

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

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WORSHIP: WHOM? HOW?

By: C. D. COLE

Deuteronomy 4:12-18: *"And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth."*

Exodus 20:4-5: *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."*

Luke 4:8: *"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."*

John 4:23, 24: *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

INTRODUCTION: There is no more important question than **whom** to worship and **how** to worship.

God is the exclusive and sole object of worship and He is to be worshiped in spirit and in truth. To have any other object of worship than God, or to worship him in the use of images is to be guilty of idolatry. Roman Catholics do both and yet resent the charge of idolatry.

The General Council of Trent says: "The images of Christ, and of His Virgin Mother, and of other saints, are to be had and retained, especially in churches; and a due honor and virtue is believed to be in them, for which they are to be honoured, or that any prayer is to be made to them, or that any confidence is to be placed in them, as was formerly done by the heathens, who placed their hopes in idols; but because the honor which is given them is referred to the originals which they represent, so that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads or kneel, we adore Christ, and venerate His saints, whose likeness they represent." (Faith of our Fathers, Page 192.)

Cardinal Gibbons makes no attempt to prove the worship of God through images from the Scriptures.

Their plea for images is the plea of

all idolaters. They tell us they do not worship the image, but God through the image. This is exactly what the heathen claim. Their images only represented their gods and in bowing before the images, their worship terminated on the gods they represented.

This is what Israel did at Sinai, but God was angry with them and punished them for idolatry. Aaron made them a calf, *"And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD,"* Exodus 32:5. Acts 7:41, *"And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands."* The Israelites did not deny that Jehovah was their God, but they were worshiping Him through the idol.

Roman Catholics point to the brazen serpent Moses made and put on a pole for the healing of snake-bitten Israelites. But this serpent was not a representation of God, but rather a type of Christ. When the people began to worship that brazen serpent, the good Hezekiah broke it in pieces, as he did other images.

Why is idolatry so hateful to God?

And why is it so hateful to Him for people to make images or representations of Him through which they worship Him? I think it is because He is caricatured - a caricature is a distortion or misrepresentation of a person. Who can make anything that will represent God? It is absurd.

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THE HIDING PLACE

By: C. D. Cole

Job 14:1, “*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*” **Isaiah 32:2,** “*And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*”

Isaiah is familiarly known as the evangelical prophet. He is peculiarly the gospel prophet. Mixed with his stern rebukes of an idolatrous and wicked people, was the announcement of a coming Deliverer. Spanning the threatening heavens from which an indignant God showed His face, was the rainbow of promise.

Our text is a messianic prophecy. It points to the coming of the Son of Man. It tells us that a man shall be a hiding place from the terrible tempest of wrath that will ere long sweep down upon this earth. Man has always been trying to hide from God. Human history begins with Adam and Eve trying to hide behind the trees of the garden of Eden. Genesis 3:8-9, “*And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*” Revelation 6:15-16, “*And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.*” Just as the trees did not afford a hiding place for the first pair of sinners, so the caves and rocks of the mountains will not hide the multitude from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne. Our text has in it three things, which we might profitably ponder: First, We have a sad conception of human life; Second, we have a mysterious Hope pointed to; and Third, we have the solution of this mystery.

SAD CONCEPTION OF HUMAN LIFE

There underlies this prophecy a very sad, but a very true conception of human life. Human existence, without salvation

from the wrath to come, is a terrible thing. It would be ten thousand times better never to have been born than to live and die without salvation. The three promises of this text correspond to the three phases of man's condition; three diverse aspects of his need and misery. The covert and hiding-place imply a storm, tempest, and danger, the rivers of water imply drought and thirst; the shadow of a great rock implies fatigue and weariness. Now put the three words together: Danger, thirst, weariness; these three words describe man's needs and miseries. A philosophy of life that ignores or minimizes these needs is untrue to fact and guilty of deception. It requires but a very short experience of this life, and but a superficial examination of our own histories in order to come to the conclusion that the world is full of strange and terrible sadness. No representation of human life is true that dips its pencil only in light and flings no shadows on the canvas. Job 5:7, “*Yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.*” Job 14:1, “*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*” Let us look more minutely at these three aspects of fallen man's misery:

There is danger. “Because there is wrath beware, etc.” Multitudes play the ostrich which puts its head in the sand in times of danger and imagines itself to be safe. Some hide their heads in the sand of pleasure; others in the sand of business, and have no eyes for the gaunt spectre of judgment that haunts and hounds them. But the judgment day is all the while stealthily creeping upon them. All the dangers that confront us here culminate in the crisis of having to face the judgment seat of an angry God. A woman on being asked if she were saved, replied, “Don't embarrass me with such a question.” Better be embarrassed here than to be eternally confounded at the judgment. Revelation 6:15-17, “*And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of*

his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

There is another aspect of life which underlies the words of our text. Man is a thirsty creature. The image of a desert was before the prophet's eye. He looked upon man traversing a waterless desert, a place in which wild and ravening thirst finds no refreshing drouths. Look at the human race; thirsting, they know not what for, until grace enables them to say, Psalm 42:2, “*My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God...*” Psalm 63:1, “*O GOD, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.*” It is a prosy fact that we live in a world where there is nothing to satisfy the longings of our soul. Everywhere we see men trying to slake their thirst in a dry place where no water is, all unconscious that they live in a dry land. That is the explanation of all the restlessness of a feverish humanity. Proverbs 13:25, “*The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.*”

Human life is cast in a dry place as well as a dangerous place. Ecclesiastes 1:8, “*All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.*” Ecclesiastes 4:8, “*There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.*” Ecclesiastes 5:10, “*He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.*”

And then there is the other phase of this sad life; not only danger and drought, but also weariness and languor. Man is a tired creature. All efforts to satisfy the soul with things of this world only tend to increase his weariness. How few people are contented today. I Timothy 6:6, 8, “*But godliness with contentment is great gain...And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*” Hebrews 13:5, “*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*”

MYSTERIOUS HOPE

Our text points to a mysterious hope. Isaiah 32:2, "*And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of waters in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*" A Deliverer is promised from the danger; a satisfying portion for our thirsty souls; and a giver of rest to our tired spirits. A man shall be a refuge; a man shall be rivers of water; a man shall be the shadow of a great rock. One of us shall deliver us from all this evil life. Life, after all is worth living, not because there is no danger; not because there is no drought; not because there is no weariness; but because there is a supply for all these needs, a remedy for all these evils. Our text says there is deliverance in a man. Experience seems to contradict it. And do not the Scriptures say in Isaiah 2:22, "*Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?*" Yes, but what man? But the man of our text is not such a man. He is the God-man; truly man, but more than man. I Timothy 3:16, "*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*"

SOLUTION OF THIS MYSTERY

The solution of this mystery is in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the man of the text. There is one man to whom it is wise and blessed to look as the exclusive source of all help and happiness. There is a man in whom we find all that we have vainly sought for in men. I Timothy 2:5, "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*" He is a sure deliverer from the wrath to come: He is the rivers of water in a dry land; He is the rest giver to tired souls.

The ancient promise of our text has become history. The Deliverer has come, Hebrews 9:26, "*...but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*" Let His blood speak peace to thy troubled, fearful conscience. The Bringer of refreshing droughts has come. John 7:37, "*...Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.*" The great rock casts its shadow in a weary land. Matthew 11:28, "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

WORSHIP: WHOM? HOW? (Continued from Page 1)

Moses told Israel in Deuteronomy 4:12, 15, "*And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice...Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire.*" This was the basis of his warning against trying to make any likeness of God. There is nothing man can conceive of that will represent God, for He is incomparable.

St Thomas Aquinas, their greatest theologian of the 13th century, taught that the reverence due to Christ is due to His image. But others maintain that the kind of worship due Christ should not be given His image.

Roman Catholics have three degrees of worship towards images. Images of saints are due the worship of "dulia"; images of Mary are due the worship of hyperdulia; and the image of Christ and of God with the worship of latria. They thus try to escape the charge of idolatry. But this distinction springs from their imagination and has no support in the Word of God. For example: Matthew 6:24, "*...Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" The word for serve here is "dulia", the word they use for inferior worship; but it is applied to worship of God. Again, I Thessalonians 1:9, "*...ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*" And here again the word for serve is "dulia," applied to the service or worship of God.

Roman Catholic theologians were so suspicious their practice was unscriptural that they struck the second commandment out of the decalogue. A Dr. Berg says, "I defy any man to shew me the second commandment in any of the manuals of the Roman Church before the reformation."

The History of Image Worship

Image worship did not spring up overnight. Of course we all know there is nothing about the worship of images in the New Testament except among the heathen. The council of Elvira, in Spain,

condemned the use of pictures in churches. Augustine, in the 4th century complained of the superstitious use of images. Eusebius who died in 340 protested against being made objects of worship. Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, allowed their use only as means of instruction. As late as the 8th century, we find many in the Roman church struggling against the tendency to idolatry. In A.D. 726, Emperor Leo III, a good Catholic, issued an ordinance forbidding the use of images in churches as heathenish and heretical. The council of Constantinople, met in A.D. 754, upheld his views. But 33 years later the Empress Irene, a fanatical image-worshiper, called another council to reconsider the matter. This council met in Constantinople, but the opposition in that city to the use of images was so strong, the council was adjourned and met the following year at Nice. And in the Council of Nice the decrees of Constantinople were reversed and declared heretical, and the use of pictures and images was ordained. This council pronounced a curse upon all who opposed sacred images and even those who had doubts about their use.

Its decisions were sanctioned by the pope, but there were bishops that called it by its true name and opposed it. Nevertheless a book was written to refute the decrees of the council of Nice, as establishing idolatry in the church. A council was called to meet at Frankfort-on-the-Main, at which there were delegates from Germany, France and Italy, and even two legates from the pope were there. This council rejected, despised, and condemned the decrees of the council of Nice. All worshipping of pictures and images was forbidden.

The famous council of Trent, met in 1545, 46, 51, 63, and definitely settled the doctrines of the Roman Catholic church, and since that time the worship of images has been the practice.

True worship is in spirit and in truth. It is an attitude of the mind and heart; it is the soul meditating on the personal perfection of God and adoring Him for what He is and for what He has done. It does not need the help of the hands nor the help of the eyes. The hands cannot touch God nor can the eyes see God, therefore we need nothing material and physical through which to worship Him. And when we try to make something to represent God; something we can see and touch, through which we worship Him, we are guilty of idolatry.