

been made clear to them. Any kind of form or ceremony that helps us to have a personal, spiritual relation to God in which we bow in adoring contemplation of His majesty, and His goodness can be helpful. There is no objection to any form that is useful to us, but there is great objection if the form becomes an end in itself.

Beautiful music that leads out thoughts toward God is fine as a means, but if it becomes an end, it can cease to be a help. We read in the book of Numbers how God told Moses to put up a brazen serpent on a pole. When somebody was bit by a serpent he would look at the brazen serpent and he ~~would~~ would be healed. This was a wonderful help in looking to God, in worshipping God. It was a representation of how Jesus Christ would take our sin upon Him on the cross. But the time came when the people worshipped the brazen serpent. So we read in 2 Ki.18:4 about Hezekiah that he removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones, cut down the Asherah poles, he broke into pieces the bronze serpent Moses had made for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. This thing which God had prescribed, this thing which had been a great blessing to the Israelites, this thing which had been a great help in worshipping became an end in itself and they were worshipping it instead of worshipping God.

Can you think of how Hezekiah must have felt as he took down that which Moses had put up as a means of blessing his people, and he broke it because it had become a curse to them. That is true of any material aid to worship. It can be helpful, but it must be a help and not an end in itself. A church service should be a great help, but this help is not automatic. Nor is it exclusive. It is often said that the greatest spiritual experiences have come when people have been alone, meditating on the Word, or perhaps when they have been out in observing nature, out in what God has made.