

In other cases the delay arises from the fear lest they should bring reproach upon the sacred name they ought to bear. Satan is often very jealous for the honour of Christ! Hence he would have them wait to "prove themselves," instead of trusting Him who has said, "I will never leave thee." While in yet other instances, young people are often deterred from making a profession of religion, because their parents are not Christians, and they fear to take a step that would seem to cast reproach upon them!

But may there not be still another cause for the neglect? Is there never anything in our mode of examining or receiving candidates, to deter the timid from the attempt to join a church? Do we not sometimes make the gate straiter, and the way narrower than there is any need for, by the formidable processes through which we compel applicants to pass; and then, as we see some sensitive female, or child, stand hesitating at the door, say within ourselves, "Ah! if you were a Christian, you would not be ashamed of Jesus!" But *is it shame*, or is it not rather a *constitutional shrinking* from the publicity of the occasion? And ought we not rather to help than to hinder such? One of our churches was once described to us as having certain officials, charged with the duty of standing sentry and *keeping out* all who sought to enter! The description was suggestive, if it was a little over-drawn. We are creatures of extremes, and in our judgment, it is just as wrong to drive the lambs away from the divinely appointed enclosure, as it is to open the doors of our churches to all who live morally, and can repeat a catechism. "What we want," said the Rev. E. R. Conder, at the last autumnal meeting of the English Congregational Union, "is not to make church membership contemptible and worthless by the destruction of those distinctions and safeguards which alone can conserve its dignity and usefulness, but to make it attractive and impressive, a manifest privilege, a confessed obligation. Let us have no lions in the way before the gate—even chained ones; no, nor stuffed ones; no threatening portcullis over the gateway, no grim sentry or stiff pompous police officer to demand the watchword and scrutinize the passport. But neither let us make breaches in the walls, or let down from windows on the wall softly cushioned baskets, for those who are too proud, too timorous, or too lazy, to enter in, as an honest law-abiding citizen should do, through the gate into the city. In vain do you perplex yourselves how to make admission easy, if there be nothing worth having when you are in. Make the church attractive, with the double attractiveness