

ATTRACTIVE WORSHIP.

"We are losing our young people," we are told, "Unless the service of the Presbyterian Church is made more attractive they will go to other churches." What do you then propose? How can our worship be made more attractive? The answer is on the tongue-tip—"Shorten your services, so as not to exceed an hour and a quarter altogether. Give up the long prayer and let us have two short ones in stead. Do not read long screeds of the Bible. Make the sermon *interesting* by its eloquence, research, intellectual power, pathos, poetic beauty. Avoid theological terms and scripture phrases, and use more popular language. Get a new Psalmody, so as to supersede the *uncouth* Rouse's version. Introduce hymns which young people like and will sing with enjoyment, and" these friends would add as "further improvements to please the young, Let us have organs and good music. Build fine churches which it will be a pleasure to enter. Form associations where the young people can meet and make religion pleasant. Relax the severity of Puritan notions regarding innocent amusements. If you do these things, the Presbyterian Church will be as attractive as any other, and instead of losing you may gain from other churches."

Let us examine this commonly advocated theory of improvement. We at once concede, nay, we assert strongly that services should not be protracted so as to weary out devotion; that sermons and prayers ought not to be a jumble of unpremeditated and irreverent speech; that our service of praise should be improved; that churches should be distinguishable from barns, and should be decently arranged and cared for; that Christian society should care more for the young in their pastimes and recreations: that the young should find something to do for Christ. We have no wish to hide the faults of our Church in these and other respects. By all means let these things be corrected. But our zealous reformers are asking far more than the correcting of faults. They plead for the introduction of *attractions* into worship. Here we are forced to disagree with them. We may have short sermon and prayers, a choral service, and a rare musical entertainment, and thereby may attract to the church a crowd, part of which will leave before sermon, and the other part give it a listless hearing. In place of an old fashioned Gospel sermon, we may have an eloquent or interesting lecture on science or history, a very gem of literary excellence; or a patriotic oration full of impassioned eloquence, and the church may be crowded to hear it. We may have an exquisitely finished church, with every comfort and convenience, the sittings in which are readily taken up, and where there enter no poor to have the Gospel preached to them. We may have all that and yet fail to draw our young people. Men prefer the *reality* to the *imitation*. Better, if it is only entertainment they are looking for, to have a concert, a theatre, a Shakespearian reading, than a mongrel performance savouring only of nature and earth, and spoiled by the overshadowing of conscience. If it is only pleasure that is sought, better to seek it in the gay saloon, or a pleasure walk or drive, than have enjoyment interrupted by a form of religion. The introduction of such attractions, and experience has proved it, is to produce irreligion, make sensible men withdraw from the church altogether, and to foster a mere æsthetic sentimentalism which entirely supplants true Godliness. If a man has no relish for wholesome bread, you cannot produce that relish by feeding him on dainties. Such feeding only increases the disease. The fault is not in the bread, but in the man. Make him healthy and he will prefer bread to dainties. So let our youth be in spiritual health; then hungering for the bread of life, they will relish