

DO YOU HAVE AN IDOL?

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"Here is my god," said a man, holding an idol up to Augustine, "where is yours?"

Augustine commented on the incident, "I did not show him my God, not because I had none to show, but because he had no eyes to see Him."

This illuminates Paul's statement, "A man who has no life but physical life cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. To him they are foolishness and he cannot understand them, because it takes the Spirit to discern them" (I Cor. 2:14, Barclay).

No power of thought unaided by the Spirit of God can find out the knowledge of God. The Spirit alone knows the things of God and He alone can teach them to us. Isaiah, even in his early day, spoke of this spiritual significance of God's salvation: "From ancient times men have not heard or perceived," he said, "nor has human eye seen a God besides Thee who works for him who waits for Him" (Isa. 64:4, Berkeley).

Isaiah spoke of this after referring to the startling manifestations at Sinai where God himself declared: "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" (Ex. 20:4, 5, ASV).

By this demand for an imageless worship in a world where the powers of nature were universally personified and worshiped in the form of statues, Jehovah pointed up His unique spiritual quality and, consequently, the necessity of a thoroughly spiritual worship.

This second command of the Decalogue does not rule out all such matters as photography and works of art; for soon after giving this rule, the Lord went on to instruct Moses about the symbols to be used in the tabernacle. The point is that we are not to make any visible or tangible thing an object or an aid to worship. Worship of the true God must be purely spiritual.

While Christ nowhere quotes the Second Commandment, His teachings incorporate and validate it. In setting forth God's true nature and that of proper worship, Jesus swept aside all shrines as exclusive places to meet God.

No man who knows God, who lives daily in communion with Him, needs a picture or any other concrete object to help him pray. Such an object only hinders. Such a man does not need a priest or confessor through whom to approach God, nor does he need any other outside aid such as an ornate and complicated ritual.

Any public worship service must of necessity have some form. There will be preaching, singing, observance of the Lord's Supper, and such exercises. Even private devotion must involve some material items. There is the Bible and an object upon which to stand, sit, or kneel. But worship begins only when we pass beyond these material things. In communion with God we pass through the preaching, the singing, the desk, the chair, and other forms to bring our spirit face-to-face with God. "Whenever a man stops short of that face-to-face worship of the eternal God," Campbell Morgan says, "he is working ruin to his own character, because he is breaking the commandment of God."

Idols obstruct our approach to God. And in a very real sense anything which has a larger influence in our life than the Spirit of God is an idol. This is the reason Jesus admonished, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19, 21).

When Mahmoud, in his Moslem conquest of northern India, came to Guggarett, the city fathers dared to approach him and plead for the preservation of an esteemed

WHEN I MET MY MASTER

"I had built my castles and reared them high;
And their towers had pierced the blue of the sky;
I had sworn to rule with an iron mace
When I met my Master face to face.

"I met Him and knew Him and blushed to see
That His eyes full of sorrow were fixed on me;
And faltered and fell at His feet that day
While my castles all melted and vanished away.

"Melted and vanished, and in their place
I saw naught else but my Master's face.
And I cried aloud, "Oh, make me meet
To follow the marks of Thy pierced feet!"

My thought is now for the souls of men;
I have lost my life to find it again.
Ere since alone in that holy place
When I met my Master face to face."

SOME QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE MINISTRY

A father's tenderness, a shepherd's care;
A leader's courage which the cross can bear;
A ruler's care, a mother's watchful eye;
A pilot's skill the helm in storms to ply;
A fisher's patience and a laborer's toil;
A guide's dexterity to disembroil;
A prophet's inspiration from above;
A teacher's knowledge, and a Savior's love.

—Richmond Christian Advocate

idol. They knew that wherever he had conquered, he had smashed the idols; but they told him that if he must destroy the others of their city, they could bear it. If he destroyed this one, however, he might as well also kill them. This one they could not live without.

The earnest intensity of the plea almost persuaded Mahmoud. But at length, remembering his vow to Allah, with his heavy sledge, he struck the idol a terrific blow. To his amazement there poured out a stream of jewels and precious stones. The people had hidden their treasures in this favorite idol hoping to keep them secure.

Just as the people of Guggeratt stored their treasure in their idol, so all forms of inward and outward idolatry are expressions of men's evil desire and inordinate attachment to earthly treasures. For most of us outward idols are not the basic problem. There is a propensity within the natural man which is an inveterate maker of unseen idols. This is the reason the Apostle Paul wrote: "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passions, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5, ASV).

The distressing knowledge of those carnal inclinations in his heart prompted James Nicholson to pray:

"Break down every idol, cast out every foe.
Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."
And when his prayer was answered, he gloriously sang:

"The blessing by faith I receive from above.
Oh, glory! My soul is made perfect in love;
My prayer has prevailed, and this moment I know
The blood is applied, I am whiter than snow."

Thus was fulfilled in his heart the purpose of which God spoke long ago to His people when He said, "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. . . and I will take away the stony heart . . . and I will give you a heart of flesh And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezek. 36:25-27).

—Pilgrim Holiness Advocate

The King's Highway