

*The*  
*Jewishness*  
*of*  
*Ritualism.*

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BY H. H. S.

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LONDON:  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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## THE JEWISHNESS OF RITUALISM.

RITUALISM is a denial of Christianity. It refuses the finished work of the Son of God, and returns to types and shadows. It is a deadly compound of Judaism and Christianity, which destroys both, and leaves neither. This is why its victims are ever in bondage, and, instead of rejoicing in the Lord always, have their minds darkened with uncertainty and confusion. May God graciously deliver souls from its blinding and seducing influence.

A glance at the inspired epistles to Christians is enough to shew how entirely the ritualistic system was unsanctioned by the apostles. Not a word is found as to the erection, not to say ornamentation, of any kind of ecclesiastical building. So immaterial was their place of meeting, as taught by our Lord Himself, and carried out

in apostolic times, that He said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. xviii. 20.) After Judaism was set aside, we have no mention of any place of worship on earth for Christians; and we find that the people, and not the building, are spoken of as "the house of God." (Heb. iii. 6; 1 Tim. iii. 15.) This is, doubtless, because the character of the present dispensation is spiritual, and not fleshly as in Israel's time; and this is why we have not one word of instruction about clerical garments, or ecclesiastical decorations, or furniture.

1. The Jewishness of Ritualism comes out in the awful denial that every believer in our Lord Jesus Christ is already "made nigh," "accepted in the Beloved," "complete in him which is the Head of all principality and power," and sealed with the Holy Ghost on receiving remission of sins. The sincere Ritualist is therefore struggling, and redoubling his efforts, hoping by-and-by to get near to God; and,

like the Jew of old, who knew nothing better, he resorts to ordinances, imposing ceremonies, an earthly order of priesthood, a worldly sanctuary, and is adding perhaps Christ's work as a make-weight for all his deficiencies. At the same time all this religious activity makes self an object of importance, and gives him a place of distinction among men. Having missed the present nearness and acceptance into which divine grace has brought all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the mistaken Ritualist has gone back to a carnal order of tabernacle and temple service, which, when its veil was yet standing, shewed that man was outside the presence of God, and that priests with all their sacrifices and ordinances could never bring him in. Till the veil was rent from the top to the bottom in virtue of the one offering of the body of Christ, the way into the holiest was not made manifest.

Ritualism is therefore the setting up *again* of a Jewish tabernacle or temple order of types and shadows, which at

this time has no existence before God. Instead of gladly accepting the rent veil (which was typical of the flesh of Jesus) as the way of access to God with confidence, its leaders are zealously occupied in putting up the veil again, if possible, and thus keeping the people outside. All this constitutes a denial of Christianity. Many of its promoters are perhaps themselves deceived, and blind to the deep dishonour done to God, and the mischief to souls. How many trembling but honest children of God are by this ritual system kept outside the veil in misery and bondage, when, by looking simply to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven by His own blood, and relying only on God's testimony in His written word, they would be rejoicing in the Lord. We know that such are entitled to have the certainty of sins forgiven, of having the present possession of everlasting life, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; and they should be happily waiting for God's Son from heaven.

2. The Jewishness of Ritualism is

further manifested in ignoring God's present priesthood, and setting up again an earthly order. The Aaronic priesthood was earthly, successional, and changeable. Being set up for a people who were outside the veil, excluded from the presence of God, Aaron with his sons, and their successors, formed, and rightly so, an intermediate class between God and His people Israel. Their sphere was earthly and not heavenly; and their business was to offer gifts, and sacrifices for sins, which could only bring sins to remembrance, and never take away sins, because they were only types and shadows of good things to come. These priests, being themselves compassed with infirmity, could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way; but they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. (Heb. v. 1; vii. 23; x. 4.) We are told plainly that the priesthood is changed; so much so that, even if Christ "were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing there are priests that offer gifts according to

the law." (Heb. viii. 4.) Aaron's order of priesthood therefore was connected with the law, a shadow of heavenly things. It formed part of an earthly, and indeed the only divinely-ordered ritual. It was changeable, was associated with a worldly sanctuary, and, like every other part of the system, "made nothing perfect." Whereas God's present priesthood is a heavenly one in connection with the throne of God; our High Priest being a minister of the true sanctuary, which the Lord pitched and not man: so that He now appears in the presence of God for us. It is founded upon an accomplished redemption, whereby sins are so purged as to be remembered no more; the believer is perfected for ever by the one offering, and has no more conscience of sins. The Son of God therefore hath an unchangeable priesthood; so that He ever lives to sustain, succour, and make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. What love! All, therefore, who believe on Him to the saving of the soul, have this ever-living, ever-



loving high Priest, and need no other priest; for they are not only washed from their sins in His own blood, but are themselves made priests unto God—a *holy priesthood* to offer up spiritual sacrifices, and a *royal priesthood* to shew forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. The truth is that the accomplishment of redemption by Christ Jesus, the rending of the veil, His going into heaven itself by His own blood, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, necessitated a change of priesthood; and the Priest for a heavenly people is not now “after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.” (Heb. vii. 12, 16.) This priesthood, though carrying out some of the Aaronic functions is not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchisedec—a blessing and ever-living Priest. The Aaronic priesthood was for those who were outside the veil, but the priesthood of Jesus, the Son of God, is for them who are “made nigh,” who are “perfected for ever” by the one

## 10 THE JEWISHNESS OF RITUALISM.

offering, and have therefore “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.” (Eph. ii. 13; Heb. x. 14–21.)

To give up then this heavenly and unchangeable priesthood, and to go back to the Jewish order, is not only to turn away from the substantial realities in Christ, and return to types and shadows, but it brings God's dear children into perplexity and bondage, and keeps them at a distance from God. Such must always be the effect of accrediting a sacerdotal class, of which scripture knows nothing in the church of God. Is it not the sin of Korah over again, who, having despised God's order of priesthood, took censers for themselves, and brought down the severest judgment from God? Let the christian reader ask himself solemnly, whether or not he is owning the ascended Son of God as the perfect and only Priest that God has appointed for him?

3. The Jewishness of Ritualism is also remarkably seen in its practically confounding priesthood and ministry, which the New Testament teaches to be two very different lines of truth. There all believers are spoken of as "priests," and ministry of the word is carried on by "evangelists," "teachers," "pastors," and other "gifts" from the ascended Christ. We read of no one there being humanly ordained to preach, nor is he introduced into his labours by human credentials, or official orders of any kind. He is responsible to the Lord. His being a minister of the word of God depends absolutely on his having received a gift from Christ. Nor is the idea of the minister, or pastor of a church, or even that of a member of a church found in scripture. The sacramental system is the fruit of trying to blend by human authority these two things—priesthood and ministry. Hence its totally false character. The assumption by any class of men being now in a kind of mediatorial position, like Moses, between God and His people,

is not Christianity. The scripture ground of God's church, formed and energised by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, and united to the Head there as members of His body has been entirely given up, and Jewish things embraced in order to attract the senses, and give importance and power to men. Hence too the linen garments, the consecration of the elements, imposing ceremonies, and successional priesthood in imitation of Aaron, who in typical days, had to present sacrifices to God, and deal with Him about the people's sins.

Nothing is more censured in the writings of the apostle Paul than the God-dishonouring, and soul-damaging declension from grace to law, from Christianity to Judaism. We need only to read the epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews to see this. So common is the mixture now that multitudes of God's children are unconsciously involved in it. We believe, however, that many would be delivered if the scriptures were put before them.

When they learn from the written word that they are so completely forgiven that God says, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more;" that they have eternal life, and are the children of God; that even now they are looked at by God as "not in the flesh," but "in Christ," and "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," and have received the Holy Ghost, as the earnest of the inheritance; then they find they are set free by the truth of God.

We have seen many instances of this liberating power of the truth. We remember on one occasion when an ecclesiastical building had been completed, with its coloured glass windows, and well-furnished benches, tables of the ten commandments, pulpit, font, a powerful musical instrument, &c., the clergyman and his friends *then* had serious questions as to its being consecrated. The more they searched the directions of scripture to the church of God, the more they became convinced that such consecration was not Christian but

## 14 THE JEWISHNESS OF RITUALISM.

Jewish in its origin, and suited only to God's earthly people Israel, who were outside the veil of Solomon's temple. The more clearly they perceived the heavenly and spiritual character of believers who, through grace, enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, the more convinced they became that consecrating any building on earth *now*, and calling it the house of God, is wholly opposed to Christianity, and a going back to what was carnal, legal, and Jewish; that it was returning to the weak and beggarly elements against which the Galatians were so solemnly warned. They, therefore, abandoned the idea of consecration. Being faithful to God in this one point, further light from scripture dawned upon their waiting souls. Holding fast what they received from the word of God, they rejoiced in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. When they saw that the time now is when true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth, they had the musical instrument removed. When they learned

from scripture that they were "not under law but under grace," and that Christ's example, and not the commandments of Moses, was the Christian's rule of life, the two tables of the law were taken down, and carried away. The clergyman himself ere long saw that his position as such was unsanctioned by scripture, and that he was only one member of the body of Christ among many, and responsible to the Lord for any "gift" he had received from Him; consequently his linen garments (to resemble Aaron's), as well as his black ones to distinguish him as belonging to a peculiar class were soon laid aside, and turned to useful purposes. It was also found that the baptismal font was no longer required. The pulpit was pared down to a temporary desk, and used only when preaching the gospel to many hearers. Some of those among the over-flowing congregation who knew the Lord, were taught by the word of God that the Lord Jesus Christ was "in the midst" of those who were "gathered together in his name,"

and that it was their sweet privilege, when thus gathered, to remember Him and shew His death till He come, as members of one body, of which He was Head, as well as to own the presence of the Holy Ghost in us, and in the assembly, as the power of all service, worship, and ministry, &c.

We forbear entering into the outrageous doctrines and ways of some modern ritualists, such as baptismal regeneration, penance, absolution, praying and offering sacrifices for the dead, candles, flowers, &c.; because we judge that unless a soul really gets by faith on redemption ground, as being now in heavenly places in Christ, and having the Holy Ghost in Him as the seal, anointing, and earnest of the inheritance, there is no limit to the religious folly he may not fall into. What did our Lord mean when He spake of "the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan"?



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