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# An Inquiry into the Nature and Worship of God with Special Reference to the Second Commandment

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND WORSHIP OF GOD  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
Western Evangelical Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by  
Virgil Dunbar  
April 1965

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. THE PROBLEM

The problem considered in this study has been: Does the Bible permit the use of man-made images of God, or images that man might intend to represent God? This is related to the problem: Can an image created by man help man to know God?

The word image, in this study, has been selected to cover the wide subject of visual art work. Both statues and pictures are included, because no essential difference between statues and pictures has been found.

#### II. JUSTIFICATION OF THIS STUDY

##### Danger of Idolatry

The consequences of idolatry are grave enough to justify an investigation into what constitutes idolatry. Few subjects are more significant to the covenant theme of the Bible than the subject of idolatry. The relationship of images man might make to represent God to the Scriptural meaning of idolatry needs to be understood. The following notes indicate the general significance of idolatry in the Scriptures.

Hebrew words for idolatry. A survey of Hebrew words used in the Old Testament to denote idolatry is presented in the Zondervan Pictorial

Bible Dictionary. Ten Hebrew words are translated by the English word idol, and other Hebrew words for the same subject are found.

The word "idolatry," which occurs only once in the KJV (I Sam. 15:23), has no exact Hebrew equivalent. There are, however, a number of Hebrew words which are rendered "idol" in the KJV. They all give expression to the loathing, contempt, and dread excited in godly men by idolatry. The terms are as follows. 1. aven, "emptiness," "nothingness," that is, a vain, false, wicked thing (Isa. 66:3). 2. emah, "an object of horror or terror," referring either to the hideousness of the idols or the shameful character of their worship (Jer. 50:38). 3. el, the name of the supreme god of Canaan; used also as a neutral expression for any divinity (Isa. 57:5). 4. elil, "a thing of naught, cipher," resembling aven in meaning (Lev. 19:4; 26:1; I Chron. 16:26; etc.). 5. miphletseth, "a fright, a horror" (I Kings 15:13; II Chron. 15:16). 6. semel, "a likeness," "semblance" (II Chron. 33:7,15). 7. atsab, "a cause of grief" (I Sam. 31:9; I Chron. 10:9, etc.). 8. etseb, "a cause of grief" (Jer. 22:28). 9. otseb, "a cause of grief" (Isa. 48:5). 10. tsir, "a form," and hence an idol (Isa. 45:16). Besides the above words there are a number of others, not translated "idol," but referring to it which express the degradation associated with idolatry: bosheth, "shameful thing," applied to Baal and referring to the obscenity of his worship (Jer. 11:13; Hos. 9:10); gillulim, a term of contempt meaning "shapeless, dungy things" (Ezek. 4:2; Zeph. 1:17); shikkuts, "filth," referring especially to the obscene rites associated with idolatry (Ezek. 37:23; Nah. 3:6).<sup>1</sup>

Frequency of occurrence. In the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament there are many references to the general subject of idolatry. Various English words refer to this subject, among which are: image, images, god, gods, idol, idols, and abomination. These words are found in twenty-nine of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament: therefore in approximately three-fourths of the books. The consequences of idolatry

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<sup>1</sup>Steven Barabas, "Idolatry," The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 368.

upon the Israelites must be understood to understand such important subjects as the Captivity. Several books assume knowledge of the results of idolatry, but do not have specific references to the subject and are not counted in the above twenty-nine. It could be questioned whether these books (Nehemiah, Esther, Lamentations, Haggai) would have been written were it not for the captivity. Thus the numerous references to the subject of idolatry and its consequences indicate the significance of idolatry in the Old Testament. There are a number of references to idolatry in the New Testament also. No idolater has any part in the kingdom of heaven. Idolatry will be flourishing at the end of the age.

Calvin's observations. A concise outline of the influence of idolatry and its results upon the Israelites is found in the writings of John Calvin.

This is the sin on account of which Moses, who was otherwise of so meek a temper, being inflamed by the Spirit of God, ordered the Levites "to go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour," (Ex. 32:27); the sin on account of which God so often punished his chosen people, afflicting them with sword, pestilence, and famine, and, in short, all kinds of calamity; the sin on account of which, especially, the kingdom, first of Israel, and then of Judah, was laid waste, Jerusalem the holy city destroyed, the temple of God (the only temple then existing in the world) laid in ruins, and the people whom he had selected out of all the nations of the earth to be peculiarly his own, entering into covenant with them, that they alone might bear his standard, and live under his rule and protection--the people, in short, from whom Christ was to spring, were doomed to all kinds of disaster, stript of all dignity, driven into exile, and brought to the brink of destruction. It were too long here to give a full detail, for there is not a page in the Prophets which does not proclaim aloud that there is nothing which

more provokes the divine indignation.<sup>2</sup>

As will be seen in the resume of the problem, the Early Church and the Reformers generally understood the second commandment of the decalogue (Ex. 20:4-6) to prohibit man from attempting to make an image to represent God. They usually interpreted this to prohibit images of Christ. The Catholic church disagreed. It said Exodus 20:4-6 is a part of the first commandment and only forbids images of heathen gods.

Images and likenesses of Christ are used for various purposes by conservative evangelical Christians today. This practice is so widespread that it needs no documentation. This practice is contrary to the Early Church and Reformers' interpretation of the second commandment. To them the modern practice would be an offence. It is likely they would call the modern church idolatrous. The serious nature of such a difference demands an investigation of the Scriptures to see if this interpretation of the second commandment can be verified by other Scripture.

#### Ecumenical question.

Indications of the ecumenical mood of the age are the mergers of

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<sup>2</sup>John Calvin, Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), I, 187-188. (Upon this understanding of the importance of idolatry and his understanding that the practice of the Roman Catholic Church was in principle the same, Calvin opposed the trend of the Roman Catholic Church, for he adds to the above survey this conclusion: "What then? When we saw idolatry openly and everywhere stalking abroad, were we to connive at it? To have done so would have just been to rock the world in its sleep of death, that it might not awake.")

various Protestant denominations. The Roman Catholic church has received a number of Protestant observers to its Ecumenical Councils. The possibility of eventual merger of the Catholic and Protestant churches is debated, but at least it is discussed at various levels.

A traditional difference between the two churches has been the matter of images. At present Protestants are harmonizing their practice with that of Catholics, but no serious attempts to establish the Scriptural foundation for this practice are known to the writer of this paper. Neither popular practice, philosophic foundation, nor psychological understanding is sufficient justification for using images of God for those who accept the Scriptures as their final authority. A study of what the Bible teaches about images is justified for those whose future may be affected by the ecumenical movement. If there is a basic difference between Catholics and Protestants it is important and fair that any persons who would be involved in such a merger should be informed of this basic difference and of the potential effects of merger. To wait until after such merger to question the validity of such images would obviously mean risking a heresy charge by what would then be one's own church.

#### Relationship of worship to theology

Investigation of theological bases, and their relationship to worship practices, is in order, especially at times when both the theology and the worship of Protestants may be changing.

Little effort is being put into the matter of re-thinking or

re-studying the church's basic attitude toward images. There was a tendency in neo-orthodoxy to oppose images since God was "wholly other" and could not be made captive in a piece of art. But artists answered that they were as concerned with "encounter" as Barth was. Neo-orthodoxy has tended to undermine the authority of its message by raising questions about the Bible as being the Word of God. So, who has felt the opposition of neo-orthodox theologians against making images of deity?

Some investigation of the church's attitude toward images is being done, at least by Church of England personnel, in connection with the insights of psychologists. A Church of England writer declares:

A certain amount of rethinking of the whole question (of images) is now going on in the light of recent psychological theory so that in this (as in many other matters) the Church of England is taking up a reasonable intermediate position.<sup>3</sup>

A few books have been published on the ten commandments in recent years, but in dealing with the second commandment there is almost no reference to the modern practice of making and using pictures of the second member of the Trinity for aids to worship and Christian education. In two years of studying this question the writer has seen no recent study of any extent whatever into the Scriptural meaning of the second commandment.

### III. LITERATURE AND METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Literature. A search has been made to find references that would

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<sup>3</sup>Gilbert Cope, Symbolism in the Bible and the Church (London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1959), p. 48.



present traditional Protestant Biblical interpretation of the use of images. Works that were used include the commentaries of Lange, Keil and Delitzsch, Adam Clarke, as well as commentaries of Luther and Calvin, and others.

An attempt has been made to ascertain the teachings of the Reformers themselves, the Roman Catholic church dogma and tradition, and the Early Church fathers, to see if these three groups concurred or disagreed about the Scriptural teaching about images. The consistency of what was discovered in this research, supported by occasional statements by authorities, has led the writer to believe he has discovered the main stream of the thinking of each of the three groups. To study the teachings of the Reformers their writings have been studied with the aid of indexes in the volumes investigated. Works of Luther, Calvin, Arminius, Wesley, and Knox were investigated, however the works of Wesley contain very little study of images and idolatry if the indexes are accurate. History books have provided insight into the views of the Reformers and helped also to confirm the observations of the writer. The comprehensive article in The Catholic Encyclopedia, discussing the Catholic understanding of images, has been the main source used for understanding the Roman Catholic development of their practice and dogma. This information has been confirmed by their Protestant friends and foes, and histories of religious art, etc. The early church fathers were studied with the help of the indexed references to images and idolatry in The Ante-Nicean Fathers. Of special help were the editorial

notes appended to a discourse of Tertullian about idolatry. Histories about the early church and about early church art helped to confirm these findings.

Method of procedure. The procedure for this study has been to study both the Old and New Testaments' teachings about the use of images that were not made for the specific worship of other gods, such as are represented with proper names like Baal and Ashtoreth. Only passing notice is made of such pagan worship. A separate chapter is devoted to each testament. An attempt has been made to find how these Scriptures were interpreted by (1) the Early Church, (2) the Roman Catholic Church, and (3) the Reformers. Significant comments have been placed in connection with the Scripture they help to interpret (the Scriptures of lesser significance for this study have not been studied in the light of the interpretation of church history).

The Old Testament Scriptures investigated and studied have been limited to those which include and follow the giving of the law at Sinai. The Scriptures then selected for study were those which most clearly bear upon the Old Testament interpretation of the Second Commandment (Exodus 20:4-6). These Scriptures have been grouped in this study according to their general chronological sequence: under Moses, under the judges, and under the kings.

The New Testament Scriptures studied were those which established the identity of Jehovah, the Old Testament giver of the law, in the New Testament. Then the broad subject of the nature of New Testament worship

was considered. Consideration has been given to the spiritual nature of New Testament worship and the meaning of the covenant relationship with God which the New Testament believer enjoys. Also the teachings of the apostles Paul, Peter, and John regarding the use of images and idols have been surveyed.

The concluding chapter summarized the findings of this study. A dispensational and a non-dispensational interpretation has then been presented, along with the evidence for each interpretation.

#### IV. RESUME OF THE PROBLEM

Four general eras can be distinguished in the history of the Christian church's interpretation of the second commandment. The first era is that which has been called the Early Church era in this study. It extends from the birth of the Christian faith until approximately the time of Constantine or St. Augustine. The second era, the Roman Catholic, is the longest and its influence is strong in the modern age. The third era was that of the Protestant Reformers. The fourth era has been called the Twentieth Century Era in this study.

Early church era. Because the Jerusalem Conference and the teachings of the apostles are considered in chapter three of this study it will suffice to note here the general opposition of the apostles to anything associated with idolatry. So strong was the opposition of the Early Church against idolatry that among pagan people the Christians were sometimes considered atheists because they had no images for worship in

their possession: they had no visible gods (or God). The Catholic Encyclopedia article on images admits that there were no pictures or images of Christ in the church before 150 A.D.<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus (A.D. 140?-202?) opposed the Carpocratians for having such figures.<sup>5</sup> Eusebius opposed such images of Christ and the apostles and encouraged the widow of Licinius to seek the image of Christ in the Scriptures.<sup>6</sup> Tertullian (A.D. 160?-230?) in a rather lengthy discourse, "On Idolatry," declared that idolatry is "the head of unrighteousness."<sup>7</sup> He considered idolatry an elusive sin that must be guarded against and to which the Christians were especially to oppose themselves. Tertullian referred to the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15) when he said:

The reason why the Holy Spirit did, when the apostles at the time were consulting, relax the bond and yoke for us, was that we might be free to devote ourselves to the shunning of idolatry. This shall be our Law . . . (a Law) peculiar to Christians, by means whereof we are recognized and examined by heathens.<sup>8</sup>

At the conclusion of this article by Tertullian the editors of The Ante-Nicene Fathers make special note of their observation that all of the primitive church fathers are "of one accord" agreeing with

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<sup>4</sup>Adrian Fortescue, "Veneration of Images," The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910), VII.

<sup>5</sup>N. Bonwetsch, "Images and Image-Worship," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1910), V, 453. (notes Haer. I., xxv. 6)

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Tertullian, "On Idolatry," The Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), III, 62.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

Tertullian's conclusion.<sup>9</sup>

An indication of the opposition of the Early Church to images for worship is the indication that they considered idolatry to be an unforgiveable sin.

In the last decades of the second century adultery, homicide and idolatry (or apostasy) seemed to have been treated in practice, if not in theory, as irremissible. . . . Certainly Hippolytus, protesting against Callistus's innovations, and Tertullian in his later Montanist phase took it for granted that it had been the Church's practice to reserve such sins hitherto.<sup>10</sup>

Origen adds confirmatory evidence from the East that idolatry was a sin for which there was no remedy. And Cyprian said that before his time idolatry had been considered irremissible but after the Decian persecution it had come to be included among sins capable of being forgiven.<sup>11</sup> Very early the epistle of Barnabas in warning of the Anti-Christ being at hand called attention to the fact the Israelites broke their covenant with God by idolatry.<sup>12</sup> And at the end of the Early Church period Calvin cites Augustine as opposing idolatry in his day.

And we have too much experience of the absolute truth of St. Augustine's sentiment, (Ep. xlix). "No man prays or worships looking at an image without being impressed with the idea that it is listening to him." And likewise, (in Psalm cxv. 4) "Images,

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), p. 217.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>12</sup>"The Epistle of Barnabas," The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), I, 139.

from having a mouth, eyes, ears, and feet, are more effectual to mislead an unhappy soul than to correct it, because they neither speak, nor see, nor hear, nor walk."<sup>13</sup>

Evidently any image made to represent any member of the Trinity, as well as any heathen god, was opposed by the Early Church. Both Schaff and Westcott agree that the first images of Christ were found among the heretical groups known as the Gnostics. Westcott says: "As early as the second century Gnostic sects had alleged portraits of the Lord. Such representations were foreign to the mind of the Church."<sup>14</sup> And Schaff says:

The first representations of Christ are of heretical and pagan origin. The Gnostic sect of the Carpocratians worshipped crowned pictures of Christ, together with images of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and other sages, and asserted that Pilate had caused a portrait of Christ to be made. In the same spirit of pantheistic hero-worship the emperor Alexander Severus (A.D. 222-235) set up in his domestic chapel for his adoration the images of Abraham, Orpheus, Apollonius, and Christ.<sup>15</sup>

Official opposition from the church to image worship came from the Council of Elvira which met in Spain (A.D. 303, 305, 309). This council declared: "It is ordained that pictures are not to be in churches, so that that which is worshipped and adored shall not be painted on walls."<sup>16</sup> This decision was exactly the opposite of the final

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<sup>13</sup>John Calvin, "Reforming the Church," Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), I, 150.

<sup>14</sup>Brooke Foss Westcott, The Epistles of St. John (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 358.

<sup>15</sup>Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), III, 563-564.

<sup>16</sup>Fortescue, VII, 699.

Roman Catholic position.

The Roman Catholic era. The dogma on images established by the Second Council of Nicaea (A.D. 787) was based on a practical and theological foundation that developed in the several previous centuries.

According to The Catholic Encyclopedia the practice of venerating images developed from "general fashion rather than of principle".<sup>17</sup> It cites the testimony of "Philostorgius (who was an Iconoclast long before the eighth century)"<sup>18</sup> that the Christians in the East offered gifts, incense, and even prayers to statues of the emperor. And The Catholic Encyclopedia suggests that likely those who bowed before Caesar's image and kissed it "with no suspicion of anything like idolatry" also showed the same respect to representations of Christ.<sup>19</sup> Such practices were known also in the West. New traditions were being established. "So in the first Byzantine centuries there grew up traditions of respect that gradually became fixed, as does all ceremonial."<sup>20</sup> By the time of the Iconoclast controversy "things had gone very far in the direction of image worship."<sup>21</sup> Images were extremely numerous everywhere. Church walls were covered inside from floor to the ceiling with icons, Bible

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 668.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 667.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 668.

scenes, and allegorical groups. In the East, especially, icons were taken on journeys for a protection. Icons marched at the head of armies. Icons presided in the hippodrome at races. Icons had a place of honor in every room. They covered "cups, garments, furniture, rings; wherever a possible space was found, it was filled with a picture of Christ, our Lady, or a saint."<sup>22</sup> In those times such excesses as imploring the help of images, dressing up images in linen clothes and choosing them for god-parents of children, and priests scraping paint from images and mixing the scrapings with the consecrated bread and wine and giving it to the faithful were recorded as not unusual practices. These excesses precipitated the Iconoclast controversy in the eighth century with its battles and its councils that endeavored to resolve the problem.

The theological climate at the time of Nicaea II must be considered to understand the foundation upon which the council established and justified the Roman Catholic use of images to represent deity. There was an open door for communication between Greek philosophy and Christian theology because the Greek language was the language of both the church and of philosophy as Etienne Gilson points out.

The first Christian apologies were written in Greek because Greek was the first language of the Church, even in Rome; but ever since the time of Thales, it had also been the language of philosophy, and this is the reason why, as soon as men of Greek culture became Christians they initiated between Christianity and philosophy a dialogue which has not yet come to an end.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Etienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 10.



When the "Logos" of philosophy was identified with the "Logos" of John's Gospel the key to a synthesis of pagan and Christian theologies was adopted. On this point Adolph Harnack is quoted as declaring: "(The) most important event which ever happened in the history of Christian doctrines, took place at the beginning of the second century, on the day when Christian Apologists laid down the equation: 'The Logos is Jesus Christ'."<sup>24</sup>

A result of the influence of Greek philosophy upon the Christian church was the development of the allegorical method of Biblical interpretation, which tended to down-grade the plain and literal meaning of Scripture. The Alexandrian Jews adopted the allegorical interpretation of the Bible "in their attempt to reconcile the Mosaic account with Greek philosophy,"<sup>25</sup> "The allegorical system that arose among the pagan Greeks copied by the Alexandrian Jews, was next adopted by the Christian church and largely dominated exegesis until the Reformation . . ."<sup>26</sup> It was Philo of Alexandria (B.C. 20 - A.D. 42) who was credited with introducing allegorism into Biblical scholarship. And Origen systematically developed this method in Volume IV of his *De Principiis*.<sup>27</sup> With Origen's

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation (Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1956), p. 28.

<sup>27</sup>J. L. Neve, A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946), I, 85.

help Scripture "assumed a double or three-fold sense, both being intended by the author."<sup>28</sup> Thus Scripture tended to become subservient to whatever theological system men might try to prove by it.

Mysticism developed in this time, which further indicates the influence of Greek philosophy on the church. Neo-platonism made a strong contribution to the rise of mysticism. Watson's Biblical and Theological Dictionary explains concisely the basic principle of mysticism. "The system of the Mystics proceeded upon the known doctrine of the Platonic school, which was also adopted by Origen and his disciples, that the divine nature was diffused through all human souls."<sup>29</sup> Because the One is above all duality, and because language and knowledge require distinctness the One is beyond description and cannot be known. "Man may come into contact with it only by mystic vision, and ineffable experience."<sup>30</sup> Mysticism was the method of communion and union with the Supreme Being.

The practical concept of God expressed in mysticism became consistent with the theological concept of God being taught in that day. Neve says that neo-platonism influenced both the teaching of the church fathers and also heretical groups. He finds a "monistic trend" in

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<sup>28</sup>Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957), p. 37.

<sup>29</sup>Richard Watson, A Biblical and Theological Dictionary (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1853), p. 682.

<sup>30</sup>"Neo-Platonism," Colliers Encyclopedia, XVI, 129.

neo-platonism "in which the world first emanates from God and then returns to Him."<sup>31</sup>

The New-Platonic conception of the transcendence, unknowableness, spirituality and timelessness of God had its effect not only on Dionysius the Areopagite, but also on Augustine. Still more significant in their after effects on the Christian conception were the combination of monism and dualism, and the idea of a development from God to the world and from the world to God.<sup>32</sup>

Basil, whom John Damascus refers to as "that much versed expounder of divine things,"<sup>33</sup> believed it was impossible to know the essence of God. "We say that we know the greatness of God, His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His providence over us, and the justness of His judgment; but not His very essence."<sup>34</sup> Basil was driven to representative images and said that "the honour given to the image passes over to the prototype," as John Damascus quotes him.<sup>35</sup> Natural theology was becoming authoritative.

Neve cites Harnack as saying that since about the fourth century "Christianity's second order" (Christentum zweiter Ordnung)<sup>36</sup> had become so strong that it resulted in the formulation of a dogma sanctioning the veneration of images by the time of Nicaea II (A.D. 787),

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<sup>31</sup>Neve, op. cit.; p. 24.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>33</sup>John Damascus, "Exposition of the Orthodox Faith," A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 274.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>36</sup>Neve, op. cit., p. 168.

and Neve further explains the advocacy of image worship with the following two reasons for the action of the Second Nicean Council.

(1) Neo-Platonism with its persistent influence upon the theologians of that day stood for the principle that the heavenly forces work through earthly symbols and images.

(2) Monophysitism, as taught by the later Alexandrian School, particularly by Cyril, was a strong undercurrent of Greek piety. And now a picture of Jesus as a man was looked upon as the symbol of His deity. John Damascus contributed much to the final decision by his three orations on the images.<sup>37</sup>

Catholic historians, Neill and Schmandt confirm Neve.

John developed the Catholic position by pointing out the difference between worship and veneration and describing the utility of pictures in stimulating piety and instructing the unlearned.<sup>38</sup>

At the Second Ecumenical Council of Nicaea the use of images was decreed, and among the images specifically required was that of Christ, who was specifically recognized at the same time as deity. The council decreed that:

Proceeding as it were on the royal road and following the divinely inspired teaching of our holy Fathers, and the tradition of the Catholic Church (for we know that this tradition is of the Holy Spirit which dwells in the Church), we define, with all care and exactitude, that the venerable and holy images are set up in just the same way as the figure of the precious and life-giving cross; painted images, and those in mosaic and those of other suitable material, in the holy churches of God, on holy vessels and vestments, on walls and in pictures, in houses and by the road-sides; images of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ and our undefiled Lady, the holy God-bearer, and of the honourable angels, and of all saintly and holy men. For the more continually these are observed

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 168-169.

<sup>38</sup>Thomas P. Neill and Raymond H. Schmandt, History of the Catholic Church (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1957), p. 137.

by means of such representations, so much the more will the beholders be aroused to recollect the originals and to long after them, and to pay to images the tribute of an embrace and a reverence of honour, not to pay to them the actual worship which is according to our faith, and which is proper only to the divine nature: but as to the figure of the venerable and life-giving cross, and to the holy Gospels, and the other sacred monuments, so to those images to accord the honour of incense and oblation of lights, as it has been the pious custom of antiquity. For the honour paid to the image passes to its original, and he that adores an image adores in it the person depicted thereby.<sup>39</sup>

The declarations of this council are accepted as authoritative by both the Greek and Roman Catholic churches and opposition to images became heresy.

Without accepting its decrees no one could be a member of that church, no one can to-day be Catholic or Orthodox. Images and their cult had become an integral part of the Faith; Iconoclasm was now definitely a heresy condemned by the Church as much as Arianism or Nestorianism . . . Both sides still maintain the same principles in this matter.<sup>40</sup>

Actually this council did not follow the precedent of the Council of Elvira (thirty-sixth canon), and also set aside and condemned the Council of Constantinople<sup>41</sup> (A.D. 726-754) which had ruled against images. From 726 until 842 A.D. there was much conflict between iconoclasts and image worshippers. After the Council of Nicaea's ruling in 787, the news was carried to Emperor Charlemagne in the West. Charlemagne of course took this ruling as a threat to his sovereignty and in reaction called upon his scholars to make a thorough study of the matter of

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<sup>39</sup>Cope, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

<sup>40</sup>Fortescue, op. cit., p. 669.

<sup>41</sup>Schaff, op. cit., IV, 454.

images. The Caroline Books are the result of their studies. These books are credited with tempering the attitude of the West toward images. But Thomas Aquinas, the great theologian of the Roman Catholic church, stated that an image of Christ claims the same veneration as Christ Himself.<sup>42</sup> And the Roman Catholic church has evolved certain rituals giving great honor to images of Christ. An example of this is in the celebration of the Mass.

In the Latin Rite the priest is commanded to bow to the cross in the sacristy before he leaves it to say Mass; he bows again profoundly to the altar or the image of the crucifix placed upon it when he begins Mass; he begins incensing the altar by incensing crucifix on it, and bows to it every time he passes it; he also incenses any relics or images of saints that may be on the altar.<sup>43</sup>

The coronation of images has also become a fixed rite. Crowns are blessed ("like all things dedicated to the use of the Church")<sup>44</sup> sprinkled with holy water, incensed, and affixed to pictures of both Christ and Mary. The form of the image coronation ritual was established by Pope Gregory XVI (1831-46). The Council of Trent, in its twenty-fifth session, cautiously justified the worship of the image from its relation to the prototype, and thus re-affirmed the decision of Nicaea II.

During the history of the Catholic practice of venerating images

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<sup>42</sup>Bonwetsch, op. cit., p. 454. (Summa III, qu. 25, art. 3-4)

<sup>43</sup>Fortescue, op. cit., p. 670.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

of deity there have been three major divisions precipitated by this practice. First came the Mohammedan reaction to images in Christianity and its threat of conquering and captivating all Christian lands. Mohammed started out to preach monotheism, but the opposition of idolaters, both pagan and Christian, excited a polemic strain in his preaching. Mohammed spread his peculiar brand of monotheism over many lands and stamped out the Catholic witness in these lands.<sup>45</sup> Then came the division between the Eastern and Western churches. All the reasons for this division are still uncertain, but the iconoclastic controversy was surely an important factor. The third division over the image question came with the rise of the Protestant Reformation. As the Reformation developed, the matter of images was revealed to be a matter of basic difference between the Protestants and the Catholics as is shown below. Thus image worship has not created harmony in the Christian church.

Reformation era. Shortly after being convicted at the Diet of Worms Martin Luther risked his life to come out of hiding at Wartburg, and he went to Wittenberg to preach a series of eight sermons needed to guide the reformation and correct certain errors. One of these errors was that of angry crowds attacking church buildings and destroying images and altars. In his third sermon Luther studied the second commandment

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<sup>45</sup>"Mohammedanism," Encyclopaedia Britannica (9th ed.), XVI, 548.

(which he always called the first). He observed that this did not forbid the making of all images because there were images of cherubim in the holy place. But this commandment did forbid the worshiping of images. Luther reminded his hearers that in former times when he had accused some church people of worshiping images they would not admit that this was works without faith, nor would they admit to worshiping the images. Yet Luther was convinced they were idolatrous. He said:

They will answer: Art thou the man who dares to accuse us of worshiping the images? Do not believe that they will acknowledge it. To be sure it is true, but we cannot make them admit it.<sup>46</sup>

In opposing this idolatry Luther argued against creating an uproar by overthrowing the images by force. "Do you really believe you can abolish the images on this wise? Nay, you will only set them up more firmly."<sup>47</sup> But Luther encouraged, as the proper Scriptural opposition to images, the preaching of the Word against them. "Therefore it should have been preached that images were nothing and that God is not served by their erection, and they would have fallen of themselves."<sup>48</sup> He used the illustration of how Paul preached against idolatry when he found this to be the sin of the Athenians, but he was careful not to attack their images by physical force.

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<sup>46</sup>Martin Luther, "The Eight Wittenberg Sermons," The Works of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1943), II, 405.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.



He did not strike at any of them, but stood in the market-place and said, "Ye men of Athens, ye are all idolatrous." He preached against their idols, but he overthrew none by force.<sup>49</sup>

This sermon by Luther and the events that evoke it indicate the significance of image worship in the precipitation of the Reformation. That Luther could be severe and relentless in his preaching against this idolatry of the Roman Catholic church appears also in his commentaries. In his Lectures on Deuteronomy Luther compared the worship of the Catholics with that of the Moabites.

The Moabites and other nations did not worship demons because they knew they were demons, but they believed that they were serving the true God no less than the idolatrous Jews, yes, than all our papists, even the holiest and most religious.<sup>50</sup>

In Luther's "Preface to the Prophets" he wrote about the practice of his day, a decade after the Diet of Worms. Idolatry meant worshiping a false idea of God rather than God as He is revealed in Scripture. This false idea is inspired by the devil in those who will not worship God in the Scriptural way.

One who is accustomed to serve God in ways that have no testimony of God for them ought to know he is serving, not the true God, but an idol that he has imagined for himself, that is to say, he is serving the devil himself, and the words of all the prophets are against him. For this God, who would let us establish worship for Him according to our own choice and devotion, without His command and Word,---this God is nowhere . . .<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Martin Luther, Lectures on Deuteronomy (Vol. IX of Luther's Works, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), p. 53.

<sup>51</sup>Martin Luther, "Preface to the Prophets," Works of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1932), VI, 402-403.

Such was the teaching of the leader of the Reformation.<sup>52</sup> But in days to come the Lutheran church settled for a place of moderation between the total rejection of images of the Calvinistic churches and the total usage of images of the Roman Catholic churches. The Lutheran church decided they would attempt to follow the course outlined in the Caroline Books which permitted in a general way the use of images but said they could not be worshiped.

John Calvin gave the Reformed churches his writings which based a strong opposition to images of deity upon Scriptural grounds, and the Reformed churches have long had the testimony of being free from such images. To Calvin such images were the world's way of corrupting the glory of God.

Meanwhile, since this brute stupidity gripped the whole world--to pant after visible figures of God, and thus to form gods of wood, stone, gold, silver, or other dead and corruptible matter--we must cling to this principle: God's glory is corrupted by an impious falsehood whenever any form is attached to him.<sup>53</sup>

Calvin opposed the Catholic teaching that pictures are the books of the uneducated so far as teaching the knowledge of God is concerned. He said the pictures Catholics used to represent God were monstrosities and the pictures they used to represent saints and martyrs were "examples of the

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<sup>52</sup>Some of Luther's writings indicate he did not make a clear distinction between pictures of Christ and other pictures. He did not oppose the use of pictures in general for the purpose of instruction. It would be interesting to compare the earlier and the later writings of the Reformers on the subject of images. (See Hodge, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1940), III, 303-304.

<sup>53</sup>Wm. F. Keesecker, A Calvin Treasury: Selections from Institutes of the Christian Religion (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 62.

most abandoned lust and obscenity."<sup>54</sup> But even virtuous pictures were not God's way of teaching the hidden truth of Himself. Those who sought images proved they were not really interested in knowing the truth of God. Calvin said:

In the preaching of his Word and sacred mysteries He has bidden that a common doctrine be there set forth for all. But those whose eyes rove about in contemplating idols betray that their minds are not diligently upon this doctrine.<sup>55</sup>

He said the idea that pictures are the books of the uneducated is un-Scriptural.

Therefore, if the papists have any shame, let them henceforward not use this evasion, that pictures are the books of the uneducated, because it is plainly refuted by very many testimonies of Scripture.<sup>56</sup>

Calvin did not believe that the second commandment forbade all art.

In the "Catechism of the Church of Geneva" he asks the question: "Does (the second commandment) entirely prohibit us from sculpturing or painting any resemblance?" And the answer is: "No; it only forbids us to make any resemblances for the sake of representing or worshipping God."<sup>57</sup> But Calvin believed that in opposing images of deity in the Christian church he was not only Scriptural but following the precedent of the early church.

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Keesecker, loc. cit.

<sup>57</sup>John Calvin, Tracts and Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), II, 58.

Besides the clear testimonies which are everywhere met within Scripture, we are also supported by the authority of the ancient Church. All the writers of a purer age describe the abuse of images among the Gentiles as not differing from what is seen in the world in the present day; and their observations on the subject are not less applicable to the present age than to the persons whom they censured.<sup>58</sup>

The mediating position of the Lutheran church did not appear effective.

Calvin saw no solution to this problem of idolatry except to destroy the images just as Hezekiah destroyed the brazen serpent. He said:

It is certain that the idolomania, with which the minds of men are now fascinated, cannot be cured otherwise than by removing bodily the source of the infatuation.<sup>59</sup>

Calvin testified to the Imperial Diet at Spires that the world recognized that his church had been faithful to remove such practices:

While the whole world teems with these and similar delusions, and the fact is perfectly notorious, we, who have brought back the worship of the one God to the rule of the Word, we, who are blameless in this matter, and have purged our churches, not only of idolatry but of superstition also, are accused of violating the worship of God, because we have discarded the worship of images.<sup>60</sup>

Calvin frankly did admit that the Roman Catholic church claimed vigorously to oppose idolatry and that the worship they gave to the images was intended for God. But Calvin understood this as the very principle of idolatry. The following is his description of the controversy.

Both parties confess, that in the sight of God idolatry is an execrable crime. But when we attack the worship of images, our

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., I, 149-150.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., I, 150.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., I, 149 (taken from a "Supplicatory Remonstrance" presented to the Imperial Diet at Spires, A.D. 1544).

our adversaries immediately take the opposite side, and lend their support to the crime which they had verbally concurred with us in condemning. Nay, what is more ridiculous, after agreeing with us as to the term in Greek, it is no sooner turned into Latin than their opposition begins. For they strenuously defend the worship of images, though they condemn idolatry--ingenuous men denying that the honour which they pay to the image is worship; as if, in comparing it with ancient idolatry, it were possible to see any difference. Idolaters pretended that they worshipped the celestial gods, though under corporeal figures which represented them. What else do our adversaries pretend?<sup>61</sup>

In opposing Roman Catholic idolatry Calvin was careful to remember that Catholics really believed they were worshipping God, and Calvin instructed converts to beware of seeming to attack God Himself rather than the images:

. . . take good heed, as far as in you lies, that those miserable and blind idolaters (to whom, when superstition is removed, God and Religion appear to be utterly abolished) are not led to imagine, when they see you holding their idols in ridicule or contempt, that you are a derider and contemner of God also.<sup>62</sup>

Evangelism must make no compromise with idolatry, but it needed also to understand the viewpoint of Catholics. A believer's godly life would force Catholics to recognize that a believer who did not use images was a true servant of God.

Calvin's firm stand against idolatry and the church's recognition of him as an authority on the exposition of Scripture provided John Knox with human support as well as with Scriptural principles for establishing

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., I, 148.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., III, 406.

the Reformation in Scotland in spite of severe opposition from the Queen.<sup>63</sup>

James Arminius, another Calvinist disciple, did finally break with Calvinism about predestination, but Arminius agreed strongly about image worship. Arminius wrote a "Disputation" on idolatry that shows characteristic thoughtfulness and thoroughness. Arminius begins the disputation by asserting it has always been the intention of the devil to draw man's worship to himself, or else that men be moved to atheism and then hurried into every kind of wickedness. But being foiled by the Creator's deep impression upon man of a deity who is benevolent, the devil has been trying to lead men to worship some figment of their imagination, "or, at least, to worship the true God in an image."<sup>64</sup> Arminius declared that "this evil holds domination far and wide in christendom itself."<sup>65</sup> To worship God through the aid of an image was idolatry to Arminius.

Idolatry . . . according to the etymology of the word, is "service rendered to an idol;" but with regard to fact, it is when divine worship is paid to any other than the true God, whether that be done by an erroneous judgment of the mind, by which that is esteemed as a God which is no God, or it be done solely by the performance of such worship, though he who renders it be aware that the idol is not God, and though he protest that he does not esteem it as a God, since his

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<sup>63</sup>William Croft Dickinson (ed.), John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), II, 108-134, 215, 280-283.

<sup>64</sup>James Arminius, The Writings of James Arminius, trans. James Nichols (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1956), I, 637.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

protestation is contrary to fact.<sup>66</sup>

Thus if a man knows that an image is not really God and still bows before it to give it the worship due only to God it is the same as

to say to the wood, with one portion of which he has kindled the fire of his hearth and of his oven, and from another has fashioned to himself a god, "Deliver me; for thou art my god" and to a stone, "Thou hast begotten me".<sup>67</sup>

The Church of England gave official opposition to the use of images in its Homilies. These Homilies "were long, authoritative and are still sometimes appealed to to settle disputes . . .,"<sup>68</sup> and they are approved as "godly and wholesome doctrine" by Article 35 of the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1571.<sup>69</sup> The "Homily against Peril of Idolatry and Superfluous Decking of Churches" reveals a total lack of toleration for images in churches because of man's natural tendency toward idolatry.

Let us therefore of these latter days learn this lesson of the experience of ancient antiquity, that idolatry cannot possibly be separated from images any long time; but that as an unseparable accident, or as a shadow followeth the body when the sun shineth, so idolatry followeth and cleaveth to the public having of images in Temples and Churches. And finally, as idolatry is to be abhorred and avoided, so are images (which cannot be long without idolatry) to be put away and destroyed. Besides the which experiments and proof of times before, the very nature and origin of images themselves draweth to idolatry most violently, and Man's nature and inclination also is bent to idolatry so vehemently, that it is not possible to sever or part images, nor to keep Men from

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 638 (Ref. to Is. 43:8; Gal. 4:8; Ex. 32:4-5).

<sup>67</sup>Arminius, loc. cit. (Ref. to Jer. 2:27). Note: Could this refer to a spiritual begetting: "Thou hast begotten my concept of God?"

<sup>68</sup>"Homily," The Encyclopedia Americana, XIV, 341.

<sup>69</sup>"Great Britain---Church of England," The Encyclopedia Americana, XIII, 257.

idolatry, if images be suffered publickly.<sup>70</sup>

If this is not sufficiently clear the Homily continues with an illustration of idolatrous nature of mankind based upon the Scriptural illustration of idolatry as spiritual fornication.

Now as was before touched, . . . the nature of Man is none otherwise bent to the worshipping of images (if he may have them and see them), than it is bent to whoredom and adultery in the company of harlots. And as unto a Man given to the lust of the flesh, seeing a wanton harlot, sitting by her, and embracing her, it profiteth little for one to say, "Beware of fornication, God will condemn fornicators and adulterers." For neither will he, being overcome with greater inticements of the strumpet, give ear to take heed to such godly admonitions; and when he is left afterwards alone with the harlot, nothing can follow but wickedness. Even so suffer images to be set in the Church and Temples, ye shall in vain bid them beware of images . . . For a number will notwithstanding fall into it, what by the nature of images, and what by the inclination of their own corrupt nature.<sup>71</sup>

Such is the Calvinist and Church of England heritage received by the Wesleys who were able to build a large spiritual movement on the theological foundation they found already established. Such also was the spiritual heritage of the Puritans who, in turn, helped establish the spiritual climate of Protestant America.

Twentieth century era. At the present time the Roman Catholic position on images has not substantially changed from the decision of the Second Nicean Council and the Council of Trent.

The Protestant Church is giving evidence of moving toward a

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<sup>70</sup>Cope, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 47.



similarity of practice with that of the Roman Catholic church. The writer has found the following nine reasons that have motivated and modified modern Protestant usage of images of Christ.

1. Modern printing methods make accessible to everyone a tremendous variety and volume of religious art including that which is intended to represent deity. In the latter part of the nineteenth century historian Philip Schaff saw this as a boon to the modern and enlightened Christian church.

The modern progress of art, and the increased mechanical facilities for the multiplication of pictures have produced a change in Protestant countries. Sunday School books and other works for old and young abound in pictorial illustrations from Bible history for instruction; and the masterpieces of the great religious painters have become household ornaments, which will never be again objects of worship, which is due to God alone.<sup>72</sup>

Thus Schaff did not consider a picture to represent deity to be inherently idolatrous and, no doubt, this is true of all who use them in the church today.

2. Pictures of Christ are used as educational aids. The writer is aware of no Protestant publishing house that publishes Sunday school literature for children that does not use pictures of Christ. For example, in a vacation Bible school junior pupil's quarterly, entitled We Learn About God, there are eight drawings or paintings of Christ, some of which are intended as merely symbolic. One larger drawing of Christ is right under the title of the lesson entitled "God Speaks

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<sup>72</sup>Schaff, op. cit., IV, 453.

Through His Son."<sup>73</sup> A previous lesson, entitled "God Speaks Through His Law," made a study of the ten commandments. The one sentence of combined commentary and exercise on the second commandment said: "The second commandment tells us not to bow down before any \_\_\_\_\_,"<sup>74</sup> plus one line for writing the meaning of the command. The only additional commentary in the teacher's manual was a two sentence thought about worshipping God in spirit anywhere. Another example, this time for a young adult class, is found in Leader, an "idea magazine for Sunday School workers," which in 1963 won the Evangelical Press Association's Magazine of the Year Award for Christian Education Periodicals. In an article entitled "Those Pictures on the Wall," by Jean Louise Smith,<sup>75</sup> there is a reproduction of Hunt's painting, "The Light of the World," and the devotional idea centers around the following paragraph:

See how Hunt has shown the door overgrown with weeds, vines, and tall grass. It has been a long time since this door has opened to Christ! Perhaps it has never opened to Him. The hinges will creak with rust if the door swings out. The weeds of sin that choke and bind the spirit will have to be rooted out.<sup>76</sup>

The suggestion is then made that we should open wide the doors of our souls to Christ. There is to be the reading of I John 1:3-7; John 8:12. Then the group is to sing prayerfully, "O Jesus, Thou Art Standing."

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<sup>73</sup>Catherine Briggs Ward and Jackson D. Phillips, We Learn About God (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1964), p. 22.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-18.

<sup>75</sup>Jean Louise Smith, "Those Pictures on the Wall," Leader, September, 1964, pp. 17-18.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

3. Pictures of Christ are used for inspirational purposes. The inspirational use of Sallman's "Head of Christ" is already almost legendary. Stories attributing divine inspiration to the creation of pictures or images of Christ are printed in Protestant publications. There is the example of the statue named "The Christ", which was sculptured by Albert Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) and stands behind the altar in the Protestant Cathedral, Copenhagen, Denmark. It was intended by the sculptor as a kingly, majestic representation. Then the clay drooped. But the sculptor's work was not ruined. "Some greater Power had breathed meaning into the artist's ruined statue --this was no defeated Christ: this was a compassionate Savior."<sup>77</sup> In Power, the Sunday school leaflet published by Scripture Press, a feature article about Warner Sallman suggested his famous "Head of Christ" is "a paintbrush miracle."<sup>78</sup>

. . . (The) painting itself (is) a miracle, for Artist Sallman, a devoted and humble servant of the Lord, under God's guidance produced the "Head of Christ," to see it attain a circulation of 60,000,000 copies around the world and become instrumental<sup>79</sup> in winning many souls to the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Frances Yost, "Miracle in Clay," Guideposts, July, 1961, p. 17.

<sup>78</sup>William F. McDermott, "Paintbrush Miracles," Power, November 4, 1956, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup>Note: Charles Hodge cites the testimony of miraculous powers as one reason the Second Nicaean Council established image worship: "Few could withstand . . . the cogency of the argument for image worship drawn from the numerous miracles adduced in favor of their worship." (Chas. Hodge, Systematic Theology, III, 296.)

<sup>80</sup>McDermott, loc. cit.

Stories of people being influenced to commit their lives to Christ because of a picture of Christ they had seen make the picture almost sacred. "Shall we criticize the chalk talks . . . accompanied by a running evangelistic commentary? Souls have been saved through such programs."<sup>81</sup> The conversion of Evangeline Booth, for example, has been attributed largely to the influence of a picture of Christ she saw at an art museum.

When she went home Eva could not forget the pictures. One night she rolled and tossed on her bed remembering. Finally she stumbled out to her parents. "I want to give myself to the Lord," she sobbed.<sup>82</sup>

4. There are indications that a desire for unity and understanding between the various churches of the world is fostering some usage of religious art which includes pictures made to represent deity. As long as Catholics and Protestants are separated over such images this unity cannot prevail. But since the Catholic position developed more from practice than principle<sup>83</sup> it is possible the Protestant opposition to images of deity will vanish when they awake to realize this is also their universal practice. Norman Kent, editor of American Artist, says there is a great revival of interest in ecclesiastical art today and that "more and more people are being spiritually conditioned by the art within

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<sup>81</sup>Grant Reynard, "Christians and Art: A Painter's View," Christianity Today, 8:4, January 31, 1964.

<sup>82</sup>Bess A. Olson, "Girl of the Army," Power, June 23, 1957, pp. 1-2.

<sup>83</sup>Fortescue, op. cit., p. 668.

the churches than at any time since the Renaissance."<sup>84</sup> The Art Institute of Chicago held an exhibition of religious art in connection with the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1954 in the city of Chicago. The majority of the pictures shown in the brochure include a figure of Christ one way or another. The introduction gave some supervisory credit to the Council. It said:

Our welcome is an exhibition of Masterpieces of Religious Art, arranged with the assistance of the Council, and chosen from great museums and collections of the world. In a sense these paintings, too, are delegates; they come from distant lands and distant times to represent a few of the great tendencies in art associated with worship and religious contemplation.<sup>85</sup>

Pictures of Christ are serving a mediating purpose for the ecumenical movement.

5. A school of thought within the church considers image worship to be on a higher level on the evolutionary scale than worship that is aniconic, or opposed to images. Thus the article on "Semitic Religion" in Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary says:

There were two chief kinds of worship. The best known, image worship, is the second main phase, which is sometimes called "iconic" as opposed to the (normally earlier and ruder) "aniconic". Everywhere there was a series of slowly evolving types of worship, in which there was no man-made likeness of the sacred object.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Norman Kent, "Religious Relief Prints," American Artist, April, 1961, p. 38.

<sup>85</sup>Masterpieces of Religious Art (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley and Sons Company, 1954), p. 5.

<sup>86</sup>James F. McCurdy and J. M. Powis Smith, "Semitic Religion," Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1936), p. 824.

This first phase was then eventually followed by:

. . . the evolution of the second main phase, that of image worship, which, however, in some of its forms doubtless also developed separately.<sup>87</sup>

Thus the person who can use artful portrayals of God to aid his worship has arrived at a higher state of religion than the person who must avoid such images in order to avoid idolatry.

6. Theological liberalism has caused some members of the Protestant church to doubt the inspiration of the Bible. When any Scriptural prohibition of images of deity is not believed to be the word of God it loses authority for the person who has that doubt.

7. Some Bible teachers "spiritualize" the meaning of "idolatry" when they teach on this theme. Thus idolatry is "success,"<sup>88</sup> or materialism, or the family, or business. This is near allegorism. Idolatry is whatever keeps people from doing whatever you think they should.

8. Hyper-dispensational beliefs cause some people to believe the second commandment was not intended for Christians. The interpretation of Professor John Foster (D.D., University of Glasgow) appears to be in this category: "The second of the Ten Commandments forbids the Jew to make any image at all."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>This is used to some extent by Ralph G. Turnbull, Jesus and the Ten Commandments (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961), p. 23f.

<sup>89</sup>John Foster, "Early Christian Emblems," The Expository Times, August, 1963, p. 339.

9. And it should not be necessary to document the fact that some Protestants are simply uninformed about the possibility of idolatry in connection with images of Christ. Much less are they aware that the leaders of the Reformation and other Protestant theologians believed that using an image as an aid to worship was idolatrous.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OLD TESTAMENT AND IMAGES OF JEHOVAH

This chapter has surveyed the evidence that some images were made to represent God during Old Testament times and that God dealt with this problem. On the other hand, this chapter has not evaluated any evidence that worship of other gods to which were ascribed proper names (as Baal and Ashtoreth) may have been somehow intended as honoring to Jehovah. This study has been limited to instances of idolatry that most clearly were attempts to make an image to represent Jehovah. To select other instances of idolatry and give evidence that they were attempts to worship Jehovah in an image would only strengthen the argument that the second commandment was intended to prohibit worshipping Jehovah in an image. Nor would contrary evidence for them change the cases cited in this study. The incidents cited occurred during the three eras when Israel was guided by Moses, by the judges, and by the kings, and that chronological arrangement has helped structure this study. The purpose of this chapter has been to determine from the evidence whether or not the Old Testament Scriptures permit images made to represent Jehovah. The method of procedure has been to investigate the relevant Scriptures and note helpful insights and interpretations of various commentators, and compare essential areas of this study with the interpretations of the Early Church writers, the Roman Catholic Church until the time of the Council of Trent, and the Reformation leaders.



## I. ISRAEL UNDER MOSES

The writings of Moses have been found to contain several kinds of evidence that images of Jehovah were not lawful. This evidence includes the second commandment in the decalogue itself, other passages indicating that they are commentary on the second commandment, and evidence that Aaron's golden calf was an attempt to make a visual representation of Jehovah.

The second commandment. The wording of the second commandment would prohibit the making or using for worship of any image or likeness of God. The American Standard Version translates the second commandment as follows:

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.<sup>1</sup>

So strong is the prohibition that no one seriously tries to prove that this commandment itself leaves any lawful loophole for any visual image or likeness of Jehovah.

The Roman Catholic interpretation of this commandment is presented in The Teaching of the Catholic Church: A Summary of the Catholic

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<sup>1</sup>Exodus 20:4-6. The wording of Deut. 5:5-8 is almost identical with no change of wording in that part prohibiting images and likenesses.

Doctrine, edited by George D. Smith, in which it is stated that the one thing forbidden in the Israelites' worship was the making of images of God.

The Hebrews inherited from their pagan ancestors a number of forms of worship, and picked up a number more during their sojourns among pagans. When Moses gave them their Law, he abolished many of these, and regulated others, and above all taught a true knowledge of God's nature and attributes so as to prevent a wrong meaning being given to the acts of worship they still used. The one thing that was absolutely forbidden was, the making of images of God for the eye. It was too easy for men to attach a wrong value--a "person-value," so to say, to such images.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Roman Catholic Church has combined what was previously generally considered by the Early church to be the first and second commandments into what they call the "first" commandment in the decalogue.<sup>3</sup> The lesser importance of this part of the decalogue for Catholics is indicated by The Catholic Encyclopedia's statement that the commandment forbidding images has been abrogated by the New Testament and is not binding upon Christians:

(Exodus 20:4-6) is clearly not natural law, nor can anyone prove the inherent wickedness of making a graven thing; therefore it is Divine positive law of the Old Dispensation that no more applies to Christians.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>George D. Smith (ed.), The Teaching of the Catholic Church: A Summary of the Catholic Doctrine (London: Burns and Oates, 1956), p. 736.

<sup>3</sup>Solomon Goldman, The Ten Commandments (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 28. "The Greek and Reformed churches adopt the numbering found in the Septuagint (edition Swete, Philo, and Josephus . . .)."

<sup>4</sup>Adrian Fortescue, "Veneration of Images," The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910), VII, 671.

Thus this commandment forbade images but it has been rescinded by the New Testament. Along this line is the interpretation that this was a prohibition only of the images associated with pagan worship.

Owing to the influence of the Old Testament prohibition of images, Christian veneration of images developed only after the victory of the Church over paganism.<sup>5</sup>

Calvin's "Catechism of The Church of Geneva" has the following questions and answers on the second commandment in which it is seen that he understood it to forbid images for the sake of representing or worshipping God, but not other art work.

(Master). Does (the second commandment) entirely prohibit us from sculpturing or painting any resemblance?

(Scholar). No; it only forbids us to make any resemblances for the sake of representing or worshipping God.

M. Why is it unlawful to represent God by a visible shape?

S. Because there is no resemblance between him who is an eternal Spirit and incomprehensible, and a corporeal, corruptible, and lifeless figure. (Deut. 4:15; Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:23)

M. You think then that an insult is offered to his majesty when he is represented in this way?

S. Such is my belief.

M. What kind of worship is here condemned?

S. When we turn to a statue or image intending to pray, we prostrate ourselves before it: when we pay honour to it by the bending of our knees, or other signs, as if God were there representing himself to us.<sup>6</sup>

Thus Calvin understood the reason for this prohibition of images of God to be the inability of an image to represent the presence or the nature

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<sup>5</sup>Ludwig Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma (St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Book Company, 1957), p. 320.

<sup>6</sup>John Calvin, "Catechism of the Church of Geneva," Tracts and Treatises on the Doctrines and Worship of the Church (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), p. 58.

of God. So fundamental was this commandment in the theology of Calvin that under this heading he placed the other passages of the Pentateuch (except Genesis) which pertain to external worship. Calvin declared: "The whole external profession of God's worship is fitly annexed to the Second Commandment, because upon that it depends, and has no other object than its due observation."

Arminius distinguished the first from the second commandment as follows:

Idolatry is . . . of two kinds. The first is, when that which is not God is accounted and worshiped as God. The second is, when that which is either truly or falsely accounted for God is fashioned into a corporeal image, and is worshiped in an image, or according to an image. The former of these is prohibited in the first commandment. . . . The latter is the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any likeness, thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."<sup>8</sup>

A modern interpretation of the second commandment that reflects the teachings of the Reformers is found in The New Bible Commentary, which cites the spiritual nature of God (John 4:24) as the revealed reason for the command.

The Lord is Spirit . . . He must not be worshipped under the form of any material representation, whether it be the product of plastic or pictorial art. Such not only divert the mind from the knowledge of the pure spirituality of God, but inevitably become themselves the

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<sup>7</sup>John Calvin, Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony, Charles William Bingham, trans. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), II, 129.

<sup>8</sup>J. Arminius, "On Idolatry," The Writings of James Arminius, trans. James Nichols (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1856), I, 639.

object of veneration and also give rise to many sensual practices.<sup>9</sup>

Similar Scriptures. To arrive at God's purpose in giving the second commandment it is necessary to note the Scriptures which explain the commandment. It is helpful to note that in both the Exodus and Deuteronomy accounts of the decalogue there is added a special explanation of the second commandment.

Immediately preceding the giving of the law, in the Exodus account (19:20-25), Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai, called Moses to the top of the mountain, and instructed him to go back down to the people and warn them again not to come up the mountain "lest they brake through unto Jehovah to gaze, and many of them perish."<sup>10</sup> Immediately following the giving of the decalogue the first word of Jehovah reminds them that they have "seen" that He spoke to them from heaven. Then he reiterates the prohibition of images.

And Jehovah said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make (other gods) with me; gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you.<sup>11</sup>

The words in parenthesis in the above quotation were supplied by the translators. To delete these supplied words does not make good English grammar, but it does raise the question whether the word with is in the

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<sup>9</sup>F. Davidson (ed.), The New Bible Commentary (London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1959), p. 120.

<sup>10</sup>Exodus 19:21.

<sup>11</sup>Exodus 20:22-23.

instrumental case, or in the locative case. Keil and Delitzsch understand this passage as another prohibition of images of Jehovah.

"From heaven" Jehovah came down upon Sinai enveloped in the darkness of a cloud; and thereby He made known to the people that His nature was heavenly, and could not be imitated in any earthly material. "Ye shall not make with me," place by the side of, or on a par with Me, "gods of silver and gold,"--that is to say, idols primarily intended to represent the nature of God, and therefore meant as symbols of Jehovah, but which became false gods from the very fact that they were intended as representatives of the purely spiritual God.<sup>12</sup>

Lange agrees, and quotes Keil.<sup>13</sup> Jamieson agrees.<sup>14</sup> According to Adam Clarke the statement, "Ye shall not make other gods with me (Ex. 20:23) contrasts with the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3), thus supporting the above conclusions. He says:

The expressions are very remarkable. Before it was said, Ye shall have no other gods before me (al panai). . . Here they are commanded, ye shall not make gods of silver or gold with (itti) me, as emblems or representatives of God, in order, as might be pretended, to keep these displays of his magnificence in memory.<sup>15</sup>

The two different (Hebrew) prepositions thus indicate a distinction between the first commandment prohibiting other gods and the commandment prohibiting images to represent Jehovah. This supports such an interpretation of the second commandment as being distinct from the first.

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<sup>12</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, The Pentateuch (Vol. II of Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 127.

<sup>13</sup>John Peter Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 82.

<sup>14</sup>Robert Jamieson, Genesis-Deuteronomy (Vol. I of commentary by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948), p. 361.

<sup>15</sup>A. Clarke, A Commentary and Critical Notes (New York: Nelson and Phillips, n.d.), I, 401.

Immediately preceding the Deuteronomy account of the decalogue is found a detailed explanation of the second commandment. The decalogue is found in Deuteronomy 5, and in chapter 4:11-14 attention is called to the fact that the people had seen no visible form of Jehovah forty years previously when He had given them the law and revealed Himself at Sinai. He had not revealed Himself by any visible form, but only by a voice.

And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire . . . And Jehovah spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form: only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments.<sup>16</sup>

The next verses restate the fact that Jehovah did not visibly reveal Himself, and then explains that this was so the people would not attempt to make an image of Him.

Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of form on the day that Jehovah spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image in the form of any figure . . .<sup>17</sup>

The two reasons for making no images of Jehovah were: the Lord revealed Himself by no visible form that could be copied, and making images to represent Jehovah would therefore tend to corrupt the people. This Scripture goes on to warn that God's covenant is forgotten whenever anyone attempts to make a visible image of Him (Deut. 4:23-24).

Calvin's commentary on this Scripture says that the use of images

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<sup>16</sup>Deuteronomy 4:11-13a.

<sup>17</sup>Deuteronomy 4:15-16.

to represent God is an expression of dissatisfaction with God's true nature.

It is a confirmation of the Second Commandment, that God manifested Himself to the Israelites by a voice, and not in bodily form; whence it follows that those who are not contented with His voice, but seek His visible form, substitute imaginations and phantoms in His place . . . For it was not in vain that Moses laid down this principle, that when God collected to Himself a Church, and handed down a certain and inviolable rule for holy living, He had not invested Himself in a bodily shape, but had exhibited the living image of His glory in the doctrine itself. Hence we may conclude that all those who seek for God in a visible form, not only decline, but actually revolt, from the true study of piety.<sup>18</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch found that it was vitally important for the Israelites to avoid worshipping God in images.

As the Israelites had seen no shape of God at Horeb, they were to beware for their soul's sake (for their lives) of acting corruptly, and making to themselves any kind of image of Jehovah their God, namely, as the context shows, to worship God in it.<sup>19</sup>

Adam Clarke understood that God "took care never to assume any describable form" because He is a Spirit and "would have no image worship."<sup>20</sup>

The covenant nature of the decalogue. The significance of this law is indicated by its covenant nature. A helpful survey of this covenant is found in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia showing its meaning, benefits, and conditionality.

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<sup>18</sup>Calvin, Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses, II, 119-120.

<sup>19</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., III, 311.

<sup>20</sup>Clarke, op. cit., p. 746.



A covenant is made with the nation Israel at Sinai (Horeb) (Ex. 19:5; 24:7,8; 34:10,27,28 etc.), ratified by a covenant sacrifice and sprinkling of blood (Ex. 24:4-8). This constituted the nation the peculiar people of God, and was accompanied by promises for obedience and penalties for disobedience. This covenant was renewed on the plains of Moab (Dt. 21:1). In these national covenants the individual had a place, but only as a member of the nation. The individual might forfeit his rights under the covenant, however, by deliberate rebellion against Jeh(ovah), sinning "with a high hand" (Nu. 15:30f.), and then he was regarded as no longer a member of the nation, he was "cut off from among his people," i.e. put to death.<sup>21</sup>

And Hastings Dictionary of the Bible sums up the covenant succinctly:

"In brief, the covenant is, 'I am J(ehovah) thy God, and thou art my people,' and the Decalogue is the expression or the analysis of what this means."<sup>22</sup> This theme is found frequently throughout the Scriptures.

Deuteronomy 4:23,24 connects this prohibition of images to represent Jehovah with the covenant:

Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image in the form of any thing which Jehovah thy God hath forbidden thee. For Jehovah thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.<sup>23</sup>

Thus the covenant nature of the second commandment is especially established before the second giving of the law. This reminds that the golden calf transgression had caused the breaking of the stone tables of the covenant previously.

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<sup>21</sup>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, II, 728.

<sup>22</sup>James Hastings (ed.), A Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), I, 512. (Note how this agrees with Revelation 21:3,7-8)

<sup>23</sup>Deuteronomy 4:23-24.

Aaron's golden calf. The account of the golden calf is found in Exodus 32, and it reveals God's anger at images made to represent Him. It occurred after Moses had disappeared upon the mountain. Aaron was left in charge of the Israelites who were freed from slavery by the deliverance at the Red Sea. The Israelites either wondered if Moses had abandoned them in the wilderness, or more likely they feared he had not survived the burning on the mountain, for they said to Aaron, "Up, make us gods (margin: 'or, a god,'--the Hebrew word is *elohim*) which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him."<sup>24</sup> Aaron acceded to their petition. When the image was prepared the people said, "These are thy gods (margin: 'Or, This is thy god'), O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."<sup>25</sup> This statement the Lord repeated to Moses upon the mountain as His reason for wanting to destroy the Israelites. Aaron had vainly tried to take advantage of this opportunity to teach them that this image represented Jehovah. Aaron had built an altar before the image and had prepared to teach the people to worship Jehovah there: "And when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow shall be a feast to Jehovah."<sup>26</sup> The people wanted an image of God and Aaron set up

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<sup>24</sup>Exodus 32:1

<sup>25</sup>Exodus 32:4

<sup>26</sup>Exodus 32:5

the image to represent God and called upon the people to worship Him.

Jehovah responded to this misguided devotion and dependence by immediately sending Moses back to the Israelites, revealing that their worship given to the "type" was not referred to Himself (Jehovah: the supposed Prototype).

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.<sup>27</sup>

Jehovah responded to this worship with such wrath that He threatened to destroy the whole group of Israelites and start over again with Moses.

And Jehovah said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.<sup>28</sup>

Moses earnestly interceded in behalf of the people until "Jehovah repented of the evil which he said he would do unto his people."<sup>29</sup> Then Moses went down to the Israelites, bearing in his hand the two tables of the testimony. When he approached the camp he heard the sound of singing. Drawing still nearer he saw the calf and people dancing about it. Then Moses became very angry, cast down and broke the stone tables

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<sup>27</sup>Exodus 32:7,8

<sup>28</sup>Exodus 32:9,10

<sup>29</sup>Exodus 32:14

of the law he carried, illustrating that the people had broken the covenant.

Later references to Aaron's golden calf are instructive. In the Psalms it says the people "worshipped a molten image" and "they changed their glory for the likeness of an ox that eateth grass" when they "made a calf in Horeb" (Psalm 106:19,20).

The Levites that returned after the Babylonian captivity quoted their forefathers as saying that the calf was their God who had delivered them: "This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt" (Neh. 9:18). This is different than "These are thy gods" as their forefathers are quoted in Exodus 32:4.

The golden calf transgression is cited in the New Testament by Stephen in his address to the Sanhedrin. He quoted the forefathers as requesting of Aaron: "Make us gods" (Acts 7:40). Stephen called the calf an idol: "And they made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands (Acts 7:41). Stephen's suggestion in his sermon is that there is a similarity between the forefathers' attitude toward the calf and the Sanhedrin's attitude toward the temple, for these men have rejected the same Lord for their temple as the forefathers rejected for their calf. Thus Stephen is saying the calf was as closely identified with God in the minds of the forefathers as the temple was identified with God in the minds of the Sanhedrin members.

It was "at that time" (Dt. 10:1) after the golden calf incident,

that God gave specific instructions to Moses to put the new copy of the law into the ark of the covenant. A study of this ark contributes to an understanding of the way God revealed Himself, and the way He did not reveal Himself. The place where God promised to meet Moses was from between the images of the cherubim on the ark of the covenant. The ark was a chest of acacia wood made according to specific instructions of the Lord (Ex. 25:10-22, Dt. 10:2-5). It was overlaid within and without with gold. Inside the ark was to be kept "the testimony" which the Lord would command them: this included the tables of the covenant upon which the decalogue was engraved. On top of the ark was a mercy seat made of gold with two golden cherubim facing each other with wings outspread, their eyes toward the mercy seat. It was here that Moses could meet with God in behalf of the Israelites.

And thou shalt make a mercy-seat (margin: "Or, covering") of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work shalt thou make them, at the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub at the one end, and one cherub at the other end of one piece<sup>30</sup> with the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, with their faces one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Margin: "Heb. 'out of the mercy-seat'"

<sup>31</sup>Exodus 25:17-22

The Lord, in commanding Moses to make the two images of the cherubim and declaring that He would meet with Moses from above the mercy-seat and between these two images, did both localize His presence and at the same time establish the fact that no image was to represent Him, not even in the most holy place. This localization of God's presence was confined to the immediate vicinity of this ark of the covenant so far as the place where man could meet with God. Here, for certain purposes, God did manifest His presence by a cloud which could be seen above the tabernacle which housed the ark of the covenant. Before the ark was made, this cloud hid the Israelites from the Egyptians at the Red Sea. In later years the cloud filled Solomon's temple at its dedication; still later it was identified with Christ's ministry (Matt. 17:5; Acts 1:9). The significance of this cloud is traced in Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary, under the name "Shekinah", which word, it says, means in Hebrew, "dwelling of God":

Shekinah (is) a word, though not occurring in the Bible,<sup>32</sup> that is employed by some Jews and by Christians to describe the visible presence of Jehovah. It is alluded to in such places as Isaiah 60:2 by the phrase "his glory" and in Romans 9:4 by the phrase "the glory." Moses calls this the "cloud" in Exodus 14:19. Its first appearance occurred for a twofold purpose when Israel was being led by Moses out of Egypt. It hid the Israelites from the pursuing Egyptians and lighted the way at night for Israel (Exodus 13:21; 14:19-20). To the Egyptians it was a cloud of darkness, but to Israel a cloud of light. It later covered Sinai when God spoke with

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<sup>32</sup>The article on "Glory" in the Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary states that, "To avoid anthropomorphisms (ascriptions of physical characteristics to God) which might lead to erroneous doctrine, the Targum writers spoke of the glory of the Shekinah." (p. 315)

Moses (Exodus 24:15-18), filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34,35), guided Israel (Exodus 40:36-38), filled Solomon's temple (II Chron. 7:1) and was frequently seen in connection with Christ's ministry in the New Testament (Matt. 17:5; Acts 1:9).<sup>33</sup>

Even though this cloud was probably not always seen visibly above the ark, the presence of God came to be associated with this ark by both Israelites and pagans. Calvin said, "The Ark of the Covenant indeed is often called 'His face' . . ."<sup>34</sup> The identification of God with this ark is surveyed as follows:

The ark went before Israel in the wilderness journeys "to search out a resting-place for them" (Num. 10:33). The ark was instrumental in the crossing of the Jordan on dry land under Joshua (Josh. 3), and in the capture of Jericho (Josh. 4:7-11). Joshua prayed before the ark after the defeat at Ai (Josh. 7:6) and after the subsequent victory, at Mt. Ebal, the ark being present (Josh. 8:33). In the days of Eli the ark was in the tabernacle at Shiloh (I Sam. 3:3). It was taken into battle against the Philistines, and captured by them. "The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken" (I Sam. 4:3-22). It was held by the Philistines until a plague convinced them that the ark was too dangerous to keep, and it was ceremoniously sent back (I Sam. 5:1-6:15) to Beth-shemesh. The men of this place also suffered a plague for looking into the ark, and it was removed to Kirjath-jearim (I Sam. 6:19-21). Here it was treated with due respect, being kept in the house of Abinadab under the care of his son Eleazar (I Sam. 7:1,2).<sup>35</sup>

Later, when David moved the ark to Jerusalem, Jerusalem came to be known as the city of God, as the ark was permanently established here (Psalms 132:7,13,14). Following is a study of the way God has identified Himself with Jerusalem.

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<sup>33</sup>Howard Z. Cleveland, "Shekinah," Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, p. 782.

<sup>34</sup>Calvin, Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses, II, 132.

<sup>35</sup>Emmet Russell, "Ark," Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary, p. 70.

The greatest group of titles for this city are those which identify it as the city of God. It is called exactly this in the Psalms, as well as in the New Testament (Psa. 46:4; 48:1,8; 87:3; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 3:12). It is also called the city of Jehovah (Isa. 60:14), the mountain of the Lord (Isa. 2:3 and 30:29); the mountain of Jehovah of hosts (Zech. 8:3); the holy mountain of Jehovah (Isa. 27:13; 66:20); Zion of the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 60:13). The Lord Himself refers to it, and to no other place, as "my city" (Isa. 45:13), or more often, "my holy mountain" (Isa. 11:9; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11,25; 66:20). Because it is the city of God, where He has put His name, it is often referred to as the Holy City (Isa. 48:2; 52:1; Neh. 11:1-18), a title twice used by Matthew (in 4:5 and 27:53) and once of a future event by St. John (Rev. 11:2), and used in referring to our eternal heavenly home at the close of the Scriptures (Rev. 21:2; 22:19).<sup>36</sup>

The indication of Deuteronomy 12:10ff is that one reason God chose the one place (Jerusalem) was to overcome idolatry. All worship was to be done in this place where images were excluded. After King Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem the ark was moved into the temple.<sup>37</sup> When the ark was properly installed the cloud of God's glory so filled the temple that the priests could not minister:

. . . then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of Jehovah, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of Jehovah filled the house of God.<sup>38</sup>

Jeremiah, however, spoke of a time when the ark would no longer be needed (Jeremiah 3:16). Thus, in various ways and at different times, Jehovah gave great assurance to the Israelites that His presence was associated (but not identical) with the ark of the covenant. In no other place were the people to offer their sacrifices to Him, nor inquire of

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<sup>36</sup>Wilbur M. Smith, "Jerusalem," Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary, p. 418.

<sup>37</sup>II Chron. 5:2ff.



Him. His priests were to minister here. In this place where He manifested Himself there were no images to represent Him. God's revelation of Himself only where the ark was located taught the Israelites that images to represent Jehovah were not used in His worship. This study has surveyed ahead into the time of the kings to see how various Mosaic institutions were to be understood.

The Old Testament and art. Whether or not all art work, such as sculptury, painting, and even modern photography, are prohibited by the second commandment has been debated. The Jews after the captivity were inclined to oppose all such art in their hatred of idols. Some reformers, such as Zwilling and Carlstadt, were inclined to go this far. The pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts were among those who frowned upon the use of any pictures. However their position can be contested on the basis of the Old Testament Scriptures, because certain art work, including images, were used in lawful worship and some were made specifically at the instruction of the Lord. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge has a comprehensive survey of art in the Old Testament as it relates to the second commandment. This cites cases where art was not opposed by the Lord.

In freeing the deity from the fetters (idolatry) with which sensual limitations chain man's inclination to worship images made by himself, art was not rejected by the spirit of the Old Testament. There may be discovered in it a mental impulse of divine origin (Ex. 30:1 sqq; cf. II Kings 16:11 with Isa. 7:2). But the exclusion of plastic art from the highest spheres which employed it in heathenism denied to it that powerful development among the people of God which it obtained elsewhere by illustrating divine ideal forms. With

emphasis the narrator in I Kings 7:13 sqq. points out that the artistic outfit of the buildings of Solomon was mainly due to Phenician art. So far as it did not serve idolatrous purposes, the art of the Old Testament did not go essentially beyond the purposes of ornamentation and decoration. Imitations of flowers, garlands, fruits, trees, whether of beaten work (Num. 7:4), or carving (I Kings 6:18), or graven work (I Kings 7:36), or in wool, formed the adornment of buildings for sacred and secular uses (Ex. 25:31 sqq.; 28:33 sqq.; I Kings 6:18, 29, 32, 35; 7:18sqq.; Exek. 41:18 sqq.; Ps. 144:12). Even the animal world, in distingusihted types, was laid under contribution. Lions appeared as thronekeepers of the earthly king (I Kings 10:19 sqq.); lions and oxen were beneath the bases of the lavers of the temple; the latter carried also the brazen sea (I Kings 7:29, 36, 25).<sup>38</sup>

That all such art in the Old Testament was not prohibited is recognized by both the Trent Catechism and Calvin's "Catechism of the Church of Geneva," both of which recognize the general facts presented above. The Trent Catechism said:

Nor let anyone suppose that this commandment (the second commandment) prohibits the arts of painting, modelling or sculpture, for, in the Scriptures we are informed that God himself commanded images of cherubim, and also of the brazen serpent, to be made.<sup>39</sup>

And the Catechism of the Church of Geneva said:

We are not to understand then that simply any kind of picture or sculpture is condemned by these words. We are only prohibited from making images for the purpose of seeking or worshipping God in them, or which is the same thing, for the purpose of worshipping them in honour of God, or abusing them in any way to superstition and idolatry.<sup>40</sup>

These two widely divergent catechisms agree that the second commandment

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<sup>38</sup>N. Bonwetsch, "Images and Image-Worship," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), V, 453.

<sup>39</sup>Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (eds.), The Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), III, 62.

<sup>40</sup>Calvin, "Catechism of the Church of Geneva," p. 58.

is not intended to prohibit general art work. Luther also agreed. In the "Eight Wittenberg Sermons," in which he attempted to correct the indiscriminate image-breaking of the crowds, he made the point that some images may be Scriptural and lawful. Among the questions he considered was: "(Do) we not read that the two birds were erected on the mercy-seat, the very place where God willed that He should be worshipped?"<sup>41</sup> And Luther replied:

Here we must admit, that we may make images and have images, but we must not worship them, and when they are worshipped, they should be put away and destroyed, just as King Hezekiah brake in pieces the serpent erected by Moses.<sup>42</sup>

The brazen serpent. The brazen serpent case illustrates what the second commandment prohibits, and also what it does not prohibit. This unusual image was made in obedience to the Lord's instruction when the Israelites were bitten by serpents after they had complained against the Lord in the wilderness.

And Jehovah said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the standard: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived.<sup>43</sup>

Forbidding all images could not have been the intention of the second commandment because Jehovah Himself instructed Moses to make this

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<sup>41</sup>Luther, "The Eight Wittenberg Sermons," Works of Luther (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1943), II, 404.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Numbers 21:8,9.

image. (Of course, there is the possibility that Jehovah did not intend the law to apply to Himself in this case.) John 3:14,15 indicates that this brass serpent was understood in the New Testament as a type of Christ. However in Numbers there is no indication that the brass serpent was understood to represent anything more than a serpent. To understand how a serpent could ever represent Christ is extremely difficult without the insight of Paul's statement in II Corinthians about Christ: "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him."<sup>44</sup> Thus the serpent lifted up on the pole reminds of Christ being lifted up as a sacrifice for our sin---and the serpent may be taken to represent not the attributes of God but the attributes of man's sin and looking to it illustrates our looking to Christ's sacrifice. After the emergency Moses put the brazen serpent into the ark. But when the brass serpent came in later times to be an object of worship it was destroyed by Hezekiah:

He removed the high places, and brake the pillars, and cut down the Asherah: and he brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it; and he called it Nehushtan (That is: "A piece of brass").<sup>45</sup>

Thus when it was used as an object of veneration even the brazen serpent made by the command of the Lord was to be destroyed. The next verse says

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<sup>44</sup>II Cor. 5:21.

<sup>45</sup>II Kings 18:4.

of Hezekiah: "He trusted in Jehovah."<sup>46</sup>

By way of further evidence, The New Bible Commentary says: "The (second commandment) does not prohibit all sculpture and painting,"<sup>47</sup> and cites the brazen serpent incident as proof.

## II. ISRAEL UNDER THE JUDGES

After the Mosaic period the nation of Israel was ruled by various judges, and this period of time lasted approximately four hundred years. In this time the Israelites failed to drive out the idolatrous inhabitants of the land as they had been commanded. Hebrews even began to copy methods of the idolaters in their worship. A characteristic of this time was that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."<sup>48</sup> Special attention is given in the Scriptures to a form of idolatry that began within the Hebrew religion itself: Micah, an Ephraimite, established a house of God on his property and consecrated a Levite for his own priest. This priest, along with the important objects made for worship, was later stolen by the tribe of Dan.<sup>49</sup>

Some Bible scholars believe that Micah had an image to represent Jehovah among the objects in his house of God. This is not definitely

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<sup>46</sup>II Kings 18:5a.

<sup>47</sup>Davidson, loc. cit.

<sup>48</sup>Judges 17:6; 21:25 (Cf. 3:7; 3:12; 4:1; 6:1; 13:1).

<sup>49</sup>Judges 17, 18.

stated in the Scripture, but there was an image in the house:

And when (Micah) restored the money unto his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and it was in the house of Micah . . . In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.<sup>50</sup>

It is noted that images were in the house of God that Micah made, and there is no declaration of any intention of departing from the worship of Jehovah, but he did "that which was right in his own eyes." The image or images made by Micah and his mother are not described but all the evidence leads to the conclusion that these people were getting set to worship Jehovah in the way that seemed right to them. Within the borders of Ephraim stood the tabernacle with its ritual of worship as a pattern and Micah even obtained a Levite for his priest.

Keil and Delitzsch state unequivocally that Micah did have an image to represent Jehovah.<sup>51</sup> They suggest this is the first such incident after the time of Joshua.<sup>52</sup>

Luther augmented his "Preface to the Prophets" with a study of Micah's idolatry, in which he found Micah's image to have been intended as a representative of Jehovah:

For thus we read in Judges 17, that the mother of Micah, when he had taken from her the eleven hundred pieces of silver, and returned them, said to him "Blessed by my son from the Lord. I vowed this

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<sup>50</sup>Judges 17:4-6.

<sup>51</sup>C. R. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 427, 430.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 427.

silver to the Lord, that my son shall take the silver and have a graven image made of it, etc." Here one learns clearly and certainly that the mother is thinking of the true God, to whom she has vowed the silver, to have a graven image made of it. She does not say, "I have vowed the silver to an idol," but "to the Lord," which name is known among all Jews as the name of the one true God.<sup>53</sup>

Micah's image worship brought no blessing either to his house or to his tribe of Ephraim. The tribe of Dan was attracted to his worship and stole both his image and his Levite. Yet Micah had had the special benefit of having the true tabernacle set up within his own tribe's border,<sup>54</sup> so he should have known the law of God and avoided his trouble. But the pride of Ephraim would not bow to the law of God, and the presence of the tabernacle had only increased the people's pride. Their land was centrally located in the very heart of Palestine and reached from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. The Ephraimites' haughty spirit later expressed itself against David (II Sam. 2:8,9), though "after the death of Ishbosheth, a large body of them went to Hebron to join David."<sup>55</sup> Their influence was so great that Rehoboam found it necessary to go to Shechem, a city of Ephraim, for his inauguration (I Kings 12:1).<sup>56</sup> After the ten tribes revolted from Rehoboam it was in Ephraim

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<sup>53</sup>Joshua 18:1.

<sup>54</sup>Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957), p. 317.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

that rival king Jeroboam established "the seat of the kingdom,"<sup>57</sup> and "Ephraim was the main support of the northern kingdom, which came to be designated by its name . . ."<sup>58</sup> Ephraim's influence in Israel was great. Self-willed Ephraim so persisted in its idolatry that the prophet Hosea said, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." (Hosea 4:7). The eventual consequence of this idolatry was that Ephraim was taken captive beyond the Euphrates, along with all the ten tribes, by King Salmaneser of Assyria.<sup>59</sup> Image worship harmonized with the pride and fall of Ephraim, and that which was right in the eyes of Micah harmonized with this evil instead of checking it. There is evidence that Micah helped to initiate all this evil with his unlawful worship of Jehovah: occurring in the early days of Ephraim's history and significant enough to be recorded in the Scriptures, Micah's image must have helped precipitate Ephraim's idolatrous practice, which in turn fostered idolatry among all Israel.

### III. ISRAEL UNDER THE KINGS

That idolatry invaded the nation of Israel is indicated by finding references to images associated with idolatry in the households of Saul

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<sup>57</sup>Richard Watson, A Biblical and Theological Dictionary (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1853), p. 346.

<sup>58</sup>Unger, loc. cit.

<sup>59</sup>Watson, loc. cit.



and David, kings of Israel. There is no evidence that these men whom God chose to rule Israel were any more personally involved with the images than the patriarch Jacob whose wives for a time had images in their possession. But the strong influence of Israel's neighbors is suggested by the names of Saul's children.

Thus a son of Saul was known as Ishbaal—"the man of Baal"; while two of his sons and one of his grandsons have names ending in Bosheth—"shame", a word used by the Jews as a contemptuous substitute for Ashtoreth.<sup>60</sup>

David's wife, Michal, who was the younger daughter of King Saul, evidently had a teraphim<sup>61</sup> (which is commonly considered a name for house gods). When Saul was seeking the life of David, Michal helped him to escape by putting the teraphim into David's bed, thereby deceiving Saul's officers and giving David time to make his escape. No notation is found in the Scripture to indicate the presence of the teraphim in the home needed explanation.

On the other hand David did not personally contribute to image worship. David was the human instrument used by the Lord to conquer Jerusalem from the Jebusites.<sup>62</sup> Until this time it had been a heathen city. David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem from Kirjath-jearim.<sup>63</sup> David encouraged the lawful worship of Jehovah and prepared

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<sup>60</sup>Geikie, Hours with the Bible (New York: James Pott and Company, Publishers, 1885), II, 452.

<sup>61</sup>I Sam. 19:11-17.

<sup>62</sup>II Sam. 5:6-10.

<sup>63</sup>II Sam. 6; I Chron. 13 and 15.

for the building of the temple. Through his faithfulness to Jehovah, Jerusalem became the city of God and the spiritual worship of God was established in Jerusalem. Jehovah made a covenant with David to establish his throne forever. This covenant was made at the time when David was preparing to build God's temple at Jerusalem.<sup>64</sup> David understood and entered into the spirit and purpose of this covenant when he said:

And now, O Jehovah God, the word that thou hast spoken . . . confirm thou it for ever, and do as thou hast spoken. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, Jehovah of hosts is God over Israel.<sup>65</sup>

During the reign of David and Solomon there is little reference to idolatry among the Israelites. This was a time when the kings exalted Jehovah and Israel enjoyed His blessing. It can be noted that in the Psalms there are warnings about images for worship. Psalm 115 states that those who make or trust in these images will degenerate: "They that make them shall be like unto them; Yea, every one that trusteth in them."<sup>66</sup>

But idolatry began again to gain the ascendancy over Israel toward the latter part of Solomon's reign. When Solomon had multiplied wives he made places of worship "for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children

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<sup>64</sup>II Sam. 7.

<sup>65</sup>II Sam. 7:25, 26.

<sup>66</sup>Psalms 115:8.

of Ammon."<sup>67</sup> "And so did he for all his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods."<sup>68</sup> God was angry with Solomon and told him his kingdom would be divided after his death.<sup>69</sup> God's anger was aroused by the fact that Solomon's "heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as was the heart of David his father,"<sup>70</sup> and Solomon's "heart was turned away from Jehovah"<sup>71</sup> when he went "after other gods."<sup>72</sup> But future idolatry in Israel was not traced to this sin of Solomon, even though it desecrated the environs of Jerusalem itself, broke God's covenant,<sup>73</sup> and was the reason for the later division of the kingdom.

In contrast, the action of Solomon's servant, Jeroboam, who became king of the rebellious ten tribes, brought a kind of idolatry to which Israel wedded itself. Jeroboam made images of calves and established them at Dan and Bethel, and then encouraged the northern tribes to worship at these locations, instead of going to Jerusalem.

And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the

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<sup>67</sup>I Kings 11:7.

<sup>68</sup>I Kings 11:8.

<sup>69</sup>I Kings 11:9-13.

<sup>70</sup>I Kings 11:4.

<sup>71</sup>I Kings 11:9.

<sup>72</sup>I Kings 11:10.

<sup>73</sup>I Kings 11:11.

house of David: if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah . . . Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.<sup>74</sup>

The people cooperated with Jeroboam's religious institution and it became a sin. The people worshipped before the images (though it does not say they worshipped the images themselves): "And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one (margin: "Or, 'each of them'"), even unto Dan."<sup>75</sup> This became a terrible snare to the northern tribes. Many subsequent kings of the northern kingdom had their life's work summed up in the statement: he "walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin."<sup>76</sup> These kings include Nadab, Baasha, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, Jehoash, Joash, and Menahem.

The evidence suggests strongly that the images which Jeroboam set up at Dan and Bethel were intended as images to represent Jehovah, and not to represent some false deity. There is no statement indicating Jeroboam wanted the people to worship some other god or that the nation wanted to depart from God. Jeroboam's purpose in setting up the images at Dan and Bethel was to keep the northern tribes from returning to

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<sup>74</sup>I Kings 12:26-28.

<sup>75</sup>I Kings 12:30.

<sup>76</sup>I Kings 15:26 (Nadab); 15:34 (Baasha); 16:19 (Zimri); 16:26 (Omri); 21:22 (Ahab); II Kings 13:10 (Jehoash); 14:23 (Joash); 15:18 (Menamen).

Jerusalem for worship and thereby threatening to weaken his throne and reunite the northern tribes with the king in Jerusalem. So Jeroboam "devised of his own heart"<sup>77</sup> worship services that did not harmonize with the law of God. The statement, "Behold thy gods (Elohim), O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," is the very same as the statement that deceived the people into worshipping Aaron's golden calf at an earlier date.

Elijah courageously opposed Baal worship and temporarily defeated it. But there is no record of Elijah opposing the calf worship at Dan and Bethel. This indicates he saw a distinction.

King Jehu declared his "zeal for Jehovah" (II Kings 10:16) and opposed himself to Baal worship. His diligent labor was effective, for it is recorded of him that "Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel" (II Kings 10:28). But he did not oppose the calf worship of Jeroboam for the next verse says:

Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan.<sup>78</sup>

There is no indication from Jehu's life that he considered these calves inconsistent with his zeal for Jehovah.

Among the commentators who believe Jeroboam's calves were intended as representations of Jehovah are Keil and Delitzsch. They say that "when

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<sup>77</sup>I Kings 12:33.

<sup>78</sup>II Kings 10:29.

Jeroboam established the kingdom of the ten tribes he had two golden calves made as images of Jehovah for the subjects of his kingdom."<sup>79</sup> Martin Luther believed that Jeroboam intended to worship Jehovah in the calves. He said:

Thus we read in (I) Kings 12, not simply that Jeroboam set up the two calves, but had it preached to the people besides, "Ye shall no more go up to Jerusalem; lo, here, Israel, is thy God, who led thee out of Egypt." He does not say, "Lo, here, Israel, is a calf," but "Here is thy God who led thee out of Egypt." He confesses freely that the God of Israel is the true God and that he led them out of Egypt; but men are not to run to Jerusalem after Him, but rather to find Him here at Dan and Beersheba, where the golden calves are.<sup>80</sup>

G. A. Chadwick, in the Expositor's Bible, refers to Jeroboam's "sin of idolatry (as having fallen) short of apostasy to a wholly different god."<sup>81</sup> James Arminius said Jeroboam "worshiped God in calves, and . . . taught others to do the same."<sup>82</sup> The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge says that "from the tenacity of habit . . . Jeroboam set up calves representing Yahweh at the sacred places in the northern kingdom."<sup>83</sup> The New Bible Commentary contains two interpretations of Jeroboam's images. H. L. Ellison speaks of Jeroboam's "choice of a bull as Jehovah's pedestal and symbol of His

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<sup>79</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 441.

<sup>80</sup>Martin Luther, "Preface to the Prophets," Works of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1932), VI, 399.

<sup>81</sup>G. A. Chadwick, "The Book of Exodus," Expositor's Bible (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), I, 284.

<sup>82</sup>Arminius, loc. cit.

<sup>83</sup>Bonwetsch, op. cit., p. 452.

presence,"<sup>84</sup> but he cites and agrees with Albright<sup>85</sup> as insisting strongly on archaeological grounds "that the golden bulls were not images of Jehovah, but the visible pedestal on which 'the invisible Yahweh stood', even as the cherubim were his visible throne."<sup>86</sup> However this interpretation does not appear to agree with Jeroboam's statement when he presented the calves to the people: "Behold thy gods, O Israel" (I Kings 12:28). And J. C. Connell, author of the commentary on Exodus in the same New Bible Commentary, speaking of Aaron's golden calf says: "This representation was common in Egypt. It was renewed by Jeroboam . . . They did not replace Jehovah with the calf, but thought to worship Him under the form of the image."<sup>87</sup>

Prophets' view of idolatry. Idolatry was one of the major concerns of the prophets in their preaching during the reign of the kings. After the door was opened by Jeroboam's idolatry, many other forms of idolatry came in to defile the Israelites. There is evidence that the prophets found these calves to be a unique problem to oppose. There is no evidence that Israel ever acknowledged their departure from Jehovah in

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<sup>84</sup>H. L. Ellison, "The Religion of Israel Under the Monarchy," The New Bible Commentary (London: The Inter-Varsity Press, 1959), p. 334.

<sup>85</sup>Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, p. 229f.

<sup>86</sup>Ellison, op. cit., p. 312.

<sup>87</sup>J. C. Connell, "Exodus," The New Bible Commentary, p. 129.

their golden calves, at least until the captivity. The man of God, whom Jehovah sent out of Judah to oppose Jeroboam's institution, did not speak against the calves but only "against the altar" (I Kings 13:2,3,5), even though Jeroboam had already been "sacrificing unto the calves" (I Kings 12:32). There is no evidence that the "old prophet in Bethel" had spoken against the calf institution in Bethel even though he was a man through whom Jehovah gave a message and he wanted to be buried in the same sepulchre where the man of God was buried. There is no record of Elijah or Elisha speaking against these calves, although there is no record of their permitting them either. Amos incurred the wrath of Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, by his prophecies against "Samaria" and "Bethel" and "the altar" and "images," but the calves were not specifically mentioned. That this altar was intended for the worship of Jehovah but rejected by Him is supported by the fact that Amos saw the Lord upon the altar with the message that would destroy that altar (Amos 9:1ff.); and raise up again the tabernacle of David (which of course had no calves). Hosea has certain statements suggesting the people had been identifying Jehovah with the calves. He said to Samaria: "He hath cast off thy calf," (Hosea 8:5), as if God had once condescended to own the calf (or even to be clothed with the calf in an incarnate sense). He said Ephraim "compasseth (God) about with falsehood" (Hos. 11:12). No prophet said the calves were God or a representation of Him. They evidently faced the problem that the people thought they were such representations. Only with caution did the prophets acknowledge that the people believed they



were worshipping Jehovah at these places. Mostly they tried to persuade the people that this worship broke their covenant with God and they would surely go into captivity. The prophets generally were not heeded, often they were hated for their message.

The "calves" of Bethel, Dan, Gilgal outlasted not only the Phenician cults favored by later kings in the northern kingdom, but even the powerful assault of prophecy (Amos 5:4 sqq., 8:14; Hos. 6:10; 8:4 sqq., 9:15; II Kings 10:25 sqq.). Even after the carrying away of the ten tribes the cult of Bethel survived (II Kings 17:27).<sup>88</sup>

Martin Luther, in his "Preface to the Prophets," says the Israelites would admit to idolatry even less than Roman Catholics would confess themselves idolatrous. Luther thought the Israelites believed they were worshipping the true God even when they used idols in the worship. He compared Catholic worship with that in ancient Israel in the following discussion:

Since the prophets cry out most of all against idolatry, it is necessary to know the form which this idolatry had; for in our time, under the papacy, many people flatter themselves pleasantly and think that they are no such idolater as the children of Israel. For this reason, then they do not think highly of the prophets, especially of this part of them, because the rebukes upon idolatry do not concern them at all. They are far too pure and holy to commit idolatry, and it would be laughable for them to be afraid or terrified because of threats and denunciations against idolatry. That is just what the people of Israel also did. They simply would not believe that they were idolatrous, and therefore the threatenings of the prophets had to be lies, and they themselves had to be condemned as heretics. The children of Israel were not such mad saints as to worship plain wood and stone, especially the kings, princes, priests, and prophets, though they were the most idolatrous of all; but their idolatry consisted in letting go of the worship

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<sup>88</sup>Bonwetsch, loc. cit.

which God had instituted and ordered at Jerusalem, and where else God would have it, and improving on it, establishing it and setting it up elsewhere, according to their own ideas and opinions, without God's command, and inventing new forms and persons and times for it, though Moses had strictly forbidden this, especially in Deuteronomy 12, and pointed them to the place that God had chosen for His tabernacle and dwelling-place. This false worship was their idolatry, and they thought it (their worship) a fine and precious thing, and relied upon it as though they had done well in performing it, though it was sheer disobedience and apostasy from God and His commands.<sup>89</sup>

Luther believed the Israelites justified their opposition to the prophets upon their belief they were serving God in their idolatrous worship.

So they built on their own works and devotion and not purely and alone on God. With this devotion they afterwards filled the land with idolatry; on all the hills, in all the valleys, under all the trees they sacrificed and burned incense, and all this had to be called serving the God of Israel; he who said otherwise was a heretic and false prophet.<sup>90</sup>

And Luther said in his Lectures on Deuteronomy: "Therefore in Scripture strange gods should not be so understood as if their worshipers wholly denied the name of the true God; yes, they most firmly claimed it for themselves . . ."<sup>91</sup>

Eventually the Israelites became so wedded to their images that their ability to understand and believe the prophets was gone. The broken condition of their covenant with God had to be revealed to the world and to themselves in an unmistakeable manner. This was true of

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<sup>89</sup>Luther, "Preface to the Prophets," pp. 398-399.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 399.

<sup>91</sup>Martin Luther, Lectures on Deuteronomy (Vol. IX of Luther's Works, Jaroslav Pelikan (ed.). St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), p. 53.

both Israel and Judah. Then came the captivity that God had warned them He would bring if they broke the covenant. Israel was carried away by the Assyrians and, when Judah would not be instructed by even this lesson before her eyes, she saw the Babylonians come, ruin the temple and the city of God, and carry her away captive also. The ten tribes of the nation of Israel were dispersed and this nation never rose again as a separate nation. The Jewish people in Babylonian captivity had seventy years to consider their sin and repent. No longer were they able to rationalize their image worship as being pleasing to God. Clearly He was displeased with them and had punished them as He had warned He would punish idolatry with captivity. They re-examined their covenant with God, with the help of the words of their prophets. After seventy years some Jews gained the authority of King Cyrus (Persia had conquered Babylon during these seventy years) to return to Jerusalem to build the temple. Judging by the words of Cyrus, the Jews had sufficiently repented from idolatry to have an influence for Jehovah in the land of their captivity, even upon the king of that land:

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah (Jer. 25:12; 29:10) might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, Jehovah his God will be with him, and let him go up.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>II Chron. 36:22-23. (These are the last words in II Chronicles, the book said to be located last in the Jewish arrangement of the Old Testament).

The temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem in 516 B.C., even though the Samaritans powerfully opposed its construction. But the nation again drifted into apostasy after a brief period of lawful worship. The temple services and sacrifices were neglected (Mal. 1:6-14) and many Jews married heathen wives (Mal. 2:11) and thereby filled the land with "abominations" (Ezra 9:11). This was true not only of the people generally and the priests and Levites, but especially of the rulers and princes (Ezra 9:1,2). When Ezra heard of this he was horrified, and rent his garments, tore out his hair, and "sat down confounded" (Ezra 9:3). He was joined by others who feared God. At evening prayer time he arose and confessed their sin to God, in great humiliation and agony, saying:

Since the days of our fathers we have been exceeding guilty unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to plunder, and to confusion of face, as it is this day. And now for a little moment grace hath been showed from Jehovah our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place . . . And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments . . . And after all . . . shall we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the peoples that do these abominations . . . O Jehovah . . . behold, we are before thee in our guiltiness; for none can stand before thee because of this.<sup>93</sup>

While Ezra prayed in anguish there was gathered a great assembly of people who also wept bitterly. Finally a man named Shecaniah stepped forward. He interrupted the prayer to suggest a re-establishment of the covenant

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<sup>93</sup>Ezra 9:6-15.

with God, saying:

Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.<sup>94</sup>

The book of Ezra is concluded with the account of the guilty but repentant Jews putting away their foreign wives and children, in spite of some opposition.<sup>95</sup>

Even after this incident there were later dangers from the encroachment of idolatry but now, after the captivity, there were found people who would risk their lives to safeguard the Jews from idolatry. Such were the Maccabees.

More than 200 years later (than Ezra), when Antioches Epiphanes tried to extirpate Judaism and Hellenize the Jews, many of them obeyed his command to offer sacrifices to idols, although his action led to the Maccabean war.<sup>96</sup>

The result of the Maccabean war was that the Jews became identified with determined opposition to any form of idolatrous worship. They were now determined to keep entirely free from idolatry. No images were allowed.

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<sup>94</sup>Ezra 10:3.

<sup>95</sup>Ezra 10:15.

<sup>96</sup>Steven Barabas, "Idolatry," The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 369.

## IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Law

God's law regarding images is found basically in the decalogue.

The second commandment covers images that might be made to represent

God:

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them (Exodus 20:4,5).

Moses put the tablets containing this law into the ark of the covenant. Upon the ark was the mercy-seat with the cherubim at each end. God localized His presence for meeting with Moses to the place where there was no image: above the mercy-seat and between the cherubim. God said:

And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony . . . (Exodus 25:22a).

Moses provided a very detailed explanation that God had revealed Himself at Sinai by no visible form so that the people would have no reason for making an image in this regard. This explanation stated twice that God revealed Himself by no visible form. Jehovah had spoken to them "out of the midst of the fire" (Dt. 4:13), and the people had heard the "voice of words", but they "saw no form". Moses' interpretation of this fact was as follows:

Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of form on the day that Jehovah spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven

image in the form of any figure . . . (Dt. 4:15,16a).

Thus God revealed Himself by no form at Sinai lest the people make an image, and thereby corrupt themselves. This account, found in Moses' preface to the decalogue in Deuteronomy, harmonizes with the Exodus preface and epilogue to the decalogue. That preface prohibited the people from approaching the mountain where God had descended "lest they break through unto Jehovah to gaze, and many of them perish" (Ex. 19:21). The epilogue forbade the making of images with God of gold or silver (Ex. 20:23).

There are two possible interpretations of the second commandment when it is taken literally. It may prohibit the making or using of any likeness of anything for any purpose. (The fact that God Himself commanded that images of cherubim be placed above the ark where this commandment was kept raises doubts about this interpretation.) Or, the phrase, "thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them," may be a qualification of the first part of the commandment. A study of the various images discussed in the Old Testament also indicates that the phrase "thou shalt not bow down thyself to them . . ." modifies the first declaration.

#### Four Kinds of Images

Investigation of the images made by man recorded in the Old Testament reveals four kinds of images.

Images of other gods. Images to represent other gods were not

allowed. No detailed investigation was needed here. There are various summary statements in the Bible condemning other gods and commands for the destruction of their images. Furthermore, "other gods" comes under the heading of the first commandment in the decalogue, which specifically forbids "other gods." This has not been an exhaustive investigation of whether the people who worshipped other gods thought they were worshipping, in some way, the true God. This study has assumed that when the gods were given other names it was obvious to both Jehovah and the Israelites that these were other gods. The Israelites were to destroy the images of all such gods in Canaan. The Israelites were ordered to execute without mercy any Israelite who worshipped other gods. They were not to marry anyone from the Gentiles who worshipped other gods. They were not to enter into alliances with nations that worshipped other gods.

Images of Jehovah. Images to represent Jehovah were not allowed. This classification of images at first appears to be slightly arbitrary because there is no specific mention in the Bible of a man made image of Jehovah. But this second classification must be set apart for those instances where an image was evidently intended by the people to somehow represent Jehovah, even though Jehovah Himself did not recognize the image as being representative of Himself. (While certain commentators can be found who will assert that the people actually intended to worship Jehovah when they served Baal and Ashtoreth, etc., this would be hard to prove from the Scripture itself.) There are Scriptural indications



that on certain occasions the people justified certain idolatrous worship as being given to Jehovah.

Aaron's golden calf was the first example. When Moses had disappeared for some days upon the mountain the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron with the petition "make us gods (margin: or 'a god'), which shall go before us." (Ex. 32:1) The reason they gave was that they did not know what had become of Moses, "the man that brought (them) up out of the land of Egypt." (Ex. 32:1) So Aaron collected their golden ear-rings and made a molten calf. The subsequent words of both Aaron and the people state that they considered this calf somehow representative of the God that had delivered them from Egypt, or in other words, Jehovah. The people said: "These are thy gods (margin: "Or, 'This is thy god'"), O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 32:4). This is the same thing they had said about Moses: he had "brought (them) up out of the land of Egypt." Therefore it may be concluded they intended this calf to represent Jehovah to them as Moses had previously done. Aaron built an altar before the calf and made a proclamation saying, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to Jehovah." (Ex. 32:5). Surely the people knew that it was Jehovah that had delivered them from Egypt. There is no statement of any desire of Aaron or the people to depart from Jehovah. Instead both parties evidenced intention of strengthening their ties with Jehovah now that Moses had disappeared into the cloud where Jehovah was dwelling above on the mountain. Licentiousness resulted from this "feast to Jehovah," for the

people "rose up to play" (Ex. 32:6), but Jehovah's anger was aroused by more than the licentiousness, for He said to Moses that the people had worshipped the molten calf. Jehovah quoted their words, "These are thy gods (elohim) . . . which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 32:4,8), as literal. There are two possible ways of understanding the Israelites' words. Either the people believed that in some way the calf had delivered them from Egypt and they were actually worshipping the calf, or, more likely, the people believed the calf merely represented the gods (God) who had delivered them from Egypt and that the gods (God) received their worship when they bowed before the representation. A strong indication that the people understood the calf as being a mere representation is that the calf was singular: there was only one calf. But when the people saw it they said, "These be thy gods . . ." "These" is plural, indicating their concept of Jehovah, Who had delivered them from Egypt, was that of a plurality of gods. It is evident that Jehovah recognized that the people had departed from Him when they said of the calf, "These are thy gods, O Israel . . ." His hot wrath was ready to destroy them. The interpretation of the Levites after the captivity shows that they understood this calf to represent the God who delivered them from Egypt. Instead of quoting "These be thy gods" they quoted it, "This is thy God" (Neh. 9:18). No longer did the Israelites make images to represent Jehovah. They understood how such a representation had earlier broken the covenant. In the New Testament, Stephen gave evidence of believing the Israelites associated the golden

calf with God in a way similar to the Sanhedrin's association of the temple with God. The Sanhedrin evidently so understood him.

During the interim period between Moses and the Kings there is the record that Micah, an Ephraimite, put an image in his "house of God" which he built. There is no evidence he intended this image to represent anything in heathen worship: he did that which was "right in his own eyes." There is evidence that his "house of God" was generally patterned after the tabernacle in Shiloh (which was also in Ephraim). He obtained a Levite to be his priest and he expected that God would bless him. Various Bible scholars have concluded that the image Micah put into his "house of God" was intended as a representation of Him.

Jeroboam's calves involve a similar problem to Aaron's calf. Jeroboam made his two calves of gold and established them at Bethel and Dan in order to keep the people of the ten tribes from returning to the king at Jerusalem from whom they had rebelled. A literal understanding of I Kings 12:28 indicates that he meant for the people to worship Jehovah before the calves. He said to them: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (I Kings 12:28b). The Scriptures interpret Jeroboam's images as false gods. His device "became a sin". (I Kings 12:30). Nevertheless both the literal words and the context indicate that neither Jeroboam nor the people considered that they were departing from Jehovah and that they were only beginning to worship Him in a

different place and in their own way.

The Scriptures attach considerable significance to Jeroboam's calves, as well as to that of Aaron. But Jeroboam's idolatry was more disastrous than that of Aaron because it was not checked as soon. From the beginning of the worship of Jeroboam's calves idolatry spread in Israel and the worship of such gods as Baal also became common. This calf worship thus was idolatrous in its results. (It is instructive to note that images of calves were said to be used in Baal worship.)

The Scriptures do contain a number of evidences that Jeroboam's calves, while the prophets denounced them as false gods, were thought by the people who worshipped before them (which was called worshipping the calves in Scripture) to some way represent Jehovah and not some other god. This evidence includes the following observations:

1. They were called the gods that led the people out of Egypt. The people were not ignorant of their own history and so must not have been ignorant of the fact that it was Jehovah that had delivered them from Egypt. David and Solomon's reign had just passed in which much of Jehovah's glory had been revealed to the world, and therefore also to Israel.

2. The Hebrew word translated here as "gods" is "Elohim", which was much more frequently translated "God" in the Old Testament.

3. The people accepted the images. If they thought Jeroboam was instituting the worship of another god than Jehovah they did not indicate it. It is unlikely that Jeroboam would have tried to institute the

worship of that which the people would consider another god:

a. because it is most unlikely that the people would have agreed to change gods so easily. Ten tribes were involved. Changing of gods would not have unified the people behind him, but would have involved a great risk to his place of leadership;

b. and Jeroboam's motivation for establishing the images was not that of changing gods, but to unify and rally the people to himself and his leadership.

4. These calves did not bear the name of any heathen god. No proper noun is given to them.

5. There is no record of their being touched in the purges of Baal worship. Elijah purged the land from Baal worship but said nothing about the calves at Bethel. He faced the crisis of total apostasy. King Jehu, exhibiting his "zeal for Jehovah," "destroyed Baal out of Israel" (II Kings 10:28), but "from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves . . ." (II Kings 10:29).

6. They were called "no gods". The use of the term "no gods" in reference to them by prophets suggests that the people themselves may have justified their existence because they were "no gods"---merely representative, but no god in themselves.

7. Israel was told by the prophet Hosea that Jehovah had "cast off" the calf, as if He had once been clothed by it for meeting with them (Hos. 8:5; cf. 2:16; 4:12; 7:15,16; 10:5; 11:2,7,12; 13:2).

Thus, while there is no record of a man-made "image of Jehovah" in the Old Testament, and while it unquestionably can be said that man never made such an image so far as truth is concerned in the objective sense, there are evidences in the Old Testament that on occasion people did not think they were departing from Jehovah when they bowed before an image, and there is evidence that they thought this image represented Jehovah in some way.

Art work. Images not made to represent deity (either true or false deity) were allowed in the Old Testament.

Typical images. There is at least one image that was made by the command of the Lord which was in some way typical or representative of Christ. This was the brazen serpent which the Lord instructed Moses to make when serpents were destroying the Israelites for their murmuring in the wilderness (Num. 21:4ff.). The pertinent facts here were that:

1. God commanded the making of this image, as contradistinct from man making it for a devotional aid. The Israelites were far from a devotional mood: they were complaining against God (vs. 4).

2. The people were delivered from the serpent bites, not by bowing before the image, but by seeing it ("when he seeth it," vs. 8; "when he looked . . . he lived," vs. 9). Thus the qualifying phrase of the second commandment was not broken: there was no bowing before the image, nor service of the image.

3. The image was made in the form of that which the Israelites

naturally loathed and associated with evil. In no way could the serpent be considered an ideal of good.

4. As soon as the emergency passed the image was removed from sight and placed in the ark of the covenant.

5. Even though the image of the serpent evidently came to somehow represent Jehovah (Is. 45: , Jn. 3:14,15), it was called a thing of brass and destroyed by Hezekiah when it had become an object of devotion and veneration.

### Conclusions

There is evidence in the Old Testament that men cannot make an image to represent God. This study has found that a portion of that law which was written on tables of stone as God's covenant with Israel does forbid the making of certain images. God revealed Himself by no visible form at Sinai so that the Israelites would not attempt to make images of any form to represent Him. Any image that the people might have intended as a representation of God was not acceptable to Him in the Old Testament.

This study of images made in Old Testament times has discovered a four-fold classification of images: images that the people called by the names of other gods, images that evidently were made by man's imagination to represent God, images that were not meant to represent any deity (either true or false), and typical images made at the direct command of the Lord. It is questionable that their typical significance was understood while these images were present. It has been concluded that the

first two classes of images were bowed down before and served by the Israelites at various times, and that both of these kinds of images were classed as idolatrous and punishable. This included Aaron's and Jeroboam's golden calves even though there is evidence the people thought they were thereby worshipping God. It has been concluded that the last two kinds of images were not classed as idolatrous and thus did not bring the disfavor of God as long as they were in no way venerated. These were images that were not considered to represent deity in any way. No person could have an image of which they would say, "This is thy God." Other images were permitted and even inspired by the Holy Spirit, at least in some cases.

Thus upon the assumption that the first commandment forbade all other gods; and upon the conclusions that God reserved the right to command the making of typical images and that art work was permitted: it is further concluded that the purpose of the second commandment was to prohibit the making of images and likenesses to represent Jehovah by man's wisdom and art. Any image to which a man could point and say, "Behold thy God" was not lawful, and it was against such images that the second commandment guarded.



### CHAPTER III

#### IMAGES OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

This chapter has investigated the New Testament identity of Jehovah, who established the covenant with Israel in the Old Testament. Then the next step was to investigate the nature of New Testament worship. The purpose of this chapter has been to inquire whether or not the Old Testament prohibition of images of Jehovah applies in the New Testament dispensation to images of members of the trinity.

#### I. JEHOVAH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Old Covenant was established by Jehovah. This is the name by which God revealed Himself when He established the covenant at Sinai with Israel. The Jewish people came to consider the verse which precedes the decalogue,

I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt,  
out of the house of bondage,<sup>1</sup>

as their first commandment because it clearly identifies with whom their covenant was established, and it also identifies Jehovah with God (Elohim) the Creator.<sup>2</sup> Jehovah is also the name of God used most frequently in the Old Testament Scriptures, appearing 6,823 times, compared with

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<sup>1</sup>Ex. 20:2.

<sup>2</sup>Solomon Goldman, The Ten Commandments, Maurice Samuel, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 28, 125ff.

approximately 2,550 occurrences of "Elohim", the next most frequent name for God in the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup>

The name "Jehovah" does not occur in the New Testament. This fact could lead a person to wonder if Jehovah, who established the Old Covenant, even makes an appearance in the New Testament. Or is the New Testament not only a new covenant, but also established by a different Person? If the same God established both covenants we are dealing with the will of one Person; otherwise we are dealing with two different wills, one revealed in the old covenant, and the other revealed in the new covenant.

A comparison of the Old and New Testaments removes any doubt that Jehovah of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. Passages from the Old Testament are cited in the New Testament, and these Old Testament passages refer to Jehovah. Some of these Old Testament passages are applied in the New Testament to the Father, some are applied to the Son, and some to the Holy Spirit. Thus the one God of Israel,<sup>4</sup> and revealed in the Old Testament, is revealed clearly in the New Testament as the triune God. A study of the Scriptural usage of the name of Jehovah reveals that, while Jehovah is one, Jehovah is the Father, Jehovah is the Son, and Jehovah is the Holy Spirit. The following notes explore the relationship between Jehovah, who established

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<sup>3</sup>Herbert F. Stevenson, Titles of the Triune God (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1956), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>Deuteronomy 6:4. "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah," (Margin: "Or, 'Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one' Or, 'Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is one' Or, 'Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone'").

the old covenant, and the Trinity, who establish the new covenant.

Jehovah is the Son. The first chapter of the New Testament states both the humanity and the deity of Jesus Christ. After His human genealogy is traced from David and Abraham, His unique birth is explained. Then two names indicating His deity are ascribed to Him. The first is "Jesus", which name Stevenson says means "Jehovah the Saviour":

. . . God who had revealed Himself "at sundry times and in divers manners" came in the Person of His Son to make Himself fully known---Jesus, whose name is an abbreviation of Jehoshua, "Jehovah the Saviour".<sup>5</sup>

The other name ascribed to Him at this time was "Immanuel" which is said to mean "God with us".<sup>6</sup>

Some of the comparisons between Old and New Testament Scriptures which indicate that the name Jehovah is applied to Jesus, the Son, are listed below.

1. (John 12:36-41 compared with Isaiah 6:1-3,9,10). Isaiah tells of his vision of the glory of Jehovah, and then the commission he received from the Lord:

Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again and be healed.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Stevenson, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>6</sup>Matthew 1:21,23.

<sup>7</sup>Isaiah 6:9-10.

John tells of the Jews' rejection of Jesus and declares that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, thus associating the sixth chapter of Isaiah with his remarks. John's account of the Jews' rejection of Jesus directly follows the account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem when the multitude welcomed Him shouting:

Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.<sup>8</sup>

John recognized Jesus as the same King that Isaiah saw seated on the throne of Jehovah.

2. (John 8:58 compared with Exodus 3:14,15). The Old Testament reference is to God's assertion of His name to Moses:

Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.<sup>9</sup>

The marginal note to "I AM" in the American Standard Version says this name is from the same root (Ehyeh) as "Jehovah".

The New Testament reference is the assertion of Jesus to the Jews, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I AM." Jesus is clearly stating His pre-existence and identifying Himself with the I AM that Moses met at the burning bush and Who also identified Himself as "Jehovah" at the burning bush. If He had been merely pre-existent, but not Jehovah, He would have had to say "Before Abraham was, I was."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>John 12:13.

<sup>9</sup>Exodus 3:14.

<sup>10</sup>F. F. Bruce and William J. Martin, "The Deity of Christ", Christianity Today, IX, 6 (Dec. 18, 1964), p. 12.

3. (Hebrews 1:8-12 compared with Psalms 102:12,25,27). The Old Testament reference is to God's creation of the world, and God is known by the name of Jehovah in this reference in Psalms.

The New Testament reference is a quotation of Psalm 102:25ff,<sup>11</sup> and it is applied to "the Son".<sup>12</sup> This Son is Jesus.<sup>13</sup> Thus this Psalm in the Old Testament refers to Jehovah and the same reference quoted in the New Testament is applied to Jesus.

4. (John 10:11,16-19 compared with Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34:23). The "Shepherd Psalm" states "Jehovah is my shepherd". And Ezekiel speaks of there being just one shepherd:

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David: he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I Jehovah have spoken it.<sup>14</sup>

The New Testament references are the words of Jesus, Who is of the lineage of David, declaring, "I am the good shepherd," and then His assertion that there will be only one flock and one shepherd in His Father's economy, and this flock hears the voice of Jesus. Thus the Old Testament calls the one divine shepherd Jesus.

5. (John 3:14,15 and I Corinthians 10:9 compared with Numbers 20:5-9). Robert J. Breckinridge has a discussion of these Scriptures

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<sup>11</sup>According to the marginal note in the American Standard Version.

<sup>12</sup>Hebrews 1:8. The "Son" is also addressed here by the Father as "O God".

<sup>13</sup>Hebrews 2:9.

<sup>14</sup>Ezekiel 34:23

in which he calls attention to the fact that both Jesus and Paul relate the name of Jehovah with Jesus Christ.

In the book of Numbers, it is written that the people, much discouraged because of the way, spoke against God and against Moses. And the Lord (Jehovah) sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. And then the people confessed they had sinned against Jehovah. And Moses bade them "pray unto Jehovah", and he also prayed for them. And the Lord commanded Moses to make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole. And Moses made it of brass, and whosoever was bitten and looked on the serpent lived. Now Christ himself, when expressly teaching Nicodemus the way of salvation, tells him that this whole transaction illustrated and pointed to his own crucifixion, and its effects (John 3:14,15). And Paul, if possible, more directly to the present intent says, Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.<sup>15</sup>

6. (Luke 1:76 compared with Malachi 3:1). J. Oliver Buswell cites these Scriptures as evidence that Jesus is Jehovah.

In the prophecy of Zacharias (Luke 1:76) it is said of John the Baptist, "And thou, child, shalt be called Prophet of the Most High; thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways." It is obvious that Luke understood this prophecy as referring to John as the forerunner of Jesus. But Zacharias was alluding to Malachi 3:1 in which the word "the Lord" is Jahweh . . . Thus "the Lord", whose ways John was to prepare, is none other than Jahweh Himself.<sup>16</sup>

7. (Romans 10:13 compared with Joel 2:32). Buswell says of these Scriptures:

Paul gives great emphasis to the prophecy of Joel. "Whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13). It is clear in the context that Paul is calling Christ "the Lord," but in Joel 2:32, in the phrase, "Whosoever shall call upon the

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<sup>15</sup>I Corinthians 10:9.

<sup>16</sup>J. Oliver Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), pp. 104-105.

name of the Lord shall be delivered," "the Lord" in the Hebrew text is Jahweh.<sup>17</sup>

8. (Romans 14:10 compared with Isaiah 45:23). Again Buswell's summary is quoted.

In the Romans 14:10 reference to the judgment of the saints, Paul adds a quotation from Isaiah 45:23. "As I live saith the Lord, every knee will bow to me and every tongue will confess to God." That Jahweh is the speaker in Isaiah's words is evident from verses 24 and 25. These passages indicate that Christ and God and Jahweh are one.<sup>18</sup>

The Jews of Jesus time understood that Jesus claimed to be Jehovah, and for this reason many of them tried to have Him executed, because they considered Him a blasphemer. After His resurrection, the early Christians accepted Jesus as Jehovah and this posed no problem in their thinking.

When the NT Christians apply to Jesus OT passages which relate to Jehovah, they reflect the OT presupposition that the Messiah would be Jehovah, sent by Jehovah (Jer. 23:5,6; 33:14-16), and they show no awareness of controversy on this latter point. It was not the Jewish mind of the first century which stumbled at the personal distinctions in the Godhead.<sup>19</sup>

Various Bible scholars have observed and concluded that Jesus is Jehovah. M'Clintock and Strong declare that the "Lord" of the Old Testament is the same Lord in the New Testament.

It will be evident to the attentive reader that the term Lord, so frequently applied to Christ in the N.T., is generally

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>James Oliver Buswell, Jr., "Trinity" The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 872.

synonymous with Jehovah in the Old Testament. As Christ is called "The Alpha and Omega," the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty; and also, "of him it is said, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever;" he must be Jehovah, the eternally existing and supreme God.<sup>20</sup>

Charles Hodge, in his commentary on Ephesians, discussed "the identity of the Logos or Son manifested in the flesh under the new dispensation with the manifested Jehovah of the Old economy":

Hence what is said of the one, is properly assumed to be said of the other. Therefore, as Moses says Jehovah led his people through the wilderness, Paul says Christ led them. I Cor. 10:4. As Isaiah saw the glory of Jehovah in the temple, John says he saw the glory of Christ. John 12:41. As it is written in the prophets, As I live, saith Jehovah, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God," Is. 45:23, Paul says this proves that we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Rom. 14:10,11. What in Psalm 102:25, etc., is said of God as creator, and as eternal and immutable, is in Hebrews 1:10 applied to Christ. On the same principle what is said in Ps. 68:18, of Jehovah as ascending to heaven and leading captivity captive, is here said to refer to Christ.<sup>21</sup>

In the margin of Miley's Systematic Theology, beside the following paragraph about the Angel of Jehovah, is phrased the explanatory sub-title, "The Son Is Jehovah".

This name is given to the Son, and in the fullness of its meaning as a divine title. The Scriptures open with the name of God in plural form. These terms may have been in themselves but little force for the proof of the Trinity; but as seen in the light of a fuller revelation of God they properly anticipate the personal distinctions in the theophanies of a later period. In these

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<sup>20</sup>John M'Clintock and James Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1894), IV, 810.

<sup>21</sup>Charles Hodge, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1856), pp. 217-218.



theophanies there are the personal designations of Jehovah and the Angel of Jehovah. The same person appears, sometimes with the one title, sometimes with the other, and in some instances with both, and with the distinctive facts of divinity. A few references will verify these statements. (footnote: Gen. 16: 7-13; 17:1-22; 18:1-11; 22:1-18; 28:10-22; 32:24-30, with Hosea 12:3-5; Ex. 3:2-15). The Angel of Jehovah, as revealed in these theophanies, is a divine person. The powers which he exercises and the prerogatives which he asserts are distinctive of deity. Yet when styled Jehovah it is clearly with personal distinction from the Father. He cannot be the Angel of Jehovah and Jehovah the Father at the same time; though he can be Jehovah the Son and the Angel of the Father. This is the sense of these theophanies as we read them in the light of later revelations, especially in the clear light of the New Testament. The Angel of Jehovah, the Jehovah of these theophanies, is the Son of God.<sup>22</sup>

H. Orton Wiley, under the sub-title "Christ was the Jehovah of the Old Testament," compares the Old and New Testaments to prove that the same Lord who instituted the Mosaic covenant also instituted the new covenant, and that the Lord of the temple whom Malachi said would suddenly come to His temple was actually Jesus. Wiley's evidence is that Jesus instituted the old covenant as well as the new, and that this also means He is Jehovah.

It will be recalled, that the Mosaic law was given by the dispensation of angels, referring more especially to the "angel of Jehovah," who was at once servant and Lord, angel and Jehovah; and that this law was given in His own name (Exod. 23:20,21). Later Moses declared that "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15). Still later Jeremiah prophesied saying, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Jer. 31:31,32).

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<sup>22</sup> John Miley, Systematic Theology (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1892), I, 244-245.

The first of these prophecies was specifically declared by Stephen in his last address, to have been fulfilled in Christ; and he refers also to the law given by the dispensation of angels, a subject which receives its full development by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in his discussion of the New Covenant (cf. Acts 7:53 with Heb. 8:6-13; 10:16-18).<sup>23</sup>

And Wiley understood that Jesus was the Lord of the temple:

As the Lord of a temple is the Deity to whose worship it is consecrated, the act of our Lord in entering the temple makes it evident that He was the Jehovah of the Old Testament to whom it was consecrated.<sup>24</sup>

Jehovah is the Holy Spirit and the Father. Since even the Roman Catholic Church forbids the making of human representations of the Holy Spirit it is not particularly relevant to the theme of this study to prove that Jehovah is the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless there are Scriptures which strongly indicate that He is. One example of this is a comparison of II Peter 1:19,20 with Numbers 12:6-8. Another example is Acts 28:25-27 compared with Isaiah 6:9,10.

Nor is it here considered necessary to prove that Jehovah is the Father, because this is the generally accepted idea that God (the Father) and Jehovah are one and the same. One example of Scriptural verification for this is the New Testament usage of Psalm 110. Another example is Matthew 2:15 compared with Hosea 11:1.

A basic unity of the Bible is revealed by the discovery that Jehovah, who established the Old Covenant, is to be identified with the Trinity, who have established the new covenant. The next question

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<sup>23</sup>H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1952) II, pp. 173-174.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

involves an investigation of the new covenant to discover if it is essentially similar or dissimilar to the old covenant.

## II. THE NEW COVENANT

The last twenty seven books of the Bible are grouped separately and known as the New Testament. This New Testament, or new covenant, was established by the person and work of Jesus Christ. God is clearly revealed to the world in Jesus Christ. Christ came to reconcile the world to God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.<sup>25</sup>

Faith in God, as He is revealed in the person and work of Christ, is the condition of salvation in the new covenant. Salvation is essentially the covenant relationship whereby God becomes our God and we become His people.<sup>26</sup>

The basic principles of the new covenant are found foretold in promises and "shadows"<sup>27</sup> (or types) of the old covenant. That the just shall live by faith in the revealed God is the basic principle of both covenants.<sup>28</sup> There is a sense in which there is really only one covenant.

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<sup>25</sup>John 3:16.

<sup>26</sup>Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 9:4ff; Galatians 3; Hebrews 10:15-18; Revelation 21:3-8; 22:3-5.

<sup>27</sup>Hebrews 10:1.

<sup>28</sup>Romans 1:17, quoting Habakkuk 2:4.

For while there can be but one testament, corresponding to the one death of Christ ("My blood of the testament," according to the better MSS of Matt. 26:28), revelation yet organizes itself under the older testament, with its anticipatory symbols of Christ's coming (Jer. 31-32, II Cor. 3:14), and the newer testament, commemorative of His accomplished redemption (Jer. 31:31, II Cor. 3:6).<sup>29</sup>

The law established. Jeremiah had one word of hope and comfort at the time when Jerusalem was destroyed and carried away captive to Babylon: God was yet going to establish the covenant which was first engraved on stone tablets. God's new covenant would be inscribed on the heart and in the mind of the person who would belong to God.<sup>30</sup> This prophecy of Jeremiah is quoted twice in the Epistle to the Hebrews with the explanation that this is the covenant which has been established by Jesus Christ. He has not only fulfilled the sacrificial requirements in behalf of the believer by the shedding of His own blood once and for all, but in this covenant the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us that His law has been written in our hearts and minds.<sup>31</sup> So surely is the law of God written in the heart of the believer that it is nothing short of apostasy to impudently transgress that law:

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. A man that hath set at nought Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye,

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<sup>29</sup>J. Barton Payne, "Covenant", The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, op. cit., p. 186.

<sup>30</sup>Jeremiah 31:31 ff.

<sup>31</sup>Hebrews 10:15 ff.

shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?<sup>32</sup>

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, explained that faith does not set aside the law of God, but instead faith establishes the law.

Do we then make the law of none effect through faith: God forbid: nay, we establish the law.<sup>33</sup>

Nor is the law sin. It is the law that reveals sin.<sup>34</sup>

So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good.<sup>35</sup>

Those who walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, fulfill the law.<sup>36</sup>

The Pauline epistles that contain "proof-texts" that Christ has set aside the law for Christians also have proof-texts that those who impudently break the basic principles of the law will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Nor does the apostle John set forth an antinomian concept of grace. John quoted the words of Jesus to His disciples:

If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.<sup>37</sup>

In the first epistle of John it is written:

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Hebrews 10:26-29.

<sup>33</sup>Romans 3:31.

<sup>34</sup>Romans 7:7.

<sup>35</sup>Romans 7:12.

<sup>36</sup>Romans 8:4.

<sup>37</sup>John 14:15.

<sup>38</sup>John 5:3.

In the book of Revelation John foresaw a new heaven and a new earth but this did not change the fate of those who had transgressed the law of God. Their part was in the lake of fire, the second death.<sup>39</sup>

That God, in establishing His covenant, has established His law has been understood in the various eras of the Christian church. "The Epistle of Barnabas" in the Early Church discussed how the people of the new covenant were redeemed from iniquity.

This is set forth in Chapter fourteen of the epistle, entitled "The Lord Hath Given Us the Testament Which Moses Received and Broke":

Yes (It is even so); but let us inquire if the Lord has really given that testament which He swore to the fathers that He would give to the people. He did give it; but they were not worthy to receive it, on account of their sins. For the prophet declares, "And Moses was fasting forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai, that he might receive the testament of the Lord for the people." And he received from the Lord two tables, written in the spirit by the finger of the hand of the Lord. And Moses having received them, carried them down to give to the people. And the Lord said to Moses, "Moses, Moses, go down quickly; for thy people hath sinned, whom thou didst bring out of the land of Egypt." And Moses understood that they had again made molten images; and he threw the tables out of his hands, and the tables of the testament of the Lord were broken. Moses then received it, but they proved themselves unworthy. Learn now how we have received it. Moses, as a servant, received it; but the Lord himself, having suffered in our behalf, hath given it to us, that we should be the people of inheritance. But He was manifested, in order that they might be perfected in their iniquities, and that we, being constituted heirs through Him, might receive the testament of the Lord Jesus, who was prepared for this end, that by His personal manifestation, redeeming our hearts (which were already wasted by death, and given over to the iniquity of error) from darkness, He might by His word enter into a covenant with us. For it is written how the Father, about to redeem us from darkness, commanded Him to prepare a holy people for Himself. The

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<sup>39</sup>Revelation 21:8, also see 14:9-12.

prophet therefore declares, "I, the Lord Thy God, have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thy hand, and will strengthen Thee; and I have given Thee for a covenant to the people, for a light to the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth from fetters them that are bound, and those that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Ye perceive, then, whence we have been redeemed.<sup>40</sup>

The new covenant therefore was given to deliver its members from lawlessness.

Thomas Aquinas, the Roman Catholic theologian, believed that the Mosaic law contained some abiding moral precepts.

I answer that, The Old Law contained some moral precepts, as is evident from Exod. 20:13,15: Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal. This was reasonable, because just as the principal intention of human law is to create friendship between man and man, so the chief intention of the Divine law is to establish man in friendship with God. Now since likeness is the reason of love, . . . there cannot possibly be any friendship of man to God, Who is supremely good, unless man becomes good. Therefore it is written: You shall be holy, for I am holy. But the goodness of man is virtue, which makes its possessor good. Therefore it was necessary for the Old Law to include precepts about acts of virtue, and these are the moral precepts of the Law.<sup>41</sup>

And Aquinas declared that there can be no dispensation of the precepts of the decalogue.

Now the precepts of the decalogue contain the very intention of the lawgiver, Who is God. For the precepts of the first table, which direct us to God, contain the very order to the common and final good, which is God; while the precepts of the second table contain the order of justice to be observed among men, that nothing undue be done to anyone, and that each one be given his due; for it is in this sense that we are to take the precepts of

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<sup>40</sup>"The Epistle of Barnabas", p. 146

<sup>41</sup>The Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Vol. II (Great Books of the Western World, Vol. 20 of 54 vols., Robert Maynard Hutchins, ed.) (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), p. 246.

the decalogue. Consequently the precepts of the decalogue admit of no dispensation whatever.<sup>42</sup>

Martin Luther, leader of the Reformation, believed that in the new covenant God wrote His commandments upon men's hearts.

For Christian holiness, or the holiness of universal Christendom is that which comes when the Holy Spirit gives people faith in Christ, according to Acts 15, that is, He makes heart, soul, body, works and manner of life new and writes God's commandments, not on tables of stone, but on hearts of flesh according to II Corinthians 3. To speak plainly, according to the first Table He gives knowledge of God, so that those whom He enlightens can resist all heresies, in true faith, and overcome all false ideas and errors, and thus remain pure in faith against the devil. He also gives strength and comfort to feeble, despondent, weak consciences against the accusations and attacks of sin, so that souls are not despondent and so not despair and are not terrified at torment, pain, death, and God's wrath and judgment, but strengthened and comforted in hope, are bold and joyful in overcoming the devil.<sup>43</sup>

Luther said it is the Holy Spirit who writes this law on the heart.

Luther also said that any person who had not entered into such a relationship with God ought not call himself a Christian.

This is done by the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies and awakens even the body to this new life, until it is completed in the life beyond. That is Christian holiness. . . . Those who are not of this sort ought not to count themselves Christians, and they ought not to be comforted, as one comforts Christians, with much talk about the forgiveness of sins and the grace of Christ, as the Antinomians do.<sup>44</sup>

It is interesting to note that Luther wrote the above declarations in 1539, nearly twenty years after the beginning of the Reformation, and

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid. p. 260

<sup>43</sup>Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Churches", Works of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company and The Castle Press, 1931), V, 261.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 268.



six years before his death.

John Calvin also believed that the Holy Spirit engraves God's law upon the heart of the Christian.

It would be in vain for the feet and hands and eyes to be controlled to observe the Law unless obedience begins at the heart. It is the Holy Spirit's own particular office to engrave the Law of God on our hearts.<sup>45</sup>

Calvin believed that a Christian would therefore be disposed to live a life harmonious with the law written on his heart. Calvin's writings on this work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian have been summed up by Ronald S. Wallace as follows:

The effect of the work of the Spirit in writing the Law on our hearts is that instead of being inclined to sin we begin cordially to seek after a righteousness to which we were previously altogether averse, for the phrase to "write the Law in the heart" means that the Law should rule in the heart and that there should be "no feeling of the heart not conformable to and not consenting to its doctrine." (Comm. on Jer. 31:33, C.O. 38:692). The love of the Law thus created in our hearts by the Holy Spirit is a sure sign of our regeneration and adoption. (Comm. on Ps. 119:159, C.O. 32:286).<sup>46</sup>

John Wesley believed that man needs the revelation of God's law if man is to see God.

Now this law is an incorruptible picture of the most High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity. It is He whom, in His essence, no man hath seen or can see, made visible to men and angels. It is the face of God unveiled; God manifested to his creatures as they are able to bear it; manifested to give, and not to destroy, life---that they may see God and live. It is the heart of God disclosed to man. Yea, in some sense, we may apply to this law

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<sup>45</sup>Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 121. Ref. to Calvin's "Com. on Ps. 40:8, C.O. 31:412.cf. serm. on I Tim. 1:8-11, C.O. 53:55)".

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

what the Apostle says of His Son: It is "... the streaming forth or out-beaming of His glory, the express image of His person."<sup>47</sup>

If, as Wesley said, the "law is an incorruptible picture" of God, it is more acceptable for teaching the knowledge of God than the images of foolish persons (Romans 1:22) who "changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man." (Romans 1:23)

New Testament Christianity is not antinomian. The New Testament law of love harmonizes with, and fulfills the objective law of God recorded on tables of stone in the Old Covenant. The basic principles of the law are more sacred and more inviolable in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. These are the eternal laws which will stand as true in heaven as on earth. Thus the basic unity of the Bible is established upon the discovery that the God of the New Testament (Covenant) is the same as the God of the Old Testament. This is the eternal God who changes not. And the fundamental purpose of both covenants is the same. Neither covenant is antinomian.

The specific question of man's making an image to represent Jehovah in the New Testament dispensation is further considered in the following pages.

Image worship in the New Testament. A survey of the New Testament reveals that there are a number of references to idols and images for worship. It is interesting to note that the Greek word for an idol in the New Testament is eidolon. This word comes from an obsolete root

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<sup>47</sup>John Wesley, Works of John Wesley, V, 438.

word which means to see (Latin: video). The tenses of this root word have formed two families<sup>48</sup> one means to see; the other, to know.<sup>49</sup> The Greek word for an image means likeness or (figuratively) a representation.<sup>50</sup>

The absence of references to images in the Gospels is noteworthy. In the Gospels there are no references to idols or gods for worship. The only possible reference to such an image is that of the image on the coin which Jesus said should be rendered to Caesar. In this case Jesus obviously did not condemn the making of a "likeness" of man to represent a man. It is noteworthy also that Jesus chose Samaria as the place to announce that God is a spirit. The writer was much influenced while doing missionary work in Japan by the statement of a respected missionary leader there, that since Jesus condescended to recognize no idols in His ministry, the messengers of Christ would be wise to follow this example of Jesus not to pay the idols of the heathen the tribute of any recognition whatever. This meant it would not be necessary to speak against false gods if the knowledge of the true God was proclaimed. However this extreme interpretation is brought into question when it is observed that in the writings of three of Jesus' apostles, Paul, John, and Peter, there is teaching against idolatry.

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<sup>48</sup>Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon (N. Y.: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1856), p. 398.

<sup>49</sup>James Strong, "Greek Dictionary of the New Testament", The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (N. Y. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1890), p. 25.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

And in the book of Revelation, Jesus Himself is quoted as warning two churches about the pollution of idolatry that was corrupting them.

There are several references to the subject of idolatry in Acts. The martyr Stephen, in his defense before the Sanhedrin, called attention to the Israelites' rejection of God when they made the golden calf. His suggestion is that the Israelites were as sure they were worshipping God with the calf as the later Jews were sure they were worshipping God by keeping the temple and crucifying Jesus when they thought He spoke against the temple. The other references to idolatry in Acts grow out of the missionary encounters of the apostles. The Jerusalem conference gave special attention to idolatry<sup>51</sup> to avoid its pollutions for Gentile Christians. At Lystra the people tried to deify Barnabas and Paul.<sup>52</sup> In Athens, the center of philosophy, Paul singled out the sin of idolatry for attack.<sup>53</sup> In Ephesus the idol-makers of the goddess Diana attacked him because he was hurting their business.<sup>54</sup> The barbarians on the island of Melita decided Paul was a god.<sup>55</sup> In his epistle to the Romans, Paul traced the degeneration of the heathen from their dissatisfaction with the true nature of God and their substitution of images for Him.<sup>56</sup> Paul gave instructions to the Corinthians about how to live in the midst of an idolatrous society: An idol is really nothing and we know that there is only one God, nevertheless not all men have this knowledge, so the Christian should consider his influence upon the person of weak

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<sup>51</sup>Acts 15:20,29.    <sup>52</sup>Acts 14:12ff.    <sup>53</sup>Acts 17:22ff.

<sup>54</sup>Acts 19:23ff.    <sup>55</sup>Acts 28:6.    <sup>56</sup>Romans 1:18ff.

conscience.<sup>57</sup> Paul said that when the Gentiles sacrificed to idols they were actually sacrificing to demons instead of to God. (I. Cor. 10:20) He warned them to "flee from idolatry,"<sup>58</sup> and he reminded them that the temple of God has no concord with idols.<sup>59</sup> Paul recognized that the Thessalonians had turned from idols "to serve a living and true God."<sup>60</sup> The apostle Peter recognized that the Christians addressed in his first epistle had formerly been involved in "abominable idolatries."<sup>61</sup>

The first epistle of John sets out to "declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;"<sup>62</sup> and concludes with the warning, "guard yourselves from idols."<sup>63</sup> It is the opinion of some Biblical scholars that this warning about images is the last word, chronologically speaking, in the writing of the New Testament Scriptures.

In the book of Revelation, John has a number of references to the worship of images and idolatry. John reports to the church in Pergamum that Christ has against them the fact they have "some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols. . ."<sup>64</sup> Christ has against the church in Thyatira the fact that they permit "the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth

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<sup>57</sup>I Corinthians 8:1ff.    <sup>58</sup>I Corinthians 10:14,21.

<sup>59</sup>II Corinthians 6:16.    <sup>60</sup>I Thessalonians 1:9.

<sup>61</sup>I Peter 4:3.    <sup>62</sup>I John 1:2. (Also 1:3).    <sup>63</sup>I John 5:21.

<sup>64</sup>Revelation 2:14.

my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols."<sup>65</sup> Christ called upon the church in Pergamum to repent, but He declared the guilty ones in the church at Thyatira had already refused to repent and they would now face great tribulation if they did not repent.<sup>66</sup> In chapter nine, when the sixth angel sounded his trumpet a third part of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke, and brimstone.<sup>67</sup> This catastrophe did not deter the rest of mankind from worshiping images:

And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk.<sup>68</sup>

In chapter thirteen it is recorded that the beast that came up out of the earth, and which had two horns, deceived the people who dwell on earth "that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived"<sup>69</sup> and miraculous powers were allowed to the beast so that it was able to cause the image to breathe and speak and cause those who would not worship the image to be killed.<sup>70</sup> In chapter fourteen an angel announced that whoever worshiped the beast or his image or received a mark on his forehead or hand would receive everlasting punishment from the Lord. This message is concluded with the instruction that God's saints will keep His commandments and the faith of Jesus.

And (this third angel) followed them, saying with a great voice,

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<sup>65</sup>Revelation 2:20.

<sup>66</sup>Revelation 2:16,22ff.

<sup>67</sup>Revelation 9:13,18.

<sup>68</sup>Revelation 9:20.

<sup>69</sup>Revelation 13:14.

<sup>70</sup>Revelation 13:15. (Note: If the "beast" is a false Messiah, then would not his image be advanced as being the image of Christ?)

If any man worshipping the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment goeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.<sup>71</sup>

In chapter nineteen is recorded a battle in which the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered to make war against one that sat upon a white horse coming from heaven. The beast was taken, and along with him was taken the false prophet who had deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those that worshiped his image. These two were "cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone."<sup>72</sup> In chapter twenty John reports his vision of those who had been "beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image. . ."<sup>73</sup> and these lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. In chapter twenty-one John reported that idolaters will be among those whose part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.<sup>74</sup> In the last chapter of Revelation, the final chapter in the Bible, there is a final declaration that idolaters will have no entrance to the city of God.

Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates

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<sup>71</sup>Revelation 14:9-12.

<sup>72</sup>Revelation 19:20.

<sup>73</sup>Revelation 20:4.

<sup>74</sup>Revelation 21:8.

into the city. Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie.<sup>75</sup>

The foregoing survey of idolatry in the New Testament indicates that what is described is clearly repugnant and antagonistic to the true worship of God. The numerous references to idolatry and image worship in the book of Revelation indicate that, before the final judgment of the earth, the sin of idolatry will be very prevalent. The world will be worshipping an image. Those who worship this image will have been deceived into this worship. (If the "beast" should be accepted by the world as the Messiah, then it seems necessary to conclude that his image will be accepted by the world as an image of Christ.) This deception will be accomplished with the help of a false prophet. While many of the references to idolatry are clearly applied to pagan idolatries related to other gods, there are some references (such as in Acts 17, Romans 1, and Revelation 13, 14, 19, 20, and perhaps I Corinthians 10:20, and II Corinthians 6:16, and I John 5:21) which might apply to images made by Christians to portray their God, if they would try to portray Him.

Images to represent God. The above survey of image worship in the New Testament was general. It indicates a general breach between image worship and the worship of God. But the question remains whether or not the New Testament specifically forbids the making and using of images to represent the true God at any time and for any purpose. Even the Jerusalem Conference, recorded in Acts 15, does not specifically

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<sup>76</sup>Revelation 22:14,15.



refer to images made to represent God. This conference dealt with the general relation of Gentile Christians to the Mosaic law. This conference instructed the church to avoid the pollutions of pagan idolatry even though such Mosaic institutions as circumcision were not required. The testimony of the Early Church indicates that they permitted no image to represent God. Tertullian said of this conference:

The reason why the Holy Spirit did, when the apostles at the time were consulting, relax the bond and yoke for us, was that we might be free to devote ourselves to the shunning of idolatry. This shall be our Law, the more fully to be administered the more ready it is to hand; (a Law) peculiar to Christians, by means whereof we are recognized and examined by heathens.<sup>77</sup>

On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church understands the apostles only opposed the image worship which gave worship to the gods of the heathen, but they recognize that the Early Church had no images. Therefore they say:

Owing to the influence of the Old Testament prohibition of images, Christian veneration of images developed only after the victory of the Church over paganism.<sup>78</sup>

The apostle Paul provided two discourses in which he opposed the making of images to represent God. The first was addressed to pagan philosophers. When Paul Visited Athens "his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols."<sup>79</sup> Therefore he began to

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<sup>77</sup> Tertullian, "On Idolatry", The Ante-Nicene Fathers (N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), III, 62.

<sup>78</sup> Ludwig Ott, Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma, James Canon Bastible, England, ed. (St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Book Company, 1957), p. 320.

<sup>79</sup> Acts 17:16.

reason with the people both in the synagogue and in the market place:

So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him.<sup>80</sup>

This aroused the interest of the people sufficiently that Paul was given the opportunity to present his message before the philosophers. Paul addressed himself to the folly of endeavoring to represent God with an image. He quoted the wisdom of their own philosophers who said that man is the offspring of God: "For we are also his offspring".<sup>81</sup> Paul called upon them to act consistently with this wisdom and not to consider the Godhead to be like gold, silver, or stone, graven by man's art, if man, the offspring of God, is not like such images.

Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man.<sup>82</sup>

This was the negative aspect of declaring unto them "The Unknown God" to which he had observed an image.<sup>83</sup> After destroying any reason they might have to erect an image to Paul's God, he immediately stated the positive aspect of his message by declaring unto them Jesus and the resurrection. Paul concluded his explanation of the folly of the making of an image of God by declaring that, while God once over-looked this error on man's part, He has now sufficiently revealed Himself that He calls upon all men everywhere to repent because they know that God is going to judge according to that which is right.

Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the

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<sup>80</sup>Acts 17:17.

<sup>81</sup>Acts 17:28

<sup>82</sup>Acts 17:29.

<sup>83</sup>Acts 17:23.

Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. . .<sup>84</sup>

Thus Paul's revelation of the unknown God to the idolatrous Athenians involved both a negative and a positive proposition. The negative proposition was that God cannot be likened to any man-made image. The positive proposition was that Christ is the revelation of God. Paul's principle of becoming "all things to all men that (he might) by all means save some"<sup>85</sup> did not extend to using an image to present Christ to the idolatrous Athenians.<sup>86</sup>

Paul's second discourse opposing images made to represent God was addressed to Christians, both Jewish and Gentile. This is found in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans. Paul first states the theme of the epistle: "the righteous shall live by faith."<sup>87</sup> Finding God's righteousness is through believing in God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ.<sup>88</sup>

But from 1:18-32 Paul traces the downward fall of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. It is evident from this passage of Scripture that Paul traces all the downward fall from the point of man's

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<sup>84</sup>Acts 17:29-31.

<sup>85</sup>I Corinthians 9:22.

<sup>86</sup>Pope Paul VI, on his historic visit to India, was given considerable publicity for carrying a large crucifix in the street in a public parade. The pope's use of an image of Christ did not follow the precedent set by his namesake when he visited an idolatrous land.

<sup>87</sup>Romans 1:17.

<sup>88</sup>Romans 1:17; 5:1; 6:23; 8:1ff, etc.

dissatisfaction with the right concept of God.

The first statement of man's dissatisfaction with the nature of God is that he hinders the truth of God in unrighteousness. The marginal reading is to "hold the truth", i.e., in unrighteousness (verse 18). That it is God's nature that Paul is talking about is evidenced by the lengthy explanation that follows about how God has even manifested the fact that "his everlasting power and divinity are invisible, so that they may be without excuse"<sup>89</sup> (that is: be without excuse if they should turn away from this knowledge) and make images. The question might be asked: Does Romans 1:18-23 say that the invisible things of God (even His everlasting power and divinity) are made visible in nature? or that nature reveals that God (even His everlasting power and divinity) is invisible? The first interpretation opens the door to natural theology; the second interpretation reveals the inadequacy of natural theology to lead man to the knowledge of God. Verse 23, which finds that man is foolish for attempting to exchange God's incorruptible glory for a "likeness of an image" of something corruptible, supports the interpretation that God is invisible. No matter which interpretation is accepted it remains that Paul is saying man was not satisfied with God's nature and held the truth in unrighteousness.

The second statement that man's sin starts with dissatisfaction with the true nature of God is found in the next verse.

(Because) that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God,  
neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and

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<sup>89</sup>Romans 1:20.

their senseless heart was darkened.<sup>90</sup>

In this darkened condition Paul found that man began to create images to represent God as man wished to think of God, which images were, of course, essentially "other" than God. They had departed from God.

(They) changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image. . .<sup>91</sup>

For this reason God gave them up to follow the lusts of their sinful hearts to realize the wicked extremes that such a course would accomplish. Release to sin further was the first punishment of sin.<sup>92</sup>

The third statement that man's dissatisfaction with God's nature led him away from God is that man "exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator. . .<sup>93</sup> They worshipped the thing created.

The fourth statement that man's dissatisfaction with the nature of God led away from God is that because "they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting."<sup>94</sup>

Thus in Romans I it is stated four times that man's departure from the knowledge to God has come because of man's dissatisfaction with the true nature of God. Paul locates man's making of images for worship as an expression of a heart darkened and made foolish by a departure from the true knowledge of God. The principle of departing from God via images is stated in verse 23:

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<sup>90</sup>Romans 1:21.    <sup>91</sup>Romans 1:23.    <sup>92</sup>Romans 1:24ff.

<sup>93</sup>Romans 1:25.    <sup>94</sup>Romans 1:28.

(They) changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image . . .

This is the basic thought of the entire passage. Putting an image in the place of the incorruptible God is contrary to living by faith in His true nature. Images are not aid to the worship of God. It may be instructive to notice in this connection that as Paul cited the prophet Habakkuk's theme "the just shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17) and followed it with a denunciation of idolatry, just so the prophet Habakkuk has a searching denunciation of idolatry in the same chapter following his statement about faith. (Habakkuk 2:4). After a statement that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah" (Habakkuk 2:14) the prophet asked the question: "What profiteth the graven image . . . the teacher of lies . . . Shall this teach?" (Habakkuk 2:18,19). There is such a similarity of subject matter as in Romans I that the question might be asked: Was not Paul talking about the knowledge of God (Romans 1:1,14,15; cf. Habakkuk 2:14), and saying that the just would know Him by faith (Romans 1:17; cf. Habakkuk 2:4), but the unjust would fail to know Him through their images (Romans 1:18-23; cf. Habakkuk 2:18-20), with Habakkuk 2 in mind?

In the Early Church, Justin Martyr discussed how God is insulted when men try to fashion His image out of materials in their hands:

And neither do we honour with many sacrifices and garlands of flowers such deities as men have formed and set in shrines and called gods; since we see that these are soulless and dead, and have not the form of God (for we do not consider that God has such a form as some say that they imitate to His honour), but have the names and forms of those wicked demons which have appeared. For why need we tell you who already know, into what forms the craftsmen, carving and cutting, casting and hammering, fashion

the materials? And often out of vessels of dishonour, by merely changing the form, and making an image of the prerequisite shape, they make what they call a god; which we consider not only senseless, but to be even insulting to God, who, having ineffable glory and form, thus gets His name attached to things that are corruptible, and require constant service.<sup>95</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, alludes to Romans I to justify their sacramental system. This is found in an article entitled, "The Sacramental System":

After all, God is himself the author of nature. He could quite well, had he chosen, have created nothing but angels. However, he not only created this visible universe, but created Man in particular, and continually thrusts nature into his eyes and on to his attention so that to worship God by means of nature and in nature is the very suggestion, so to say, of God himself. St. Paul (footnote here to Romans I) insists that men had no excuse for not knowing and worshipping God, since "what is invisible in God is (none the less) ever since the foundation of the world made visible to human reflection through his works, even his eternal power and divinity", . . . <sup>96</sup>

Thus the Roman Catholic Church finds in Romans I a justification for using material things to represent the holy, while the Early Church and later the Reformation church found this chapter to forbid such a use of the material, created object. However it is interesting to note that during the seventeenth century when even the Holy Spirit was being represented in art by human form, Pope Urban VIII, in 1623, prohibited this representation of deity. A Catholic publication says:

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<sup>95</sup> Justin Martyr, "Folly of Idol Worship" (Chapter IX of "the First Apology of Justin") The Ante-Nicene Fathers, I, 165.

<sup>96</sup> C. C. Martindale, "The Sacramental System" (ch. xxi, The Teaching of the Catholic Church: A Summary of the Catholic Doctrine, George D. Smith, ed.) p. 737.

During the time of the humanistic movement, and shortly before it, the custom of representing the Holy Ghost in human form became fairly common. This however, was prohibited by the church.<sup>97</sup>

In Martin Luther's Lectures on Deuteronomy he referred to Romans I to support his argument that Satan is unwittingly worshipped when man improvises a ceremony for worshipping God that does not have its foundation in God's Word:

This is what the apostle touches on in Rom. 1:21ff. . . . This is nothing else than to want God to be shaped by us, not ourselves to be shaped by God. It is to want to adjust the plans and thinking of God to our plans and thinking, as He says in Isaiah (40:18): "What likeness will you set for Him?" and in Isaiah 55:9: "As far as the heavens are higher than the earth, My ways are exalted above your ways."<sup>98</sup>

Charles Hodge says that "the glory" is "a collective term for all the divine perfections."<sup>99</sup> Hodge believed that worshipping God through an image identified such worship with all other idolatry which missed the glory of God. He makes the following comparison of this worship with heathen idolatries:

Some professed to regard the visible image as a symbol of the real object of their adoration; while others believed that the gods in some way filled these idols, and operated through them; and others again, that the universal principle of being was revered under these manifestations. The Scriptures take no account of these distinctions. All who bowed down to stocks and stones are denounced as worshipping gods which their own hands

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<sup>97</sup>Carl Van Treek and Aloysius Croft, Symbols in the Church (Milwaukie: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1936), p. 44. (Nihil obstat: H. B. Ries, Censor librorum; Imprimatur: Samuel A. Stritch).

<sup>98</sup>Martin Luther, Lectures on Deuteronomy, p. 54.

<sup>99</sup>Charles Hodge, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), p. 39.



had made; and idolatry is made to include not merely the worship of false gods, but the worship of the true God by images.<sup>100</sup>

Jesus established spiritual worship. Jesus chose Samaria,<sup>101</sup> the location defiled by the golden calves of Jeroboam, for His announcement about the spiritual nature of God and the spiritual worship He thereby requires. Attention is given in the Scripture that Jesus "must needs pass through Samaria" (John 4:4), and His message to the defiled woman of Samaria:

The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: . . . God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.<sup>102</sup>

Jesus told the disciples that He was the truth and the way to God.<sup>103</sup> He also said that whoever had seen Him had seen the Father.<sup>104</sup>

But the fact that His physical image did not set Him apart from other men as obviously the image of the Father needs little documentation. Many Jewish people wanted Him executed as a blasphemer. Even Philip, His own disciple, did not recognize His deity.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?<sup>105</sup>

Jesus was not discernable to the human eye as the "only begotten from the Father; full of grace and truth"<sup>106</sup> by His physical image, but only as His deity was revealed to an individual by the Lord. The human eye could not recognize the actual deity of Christ apart from divine

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<sup>100</sup>Hodge, loc. cit.    <sup>101</sup>John 4:4.    <sup>102</sup>John 4:23,24.

<sup>103</sup>John 14:6.    <sup>104</sup>John 14:9.    <sup>105</sup>John 14:9.

<sup>106</sup>John 1:14.

illumination.

Examples of persons who recognized Jesus for the special Person He is by a special revelation of God directly, or by special insight or illumination gained from knowledge and belief of the Scriptures are Mary,<sup>107</sup> Joseph,<sup>108</sup> the prophetess Anna,<sup>109</sup> the aged Simeon,<sup>110</sup> John the Baptist,<sup>111</sup> Nathaniel,<sup>112</sup> and Simon Peter.<sup>113</sup> After His resurrection Jesus met with His disciples and used the scriptures to convince them that He was truly the Christ,<sup>114</sup> and that all authority was His.<sup>115</sup> It may also be observed that after His resurrection Jesus revealed His physical image to no person that either did not then believe on Him or did not later believe on Him in the Scriptural sense.

His deity was visible, not to the physical eye, but to the eye of faith. Spiritual vision is an imperative for seeing God. Those who were not born and alive spiritually could not see spiritual things or a spiritual God.<sup>116</sup> And spiritual birth and life depends upon faith in Jesus.<sup>117</sup> Thus the true worship of God depends upon (1) the knowledge of the true object of worship (who is spiritual), and (2) worship which is spiritual (in spirit). The revelation of a man, even the perfect man, does not reveal God to the person who does not believe the word of God. That which is natural is natural, and that which is spiritual is

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<sup>107</sup>Luke 1:38.

<sup>108</sup>Matthew 1:24.

<sup>109</sup>Luke 2:38.

<sup>110</sup>Luke 2:34.

<sup>111</sup>Mark 1:7-9.

<sup>112</sup>John 1:47-51.

<sup>113</sup>Matthew 16:16-17.

<sup>114</sup>Luke 24:44-49.

<sup>115</sup>Matthew 28:18.

<sup>116</sup>John 3:3,6.

<sup>117</sup>John 3:9,14-16.

spiritual. Paul said:

"Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged." (I Corinthians 2:14).

For this reason Paul could say the flesh did not teach the knowledge of God:

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

Thus an image of a man can represent a man and teach those things which the natural man understands (Jesus used the image of Caesar to teach Caesar's rights). But only the Spirit of God can reveal and teach about God. These things can only be spiritually discerned (John 3:3; ICor. 2:11-13 margin: "interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men").

The object of worship is God as He is revealed in Jesus. And this revelation of Jesus to an individual is the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said:

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me.<sup>118</sup>

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would glorify Him<sup>119</sup> and the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance the things Jesus had already taught them<sup>120</sup> and would guide them into all truth.<sup>121</sup>

The relationship between the disciples and the Holy Spirit would be very close: He would dwell in them<sup>122</sup> and He would be with them

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<sup>118</sup>John 15:26.

<sup>119</sup>John 16:14.

<sup>120</sup>John 14:26.

<sup>121</sup>John 16:13

<sup>122</sup>John 14:17.

forever.<sup>123</sup> The presence of the invisible Holy Spirit would be more advantageous to the disciples than the visible presence of Jesus with them in the flesh, for He said to the disciples:

It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.<sup>124</sup>

The presence of the Holy Spirit abiding within them would guarantee the manifestation of the Father and the Son also to the disciple.<sup>125</sup> The person who keeps God's word will have the abiding presence of God.<sup>126</sup> The presence of the Holy Spirit guarantees the believer the presence of a teacher who will "teach you all things", and a reminder (a Person) who will "bring to your remembrance all that (Jesus) said unto you."<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, the coming of the Holy Spirit would continue the work and purpose of Christ in the world. He would teach the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment. This is God's way of reconciling the world to Himself and teaching the unlearned the knowledge of God.

Jesus said that the words He had spoken were spirit.<sup>128</sup> He said also that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance the words He had spoken. And the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the believer, this being done through the revelation of the Word. The word which the Old Testament prophets spoke by inspiration became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>129</sup> John said that "the Word became flesh"<sup>130</sup> when he was

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<sup>123</sup>John 14:16.      <sup>124</sup>John 14:7.      <sup>125</sup>John 14:15-24.

<sup>126</sup>John 14:23.      <sup>127</sup>John 14:26.      <sup>128</sup>John 6:63

<sup>129</sup>Frank E. Gaebelin, "The Unity of the Bible", Revelation and the Bible, Carl F. H. Henry, ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, '58), p. 401.

<sup>130</sup>John 1:14.

speaking of the incarnation of Jesus. The Holy Spirit inspired this word that was perfectly fulfilled in Jesus, and the Holy Spirit uses this word to reveal Jehovah-Jesus to those who believe that word. Furthermore the word of God is written upon the heart of the believer.

Jesus declared that when the Holy Spirit would come upon His disciples they would become His witnesses to proclaim and reveal Christ to the ends of the earth<sup>131</sup> that others might also enter into covenant with Him.<sup>132</sup>

Inspiration of images. The question can be raised whether or not the Holy Spirit inspires images to represent deity. That it is not impossible for men to believe that the Holy Spirit does inspire and use such images is testified to by the fact that such images are found in churches and homes of people who professedly believe in the deity of Christ, and by the occasionally heard testimony of someone who testifies that the Lord used a picture of Christ to convert him, or the testimony of an artist that the Lord helped him in the creation of such an image intended to represent a member of the trinity. The following notes survey some of the difficulties of justifying such an interpretation from the Scriptures. The evidence against such an inspiration of these images includes the testimony of Christ that He did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. There is no Scriptural evidence that Christ abrogated the Old Testament prohibition of images of Jehovah. There is no explicit permission or precedent in the Scriptures for man to attempt

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<sup>131</sup>Acts 1:8.

<sup>132</sup>Acts 15:15-18, etc.

to portray any member of the trinity by art. Jehovah did not incarnate Himself until such time as the Jews were unalterably and unconditionally opposed to tolerating any image of deity. When Christ fulfilled the ceremonial law it could pass away because it was no longer needed. But when He fulfilled the moral law He actually confirmed and established it.

The great general principles of the Law were not transitory but abiding, and reappear under the gospel dispensation.<sup>133</sup>

Jesus' statement that God is a Spirit and must be worshipped in spirit only established the more deeply and clearly the reason for the Old Testament prohibition of images of God---images which do not require spiritual worship. And in His Sermon on the Mount He said the condition for seeing God was purity of heart.

Further evidence that the Holy Spirit does not empower or inspire men to make images of God is based upon the reasoning that if the Holy Spirit inspired the Old Testament law and also inspired the writing of the New Testament, then He surely would not inspire anything on the part of faithful men that would contradict and oppose a fundamental part of that law. It has been noted that the word which the Holy Spirit inspired does reveal Jesus. Evidence has also been previously noted that images do not reveal God.

It is noted, however, that God does reserve for Himself the right to make the image of Himself, and the two evidences of this are: the making of man in the image of God, (Gen. 1:27) and the work of the Holy

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<sup>133</sup>The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Chicago: The Howard Severance Co., 1915), III, 1847.

Spirit in conforming believers to the image of God's Son. (Romans 8:29).

The Lord's Supper. Evidently Christ was aware of the tension that would result from the fact that His uncreated deity could not be duplicated by man into a created image or likeness, and yet His manhood ("made like unto his brethren")<sup>134</sup> has been retained. Christ is our brother.<sup>135</sup> Christ actually authorized a physical memorial of His manhood for the benefit of His believers. The Lord's Supper is this institution. The apostle Paul continued this practice. (I. Cor. 11:23-26). Yet it cannot be said that Jesus hereby authorized making images to represent God. Just as God provided, in the Old Testament, the ark of the covenant which actually had images but which images guarded against the idea that God could be represented with an image because He dwelt between the images or above them, so the New Testament provides a visible reminder that God had incarnated Himself in human flesh, but which reminder also guards against the creation of an image to represent God. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He said of the bread, "this is my body" (Matt. 26:26); and of the cup, "this is my blood of the covenant." The Roman Catholic church has taken this to an extreme when they say of the bread, "this is the Host (meaning Jehovah of Hosts).

The interpretation of the Lord's Supper by the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed church differs basically. The leaders of the Reformation believed that the Roman Catholic celebration of the Lord's Supper in the mass was idolatrous.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Hebrews 2:17.

<sup>135</sup>Hebrews 2:12.

<sup>136</sup>William Craft Dickinson (ed.), John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950).

The Epistle to the Hebrews. The ceremonial worship of the Old Testament is compared with the reality of coming into the "holy place" (Heb. 10:19) itself in the epistle to the Hebrews. Entrance into this holy place is by faith in Jesus Christ. Worship is much more than ceremonies and symbols. New Testament worship requires a covenant relationship between God and man in which God's laws are written inwardly in man's heart and mind (Heb. 9:8-10; 10:16). New Testament worship is not only a season (as an hour in church), but a purposeful life to be lived as illustrated by a runner in a race with his eyes steadfastly fixed upon his goal: and the goal is Jesus Christ. We are to follow the example of faith of Moses, who "endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb 11:27). The fact that faith is basic in worshipping God in both the Old and New Testaments is declared in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Hebrews. But faith in the New Testament has the advantage because the object of faith is more clearly revealed. There is now no further need of the shadow of types and ceremonies (Heb. 10:1; 12:23,24), which are now ready to drop away, as God Himself is revealed in Christ (Heb. 12:27). When Hebrews 12:29 declares "our God is a consuming fire" it is an obvious reference to Deuteronomy 4:24, which passage explained at length why the people were to make no image or likeness.

If the representations of God instituted by the Lord Himself, and which guarded against man-made images as His representatives, are all done away with and no longer necessary, it is highly questionable whether the



church is benefited by the addition of man-made images of God to represent Christ.

### III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### Summary

The man made images described in the New Testament may be summed up and distinguished by a four-fold classification similar to that found in the Old Testament.

Other gods. Images made to represent gods that the people evidently considered distinct from the God of the Bible were prohibited for Christians. Most of the idolatry Paul encountered in his missionary journeys would fall in this class. It is commonly known as heathen idolatry. Images of the goddess Diana are an example.

Images to represent God. There is no record in the New Testament of any image having been made to represent any member of the Trinity by any Jewish person or Christian believer during the lifetimes of Jesus or the apostles. The influence of the Old Testament is evident here. Nevertheless there is sufficient evidence that the New Testament gives consideration to such images that such a classification is justified. Such evidence includes Paul's using the inscription on an image "To the unknown God" as his point of departure to reveal Jesus unto the Athenians. But before mentioning Jesus he convincingly argued that God cannot be likened to an image. The point is that Paul discussed the impossibility

of making an image that would be a likeness of his God. His epistle to the Romans includes a discussion about what happens when God's incorruptible glory is changed for the likeness of an image. There is evidence in John's first epistle that his concluding statement, "keep yourselves from images (eidolon)", may refer back to his statement of the purpose of the epistle: "That which we have seen and heard (of the "Word of life") declare we unto you" (I John 1:1-3). John is evidently saying the knowledge of the "true God" (I John 5:20) is not advanced by "images" (I John 5:21). The book of Revelation warns that the world will be deceived by a false prophet into image worship at the end time.

Typical images. Christ, in the New Testament, fulfilled the types set forth in the Old Testament to illustrate the significance of His ministry. Therefore typical images drop away in the New Testament. Nevertheless this classification of images is discussed in the New Testament. Jesus spoke of the brazen serpent as being typical of His own being lifted up on the cross. And in a modified sense of the word "image" (the artistic element is missing) the Lord's Supper was instituted as a remembrance of the body and blood of Christ.

General art. There is no commandment in the New Testament prohibiting art work. Nor did Jesus condemn the use of Caesar's image on coins. Even Paul's discussion of images of "corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:23) does not apparently condemn the making of such images but the putting of them into

the place in man's understanding and affection that only God should occupy.

### Conclusion

Therefore it may be said that there is evidence in the New Testament that man cannot make an image which would be a likeness of God.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### Summary

The problem considered in this study has been: Does the Bible permit the use of man-made images of God, or images that man might intend to represent God? A four-fold classification of man-made images has been found in both the Old and New Testaments.

Other gods. Images were made for the worship of such other gods as Baal and Ashtoreth in the Old Testament, and for Diana in the New Testament. The apostle Paul said that when the Gentiles worshipped idols they were actually worshipping demons. Israel and Judah were both involved in worship of these images before being taken into captivity. This was a frequent problem in Old Testament times. In the New Testament there is no account of any Jewish person worshipping such a foreign god. Gentile Christians were warned by the Jerusalem Conference to avoid the pollutions of idolatry. The apostle Paul said idolaters would not inherit the kingdom of God, and the apostle John said idolaters would have their part in the lake of fire and would have no place in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Images made to represent God. The possibility of man's attempting to make an image to represent God is given consideration in both testaments. In the decalogue the second commandment prohibits bowing before and serving the image of anything in heaven or earth. Jehovah did not reveal Himself by any form when He established His covenant with Israel

so that they would not make an image. In the golden calf problem the people wanted something that would be for them the "gods" that delivered them from Egypt. The Hebrew word translated "gods" is elohim which is more frequently translated "God" in English. This word refers to God about 2,500 times in the Old Testament, but refers to gods only about 250 times. In fact, the Levites who returned from the Babylonian captivity acknowledged that the people at Sinai said of the calf, "This is (our) God . . . that brought (us) up out of Egypt." (Neh. 9:18). And Stephen, in the New Testament, suggested to the Sanhedrin members that the temple of Jehovah had become their "golden calf": that they were serving it rather than Jehovah in the same way the forefathers served the calf as if they were serving Jehovah. (They disagreed.) Aaron built an altar before the calf and proclaimed a feast to Jehovah. Deuteronomy, chapters nine and ten, provide a comparison between this golden calf problem (chapter nine) and the true worship of Jehovah before the ark of the covenant (chapter ten). God promised to meet with Moses from between the cherubim above the mercy-seat. There was no image in that place.

During the interim period between Moses and the kings there is the record that Micah, an Ephraimite, put an image in his "house of God" that he built. There is no evidence that he intended this image to represent a heathen god. He did that which was "right in his own eyes." There is evidence that his "house of God" was generally patterned after the tabernacle in Shiloh, which was not far away. He obtained a Levite for

his priest, and he expected that he would enjoy the blessing of God. Various Bible scholars have believed that the image Micah put into his house of God was intended as a representation of Him.

King Jeroboam established golden calves at Dan and Bethel and persuaded Israel to worship at these places rather than to make the journey to Jerusalem. He introduced the calves to the people with the same explanation that the people at Sinai had believed to accept the similar calf. There is no statement that either Jeroboam or the people intended to depart from Jehovah. There is no statement that the people thought they were departing from the worship of Jehovah (except for departing from His worship at Jerusalem). Jeroboam instituted this worship for the express purpose of unifying the ten tribes to himself instead of allowing them to be reunited with King Rehoboam in Jerusalem. It has been noted that if Jeroboam had asked the people to change to other gods than Jehovah it would have divided the kingdom rather than have united it to him. There is no record of Elijah speaking against these calves when he defended the nation from going into the apostasy of Baal worship. King Jehu destroyed Baal worship in his "zeal for Jehovah," but he did not depart "from after . . . the golden calves" in Dan and Bethel, and there is no indication that Jehu considered these calves contrary to the worship of Jehovah.

There is evidence that the prophets found these calves to be a unique problem. There is no evidence that Israel ever acknowledged any departure from Jehovah in these golden calves, at least until the

captivity. The man of God whom Jehovah sent out of Judah to oppose Jeroboam's institution did not speak against the calves but only "against the altar" (I Kings 13:2,3,5), even though Jeroboam had already been "sacrificing unto the calves" (I Kings 12:32). There is no evidence that the "old prophet in Bethel" had spoken against the calf institution in Bethel, (and there is no evidence that he intended to be a false prophet: he brought a message from Jehovah to the other man of God and he wanted to be buried in the same sepulchre where the man of God was buried). There is no record of Elijah or Elisha opposing these calves, though there is no record of their permitting them either. Amos incurred the wrath of Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, by his prophecies against "Samaria" and "Bethel" and "the altar" and "images", but the calves were not specifically mentioned. That this altar was intended for the worship of Jehovah but rejected by Him is supported by the fact that Amos saw the Lord upon the altar with the message that He would destroy that altar (Amos 9:1ff.) and raise up again the tabernacle of David (which of course had no such images). Hosea had certain statements that suggest the people had been identifying Jehovah with the calves. He said to Samaria, "He hath cast off thy calf," (Hosea 8:5), as if God had once condescended to own the calf (or even to be clothed with the calf in an incarnate sense). He said Ephraim "compasseth (God) about with falsehood" (Hosea 11:12). Hosea prophesied that Israel would return to Jehovah and no more say to the work of their hands, "Ye are our gods" (Hosea 14:3). No prophet said the calves were God or a representation of Him. They evidently faced the

problem that the people thought they were such representations. Only with caution did the prophets acknowledge that the people believed they were worshipping Jehovah at these places. Mostly they tried to persuade the people that this worship broke their covenant with God and they would surely go into captivity for it.

No evidence has been found that the Old Testament permitted man to make images of his own imagination to represent God. No Biblical scholar or commentator has been found who believed that the Old Testament permitted such images.

In New Testament times the divine prohibition of images to represent God has been interpreted in two opposite ways: a dispensational and a non-dispensational interpretation. The dispensational interpretation is illustrated by the position of the Roman Catholic Church. That church believes that most of the commandments in the decalogue are not dispensational but reveal principles that endure. That church further believes that there is no dispensation of God's opposition to worship that is avowedly idolatrous (meaning either worship of other gods or worship intended for the image itself and not for God). But the Roman Catholic Church believes that the prohibition of images to represent God was only a temporary law. As a precedent of a decalogue requirement that is dispensational they cite the fourth commandment, which alters the seventh-day requirement. Concerning the second commandment they say, "Who can prove the inherent sinfulness of making a graven thing?" They believe that an image ("type") is justified as long as it is not considered the



object of worship.

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The non-dispensational interpretation of the second commandment is illustrated by the position of the Protestant Reformers. They generally believed that some images were lawful even in the Old Testament. But they generally opposed images that any person might use to represent any member of the Trinity. The non-dispensational interpretation is supported by the evidence that, while there may be New Testament references setting aside the Old Testament interpretation of the law about the Sabbath, there is no specific dispensation of the Old Testament law about images. Nor is there any precedent in the New Testament for making an image to represent the true God. (cf. Precedent and teaching may be found in the New Testament for changing the interpretation of the sabbath). The non-dispensational interpretation is supported by evidence for the unity of the Bible. The God of the old covenant is the same God of the new covenant. His will in one covenant is not fundamentally different than in the other covenant. The old covenant revealed Christ with types that God ordained (and most of these types were not images in the usual sense of the word). In the New Testament these types fall away as Christ is revealed to the eye of faith. By this covenant the Gentiles turn from idols to serve the living God. The purpose begun in the old covenant is realized in the new. The non-dispensational interpretation is supported by Jesus' statement that God is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit. The New Testament provides every spiritual resource necessary for worshipping God and also for communicating the knowledge of God. There is evidence

that the knowledge of God can only be communicated by spiritual means.

Typical images. Consideration is given in both testaments to the brazen serpent. This image was recognized by Jesus as being in some way image to represent Himself. The brazen serpent was not made by the imagination or devotion of the people, but it was made at the express instruction of the Lord to Moses when he interceded in behalf of the afflicted and complaining Israelites. It was soon put out of sight into the ark of the covenant. It was destroyed in a later century by King Hezekiah because he found the people were venerating it. In the New Testament any need that people may have for a typical image as a remembrance of the incarnation is satisfied by the institution of the Lord's Supper, and yet the bread and the wine are not images in the sense that an image is the product of an artistic gift.

General art. Images that were not used for representing deity can be found in both testaments. In the Old Testament these images were to be found in certain places in the tabernacle and the temple. Some were made at the command of the Lord and others were made by an artistic gift that was to some extent the result of a gift by the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament Jesus taught that Caesar's image on a coin indicated his ownership of the coin. There is no evidence of divine disapproval of such images in either testament as long as they met the requirements of the moral and spiritual law.

This study has been primarily concerned with the second classification of images that have been found in the Bible: those images which man makes to represent God. The problem under consideration has been: Does the Bible permit the use of man-made images of God, or images that man might intend to represent God? Evidence has been found that both the Old and New Testaments give consideration to such images. It has been found that images to represent God are prohibited by the second commandment of the decalogue. There is no explicit dispensation of this commandment in the New Testament, but there is evidence that it is made more sacred and inviolable in the New Testament. This divine prohibition reveals a principle that man can comprehend: that God cannot be likened to any image. Evidence has been found that, even if there were no divine prohibition, it would still be impossible for man to make a likeness of God. He is a Spirit who cannot be likened to a man-made image. He is the Creator who cannot be likened to an image created by man.

Therefore it may be said that there is evidence that God cannot be likened to a man-made image.

For Further Study

The nature of Christ. Because there is evidence that God cannot be likened to a man-made image, and because there is evidence that man can be represented by such an image, the question of whether or not it is proper or possible to represent the human form of Christ arises. Can

Christ's human and divine natures be divided for Christian art purposes? It is relevant to notice that the council of Chalcedon declared that His nature cannot be divided.

Nicaea II question. When the Second Council of Nicaea established image worship for the Catholic church, the council did not attempt to distinguish between Christ's human and divine natures. In this regard they accepted the decision at Chalcedon. But the Second Nicaean Council approached the question of images from another angle. It proceeded upon the theology that God can be represented by a man-made image ("type"). Because this study has found Scriptural evidence that God cannot be represented by a man-made image the decision of Nicaea II is questioned on this Scriptural authority. The burden of proof is placed upon the exponents of the philosophy of Nicaea II. Can they cite Scriptural verification that man can produce a typical image of God?

Modern theology and worship. Evidence has been found in this study which indicates the modern advancement of images to represent Christ by conservative evangelicals did not have its roots in the Protestant Reformation. This raises the question: what are the historical and theological bases of the modern use of pictures of Christ in conservative evangelical churches? Has the dispensationalism of Darby-Scofield, etc. been a significant influence? Has the immanence of liberal theology been a significant influence? Has Roman Catholic sacramentalism been a significant influence? What is the relationship between the modern

practice and its view of the nature of Christ?

Means of communication. Evidence has been found in this study that the Early Church and the Reformed Church did not use any visual image to represent any member of the Trinity. This raises the question: did this practice hinder their communication of the Gospel? Or, in the modern church's quest for "images" (in the psychological sense of the word) to communicate the knowledge of God to the world is there something to be learned from their rejection of a man-made image to represent God?

Iconoclasm as a "catalyst". It has been observed in this study that iconoclasm was an issue in each of the three major divisions from the Roman Catholic Church, but the significance of iconoclasm in these divisions is not clear. To what extent did iconoclasm precipitate and motivate the Mohammedan sweep? the East-West split? the Protestant Reformation? To what extent did knowledge of the Scriptures precipitate these iconoclastic movements? Since iconoclasm appears in each of these divisions it indicates this may have been a larger issue in the Protestant Reformation than is generally recognized today. It was the enraged iconoclasm of the people that brought Luther out of hiding at Wartburg to give direction to the reformation in progress. Most reformers tolerated no images in a day when some people craved them. It appears that such images represented God in the minds of the Catholics, but represented all that was considered erroneous and evil in Catholicism to the minds of

the reform groups. Hypothetically it might be said that iconoclasm was the "catalyst" that separated these three reform groups from the Roman Catholic Church.

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