

pose a thing to exist in one term of comparison, when it does not exist in the other term which is the basis of the analogy? Then if such a process cannot be proved in natural growth, neither may it be inferred in the spiritual. But it will be inquired, How does God give the increase? We ask, How does he cause seeds to grow? The operations of mind and the formation of moral principles, are as mysterious as the operations of matter and the formation of natural substances. It is certain, however, that the *good ground* and the *good and honest heart* brings forth abundantly—that the thorns choke out the grain, and that worldly lusts erase moral impressions—that the rocky ground brings forth temporary fruit, and that the fickle-minded soon turn again into frequented paths—that the wide ground provides nothing, and that understanding is the first step in the road to reformation. In other words, as different qualities of ground produce different results, so different states of heart produce different results. As God works through secondary causes in the natural, so he works through secondary causes in the spiritual. But, says one, does not God employ a powerful agency, distinct from and above the truth? I ask, Does he employ such an agency in the natural world? Prove it, and I will admit such agency is taught in the passage under consideration. If you cannot prove it, why draw such an unwarrantable inference? But, says another, you make the giving of the increase to come through man, while the Scriptures ascribe it to God. Yes. The Scriptures say that “God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him,” and also that “the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself.” These are no less contradictory than that “God gives the increase,” and that it is also dependent upon a “good and honest heart.” It is very easy to reconcile such apparently conflicting statements by reflecting that although there is but one great First Cause, there are many secondary causes, and that an eye is properly ascribed to the one as the other. Then while it is the good and honest heart that brings forth fruit, it is God that gives the increase.

C. R.

MERE FORMALITY.

The word of God, and the church of God based upon the word, countenance no mere formality.

Violence must be done to the conscience, or the scriptural ordinances of the church must be wrested from their plain meaning, before membership in it can be professed by careless or thoughtless believers, or office assumed in it by any of its members animated by considerations merely worldly.

Either *God* or the *world* will have our hearts best thoughts and best services. But oh! to serve God—to come daily to His Word and learn something more of his heavenly and gracious character—to submit to his teaching, and by His word to be furnished to all good works:

amidst all our imperfections, short comings and stumblings, still to be led on by His tender and fatherly hand, forgiving, strengthening and enabling us to live not to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and now lives for us, and who will, we know not how soon, appear for us, bringing in his kingdom of glory: is not all this worth *devotion*? Is it not worth the sacrifice of a world which perishes in the using? Is it not worth everything? And is it not worthy a creature formed for communion with his Creator—formed for happiness, for enjoyment, for eternity? Do any inquire how they may secure this happiness? By the study of the word of God, in which He has made himself known. And what must they give for its attainment? All things contrary to that word. Let it never be forgotten that the education of the Word is opposed to the education of the world; but, the one has the promise of life which now is and that which is to come;—the other has also its fruits—disappointment and death.

C. D. H.

ORDINANCES DIVINE AND HUMAN.

If Christ has given directions to His people, they must be the best: otherwise the creature must be wiser than his Creator.

If Christ has given laws to His people, they are guilty of rebellion if they neglect to obey them.

If Christ has given instructions to His people, He will punish their disobedience.

Christ will also commend and reward those who keep His commands.

Every deviation from Scripture insults the Lawgiver by impugning His wisdom, setting aside His authority, and despising His instructions.

In observing the appointments of Christ, or the ways which are in Christ Jesus, which Paul “taught *everywhere, in every church*” (1 Cor. iv. 17) the *SPIRITUALITY* of Christ's kingdom is maintained in *efficiency*, the gifts of His people exercised *profitably*, the power of His presence manifested *evidently*, and His wisdom made *apparent* as the sun shining in his strength.

All these blessings are *obscured*, more or less, by every deviation from the *DIVINE MODEL*.

For these, and other reasons, we cannot bow down to any national idol, whether that of Rome or England, whether that of Scotland or Geneva.

Any system deviating in the least from the *SCRIPTURAL MODEL* we are not concerned to vindicate. We would willingly see it perish before the edifying and all glorious model of the Word of God.

1 Cor. iv. 16, 17: iv. 17: xi. 1, 2, 16; xiv. 33; Eph. v. 1: Phil. iii. 17; iv. 2; 1 Thes. i. 6; ii. 14.

Remember. When brethren departed from the example of the Apostle he would not praise them.