlastingly at it who succeeds. Emerson said, "If a man write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mousetrap than his neighbor, though he build his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door." But in order to be recognized you must specialize. Try to do one thing well and you will succeed. "Dig right in and do your bit. Take your dose and work and grin; Put your soul right into it."

That's the only way to win. Don't sit down and loudly wail. Just because your task is tough. That's the surest way to fail. Tackle it and show your stuff."

Then why be a failure when all things are yours? Why remain inactive, while others are getting rich? Why remain stagnant, while others are rising to success? Why remain a slave while others are becoming masters? Why be a failure when success is easily within your reach? Why remain satisfied with the crumbs when you can get the whole loaf? Why take less of your rightful share of life joy and success while others are climbing upward and enjoying life? Why sit in idleness while others are hard at work? Why sit down and whine and mourn away your life while others are rejoicing? Why live an inferior life while others are living the superior life?

Few of us realize how short life really is. "We complain that life is too short, yet we live each day as if it were a thousand years," said Seneca. When we have learned the value of time, then we are on the road to success and not until then. The average man makes but little of his chance. A few men in one day often accomplish more than

many a man in a whole lifetime. Life is simply a matter of concentration. You are what you set out to be. The things you think to-day are the things you become to-morrow. "You are a composite of the things you say, the books you read, the thoughts you think, the company you keep and the things you aspire to become."

You must have some plan for improving yourself and evolving your life into success. Time is your only asset. Each moment is a golden treasure, and the way you spend it shapes your life as an individual. If you would devote thirty minutes of each day to the study of some splendid idea, to the improvement of your mind, in obtaining a more accurate knowledge of the business or profession you have chosen, in a few years time you would have evolved into a giant of intellectual strength with power to follow any plan or idea to final and positive success.

Time is our most precious gift. It knows no prejudice, makes no promises, keeps no records and asks no questions. You are here for a purpose and each moment you spend foolishly or frivolously is lost to all time—simply, thrown into the waste basket of indifference.

Then you must ask yourself the question, have I the right aim in life? What am I living for? What is human life for? How am I using my life? How am I investing my life? When you have answered these questions satisfactorily you will realize the value of time to such an extent that you will use it to the best advantage in equipping and qualifying yourself for your chosen profession. Unless you know the value of each moment as an investment, each day that passes is a stumbling block that sends you blundering on into indifference.

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helplessness and decline of old age. Then the question is, what are we going to do with each hour? Are you going to leave untouched the treasure of the world in which you live and lose the great opportunity of a life time?

Never before have we seen such a day of opportunity. It is continually knocking at our door. We have but to let it in. "It is pounding a perpetual tattoo on your door and follows you with a club from the time of your rising to the time of your retiring." Are you going to be a person or a personality? All of us cannot be rich nor all of us famous, but every one can be successful. It is every one's duty to be successful. To be a failure or a partial failure is something to be ashamed of for it means that you have not done your duty.

There are millions struggling for success. Each in his own particular line is traveling his own road. There are as many varieties of success as there are varieties of people. Your success is not the same as someone else you know. It is your own peculiar brand. If you cannot be a great artist or a great statesman or a great author or merchant, you can be great in your particular line. You can be a success in the thing you are fitted to do.

In choosing a profession a great many people fail to estimate them-

selves carefully and fairly. They make a great mistake to start with and how can they expect to reach the heights of success. They simply pick out what they term a successful person who has made lots of money and try to follow his profession, no matter what the profession may be. The probability is, that the one who chooses his profession in this manner will be a failure. We need to use common sense in estimating our equipment and not confuse a liking for rewards of a special gift with the gift itself. We must be on our guard against over-estimating ourselves as well as under-estimating ourselves, one is as pathetic as the other.

Among the ranks of all the professions we find those who do not belong where they are. By chance they have gotten there, but by the unwritten law they belong somewhere else. Perhaps they failed to ask their maker their place in life. It is He who should guide us in so important a decision. But we fail in

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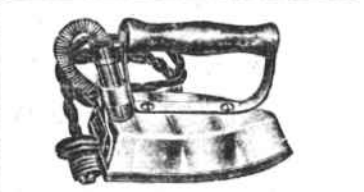
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