

of Damascus to argue that images were not ill-used if they were not the object of worship. The Damascene argued that since the Lord had a physical form while on earth and could be actually seen and touched, there could be no sin in a simple representation of that form any more than would be true in any other picture of a person or thing. If the icon aided worship but was not worshipped there was no reason for not possessing it. This was the accepted position of the council and it determined that icons could stay. You will discover that the problem had not been so great in the western church...the Emperor had little authority there. And you will notice that the Greek churches make much more use of pictures and bas-relief while the Roman church enjoys a lot more free-standing statues. But such were brought back and the adornment of the churches and the grottoes of homes continued with the items that were thought to be an aid in worship.

A strange thing happened at Frankfurt in the Synod of 794. Charlemagne called this Synod to deal with problems of adoptionism (in Spanish territory) as well as general church polity. It was not ecumenical but did represent the interests of the territory of the Franks...a wide-ranging area. It appears someone gave him a bogus report on Nicaea and indicated that the Nicene group had favored the worship of pictures. Consequently Frankfurt banned such worship and said some sharp things against pictures in general. A few years of confusion followed in the Frankish churches but the difficulty was concluded about 813 under the guidance of Leo V or Rome. We think some zealous anti-picture person took a spurious report or even a forged copy of the Nicene works to Charlemagne in the hope that the great Frank might use his army to support iconoclasm in the east.

The icon matter came to a full ending in 843 with the establishment of the Feast of Orthodoxy on the first Sunday of Lent in the Grecian rites. A complete restoration of images was effected. Very vigorous in this reform were the painters, craftsmen, etc., who prepared icons and who staunchly defended their usage, a defense that Walker notes could have been used by any idol maker anywhere to defend his art. Many of us in reformed circles are not given to the use of pictures although they bother me a lot less in the sanctuary than does the upholstered pews!