

Such argument seems plausible, but is it not fallacious? What if there lies beneath this whole conception a fundamental error! Does it not rest upon an assumption that the Church is to *undertake to draw ungodly souls toward her assemblies*? For that position who will show us any Scripture warrant? We need to go back to the New Testament and learn the true nature of a Christian Church. Where does it contain one passage in which it is even hinted that the Church is to employ any means, secular or sacred, for the mere purpose of drawing outsiders into her assemblies for worship?

Dr. Adolph Saphir, that marvellous preacher who kept all London awake by his singular insight into Scripture truth, sounded the alarm against this notion, in the world's metropolis. He says, "The Church is the *congregation of believers*, and to them God's truth must be fully unfolded." "As the Church service is in the first instance for God's worship and the instruction and advancement of believers, many things must be explained and dwelt on which unbelievers or outsiders cannot fully understand, and which they, likely, will misunderstand, and at which they will be offended." "We have too much adapted our whole service and church life to undecided worldly people." *

This false philosophy of adaptation works two ways: first, toward *suppression of unpalatable doctrine or truth*. Many a truth that is a stepping-stone to a believer is a stumbling-stone to an unbeliever. Shall we deprive saints of a step upward lest sinners fall over it downward? Our Lord did not so. When even professed disciples stumbled at His teaching, He only repeated the objectionable truth in even a more obnoxious form.† One has only to go about from church to church nowadays to find that even in Evangelical pulpits certain so-called "severer," "sterner" doctrines are treated as obsolete. It is a day of prophesying of smooth things; of love *versus* law, salvation rather than sin, culture more than regeneration, the perfectability of humanity rather than man's depravity and utter ruin. And the pulpit must be in bondage so long and so far as preaching is consciously or unconsciously shaped with reference to *drawing or repelling men*. It is a disaster when the "offence of the cross" ceases. Spiritual disciples will no longer be edified when carnal minds are gratified and satisfied.

A second, and equally serious result is the *lowering of the standard of godliness*. "The world will love its own," and to draw the world it is necessary to set up a worldly attraction. A magnet draws only iron and steel, and so the Gospel's attraction is regulated by affinity. Every attempt, therefore, to make a service of worship attractive to the natural and carnal man runs at least this risk—that we shall be led to drop out what is distinctively spiritual, and substitute what is distinctively worldly. And the practical result is that every innovation, introduced into church worship and life with a view to drawing the outsider, proves a means of harm to the spiritual character of disciples. We accommodate ourselves to the world

* A Memoir of Adolph Saphir, 358, 359.

† Cf. John 3: 3-11; 8: 52-58.