

Indifference or Ignorance: The Practice of Idolatry Within the Church

by Richard Bennett and Randall Paquette

Praise for Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," has resounded from pulpit to pew. It is evident that there are many Christians who, without reservation, are prepared to accept movies about "Christ", even one in the Catholic tradition. The question therefore that must be asked is this: in the light of Scripture, is their position defensible or do they fall under the condemnation of Almighty God?

No revival without the true Gospel and a righteous anger against Images

Evangelicals have discovered themselves confronting crisis upon crisis. After decades of endeavor and aggregate growth, moral turpitude and the apparent demise of marriage like corrupt weeds, blossom before their face. The *modus vivendi* embodied in the 1994 "Evangelicals & Catholics Together" (ECT) still confuses and deceives. Its ecclesiastical endorsement has further led many Evangelical churches to believe that there is no essential difference between Catholicism and Biblical Christianity. The dramatic "Passion" movie perpetuates the lie. In the Evangelical camp, the carnal pandering of "seeker sensitive" churches loiters unquestioned. The unregenerate fill the pews, and silence, the pulpits. There is no conviction of sin, because the Gospel is unavowed. Within the Reformed churches there is division, contention, and strife caused by the "Auburn Avenue controversy" and the "New Perspective on Justification." Revival has been preached, pursued, and prayed for and still remains aloof. "*We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were, brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.*"¹ In the soil of "another" Gospel can spring no revival! In the temple of images and pictures can come no renewal! From Moses unto Hosea, those who sought to revive the spirit of the nation and would have hearts return to a true worship of God, condemned images. And that which is condemned in the Old Testament is not justified in the New Testament.² The great revivals in Christian history have flourished under the true Gospel and the denunciation of idolatry. So it was with the Vaudois, the Waldenses, the Lollards, the Bohemians, and the Reformers. In the Dark Ages, luminaries such as Girolamo Savonarola, John Wycliffe, and John Huss attacked the corruption of idolatry and preached the Gospel.

In the Great Awakening in the USA, preachers inspired by George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and William Law, sought to glorify God in the Gospel by uniting veracious worship with the censuring of images. "If Jesse Lee had not come into Massachusetts, some one else pressed in spirit, like Paul at Athens 'when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry', would have found utterance and would have had followers."³ Following Jonathan Edwards' publication of the journal of David Brainerd, "The revival had greatest impact when Brainerd emphasised the compassion of the Saviour, the provisions of the gospel, and the free offer of divine grace. Idola-

¹ Isaiah 26:18

² God will cast all idolaters into "*the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death*" Revelation 21:1-8, Acts 17:29-30, and Romans 1:22-25

³ <http://216.239.37.104/search?q=cache:14a0QsT5bn8J> 3/12/04

try was abandoned, marriages repaired, drunkenness practically disappeared....Their communities were filled with love.”⁴ The witness of this testimony must not remain unheeded if we are to receive the blessing we long for from On High, for “*what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?*”⁵

Christ’s Divine Person is revealed only in One human body

Christians reason within themselves that since God became a man in the person of Christ, a picture of Jesus is but an image of an image. Their rationalization is that the Incarnation is justification, if not authorization, for us to depict Christ in human form. They argue further that no portrait can display a man’s soul, thus Christ’s body can be legitimately pictured distinct from His Divinity. Poor deluded Christians, unwilling to sever the last vestiges of carnal thinking, averse to bringing “*every thought to the obedience of Christ.*” Christ remains amongst humanity unique. Attempts to represent this uniqueness in human form (an achievement that God alone could do in the Incarnation) destroy it. The multiplicity of depictions with various facial features, hues and expressions, denies it. A man has but one nature, and thus he can be legitimately portrayed with no offense to what he is, but not so Christ who is also Divine; and to make Him into an “*image like unto corruptible man*” is to transgress the Law and insult the Godhead. Those who saw Christ upon this earth, had before their eyes “*God manifest in the flesh*”. What animistic artist or photographer could claim such for his effort? What do we have then? Is it not an attempt to create a likeness of the One of Whom we have no likeness? This then is the very essence of idolatry – the false representation of God. In the silence of our chambers we should reverently pray, “*Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*”⁶, and lo, the answer thunders down through the ages, “*I am God, and there is none like me...*”⁷

The Person of Christ consists of two indivisible natures – the Human and the Divine. He who manifested in the flesh was really and truly God.⁸ And yet, it was real human flesh. “*Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same...*”⁹ Pictures or movies of “Christ” are merely portraits of a human body. It is totally impossible to show forth the divinity of Christ; this only His body in heaven can now do, “*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*”¹⁰ The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ, and not figuratively, for he is both God and man. This “fullness” can never be found in types, figures, and likenesses of Him. Any such attempt at replication is utter deceit. Whenever a bodily form is artistically ascribed to Christ Jesus, it remains a gross lie. This fact - that Christ Jesus is both God and man - is a great and central doctrine of Christian faith. What Evangelicals fail to comprehend is that by so representing Christ, they are perjuring themselves before the All Holy God because all depictions of Him succeed in showing humanity bereft of divinity. “*What profiteth the graven image...a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols?*”¹¹ The words of Scripture alone patently present the divinity of Christ.

⁴ <http://www.pastornet.net.au/renewal/fire/ff-1700.htm> 3/12/04

⁵ II Corinthians 6:16

⁶ Exodus 15:11

⁷ Isaiah 46:9

⁸ I Timothy 3:16

⁹ Hebrews 2:14

¹⁰ Colossians 2:9

¹¹ Habakkuk 2:18

Christ Jesus in His person and human nature is the express image of God. Whoever has seen Him has seen the Father.¹² If Jesus were only a man, albeit the best of men, it would be quite acceptable to portray Him. But Christ is not! He is the express image of God, *“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.”*¹³ This *image* involves His eternal essence and as such cannot be replicated or reproduced. Those who accept pictures and movies of Christ fail to comprehend that they have reduced Christ’s incarnation to humanity alone. These representations ignore the inimitable character of Christ Jesus as the unexampled *“express image”* of God. While He is truly a man, yet Christ’s humanity cannot be separated from His divinity. Such practice perpetuates the heresy of Nestorius who taught that Jesus was two distinct “persons,” one human and one divine.¹⁴

The uniqueness of Christ Jesus coupled with the command not to practice idolatry is given in the strongest terms in the New Testament. *“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”*¹⁵ There can be no doubt that He of whom it is said, *“in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,”* and, *“all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made”*; Who Himself declared *“I and my Father are one,”* was worshipped as *“my Lord and my God”*! He is very God of very God.

Do we imagine that God in His omniscience did not foresee portraits or pictures, canvas or cameras? Are we wiser than He? There beats within the heart of every man a craving for visible forms to give expression to religious beliefs. Because of this evil desire, the Lord God has forbidden idolatry, warning of its corrupting influence. If believers have been deceived in this matter, it is our desire and prayer that they see the truth of God’s Word and understand that they have been feeding upon ashes and say, *“For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain.”*¹⁶

Presentations that confuse the distinction between God and His created world

A picture or movie of Christ because of inherent limitations, resides in the world of created things. Whatever aspirations may be intended, it can rise no higher than that which it is. Hence it blurs the distinctness between God and man, confusing the Creator with the creation. The Apostle Paul reveals the cause of this confusion, *“Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”*¹⁷ This digression, the Apostle tells us, continues because, *“professing*

¹² John 1:14; 14:9.

¹³ Hebrews 1:3

¹⁴ Nestorianism is the heresy named after Nestorius who was born in Syria and died in 451 AD. He advocated the doctrine that Jesus had two distinct persons. The biblical solution to that controversy was stated at the Council of Ephesus (431 AD) when it was shown that Christ has two natures in His one person. On questions about whether the two natures can be merged into one, confused or separated, a later the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) showed biblically that the two natures can never be confused with each other, nor can they be separated from each other.

¹⁵ I John 5:20-21

¹⁶ Zechariah 10:2

¹⁷ Romans 1:21

*themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man....*¹⁸ The problem is this: *“to whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?”*¹⁹ The Scriptural answer is unequivocal: *“be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”*²⁰

Any attempted portrayal of Christ transforms the medium itself into a mediator between God and man. The viewer, restricted within the confines this humanistic plane, imagines that he knows the Lord, at least in some measure. With this inculcated image of Christ throbbing within his mind, the viewer is allowed to wander, silently thinking his own thoughts, constrained by an impression that is not Christ. Thus, the viewer’s mind continues to be conformed to the world by the created image and by his own subjectivity. Although such visual presentations appeal strongly to the sensual impulses, they do not present explicitly to any man the objective truth concerning the Lord.

Our knowledge of Jesus Christ must be formed from the truths in Scripture and not by subjective impressions of artistic interpretation. In the latter, the artist and the viewer coalesce God and His creation into a single entity within the picture, and this is the visible expression of idolatry. This spurious image lays the foundation for a pantheistic concept of God. Marvel not then that, “Soaring pagan numbers have churches worrying and calling for stricter controls on cult TV programs and films that celebrate sorcery like “Harry Potter,” “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” and “Sabrina the Teenage Witch.”²¹ The command given in Scripture is to choose God’s way so as to know and follow Christ in His Word! When obeyed, upon the pages of Scripture, in the words of the Law, in the grace of the Gospel, we know Him in spirit and truth.

We do not see Jesus Christ with the physical eye. This is the whole meaning of faith. The excellence of the object of faith is the unseen Jesus. While sense deals with things that are seen, reason is a higher plane. Faith however ascends further still, and assures us of abundance of particulars that sense and reason could never have found. *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*²² Faith nourishes itself – *“I had fainted unless **I had believed to see**”*²³ – upon the power and promises of the Unseen. We can understand, then, the logic and consistent purpose of why the Lord God forbids images.

Pictures and movies that break God’s Law and defile God’s Grace

Evangelical churches demonstrate an ignorance of the meaning of the Second Commandment, which forbids using images to represent God.

“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

¹⁸ Romans 1: 22-23

¹⁹ Isaiah 40:18

²⁰ Romans 12:2

²¹ 2003 Reuters Limited 6/20/03

²² Hebrews 11:1

²³ Psalm 27:13

of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”²⁴

This commandment prohibits the creation and use of graven images. It essentially brings to mind that God is a Spirit, not to be conceived of or fashioned in man’s image, or any other creature. In Deuteronomy 4:12-16 is found a concomitant passage,

*“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....”*

What is forbidden is the similitude of the Lord Himself. No similitude of the Divine was given to the people and none was to be made. And in the New Testament, we see that no “similitude” of Christ Jesus was given, and the commandment must remain unabridged. Any similitude or image of Father, Son or Holy Spirit is sinful and insulting to the majesty of the Lord God. And what of those who seek balm for their conscience in preferring pictures over statues, as if the lack of one dimension transforms the image into a thing acceptable unto God? They well imagine that they have acted more nobly toward the Lord because theirs is not a “graven image.” It comforts them not to be upon the Roman road of idolatry, oblivious to the fact that they parallel it upon the Greek route.²⁵ God forbids the making of a *likeness of anything*. Therefore it is a transgression of God’s law to make a “representation” or “semblance” of anything in heaven or upon the earth, to delineate God. He calls those who break this commandment “*those who hate me*”,²⁶ and those who keep the commandment, “*those who love me*”²⁷. Punishment for iniquity is promised to the transgressors, while blessing is pledged to its adherents. From God’s perspective idolatry is spiritual adultery, so with the indignant reaction of a betrayed husband, He continues, “*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.*”²⁸

The Lesson of the Golden Calf

The children of Israel languished in impatience and unbelief at the base of Mount Sinai, waiting for Moses, who seemingly would not return. Impatience grew into murmuring, murmuring into vociferation. God they had never seen with their eyes; and now His anointed, “*this Moses. . . we wot not what is become of him.*” He too, it appeared, had vanished, never to return. “*Up,*” they enjoined Aaron, “*make us gods.*” The corporeal yearning of their hearts demanded visible forms for religious expression. But there is a price to be paid; the pure must be forfeited to produce the crass. They must part with their gold, and bring it to Aaron and he took it, “*and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods* (Elohim), *O*

²⁴ Exodus 20:4-6

²⁵ The Greek Orthodox honor and kiss icons. These are pictures and not statues. They state “use of icons was defended and upheld at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. The end of that council is still celebrated as the ‘Triumph of Orthodoxy’ in today, and icons remain a central part of Orthodox faith and practice.”

www.fact-index.com/e/ea/eastern_orthodoxy.html

²⁶ Exodus 20:5

²⁷ Exodus 20:6

²⁸ Exodus 20: 5

Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, **Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.**” The children of Israel looked upon this idol and called it “*Elohim. . .which brought thee up out of Egypt.*” Aaron ratified this designation, for with the image as centerpiece, tomorrow would be a feast to Jehovah. But what did God see? The answer is given in Scripture, “*They made a calf in Horeb and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their Glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass; they forgot God their Savior.*”²⁹

The Apostle Paul tells us that idolatry is changing, “*the Glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and to fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*”³⁰ What was their Glory, and is the Church’s glory, is in truth the Glory of God Himself and it cannot, and must not, be represented by an image of a man or a beast. God, knowing the evil inclinations of men, and their struggle to justify their ungodly deeds, especially those done in the name of religion has declared, “*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*”³¹ Whatever theologians may debate concerning this verse, one thing is clear; if you give a physical representation to Christ’s face, then you have defined and defiled the Glory of God. Whether a “man” or an “ox that eateth grass,” any attempt to replicate that Glory, save that which God does Himself, is idolatry.

An overview of the Christian history of idolatry

The Apostles, whose epistles and gospels are the very oracles of God, are men who could say, “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, **which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life,***”³² never give a physical description of Christ. Rather, they proclaimed what He said and what He did. They emphasize His death and resurrection, explaining the significance of these events, and the necessity of faith in them in order to be saved. The Apostle Paul pointedly states that we know Jesus no longer after the flesh.³³ Peter says of Christ, *Whom having **not** seen, ye love, in Whom **though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*** And men and women, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, exulted in the unseen Christ just as the Patriarchs had done in the unseen Jehovah, neither did they clamor for a description of the Lord. The New Testament muteness on this point is an essential compliance with the dictates of the Old Testament. Any other contemporaneous source claiming to provide a description of Christ is extracanonical.

In the first two centuries of the Church, Christians did not use images to represent Christ. During this infancy the early Christians would not bow to the image of Caesar nor to any work of man’s hands. They had no images, statues, or pictures; they well understood that the God they worshipped would never have accepted such an affront, for He alone is God. How then did idolatry come into the Church? It was a process of time, indifference, ignorance and deceit. In

²⁹Psalm.106: 19-21

³⁰ Roman 1:23

³¹ II Corinthians 4:6

³² I John 1:1

³³ II Corinthians 5:16 “*Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer.*”

the year 313 A.D., when the Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Empire, pagans by governmental edict, and not regeneration, found themselves to be Christians. Not knowing God or the Gospel, they flooded the Church, idols in their arms, in their homes, in their minds, and in their hearts. True believers, however, opposed pictures and statues as representing Christ. The controversy raged back and forth for several centuries, and there was much turmoil over the matter. In the midst of this battle, Pope Gregory the Great I (604) presented a seemingly innocent and compellingly plausible argument in their favor. He wrote to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles, who had destroyed the images in his diocese, “What books are to those who can read, that is a picture to the ignorant who look at it; in a picture even the unlearned may see what example they should follow; in a picture they who know no letters may yet read. Hence, for barbarians especially a picture takes the place of a book.”³⁴ Such carnal reasoning usurps authority from the Word of God. But in truth, if the illiterate cannot read, they can certainly “hear” and “*faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God,*” because “*it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*” Then in the year 754 A.D., a large council of bishops declared that such pictures are not biblical and therefore are not acceptable in the Church. Twenty-three years later however another council of bishops reversed that teaching. The Second Council of Nicea, which met in 787 A.D, required the use of pictures and statues as signifying Christ. This inexcusable idolatry of the Roman Catholic Church led into the Dark Ages. When the Reformation came, and with it the true Gospel, there was also a condemnation of the evils of idolatry. To escape idolatry, many people left the Catholic Church, and Bible based churches sprang up in many countries. At the time of the Reformation both pastors and people realized that everything respecting God that is learned from images is both futile and false.

“O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err and destroy the way of thy paths.”³⁵

How did it come to this? It may well be argued that the spirit of *Jezebel* is alive in the Church, and she is teaching His servants “*to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*”³⁶ As with any education this one commences in the elementary grades – the decorative “religious” pictures, the carnal reasoning, the excuses and justification, and the assurance that the incipient deed will go no further. But she knows that every man is at heart an idolater, and it takes but a blink of the eye to go from hanging an image to bowing the knee. Thus, once the rudimentary lessons are learned and accepted, her students are almost certain to progress into a papal form of idolatry. Unless vigilance is exercised in guarding against that initial step, the conclusion is inevitable. Because Christ is the focus of Christianity, any picture that attempts to portray Him, becomes special in comparison to all others. Although the picture is not Christ, nor is it an honest replication of

³⁴ Ep. ix, 105, in P. L., LXXVII, 1027 http://landru.i-link-2.net/shnyves/Catholic_Tradition_art.html 3/15/04

³⁵ Isaiah 3:12

³⁶ Revelation 2:20. **She has plied her trade with unparalleled success, from Babylon to India.** But her greatest achievement, the Church of Rome today, has its adherents kneel before a crucifix (which is an idol) whilst the priest raises before it an Eucharist, the oblation of the “bloodless” sacrifice of the Mass - and then amidst the orchestration of this solemn act, her votaries, in their turn, eat this thing *sacrificed unto idols* precisely as Rev.2:20 charges. But how did this come about? Not over night, Jezebel taught in stages commencing their education with the primary lessons: pictures hanging in homes to inspire, used to teach the illiterate, and statues used to represent, the “saints”, Christ, *et al.*, and all to be pious ornaments in the churches, etc. But the end was inevitable. Rest assured, should the Lord tarry, the same Evangelical churches, which today tolerate pictures, will one day be having their communion with one on the table in front of the elements (perhaps some already do) and eventually will place it in a predella and bow before it and eat their bread. Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. It is that Jezebel who was “suffered” or tolerated by the elders at Thyatira that is being tolerated in Evangelism today, and the result is assured.

Him; eventually however, in the mind of observer, it will be both. It must certainly be the latter initially, else why hang a picture of an unknown stranger upon the wall? Ask the owner of that picture, “Who is this?” and he shall answer without hesitation, and with no more proof than general consensus, “It is Jesus,” when in fact it is not, and thus it fulfills all the criteria necessary to qualify as an idol – a false representation of God. And because he is certain that this image is Jesus, he is bound by his respect for Christ to honor the picture, but “honor” will eventually give way to “reverence”, and “reverence” shall cede to “veneration.” Surely this is the curse that he binds about the necks of his children’s, children’s children. It is to be feared that this warning will fall upon deaf ears. Many who call themselves Christian have a cavalier attitude toward the issue of idolatry. They rationalize along these lines. “I am saved and I use pictures, movies and videos of Christ, therefore, pictures, movies and videos of Christ cannot be wrong.” Hence, God no longer is adjudicator of what is right and what is wrong, the creature is, presuming upon the holy gift of salvation as a license to do his own pleasure. God’s Word ceases to be the basis for “what is believed,” but “what is believed” becomes the interpreter of God’s Word. In effect, the “Christian’s” will become the arbitrator that reins in the truth of Scripture. How difficult is it then to adopt Catholicism’s official teaching, “By becoming incarnate, the Son of God introduced a new ‘economy’ of images,”³⁷ and relegate the Word of the Lord to the status of a “silent partner”?

It seems that none of us is ever far from the taint of Egypt. It cleaves to our garments, and beckons us back in the night watches. Unless prayerful and vigilant, we succumb, perhaps not at once, but by moments and by steps. That which was an object of our indifference becomes a focus of our need. Mark this well: the pictures that this generation hangs in the temple will be the idols, which the next generation shall worship. There is little hesitation to insert the adjective “sacred” before the word “picture,” and this will provide the rationale for veneration. How many Christians have defended the picture of Christ adorning their wall by saying that they worship not the image, but that which the image represents. Do they honestly believe that by this sophistry they honor God? Indeed, they posit as the papists do today, and postulate as the pagans did yesterday. The ancient pagans lived in societies awash with statues and shrines dedicated to each god. These idolaters also believed that when they knelt before their effigies, they were worshipping the gods, which the image represented. No doubt this association, allied with natural superstition, imparted a sentient quality to the idol for the worshipper, but let this fact be counted a warning rather than a distinction. Does not the Church of Rome, where truth once again bows to superstition, claim miracles of animation their idols? Her votaries have testified of statues that move, weep and bleed.³⁸ This is the legacy of all idolatry.

What Then Should One Do?

As we read of the “*high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,*”³⁹ and “*the better promises*”⁴⁰ that He has for His people in the New Covenant than in the Old, we have a great well-founded hope for true conviction on this fundamental issue. The promise given is explicit and most encouraging. “*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who*

³⁷ *Catechism*, Para 2131

³⁸ *US News & World Report* 3/ 29/ 93. “The case of the Weeping Madonna”, pp. 46-50

³⁹ Hebrews 8:1

⁴⁰ Hebrews 8:6 “*But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*”

*through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*⁴¹ The efficacy of Christ Jesus’ blood is very great. It is sufficient to reach to the very soul and conscience. A soul defiled with idolatry can be purged, its conscience assuaged and enabled to serve the living God. The blood of Christ through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit not only convicts but also absolves the true believer enabling him to serve the living God in a worthy manner.

The Apostle Paul proceeds most strongly called on all to repent from the absurdity of idolatry, this is meant not simply those who knew it indeed was idolatry, but those who in ignorance did so “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.*”⁴² Men greatly dishonor God if they make Him after the likeness of a mere human body. It is like unto the sin of apostasy in that it puts Christ Jesus to open shame. Most beloved, to imagine that it is acceptable to present the Lord in human flesh that is not His own glorified flesh is to engage in idolatry.

There is no higher obligation than to obey the command of God. It can be done. God does not expect the impossible. It is a fearful thing to think that some have concluded that this matter of idolatry is inconsequential. There will be no revival in the absence of the true Gospel. There will be no revival without sincere repentance for making and using images, which is the predominant sin of movies and pictures that portray the Lord Jesus Christ. “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*” ♦

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⁴¹ Hebrews 9:14

⁴² Acts 17:30