

by assimilation to it ; but by so much as our fare is more savory to their taste, it loses the godly flavor, the salt of God, and so sacrifices its real relish and nutritious quality to holy souls.

If this position seem extreme, let us test it by the teachings of the Word. It is certainly a significant fact that there is not one sentence of New Testament Scripture that warrants us to put before us as an object the attracting of ungodly people to Christian assemblies ! If, by creating and maintaining a scriptural and spiritual worship and life, we may attract them, we are to rejoice. These are legitimate ways of drawing outsiders. As the healing virtues of Bethesda drew the lame, and halt, and withered to the pool, let the Church prove a pool of healing virtue, and an armed band cannot keep away those who are conscious of need or yearning for somewhat to fill a void. But we are not to go one step toward the world, even to draw the world toward ourselves. We are to attract by contrast and consecration and separation, but not by courting and catering and assimilation.

The Church is never contemplated in the Scripture as a "mixed multitude," for the mixed multitude always fails a lusting and longs for the leeks and onions of Egypt. Its direction of march is always backward, not forward. The Church is a body of believers meeting for worship, the Lord's Supper, prayer, teaching, mutual edification. Only two passages in the New Testament can be tortured into encouraging such seeking of a mixture of the worldly element. In Luke 14 : 23 we read : " Go out and compel them to come in," the true interpretation of which has no probable connection with the question under discussion ; and in 1 Cor. 14 : 23, 24, we read : " If there come in one that believeth not, or unlearned," which supposes an exceptional case, as though the presence of such an element were not ordinarily to be expected. Certain it is that the Church is not contemplated in the New Testament as mixed with worldly elements.

We are not now contending that it is *undesirable to have* unbelievers present at our church assemblies ; but only that it is unscriptural to *seek to draw them by unspiritual methods* ; and that no Scripture authorizes us to set such object before us. Church gatherings are distinctively for godly people, and must, therefore, be primarily conducted with reference to the *edification of believers, not the gratification of unbelievers.*

This leaven of sensationalism pervades our whole church life and threatens to revolutionize the Church itself, turning it into a worldly club. How easily may the new "institutional church" become a worldly "institution" and drop out the essential "church" feature altogether ! The outcry in these days is for *attractiveness* in worship. Attractiveness to whom ? The only beauty recognized by God is the beauty of holiness ; and for the perception and reception of that beauty no worldly nature has inclination or even capacity. We are indeed to seek to make worship attractive to all godly souls ; but in so far as it is truly holy and spiritual, will it not be unattractive to those who are not godly but carnal ?