

mains undisputed and indisputable that the church is not popular with men, and is therefore reaching only a small proportion of that part of our population. Those inside the church and those outside the church both know that the attendants at our prayer-meetings, our missionary meetings, our sociables and rallies, and at the services for public worship on the Sabbath are largely women. Compare the audiences which crowd our theaters and lecture-halls with those which are in attendance upon our religious meetings, and the unpopularity of the church with men will be made so apparent and so pronounced as to be well-nigh humiliating. There are some churches, of course, that can count up more male adherents and attendants than others, but the general average, when taken, is anything but creditable or encouraging.

Where does the fault lie? With the men, no doubt, to a great extent—an extent greater than they themselves would be likely to admit. The spirit of the age, which is one of restlessness and excitement, has made a quiet, restful, thoughtful hour in the house of the Lord uncongenial and uninviting to them; in some cases, many cases, they find the sacred suggestions and self-searching silences of the sanctuary too pointed and penetrating to be either comfortable or tolerable. These and various other reasons, for which they themselves are wholly responsible, will account in part for the breach which now exists between men and the church.

But some of the blame belongs elsewhere. There is another side to make answer, and if the answer be honestly, candidly given, the responsibility will stand almost equally divided; one half of the fault, at least, will be found lying at the door of the church. Here, then, should be our angle of attack, our base of maneuver. Instead of complaining of the men and excusing ourselves because they are stolidly unresponsive and unapproachable, we

should become introspective and self-reformatory, locating and removing the barriers which the church itself has cast in the way. Let us confess our faults to one another! An open confession, besides being good for our souls, will greatly aid the solution of the problem before us.

One reason—and I am coming more and more to feel that it is the chief reason—why the church is unpopular with men, is because men are unpopular with the church. The fact is, we are altogether too fond of the women, and too much inclined to be content with their loyalty and support. When the church seeks the men as diligently as it now seeks the women, it will find them, and in equal numbers.

I. As a rule—there are exceptions, many exceptions, but of these we are not speaking now—men are neglected homiletically. The average sermon which is preached to-day, I believe, is not calculated to interest, much less to attract, men. I am willing to go even farther than that, and say that I believe the average sermon of to-day is not prepared—using that word in its broader homiletic sense—either for men or by men. It is written by a man and delivered by a man, but if a sermon is a growth, an outgrowth, the product of contact and contagion, as we believe and say it should be, then the mold in which it is cast is feminine rather than masculine, being prompted and punctuated, as it is in most cases, by knowledge of and association with the women and not the men. If preachers knew the cares and conditions under which the great mass of men live, their peculiar temptations, their strange and often secret struggles, the influences which are thrown around them and the impulses awakened within them, knew the nineteenth-century man as his fellows know him, their method of sermonizing would instantly undergo a change.

The man of to-day, especially as found in our great cities, is a peculiar but a most interesting and, as it seems