

matters of the law are what bulk most largely in men's minds. The outward forms of religion, ritual times, places, etc., are but forms through which this life flows and finds expression. Of themselves they are regarded as secondary matters. In course of time, however, coldness, worldliness and hypocrisy creep in; the life and fire die out; and, as this goes on there appears an ever increasing tendency to attach importance to the former. We reserve the skeleton all the more carefully after the life is gone. Forgetting that for which these forms were instituted they come to regard them as intrinsically meretorious. They separate more and more between religion and morals, so that no matter what a man's life may be, if he have but gone through his round of observances, they imagine he is pleasing God and safe for heaven. This simply means the death of true religion.

This conception of religion is by no means an uncommon one. We have instanced it in the case of the Jewish people. We regret to have to state that it has not been confined to them. We need not dwell upon the condition of the nations in this respect. The poor heathen will present his offerings, and pay his vows to his gods, and think he is rendering the full requirements of religion, while, all the time, he is steeped in vice. His religion is all sacrifice and no mercy. Unfortunately we do not require to go so far to find examples of the error in question. How for instance do Rome's teachings and practices square with the principle of this text? None too well we are inclined to suspect.

The Church of Rome is strongly tainted if not wholly imbued with this eternal idea of religion. With her the ceremonial rather than the moral view of holiness predominates. Virtue is to her not so much a moral quality as a mysterious something that comes from physical contact with a sacred object. Witness her shrines, relics, sacerdotalism, sacramentarianism, etc. What again does her worship consist of? Largely a series of unintelligible forms and ceremonies: counting of beads, going to masses, crossings, bowings and genuflections. On the minds of most Romanists these things constitute religion. They are not simply means for the expression and promotion of spiritual life, but, ends in themselves—they are meretorious observances possessing intrinsic power to save. Greater importance is evidently attached to these things than to moral points. We know scores of members of that church, who would not for the life of them neglect, or make light of any of her requirements; yet have no hesitation to swear, lie, cheat and steal. What