

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWSTHE UNIVERSAL OBLIGATION TO
WORK.

By J. Campbell White.

Idleness is not only weakness, it is sin. "Six days shalt thou labor" is just as positive a command as "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Work is not a curse, but a blessing. Even before the fall Adam had definite duties assigned him. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Jesus Christ lived the only perfect human life, and it was one of ceaseless productive activity. "I must work the work of Him that sent Me," expresses the sense of obligation which always rested upon Him. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work," indicates the fascination and soul-satisfaction which He found in such service. At the close of His career, He was able to make this magnificent claim, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." When misunderstood for His devotion to duty and sacrifice of ease and comfort, His appeal was to the highest conceivable example—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

So strongly did Paul feel this universal obligation that he said, "If any will not work, neither let him eat." This is as true of the millionaire as of the pauper, as a matter of principle. "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." "Study to be quiet and to do your own business and to work with your hands, even as we charged you, that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing."

And not only to supply our own needs and the needs of our families is the obligation upon us to work, but to supply the world's needs. No one has a right to cease using faithfully his powers of productive activity until these needs are relieved. Even to converted robbers, Paul wrote, "Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Instead of studying to steal something, he was to be ready to bestow something, and to work to get that he might have to give. And such giving becomes a necessity to every one touched with the compassion of Jesus Christ, for "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?"

Selfish accumulation of money or selfish waste of money, in view of the world's terrible need, indicates the absence of that love which God's presence always brings. "Let us love one another, for love is of God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love."

In the kingdom of God there is no place for idlers or triflers. They are the contempt of honest, earnest souls. "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and the idle soul shall suffer hunger." "Drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." Of the virtuous woman, it is written, "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and catcheth not the bread of idleness." And the real seriousness of the spirit of idleness is strikingly put in these words—"He that is slack in his work is brother to him that is a destroyer."

Let no one have an ambition to reach such a state of financial independence as to enable him to retire into idleness and uselessness. This is degeneration—physical, mental, and moral. It corresponds far too closely with the ambition of the

idle, lazy, naked, barbarian savages of Central Africa. We already have a superfluity of aristocratic barbarians in Christian lands. When any one capable of useful activity deliberately chooses a life of useless idleness, he becomes a mere parasite, and is a serious menace, both to himself and to society. The idle children of the idle rich are almost sure either to be nonentities, fools, or criminals. It is little wonder that the Lord gives riches to so comparatively few people when so many of those to whom He does give them are manifestly spoiled by their wrong use of their enlarged opportunities.

Every talent given to us by the Lord, whether it be of hand, or head, or heart, or of gold, is intrusted to us for a season, not to enjoy or to bury, but to use. He would remind us that all these talents are really his property; that we ourselves are on trial in the use we make of them; that one day He will ask us for a reckoning, and will regard us only in the measure of our faithfulness as His servants and stewards. Does it not become us all, then, to be "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord?"

MONTREAL.

The annual meeting of the Montreal West Presbyterian Church was very largely attended, about one hundred and fifty partaking of the supper provided by the ladies. The business meeting followed, under the presidency of the pastor, the Rev. W. R. Cruickshank. The pastor gave the report of the session, showing a membership of seventy-five persons, with ten baptisms and three deaths during the year. The financial report showed the most satisfactory condition in the fifteen years of the church's existence. The general receipts and expenditures were \$1,830, with a large increase in the envelope system and mission collections, a cash balance of \$56 being carried forward, with all debt paid. The total receipts from all sources were \$3,211. A very interesting report was given of the work at Rockfield, where, owing to the rapid development of large business concerns the urgent need for church extension had been much felt. Upwards of \$1,000 was raised for this purpose, and a building capable of seating nearly two hundred persons, with reading room (intended to be open daily) had been erected, largely by the labors of the residents amongst whom Messrs. Munroe, A. Keiler and Knox Henry had been leaders; the church was nearly ready for occupation and would be opened shortly, and with the Kensington Church would have the oversight of the Montreal West Session, which was enlarged by the nomination of Messrs. E. L. Gnaedinger, and J. B. Grass, as elders. The election of officers resulted in the addition of Mr. W. H. Heath to the board of managers, and Mr. James Speirs, as auditor. It should be added that the reports from the Sunday School, the Ladies' Aid Society and Woman's Missionary were all of a most encouraging character. Dr. Kelly, an active worker in various directions, was made the recipient of a Reading Lamp for his study by the Young People's Society. Rev. Mr. Cruickshank is doing excellent work in this growing suburb of Montreal.

Satan has a great dislike for a gymnasium. He can use a weak man better than a strong one. He is much more at home with a man with indigestion and a pampered body than with one whose blood is vigorous.

MR. BALFOUR'S DEFEAT.
By Two Passive Resisters.

The British Weekly prints the following communication as significant of the profound feelings raised by the long persecution of Nonconformists:

The midnight hour of Saturday was fast approaching as I sat in my study putting a few finishing touches to my Sunday work. A loud and sharp "ratt-tat-tat" rattled through the house and startled me. There was excitement and victory in every rap. Rushing to the door I was met with a group of faces which fairly glowed in the moonlight, and with a simultaneous shout, "Balfour's out." Work was now out of the question, so I decided to retire for the night. Did I return to try the door and see that all was secure? Anyway, the front door flew open at my touch, and I stepped out into the street. The moon was shining with remarkable brilliancy from a clear sky. Turning a corner, I entered a side street of warehouses and closed shops. It was deserted save for a solitary figure, tall and slender, with bent shoulders and head, who walked on before me rapidly, but with a somewhat slouching gait. Ah! he knows his friends have deceived him, and now their words of sympathy bore and almost disgust him, and he has given them the slip. Poor Arthur! and, despite everything, my heart ached for him. Stepping up to him, he latched his arm in mine, and held me as in a vice, and we walked on together without a word till the silence began to oppress us both. "Arthur," said I in a low voice, "you have been much in my thoughts and prayers to-day." He stopped suddenly, withdrew his arm, and cast at me a look of mingled approach and scorn, for he knew my views. "Don't mistake me. I have prayed, as thousands of men and women, good and true, over half the religious nation, have prayed to-day, for just this result." We resumed our walk as before.

"You were always clever, Arthur—you are still—and that has contrived to your downfall. You saw what was said of your life the other day, that, like all clever men, you believed the rest of humanity to be common fools. There is truth in that sweeping assertion. You believed I was a fool for going to prison rather than submit to your Education Act. You never knew Thomas Champness. He was not clever like you, but had a genius for practical common sense such as would have saved you, and, in addition, was one of the saintliest men in this country. It is believed that by putting him in prison you shortened his life. A friend of mine saw him after his second imprisonment, just before he died, and referred to his life in gaol. The old man said, 'Don't mention it; pray, don't. It was hell. It was hell.' His hand trembled on my arm, and his frame shook.

"Arthur, you are changed. You never allowed me to speak to you like this before. Had you possessed this spirit when in power, it would have prevented untold mischief, saved the country endless loss and sorrow, and you all this defeat and shame. But it is a word of comfort I desire to give you. Your crushing defeat is almost entirely due to prayer. Remember this; answered prayer often hurts, but it never really harms; never. Your discomfiture to-day may prove your salvation."

We had reached his hotel; the moon shone upon his pale face, and I saw that he was soothed. Ere he climbed the steps and vanished through the swing doors, he gripped my hand so tightly that I awoke, and was positively pained to find it was no more than a dream.