

But should we consider the final destiny of each, the sentence pronounced upon the one is most severe, while the honor bestowed upon the other is great and pleasing. To the former the great Judge says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." But to the latter comes these words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Often there is the fretting because evil doers seem prosperous in their way, while many devoted Christians are exposed to hardships. Upon such indeed the Psalmist himself stumbles, for he says: "I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, for there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish." Thus with the Psalmist we are envious of the wicked and their ill gotten gains and almost charge God with bestowing special prosperity upon the worldling, forgetting that much of his gain was acquired by means, that the restraining influence of an enlightened Christian conscience would prevent the Christian from using. An act of deception, to the Christian, bears a different estimate than to the worldling; the former sees in it an insult to the spirit of Jesus, the latter sees in it a useful accommodation to reach his goal in the acquirement of earthly possessions. The Christian recognizes that he is not his own, but that he has been bought with a price, even the precious blood of Jesus. "The worker of iniquity" recognizes no master, neither on earth nor in heaven, and that all deceptions are useful accommodations to gain his ends. "The present and self," is his motto. The Christian calls God his Father and looks upon heaven as his home. His motto is, "Christ and the Church." The sinner living for the present and self, receives his chief good in life. The Christian, in life, preparing and developing himself for the home in glory, will receive his chief good in the hereafter.

Why be envious or fret? Suppose by their principles, they gain the world, yet they have not, as we, a title to the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away." Have some acquired great treasures? They have not "the pearl of great price." Time's things may be theirs to a greater degree than ours. The treasures of eternity are ours alone. Earth's treasures must pass away, earth's liberty will soon be no more, earth's beauty must fade and its joys disappear. Heaven's treasures are enduring, heaven's liberty is as lasting as God's throne, heaven's beauty is unfading and its joys eternal.

Why envious? It has well been said: "Just as soon should the imperial eagle, whose undazzled eye drinks in the burning splendor of the cloudless sun, envy the worm that never rose an inch above its native dust? Shall the sun itself envy the flickering rush-light which the feeble breeze can extinguish? Shall the majestic mountain, whose breast is wreathed with clouds and whose head towers into the bright azure, envy the mole-hill which the tread of a child may sink to the level of a plain? Shall the heaving ocean, bearing in its bosom the rich merchandise, and reflecting from its deep blue eyes the glories of the firmament, envy the little summer pool, which a passing cloud has poured into a footprint?"

Let those who love our Lord and Saviour dismiss all fretting and silence every complaint. Give to the world a cheerfulness

created by the glorious gospel of redemption. Let those fret who have no God, who enjoy no hope of a future home, who have no faith in a risen Lord; but thou whose sins are pardoned through the atoning blood of Jesus and who hope for unending life in the world to come, let them "Come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

FORM IN CHRISTIANITY.

O. B. STOCKFORD.

The history of reformations almost invariably teaches us that their promoters are apt to go beyond proper bounds in their changes. Indeed reformers quite frequently have gone as far in one extreme as their opponents have in the opposite.

The Disciples of Christ plead for the restoration of pure Christianity—the reformation of the church. I feel confident that our interpretation of Christian doctrine would, if it were applied, restore to Christianity much of its true simplicity. In one particular, however, the course we are pursuing may be leading us beyond the bounds of true reformation.

We, in common with other Christian bodies, protest against the use of an elaborate liturgy in church worship.

I think the position we take in this matter is the correct one. In extravagant forms of church service the spirit is apt to be lost sight in the importance attached to the outward act. Heartfelt worship is apt to be cramped by rigid conformity to rite. A system of worship which is pervaded by inflexible ceremony tends to lead the observer to depend upon salvation by works. An elaborate liturgy was necessary for the worship of the Jews during the last dispensation. Types, sacrifices and fallible mediators were necessary until the Divine antitype, sacrifice and mediator appeared. The people apparently could only be educated by signs and symbols until he who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life marked out the perfect path. Until the gospel, upon which man's redemption depends was accomplished, God gave his people ceremonies to set forth, in type, the great facts herein involved. Until a perfect example in life was given, a law, pelled obedience by outward force, was necessary.

But since the Seed came there has not been any necessity of external force to compel, and but few forms and ceremonies to teach, true religion. The great motive power of Christianity is the "faith which worketh by love."

But we should not push this principle too far. Forms cannot be dispensed with in religion in this life. It may be said indeed that the ordinances of the Christian religion educate us in the same manner in which the types of last dispensation educated the Jews—with this difference the types point forward while the ordinances point backward to the great gospel facts.

But aside from the ordinances, forms in Christianity are apparently, if necessary to express or convey a knowledge of religious principles and do not of themselves contain instruction. That is, the religious education is not derived so much through a particular form now, as in prior dispensations. In the Jewish economy the manner in which a rite was performed brought before people the lesson God sought to teach. The very form itself was an educator. Having passed the age of types we have necessarily almost entirely outgrown this system. Peculiarity of form, in any age, is only essential so far

as it is required by the law of God. It can rest upon nothing but the Divine will. As God has given us but few commands on this line the Christian is often left at liberty in the matter.

In the early history of the race God educated the people by figures. The child has to pay particular attention to the alphabet before it can read, and to step any before it can walk. At this stage of our progress the time is taken up with the mode by which we are to attain the end, rather than the end itself. When, however, we learn to read well, we do not think of the alphabet. When we can walk readily, we do not have to think of every step we take. So the Christian, having advanced further than his forefathers, is often unconscious of the form he uses while he seeks to worship his Heavenly in spirit and in truth.

Paul's instructions to Timothy to "Hold fast the form of sound words," evidently meant that he should "speak as the oracles of God," and not that he should follow a particular ritualism. The gospel and the gospel alone should be preached by the minister of Christ. But while loyally proclaiming the plan of redemption, exact words are only necessary so far as they are required to state the facts.

But as before stated forms cannot at any time be dispensed with, although peculiarity of form is now but seldom required. By form we convey our religious thoughts to others; give expression to our heartfelt prayers; teach the Scriptures and sing praises to God.

The beautiful confession by which a person acknowledges with the mouth the Lord Jesus; the baptism by which the candidate puts on Christ—is buried with his Saviour to walk in newness of life; the Lord's Supper which has been ordained to keep before the mind of the Christian that death and suffering through which he may obtain eternal life, all involve forms.

This confession and these ordinances, together with the use of sound words I think constitute the form of doctrine delivered by the apostles.

Christian forms arise from a true and contrite spirit; either as the natural expression of the emotion within, or the humble submission to a Divine command. As regards the person using them they are more frequently the effect than the cause of Christian life. Without a pure heart religious forms are mere expressions of hypocrisy. But they are the natural accompaniment of an honest Christian life.

It follows that as they are necessary to true religion they should not be lightly treated. In another issue of THE CHRISTIAN I will give instances in which I think we are negligent or careless in our use of them.

HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE.

H. MURRAY.

The word of life is the light of the world, and the Christian is the light bearer. Truth must find its power in thy person. "Ye are the light of the world." This word of life is the word of Christ. In the language of Peter: "To whom shall we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life. We have in this also the doctrine or gospel of Christ. How careful we should be that we hold forth nothing but the word of life. We regret to say that there is much held forth to-day that is not the word of life. The unsettled and unsatisfied condition of the religious world shows plainly that much is taught that has no life in it. The world is calling for the