Portfolio of Select Literature.

YOUNG MEN AND CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP.

It is to be feared, (says one,) that the duty of joining the fellowship of the church is delayed and neglected to a greater extent on the part of our young men, than among the young of the other sex. If this be a fact, it is important to inquire into the causes of it. What ostensible excuse can be pleaded in the case?

Youth is pleaded. "We are young, and require greater knowledge, and more experience ere we take this step." This is specious, and has the aspect of humility and diffidence. Some young persons are diffident in everything, and require encouragement; while others are forward in everything, but the thing of which we now speak. The arts of life, the knowledge and conversation of man, the relations of life, the offices of men, are severally objects of pursuit, while duty to the church is neglected. The excuse is unsound in principle. Are youth excused from other obligations, such as reading the word of God, prayer, and obedience to the commandments of Christ? Is grace not promised to the young? Is the easy yoke of Christ too heavy for the young? Will death spare the young? Will heaven shut out the young? Will hell not open to receive the young? I am not speaking of very young children, but of those who approach, or have reached, manhood in other things. Are they to put away childish things in every concern but religion, and pushing forward to the employment relations, and honours of this world, shall they neglect their duty to Christ, to their own souls, and to the church, as if hesitation in this matter were a virtue, and accession to the church an evil to be delayed to the latest possible hour, or neglected altogether? This excuse has no sound foundation, and cannot apply to young men more than to young women.

The claims of business are sometimes opposed to the claims of Christ. "We are much occupied; we have not leisure for the serious thoughtfulness required in taking a step so solemn, but must attend to it at the first favorable opportunity." This is specious also, but hollow. The world has its claims, but they are secondary, and come after the claims of God and of Christ. Upon the principle of this objection, individuals might excuse themselves from reading the Bible, or performing any other religious duties; and business is pleaded as an excuse for not sanctifying the Sabbath, and being absent from religious ordinances. Only reflect on the lengths to which this objection will lead. Let young men ask, "Has God required this at our hand? and can that business be lawful, or lawfully pursued, which interferes with our obligations to him?" "No man can serve two masters; ye cannot serve God and mammon." The duties of religion in their time and place interfere with no just claims of business. So far from this, religion enjoins diligence, and rebukes slothfulness. Religion will give a place, and a proportion to all the duties of life, and a spirit for the performance of them, and a pleasure in the enjoyment of the gifts of God, which cannot be experienced where the mind, in the guilt and sense of a constant omission of duty to God, is occupied in the exclusive pursuit of