

throw the weight of evidence on the other side. If so, we would rejoice to hear it said and know the truth. But if not, it is unjust to truth to withhold our assent; and how much is lost by our unbelief!

THE CHURCH AND YOUNG MEN.

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ALL, I am sure, recognize the importance of securing and retaining the close relation of young men with the church, and almost all have to confess the difficulty there seems to be in enlisting young men in general in active Christian work. Do we not often find that in the face of all the efforts of Sabbath schools, Bible classes, and young people's societies, the proportion of young men who make profession of faith, at, say twenty-one years of age, is much less than of young women; and in our Bible classes is it not very often the case that the number of young women is double that of young men? To discover the causes of this state of affairs regarding our young men, and, if possible, to remedy it, is a practical question of vast moment to the church at the present day. Let me endeavour to suggest a few things here.

1. First, consider the *hindrances* young men meet in making decision for Christ, and then engaging in Christian work. Some of these are to be found in the *world*, and some may exist in the *church* itself.

1. The hindrances the *world* presents are many and varied, subtle and seductive. Here of course, especially in towns, we find the saloon, the billiard room, and the theatre, in

the foreground. Each of these exerts a most injurious influence, and soon destroys interest in religious concerns, and in the end leads young men astray into vicious courses. In regard to these things there can be but one opinion, and that is, that they are a great hindrance in the way of the young men of the land coming under distinct religious influences. So long as we find more young men at the theatre on Saturday night than in God's house on Sabbath morning, so long as we find more in the saloon any evening than at the prayer meeting, and so long as more frequent the billiard room than attend Bible class, there is an alarming state of affairs, which may well fill Christian hearts with the deepest concern as to what the result will be.

Then in the world there comes, too, the influence that the *rush of business and race for riches* exerts. Many young men who scarcely ever enter either saloon, billiard room or theatre, are full of ambitious plans in regard to business or professional life. They bend all their energies to carrying out their plans, and do not find time for the duties, or even the privileges, of religion. Too many young men reason thus: When I get my trade learned, or my profession acquired, or again, when I get well settled in life, and have obtained a competency, then I will attend to my own spiritual interests, and seek to promote the cause of Christ in the world.

Then again, in the *literature* which lads and young men chiefly read, there is much evil influence silently at work. Many books prepared for boys and young men are decidedly injurious, and destroy taste for things more solid and serious. All the lower classes of novels, in book form, or in magazines and papers, cannot but exert a baneful moral influence on young men. In these we see vice often gild-