

Still we did not like to give it up. Charitably disposed people called these idlers good men, and we did not wish to dissent from their judgment. So, finding no present solution of the mystery, we at last left it, along with many others, to be cleared up by the light of a better world, often wondering, however, what the verdict of the Master will be, who said, "my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to do His work," and whether He whose life was such an unwearying round of benevolent activity, would recognize these do-nothing christians as His followers?

Unfortunately this description of good people is not confined to any one locality. We are told continually of Sabbath Schools languishing for want of teachers,—of Sabbath-breaking children whom it is somebody's duty to endeavour to gather in,—of poor people never invited to church,—of cities and towns almost without a tract distributor,—of the intemperate and the fallen, left to perish without a warning voice or a hand stretched out to help them,—of the fatherless and widows, unvisited in their affliction,—in fine, of abundance of work to be done, and but here and there one willing to do it.

This cannot arise from any lack of natural energy, for these good men are often preeminent for their earnestness and enterprise in regard to all material interests. They toil early and late in the pursuit of their own worldly advantage; it is only in regard to "the things that are Jesus Christ's" that they are thus apathetic. In fact it is urged that business is so absorbing, and its demands on man's time and attention so exhausting, that active engagement in christian work, after the labours of the day are past, or even on the Sabbath, is out of the question. "Anything of interest in your Sabbath-school class?" we asked innocently the other day of one whom we had long known as an earnest and successful teacher. "Oh! I am not teaching now," was his reply; "I am so over-done on Saturday nights, that I need Sunday to rest, and I have given up my class." It was not the only occasion on which we have received a similar answer.

Now, assuming this case to be a valid one, are we not fairly entitled to ask whether it can be right to allow ourselves to become so engrossed and exhausted with attention to business, as to leave no time or strength for works of love and mercy! Ought we not to be prepared to suffer worldly loss, if need be, rather than forego altogether the pleasure and advantage of engagement in some christian work? Better do *a little*, than *nothing at all!* Much as the cause of God needs our active cöoperation, the loss we sustain by such neglect is far greater than the loss we inflict by it. No christian man or woman can afford to be idle. Our spiritual like our physical strength depends upon our appetite, and that, again, depends largely upon the amount of exercise we take; so that we should scarcely feel as if we were taking an unwarrantable liberty with the Apostle's language were we to read it, "if any man will not work, neither can he eat." The dinner of herbs is far more savoury to the labouring man, than the stalled ox to the sluggard