

IS THERE ANY WORK TO DO?

W. G. B.

In this instalment under the above heading I wish to call attention to the question of *Lectures*. It is a branch of work Friends have engaged in to a very limited extent. Nevertheless it is one of no mean importance. As individuals it is doubtful if a larger percentage could be found of any other religious society that appreciates more fully than we a good lecture. But so far as encouraging among ourselves this talent, it may be said we are weak. True many of our young people enjoy the privileges of literary and debating clubs, yet few become lecturers. It cannot be for want of ability.

Occasionally we have an opportunity of counting the value of a lecture, and it would seem to indicate that, so far as the society is concerned, our respect and admiration for it, as well as for the lecturer, is increased—not to say anything of the brightened faculties thereby brought into its service.

There are many subjects closely allied with our religious order upon which much light could be thrown with advantage to many of our members. Not a few of our principles and testimonies, whose mention awakens in the minds of many, especially the young, very vague notions, could be brought out in a lecture, so as to create more than passing interest and an intelligent understanding.

Men and women there are plentiful enough whose education and ability fit them for this work, and the most needful thing for them is to see the necessity of the case.

John J. Cornell and Isaac Wilson appear upon the Temperance platform occasionally, and no doubt a number of others do, not familiar to the writer. To say that the cause in them finds able exponents is putting it mild enough. We cannot count the influence of their public representations in the manner alluded to. Friends will remember with satisfaction and a just pride the visit last summer of Edward H. Magill. Apart altogether from the valuable material of the lecture, we could not help but feel that our Society was a home, not for narrow but for liberal-minded people—

people of wide range of thought and cultivated powers. We could not help but associate the lecture and the lecturer with our Society. It inspired us with more confidence in ourselves and more respect for ourselves as a Society, and if we did not quite appreciate all that the lecture contained, it was probably owing to the infrequency of such a discourse.

It would, I believe, have a most salutary effect upon us were we to have well prepared lectures upon such subjects as the following may suggest: The Rise and Progress of the Society, Our Distinguished Dead and Living, Friends and Slavery, Intemperance and Other Social Evils, Relations in the Home, Prison Life and Reform, Society the Individual and Punishment, Separate or Public Schools, Religion in Public Schools, The Sacrifice of War, A Paid Ministry, Music Secular and Sacred, Judicial Oaths, The Origin and Compilation of the Bible, The Early Church, The East and Its People, The Characteristics of Sects, and so forth.

The visit last summer of E. H. M. was, it is to be hoped, but the inauguration of a practice. The writer expresses the wish of very many in the words "Come again," and any others whose inclinations may favor the project will no doubt receive a ready welcome. There are a greater number of Friends probably on the other side of the imaginary line that divides us, who possess the means and the leisure for entering upon this work.

And for those qualified a large field lies open outside of our meeting-houses, in which talent and God-fearing manhood may enter. Speaking from some degree of experience, there is a class to whom lectures upon our principles and the grounds of our faith would come with refreshing acceptance—a class large in mentality and independence—a class in some of whom the desire for usefulness induces a union with some church in spite of their views, or in others of whom the dissatisfaction with the practices and faith of the orthodox churches causes them to drift away into indifference. I refer to the *university and professional students*. Were our views intelligently and lovingly brought to their notice, our Society and the cause of truth might