

it, because they were not of it. So it is with the visible Church. There are ever found in her assemblies the representatives of Satan and the world, in the persons of those who have a name to live while they are dead; but these form no part whatever of the Church of Christ. They are no more part of Christ's body or God's temple than the parasitic plant which has its roots in the tree and lives upon its life, is part of the tree itself. Only where the Saints are, is the Church of God to be found; and any assembly in which they are not, is not the Church, and can only be the Synagogue of Satan.

While, however, the Church is the assembly of the Saints, it is not without organization or form. As a "communion," it must have some form; "communion" is impossible in the world without a visible form, and whatever may be said to the contrary there will, we apprehend, be found in the Word of God, an abundant provision for this necessity of the Church. Every minute particular, it is true, may not be prescribed with all the precision of a ceremonial law, still enough, we believe, will be given of the great general features of the house of God to enable us to determine what its form should be, and how the minor details should be filled up.

It is universally conceded that one part of the visible form of the Church is the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; a second is, united praise and prayer to Father, Son and Holy Ghost; a third is, common edification by the public preaching of the Word; a fourth is, the exercise of discipline, in which may be included the admission of members into the body, and the preservation of its own purity by the rejection of those who are manifestly corrupt. All these things, the Saints in communion must necessarily attend to in obedience to the command of Christ, and these things every form of christian communion professes in some way or other to do. About these visible forms there can be little or no dispute; in regard to them, there is, in fact, all but universal consent. Differences arise only when we leave the *generals* and come to the *particulars*; then the questions arise, what is or is not necessary to the validity of sacraments? and what is or is not necessary to the constitution of a Church? If it could only be conceded that the outward form alone is not the Church, our differences might not be so much lamented. But alas! men often in their blind zeal for mere forms, confound the earthly with the spiritual, the temporal with the eternal; and hence claim for the form itself, all the prerogatives of the Church of God. It is to be hoped that the time is coming when professing Christians shall see eye to eye in this matter, and when it will be thought both contemptible and wicked, for the Episcopalian, the Independent, or the Presbyterian, to say one to another, "Your pastors are no pastors, your sacraments no sacraments, your Church is no Church."

While we hold and avow these opinions, let it not be supposed that we think lightly of forms, or that the presence of Saints in a Church organization renders it on that account agreeable to the Word of God. So far from this, we would repudiate every form of Church order, however respectable it may be by reason of its antiquity or prescription, that is not in every point conformed to the examples, the precepts, and the principles of the Word; while we must say of the Church, as of the individual, that we have the treasure in earthen vessels, and that to every Church form some exception may be taken, yet it can be shown that as with persons so with Churches, there are some vessels more honorable than others, and better fitted to enshrine the Christian life. In the variety of Church forms it will be found that some mingle unduly the element of hoar antiquity with the simplicity of the Gospel. They delight in the bold sculptures and bright adornments of the temple, in the splendid robes of the priesthood, and in the grandeur of sensuous ceremonial. Others, again, emulate the severe and clear beauty of primitive Christian times, with its deep foundations and its co-