

great outside world, they are feeble-minded, "goody-goody," imperfectly educated, and withal, given to delivering sermons of forty instead of fifteen or twenty minutes. These things are working ruin, emptying churches, and driving away young men.

Well, if assertions were facts, the situation would certainly be serious. Were Mr. Bok's *ipse dixit* as true as the Gospel, good people might well be alarmed. But he is manifestly ignorant as to how Presbyterian ministers, in Canada at least, are trained. We do not "educate the goody-goody boys of our families to be ministers." Our students, as a class, are young men of vigor who fight their own battle in the world. They are not nurtured like hot-house plants. They are not cooped and sheltered from the strongest currents of thought in the age. They take their place in our universities along with those aspiring to be lawyers, doctors, scientists and legislators, and carry away a full share of academic honors and medals before pursuing theological studies. Yes, and some of them gain high distinctions in running, jumping, cricketing, football, and all forms of athletics. But as to being conversant with all other avocations than their own, there must be a limit, notwithstanding the demand for their being men of the world and of broad culture. I can recall the career of a vigorous minister who was strong in business, and eventually gave up Gospel work altogether; and the career of another who studied commercial pursuits and politics, and knew far more about the culture of bees and the breeding of cattle and swine than about the prophecies of Isaiah and the epistles of Peter and Paul. He was a man of ability and a fluent speaker, but sensible congregations soon tired of his prelections, and he was finally relegated to well-merited obscurity and silence.

Young men are doubtless kept from church by the faults of ministers. It is possible, however, that there is ex-

aggeration in this respect, the number of absentees may be magnified, and it is certain that other potent causes for their absence are overlooked or ignored in the article before me. The writer takes no account of the natural aversion to the things of God, which belongs to the unrenewed heart, and the pernicious influence exerted by the flood of anti-Christian literature of our day.

It is easy to picture young men reading good books, but they make another selection as well. I have seen men and women absorbed in sensational tales and sceptical essays in the crowded street cars of New York as well as in the great thoroughfares of travel; but hardly ever have I found in their hands respectable, scientific, or ethical treatises, to say nothing of the Bible.

Young men may be deterred from church attendance by uncomfortable pews, and poisonous atmosphere through lack of ventilation. They may be driven away by the coldness and lack of kindly Christian sympathy of deacons, elders and members, and by what they deem, justly or unjustly, the inconsistency and hypocrisy of prominent persons in the church. How often do we hear of their being three or four years in a church without being spoken to by anyone. They may see so little practical difference between the church and the world as to lead them to conclude that it matters not to which they belong. Their frequent attendance upon theatres and operas and secular lectures, spiced with sceptical hints and derisive allusions to Christianity, and their membership in clubs and various societies where the same atmosphere is breathed, may impair and even destroy their relish for all religious exercises. They may feel wounded and insulted by the plain incisive truths sent home to their consciences from the pulpit. They may be under the power of the god of this world—an agent unrecognized in Mr. Bok's essay. When Christ preached, they said "He is beside Himself, He hath Beelze-