**“Lifeless Forms” Australasian Signs of the Times 18, 45.**

E. J. Waggoner

A writer in the “Spectator” comments on the power of ritual to hold people to the forms of religious service. One who knows India intimately says, for example:- {BEST November 9, 1903, par. 1}

“A Brahmin who has lost all faith in the supernatural, will yet stand neck-deep in the Ganges water twice a day, going through an elaborate ceremonial, not that his neighbour may see, but because it is his habit.” {BEST November 9, 1903, par. 2}

One need not go to India to see the same truth illustrated. A great mass of professors make of Christianity but a round of ritual, having an idea that the religion of Christ is a life of right doing. There is the habit of church-going, the habit of performing this or that religious ceremony, and as a door swings open its hinges, they follow the forms which training and habit have made a part of their lives, without ever giving intelligent earnest thought as to whether they really mean anything by it, or whether there is any actual life and power in the service. {BEST November 9, 1903, par. 3}

In order to hold men’s minds in this state of apathy and yet to satisfy man’s naturally religious nature, Satan has always devoted led to the manufacture of ritual and form by which to hide the simplicity of the Gospel. But it is at the same time true that the great danger is that multitudes who reject these importations, and would hold only the truth as it is revealed in the Word, may yet hold only the form and theory of the truth and miss its life. This is to fail as grievously as the other class who hold only the forms of error and superstition. “Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof”-is the description of the condition from which the Apostle Paul warns us to turn. The only way to turn from it is by taking Jesus Christ, the life and power which alone can work righteousness in human flesh. {BEST November 9, 1903, par. 4}