

## KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS

*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. (1 John 5:20-21)*

The most famous picture of Jesus is entitled "The Head of Christ", a 1940 portrait painting of Jesus by American artist Warner Sallman (1892-1968).

In the painting, Christ is depicted with olive skin, brown eyes and shoulder length hair. Sallman credited the inspiration for the image from a "miraculous vision that he received late one night"

It has been reproduced over half a billion times, many religious groups, catholic and protestant, distributing the image, much like we would pass out gospel tracts, with the hope that it would turn people to Jesus.

Miracles have been attributed to the picture. A boy was healed of leukaemia from it. A would-be thief aborted his burglary upon seeing the picture on a living room wall. Unbelievers have been converted on their death-beds because of the picture.

So we might wonder, instead of handing out gospel tracts, should we hand out pictures of Jesus? Instead of having a billboard with a Bible verse, should we have one big image of Jesus?

Should we have a picture of Jesus hanging in the church, to help us worship him? Should we have pictures of Jesus in our Sunday School lessons so the children will grasp the teaching better?

As we get closer to Christmas, we will be exposed to more and more visual representations of the infant Son of God, either in statue form, or two-dimensional pictures. I know of Baptist churches that would buy a nativity scene and set those images up within the church-house.

Now is that just some harmless tradition or is it idolatry?

It is extremely difficult to approach an issue like this objectively, because we all have experiences and influences that we bring with us that hinder us from taking a sober, objective look at what the Bible says on it. It might be the church we grew up in, or the pastor we admire, or family traditions, and for many people, those influences prove to be stronger than the word of God itself.

(There will be many people in hell because they refused to let go of the traditions they grew up with, AND there will be many Christians at the judgment seat of Christ who will miss out on rewards because they were unwilling to put the word of God before the traditions and teachings of men.)

Does the Bible permit the use of images representing God?

In this sermon I will endeavour to take a brief look at what the Bible says about images of God and how we can make sure that we are not breaking the second commandment.

### I. MAN HAS AN INNATE TENDENCY TOWARDS IDOLATRY

*Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down*

*thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. (Deuteronomy 5:8-10)*

A. The First Commandment forbids us to worship false gods (Deuteronomy 5:7)

B. The Second Commandment forbids us to worship the true God under false forms.

There are two parts to this commandment:

1. Images representing Deity are forbidden

Cf. Deuteronomy 4:12,13,15:

*And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.*

*Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire:*

2. The use of images in worship is forbidden

When man sets up images to help worship the invisible God, it is not long before the created object is worshipped as a god instead of the Creator.

C. What is idolatry?

1. The worship of deity in a visible form

2. False worship of God

Cain's sacrifice (Genesis 4:3-5) and Nadab and Abihu's "strange fire" (Leviticus 10:1-2) are examples of worshipping God falsely. This "will worship" (Colossians 2:23) – man devising his own means of worshipping God – is idolatry.

3. Misrepresentations of God

Aberrant doctrines of the Godhead, such as Unitarianism, Modalism and Arianism are misrepresentations of God and therefore idolatry.

All images and pictures of God are misrepresentations of Him and therefore idolatry.

4. Putting something or someone in place of God

Anything can become an idol if it replaces the love and worship of the true God, including angels (Colossians 2:18), family (Luke 14:26), money (Matthew 6:24), possessions (Matthew 19:22), pictures (Numbers 33:52), pleasures (2 Timothy 3:4), or one's own life (Luke 14:26; John 12:25).

5. Covetousness

*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: (Colossians 3:5)*

D. The Bible is a continual record of man's idolatry

1. Beginning with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:6)

Adam and Eve were guilty of idolatry. They put their desires, hopes and aspirations in the tree instead of God.

Cain was an idolater, offering the works of his hands to God.

2. Israel (Exodus 32:4; Numbers 25:2; Judges 3:7; 1 Kings 12:32; 16:31; 2 Kings 17:12; 18:4; 21:21; 2 Chronicles 25:14; 28:2)

a. The golden calves were intended to be representations of Jehovah

*And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. (Exodus 32:4-5; cf. 1 Kings 12:28)*

Note that the word translated "gods" is *elohim*, which, though plural in construction, is often singular in signification. Aaron's announcement could alternatively be rendered, "This is thy God, O Israel." Furthermore, he went on to proclaim a feast to "the LORD", not to the gods of Egypt or to Baal, but to Jehovah. It was not that Aaron was directing them to worship strange gods, but to worship Jehovah through images. They believed they were worshipping God through this representation of Him.

b. The brazen serpent, later named Nehushtan, became an object of worship (Numbers 21:8-9; 2 Kings 18:4)

3. Gentiles (Daniel 3:7; 5:23; Acts 17:16; Romans 1:23)

4. Christians are warned to avoid idolatry

*Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. (1 Corinthians 10:7)*

*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (2 Corinthians 6:16)*

E. Idolatry is as prevalent today as it ever was

People "idolise" movie stars, musicians, or sportspeople. There is even a television show called "Australian Idol". People, and also possessions, especially in an affluent society, become idols. Religious idolatry remains widespread in eastern religions, as well as in Roman Catholicism and much of Protestantism.

F. Our wicked hearts are drawn to idolatry

If we think that our own hearts are not prone to follow after idols, then we are deceiving ourselves. Our deceitful and desperately wicked hearts are drawn to worship that which we can see.

A close relative of mine said once that she wanted a god that she could see, so she became a Roman Catholic. Their god is visible, whether it is in statues, paintings, or in the wafer.

Religious films promote idolatry.

The Jesus Film (1979) is said to be the most-watched motion picture of all time. It has been viewed over 5 billion times by over 3 billion people.

The 35-year-old actor who played Jesus in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* was on a one-week tour of the east Mexican state of Veracruz.

"According to Mexican newspaper *Reforma*, dozens of residents from villages throughout the state, one of the poorest in the country, asked Caviezel to heal the sick and perform other miracles as he passed through.

"The actor, who is himself a strict Catholic, said, 'The belief of these people really moved me. It was a shock for me to see how they came up to me to ask for my help. I had to explain to them that I was only an actor and wasn't really the Son of God.'

<http://www.thebereancall.org/content/jesus-actor-gets-some-fan-worship>

"The Passion of the Christ", "The Jesus Film", and every other film or cartoon that depicts Jesus Christ, are forms of idolatry as they falsely represent Christ.

## II. CHRISTIANS HAVE HISTORICALLY OPPOSED IMAGES OF GOD

### A. The apostles

#### 1. Preached against it

*"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."* (Acts 17:29)

#### 2. Made no artistic representations of Christ

These men saw with their own eyes the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh. Surely they would have realised how helpful it would be for succeeding generations of Christians to make some sketches or paintings of the Lord, while His appearance was fresh in their minds. Then we wouldn't have to guess what He looked like when we made our own pictures of Him. But they didn't do that because they understood that images of Christ were idols.

#### 3. Gave no physical description of Christ in the flesh

The fact that in all the information about Christ that is recorded in the Gospels, there is not one description of his appearance – His hair colour, eye colour, nose shape, build, or height – should leave us in no doubt that the Holy Spirit did not want us to make images of Christ, either with our hands or in our hearts.

### B. Various councils denounced images

The Church historian Eusebius, who lived in the fourth century, declared himself in the strongest manner against images of Christ in a letter to the Empress Constantia who asked him for such an image. Amongst other things Eusebius wrote:

"Who can therefore counterfeit by dead and insensible colours, by vain shadowing painter's art, the bright and shining glistering of such his glory? whereas his holy disciples were not

able to behold the same in the mountain; who, therefore, falling on their faces, acknowledged they were not able to behold such a sight.”

Alexander Vasiliev writes of the Council of Elvira (306 AD):

“At the very beginning of the fourth century the Council of Elvira (in Spain) had ruled 'that there must be no pictures (picturas) in the church, that the walls should have no images of that which is revered and worshipped' (ne quod colitur et adoratur in parietibus depingatur).”  
(Alexander Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire, 324 to 1453*, Kindle location 3815).

A major church council in Constantinople (754 AD) (Council of Hieria) decreed:

If any person shall divide human nature, united to the Person of God the Word; and, having it only in the imagination of his mind, shall therefore, attempt to paint the same in an Image; let him be holden as accursed. If any person shall divide Christ, being but one, into two persons; placing on the one side the Son of God, and on the other side the son of Mary; neither doth confess the continual union that is made; and by that reason doth paint in an Image of the son of Mary, as subsisting by himself; let him be accursed. If any person shall paint in an Image the human nature, being deified by the uniting thereof to God the Word; separating the same as it were from the Godhead assumed and deified; let him be holden as accursed.

Regarding this council Philip Schaff writes:

The council, appealing to the second commandment and other scripture passages denouncing idolatry (Rom. 1:23, 25; John 4:24), and opinions of the Fathers (Epiphanius, Eusebius, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, etc.), condemned and forbade the public and private worship of sacred images on pain of deposition and excommunication. It denounced all religious representations by painter or sculptor as presumptuous, pagan and idolatrous. Those who make pictures of the Saviour, who is God as well as man in one inseparable person, either limit the incomprehensible Godhead to the bounds of created flesh, or confound his two natures like Eutyches, or separate them, like Nestorius, or deny his Godhead, like Arius; and those who worship such a picture are guilty of the same heresy and blasphemy.

It was at the Second Council of Nicaea, 787, that the Roman Catholic Church officially sanctioned the use of images in worship.

C. There were various “iconoclast” controversies throughout church history, when there were great purges of images from churches. However, over time, they would come back.

D. The Protestant Reformation saw a resurgence of iconoclasm

Two differing positions on worship were taken by the reformers:

1. Normative Principle of Worship – whatever is not prohibited in Scripture is permitted in worship (Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist)
2. Regulative Principle of Worship – only what is commanded or can be deduced from Scripture is permitted in worship (Baptist, Presbyterian, Reformed)

The rule all throughout Scripture is that God has not given man liberty to worship Him as he pleases. Man is to worship God according to His word.

Those who hold the Normative Principle reason that because God has not forbidden the use of images in churches (which, in fact, He has), then they are free to use images of God. However, the Regulative Principle, which is Biblical, holds that images of God are abominations.

There is a city named "Ely", not far from Cambridge in England, which has a cathedral dating back to 1083AD. When I was in England many years ago, I was able to see this cathedral and take a guided tour of it. Off to one side of the building was a chapel called a "Lady Chapel" (devoted to Mary). In this chapel, on the walls, over the ceiling, were hundreds of images of God, saints, angels, gargoyles, animals...just about anything you could think of. In 1643, Oliver Cromwell, as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, sent his men into this Lady Chapel to do some "renovations". They proceeded to remove the heads from every statue in the place, as well as removing the stained glass windows. To this day, those hundreds of statues remain headless. I could hear the disgust in the tour guide's voice as she described the vandalism of these Puritan iconoclasts, but I was inspired by the zeal of these men in destroying those idols.

May God give us the zeal for true worship, and holy hatred of idolatry in all its forms, that we too would destroy the idols wherever we see them!

### III. IMAGES OF GOD ARE FALSE REPRESENTATIONS OF HIM

#### A. Even the greatest artist cannot accurately represent the Godhead

I have been in the Sistene Chapel and seen "The Creation of Adam" by Michelangelo. In it he thought to have painted God creating Adam, but all he depicted was two men. How could man think that he can confine God Almighty to a canvas or a graven image?

##### 1. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him

Solomon said, *But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?* (2 Chronicles 2:6)

##### 2. He dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen"

Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:16)

#### B. Images rob God of His glory

##### 1. Images confuse the Creator with the creation

The picture is a part of creation. The creation is not God. To picture a created man, and to label that picture with the name of the Creator is to confuse the Creator with the creation.

*And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.* (Romans 1:23)

##### 2. The creation informs us of the *invisible* attributes of God, his eternal power and Godhead, not his visible appearance

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (Romans 1:20)

The great and objectively beautiful works of art, whether they be literature, music or visual arts, can and should move us to be sensible of God's truth, goodness and beauty and to glorify him.

BUT they are not to attempt to depict his appearance.

C. The viewer gains a corrupt understanding of God

Because the image is a corruption of God, when people see that, their hearts are being corrupted with a false view of God.

1. What we see affects our hearts.

*Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.* (Lamentations 3:51)

#### **IV. WE ARE TO KNOW AND WORSHIP GOD BY FAITH**

A. We walk by faith, not sight

*(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)* (2 Corinthians 5:7)

B. God has revealed Himself to us by words, not pictures

When God, with His own finger wrote the Decalogue on the tablets of stone, He drew no pictures. When all the inspired writers of the Bible from Moses to John wrote down what God told them to write, not one of them provided illustrations alongside the text.

C. The Holy Spirit, not images, reveals Christ to us

*He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* (John 16:14)

The work of the Spirit is to make the Lord Jesus Christ real to us. So do not waste your time trying to picture the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not go and look at portraits of Him that are wholly imaginary. There is a sense, I believe, in which nobody should ever try to paint Him—it is wrong. I do not like these paintings of Christ; they are the efforts of the natural mind.  
(D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

D. Images of Christ are not to be used for "instruction"

One argument that proponents of icons and images of Christ use is that they are merely for "instruction", not worship, or devotion.

1. All instruction of Christ is to lead us to worship Him

Whether it be Bible reading, lessons, songs, or, as some use images, they should lead us to love and worship Him.

2. Any instruction of Christ that does not excite love and worship of Him is at best vain, if not sinful

3. Every picture of Christ is false, and hence useless for instruction

Even if the “instruction” argument held up, you would still be left with a false representation of Christ, and the “instruction” would not glorify Christ.

Incidentally, the vast majority of the images of Christ, picture Him with long hair, however 1 Corinthians 11:14 states that *“if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him.”* These artists misrepresent Christ and bring Him to shame.

If Christ wished us to use images of Him, He would have left us an image of Himself. But He did not. Every picture of Christ is nothing more than the invention of men.

Let me give an analogy to demonstrate how offensive to God images are.

Imagine I was forcibly separated from my wife for a number of years – perhaps through imprisonment – and I was not permitted to have a photo of her. But one of the guards took pity on me and said he could not give me a picture of my wife, but he could give me a picture of a woman who looks similar to her. The woman in the picture had similar eye colour and hair colour as my wife, but it was not my wife. So I kept this photo with me, and when I looked at it, I’d think of my wife. Well, after some time I am released from prison and reunited with my wife. In the midst of the happy reunion, she sees the photo I am holding, and asks, “Who is that a photo of?”

I say, “That’s you, my dear.”

She says, “No, that’s not me, that’s another woman.”

I say, “Well I couldn’t get an exact photo of you, so I got something close. When I looked at her, I wasn’t thinking of her, I was thinking of you.”

Would she not have every right to be furious with me? Would she not feel that I had been unfaithful in my heart towards her, in using this image of another woman?

Now, imagine a Christian, standing before the Lord Jesus, and He says, “What is that picture you are holding?”

“That’s You, Lord.”

“No it isn’t.”

“Well, we didn’t know exactly what You looked like, so we just got a picture of a man and said it was You.”

“But that is not Me.”

“But when we looked at this picture, we thought of You, Lord.”

“That picture is not Me, it is a lie.”

Would not the Lord Jesus have every right to be furious? Would He not feel that the Christian had been unfaithful in His heart towards the Lord, in using a picture of some man to represent Him?

E. Any image of Christ is false because it can only represent His humanity

1. Christ in the flesh was fully God and fully man at once

*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* (1 Timothy 3:16)

*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;* (Hebrews 1:3)



2. This includes His infancy

*And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)*

3. In the flesh, the disciples “beheld His glory”

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

F. We love a Saviour who is invisible to our eyes of flesh

1. Blessed are they that have *not* seen, and yet have believed

*Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. (John 20:29)*

2. We no longer know Christ after the flesh

*Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. (2 Corinthians 5:16)*

3. We love Christ, having not seen Him

*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: (1 Peter 1:7-8)*

4. We shall see Him bodily

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)*

5. We see Him now by faith

*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. (Hebrews 2:9)*

John Gill says of this verse:

Not with bodily eyes, but with the eyes of the mind, and understanding; that he is Jesus, as the Syriac version reads; and that he is designed in the above words; and that he has all things made subject unto him; and that he was humbled, and now exalted.

## CONCLUSION

In her book *Gold Cord*, missionary Amy Carmichael tells of Preena, a young Indian girl who became a Christian and lived in Miss Carmichael's orphanage. Preena had never seen a picture of Jesus; instead, Miss Carmichael prayed for the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to each of the girls, "for who but the Divine can show the Divine?" One day, Preena was sent a package from abroad. She opened it eagerly and pulled out a picture of Jesus. Preena innocently asked who it was, and when she was told that it was Jesus, she burst into tears. "What's wrong?" they asked. "Why are you crying?" Little Preena's reply says it all: "I thought He was far more beautiful than that" (page 151).

What those well-meaning, sincere people did to that girl was to corrupt and pervert the true, pure understanding of Christ she had received from the word of God, by implanting a false Christ into her heart through that image. This is what every image of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit will do, because they are all lies.

The creation and use of images of Christ often comes from a sincere desire to know and love the Lord.

Many of these people think they love and worship Christ, yet they are in reality devoted to an idol.

A personal, experimental knowledge of Christ comes not by the skill or art of man, but by divine revelation.

But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. (Job 32:8)

The Holy Ghost reveals Christ to us as we search the Scriptures

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. (John 16:13-15)

We are to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18)

God's commandment forbidding idolatry still stands.

We must repent of every idol in our hearts and lives, and seek to love and worship the Lord in the way He has commanded.

When God showed me this some years ago, I had to repent of my toleration of idolatry, particularly having images of the Son of God in my home, and I had to do a purging of those sinful images. Some books we were able to edit by covering the pictures of God, or tearing them out, but others had to be thrown out altogether.

Now that you know the truth about idolatry, and God's hatred of it, will you, like the young King Josiah (2 Kings 22,23), obey the word of God and remove all idols from your heart, your home, and your life?

*Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.* (1 Corinthians 10:14)

We have not known thee as we ought,  
Nor learned thy wisdom, grace and pow'r;  
The things of earth have filled our thought,  
And trifles of the passing hour.  
Lord, give us light thy truth to see,  
And make us wise in knowing thee.  
(Thomas Pollock)

## APPENDIX

### EXCERPTS FROM FISHER'S CATECHISM (1753)

#### **Q. What is forbidden in the second commandment?**

A. The second commandment forbiddeth, the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

#### **Q. 1. What are the leading sins forbidden in this commandment?**

A. Idolatry and will-worship.

#### **Q. 2. What is the idolatry here condemned?**

A. [The worshipping of God by images]: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, etc.

#### **Q. 3. What is an image?**

A. It is a statue, picture, or likeness of any creature whatsoever.

#### **Q. 4. Is it lawful to have images or pictures of mere creatures?**

A. Yes, providing they be only for ornament; or the design be merely historical, to transmit the memory of persons and their actions to posterity.

#### **Q. 5. Can any image or representation be made of God?**

A. No; it is absolutely impossible; he being an infinite, incomprehensible Spirit (Isa. 40:18). "To whom will ye liken God? or, what likeness will ye compare unto him?" If we cannot delineate our own souls, much less the infinite God (Acts 17:29). "We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

#### **Q. 6. What judgment should we form of those who have devised images of God, or of the persons of the adorable Trinity?**

A. We should adjudge their practice to be both unlawful and abominable.

#### **Q. 7. Why unlawful?**

A. Because directly contrary to the express letter of the law in this commandment, and many other Scriptures; such as, Jer. 10:14-15; Hos. 13:2; and particularly Deut. 4:15-19, 23. "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, (for ye saw no MANNER OF SIMILITUDE on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female," etc.

#### **Q. 8. How is it abominable?**

A. As it is a debasing the Creator of heaven and earth to the rank of his own creatures; and a practical denying of all his infinite perfections (Psa. 50:21).

#### **Q. 9. May we not have a picture of Christ, who has a true body?**

A. By no means; because, though he has a true body and a reasonable soul (John 1:14), yet his human nature subsists in his divine person, which no picture can represent (Psa. 45:2).

#### **Q. 10. Why ought all pictures of Christ to be abominated by Christians?**

A. Because they are downright lies, representing no more than the picture of a mere man: whereas, the true Christ is *God-man*; "Immanuel, God with us" (1 Tim. 3:16; Matt. 1:23).

#### **Q. 11. Is it lawful to form any inward representation of God, or of Christ, upon our fancy, bearing a resemblance to any creature whatsoever?**

A. By no means; because this is the very inlet unto gross outward idolatry: for, when once the heathens "became vain in their imaginations, they presently changed the glory of the incorruptible

God, into images made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:21-23).

**Q. 23. Is it lawful, as some plead, to have images or pictures in churches, though not for worship, yet for instruction, and raising the affections?**

A. No; because God has expressly prohibited not only the worshipping, but the *making* of any image whatsoever on a religious account; and the setting them up in churches, cannot but have a native tendency to beget a sacred veneration for them, and therefore ought to be abstained from, as having, at least, an appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

**Q. 24. May they not be placed in churches for beauty and ornament?**

A. No: the proper ornament of churches is the sound preaching of the gospel, and the pure dispensation of the sacraments, and other ordinances of divine institution.

**Q. 25. Were not images of the cherubim placed in the tabernacle and temple, by the command of God himself?**

A. Yes: but out of all hazard of any abuse, being placed in the holy of holies, where none of the people ever came; they were instituted by God himself, which images are not; and they belonged to the typical and ceremonial worship, which is now quite abolished.