

osophy to matters of Christian practice, have you never met those whose superior gifts would have made them eminently useful, and who had designs of usefulness, perhaps philanthropic schemes of peculiar ingenuity and beauty, but who are passing away from earth, if they have not passed away already, without actually attempting any tangible good? And yet so sincere are they in their own unoperative benevolence—so hard do they toil and sweat in their own Nephelococcygia, that nothing could surprise them more than the question—"What do ye more than others?" unless it were their own inability to point out the solid product and lay their hands on the actual results.

To avoid this guilt and wretchedness—

1. Have a business in which diligence is lawful and desirable. There some pursuits which do not deserve to be called a business. *Aropus* was the king of Macedonia, and it was his favourite pursuit to make lanterns. Probably he was very good at making them, but his proper business was to be a king, and therefore the more lanterns he made, the worse king he was. And if your work be a high calling, you must not dissipate your energies on trifles, on things which, lawful in themselves, are still as irrelevant to you as lamp-making is irrelevant to a king. Perhaps some here are without any specific calling. They have neither a farm nor a merchandise to look after. They have no household to care for, no children to train and educate, no official duties to engross their time; they have an independent fortune, and live at large. My friends, I congratulate you on your wealth, your liberal education, your position in society, and your abundant leisure. It is in your power to be the benefactors of your generation; you are in circumstances to do an eminent service for God, and finish some great work before your going hence. What that work shall be I do not attempt to indicate; I rather leave it for your own investigation and discovery. Every one has his own line of things. Howard chose one path, and Wilberforce another; Harlan Pave chose one, and Brainerd Taylor another. Mrs Fletcher did one work, Lady Glenorchy another, and Mary Jane Graham a third. Every one did the work for which God had best fitted them, but each made that work their business. They gave themselves to it; they not only did it, by the bye, but they selected it and set themselves in earnest to it, not parenthetically, but on very purpose—the problem of their lives—for Christ's sake and in Christ's service, and held themselves as bound to do it as if they had been by himself expressly engaged for it. And, brethren, you must do the same. Those of you who do not need to toil for your daily bread, your very leisure is a hint what the Lord would have you to do. As you have no business of your own, he would have you devote yourselves to his business. He would have you carry on,

in some of its manifold departments, that work which he came to earth to do. He would have you go about his Father's business as he was wont to be about it. And if you still persist in living to yourselves, you cannot be happy. You cannot spend all your days in making pin-cushions or reading news papers, or loitering in club-rooms and coffee houses, and yet be happy. If you profess to follow Christ, this is not a Christian life. It is not a conscientious, and so it cannot be a comfortable life. And if the pin-cushion or the newspaper fail to make you happy, remember the reason—very good as relaxations ever so great an amount of these things can never be a business, and "wist ye not that you should be about your Father's business?"

2. Having made a wise and deliberate selection of a business, go on with it, go through with it. Persevering mediocrity is much more respectable and unspeakably more useful than talented inconstancy. In the heathery turf you will often find a plant chiefly remarkable for its peculiar roots; from the main stem down to the minutest fibre, you will find them all abruptly terminate, as if shorn or bitten off, and the silly superstition of the country people alleges, that once on a time it was a plant of singular potency for healing all sorts of maladies, and therefore the great enemy of man in his malignity bit off the roots in which its virtues resided. This plant, with this quaint history, is a very good emblem of many well-meaning but little effecting people. They might be defined as *radicibus præmorsis* or rather *inceptis succisis*. The efficacy of every good work lies in its completion, and all their good works terminate abruptly and are left off unfinished. The devil frustrates their efficacy by cutting off their ends; their unprofitable history is made up of plans and projects, schemes of usefulness that were never gone about and magnificent undertakings that were never carried forward; societies that were set agoing, then left to shift for themselves, and forlorn beings, who for a time were taken up and instructed, and just when they were beginning to show symptoms of improvement, were cast on the world again.

But others there are, who before beginning to build count the cost, and having collected their materials and laid their foundations deep and broad, go on to rear their structure indifferent to more tempting schemes and sublimer enterprises subsequently suggested. The man who provides a home for a poor neighbor, is a greater benefactor of the poor than he who lays the foundation of a stately almshouse and never finishes a single apartment. The persevering teacher who guides one child into the saving knowledge of Christ and leads him on to established habits of piety, is a more useful man than his friend who gathers in a room-full of ragged children, and after a few weeks of waning zeal, turns them all adrift on the streets again. The pa-