

SEEING JESUS

The Case Against Pictures
of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Peter Barnes

20¢

Seeing Jesus

*The Case Against Pictures of the Lord
Jesus Christ*

PETER BARNES

**MOORE COLLEGE
LIBRARY**

THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST

THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST
3 Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh EH12 6EL
P.O Box 621, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013, USA

*

© The Banner of Truth Trust 1990
First Published 1990
ISBN 0 85151 580 0

*

Typeset in 10½/11pt Linotron Plantin
at The Spartan Press Ltd.,
Lymington, Hants
and printed and bound in the U.K. by
Howie and Seath Ltd, Edinburgh

Seeing Jesus

In the last week before the crucifixion, some Greeks came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They met with Philip, one of the twelve apostles, and asked him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' (*John* 12:20-21). Jesus responded not by granting them a closer look at His physical appearance, but by giving a discourse on the meaning of His death, and the need to die in order to live (see *John* 12:23ff.). Today the request of the Greek enquirers has taken on a more literal and less desirable meaning, and the response of the Church has departed from that given by her Lord. Even in churches which trace their spiritual heritage back to the Reformation there has been a widespread acceptance of pictorial representations of Christ. There are films which depict Christ, pictures which portray Him, illustrations of Him in books, and a growing tolerance of statues and icons.

What is the Issue?

In responding to this situation we must, in the first instance, give thought to the basis upon which the issue for or against pictures of Christ is to be decided. Is this one of those questions which Scripture allows us to settle in terms of expediency? That is to say, have we simply to ask how far pictures of Christ can be judged to be useful and helpful? Or are we faced at the outset with a relevant biblical principle that excludes any justification for considerations based upon expediency? There is good reason to believe that the Bible does present us with a clear principle which is most relevant

to the question we are discussing. It is to be found in the second commandment which declares: 'You shall not make for yourself any 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 nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments' (*Exodus* 20:4-6; see *Deuteronomy* 5:8-10).

The whole Bible thunders out the same message – not only are false gods not to be worshipped, but the true God is not to be worshipped by means of images (e.g. *Leviticus* 26:1; *Psalms* 115:1-8; *Isaiah* 2:8; 40:18-20; 41:21-29; 46:5-7; *Hosea* 13:2; *Amos* 5:26-27; *Acts* 17:24-25, 29; *Romans* 1:22-25; *1 John* 5:21). Some of the severest strictures of the prophets are reserved to describe the folly of those who cut down trees, and use part of the timber to cook a meal and keep warm, while the other part is carved into the shape of a god and worshipped (*Isaiah* 44:9-20). Images are useless – they have to be fastened so they will not topple over; they cannot speak, hear or move; and they are incapable of doing either good or evil (*Jeremiah* 10:1-5). The true and living God, by contrast, cannot be represented in pictorial form.

Since God is Spirit (*John* 4:24) and hence invisible (*1 Timothy* 1:17), a physical representation of Him is impossible. That is why Moses warned the Israelites: 'Take careful heed to yourselves; for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth' (*Deuteronomy* 4:15-18).

Since God is triune, this logically means that we are not to portray the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Spirit. Christians who do not accept the relevance of the second

commandment to this issue, tend only to portray the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. They do so on the grounds that it was He who took on manhood and became flesh, and that it is only as man that He is being represented. To this argument we shall return in a moment. It shall be contended that it is a misguided argument, but the sincerity of those who propound it is not in question. We accept that the portrayal of Christ in visible form is often done with good motives, at times even with evangelistic zeal. We are not called upon to judge the motives of fellow Christians, but we are required to judge all arguments from Scripture.

Why Not Have Pictures of Christ?

I. ALL PICTURES OF CHRIST ARE NECESSARILY INACCURATE AND DEPENDENT UPON IMAGINATION.

One of the most extraordinary features of the Bible is that both Testaments testify of Christ (*John* 5:39), yet they give no description of Him. Only two very slender hints are given as to the physical appearance of Christ. The first one is found in the prophecy of Isaiah: 'He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him' (*Isaiah* 53:2). All that can be derived from this is that there seems to have been nothing majestic or striking in the physical appearance of the incarnate Word.¹

The second hint is found in an exchange between Jesus and the Jews. Our Lord declared to the Jews, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad' (*John* 8:56). The Jews were astounded at this and replied, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?' (*John* 8:57). In His humanity, Christ was only a little over thirty years of age (*Luke* 3:23), but apparently His lifestyle – having no place to rest His head (*Matthew* 8:20) and

labouring hard to proclaim the kingdom of God amidst much misunderstanding and opposition (*Mark* 3:20–21; 6:31–34) – had aged Him prematurely.

In any case, these two hints – they are hardly descriptions – are the only glimpses we have of the physical appearance of Christ. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostles simply did not see fit to describe the Lord for us. This is in keeping with Jesus' declaration to Thomas, 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' (*John* 20:29). The apostle Peter also takes it for granted that most Christians, even in the first century, had not seen Christ (*I Peter* 1:8). The point remains: Christ has come in the flesh, but we have no real idea what He looked like. The Holy Spirit has not told us whether Christ was short or tall, solid or slender, with blue eyes or brown, dark hair or fair; such things are not numbered amongst those needed to make us 'wise unto salvation'.

It is thus incontestable that all pictures of Christ are inaccurate and that we have no way of knowing how inaccurate. A master like El Greco has painted Christ's cleansing of the temple in a way that brilliantly portrays the Lord's intensity, singleness of purpose, and holy power. Yet how authentic is it? We have no way of knowing. It is difficult enough to portray modern characters in a visible way. Recently, Kathryn Lindskoog has complained that the film 'Shadowlands' turned C. S. Lewis into a soft, blue-eyed, grandfatherly figure with a tentative faith, and Joy Davidman into a luminously beautiful and refined woman of irresistible and radiant sensitivity.² Yet 'Shadowlands' was shown on American television in 1986, just twenty-three years after the death of C. S. Lewis! With Christ, a task that is always difficult becomes impossible.

Many Christians argue that it does not matter; we can picture Christ irrespective of whether the result is accurate or not. But it would be strange if a wife, when her husband was away, were to look continually at the photograph of another man, and then contend that it did not matter because she was thinking of her husband.

Pope Gregory the Great (c.540–604) and John of

Damascus (c.675–749) both defended images on the grounds that they are the books of the unlearned. In John's words: 'What a book is to the literate, that an image is to the illiterate. The image speaks to the sight, as words to the ear: it brings us understanding.'³ A variation of this argument is often heard today in order to defend the use of pictures and films of Jesus. But it is surely valid to ask whether the cause of truth can be served by falsehood and make-believe.

2. PICTURES OF CHRIST ARE NOT ONLY INACCURATE BUT THEY ARE A MEANS OF INTRODUCING MUCH ERROR CONCERNING HIM.

When men begin to portray Christ there is the almost unavoidable tendency to recreate Him in one's own image. When Adolf von Harnack sought to remove the supernatural element from Christ's life, leaving what became known as liberal Protestantism, the Roman Catholic George Tyrrell made the telling criticism that 'The Christ that Harnack sees, looking back through nineteen centuries of Catholic darkness, is only the reflection of a liberal Protestant face, seen at the bottom of a deep well'.⁴ Tyrrell himself hardly avoided the same error – an indication of the truth that being aware of a danger is not the same as avoiding it. Every picture of Christ reflects this tendency to recreate Christ in the image of the artist and his culture. Hence we find the Byzantine Christ, the Anglo-Saxon Christ, the African Christ, the hippy Christ, and so on – but none of them the authentic Christ. Holman Hunt's 'The Light of the World' is no exception.

3. PICTURES OF CHRIST NECESSARILY DISHONOUR HIM.

We come now to the most serious point of all and to the one which answers the argument that it is justifiable to represent the human nature of Christ. *Pictures of Christ necessarily dishonour Him*. Think again of the second commandment. Lest anyone should say, 'We make likenesses of God not in order to worship them but only as aids to devotions, or to

help our understanding, for use in teaching and not in worship' – the commandment forbids not only the worshipping of images but also the *making* of them. This sweeping prohibition is based on the truth that *all* representations of God dishonour Him. This is equally true of the person of Christ. Artists cannot portray Christ in the full glory of His deity so they are generally forced to attempt to portray Him only in the humility of His manhood. They cannot attempt to paint heaven so they confine themselves to earth. They leave aside the exalted Christ whose glory blinded Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, and at whose feet the apostle John fell 'as dead' (*Acts* 9:3–9; *Revelation* 1:17), and they restrict themselves to conjectures as to His human form. But Scripture allows no such separation between the two natures of Christ. Even in the period of His humiliation, now forever past, it was the fact that He is God that made Him the Saviour. Those who portray Christ in visible form must, as Thomas Watson said, portray a 'half Christ'.⁵ And if we only see Christ as a man we have missed the stupendous truth at the heart of the gospel,

'Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail the incarnate Deity!'

According to Scripture, there is a sight of Christ which is necessary to salvation. It is not of His manhood alone but of the glory of His divine person; 'This is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes in Him may have everlasting life' (*John* 6:40). This saving sight of Christ enabled His disciples to say, 'We beheld his glory,' and it is the same sight, hidden from the world, which is given to true believers today (*John* 14:19).

By leaving out the divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, artists portray Him as infinitely less than He was in the days of His flesh and as He is now in His exaltation. They therefore condition us to think of Him in the very manner which the second commandment is intended to exclude. Pictures necessarily detract from His divine glory. They represent God the Son as far less than He actually is. Amy Carmichael once told her orphan children at Dohnavur how

she came to learn this and how the orphanage gave up a practice which was then 'almost universal' among fellow missionaries in India: 'When converts were given, we found that unless they were taught to do so, they did not want pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you, who have been brought up without them, know when you do happen to see them how much less beautiful such pictures are than the one the Holy Spirit had shown you. I shall never forget the disappointment of one of you when someone sent you a lovely little picture of our Lord as a Child in the Temple. I remember the tears of disappointment when the string was untied, and the wrappings taken off, and the picture taken out of its box – "I thought He was far more beautiful than that!" We may safely leave the blessed Spirit to show to the people to whom we speak, something "far more beautiful than that".'⁶

John Owen has made the same point in more theological language. After speaking at length on the glory of Christ – 'glory absolutely of another kind and nature than that of any other creature whatever' – he adds: 'We may see hence the *vanity* as well as the *idolatry* of them who would represent Christ in glory as the object of our adoration in pictures and images. They fashion wood or stone into the likeness of a man. They adorn it with colours and flourishes of art, to set it forth unto the senses and fancies of superstitious persons as having a resemblance of glory. And when they have done, "they lavish gold out of the bag", as the prophet speaks . . . and so propose it as an image or resemblance of Christ in glory. But what is there in it that hath the least respect thereunto, – the least likeness of it? nay, is it not the most effectual means that can be derived to divert the minds of men from true and real apprehensions of it? Doth it teach anything of the subsistence of the human nature of Christ in the person of the Son of God? nay, doth it not obliterate all thoughts of it! What is represented thereby of the union of it unto God, and the immediate communications of God unto it? Doth it declare the manifestation of all the glorious properties of the divine nature in him? Persons who know not what it is to live by faith may be pleased for a time, and ruined for ever, by

these delusions. Those who have real faith in Christ, and love unto him, have a more glorious object for their exercise.⁷

As was said at the outset, the testimony of the second commandment ought to be enough on this issue. But let us not underestimate the seriousness of the distortion brought about by the use of pictures as a teaching method. Error can be very tenacious. A believer who has a picture of Christ in his house or in his place of worship can find that he is unable to think of Christ except in terms of that picture. In such a case, the picture has not become an aid to devotion or understanding, but a bondage. It ought to be destroyed.

The Testimony of the Church

Sad to say, the testimony of the Church has not always been as clear as it ought to have been on this issue. Nevertheless, much can be learnt from history. Possibly the earliest reference to pictures of Christ comes from Irenaeus (c.130–c.200), the bishop of Lyons. Irenaeus knew Polycarp of Smyrna (c.69–c.155) who knew the apostle John, so his work and witness are not far removed from the apostolic era. In his highly significant work *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus confronted the Gnostics: ‘They also possess images, some of them painted, and others formed from different kinds of material; while they maintain that a likeness of Christ was made by Pilate at that time when Jesus lived among them.’⁸ Portrayals of Christ, whether painted or carved, were seen as a Gnostic peculiarity, and a result of heathen influence.

The next Christian author to be examined is the historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260–c.340). The Emperor Constantine had a sister, Constantia, who asked Eusebius for a portrait of Christ. Eusebius replied in vigorous terms: ‘Had she (i.e. Constantia) ever seen anything of the kind in the church or heard of such a thing from another? Was it not rather true that in the whole world anything of the kind was

banished and excluded from the churches? Was it not common knowledge that it was only for the Christians that such things were forbidden?’⁹ Eusebius recalled that he had taken away from a woman pictures which were supposed to represent Paul and Christ in order that scandal might be avoided.

Such a testimony is all the more remarkable coming from Eusebius. As is well-known, his attitude to the Emperor Constantine was respectful to the point of being obsequious. He portrayed Constantine at the Council of Nicæa as ‘like some heavenly messenger of God’. For Eusebius to deny a request from the Emperor’s sister required an unusual fortitude and clarity of conviction. The way Eusebius framed his refusal indicates that his attitude reflected a widely-held belief in the early Church. This is verified by the art historian Michael Gough who writes, ‘Very few episodes drawn from the life of Christ exist from pre-Constantinian times, and the Passion and Crucifixion seem to have been almost totally excluded.’¹⁰

It did not take long, however, for attitudes to change. As the fourth century wore on, the Church apparently came to accept more readily images of Christ. Yet not all were convinced of the rightness of the new and broader views. Epiphanius (c.315–403), the bishop of Salamis (renamed Constantia) in Cyprus, described in a letter written in 393 how he was travelling in Palestine when he came to a villa called Anablatha where he saw a lamp burning. He recorded: ‘Asking what place it was, and learning it to be a church, I went in to pray, and found there a curtain hanging on the doors of the said church, dyed and embroidered. It bore an image either of Christ or of one of the saints; I do not rightly remember whose the image was. Seeing this, and being loth that an image of a man should be hung up in Christ’s church contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures, I tore it asunder and advised the custodians of the place to use it as a winding sheet for some poor person.’¹¹

Epiphanius went on to write three treatises against images in appealing to his fellow bishops and to the Emperor Theodosius I.¹² His pleas were largely unsuccessful, but his

last will and testament reveals his firm convictions: 'If anyone should dare, using the Incarnation as an excuse, to look at the divine image of the God Logos painted with earthly colours, be he anathema'.¹³ It is interesting that Epiphanius was later canonized by the Roman Church, his feast day being 12 May.

The next stage in the debate came when the Eastern Church was embroiled in the Iconoclastic Controversy from AD 725 to 843. In 725 the Emperor Leo III legislated against image-worship, and this policy was continued by Constantine V. The debate was vigorous – the Council of Hieria supported the iconoclastic emperor in 753; the Council of Nicæa reversed this in 787; but an assembly of bishops at Sancta Sophia restored the decrees of Hieria in 815. In general, the monks supported the use of icons, and their spokesman was John of Damascus. The emperors, on the other hand, thought that icons were a stumbling block to the conversion of Jews and Moslems.

By this date superstition was rife, and it was claimed by Iconodules (defenders of the use of icons) that some icons were of immediate divine origin; they were 'not made with human hands'.¹⁴ It was believed that Luke had sent to Theophilus not only his gospel, but also his portrait of the Virgin Mary and copious illustrations of the life of Christ, drawn as they had happened.¹⁵ The emperors, notably Constantine V, did their cause no good by indulging in brutality and immorality. But in the end the issue was settled, for the Eastern Church at least, by the emperor Theophilus' widow, Theodora, who restored the use of icons in 843.

The medieval Church, in both East and West, placed increasing emphasis on a visual presentation of Christianity, and it was left to the Reformation to challenge this in restoring the primacy of preaching. Calvin rejected the use of any pictorial representations of Christ,¹⁶ and his views were endorsed by all the Puritans of the seventeenth century. The Puritan conviction was formalized in Question 109 of the Westminster Larger Catechism, which asks, 'What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?' The answer is most comprehensive:

'The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counselling, commanding, using, and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; tolerating a false religion; the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshipping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.'

In the light of the above one might ask, What of those who believe that God has used pictures of Christ to speak to them? An example that could be quoted is that of Count von Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravians in the eighteenth century. Zinzendorf tells us that he was deeply affected by a painting of the Crucifixion which seemed to challenge him:

'This have I done for thee,
What hast thou done for Me?'

There is no doubting the reality of Zinzendorf's spiritual experience but God's action in opening his eyes to the cross at that moment does not signify His approval of the picture. It only means that God is so gracious that He will occasionally give blessing even where the method employed is contrary to His revealed will. Another illustration of the same fact is the use of altar calls in evangelism – the method is unbiblical and does much harm but there are many cases of Christians whose testimony is that they were converted when they walked forward at the appeal. Such examples should not be allowed to cloud the issue at stake: God's gospel should be proclaimed in God's way and no other.

We also need to remember that to hold that the Scripture is against our making pictures of Christ is not the same as saying that it is against art and sculpture as such, or even against religious art and sculpture. It was God who told Moses to make two cherubim of gold for either end of the mercy seat (*Exodus 25:18–20*). An appreciation of art is fully consistent with the principle set out in this booklet as history can confirm. We should not be surprised to note that the historian Peter Brown can assert: ‘The only two men in the Dark Ages whom we know to have been deeply interested in art – the Emperor Theophilus and Bishop Theodulf of Orleans . . . – were Iconoclast or at least, anti-Iconodule.’¹⁷ Men who opposed the use of icons nevertheless were very appreciative of the arts. As Calvin was to declare in the sixteenth century: ‘sculpture and painting are gifts of God’.¹⁸

The Needs of the Hour

The two great needs of the hour are a sure faith and vital, God-owned preaching. With these we shall see the Church revived; without them we shall see only further declension and decay.

Here on earth we walk by faith, not by sight (*2 Corinthians 5:7*). We have not seen heaven, nor have we seen Christ. Yet Christians do behold, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord (*2 Corinthians 3:18*), and they look forward to the prospect of being like Christ, ‘for we shall see Him as He is’ (*1 John 3:2*). But this will only come about when Christ is revealed. In the meantime Christians look to Christ and seek to be conformed to His likeness. Back in the seventeenth century, the learned Puritan John Owen contrasted the two ways of trying to achieve this: ‘Those of the Church of Rome say that this must be done by the beholding of crucifixes, with other images and pictures of Him, and that with bodily eyes: we say it is by our beholding His glory by faith, as revealed in the Gospel, and

no otherwise.’¹⁹ The more pictures and images are used, the further we depart from the biblical way of beholding Christ.

In order to behold Christ, we require clear and faithful preaching of His Word. When castigating the Galatians, the apostle Paul wrote, ‘You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified’ (*Galatians 3:1*; NIV). Paul did not mean that he carried around pictures of Christ on the cross for the benefit of potential converts. Rather, Paul was referring to Spirit-anointed preaching as so vivid that each sermon was a kind of verbal picture. In the paraphrase of Martin Luther: ‘There is no painter that with his colours can so lively set out Christ unto you, as I have painted him out by my preaching; and yet notwithstanding ye still remain most miserably bewitched.’²⁰

This is the missing element in the preaching of today. Pulpits are full of heresy, superficiality, and vagueness. So much contemporary preaching has no effect at all; it neither offends nor convicts. In no way could it be described as vivid word pictures of the gospel of grace. Amy Carmichael contended that the Church resorts to pictures of Jesus only when her power has gone.²¹ Such a contention has all the marks of truth upon it. Back in the eighteenth century, George Whitefield declared, ‘I love those that thunder out the Word. The Christian world is in a deep sleep! Nothing but a loud voice can awaken them out of it.’²² It is not pictures that will revive the fallen Church; it will be gospel preaching with the unction of heaven upon it. This is the God-ordained means of revival; we dare not expect blessing any other way.

Notes

1. It is perhaps also instructive that the apostle Paul was apparently not an imposing figure physically (see *2 Corinthians 10:10*).
2. K. Lindskoog, *The C. S. Lewis Hoax*, Multnomah, Oregon, 1988, p. 94.

3. Cited in N. Baynes, 'Idolatry and the Early Church' in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1955, p. 136.
4. Cited in I. H. Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1977, p. 113.
5. T. Watson, *The Ten Commandments*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, reprinted 1976, p. 62.
6. F. Houghton, *Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur*, S.P.C.K., 1959, p. 61. Carmichael says that her doubts about the use of pictures of Christ began in Japan when she heard a Japanese girl describe them as showing their God. Later her host, pointing to a famous picture of Jesus crowned with thorns, 'said that he was feeling that "to the Father, pictures of His Son are not good"'.
 7. J. Owen, *Works*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, reprinted 1981, vol 1, p. 244.
8. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, ed. by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, Eerdmans, vol. 1, reprinted 1981, I,xxv,6.
9. Cited in N. Baynes *op. cit.*, p. 122.
10. M. Gough, *The Origins of Christian Art*, Praeger, New York, 1973, p. 39.
11. Jerome, *Letters*, the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, ed. by P. Schaff and M. Wace, Eerdmans, vol VI, reprinted 1979, pp. 88-89.
12. J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol 3, Westminster, Maryland, 1986, pp. 391-3.
13. *ibid.* p. 393.
14. P. Brown, 'A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy' in *The English Historical Review*, no CCCXLVI, January 1973, p. 7.
15. *ibid.* p. 8.
16. J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I, xi, iff.
17. P. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
18. J. Calvin, *op. cit.*, I, xi, 12. See also H. R. Rookmaaker, *Art Needs no Justification*, IVP, Leicester, 1978; and F. A. Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible*, IVP, Illinois, 1973.
19. J. Owen, *Works*, vol. 1, p. 393.
20. M. Luther, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, ed. by P. Watson, James Clarke & Co, Cambridge, reprinted 1972, p. 196.
21. E. Elliot, *A Chance to Die: The Life and Legacy of Amy Carmichael*, Fleming H. Revell Co., New Jersey, 1987, p. 93.
22. A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, vol 1, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1975, p. 400.

Portrayals of Christ in pictures or on films are commonly regarded as helpful or, at worst, harmless. But a long tradition from the time of the early Church Fathers has been against such representations. This booklet gives the biblical basis behind that tradition and argues that the sight of their Saviour which Christians have in this world by faith is altogether more glorious than anything ever imagined by an artist. Looking at a picture of Jesus, an orphan in India once said to Amy Carmichael with disappointment. 'I though he was far more beautiful than that!'. The author argues that what the visual representation is intended to achieve can, in fact, only be done by the Holy Spirit. Living spiritual Christianity needs no substitutes.

Peter Barnes, Presbyterian minister of Nambucca River Charge, New South Wales, is married with six children. Also written by him and currently published by the Banner of Truth Trust are *The Milk of the Word* and *Open Your Mouth for the Dumb: Abortion and the Christian*.

Other booklets in this series:

Biblical Church Discipline, *Daniel Wray*

The Carnal Christian, *E. C. Reisinger*

Christians Grieve Too, *Donald Howard*

Coming to Faith in Christ, *John Benton*

The Cross, *D. M. Lloyd-Jones*

Five Points of Calvinism, *W. J. Seaton*

The Importance of the Local Church, *Daniel Wray*

The Invitation System, *Iain Murray*

Living the Christian Life, *A. N. Martin*

The Moral Basis of Faith, *Tom Wells*

Open Your Mouth for the Dumb, *Peter Barnes*

Origins?, *B. Ranganathan*

Practical Implications of Calvinism, *A. N. Martin*

Reading the Bible, *Geoffrey Thomas*

What is the Reformed Faith?, *J. R. de Witt*

ISBN 0 85151 580 0

\$1 20
REFORMERS' BOOKSHOP
(02) 569-9857
2139



The Banner of Truth Trust

3 Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh EH12 6EL

P.O. Box 621, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013, U.S.A.