

gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is said that when the Roman general entered the temple and found there no representation of the object of worship, he was surprised. Always accustomed to see some visible representation of the god which a nation acknowledged, he could not believe that the worshippers of Jehovah had any God at all. Of course, he would retire, thinking less favourably of the temple worship and more highly of the heathen temples, where there were "gods many and lords many." But had there been a statue of Diana, or the "image which fell down from Jupiter," or a bust of some other heathen deity, he would have uncovered himself, and by prostration or otherwise have offered that homage which he called religious worship. The fact is man is a worshipping being; and if you can only satisfy his tastes by presenting an object of adoration he will seldom refuse the act of homage. But then, man seeks something material. An invisible God does not satisfy the carnal heart. He does not, of course, demand that his worship shall be given to this visible representation exclusively. God, the supreme Jehovah, may be recognized as the ultimate object. When Aaron made a proclamation to prepare the congregation of Israel for the idolatrous worship which they had in prospect, he did not tell the people that to-morrow they would have the privilege of worshipping a golden calf. He proclaimed it as a "feast to the Lord."—Neither does the Romanist acknowledge that his graven image, or his picture, is really the object of his worship. But still he wants it, as he says, to assist his devotions. Now we hear one say, if this be all, why not let him have it? He feels that his nature demands it. But there are two reasons.—First, God forbids it. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit, and in truth."—Secondly, It is not true that it assists him in raising his heart to God. It is just an additional hindrance in his way. The blindness and unbelief of the human heart are themselves too thick a veil, hiding the Almighty from our view; and of course

every material substance which is interposed tends to deepen the darkness. God, who knows our nature, has prohibited everything of the kind, though man has ever shown a disposition to set aside the authority of God in this respect.

I need not remind you of the disastrous consequences to the church resulting from disobedience. Yet it is only the natural operation of the system of altering and improving God's institutions, which began to shew itself in the days of the apostles. The religion of Christ (as we have seen) was too simple. In the worship there was nothing to strike the eye or affect the mind, through the medium of the external senses, and hence the temptation, in the case of half-hearted christians, to add something to the simple ritual of christian worship.—Even the Jews, in many cases, remembering the more showy and attractive worship of the old dispensation, seemed to long for a more imposing "ceremonial" than they found in the churches founded by the apostles under the direction of the holy spirit; and they wondered why they could not retain parts at least of the ancient ceremonies. It is true the New Testament worship bore a striking resemblance to that of the synagogue. But the temple worship, with its magnificent ceremonies, was more to the taste of the carnal heart. They could not, or they *would* not see that the carnal ordinances of the old dispensation had lost their significance since Christ had come. They longed still for the priests and vestments, and the incense, or even the sacrifice which had hitherto impressed their imaginations. The new moons and festivals, the chantings of the priests, and the crashing sound of various instruments of music were all remembered with regret—regret proportioned to the want of spirituality in their own souls. Many were the warnings uttered by the apostles to convince them that old things were done away, and that a system of spiritual worship had taken the place of the ceremonial. The "onions and cucumbers had more relish for them than the manna from heaven."

Thus, brethren, the antagonism between light and darkness in the moral and spiritu-