

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

The second commandment is our subject. It teaches us *how we are to worship God*. Now, there two questions that we must try to answer in considering this commandment.

The first question is this: *What does this commandment forbid?* The second is: *Why does it forbid this?*

What does this commandment forbid? *It forbids the use of images and pictures in our worship.*

Let us see what this commandment says: It says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." "A graven image," of old time, is the same that we should now call a *carved image*. A graver, then, was the same as a carver now. And a carver, we know, is one who carves, or makes images, or figures out of wood.—The figure-heads of men, or women, or other objects that we see on the bows of ships and other vessels, are graven, or carved images. And so are the figures of Indians that we see, as signs, in front of certain stores. Or the graven image might have been made of stone. Then we should call the maker of it a sculptor; and we should speak of such an image as a statue. A graven image might have been made either of wood or stone.

We often read, too, in the Bible, of *molten images*, though they are not mentioned in the commandment. A molten image was one made out of melted metal, such as iron, or brass, or gold, or silver.

But the commandment speaks of a "*likeness of any thing*," as well as of an image. What does it say about this? "Thou shalt not make unto thee . . . 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."

The likeness here spoken of means a picture, or painting of any thing. Hanging up in the Hall of Independence, in Chestnut street, in a painted portrait of General Washington. We call this a likeness of Washington. In that same hall are portraits of William Penn, of Franklin, and Lafayette, and other great men, distinguished in the early history of our country. These are all called likenesses.

There is also in that hall a statue of

Washington carved out of wood. That is a "graven image" of Washington. But is it wrong to have that "graven image," or those likenesses there? Is that breaking the second commandment? No. Does anybody ever go there to worship that image of Washington? No. Does anybody ever go into that hall to worship the likeness of William Penn? or Lafayette? or Franklin? No. This commandment only forbids us having images, or likenesses, for the purpose of worshipping them. It does not forbid us to have images, or statues, or paintings, just to look at, and admire, for the beauty of their form, or for the wonderful way in which they are made to look like real persons, or things.

There is a building in Chestnut street, between Tenth and Eleventh, called "The Academy of Fine Arts." This is full of graven images, and molten images, and the likenesses of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things in the water under the earth. There are many pieces of beautiful sculpture there; statues, or images in plaster, and brass, and marble; and many interesting paintings. But it is not wrong to have them, because they are not put, or kept, there for people to worship them, but only to look at, and admire. And it is only having images or pictures to *worship*, that the commandment forbids. It is not *having* them—that is forbidden by the commandment, but making a wrong use of them.

But suppose, now, that some one should say to you that he believed it was wrong to have images or paintings at all, even though they were not worshipped. And suppose this person should try to persuade you to go home and destroy all the images or paintings in your dining-rooms, how could you prove clearly that he was wrong?

Let me show you. The second commandment says, we must not have images or pictures to worship them; but this does not mean that we are not to have them for any other purposes. For in another place in the Bible (Deut. iv. 16.) God says we must not *look* upon the sun, and the moon, and the stars to worship them. Now, is it wrong to *look* at the sun, and moon, and stars? Of course not. Why, we can not help looking at them, unless we pluck our