

ART. VII.—THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE CHURCH.

BY REV. D. GANS, D. D.

There are some who make this expression to mean two separate and independent things. Instead of regarding the visible and invisible as different sides of the same Church, they resolve them actually into two Churches. Hence you often hear them speak of a visible Church as something altogether whole and complete in itself; and in like manner also of an invisible Church as being finished and entire, as such, without any necessary relation to its visible form or manifestation. The error which is here committed should be palpable to every mind. It is the old dualistic sundering of what God has joined together—heretical to the core. It is the insidious heresy of the Bishop of Constantinople, of the 5th century, which first attacked the Person of Christ, and then, and as a consequence, the Church. Man also is visible and invisible; and it would manifestly be just as reasonable to say, that either one of these sides of his nature is complete and independent in itself; or that together they constitute, in fact, two men instead of one. The error has long since been theoretically driven from the field.

There are others, who think they are doing wonders in the way of combating the old heresy of dualism, when they acknowledge the existence of a relation between the visible and the invisible. It is clear, however, that this does not in the least relieve the case, as long as these two sides of the same thing are regarded as separately complete, each in and by itself. If they can be thus complete, then it still follows, whatever relation may be supposed to exist between them, that they constitute two Churches, and not one. Moreover, the relation itself, which, in these circumstances, is allowed to hold, or which is at all conceivable or possible, between the visible and the

invisible, never comes, nor can come in fact, to anything more than a mere outward and mechanical connection. The separate completeness of the two sides can admit of nothing deeper or more real. If this relation were regarded as inward and vital, it would at once induce the perception and actually constrain the conclusion, that neither aspect, thus related to the other, could be the whole; for in this case, the very necessity of such a union of the one with the other, would show its incompleteness in itself, and also demonstrate its essential dependence upon the other. There is, therefore, no escape from the heresy of dualism in any such superficial and mechanical view.

Plainly, the case requires the union of the visible and the invisible in a *vital* and *organic* form, in order to the completeness, not of two things, but of *one* and the *same thing*, namely, the Church of Christ. Just as man is not body, nor spirit, but body and spirit, and just as he is not both these in the form of separate completeness, but *vitally united in one person*, so the visible and the invisible, *organically united*, form one Church. These are therefore the different sides only of one and the same thing. The *unity* is the essential element.

It is equally plain that the visible is the side towards man, and that the invisible is the side towards God. The same thing meets us in the ever glorious Person of Christ, and it is in this, especially, that we see His adaptation to our condition as Saviour. He is our Saviour by virtue of this fact. By His divinity He stands organically related to God, and by His Humanity He stands related in the same way to man, and *thus* He is our Mediator. This is the regulative law for the Church, which is His body. Man is concerned, first of all, with the side of the Church which is nearest to him, and farthest from God. God begins to move towards man through the invisible, which is next to Him; man begins to move towards God through the visible, which is next to him. God and man meet in the *union* of the two, which is the Christian Church in its true, whole, organic, and proper character. This is enough to show the fallacy as well as the folly of the idea, that we must first be members, somehow or another, of the invisible side of the Church before we

can be received into the visible. It is unnatural in every sense, and so far as man can see, an utter impossibility. We can find no divine objective means to accomplish such an end. God has never ordained such means. As well indeed, might a man, in taking a journey, try to start at the point where he hopes to end. The very reverse of this is the true order of procedure. We start from the point at which we are, and thus hope to reach the point at which we aim. We begin with the side of the Church which is towards us—the side which, on account of its visibility and tangible humanness, is adapted to us; and, taken up in this, we are led to the invisible, because of the vital relationship which holds between them in the objective constitution of the Church itself.

This truth, so clear in itself, has for its illustration the whole world of Nature so far as this has become known to us. In no department do we get to essences *directly*, but always indirectly, namely, through the outward forms and signs of essences. We know the invisible only as it is borne to us in the visible; and we reach it practically just in proportion as we penetrate the outward form which is nearest to us, and thus actually enter the organism, of whatever character it may be. We do not study the essence of a plant in order to understand its outward form and structure; we do not first seek to understand the soul of man, and then, by means of this knowledge, try to understand his body. Everybody knows that we always proceed, and are compelled to proceed just in the reverse order. So from the visible in the Church we pass to the invisible—from the outside, and the side which is next to us, we pass to the inside, and the side which is most remote from us, and nearest to God.

We all feel this even in the order of the words forming the caption of this article. Who would think of saying the *invisible and visible Church*? Every one feels that there is an awkwardness in such an arrangement, that it is unnatural. It is placing that first which proper order requires to be placed second. The *visible and invisible* is the order that meets our feelings, and which leads us to say it is right, although, intel-

lectually, we may be able to assign no definite reason for our feeling. It is the unconfused testimony of our deeper consciousness, through which the analogy of the world under all other forms, uniting with our experiences in all other departments, expresses itself. Here we have the kingdom of Nature teaching parabolically the order and constitution of the kingdom of Grace. From the known we rise to the unknown—from the visible to the invisible.

Still, as already seen, no mode of representing the case dare be allowed to involve a dualism. Words and phrases, here as well as elsewhere, must take their meaning or peculiar force, from the things to which they are applied. When we speak of 'reaching the invisible through the visible, we do not thereby mean, that the invisible is not *in* the visible, that it is not one with it, that it is something separate from, and lying beyond it. The Church is not visible *and* invisible, but a *union* of the two. The Church under this aspect is more than visibility simply added to invisibility in a mathematical way. Visibility + invisibility is not = the Church. The Church is the *union* of these two in the power of *one life*—one life indivisible by its very nature. This is vastly more than the two in juxtaposition. To allow of a sundering, or to admit of two separate values under any real form, even for one moment, is to allow at the same time of an utter destruction of the very being of the Church itself, just as you have physical death when the union of body and soul in man ceases. This union of the two sides was the ground of that old saying—"Extra ecclesiam salus nulla;" and of those other words no less venerable and weighty: "Habere jam non potest Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem." That which we *see* of the Church is, therefore, never mere form. Here is just the point at which so many seem to make shipwreck. An organic sign is never a sign only, but the embodiment also of the life of the organism in which it holds and which it represents and proclaims. Such persons do not steadily hold the union of the visible and invisible, but take these as separable, or as existing each for itself, or at most as being merely mathematically *added* together, in such a way, that

the visible never actually, and in any necessary form, embodies and represents the invisible. What is this but down right Nestorianism over again in its very worst form? Hence it is difficult for such persons to conceive of real sacraments at all, either in the early or Reformation sense of the word; for in both these senses the sacraments, in their formal character, are regarded as holding vitally in the unseen essence of Christianity. Conceding the possibility of the invisible, in ordinances which Christ has appointed, being separated from the visible, it is not hard to regard all that appeals to the eye, and which God has thus made to come near to man, as merely *formal*. The doubt, thus started, necessarily tends this way. At least, where this possibility of separation is allowed to hold in any legitimate divine ordinance under its objective form, there can be no assured *confidence* for the spirit of their union at any time. Thus the ground of positive faith is broken up, the power of certitude is destroyed, the testimony of sacraments is entirely lost, and everything touching the Church is rendered uncertain, shadowy, and unreal. In this way man is sent into the endless confusion of his own subjective nature for the evidence of the presence of the unseen, which he would otherwise find in the holy sacraments, and which our Catechism plainly teaches us to look for in them. Ques. 73.

But at this age, it is felt by most men that this dualistic theory involves entirely too much, and that unless it be effectually checked by some means, it will prove fatal to the whole practical interest of Christianity. It is evident to most minds, that neither the visible nor the invisible, separately taken, constitutes the Church of Christ, and that to regard either of them, as such, is a most hurtful delusion. Here is the prolific source of dead formality on the one hand, and of the wildest forms of fanaticism on the other. If the visible *can be* where the invisible *is not*, there you have not the Church; or if the invisible *can be*, normally, and for the practical purposes of salvation, where the visible *is not*, there, again, you have not the Church, but "some other way" of deliverance; for the Church consists in the presence of these two sides united in the power of one

common life, and in this view is the object of faith according to the Creed. The invisible life of an organism is always in and pervasively commensurate with its sign or visible form. We believe there is no exception to the rule. Therefore, to conceive even the possibility of their separation, in the present application of the subject, much more so to regard this separation as at any time an actual fact, is virtually to deny the Church altogether. And this is evidently the result to which the cry of empty and vain formality, as touching any of God's legitimate ordinances, must come in the end. If the visible does not *embody* the invisible in a real way, then there is no actual Church of Christ in the world, just as, if the body does not in like manner enshrine the soul, there is no actual man in the world. There may be a visible *and* an invisible—there may be a body *and* a soul, but the two not vitally *in* each other and forming one life, there is no Church—there is no man.

But if these two things *are* one, and *must be* one to meet the demands of the case itself, then why speak of a visible and invisible Church? Why speak of empty forms and vain ceremonies? Why speak of "water baptism" as distinguished from the "baptism of the Holy Ghost" (two baptisms and both divinely appointed!)? Why speak of the Holy Supper as bearing no grace, and the necessity of feeding upon Christ in some other way? Why all those pious warnings against trusting in God through the ordinances, which he has ordained, as if they were all so many mere deceptive signs and cheats? Would there be room at all for any such language, if it were steadily believed, that the visible and invisible are one in the deep, organic and sacramental sense of the word—making but one Church, one baptism, one eucharist? In this view it would be felt that, as physical eating is, because of its being outward, formal and in the flesh, no mere vain formality in which the spirit has no actual interest, so the formal act of baptism, and the outward eating of the bread and drinking of the cup, the proper conditions being at hand, are not pure formalities which result in no gracious good, so far as "spiritual religion" in the soul may be concerned. Institutions are always the embodi-

ments of organic laws, and are therefore always essential to the life in which they stand. The institutions of grace (and pre-eminently so the Holy Sacraments) stand vitally in the union of these two sides of the Church's being, and, therefore, in themselves they must really embody what they represent and proclaim. *Man* may imagine functions to exist where there are no faculties, or set artificial eyes where there is no vision, and then trust to their guidance. This *would* be formality. No such mock appearances, however, can be attributed to the institutions which God creates. The visible and the invisible, necessarily being one in the Church of Christ, His body, there can be no room to conceive any organic part or function of it to be formal only. Every such part or function must, with its formality, be also a vitality.

ART. VIII.—RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

REPORT on the Prisons and Reformatories of the United States and Canada, made to the Legislature of New York, Jan. 1867. By *E. C. Wines, D.D., LL.D.*, and *Theodore W. Dwight, LL.D.* Albany: Van Benthuysen & Sons' Printing House, 1867.

This Report of between 500 and 600 pages, is well worthy the attention of the American public, and especially of those who feel specially interested in the welfare of society. It has already called forth no little discussion in the leading periodicals of the country. The subject seems to be claiming special attention at this time, both in this country and in Europe.

Humanitarianism regards crime as an error and a misfortune;—only this and nothing more. Hence punishment looks only to the protection of society and the improvement of the offender. This theory contains a fundamental error, in overlooking the element of crime, and the necessary connection between guilt and penalty. There is something more than society to protect; the law must be vindicated. This is an eternal necessity. The criminal is punished first because the law requires it; and this requirement rests originally in the necessary relation between law and punishment. If it were perfectly certain that a criminal would never afterwards injure society, yet having committed a crime, the law would require his punishment. So also if it were certain that his punishment would

serve in no way to reform him, or do him good, yet his punishment would be none the less necessary and right. It is not the end of punishment to reform the criminal. This, we take it, is the fundamental position to be assumed by the State on the subject.

Yet it does not follow from this, that the good of society or of the criminal has nothing to do with punishment. It connects itself very intimately with such punishment, and in this view demands attention. "The science of punishment, the philosophy which investigates the treatment of criminals, holding the just balance between coercion and reformation, must have a profound interest for all lovers of the human race." The Report investigates the subject from this point of view. There is much in it to interest all who are concerned for the suppression of vice and the promotion of public morality.

OUR FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE.
By *A. E. Kroeger.*

A pamphlet of thirty pages. We do not know who Mr. Kroeger is, nor who publishes his article. We only know that it is above the usual style of speeches and articles on the subject of our government.

Self-consciousness requires a relation between a multiplicity of individuals. Each individual, as he claims for himself free moral self-determination, must recognize the same in others. Each individual has a right to *life*, that is, a right to the body as a whole, the body being in the sensuous world the rational being itself. Each individual must retain exclusive determination of his own body. No one has the right to compel a physical action not determined through the will. In other words, complete moral freedom is guaranteed to each individual in guaranteeing to him this right to life. He has the right of *liberty*, that is, freedom of bodily movement. Hence the meaning of the *habeas corpus*; the right of emigration, &c. The *pursuit of happiness* is the right of property to all the sensuous world. He is entitled to his share, either landed estates, or some branch of business, &c. His sphere of causality, no matter what that sphere is, is his property, as soon as it is recognized by his fellow-citizens.

"But an agreement of each with all, to respect each other's freedom, affords no security that the rights of each will be respected; on the contrary, it is based on the very supposition that each will not respect the rights of the other. Hence the necessity of a power to compel each person to respect that agreement; and hence, also, the necessity of entrusting this power to a third party." Here we get the idea of government. It is the most respectable statement, as contained in the pamphlet, of the idea of government as developed from a rationalistic standpoint. The account given in the pamphlet of the early growth of the nation towards its present form of govern-