

ship, for churches and organizations must be known by their fruits the same as individuals, and people are inspired with a love of righteousness more by associating with and learning the happiness of a pure life than by listening to many arguments; therefore the management which permits this restrictiveness is not the best management for a church.

Abolishing creeds would do much to destroy this privateness of churches, but there is another cause I think which should be removed also. This other cause is found in the forms under which a person is admitted to membership. In order to join a church, as most churches are now managed, one must subordinate himself to the members of the church, or at least to some of the members. This subordination is the greater if it happens to be the case of a poor man entering a fine aristocratic church. You can all see instantly, I think, how this subordination is brought about, and what the effect of it is. Church people lay it to the pride of the sinner. I have heard, time and again, some preacher tell how he has worked with so and so to bring him to Christ, but all in vain, because of his pride. The preacher says he was too proud to humble himself before God. But this is not the truth I venture to say in nine cases out of ten. The man does not rebel against humbling himself before God, but against humbling himself before men. Just as like as not this very man is striving his best all the time to be Christ-like in his life, and if you could be near at night you might see his pillow bathed in tears. He is willing and does love God, but he does not really feel that it is right for him to humble himself to these men in the church. And why should he? They have no claim of superiority over him. There is no reason why he should humble himself. He loves God as much as they do; perhaps more than they do. Who can tell?

But there is another thought in this that must not be mistaken. The

orthodox churchman, if he heard this statement, would probably answer that Christ said that "whosoever therefore shall confess me before men him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Now, apply this to the case of this man. He loves God, but is not willing to humble himself to these men. How do you suppose he would answer at any time if you should ask him if he believed in a God and loved Him. Undoubtedly, I think, he would answer that he did believe in and loved God. That is, I think that often a man that will refuse to go forward and make a confession in a church will always uphold God and his teachings before any number of men.

The management is bad I think which makes it necessary for a man to humble himself to any people in order to confess his God before them, and in order that he may enjoy the influence of their companionship. I am aware that this point may seem subtle, and the truth of it not easily understood by those long identified with church work; therefore I will suggest an arrangement which I think would avoid this objection, and then perhaps I will make my meaning more clear. I believe I have just mentioned a church modelled after my conceptions of what is needed. This church, in the first place, would, of course, have no creed. In the second place it would have no membership roll any more than a country Sunday School has; anyone and everyone who came would be a member with all rights that any other member had.

This plan you see would offer the least possible restriction to anyone who came within reach. The effect would be that anyone who came would feel at home. It would be his church at once. He would therefore come more easily under the influence of good teachings. He would feel then that he, with all others in the church, were