

(1) Because, even if the use of ritual be lawful, it is, when used to excess, a childish method. It appeals to the eye and the ear, rather than to the faith, the understanding, the affections. "When I was a child," said the great Apostle, "I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." This he said concerning the ritual system of the Jewish church, which he had renounced. And we, as a Christian people, say the same. We have put away childish things. We need not now to be instructed by symbolical acts and object pictures, as did the Jews of old in the infancy of the last dispensation. We worship God now as adults in spirit and in truth, and "God seeketh such to worship him." Symbolism may be useful for young beginners in the school of Christ, provided it teaches scriptural truth, but it is not suited for the development of the higher life. It will not minister much to those who have advanced beyond the first principles of the Christian faith.

(2) Because it is a retrograde system. It is a return to the visible sacrificial system of the Jews, and yet it does not accord entirely with the Jewish interpretation. It involves an incongruity as great as that of one who should attempt to prophesy of a past event, or seek the risen Lord in the empty tomb. The Jew, by his symbolism and his sacrifices, declared his belief in a coming Messiah, who was to take away the sin of the world. The Christian, by his omission of sacrifices, declares his belief in a Messiah who has come and has completed His work. Sacrifice, therefore, by a Christian is now a ludicrously inconsistent act. It is a return to Judaism without any foundation in reason for it. It is a practical renunciation of the central truth of the Christian religion, viz., the finished redemption that is in Christ Jesus—the sins forgiven through the perfect atonement already made. St Paul found no room for a ritualism which was dishonourable to Christ. The Judæo-Christians argued that Jewish ritualism was divine. Nevertheless, St Paul strenuously condemned it, and he did so chiefly because it was inimical to Christ. He objected to it not simply as ritual expressive of false doctrine concerning Christ. In speaking of circumcision to the "foolish" Galatians, who were led away by false teachers like the Ritualists of the present day, he said: "Behold I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ will profit you nothing." This was said of the continued use of ritual that was divine in its origin. With how much