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ARTICLE I.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE CHURCH.

Until within the last two centuries, the empire of philosophy, in the Christian Church, has been divided, almost exclusively, between Plato and Aristotle. A modified Platonism invaded the Church (much to its detriment,) in the second century, and maintained its ascendancy for the next three hundred years. In the disputes of the fifth century, the dialectics of Aristotle began to be studied; and during this and the two succeeding ages, each of the great Grecian leaders had his admirers and followers. From the eighth to the sixteenth centuries, the empire of Aristotle was almost universal. It was entirely so, if we except a portion of the monks, the mystics, and the early reformers. With these exceptions, the authority of the Stagirite remained unbroken, till it encountered, in the first half of the seventeenth century, the more popular systems of Bacon and Des Cartes.

In the year 1605, Lord Bacon published his Chart of the Sciences, and his new method of pursuing them. This was followed, after some years, by his *Novum Organum*; in both which he inculcated what has been called the *Inductive Philosophy*. He insisted that, in our endeavours to advance the Sciences, and more especially the Physical Sciences, our reasonings must all be grounded on *facts*, and that these must be ascertained by reiterated and well conducted experiments. This can hardly

most expressive symbol of separation, how magnificent the revelation, that in the new and better world "there was no more sea." And now, let this revelation be a source of comfort to the Christian. Tossed upon life's sea of conflict and toil and trouble, let him remember that there is a rest above, where the storms of earth are hushed and there is no more sea. By contemplating the rest of heaven as a real and certain thing, he will become strengthened for the labours of earth. Labor is of the earth, rest is in heaven. There is not a wave of trial or sorrow which breaks upon the shores of life, which is not bearing the Christian on to the haven above.—The discipline of this earthly state, like the flame of the furnace, purifies the believer, and refines and ripens him for heaven. And when the flame is kindled most fiercely—when the billows rise most terribly, let him remember that there is peace above, and no sea in the better world. Let him steer on, then, over the waters of life, by the beacon light of this revelation, and when his bark has at last crossed death's narrow sea, it shall be moored in eternal safety in the haven of rest. Let the sinner remember that there is no sea in heaven, but the tempest rages awfully in hell! There the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest. Let him beware, then, of the course which he is now pursuing, for unless that course be changed, he will launch upon the ocean of eternity, only to drift forever, a shattered wreck, upon the raging billows of a sea of despair!

ARTICLE III.

FORM AND SPIRIT.

An Address, delivered before the Alumni, and the Society of Inquiry of Union Theological Seminary, Prince Edward, Va. June, 1850,

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The grand controversy of the present age, turns on the
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question, whether the efficacy of the Gospel depends chiefly on form or spirit. Various as are the parties into which the great company of Christ's professed followers is divided, this one test will array them under two banners, essentially opposite, and marshal them for a conflict which must be one of extermination. Of these two conflicting systems of religion, the one has its centre in the truth. The truth as it is in Jesus, is its sun. Around this, all revolves, and to this all is subordinated. It is essentially tolerant of diversities of form, where the truth is preserved and honoured. It has power of vision to pierce the drapery that enwraps and not unfrequently fetters the spirit; and joyfully recognizes and fraternizes with the life within. It loves and prizes the priceless jewel, whether found in the casket of lead, or silver, or gold. And when it goes out to find the true people of God—those who have made peace with him by covenant, it confines its search neither to cathedral, nor church, nor conventicle. It stands as reverently on the open heath, where humble forms are bending, and penitent hearts, untutored except by a sense of want, are sending forth to God, it may be in rudest speech, petitions for pardon and acceptance; as it does in the nave of some lofty architectural pile, where the solemn peal of the organ swells on the ear, and a dim religious light, streaming through stained and pictured windows, invites to devotion, and robed priests, in all the pageantry of the most imposing hierarchy, are making their vicarious approach to God. In short, it tears away the drapery whether of meagre poverty, or royal sumptuousness, and looks at the heart, to see if Jesus be enthroned there. Its ever recurring cry is "I would see Jesus." And where he is found its spirit rests in fraternal love, and assured hope.

The other system revolves around the form. It asks not simply is the truth held, but *how* it is held. Orders, rites, ceremonies, are the grand principles on which it rests the weightier matters of its law. And by a very natural consequence, one indeed which results from the laws of our being, this undue exaltation of the form, draws after it a corresponding depreciation of the spirit. The apotheosis of external religion, is the dethronement of the internal and the spiritual, and to a greater or less extent, this result is unvarying. Go where you will among the ad-

herents of this system, and you find a latitudinarian tolerance of diversities of doctrine, prevailing in exact proportion to the rigidity of the demand for uniformity of practice in the observances of religion. Not unfrequently this laxity of doctrine is boasted of, as an ornament, and trusted in as a secret of strength. You may believe what you will, within certain very broad and somewhat dimly defined limits, provided the loved and cherished form is observed. The very Church that, avowedly, so framed its declarations of truth as to comprehend well nigh all shades of theological opinion, even inviting to her bosom those who held some of the grand distinguishing principles of the great anti-christian apostacy, takes its position with unflinching firmness on the ground of rites and ceremonies, and cuts off from Church relationship, and valid ordinances, and abandons to the uncovenanted mercies of God, all who do not use her Shibboleth. She drowns the voice of admitted truth and piety, pleading for Christian recognition and fellowship, with the deafening cry "great is Diana of the Ephesians." Instead of seeking for the living spirit of Christianity, and recognizing it when found; this system of externalism is satisfied with the lifeless corpse, from which the animating spirit has fled, provided you give it

Before decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers.

Instead of giving free scope to the spirit, allowing it to develop itself, controlled by no laws save those God has given, it forms an encrustation around it, compelling all its growth, if it grow at all, to a conformity to its fossil mould. In short its body is more a mummy than a man.

Now between these two rival systems every man must make his choice. He cannot serve God and Mammon. He cannot have two supreme tests of the Church. These systems are antagonistic, and every man must array himself with the one or the other. And the gathering with one, is scattering abroad so far as the other is concerned. If his system is distinctively ritual, the spirit must be neglected. Dethroned from its rightful sovereignty, it will be confined in the cruel bondage of a prescribed and unalterable mould; and there is great danger that it will pine away and die in its captivity. But if the spiritual element be regnant,

forms will not be despised as useless or cumbersome ; but they will be held in subordination to the truth, and if they attempt to bind and hinder its free exercise, they will be burst asunder, as will the cerements of the tomb when the life-giver shall bid the dead to come forth.

It cannot be denied that there is in our nature a strong tendency to formalism in religion. Formalism is, indeed, a compromise between conscience and the love of the world. The mind does not readily rest in infidelity ; and does not love God or holiness. The resultant of these two forces is often the adoption and strenuous advocacy of a form of religion, which is enough like the truth to appease the conscience, yet which has not life enough to conquer worldly-mindedness. And if this form of godliness can be decorated with a splendid and captivating drapery, which appeals to the imagination, and gratifies the taste, its reception is all the more welcome, and its power the more absolute. This tendency to exalt and rest in whatever appeals to the senses, is manifested in every part of the world, and in all ages of time. It stands boldly forth in all those systems of religion which man has devised for himself. And even a true religion has not unfrequently so degenerated, as to be given up to its sway. Thus it was that that system of truth given by God as the forerunner of Christianity had so yielded to this principle, that its most prominent advocates were chargable with having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it. And the Church of Christ, simple and spiritual as it is, has not escaped this malign influence. Her history tells too plainly that altars and crosses, vestments and genuflections, penances and pilgrimages, have usurped the place of, and driven into exile the humble and loving service of the heart. And thus men painfully earn a name to live while they are dead. And just in proportion as the spirit of Christianity has been suppressed the power of forms has augmented. The form of the cross is most frequently found where the doctrines of the cross are least known.

It is not strange, therefore, that our Lord so shaped his dispensation of truth as to come in violent conflict with this dangerous tendency of our nature. We are prepared to hear his declaration to the woman of Samaria, "Believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this moun-

tain nor yet in Jerusalem worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." And in precise accordance with the truest wisdom, philosophical as well as religious, our Saviour established a system, which above all others the world has ever seen, was simple in its form. There must necessarily be a form of truth; for we are not purely spiritual beings. There must be an organized manifestation of our faith. Hence religion must have its sacred times and places, its ordinances and decent observances. But while this demand of our nature is fully met in the promulgation of the truth as it is in Jesus, care is taken that it shall not have unlimited sway. We have a visible organization of the Church, with its ordinances; baptism and the supper; and its government by bishops and elders. But lest these few and simple ordinances should assume too high a place in our esteem and confidence, we are reminded, both by precept and example, that they are but channels of grace, and not its authors—that to the worthy receiver alone, they become means of salvation. In short, that they have no inherent efficacy, and no indispensable connection with spiritual life, and that if need be, we can worship God acceptably without any or all of them. The external and the internal are combined, but each is kept in its proper place. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." "If thou shalt believe in thy heart, and confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, thou shalt be saved." "For with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."

In the Christian system form is the handmaid of spirit, and ministers to its ends, and is only valuable as it does so. When, therefore, the form assumes the prominent place, and becomes the end when the majestic temple with its heaven piercing pinnacles, and cloudlike dome, its splendid paraphernalia, and its imposing ritual, draw the eyes and the heart away from the truth to themselves, they become not only useless but prejudicial. They become at once usurpers of the place and rebels against the authority of the king of truth.

But the question may very naturally be asked, if these two elements of form and spirit belong naturally to the

Church; are necessary to its integrity, and will be found in it during its most perfect state; why are they so constantly antagonistic? Why, especially, is it found so uniformly, that the external has gained the ascendancy over the internal; as in the Greek and Roman Churches? And I grieve to add, why are such melancholy evidences so frequently seen, of progression in the same direction in Protestant Churches? The answer is easy. It is found in the alienation of our natures from God. The spiritual element is at best but imperfect in us. The light shineth in darkness, and the light must ever be fed with oil from above to shine at all. It requires a continual struggle for mastery to preserve spiritual religion in existence. On the contrary, a ritual religion is comparatively easy. It is easier to our nature and more flattering to our pride to build magnificent temples, and decorate them with all the wonders of art; to make pilgrimages, endure penances, and give costly offerings, than to keep the heart as an undesecrated temple of the Holy Ghost, and make body and soul a living sacrifice to God, which is our spiritual service. It is easier to pray with the lips, than with the heart; as the Pharisee, rather than as a Publican. It is by no means difficult to cry, Hail Master, and even to kiss the Son of God, whilst the blackest rebellion is ruling the heart. And consequently if the vital principle is not ever active, the descent to a mere formalism is easy and rapid. Little by little, the spiritual gives place to the ritual. Every contest is a victory to the latter; till at length, instead of the glorious and lifegiving truth, we have but a sepulchre, where the truth lies buried—all white and resplendent, it may be, without; but within full of rottenness, and dead men's bones.

This being the fact, and that it is, no philosophic student of human nature can deny, it will cause no surprise to find this leaven of evil working amongst us. Indeed it seems that this age has a special proclivity to formalism. The spiritual awakening of the reformation, which shook the venerable formalism of the Church, as the earthquake prostrates her gorgeous cathedrals in the dust, has partially subsided; the age of the high principled puritans and covenanters has passed away; and now the minds of men seem to be turning to the pompous ceremonial of an ex-

ternal religion. It is, however, but fair to admit that the spiritual element is capable of abuse. It has been and still is abused. It has developed the widely different, but equally noxious results of fanaticism and rationalism—the one rushing madly and destructively on after the false lights which gleam on its path way, and thus soon reaching anarchy and ruin; the other calmly elaborating a system of pure reason—subordinating revelation to its dogmas: and thus building up an intellectual system; beautiful indeed and brilliant as a palace of ice, which lifts its glancing pinnacles in the light, but just as cold and well nigh as transient. But these forms of error are effete. They decay, and wax old, and are ready to vanish away. Men demand a faith less wild and erratic than the one; and warmer and more lifelike than the other. And this sect is found in formalism.

The ceremonies of religion are beautified, to meet the demands of a cultivated taste—its edifices rise to heaven in architectural grandeur, and impress the beholders with reverential awe; its ordinances, few and simple as they came from their author, are multiplied, and a mysterious dignity and power are thrown around them. No longer symbols and seals, they assume a solemn and mysterious import. Baptism becomes regeneration; and the table of our Lord retires from the light that revelation throws around it, and in the dimness in which it is seen, becomes an awful altar of sacrifice, where the one offering of the lamb, that was slain for the sins of men, is blasphemously re-enacted, with daily frequency.

And this system, false and hollow as it is, is by no means inefficient. Would that it were so. It appeals to some of the most powerful elements of our nature. It addresses the poetical faculty, and lays hold on a cultivated taste. Music, and painting, and sculpture, and architecture, minister at its altars. It subsidizes “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;” and sends them forth to fight her battles. And those who are slain of them are many. Their melancholy trophies of conquest are seen on every side.

It requires no deep research to discover why this cannot be the religion of Christ—that it commends itself to different faculties of our nature, and gains its victories by

other agencies than those which Christ has used. All men have not a cultivated taste, but all men have souls to be saved. And therefore the benevolent author of our faith appealed not to the aesthetics, but to the clamorous wants of our fallen and alienated souls; asking for pardon and cleansing and reconciliation. It will not heal a dying soul to look on the fairest handiwork, not only of earth, but God's throne on high. Our Saviour had at his command all the resources of celestial magnificence. He could have come in a glory before which the sun would have grown dim, and the stars gone out in utter night. Twelve legions of angels might have been his resistless body guard. But had this been the case, men would have been drawn around him with unpurified hearts, and unsubdued wills. His kingdom would have been of this world. His conflict would have been that of power with power, and his victory, like that of an earthly conqueror, only on a grander scale, and with more magnificent results. Hence he chose to draw men around his standard, not by music, or painting, or sculpture, or architecture, nor by the pomp of an irresistible array, but by love for the sin-pardoner. Therefore his advent was humble, divested of the gaudy trappings of earthly splendour; and presenting an aspect that is often offensive to taste and pride. The coming of his kingdom was not with observation. He hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world, to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not; to bring to nought things which are; that no flesh should glory in his presence. The religion of such a Saviour must always be uncongenial with earthly pomp. Its strength and life are power within. It does not scorn all ornament; it is not a naked or uncouth thing; but it keeps ornament and external attractiveness in their proper place; and that is a subordinate one. It laughs to scorn their claim to be considered the pillars of its throne. True religion does not derive its authentication, or its efficiency, from its accordance with the principles of a correct and cultivated taste. No. It comes to us as the truth of God for the salvation of men. Its weaponry of warfare is drawn from the truth. It sanctifies

by the truth. It does not attempt to convert men by pleasing the fancy, or gratifying the imagination. It will never essay the reconciliation of men to God, by statuary more exquisite than ever came from the chisel of Phidias, or pictures more glorious than the creations of Michael Angelo.

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis,
Tempus eget,

is ever its language to such assistances, for such an end. And well may religion decline auxiliaries so contemptibly inadequate to the lofty ends for which it labours. They can never do the work needed. Were the ineffable glories of heaven's throne brought down to earth; were the pencil-work of God's presence chamber on high, seen in undimmed splendour, on every Church wall; were the magnificent array of worshippers seen by John in Patmos, witnessed in every religious assembly; they all combined would not awaken love in the heart and send holiness through the life. They might and would throw around the earthly sanctuary a glory and a brightness which would be no mean reflection of the true sanctuary above. But while men would gather to wonder and admire, and while their minds might be all clearness, and their imaginations filled with images well nigh seraphic; beneath all this would be the cold, dark, dead abstraction, of a rebellious heart. No. Nothing short of the outstretched arm of omnipotence, can recreate us after the divine image and fit us for the golden harp and palm of triumph.

Be it ever remembered that Christ might have, at a word, gathered more than all these auxiliaries about his faith, but he declined their aid; and the attempt to make them important agencies in the work of salvation, is not only a violation of Christ's sovereignty, but is akin to the device of Satan, who tempted him with "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them."

And true to its origin, we find that the pure faith does not affiliate with such externals. The best ages of the Church have been least cumbered by them. Painting, with its blended colours; statuary, with its lifelike representations; music, with its voluptuous swell; and architecture, with its groined arches, and castellated towers, and its solemn aisles; and a scenic ritual, with its altars, and

crosses, and genuflections and posturermaking ; have been most frequently found in connection with a false faith. They are indeed the appropriate garb of a lie ; while they cumber the truth, as did the armour of Saul the youthful David.

And a reliance on such aid as an important agency in accomplishing its objects, is an unmistakable badge of essential error. There are few ways in which Rome more strikingly exhibits her apostacy from Christ, than in her open and thus far honest avowal, of trust in the artistic beauty of pictures and images, as incitements to devotion.* But to illustrate this principle more clearly, let us take the description left us by a recent eye witness of a scene where all these agencies were brought into requisition with the greatest skill and in the highest perfection. "As seen from this position, nothing could surpass the picturesque beauty of the spectacle, especially at the moment of the elevation of the Host. The choir or chancel with its high altar was splendidly illuminated. The high priest with his assistants were before the altar in their most magnificent robes. Twelve youths from the college of the Propaganda Fide formed two lines connecting the corners or horns of the altar with the rails of the chancel. They were clothed entirely from head to foot in scarlet, and held gigantic candles of wax in their hands. These candles were above five feet long and not less than five or six inches in circumference ; and as the priest proceeded with the prayer of consecration, they all knelt, still and motionless as marble statues ; and as the priest elevated the Host they all gracefully drooped their heads, and slowly leaned forward their kneeling bodies, till they almost touched the ground, and bent their large candles all at the same instant, and with the most practiced regularity till every candle seemed to bow in union like things of life in devout adoration to the present and visible divinity. As the eye wandered at this moment from our little gallery, whence we could view the whole space of the Church, as it ranged from the splendid illumination of the high altar and rested on the officiating priest in robes of white silk damasked with the richest foliage of gold,

* Seymour's Mornings with the Jesuits, p. 108.

and then fell on the twelve youths in scarlet bowing gracefully to the earth with their gigantic candles, and then fell upon the aged pontiff, the claimant as vicar of Christ and anointed head of the Church on earth, and then looked on the long array of cardinals, those anointed princes of the Church, robed entirely in scarlet, and then strayed along the congregation, of which the ladies were clothed in black and veiled, the men were mostly in the same colour, while the Swiss guards were arranged among them, relieving the mass of black costume with the brilliant scarlet and yellow of their antique and peculiar uniform. As our eyes wandered over all this scene in this magnificent and noble Church, with its antique marbles and costly decorations, and its vaulted roof was filled with the sweetest and most beautiful music, we felt that we had never witnessed any thing at Rome in the way of a religious fete so perfect in its arrangements, so picturesque in its appearance, and in such good taste and perfect keeping in all its accompaniments. It was the perfection of a religious spectacle, and exhibited the good taste and worldly wisdom of the order of the Jesuits.*

But the full force of this illustration cannot be gathered unless we remember that this splendid and imposing performance was designed as a master argument for the conversion of the beholder to a faith which vaunted itself in such trappings. And does any one who has intelligently read one page of the oracles of God, or caught one spark of the true spirit of piety, need to be told that the religion of Jesus rests for its success on no such agencies, and that to urge on the ark of God by such means is to touch it with unholy hands? The spirit of piety is lost in such a profusion of decoration, and is smothered in the fumes of such clouds of incense. Does any one need be told that a man may join with intense relish and warmest enthusiasm in a pageant like this, with an ignorance of religion as profound as that of the Bedouin of the desert, who reins in his barb to pause and gaze on the glories of the rising or setting sun? There is no more religion in such a display, than in a magnificent storm, marshalling its clouds, volleying out its thunders, and sending forth its lightnings in

*Seymour's Mornings with the Jesuits, p. 147.

the heavens; or in a bannered host, which in mortal array, and streamers in the wind, and music in the breeze, marches with beauteous order, and disciplined tread, to the field of carnage and of death.

Having gone thus far in the way of general remark, the remainder of this discussion will be devoted to a consideration of some points of contrast between the religion of Form and that of Spirit. 1. And the first observation is that the one is a system of self-gratification, the other, one of self-denial. There is in every bosom a religious element, which demands exercise. And if you will give it a field of operation, without exacting humiliation of spirit and renunciation of self, it will go forth to the mighty task of working out salvation, with a sort of proud and confident humility; painful penances, great personal sacrifices, and the most onerous observances will be assumed, and will be proudly paraded as the good works of the Pharisee, and will be confidently trusted in, as reasons for acceptance before God. Men are ready now, as in the days of our Saviour on earth, to pay tithes, from their most valuable possessions, even to the mint, and anise, and cummin, and all manner of herbs, if they are allowed to omit the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. These external performances are perfectly consistent, indeed readily harmonize, with a proud and self-confident spirit. And, therefore, to our corrupt nature they present a way of life comparatively easy.

When the master comes to demand that service which is his due, men with alacrity ask "shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression—the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" But when the answer is "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," they turn away deeply disappointed, failing before the test. But the religion of spirit begins with the inner man. Not satisfied with observances, it demands truth in the inward parts. It does not refuse these external services: It is prepared to do and suffer in proof of its loyalty; but after all is done, it acknowledges its unprofitableness of service, and prompts its votaries to bend before the throne, and in the intensity of an earnest heart, cry "God be merciful to me a sinner."

2. Another point of contrast is found in the remark that one of these antagonistic claimants of human confidence, is a religion of principle, while the other is governed by impulse. The spring of the one is found in the love of the truth, which is as undying as the soul that feels it; that of the other is in the fancy or the imagination. The one has the immortality and unchangableness of truth in it—the other is subject to the fluctuations of impulse and emotion. There is a broad and important practical distinction between these two. There is a vast difference between making religion a thing of impulse, and the result of obedience to high and holy principle. Our glorious Lord lived and died from principle. Impulses of love would never have carried him through his mediatorial work. And it is important that his disciples should learn, that his service is not a paroxysm of joy, produced by a gratified taste, that has its sustenance in a gorgeous array, suited to the demands of this capricious faculty of our nature; but that it is a life, the implantation of a firm and uncompromising love for the truth; which exists and rules, as well when all the trappings of earthly grandeur are torn from her form, as when, clad in purple, she demands our homage from the throne of empire. And hence the religion of spirit gives to its votaries a power of bearing contempt and persecution that is not afforded by that of form. Spiritualism does not regard any sacrifice demanded, as too great for the truth. To her it is above all price; the very lifeblood of the heart. Her emblem is a hardy mountain plant, nursed amid stones; or that bush seen in the prophet's vision that was unconsumed amid the raging fire. And history fully sustains this high claim. As an illustration we point to the kindred and contiguous kingdoms of England and Scotland. In the one we are happy to admit there has ever been a leaven of spiritualism, and to this she owes all the stability that relieves and adorns her history. But this living principle has been overshadowed, and well nigh destroyed, by the supreme importance ascribed to forms. Orders and rituals, vestments and postures, have always occupied a commanding position in her system, and for these she has more than once shaken from her crown her brightest jewels. But Scotland, while she has cherished

her own simple, expressive, and apostolic forms of worship, and has cleaved to them when the faggot, and the trooper's lance, and the desolate mountain den were indissolubly associated with them; has ever, both in her creeds and her practice, subordinated form to spirit—the garb of the truth to the truth itself. And for the fruits of the two systems, look at their histories. The world knows them by heart. These things have not been done in a corner.

The English Church has been at once the creature and the play-thing of her rulers. She was first Romish and then Protestant under Henry the 8th, approached the very verge of Presbyterianism under Edward the 6th, was hurled back into the midnight gloom of the Papacy under the bloody Mary, and then came out into the twilight of prelacy under Elizabeth. And how signally is she now illustrating this same blind obedience to her rulers, and her supreme adherence to a form, where there is no corresponding spirit. Fostering in her bosom almost every variety of opinion, she still boasts of a oneness of form, and holds that up to the world with the infatuated hope that it will excite universal admiration and esteem. She has just declared by her highest authority, and that to be it remembered, a civil one, that her solemnly appointed and authorised teachers may proclaim that a child is regenerated, or that he is not regenerated in baptism, just as he sees fit. That is, between two systems of opinion, one of which is necessarily false, and if so ruinous, she does not determine—or to speak more accurately, she gives her authentication to both. And yet her best men—who are strictly evangelical—holding and preaching the truth, bow to such an establishment, and praise God that the truth which they hold is not utterly cast out of her bosom. How striking is the contrast presented by the Church of Scotland. The smiles and the frowns of royalty, the argument of logic, and that of pitiless persecution, have essayed in vain to drive her from that truth which she believes she has drawn from the word of God. She, too, has held the doctrine of a national Church establishment, and has enjoyed the benefits of perhaps the best the world has ever seen. But though prizing these advantages, she has never been willing to hold them at the price

of a sacrifice of truth. From time to time, when they have thought that truth invaded, her hardy sons have come out from under the shield of the State, and bared their breasts to the powers that be; rather than prove disloyal to truth. And recently, in the view of a wondering world, her best sons have willingly, aye joyfully, left their manes, churches, and adequate stipends, rather than compromise the rights of Christ's crown, and have come out to preach the unfettered truth, on the bleak heath, with a wintry sky for their canopy, or upon the debateable line that separates high and low water, or where this has been denied, on a boat, afloat on the heaving tide. Nothing but a love of truth has or can make such sacrifices. No other than a religion of spirit could have given a theme for that wonderful composition, the *Covenanter's Night Hymn and Prayer*. Lofty devotion to truth, and stern self-sacrifice for it, breathe in every line of it.

“Unholy change. The scorner's chair
Is now the seat of those that rule;
Tortures, and bonds, and death, the share
Of all, except the tyrants tool.
That faith, in which our fathers breathed,
And had their life—for which they died;
That priceless heirloom, they bequeathed
Their sons—our impious foes deride.

So we have left our homes behind,
And we have belted on the sword,
And we in solemn league have joined,
Yea covenanted with the Lord,
Never to seek those homes again,
Never to give the sword its sheath,
Until, our rights of faith remain
Unfettered, as the air we breathe.

O thou who rulest above the sky,
Begirt about with starry thrones,
Cast from the heaven of heavens thine eye,
Down on our wives and little ones—
From hallelujah's surging sound,
O for a moment turn thine ear,
The widow prostrate on the ground,
The famished orphans' cries to hear.

We have no hearth—the ashes lie
 In blackness where they brightly shone;
 We have no homes—the desert sky
 Our covering—earth our couch alone;
 We have no heritage—deprived
 Of these, we ask not such on earth;
 Our hearts are sealed; we seek in heaven,
 For heritage, and home, and hearth.

O Salem, city of the saints,
 And holy men made perfect, we
 Pant for thy gates, our spirits faint
 Thy glorious golden gates to see—
 To mark the rapture that inspires
 The ransomed and redeemed by grace,
 To listen to the seraphs' lyres,
 And meet the angels face to face.

Father in heaven, we turn not back,
 Though briars and thorns choke up the path;
 Rather the torture of the rack,
 Than tread the winepress of thy wrath.
 Let thunders crash, let torrents shower,
 Let whirlwinds churn the howling sea,
 What is the turmoil of an hour,
 To an eternal calm with thee."

The spirit of the other system finds a short but comprehensive delineation in one of the predictions of Jacob on his dying bed. "Issachar is a strong ass bowing down between two burdens; and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant. And bowed his shoulder to bear and became a servant unto tribute."

3. We find another point of contrast in the fact that the one system is essentially catholic, and the other just as necessarily exclusive. An eminently spiritual system, regarding the truth as the most important, as the real life and soul of any organization, will recognize and welcome that truth wherever found, and in whatever garb. The ritual system, on the contrary, will pass contemptuously by the truth, even when confessedly existing in a high degree of perfection, and refuse to affiliate with it, unless it presents itself under a certain canonized and stereotyped form. And this is not a mere harmless theory, slum-

bering in the creeds of ritualists. It has come out more than once into bold and destructive activity, and is the settled policy on which action is had. No historian can fail to revert to a time when thousands of men, of acknowledged talents, learning, piety, orthodoxy, and zeal, and what is more, with the broad seal of heaven's authentication to their ambassadorship in their abundant success in winning souls to Christ—some of whom she was anxious to invest with her highest dignities and powers—were cast out from the bosom of a ritual Church, merely because they scrupled as to the shape or colour of an ecclesiastical garment, to the position proper in the reception of an ordinance, and to forms of worship generally. More than this, they were not only ejected, but they were hurled from their homes and flocks like outlaws, and denied the privilege of preaching the gospel to those who were anxious to hear, under the heaviest penalties of person and purse.

The opposite spirit cannot be better illustrated than by a quotation from one of these very ejected ministers. In Howe's sermon on the death of Queen Mary, he says, "It ought to be most remote from us to confine, in our narrow thoughts, sincere religion and godliness to a party distinguished by little things and most extra-essential thereto. Take we that great Apostle's document—I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; and what he said of nations, may not we as aptly say that of parties? They that fear God and work righteousness are accepted of him. Let us once learn to reckon substantial godliness a greater thing than the using or not using this or that ceremony. And account that faith, mercy, judgment and the love of God, are not to be passed over for as little things, as the tithing of mint, anise and cummin. I believe that there are few in the world, if they cast their eyes about them, but might truly say (what I thank God I have often thought,) that of all our parties that hold the substantials of religion, I have known some of far greater value than myself. Let the being a good Christian signify more with us than to belong to a-so or so-shaped or figured Church."

Indeed bigotry is the natural, and, unless a considerable degree of spirituality accompany it, the inevitable result

of formalism. If the mode of worship is supreme, then he who does not adopt it is to be denounced as a rebel against God. If the visible organization of Christ's Church partakes of the nature of essence; then any body of believers, however pure in doctrine, or holy in practice, that does not conform to the pattern seen in the visions of these dreamers, does not constitute a part of the Church of Christ on earth at all. They have no ordinances, nor covenanted rights. They have no ecclesiastical standing, and are saved, if saved at all, as isolated persons, who believe in Christ—just as some solitary heathen who has learned and accepted the truth as it is in Jesus, and not as a member of the great and glorious company of God's preferred disciples—the body of Christ. With such persons the mode of your baptism, or the channel of your ordination, or the form of your Church government, or the want of a liturgy, is ecclesiastically an unpardonable sin—shuts you out of the visible Church—deprives you of all its life-giving ordinances, and abandons you, though possessing the piety, learning, and talents, of John Howe or Richard Baxter—to the uncovenanted mercies of God. And it requires but a full developement of this system to reach the point of persecution. In the agencies of spiritual religion, earthly pains and penalties have no place. They do not and cannot affect the inner man. Loaded with chains, in a cheerless dungeon, or blazing at the stake, the spirit that lives in the suffering victim defies the tyrant's power. But it is not so with formalism. Those external acts, which it exalts to such a preeminence in the plan of salvation, are the direct objects of earthly power. The tortures of the rack, the ignominy of the gibbet, the fires of the flaming fagot, may compel, however reluctantly it may be rendered, this external service. And on this system it is difficult to see why they may not be used as legitimate means of persuasion. If this bodily service is all important, and this conformity can be secured by bringing into play all the terrors of persecution, why not use them? Is it not far better that the body should suffer for a few fleeting months or years, than that the soul should pass on through all a hopeless eternity beneath the wrath of God? The inquisition, with all its heart sickening details, is the fruit of such logic. And here we may be pardoned

for pointing with pride to the stand which the Presbyterian Church has taken on this subject. No one can mistake her position. She has inscribed her recognition of sister Churches on her banner, and given it to every wind that blows. She loves her own simple, expressive, and apostolical forms of worship, and her republican and scriptural Church organization, but she does not attach her recognition to these externals, valuable as they are. Hear her voice: "The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel, consists of *all* those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children."

4. But again we remark of these two systems, that the one elevates, expands, and strengthens the mind, while the other dwarfs and emasculates it. Spiritualism sends out its votaries to seek after, and commune with, great principles of truth. Ritualism gropes amid the tombs of the past, for dead forms, and sets its followers to disputing in the twilight of medieval times, about the number and place of genuflections, or the shade and colour of a vestment, or the form and position of a piece of Church furniture.

It is difficult to express the feelings of contempt that arise in our minds, without overleaping the proprieties of the occasion, at a view of the puerile questions that formalists gravely discuss, and authoritatively determine. This point can be best illustrated by a precious morcean taken from a recent report of the New York Ecclesiological Society. Here we are told that "the Church of believers" is called "a spiritual house," therefore, the edifice (of a Church) symbolizes the Church of the faithful. They are called "living stones," therefore, the Church is built of stone. "We are fellow citizens of the saints," and "of the household of God," all being one family, and therefore, chancel and nave are both requisite for a complete Church. The building pointeth east, for there the sun of righteousness arose, and there he shall appear again, when he cometh to judgment. The tower is Christ, for "he is a strong tower for us against the enemy." The door is also Christ, for he said "I am the door." The font is close by the door, for by baptism we put on Christ, and "enter by the door, into the sheep fold." It is of stone, as is also

the altar, because "Christ is our rock," and he is "the stone cut out of the mountain." The pavement is humility, as David saith, "my soul cleaveth unto the ground," (*vul. adhaesit pavamenta anima mea.*) The great piers or pillars are apostles, for St. Paul says of Peter, James, and John, that "they seemed to be pillars." The windows are Holy Scripture, as saith the Psalmist "the entrance of thy words giveth light." The glass is stained and thus darkened, for here "we see through a glass darkly." The stars and angels in the roof are the heavenly host, for St. Paul speaks of "the whole family in heaven and earth" as one household. The chancel, arch and screen signify "the grave and gate of death" by which all must pass from the Church militant to the Church triumphant. The halls are the "rest that remains for the people of God." The sanctuary in the extreme east is adorned with the highest brilliance, for the New Jerusalem has "streets of gold, gates of pearl, and walls of twelve manner of precious stones." In addition we have a learned argument to show why the form of an octagon is the most proper to symbolize Baptismal Regeneration. It is with such puerile and contemptible trifling with Holy Scripture, that formalism amuses and deludes its votaries. Need I say that such a system emasculates the mind, robbing it of all that is free, generous, and expansive? And hence its results are most disastrous. If men believe it, they become superstitious. If they see through its hollowness and have no better system by which to judge, they readily conclude that all religion is a fable, and lapse into drear and cheerless infidelity.

5. The last remark we have to make is that the one system exalts God, the other exalts man—the one is the religion of Christ, the other the religion of the priest. These external ordinances, which formalism makes so important, come to us through the priest. They are dependant on his will. He is the indispensable channel of grace. No wonder, then, that the trembling formalist bows at the feet of his spiritual Lord. He can shut out from him the light of God's countenance. And hence formalism has ever been the fountain of ghostly tyranny. But spiritualism points to a God who seeth in secret, to whom all the workings of a penitent heart are fully known, and cheers

her votaries, by the declaration, that when the ordinances of the Church are unjustly withheld, they may safely appeal from a fallible to an infallible tribunal. And it is this very principle that has robbed ecclesiastical censures of their inordinate terror, and, more than any thing else, has thrown wide open the dungeons in which the prisoner has groaned. If, then, we wish to spread the spirit of freedom, and thus perpetuate those institutions which are identified with the best interests of the human race, disseminate a spiritual rather than a formal religion.

No one who attentively reads the signs of the times, can consider this discussion as unreasonable. The tendency of things, and the developements occurring in such rapid succession, that we have ceased to wonder at any thing, however absurd, call on the friends of truth to awake. Infidelity, open and avowed, has grown out of fashion. All men must have a religion. And true to its bias, corrupt nature will look out for that which is least burthensome, and most attractive and genteel—in short, that which is least unlike the world. We feel bound, therefore, in all earnestness to protest against this attractive, but false system of formalism. We do not charge it with inefficiency. We dare not despise it. He knows nothing of human nature who ventures to do so, and the result will amply punish him for his folly. It does lay hold on all minds that are not forearmed against it by the truth held in the love of it. For some minds it has a bewildering and irresistible fascination. Thus it is that it is dangerous. It is the beautiful bow of heavenly colouring, that arches our pathway, and lures us on. But its lovely colours are like those painted on the mist cloud, that goes up from the seething cauldron of Niagara—beautiful exceedingly—but decorating and hiding a precipice, over which to plunge is fatal. It lures to destruction.