

## STUDY 18

# Keep Yourselves from Idols

*Rod James*

The theme of this study is idolatry and the danger of idolatry in the life of God's people. Let us begin by refocussing our awareness of what idolatry is—the nature, power and evil of it. Noel Due, in *Created for Worship*, alerts us to the context of idolatry, which is worship:

Human beings were created to worship God and to express their devotion to him in obedient faith. Where this worship is abandoned, the result is not a state of 'no worship', but a state of 'false worship'.

For a human being there can be no vacuum of non-worship. One is either submitted to God in the doing of his will and the glorifying of his name, or one is submitted to someone, or something else. The error described in Romans 1:18ff., is not the *neglect* of worship, but the *exchange* of worship. Men and women are inveterate worshippers. Worship belongs to their essential structure. The expression of human sin is that the worship for which they were created is exchanged for idolatrous worship. They sin, not by *not* worshipping, but by worshipping wrongly.<sup>1</sup>

Geoffrey Bingham's *Dear Darling Idols* is a concise, accurate and essential treatment of idolatry. Geoffrey clarifies for us just what idolatry purports to do for humanity:

The genius of evil, then, is idolatry. It gives a god but not *the* God. It gives a system of worship and service, but not *the* creational system. It even provides the other elements which belong to God, and channels them through idolatry. We will look at these needs, but even without seeing them in full we can realise that idolatry is man's way of rationalising his universe. To worship the creature (the creation) and to serve and worship it rather than the Creator lets man out of his creational, and so, functional responsibilities. Man is free to go the way he has structured rather than the way God has commanded and designed him to go. Idolatry therefore is man's substitute for everything.<sup>2</sup>

## IDOLATRY AND DEMONS, PROVOCATION AND JUDGEMENT

Recently I found myself staring at a poster on the inside of someone's toilet door. The poster extolled the superior nature of a teddy bear as a friend—he is always there, he won't tell you what to do, he won't criticise you or interrupt you, and so on. We are

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<sup>1</sup> Noel Due, *Created for Worship: From Genesis to Revelation to You*, Mentor, Fearn, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Bingham, *Dear Darling Idols: Lords and Gods Piffling and Appalling*, NCPI, Blackwood, 2004, p. 9.

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prone to idolatrising God as a divine teddy bear who comforts us and benignly allows us to think what we want to think and do what we want to do. But behind an idolatrous view of God which may seem benign, even ‘nice’, there lurks something far more sinister and horrible. St Paul warned the Corinthian Christians that behind the nothingness of idols lay demonic powers:

What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? (1 Cor. 10:19–22).

Lenski comments on this passage:

It is a great mistake to imagine that back of their idolatry and their idol sacrifices there is nothing but an empty vacuity. True enough, as 8:4 makes plain, the gods of the idols have no existence whatever; no being by the name of Jupiter exists, and this is true with respect to all other gods, But something does exist, something that is far more terrible than these pseudo-gods, namely an entire kingdom of darkness which is hostile to God, a host of demons or fallen angels who are ruled by the greatest of their number, namely Satan, Eph. 2:3; 6:12.

... As these wicked angels, under the leadership of Satan, rule the entire evil world, so in particular they are the originators of the spiritual darkness of which idolatry is the most terrible evidence.<sup>3</sup>

Commenting on 1 Corinthians 10:20, Calvin says:

When men become so futile in their thinking that they offer worship to the creatures rather than to God alone, they are ripe for the punishment of being servants of Satan. For they do not find that intermediary position between God and Satan, for which they are on the look-out, but, as soon as they turn their backs on the true God, Satan immediately sets himself before them as an object of worship.<sup>4</sup>

When Paul asks, ‘Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?’ (1 Cor. 10:22) he is clearly mindful of the song in Deuteronomy 32 which God gave to Moses to speak to the people of Israel prior to his death. This awesome song should be read with trembling (Isa. 66:2) in order to better understand what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 10:19–22. Moses calls heaven and earth to listen to the proclamation of God’s awesome greatness: ‘His work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.’ But Israel ‘has dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children because they are blemished; they are a crooked and twisted generation’. Moses pleads with Israel to remember ‘your father who created you’, who chose, delivered, cherished and nourished you. But Israel has been a ‘foolish and senseless people’ and has repaid the Lord by turning to idols. By so doing they have invoked his fierce anger:

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<sup>3</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1963, p. 415.

<sup>4</sup> John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, CNTC, David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance eds, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 219.

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They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods;  
with abominations they provoked him to anger.  
They sacrificed to demons that were no gods,  
to gods they had never known,  
to new gods that had come recently,  
whom your fathers had never dreaded.  
You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you,  
and you forgot the God who gave you birth  
(Deut. 32:16–18).

God therefore bore witness to his just wrath on Israel's evil. 'They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols' (v. 21). Through his servant Moses, soon to be taken from the earth, God makes known his sole divinity as Creator of all, his absolute justice and faithfulness as the holy and righteous God, his great grace in calling a people to be his treasured possession, and his fierce anger and just judgement upon all evil and towards those who defiantly provoke him:

For a fire is kindled by my anger,  
and it burns to the depths of Sheol,  
devours the earth and its increase,  
and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains  
(Deut. 32:22).

Concerning Paul's questions—'Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?'—Calvin asks:

Is it not the case that those who evade the issue, thinking that they may disobey the commandment of God without suffering the consequences, are openly taking up arms against God?<sup>5</sup>

Idolatry therefore is a very serious business for it places the devotee in the bondage of evil powers, and it provokes the one true God to defend his sovereignty and to punish evil insurrection:

When John says, 'The whole world lies in the Evil one' (I John 5:19), he means what Paul means in Ephesians 2:1–3 that all mankind was deceived in the Fall into the power of Satan. That is, man is under the control of the prince of the power of the air. This means he cannot have his idols to himself. He can neither subjectify nor objectify his rejection of God without being incorporated into the whole system of evil. His idols then are infested with demonic powers and evil spirits. He has now to contend with fallen celestial creatures, and other supra-mundane elements. He cannot have his idolatry in mild forms.<sup>6</sup>

The warnings given by Moses to the Israelites concerning idolatry are dire:

You know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the midst of the nations through which you passed. And you have seen their detestable things, their idols of wood and stone,

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<sup>5</sup> John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, p. 220.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Bingham, *Dear Darling Idols*, p. 20.

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of silver and gold, which were among them. Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.' This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike. The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven (Deut. 29:16–20).

While 'the secret things belong to the LORD our God . . . the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law' (Deut. 29:29). These things are revealed to us that we might heed them and repent of all our idolatries. But if those engaged in idolatry are in the bondage of Satan how shall they be delivered?

### IDLERS SMASHED AND IDOLATERS SET FREE

Having turned from the living God to worship idols, humanity was in the bondage of the idols and the evil powers that indwelt them. But God promised Israel that he would cleanse them from their idols:

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you (Ezek. 36:25–26).

And on that day, declares the LORD of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness (Zech. 13:2).

These promises of redemption were so comprehensive that they could only be fulfilled in the new covenant brought into being by the coming of the Son of God. 'The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil' (1 John 3:8) and 'to proclaim liberty to the captives . . . to set at liberty those who are oppressed' (Luke 4:18). Behind the idols lay Satan like a 'strong man, fully armed', but 'one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil' (Luke 11:21, 22). The armour or defence of Satan in the presence of God was his just accusation concerning the guilt and evil of God's image creature, man. The whole human race lay in the bondage of this guilt. But Christ 'disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him [or 'in it', i.e. the cross]' (Col. 2:15). In anticipation of his work on the cross Jesus said, 'Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out' (John 12:31). 'By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, [God] condemned sin in the flesh' (Rom. 8:3). Lenski explains:

'God condemned the sin' (the sin power) as a criminal, and because of that condemnation it lost its right to rule over us. 'Condemned' implies a legal procedure that ended in a verdict. In that legal

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procedure the whole mission of Christ arose against ‘the sin’ . . . The sin lost its right of securing our condemnation because of the guilt of our sins and with it lost its power to control us, to make us keep on sinning as it had done before.<sup>7</sup>

By coming into the world and destroying the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), Christ destroyed the power of the idols and publicly humiliated them for their falsity, impotence and ridiculous nothingness. Therefore Paul can boldly assert that Christ ‘is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you’ (2 Cor. 13:3). Redemption in Jesus Christ is a total deliverance from all idolatry, for ‘with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world’ (Col. 2:20). Therefore Paul can claim and proclaim that God ‘has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins’ (Col. 1:13–14). We who ‘once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds’ in our idolatrous living are ‘now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death’ so that Christ can ‘present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him’ (Col. 1:21–22). Consequently ‘the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ’ (2 Cor. 10:4–5). While this is the position and therefore the condition of those who are ‘in Christ Jesus’, the Scriptures warn us against turning back to idols. We have a responsibility to guard or keep ourselves from idols.

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The injunction of 1 John 5:21 to ‘keep yourself from idols’ comes as a startling conclusion to that letter:

We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. **Little children, keep yourselves from idols** (1 John 5:18–21).

Stephen S. Smalley, in his commentary on 1 John is helpful to us as we try to understand why John has concluded his wonderful letter in this way.

John’s final charge to his readers is based on the three assurances of vv 18–20, in which he has set out the character of the orthodox believer (he does not continue to sin; he derives from God; he knows and abides in the real God through the person and saving activity of Jesus the Christ) . . . The warning (‘guard yourselves against false gods’) has in mind as well the foundation and character of the Christian faith itself, described in 1 John as a whole. It is the maintenance of this faith, in the face of heretical opinion, which John is urging upon the members of his congregation . . .

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<sup>7</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1961, p. 502.

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After the climactic statements which occur in the closing vv of 1 John (e.g. 5:13, 20), the final exhortation of v 21 may appear to be something of an anticlimax. But in fact it establishes a very strong contrast to the positive truth which has been outlined in the last section of the letter, and indeed in 1 John as a whole. **Avoid the sham, John warns, and keep to the genuine (of which I have spoken)!<sup>8</sup>**

Smalley continues to help us by answering the question ‘what are the “false gods” (εἰδωλα) [*eidōla*] against which John is warning his readers?’

The fact that the Church in the first century A.D. existed in the environment of the Roman Empire meant that Christians were surrounded by pagan idols as such, and needed to be warned against the dangers of idol worship (Rom 1:23; 1 Cor 8:4–6; 10:14; 1 Thess 1:9; Rev 13:15). If the letters of John originated from Ephesus, moreover, with its adoration of Diana (Artemis) goddess of the Ephesians (Acts 19:23–28; cf. 17:29), the temptation for John’s non-Jewish audience to succumb to idolatry would have been real and constant (cf. Painter, *John*, 117, 123; see further Wengst, 225–26).

However, the literal use of the term εἰδωλον is in fact comparatively rare in the NT; and it would represent an abrupt change of thought if John had introduced the word in this sense at the very end of his letter. If we look for a wider meaning, therefore, it might be found by **understanding an ‘idol’ as ‘anything which occupies the place due to God’** (Westcott, 197). For a similarly metaphorical use see Ezek 14:4 (‘idols of the heart’); Eph 5:5; Col 3:5 . . . **In this case John is urging his readers to keep away from sinful ‘God-substitutes’** (Dodd, 142; cf. Houlden, 138).

Smalley concludes that John’s meaning is that ‘all “false gods” are to be rejected in favor of the real God who in his Son brings eternal life to the true believer’.

### THE DANGER OF IDOLATRY IN THE CHURCH

The apostle John has reminded us that in the midst of true worship and the love-engendered knowledge of God there is the constant danger of idolatry. The almost relentless tendency of Israel to stray into idolatrous forms of worship makes it clear to us that being the people of the covenant does not immunise us from such temptation. As Christians we have the full picture laid out to warn us in 1 Corinthians 10:1–22—Israel was assembled under the cloud of God’s presence, they passed through the Red Sea by God’s mighty hand, and they were ‘all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea’. They ate the spiritual food and drank from the Rock which was Christ. Nevertheless, some became idolaters, some indulged in sexual immorality, some put Christ to the test, and some grumbled against God. In all of these transgressions they invoked the holy wrath of God their Saviour. Paul concludes, ‘Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall’.

Sadly, the testimony of the church is very seriously diminished when it retains the idolatrous stance of the world, so let us take heed of some of the snares and idols that lurk in our midst today.

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, WBC 51, Word, Waco, 1984, pp. 309f. (emphasis mine).

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## Dullness and Deadness to the Voice of God

There were some in Israel who had ‘taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces’ yet still came to consult God (Ezek. 14:3, 4, 7). In like manner we can hear God’s word preached clearly to us week after week and not respond. Noel Due points out that those who take their idols into their hearts become dull to reality and dead to the voice of God:

Their false trust leads them to reflect the character of the object in which they put their trust. Just as the idols are dull to the real world, and especially the world of Yahweh’s voice, their worshipers are dull to him and to his word. Their senses are as dead as those of the idols themselves.<sup>9</sup>

The fact is that church attendance and other outward observances of Christian life can be practiced without our ears having been ‘dug out’ by God (Ps. 40:6; Job 33:16), and without us having wholeheartedly ‘turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God’ (1 Thess. 1:9).

## ‘Sexual Immorality, Impurity, Passion, Evil Desire, and Covetousness, Which Is Idolatry’

In urging the Colossians to ‘Put to death therefore what is earthly in you’ (Col. 3:5), Paul lists the above vices which appear to be related in the sense that they all have to do with a person being controlled by the desires within them. In a similar manner John warns of ‘the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions’ which are ‘the things [of] the world’ (1 John 2:15–17). All of this is idolatrous and, given the powers lurking behind the idols, it suggests the bondage of sexual and other addictions. It is quite stunning to note how often idolatry is linked with sexual immorality in the Scriptures (e.g. Acts 15:20; 21:25; 1 Cor. 10:7–8; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rev. 2:14, 21):

What we do know from Romans 1 and Acts 17 is that man’s life-style forms his gods, and is formed by them. It is other than the life-style God has given man which must conform with the true knowledge of God. Hence true morality resides in, and is expressed by true worship, and likewise immorality belongs to the life-style which accords with idolatry. If what we have just said is true then almost certainly idolatry is the greatest powerful factor in man for evil. Romans 1:18–32 must then be read as being the one piece, and having no breaks anywhere. Sexual immorality, sexual perversity, a reprobate mind, and the life of shattered relationships and deliberate evil must all accord with, and indeed spring from, man’s idolatry.<sup>10</sup>

## ‘We Walk by Faith and Not by Form’

In 2 Corinthians 5:6–7 Paul reminds the believers that ‘while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight’. The word translated ‘sight’ here, *eidos*, actually means ‘external appearance’, ‘form’ or ‘shape’. For example, in Luke 3:22 the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in bodily form (*eidos*). Jesus said of his Father, ‘His voice you have never heard, his form you have

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<sup>9</sup> Noel Due, *Created for Worship*, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey Bingham, *Dear Darling Idols*, p. 8.

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never seen' (John 5:37). Paul had reminded the Corinthian believers that 'we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal' (2 Cor. 4:18). Being at home in the body and away from the Lord we are prone to turning from faith in God who is unseen to taking security in things that take material shape or form, i.e. things that are seen. Thus, in our piety, we are prone to focusing on our church building and its fittings, the ordained minister, our denomination, etc. God knew that Israel longed to walk by form rather than by faith. Knowing that any graven image would become an idol and a snare (Judg. 8:27; Ps. 106:36; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Tim. 2:26), God commanded Israel not to create any images with form or appearance:

You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God (Exod. 20:4-5).

Forms such as buildings, finances, leaders, structures, programs and church cultures are part of the created order and may have their place, but that which has form and appearance so easily becomes an idol in which we trust and which we end up serving rather than trusting and serving the risen Lord Jesus. The Jews and the Samaritans had an age-old controversy about where was the right place to worship God. Both Jerusalem and Samaria had become idolatrous locations, but Jesus foreshadowed a time when neither of these places would be significant because 'the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth' (John 4:23).

### The Idolatry of Outward Appearances

Paul confronted the Galatian Christians with the question, 'Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?' (Gal. 3:3). Having received the grace of God, the Galatians were turning back again 'to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world', that is, to the idolatry of self-justification:

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? (Gal. 4:8-9).

It is very easy, in our zeal and piety, to 'turn back' so that once again we become 'those who want to make a good showing in the flesh' (Gal. 6:12) and 'those who boast about outward appearance' (2 Cor. 5:12). Turning back to these 'elementary principles' we then labour to build a visible accomplishment which justifies and glorifies ourselves in the sight of others. Paul warns that such a 'persuasion' catches on and 'a little leaven leavens the whole lump' (Gal. 5:9).

### Corporation Idolatry

Over time it is possible for denominations, and even for local churches, to slowly change from being a spiritual house of living stones (1 Pet. 2:4-5), i.e. a congregation



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of the saints, to become a corporation, that is, an organisation made up of structures and regulations, clergy and programs, property and finance. Slowly the values and interests of the Corporation Church change to reflect the self-interest, self-preservation and self-promotion of the Corporation. The Corporation Church begins to focus on statistical growth, program management, property development and financial expansion. Instead of serving the ‘living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious’ (1 Pet. 2:4), it begins to develop programs and practices which will make it acceptable and appealing in the sight of the world, and successful in the light of its own mission goals. The objective changes from the birthing of living stones and the building of a spiritual house—the body of Christ—to the building of a material house, i.e. the Corporation Church. As the objective changes, so does the object of worship change; from the one true God, to the idolatrous Corporation.

### **‘THEREFORE, MY BELOVED, FLEE FROM IDOLATRY’**

Paul exhorts the Corinthian Christians to take care how they build and warns them of the day of God’s judgement which will be revealed with a consuming fire and will destroy every construction that is idolatrous:

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:10–15).

Paul knew that any prophet who messes with the idols in a church will be met with a volcanic eruption of angry protest: ‘Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?’ (Gal. 4:16); ‘From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus’ (Gal. 6:17). But knowing only too well of the divine holocaust which awaits all idols and idolaters on the Day of the Lord, Paul was bold to confront the churches he had planted about their turning back. Likewise, awareness of that holocaust should encourage us to urgently flee from all idolatry. The responsibility for guarding against (1 John 5:21) and fleeing from (1 Cor. 10:14) idolatry rests with the believers. God is faithful and will provide a way of escape but we must recognise the danger and flee from it. With God’s faithful help we are to flee from idolatry (1 Cor. 10:13–14), flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:18), flee from the love of money and the desire to be rich (1 Tim. 6:9–11), and flee from youthful passions (2 Tim. 2:22). It is better to flee idolatry now than to have to cast aside our idols and flee from the Lord on the day of his coming:

For the LORD of hosts has a day  
against all that is proud and lofty . . .  
And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled,

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and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low,  
and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.  
And the idols shall utterly pass away.  
And people shall enter the caves of the rocks  
and the holes of the ground,  
from before the terror of the LORD,  
and from the splendour of his majesty,  
when he rises to terrify the earth.  
In that day mankind will cast away  
their idols of silver and their idols of gold,  
which they made for themselves to worship,  
to the moles and to the bats,  
to enter the caverns of the rocks  
and the clefts of the cliffs,  
from before the terror of the LORD,  
and from the splendour of his majesty,  
when he rises to terrify the earth (Isa. 2:12, 17–21).

### DOPEY IDOLATRY AND WONDERFUL WORSHIP

Despite all God’s warnings and the historic revelations of his wrath, John laments that ‘The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk’ (Rev. 9:20). But to those who turn ‘to God from idols to serve the living and true God’ (1 Thess. 1:9), to these God gives the true worship which is ‘in spirit and truth’ (John 4:23–24). Geoffrey Bingham concludes *Dear Darling Idols* with an Appendix, ‘Worship without Idolatry’, which describes the thrill of this true worship as ‘the richest, deepest exercise and experience a man can know. No wonder [man’s] great powers of love and adoration find their flowing fulfilment in the true object, God Himself, the one True God, the Living Father, Creator and Redeemer.’<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey Bingham, *Dear Darling Idols*, p. 55.