

doctrines and practices which Ritualism sanctions and embodies, are Baptismal regeneration, the sacrifice of the Mass, Auricular Confession, prayers to the dead, the worship of Mary, and the worship of Angels.

Ritualism is a grand characteristic of the Greek and Roman Churches, and largely prevails in the German Lutheran and English Episcopal Churches. According to the Articles of the English Episcopal Church, the Church has power to decree rites and ceremonies; with the proviso, however, that it is not lawful to ordain anything contrary to God's written word; and with express declarations against works of supererogation, the sacrifice of the Mass, the doctrine of Transubstantiation, the worshipping and adoration as well of images as of relics, and the addition to the number of the Sacraments instituted by Christ, of the so-called Sacraments of Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction.

But in spite of the limitations and declarations of the Articles, to which they have given their assent, there has arisen in the Church of England a body of Clergymen, now numbered by the thousand, who teach, practise, sanction and are propagating a Ritualistic system, which in many respects is utterly unscriptural. The Books of Devotion, in which the system is set forth, bear a strong resemblance to each other—a circumstance accounted for by the fact that they are copied to a large extent, word on word, from Romish manuals. Some of the Books of Devotion, and other Ritualistic books and tracts, are being extensively circulated in England, and along with some of the Ritualistic practices which they teach, have been introduced into this country. It may be added that among other Churches, not excepting those called Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist and Methodist, there exists, and is perhaps gaining ground, a species of Ritualism which, if not directly opposed to the Scriptures, has no warrant in the Word of God.

In these circumstances it is right that we should lift a testimony against Ritualism, expose its real nature and character, and point out its dangerous tendencies and consequences. Ritualism as it exists within the pale, and as it is propagated by Clergymen of the Church of England, demands our special notice, and to this I deem it right to call particular attention, in this Presbyterian Conference. Nor do I think that any apology needs to be made for referring to the defections of a sister Church. On the contrary, loyalty to our Master, and genuine christian charity demand that we should testify against error and evil wherever they are found. I may add that on our Presbyterian platform we have a peculiar vantage ground for testifying against Ritualism, inasmuch as it forms part of our creed that it is not within the power of any Church to decree rites and ceremonies which have no warrant in the Word of God—that it is not only incompetent to the Church to decree anything contrary to the Scriptures, but also that the Church has no authority to decree anything for which there is not a warrant, explicit or implied, in the written Word.

In referring to the Ritualism which prevails within the pale of the Church of England, I do not think it necessary, at present, to advert to certain rites and ceremonies which that Church has thought proper to ordain without any warrant, as we think, in Scripture, although, as they think, not in opposition to the written Word—such as the sign of the cross in baptism, kneeling at the communion, sponsors in baptism, the rite of confirmation, bowing at the name of Jesus, the observance of such stated holidays as Christmas, Good Friday, Ash Wednesday and Holy Thursday. I confine myself to the Ritualism prevalent within the pale of the Church of England, which is more distinctly Romish, unscriptural and superstitious