

# THE BOOKS OF HOMILIES: Book 2—II. Against peril of Idolatry: Part 3

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     The third part of the homily, against images and the worshipping of them, containing the confutation of the principal arguments which are used to be made for the maintenance of images, which part may serve to instruct the curates themselves, or men of good understanding. Now you have heard how plainly, how vehemently, and that in many places the word of God speaketh against not only idolatry and worshipping of images, but also against idols and images themselves. I mean always thus herein, in that we be stirred and provoked by them to worship them, and not as though they were simply forbidden by the New Testament, without such occasion and danger. And you have heard likewise out of history's ecclesiastical, the beginning, proceeding, and success of idolatry by images, and the great contention of the Church of Christ about them to the great trouble and decay of Christendom. And withal you have heard the sentences of old ancient fathers and godly learned doctors and bishops, against images and idolatry, taken out of their own writings. It remaineth that such reasons as be made for the maintenance of images, and excessive painting, gilding, and decking, as well of them as of temples or churches, also be answered and confuted, partly by application of some places before alleged to their reasons, and partly by otherwise answering the same. Which part hath the last place in this treatise, for that it cannot well be understood of the meaner sort, nor the arguments of image maintainers, can without prolixity, too much tedious, be answered, without the knowledge of the treatise going before.

And although diverse things before mentioned be here rehearsed again, yet this repetition is not superfluous, but in a manner necessary, for that the simple sort cannot else understand how the foresaid places are to be applied to the arguments as such as do maintain images, wherewith otherwise they might be abused. First it is alleged by them that maintain images, that all laws, prohibitions, and curses noted by us out of the Holy Scripture, and sentences of the doctors also by us alleged, against images and the worshipping of them, appertain to the idols of the Gentiles or pagans, as the idol of Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, etc., and not to our images of God, of Christ, and his saints. But it shall be declared, both by God's word, and the sentences of the ancient doctors, and judgment of the primitive church, that all images, as well as the idols of the Gentiles, be forbidden and unlawful, namely in churches and temples. And first this is to be replied out of God's word, that the images of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, either severally, or the images of the Trinity, which we had in every church, be by the scriptures expressly and directly forbidden and condemned, as appeareth by these places. The Lord spake unto you out of the middle of fire, you heard the voice or sound of his words, but you did see no form or shape at all, lest peradventure you, being deceived, should make to yourselves any graven image or likeness, and so forth, as it is at large rehearsed in the first part of this treaty against images. And therefore in the old law, the middle of the propitiatory, which represented God's seat, was empty, lest any should take occasion to make any similitude or likeness of him. Ye say, after he had set forth the incomprehensible majesty of God, he asketh, To whom then will you make God like, or what similitude will you set up unto him? Shall the carver make him a carven image? And shall the goldsmith cover him with gold, or cast him into a form of silver plates? And for the poor man shall the image maker frame an image of timber, that he may have somewhat to set up also? And after this he crieth out, O wretches, heard ye never of this? Hath it not been preached to you sith the beginning? How by the creation of the world, and the greatness of the work, they might understand the majesty of God, the maker and creator of all, to be greater than that it could be expressed or set forth in any image or bodily similitude?

Thus far the prophet Issei, who from the 44th chapter to the 49th entreateth in a manner of no other thing. And St. Paul, in the Acts of the Apostles, evidently teacheth the same, that no similitude can be made unto God, in gold, silver, stone, or any other matter. By these and many other places of scripture, it is evident that no image either ought or can be made unto God. For how can God, a most pure spirit, whom man never saw, be expressed by a gross, bodily, and visible similitude?

How can the infinite majesty and greatness of God, incomprehensible to man's mind, much more not able to be compassed with the sense, be expressed in a finite and little image? How can a dead and dumb image express the living God? What can an image, which when it is fallen cannot rise up again, which can neither help his friends nor hurt his enemies, express of the most puissant and mighty God, who alone is able to reward his friends and to destroy his enemies everlastingly?

A man might justly cry with the prophet Habakkuk, Shall such images instruct or teach anything right of God? Or shall they become doctors? Wherefore men that have made an image of God, whereby to honour him, have thereby dishonoured him most highly, diminished his majesty, blemished his glory, and falsified his truth? And therefore St. Paul saith that such as have framed any similitude or image of God, like a mortal man, or any other likeness, in timber, stone, or other matter, have changed his truth into a lie. For both they thought it to be no longer that which it was, a stock or a stone, and took it to be that which it was not, as God, or an image of God. Wherefore an image of God is not only a lie, but a double lie also. But the devil is a liar, and the father of lies. Wherefore the lying images which be made of God, to his great dishonour and horrible danger of his people, came from the devil. Wherefore they be convict of foolishness and wickedness in making of images of God, or the

[ 6 : 09 ] Trinity. For that no image of God ought or can be made, as by the scriptures and good reason evidently appeareth. Yea, and once to declare an image of God cometh of infidelity, thinking not God to be present, except they might see some sign or image of him, as appeareth by the Hebrews in the wilderness, willing Aaron to make them gods whom they might see go before them. Where they object, that seeing in Esaias and Daniel be certain descriptions of God, as seating on a high seat, etc. Why may not a painter likewise set him forth in colours to be seen, as it were a judge sitting in a throne, as well as he is described in writing of the prophets, seeing that scriptural writing and picture differ but a little. First it is to be answered, that things forbidden by God's word, as painting of images of God, and things permitted of God, as such descriptions used of the prophets, be not all one, neither ought nor can man's reason, although it show never so goodly, prevail anything against God's express word and plain statute law, as I may well term it. Furthermore the scripture, although it have certain descriptions of God, yet if you read on forth, it expoundeth itself, declaring that God is a pure spirit, infinite, who replenisheth heaven and earth, which the picture doth not, nor expoundeth not itself, but rather, when it hath set God forth in a bodily similitude, leaveth a man there, and will easily bring one into the heresy of the anthropomorphites, thinking God to have hands and feet and to sit as a man doth, which they that do, saith St. Augustine in his book, *De Fide et Symbolo*, chapter 7, fall into that sacrilege which the apostle detesteth in those who have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the similitude of a corruptible man.

For it is wickedness for a Christian to erect such an image to God in a temple, and much more wickedness to erect such a one in his heart by believing of it. But to this they reply, that, this reason notwithstanding, images of Christ may be made, for that he took upon him flesh and became man. It were well that they would first grant that they have hitherto done most wickedly in making and maintaining of images of God and of the Trinity in every place, whereof they are by force of God's word and good reason convicted, and then to descend to the trial for other images. Now concerning their objection, that an image of Christ may be made, the answer is easy, for in God's word and religion it is not only inquired whether a thing may be done or no, but also whether it be lawful and agreeable to God's word to be done or no. For all wickedness may be and is daily done, which yet ought not to be done, and the words of the reasons above alleged out of the scriptures are, that images neither ought nor can be made unto God. Wherefore to reply that images of Christ may be made, except withal it be proved that it is lawful for them to be made, is rather than to hold one's peace, to say somewhat, but nothing to the purpose. And yet it appeareth that no image can be made of Christ, but a lying image, as the scripture peculiarly calleth images lies. For Christ is God and man, seeing therefore that of the Godhead which is the most excellent part, no image can be made, it is falsely called the image of Christ, wherefore images of Christ be not only defects, but also lies. Which reason serveth also for the images of saints, whose souls, the more excellent parts of them, can by no images be represented and expressed. Wherefore there be no images of saints, whose souls reign in joy with God, but of the bodies of saints, which as yet lie putrefied in the graves. Furthermore no true image can be made of Christ's body, for it is unknown now of what form and countenance he was. And there be in Greece and at

Rome, and in other places, diverse images of Christ, and none of them like to another. And yet every one of them affirmeth that theirs is the true and lively image of Christ, which cannot possibly be. Wherefore, as soon as an image of Christ is made, by and by is a lie made of him, which by God's word is forbidden, which also is true of the images of any saints of antiquity, for that it is unknown of what form and countenance they were. Wherefore, seeing that religion ought to be grounded upon truth, images which cannot be without lies, ought not to be made or put to any use of religion, or to be placed in churches and temples, places peculiarly appointed to true religion and service of God, and thus matched that no true image of God our Saviour Christ or his saints can be made. Wherewithal is also confuted that their allegation, that images be the layman's books, for it is evident of that which is afore rehearsed, that they teach no things of God, of our Saviour Christ, and of his saints, but lies and errors.

Wherefore, either they be no books, or, if they be, they be false and lying books, the teachers of all error. And now, if it should be admitted and granted that an image of Christ could truly be made, yet it is unlawful that it should be made, yea, or that an image of any saint should be made, specially to be set up in temples to the great and unavoidable danger of idolatry, as hereafter shall be proved. And first concerning the image of Christ, that, though it might be had truly, yet it were unlawful to have it in churches publicly, is a notable place in Irenaeus, who reproveth the heretics called Nostici, for that they carried about the image of Christ, made truly after his own proportion in Pilate's time, as they said, and therefore more to be esteemed than those lying images of him which we now have. The which Nostici also used to set garlands upon the head of the said image, to show their affection to it. But to go to God's word, be not, I pray you, the words of the scripture plain. Beware lest thou, being deceived, make to thyself, to say, to any use of religion, any graven image, or any similitude of anything, etc. And cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image, abomination before the Lord, etc. Be not our images such. Be not our images of Christ and his saints, either carved or molten and cast, or similitudes of men and women. It is happy that we have not followed the Gentiles in making of images of beasts, fishes, and vermins also, notwithstanding the image of an horse, as also the image of the ass that Christ rode upon, having diverse places been brought into the church and temple of God. And is not that which is written in the beginning of the

Lord's most holy law, and daily read unto you, most evident also, Thou shalt not make any likeness of anything in heaven above, in earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, etc. Could any more be forbidden and said than this, either of the kinds of images, which be either carved, molten, or otherwise similitudes, or of things whereof images are forbidden to be made, are not all things either in heaven, earth, or water under the earth? And be not our images of Christ and his saints, likenesses of things in heaven, earth, or in the water? If they continue in their former answer, that these prohibitions concern the idols of the Gentiles and not our images, first that answer is already confuted concerning the images of God and the Trinity at large, and concerning the images of Christ, also by Irenaeus. And that the law of God is likewise to be understood against all our images, as well of Christ as his saints, in temples and churches, appeareth further by the judgment of the old doctors and the primitive church. Epiphanius, renting a painted cloth, wherein was the picture of Christ or of some saint, affirming it to be against our religion that any such image should be had in the temple or church, as is afore at large declared, judged that not only idols of the Gentiles, but that all images of Christ and his saints also were forbidden by God's word and our religion.

[14:10] Lactantius, affirming it to be certain that no true religion can be where an image or picture is, as is before declared, judged that as well all images and pictures, as the idols of the Gentiles, were forbidden. Else would he not so generally have spoken and pronounced of them.

And St. Augustine, as is before alleged, greatly alloweth Marcus Varro, affirming that religion is most pure without images, and saith himself, Images be of more force to crook an unhappy soul than to teach and instruct it. And he saith further, Every child, yea, every beast, knoweth that it is not God that they see. Wherefore then doth the Holy Ghost so often monish us of that which all men know?

Where unto St. Augustine answereth thus, For, saith he, when images are placed in temples, and set in honourable sublimity, and begin once to be worshipped, forthwith breedeth the most vile affection of error. This is St. Augustine's judgment of images in churches, that by and by they breed error and idolatry. The Christian emperors, the learned bishops, all the learned men of Asia, Greece, and Spain, assembled in councils at Constantinople and in Spain, seven and eight hundred years ago and more, condemning and destroying all images, as well of Christ as of the saints set up by the Christians, as is before at large declared. Testify that they understood God's word so, that it forbade our images as well as the idols of the Gentiles. And, as it is written in Book of Wisdom, chapter 14, that images were not from the beginning, neither shall they continue to the end.

So were they not in the beginning in the primitive church. God grant they may in the end be destroyed. For all Christians in the primitive church, as Origen against Celsus, Cyprian also, and Arnobius do testify, were sword-charged and complained on, that they had no altars nor images. Wherefore did they not, I pray you, conform themselves to the Gentiles in making of images, but for lack of them sustain their heavy displeasure, if they had taken it to be lawful by God's word to have images?

It is evident, therefore, that they took all images to be unlawful in the church or temple of God, and therefore had none, though the Gentiles therefore were most highly displeased, following this rule, we must obey God rather than men. And Zephyrus, in his notes upon the apology of Tertullian, gathereth, that all his vehement persuasion should be but cold, except we know this once for all, that Christian men in his time did most hate images with their ornaments. And Irenaeus, as is above declared, reproveth the heretics called Gnosticie, for that they carried about the image of Christ.

[ 16 : 51 ] And therefore the primitive church, which is specially to be followed as most incorrupt and pure, had publicly in churches neither idols of the Gentiles nor any other images, as things directly forbidden by God's word. And thus it is declared by God's word, the sentences of the doctors, and the judgment of the primitive church, which was most pure and sincere, that all images, as well as, as the idols of the Gentiles, be by God's word forbidden, and therefore unlawful, especially in temples and churches. Now if they, as their custom is, flee to this answer, that God's word forbiddeth not absolutely all images to be made, but that they should not be made to be worshipped, and that therefore we may have images, so we worship them not, for that they be things indifferent, which may be abused or well used, which seemeth also to be the judgment of Damascene and Gregory I, as is before declared, and this is one of their chief allegations for the maintenance of images, which hath been alleged, seith Gregory I time, well then, we become to their second allegation, which in part we would not stick to grant them. For we are not so superstitious or scrupulous, that we do abhor either flowers wrought in carpets, hangings, or other arras, either the images of princes painted or stamped in their coins, which when Christ did see in a Roman coin, we read not that he reprehended it, neither do we condemn the arts of painting and image making, as wicked of themselves. But we would admit and grant them that images used for no religion, or superstition rather, we mean images of none worshipped, nor endangered to be worshipped of any, may be suffered. But images placed publicly in temples cannot possibly be without danger of worshipping and idolatry, wherefore they are not publicly to be had or suffered in temples and churches. The Jews, to whom this law was first given, and yet being a moral commandment and not ceremonial, as all doctors interpret it, bindeth us as well as them, the Jews,

I say, who should have the true sense and meaning of God's law so peculiarly given unto them, neither had in the beginning any images publicly in their temple, as Origenes and Josephus at large declareth, neither after the restitution of the temple would by any means consent to Herod, Pilate, or Petronius, that images should be placed only in the temple at Jerusalem, although no worshipping of images was required at their hand, but rather offered themselves to the death, than to assent that images should once be placed in the temple of God, neither would they suffer any image maker among them. And Origen addeth this cause, lest their minds should be plucked from God to the contemplation of earthly things. And they are much commended for this earnest zeal in maintaining of God's honour and true religion. And truth it is that the Jews and Turks, who abhor images and idols as directly forbidden by God's word, will never come to the truth of our religion, whilst these stumbling blocks of images remain amongst us, and lie in their way. If they object yet the brazen serpent which Moses did set up, or the images of the cherubins, or any other image which the Jews had in their temple, the answer is easy. We must in religion obey God's general law, which bindeth all men, and not follow examples of particular dispensation, which be no warrants for us, else we may, by the same reason, resume circumcision and sacrificing of beasts and other rites permitted to the Jews. Neither can those images of cherubin, set in secret where no man might come nor behold, be any example for our public setting up of images in churches and temples. But to let the Jews go, where they say that images, so they be not worshipped, as things indifferent may be tolerated in temples and churches, we infer and save for the adversative, that all our images of God, our Saviour Christ and his saints, publicly set up in churches and temples, places peculiarly appointed to the true worshipping of God, be not things indifferent nor tolerable, but against God's law and commandment, taking their own interpretation and exposition of it. First, for that all images so set up publicly have been worshipped of the unlearned and simple sort, shortly after they have been publicly so set up, and, in conclusion, of the wise and learned also. Secondly, for that they are worshipped in sundry places now in our time also. And thirdly, for that it is impossible that images of God, Christ, or his saints, can be suffered specially in temples and churches, any while or space without worshipping of them. And that idolatry, which is most abominable before God, cannot possibly be escaped and avoided without the abolishing and destruction of images and pictures in temples and churches.

For that idolatry is to images, specially in temples and churches, an inseparable accident, as they term it. So that images and churches and idolatry go always both together, and that therefore the one cannot be avoided except the other, specially in all public places, be destroyed. Wherefore, to make images and publicly to set them up in temples and churches, places appointed peculiarly to the service of God, is to make images to the use of religion. And not only against this precept, thou shalt make no manner of image, but against this also, thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them. For they being so set up, have been, be, and ever will be worshipped. And the full proof of that which in the beginning of the first part of this treaty was touched, is here to be made and performed. To wit, that our images and idols of the Gentiles be all one, as well in the things themselves, as also in that our images have been before, be now, and ever will be worshipped in like form and manner, as the idols of the Gentiles were worshipped, so long as they be suffered in churches and temples. Whereupon it followeth, that our images and churches have been, be, and ever will be, none other but abominable idols, and be therefore no things, indifferent. And every of these parts shall be proved in order, as hereafter followeth.

And first, that our images and the idols of the Gentiles be all one concerning themselves, is most evident. The matter of them being gold, silver, or other metal, stone, wood, clay, or plaster, as were the idols of the Gentiles. And so, being either molten or cast, either carved, graven, hewed, or otherwise formed and fashioned, after the similitude and lightness of man or woman, be dead and dumb works of man's hands, having mouth and speak not, eyes and see not, hands and feel not, feet and go not, and so, as well in form as matter, be altogether like the idols of the Gentiles, insomuch that all the titles which be given to the idols in the scriptures may be verified of our images. Wherefore no doubt but the like curses which are mentioned in the scriptures will light upon the makers and worshippers of them both. Secondly, that they have been and be worshipped in our time in like form and manner, as were the idols of the Gentiles, is now to be proved.

And for that idolatry standeth chiefly in the mind, it shall in this part first be proved, that our image maintainers have had and have the same opinions and judgment of saints, whose images they have made and worshipped, as the Gentiles idolaters had of their gods.

[ 24 : 07 ] And afterwards shall be declared, that our image maintainers and worshippers have used and used the same outward rights and manner of honouring and worshipping their images, as the Gentiles did use before their idols, and that therefore they commit idolatry as well inwardly and outwardly, as did the wicked Gentiles idolaters. And concerning the first part of the idolatrous opinions of our image maintainers, what, I pray you, be such saints with us, to whom we attribute the defence of certain countries, spoiling God of his due honour herein, but dee tutelarīs of the Gentiles idolaters, such as were Belus to the Babylonians and Assyrians, Osiris and Isis to the Egyptians, Vulcan to the Lemnians, and such other? What be such saints, to whom the safeguard of certain cities are appointed, but dee presides with the Gentiles idolaters, such as were at Delphos Apollo, at Athens Minerva, at Carthage Juno, at Rome Quirinus, etc.? What be such saints, to whom, contrary to the use of the primitive church, temples and churches be builded, and altars erected, but dee patroni of the Gentiles idolaters, such as were in the capital Jupiter, in Paphos' temple Venus, in Ephesus' temple Diana, and such like? Alas, we seem in thus thinking and doing to have learned our religion, not out of God's word, but out of the pagan poets, who say, Eskes Romnes adutis arisque relictis,

Dequibus imperium hoxterat, etc.? That is to say, all the gods by whose defence this empire stood are gone out of the temples, and have forsaken their altars. And where one saint hath images in diverse places, the same saint hath diverse names thereof, most like to the Gentiles. When you hear of Our Lady of Walsingham, Our Lady of Ipswich, Our Lady of Wilsden, and such other, what is it but an imitation of the Gentiles idolaters, Diana Agratera, Diana Coraphea, Diana Ephesia, etc., Venus Cypria, Venus Paphia, Venus Nydia, whereby is evidently meant that the saint for the image's sake should in those places, yea, in the images themselves, have a dwelling, which is the ground of their idolatry, for where no images be, they have no such means. Terentius Varro sheweth that there were three hundred Jupiters in his time, there were no fewer Veneres and Dianae, we have no fewer Christophers, ladies, and Mary Magdalene, and other saints. Enemaus and Hesiodas show that in their time there were thirty thousand gods, I think we had no fewer saints, to whom we gave the honour due to God.

And they have not only spoiled the true living God of his due honour in temples, cities, countries, and lands, by such devices and inventions, as the Gentile idolaters have done before them.

But the sea and waters have as well special saints with them, as they had gods with the Gentiles, Neptune, Triton, Nereus, Castor and Pollux, Venus, and such other, in whose places become Saint Christopher, Saint Clement, and diverse other, especially Our Lady, to whom shipmen sing, Ave Maris Stella, neither hath the fire escaped their idolatrous inventions. For instead of Vulcan and Esther, the Gentiles, gods of the fire, our men have placed Saint Agatha, and make letters on her day for to quench fire with. Every artificer and profession hath his special saint. As a peculiar god, as, for example, scholars have Saint Nicholas and Saint Gregory, painters Saint Luke, neither lack soldiers their Mars nor lovers their Venus amongst Christians, all diseases have their special saints, as gods the curers of them. The pox, Saint Rock, the falling evil, Saint Cornelis.

The toothache, Saint Apolline, etc. Neither do beasts and cattle lack their gods with us, for Saint Loy is the horse-leech, and Saint Anthony the swine-herd, etc. Where is God's providence and due honour in the mean season? Who saith, The heavens be mine, and the earth is mine, the whole world, and all that in it is? I do give victory, and I put to flight. Of me be all counsels, and help, etc. Except I keep the city, in vain doth he watch, that keepeth it. Thou, Lord, shall save both men and beasts. But we have left him neither heaven nor earth nor water nor country nor city, peace nor war, to rule and govern, neither men nor beasts nor their diseases to cure, that a godly man might justly for zealous indignation cry out, O heaven, O earth and seas, what madness and wickedness against God are men fallen into? What dishonour do the creatures to their creator and maker? And if we remember God sometime, yet because we doubt of his ability or will to help, we join to him another helper, as if he were now an adjective, using these sayings, such as learn,

[ 28 : 54 ]    God and Saint Nicholas be my speed, such as knees, God help and Saint John, to the horse, God and Saint loyze save thee. Thus are we become like horses, and moils, which have no understanding. For is there not one God only, who by his power and wisdom made all things, and by his providence governeth the same, and by his goodness maintaineth and saveth them? Be not all things of him, by him, and through him?

Why dost thou turn from the creator to the creatures? This is the manner of the Gentiles' idolaters, but thou art a Christian, and therefore by Christ alone hast access to God the Father, and help of him only. These things are not written to any reproach of the saints themselves, who were the true servants of God, and did give all honour to him, taking none unto themselves, and are blessed souls with God, but against our foolishness and wickedness, making of the true servants of God false gods, by attributing to them the power and honour which is God's, and due to him only. And for that we have such opinions of the power and ready help of saints, all our legends, hymns, sequences, and masses did contain stories, lords, and praises of them, and prayers to them, yea, and sermons also altogether of them and to their praises, God's word being clean laid aside.

And this we do altogether agreeable to the saints, as did the Gentiles' idolaters to their false gods. For these opinions which men have had of mortal persons, were they never so holy, the old most godly and learned Christians have written against the feigned gods of the Gentiles, and Christian princes have destroyed their images, who, if they were now living, would doubtless likewise both write against our false opinions of saints, and also destroy their images. For it is evident that our image maintainers have the same opinion of saints which the Gentiles had of their false gods, and thereby are moved to make them images, as the Gentiles did. If answer be made that they make saints but intercessors to God, and means for such things as they would obtain of God, that is even, after the Gentiles' idolatrous usage, to make of them, of saints, gods called *dee medioximi*, to be mean intercessors and helpers to God, as though he did not hear, or should be weary if he did all alone. So did the Gentiles teach that there was one chief power working by other as means, and so they made all gods subject to fate or destiny, as Lucian in his dialogues feigneth that



Neptune made suit to Mercury, that he might speak with Jupiter. And therefore in this also it is most evident that our image maintainers be all one in opinion with the Gentiles' idolaters.

Now remaineth the third part, that their rites and ceremonies in honouring or worshipping of the images or saints be all one with the rites which the Gentiles' idolaters used in honouring their idols.

[ 31 : 46 ] First, what meaneth it that Christians, after the example of the Gentiles' idolaters, go on pilgrimage to visit images, where they have the like at home, but that they have a more opinion of holiness and virtue in some images than other some, like as the Gentiles' idolaters had, which is the readiest way to bring them to idolatry by worshipping of them, and directly against God's word, who saith, Seek me, and ye shall live, and do not seek Bethel, neither enter not into Gilgal, neither go up to Beersabab, and against such as had any superstition in the holiness of the place, as though they should be heard for the place's sake, saying, Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that at Jerusalem is the place where men should worship. Our Saviour Christ pronounceeth, Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall worship the Father neither in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, but true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth. But it is too well known, that by such pilgrimage going, Lady Venus and her son Cupid were rather worshipped wantonly in the flesh, than God the Father and our Saviour Christ his son truly worshipped in the spirit. And it was very agreeable, as St. Paul teacheth, that they which fell to idolatry, which is spiritual fornication, should also fall into carnal fornication, and all uncleanness by the just judgments of God delivering them over to abominable concupiscences. What meaneth it that Christian men, after the use of the Gentiles' idolaters, cap and kneel before images, which, if they had any sense and gratitude, would kneel before men, carpenters, masons, plasterers, founders, and goldsmiths, their makers and framers, by whose means they have attained this honour, which else should have been evil favoured, and rude lumps of clay or plaster, pieces of timber, stone or metal, without shape or fashion, and so without all estimation and honour, as that idol in the pagan poet confesseth, saying, I was once a vile block, but now I am become a god, etc. What a fond thing is it for man, who hath life and reason, to bow himself to a dead and unsensible image, the work of his own hand!

Is not this stooping and kneeling before them adoration of them, which is forbidden so earnestly by God's word? Let such as so fall down before images of saints, know and confess that they exhibit that honour to dead stocks and stones, which the saints themselves, Peter, Paul and Barnabas, would not to be given them being alive, which the angel of God forbiddeth to be given to him.

And if they say they exhibit such honour not to the image, but to the saint whom it representeth, they are convicted of folly, to believe that they please saints with that honour which they abhor as a spoil of God's honour, for they be no changelings, but now both, having greater understanding and more fervent love of God, do more abhor to deprive him of his due honour, and being now like unto the angels of God, do with angels flee to take unto them by sacrilege the honour due to God. And herewithal is confuted their lewd distinction of Latria and Dulia, where it is evident that the saints of God cannot abide that as much as any outward worshipping be done or exhibited to them. But Satan, God's enemy, desiring to rob God of his honour, desireth exceedingly that such honour might be given to him. Wherefore those which give the honour due to the Creator to any creature do service acceptable to no saints, who be the friends of God, but unto Satan, God's and man's mortal and sworn enemy. And to attribute such desire of divine honour to saints is to blot them with a most odious and devilish ignominy and villainy, and indeed of saints to make them satans and very devils, whose property is to challenge to themselves the honour which is due to God only. And furthermore, in that they say that they do not worship the images as the Gentiles did their idols, but God and the saints, whom the images do represent, and therefore that their doings before images be not like the idolatry of the Gentiles before their idols. Saint Augustine,

Lactantius, and Clemens do prove evidently that by this their answer, they be all one with the Gentiles idolaters. The Gentiles, saith Saint Augustine, which seem to be of the pure religion, say, We worship not the images, but by the corporal image we do behold the signs of the things which we ought to worship. And Lactantius saith, The Gentiles say, We fear not the images, but them after whose likeness the images be made, and to whose names they be consecrate. Thus far Lactantius. And Clemens saith, That serpent the devil uttereth these words by the mouth of certain men. We to the honour of the invisible God worship visible images, which surely is most false. See how, in using the same excuses which the Gentiles idolaters pretended, they show themselves to be all one with them in idolatry.

For notwithstanding this excuse, Saint Augustine, Clemens, and Lactantius prove them idolaters. And Clemens saith, That the serpent the devil putteth such excuses in the mouth of idolaters.

[ 36 : 56 ] And the scriptures saith, They worship the stocks and stones, notwithstanding this excuse, even as our image maintainers do. And Ezekiel therefore calleth the gods of the Assyrians stocks and stones, although they were but images of their gods. So are our images of God and the saints, named by the names of God and his saints, after the use of the Gentiles. And the same Clemens saith thus in the same book, They dare not give the name of the emperor to any other, for he punisheth his offender and traitor by and by. But they dare give the name of God to other, because he for repentance suffereth his offenders. And even so do our image worshippers give both names of God and the saints, and also the honour due to God, to their images, even as did the Gentiles idolaters to their idols. What should it mean that they, according as did the Gentiles idolaters, light candles at noontime, or at midnight before them, but therewith to honour them? For other use is there none in so doing. For in the day it needeth not, but was ever a proverb of foolishness, to light a candle at noontime, and in the night it availeth not to light a candle before the blind. And God hath neither use nor honour thereof. And concerning this candle lighting, it is notable that Lactantius above a thousand years ago hath written after this manner, If they would behold the heavenly light of the sun, then should they perceive that God hath no need of their candles, who for the use of man hath made so goodly a light. And whereas in so little a circle of the sun, which for the great distance seemeth to be no greater than a man's head, there is so great brightness, that the sight of man's eye is not able to behold it, but if one steadfastly look upon it a while, his eyes will be dulled and blinded with darkness. How great light, how great clearness, may we think to be with God, with whom is no night nor darkness, and so forth. And by and by he saith, seemeth he therefore to be in his right mind, which offereth up to the giver of all light, the light of a wax candle for a gift. He requireth another light of us, which is not smoky, but bright and clear, even the light of the mind and understanding. And shortly after he saith, But their gods, because they be earthly, have need of light, lest they remain in darkness, whose worshippers, because they understand no heavenly thing, do draw the religion which they use down to the earth, in the which, being dark of nature, is need of light. Wherefore they give to their gods no heavenly, but the earthly understanding of mortal men, and therefore they believe those things to be necessary and pleasant unto them, which are so to us, who have need either of meat when we be hungry, or drink when we be thirsty, or clothing when we be a cold, or when the sun is set, candlelight, that we may see. Thus far lactantius, and much more, too long here to write, of candlelighting in temples before images and idols for religion, whereby appeareth both the foolishness thereof, and also that in opinion and act, we do agree all together in our candle religion with the Gentiles idolaters. What meaneth it that they, after the example of the Gentiles idolaters, burn incense, offer up gold to images, hang up crutches, chains, and ships, legs, arms, and whole men and women of wax before images, as though by them, or saints, as they say, they were delivered from lameness, sickness, captivity, or shipwreck? Is not this colere imagines, to worship images, so earnestly forbidden in God's word? If they deny it, let them read the eleventh chapter of Daniel the prophet, who saith of Antichrist, he shall worship God whom his fathers knew not, with gold, silver, and with precious stone, and other things of pleasure, in which place the Latin word is colet. And in the second of Paralipomenon, the twenty-ninth chapter, all the outward rites and ceremonies, as burning of incense and such other, wherewith God in the temple was honoured, is called cultus, to say worshipping, which is forbidden straightly by

God's word to be given to images. Do not all stories ecclesiastical declare that our holy martyrs, rather than they would bow and kneel or offer up one crumb of incense before an image or idol, have suffered a thousand kinds of most horrible and dreadful death? And what excuse soever they make, yet that all this running on pilgrimage, burning of incense and candles, hanging up of crutches, chains, ships, arms, legs, and whole men and women of wax, kneeling and holding up of hands, is done to the images, appeareth by this, that where no images be, or where they have been, and be taken away, they do no such things at all. But the places frequented when the images were there, now they be taken away, be forsaken, and left desert. Nay, now they hate and abhor the place deadly, which is an evident proof, that that which they did before was done in respect of the images.

Wherefore, when we see men and women on heaps to go on pilgrimage to images, kneel before them, hold up their hands before them, set up candles, burn incense before them, offer up gold and silver unto them, hang up ships, crutches, chains, men and women of wax before them, attributing health and safeguard, the gifts of God to them or the saints whom they represent, as they rather would have it, who I say, who can doubt but that our image maintainers, agreeing in all idolatrous opinions, outward rites and ceremonies, with the Gentiles idolaters, agree also with them in committing most abominable idolatry. And to increase this madness, wicked men, which have the keeping of such images, for their more lucre and advantage, after the example of the Gentiles idolaters, have reported and spread abroad, as well by lying tales as written fables, diverse miracles of images, as that such an image miraculously was sent from heaven, even like Palladium or Magna Diana

Ephesiorum. Such another was as miraculously found in the earth, as the man's head was in Capitol, or the horse head in Capua. Such an image was brought by angels, such an one came itself far from the east to the west, as Dame Fortune flit to Rome. Such an image of Our Lady was painted by Saint Luke, whom of a physician they have made a painter for that purpose. Such an one a hundred yokes of oxen could not move, like Bonadea, whom the ship could not carry, or Jupiter Olympias, which laughed the artificers to scorn that went about to remove him to Rome. Some images, though they were hard and stony, yet for tender heart and pity wept. Some, like Castor and Pollux, helping their friends in battle, sweat, as marble pillars do in dankish weather. Some spake more monstrously than ever did Balaam's ass, who had life and breath in him. Such a creeple came and saluted this saint of oak, and by and by he was made whole, and lo, here hangeth his crutch. Such an one in a tempest vowed to Saint Christopher and scaped, and behold, here is his ship of wax. Such an one by Saint Leonard's help break out of prison, and see where his fetters hang. And infinite thousands more miracles, by like or more shameless lies, were reported. Thus do our image maintainers, in earnest applied to their images, all such miracles as the Gentiles have feigned of their idols. And, if it were to be admitted that some miraculous acts were by illusion of the devil done, where images be, for it is evident the most part were feigned lies and crafty jugglings of men. Yet followeth it not, therefore, that such images are either to be honoured, or suffered to remain, no more than Ezekias left the brazen serpent undestroyed when it was worshipped. Although it were both set up by God's commandment, and also approved by a great and true miracle, for as many as beheld it were by and by healed, neither ought miracles to persuade us to do contrary to God's word. For the scriptures have, for a warning hereof, foreshowed that the kingdom of Antichrist shall be mighty in miracles and wonders to the strong allusion of all the reprobate. But in this they pass the folly and wickedness of the Gentiles, that they honour and worship the relics and bones of our saints, which prove that they be mortal men and dead, and therefore no gods to be worshipped, which the Gentiles would never confess of their gods for very shame. But the relics we must kiss and offer unto, especially on Relic Sunday, and while we offer, that we should not be weary or repent us of our cost, the music and minstrelsy goeth merrily all the offertory time, with praising and calling upon those saints, whose relics be then in presence.

Yea, and the water also wherein those relics have been dipped, must with great reverence be reserved, as very holy and effectuous. Is this agreeable to St. Chrysostom, who writeth thus of Relics?

[ 45 : 43 ] Do not regard the ashes of the saints' bodies, nor the relics of their flesh and bones, consumed with time, but open the eyes of thy faith, and behold them clothed with heavenly virtue, and the grace of the Holy Ghost, and shining with the brightness of the heavenly light. But our adulterers found too much vantage of relics and relic water to follow St. Chrysostom's counsel. And because relics were so gainful, few places were there, but they had relics provided for them. And for more plenty of relics, some one saint had many heads, one in one place, and another in another place. Some had six arms and twenty-six fingers. And where our Lord bare his cross alone, if all the pieces of the relics thereof were gathered together, the greatest ship in England would scarcely bare them. And yet the greatest part of it, they say, doth yet remain in the hands of the infidels, for the which they pray in their beads bidding, that they may get it also into their hands for such godly use and purpose.

And not only the bones of the saints, but everything appertaining to them was an holy relic. In some place they offer a sword, in some the scabbard, in some a shoe, in some a saddle that had been set upon some holy horse, in some the coals wherewith St. Lawrence was roasted, in some place the tail of the ass which our Lord Jesus Christ sat on, to be kissed and offered to for a relic. For rather than they would lack a relic, they would offer you a horsebone instead of a virgin's arm, or the tail of the ass to be kissed and offered unto for relics. O wicked, impudent, and most shameless men, the divisors of these things! O seely, foolish, and dastardly doors, and most beastly than the ass whose tail they kissed, that believe such things! Now God be merciful to such miserable and seely Christians, who by the fraud and falsehood of those which should have taught them the way of truth and life, have been made not only more wicked than the Gentiles idolaters, but also no wiser than asses, horses, and mules, which have no understanding. Of these things already rehearsed, it is evident that our image maintainers have not only made images and set them up in temples, as did the Gentiles idolaters their idols, but also that they have had the same idolatrous opinions of the saints, to whom they have made images which the Gentiles idolaters had of their false gods, and have not only worshipped their images with the same rites, ceremonies, superstition, and all circumstances, as did the Gentiles idolaters their idols, but in many points also have far exceeded them in all wickedness, foolishness, and madness. And if this be not sufficient to prove them image worshippers, that is to say idolaters, lo, you shall hear their own open confession.

I mean not only the decrees of the second Nicene council under Hyrene, the Roman council under Gregory III, in the which, as they teach that images are to be honoured and worshipped, as is before declared, so yet do they it warily and fearfully, in comparison to the blasphemous bold blazing of manifest idolatry, to be done to images set forth of late, even in these are days, the light of God's truth so shining, that, above other their abominable doings and writings, a man would marvel most at their impudent, shameless, and most shameful, blustering boldness, who would not at the least have chosen them a time of more darkness as meter to utter their horrible blasphemies in, but have now taken an harlot's face, not purpose to blush, in setting abroad the furniture of their spiritual whoredom.

And here the plain blasphemy of the reverend Father and God, James Naclantus, Bishop of Clugium, written in his exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans and the first chapter, and put in print now of late at Venice, may stand instead of all, whose words of image-worshipping be these in Latin, as he did write them, not one syllable altered.

Ergo non solum fortendum est, fidelis in ecclesia adorare quorum imagine, ut nunuli ad cautelam forte locunto, sedet adorare imaginem, sine quo voluerus scrupulo, quinet eo ilum venerantur cultu, quo et prototupon eos.

[ 49 : 51 ] Propter quad si illud habet adorare latria, et illa latria, si dulia vel huper dulia, et illa parata eos modi cultu adoranda est.

The sense whereof in English is this, Therefore it is not only to be confessed that the faithful in the church do worship before an image, as some peradventure do warily speak, but also do worship the image itself, without any scruple or doubt at all.

Yea, and they worship the image with the same kind of worship, wherewith they worship the copy of the image, or the thing whereafter the image is made. Wherefore, if the copy itself is to be worshipped with divine honour, as is God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the image of them is also to be worshipped with divine honour.

If the copy ought to be worshipped with inferior honour or higher worship, the image also is to be worshipped with the same honour or worship. Thus far hath Lacantus, whose blasphemies let Pope Gregorius I confute, and by his authority damn them to hell, as his successors have horribly thundered.

For although Gregory permitteth images to be had, yet he forbiddeth them by any means to be worshipped, and praiseth much Bishop Serenus for the forbidding the worship of them, and willeth him to teach the people to avoid by all means to worship any image.

[ 51 : 07 ] But Lacantus bloweth forth his blasphemous idolatry, willing images to be worshipped with the highest kind of adoration and worship. Unless such wholesome doctrine should lack authority, he groundeth it upon Aristotle in his book De Somno et Vergilia, that is, of sleeping and waking, as by his printed book, noted so in the margin, is to be seen, whose impudent wickedness and idolatrous judgment I have therefore more largely set forth, that ye may, as Virgil speaketh of Sinon, of one, know all, these image worshippers and idolaters, and understand to what point in conclusion the public having of images in temples and churches hath brought us, comparing the times and writings of Gregory I with our days, and the blasphemies of such idolaters as this beast of Belial, named Naclantus is.

Wherefore, now it is by the testimony of the old godly fathers and doctors, by the open confession of bishops assembled in councils, by most evident signs and arguments, opinions, idolatrous acts, deeds, and worshipping done to our images, and by their own open confession and doctrine set forth in their books, declared and showed that our images have been and be commonly worshipped, yea, and that they ought so to be, I will, out of God's word, make this general argument against all such makers, set us up, and maintain us of images in public places.

And first of all, I will begin with the words of our Saviour Christ, Woe be to that man by whom an offence is given. Woe be to him that offendeth one of these little ones or weak ones.

Better were it for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the middle of the sea, and drowned, than he should offend one of these little ones or weak ones. And in Deuteronomy God himself denounceth him a curse that maketh the blind to wander in his way.

And in Leviticus, thou shalt not lay a stumbling block or stone before the blind. But images in churches and temples have been and be, and as afterwards shall be proved, ever will be offences or stumbling blocks, specially to the weak, simple, and blind common people, deceiving their hearts by the cunning of the artificer, as the scripture expressly in sundry places doth testify, and so bringing them to idolatry.

[ 53 : 22 ] Therefore woe be to the erector, setter up, and maintainer of images in churches and temples, for a greater penalty remaineth for him than the death of the body. If answer be yet made, that this offence may be taken away by diligent and sincere doctrine and preaching of God's word, as by other means, and that images in churches and temples therefore be not things absolutely evil to all men, although dangerous to some, and therefore that it were to beholden that the public having of them in churches and temples is not expedient as a thing perilous, rather than unlawful, as a thing utterly wicked, then followeth the third article to be proved, which is this, that it is not possible if images be suffered in churches and temples, either by preaching of God's word, or by any other means, to keep the people from worshipping of them, and so to avoid idolatry.

And first concerning preaching, if it should be admitted that, although images were suffered in churches, yet might idolatry by diligent and sincere preaching of God's word be avoided, it should follow of necessity that sincere doctrine might always be had and continue as well as images, and so that, wheresoever to offence were erected an image, there also of reason a godly and sincere preacher should and might be continually maintained.

For it is reason that the warning be as common as the stumbling block, the remedy as large as is the offence, the medicine as general as the poison. But that is not possible, as both reason and experience teacheth.

Wherefore preaching cannot stay idolatry, images being publicly suffered. For an image which will last for many hundred years may for a little be bought, but a good preacher cannot be with much continually maintained.

Item, if the prince will suffer it, there will be by and by many, yea, infinite images. But sincere preachers were and ever shall be, but a few in respect of the multitude to be taught.

[ 55 : 16 ] For our Saviour Christ saith, The harvest is plentiful, but the workmen be but a few, which hath been hitherto continually true, and will be to the world's end, and in our time and here in our country, so true that every shire should scarcely have one good preacher, if they were divided.

Now images will continually to the beholders preach their doctrine, that is, the worshipping of images and idolatry, to the which preaching mankind is exceeding prone, and inclined to give ear and credit, as experience of all nations and ages doth too much prove.

But a true preacher to stay this mischief is in very many places scarcely heard once in an whole year, and somewheres not once in seven years, as is evident to be proved.

And that evil opinion, which hath long been rooted in men's hearts, cannot suddenly by one sermon be rooted out clean, and as few are inclined to credit sound doctrine, as many, and almost all, be prone to superstition and idolatry, so that herein appeareth not only a difficulty, but also an impossibility of the remedy.

Further, it appeareth not by any story of credit, that true and sincere preaching hath endured in any one place above one hundred years, but it is evident that images, superstition, and worshipping of images and idolatry, have continued many hundred years.

[ 56 : 36 ] For all writings and experience do testify that good things do by little and little ever decay, until they be clean banished, and contrarywise evil things do more and more increase, till they come to a full perfection of wickedness.

Neither need we to seek examples far off for a proof hereof. Our present matter is an example, for preaching of God's word, most sincere in the beginning, by process of time waxed less and less pure, and after corrupt, and last of all, all together laid down and left off, and other inventions of men crept in place of it.

And on the other part, images among Christian men were first painted, and that can hold stories together, which had some signification in them. Afterwards they were embossed, and made of timber, stone, plaster, and metal.

And first they were only kept privately in private men's houses, and then after they crept into churches and temples, but first by painting, and after by embossing, and yet were they nowhere at the first worshipped.

But shortly after they began to be worshipped of the ignorant sort of men, as appeareth by the epistle that Gregory, the first of that name bishop of Rome, did right to Serenus, bishop of Marcelles, of the which two bishops, Serenus for idolatry committed to images, break them and burn them.

[ 57 : 53 ] Gregory, although he thought it tolerable to let them stand, yet he judged it abominable that they should be worshipped, and thought, as is now alleged, that the worshipping of them might be stayed by teaching of God's word, according as he exhorteth Serenus to teach the people, as in the same epistle appeareth.

But whether Gregory's opinion or Serenus' judgment were better, herein consider ye, I pray you. For experience by and by confuteth Gregory's opinion, for notwithstanding Gregory's writing and the preaching of others, images being once publicly set up in temples and churches, simple men and women shortly after fell on heaps to worshipping of them.

And at the last, the learned also were carried away with the public error, as with a violent stream or flood. And at the second council, Nicene, the bishops and clergy decreed that images should be worshipped.

And so, by occasion of these stumbling blocks, not only the unlearned and simple, but the learned and wise, not the people only, but the bishops, not the sheep, but also the shepherds themselves, who should have been guides in the right way and light to shine in darkness, being blinded by the bewitching of images as blind guides of the blind, fell both into the pit of damnable idolatry.

In the which all the world, as it were drowned, continued until our age by the space of about 800 years, unspoken against in a manner. And this success had Gregory's order, which mischief had never come to pass had Bishop Serenus' way been taken.

[ 59 : 22 ] And all idols and images been utterly destroyed and abolished, for no man worshippeth that that is not. And thus you see how, from having of images privately, it came to public setting of them up in churches and temples, although without harm at the first, as was then of some wise and learned men judged, and from simple having them there, it came at last to worshipping of them, first by the rude people, who specially, as the scriptures teach in, are in danger of superstition and idolatry, and afterwards by the bishops, the learned, and by the whole clergy, so that laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children of whole Christendom, an horrible and most dreadful thing to think, have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices most detested of God, and most damnable to man, and that by the space of eight hundred years or more, and to this end is come that beginning of setting up of images and churches, then judged harmless, in experience proved not only harmful, but exitious and pestilent, and to the destruction and subversion of all good religion universally, so that I conclude, as it may be possible in some one city or little country to have images set up in temples and churches, and yet idolatry by earnest and continual preaching of God's true word, and the sincere gospel of our Saviour Christ may be kept away for a short time, so is it impossible that images once set up and suffered in temples and churches, any great countries, much less the whole world, can any long time be kept from idolatry.

And the godly will respect not only their own city, country and time, and the health of men of their age, but be careful for all places and times, and the salvation of men of all ages.



At the least they will not lay such stumbling blocks and snares for the feet of other countrymen and ages, which experience hath already proved to have been the ruin of the world. Wherefore I make a general conclusion of all that I have hitherto said.

If the stumbling blocks and poisons of men's souls by setting up of images will be many, yea, infinite, if they be suffered and the warnings of the said stumbling blocks and remedies for the said poisons by preaching but few, as is already declared, if the stumbling blocks be easy to be laid, the poison soon provided, and the warnings and remedies hard to know or come by, if the stumbling blocks lie continually in the way, and poison be ready at hand everywhere, and warnings and remedies but seldom given, and if all men be more ready of themselves to stumble and be offended than to be warned, all men more ready to drink of the poison than to taste of the remedy, as is before partly, and shall hereafter more fully be declared, and so in find the poison continually and deeply drunk of many, the remedy seldom and faintly tasted of a few, how can it be but infinite of the weak and infirm shall be offended, infinite by ruin shall break their necks, infinite by deadly venom be poisoned in their souls, and how is the charity of God or love of our neighbour in our hearts then, if, when we may remove such dangerous stumbling blocks, such pestilent poisons, we will not remove them, what shall I say of them which will lay stumbling blocks where before was none, and set snares for the feet, nay for the souls of weak and simple ones, and worked the danger of their eternal ruin, for whom our Saviour Christ shed his precious blood, where better it were that the arts of painting, plastering, carving, graving, and founding had never been found nor used, than one of them whose souls in the sight of God are so precious, should by occasion of image or picture perish and be lost.

And thus is it declared that preaching cannot possibly stay idolatry if images be set up publicly in temples and churches, and as true is it that no other remedy as writing against idolatry, councils assembled, decrees made against it, severe laws likewise, and proclamations of princes and emperors, neither extreme punishments and penalties, nor any other remedy, could or can be possibly devised for the avoiding of idolatry if images be publicly set up and suffered.

[ 63 : 30 ] For concerning writing against images and idolatry to them committed, there hath been alleged unto you in the second part of this treatise a great many of places out of Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, St. Augustine, Epiphanius, St. Ambrose, Clemens, and diverse other learned and holy bishops and doctors of the church.

And besides these, all histories ecclesiastical and books of other godly and learned bishops and doctors are full of notable examples and sentences against images and the worshipping of them.

And as they have most earnestly written, so did they sincerely and most diligently in their time teach and preach according to their writings and examples. For they were then preaching bishops and more often seen in pulpits than in princes' palaces, more often occupied in his legacy who said, Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to all men than in ambassadors and affairs of princes of this world.

And as they were most zealous and diligent, so were they of excellent learning and godliness of life, and by both of great authority and credit with the people, and so of more force and likelihood to persuade the people, and the people more like to believe and follow their doctrine.

But if their preachings could not help, much less could their writings, which do but come to the knowledge of a few that be learned, in comparison to continual preaching, whereof the whole multitude is partaker.

[ 64 : 54 ] Neither did the old fathers, bishops, and doctors, severally only by preaching and writing, but also together great numbers of them assembled in synods and councils, make decrees and ecclesiastical laws against images and the worshipping of them.

Neither did they so once or twice, but diverse times and in diverse ages and countries assembled synods and councils, and made severe decrees against images and worshipping of them, as hath been at large in the second part of this homily before declared.

But all their writing, preaching, assembling in councils, decreeing, and making of laws ecclesiastical, could nothing help either to pull down images to whom idolatry was committed, or against idolatry whilst images stood.

For those blind books and dumb schoolmasters, I mean images and idols, for they call them layman's books and schoolmasters, by their carved and painted writings, teaching and preaching idolatry, prevailed against all their written books and preaching with lively voice, as they call it.

Well, if preaching and writing could not keep men from worshipping of images and idolatry, if pens and words could not do it, you would think that penalty and swords might do it. I mean that princes by severe laws and punishments might stay this unbridled affection of all men to idolatry, though images were set up and suffered.

[ 66 : 12 ] But experience proveth that this can no more help against idolatry than writing and preaching. For Christian emperors, whose authority ought of reason and by God's law to be greatest, above eight in number and six of them successively reigning one after another, as in the histories before rehearsed, making most severe laws and proclamations against idols and idolatry, images and the worshipping of images, and executing most grievous punishments, yea, the penalty of death upon the maintainers of images and upon idolaters and image worshippers, could not bring to pass that either images once set up might thoroughly be destroyed, or that men should refrain from the worshipping of them being set up.

And what think you then will come to pass if men of learning should teach the people to make them and should maintain the setting up of them as things necessary in religion? To conclude, it appeareth evidently by all stories in writing and experience of times past that neither preaching, neither writing, neither the consent of the learned, nor authority of the godly, nor the decrees of councils, neither the laws of princes, nor extreme punishments of the offenders in that behalf, nor no other remedy or means can help against idolatry if images be suffered publicly.

And it is truly said that times past are schoolmasters of wisdom to us that follow and live after. Therefore, if in times past the virtuous and best learned, the most diligent also, and in number almost infinite, ancient fathers, bishops, and doctors, with their writing, preaching, industry, earnestness, authority, assemblies, and councils, could do nothing against images and idolatry to images once set up, what can we, neither in learning nor holiness of life, neither in diligence, neither authority, to be compared with them, but men in contempt, and of no estimation, as the world goeth now, a few also in number, in so great a multitude and malice of men?

What can we do, I say, or bring to pass, to the stay of idolatry or worshipping of images, if they be allowed to stand publicly in temples and churches? And if so many, so mighty emperors, by so severe laws and proclamations, so rigorous and extreme punishments and executions, could not stay the people from setting up and worshipping of images, what will ensue, think you, when men shall commend them as necessary books of the layman?

Let us therefore of these latter days learn this lesson of the experience of the ancient antiquity, that idolatry cannot possibly be separated from images any long time, but that, as an inseparable accident, or as a shadow followeth the body when the sun shineth, so idolatry followeth and cleaveth to the public having of images in temples and churches.

[ 68 : 53 ] And finally, as idolatry is to be abhorred and avoided, so are images, which cannot be long without idolatry, to be put away and destroyed. Besides the which experiments and proofs of times before, the very nature and origin of images themselves draweth to idolatry most violently, and men's nature and inclination also is bent to idolatry so vehemently that it is not possible to sever or part images, nor to keep men from idolatry, if images be suffered publicly.

That I speak of the nature and origin of images as this, even as the first invention of them is naught, and no good can come of that which had an evil beginning, for they be altogether naught, as Athanasius in his book against the Gentiles declareth, and Saint Hirome also upon the prophet Hirome, the sixth chapter, and Eusebius the seventh book of his ecclesiastical history, the eighteenth chapter, testify that they first came from the Gentiles, which were idolaters and worshippers of images unto us, and as the invention of them was the beginning of spiritual fornication, as the word of God testifieth, book of wisdom, chapter 14, so will they, naturally as it were, and of necessity, turn to their origin from whence they came, and draw us with them most violently to idolatry, abominable to God and all godly men, for if the origin of images and worshipping of them, as it is recorded in the eighth chapter of the book of wisdom, began of a blind love of a fond father, framing for his comfort an image of his son being dead, and so at the last men fell to the worshipping of the image of him whom they did know to be dead, how much more will men and women fall to the worshipping of the images of God, our Saviour Christ and his saints, if they be suffered to stand in churches and temples publicly, for the greater the opinion is of the majesty and holiness of the person to whom an image is made, the sooner will the people fall to the worshipping of the said images, wherefore the images of God, our Saviour Christ, the blessed Virgin Mary, the apostles, martyrs, and others of notable holiness, are of all other images most dangerous for the peril of idolatry, and therefore greatest heed to be taken that none of them be suffered to stand publicly in churches and temples, for there is no great dread, lest any should fall to the worshipping of the images of Annas,

Caiaphas, Pilate, or Judas the traitor, if they were set up, but to the other it is already at full proved that idolatry hath been, is, and is most likely continually to be committed.

Now, as was before touched, and is here more largely to be declared, the nature of man is none otherwise bent to worshipping of images, if he may have them and see them, than it is bent to hoard them and adultery in the company of harlots, and, as unto a man given to the lust of the flesh, seeing a wanton harlot sitting by her and embracing her, it profiteth little for one to say, Beware of fornication, God will condemn fornicators and adulterers, for neither will he, being overcome with greater enticements of the strumpet, give ear or take heed to such godly admonitions, and when he is left afterwards alone with the harlot, nothing can follow but wickedness, even so, suffer images to be in sight in churches and temples, ye shall in vain bid them beware of images, as St. John doth, and flee idolatry, as all the scriptures warn us, ye shall in vain preach and teach them against idolatry, for a number will notwithstanding fall headlongs unto it, what by the nature of images, and by the inclination of their own corrupt nature, wherefore, as a man given to lust to sit down by a strumpet is to tempt God, so is it likewise to erect an idol in this proneness of man's nature to idolatry, nothing but attempting?

Now, if any will say that this similitude proveth nothing, yet, I pray them, let the word of God, out of the which the similitude is taken, prove something. Doth not the word of God call idolatry spiritual fornication?

[ 72 : 48 ] Doth it not call a guilt or painted idol or image a strumpet with a painted face? Be not the spiritual wickedness of an idol's enticing, like the flatteries of a wanton harlot?

Be not men and women as prone to spiritual fornication, I mean idolatry, as to carnal fornication. If this be denied, let all nations upon the earth, which have been idolaters, as by all stories appeareth, prove it true.

Let the Jews and the people of God, which were so often and so earnestly warned, so dreadfully threatened, concerning images and idolatry, and so extremely punished, therefore, and yet fell unto it, prove it to be true, as in almost all the books of the Old Testament, namely the kings and the chronicles and the prophets, it appeareth most evidently.

Let all ages and times and men of all ages and times, of all degrees and conditions, wise men, learned men, princes, idiots, unlearned and commonalty, prove it to be true.

If you require examples, for wise men, you have the Egyptians and the Indian gymnosophists, the wisest men of the world. You have Solomon, the wisest of all other, for learned men, the Greeks, and namely the Athenians, exceeding all other nations in superstition and idolatry, as in the history of the Acts of the Apostles, Saint Paul chargeth them.

[ 74 : 05 ] For princes and governors, you have the Romans, the rulers of the roast, as they say. You have the same forenamed King Solomon, and all the kings of Israel and Judah after him, saving David, Ezekiah and Josias, and one or two more.

All these, I say, and infinite others, wise, learned, princes and governors, being all idolaters, have you for examples and a proof of men's inclination to idolatry.

That I may pass over in silence, in the meantime, infinite multitudes and millions of idiots and unlearned, the ignorant and gross people, like unto horses and moils, in whom is no understanding, whose peril and danger to fall on heaps to idolatry by occasion of images, the scriptures specially foreshow and give warning of.

And indeed, how should the unlearned, simple and foolish, scape the nets and snares of idols and images, in the which the wisest and best learned have been so entangled, trapped and rapt?

Wherefore the argument holdeth this ground sure, that men be as inclined of their corrupt nature to spiritual fornication as to carnal, which the wisdom of God foreseeing, to the general prohibition, that none should make to themselves any image or similitude, addeth a cause depending of man's corrupt nature, lest, saith God, thou being deceived with error, honour and worship them.

[ 75 : 23 ] And of this ground of man's corrupt inclination, as well to spiritual fornication as to carnal, it must needs follow that, as it is the duty of the godly magistrate, loving honesty and hating whoredom, to remove all strumpets and harlots, specially out of places notoriously suspected or resorted unto of naughty packs, for the avoiding of carnal fornication, so is it the duty of the same godly magistrate, after the examples of the godly kings Isechias and Josias, to drive away all spiritual harlots, I mean idols and images, specially out of suspected places, churches and temples, dangerous for idolatry to be committed to images placed there, as it were in the appointed place and height of honour and worship, as Saint Augustine saith, where the living God only, and not dead stones nor stocks, is to be worshipped.

It is, I say, the office of godly magistrates likewise to avoid images and idols out of churches and temples, as spiritual harlots out of suspected places, for the avoiding of idolatry, which is spiritual fornication.

And, as he were the enemy of all honesty that would bring strumpets and harlots out of their secret corners into the public marketplace, there freely to dwell and occupy their filthy merchandise, so is he the enemy of the true worshipping of God that bringeth idols and images into the temple and church, the house of God, there openly to be worshipped and to spoil the zealous God of his honour, who will not give it to any other, nor his glory to carven images, who is as much forsaken and the bond of love between man and him as much broken by idolatry, which is spiritual fornication, as is the knot and bond of marriage broken by carnal fornication.

Let all this be taken as a lie, if the word of God enforce it not to be true. Cursed be the man, saith God in Deuteronomium, that maketh a carven or molten image and placeth it in a secret corner and all the people shall say, Amen.

Thus saith God, for at that time no man durst have or worship images openly, but in corners only, and the whole world being the great temple of God, he that in any corner thereof robbeth God of his glory and giveth it to stocks and stones is pronounced by God's word accursed.

[ 77 : 37 ] Now he that will bring these spiritual harlots out of their lurking corners into public churches and temples, that spiritual fornication may there openly of all men and women without shame be committed with them, no doubt that person is cursed of God and twice cursed, and all good and godly men and women will say, Amen, and their Amen will take effect also.

Yea, and furthermore the madness of all men professing the religion of Christ, now by the space of a sort of hundred years, and yet even in our time, in so great light of the gospel, very many running on heaps by sea and land, the great loss of their time, expense and waste of their goods, destitution of their wives, children and families, and danger of their own bodies and lives, to compassse Rome, Jerusalem, and other far countries to visit dumb and dead stocks and stones, does sufficiently prove the proneness of man's corrupt nature to the seeking of idols once set up and the worshipping of them, and thus, as well by the origin and nature of idols and images themselves, as by the proneness and inclination of man's corrupt nature to idolatry, it is evident that neither images, if they be publicly set up, can be separated, nor men, if they see images in temples and churches, can be stayed and kept from idolatry.

Now, whereas they yet allege that howsoever the people, princes, learned, and wise of old time have fallen into idolatry by occasion of images, that yet in our time the most parts, especially the learned, wise, and any of authority, take no hurt nor offence by idols and images, neither do run into far countries to them and worship them, and that they know well what an idol or image is and how it is to be used, and that therefore it followeth images in churches and temples to be an indifferent thing, as the which of some is not abused, and that therefore they may justly hold, as was in the beginning of this part by them alleged, that it is not unlawful or wicked absolutely to have images in churches and temples, though it may, for the danger of the simpler sort, seem to be not altogether expedient.

Whereunto may be well replied that Solomon also, the wisest of all men, did well know what an idol or image was, and neither took any harm thereof a great while himself, and also with his godly writings armed others against the danger of them.

But yet afterward the same Solomon, suffering his wanton paramours to bring their idols into his court and palace, was by carnal harlots persuaded, and brought at the last to the committing of spiritual fornication with idols, and of the wisest and godliest prince became the most foolishhest and wickedest also.

[ 80 : 14 ] Wherefore it is better even for the wisest to regard this warning, he that loveth danger shall perish therein, and let him that standeth be where he fall not, rather than wittingly and willingly to lay such a stumbling block for his own feet, and others that may perhaps bring at last to breakneck.

The good king, Isakias, did know well enough that the brazen serpent was but a dead image, and therefore he took no hurt himself thereby through idolatry to it. Did he thereby let it stand, because himself took no hurt thereof?

No, not so. But being a good king, and therefore regarding the health of his seely subjects, deceived by that image, and committing idolatry thereto, he did not only take it down, but also break it to pieces, and this he did to that image that was set up by the commandment of God, in the presence whereof great miracles were wrought, as that which was a figure of our Saviour Christ to come, who should deliver us from the mortal sting of the old serpent Satan.

Neither did he spare it in respect of the ancientness or antiquity of it, which had continued about seven hundred years, nor for that it had been suffered and preserved by so many godly kings before his time.

How, think you, would that godly prince, if he were now living, handle our idols, set up against God's commandment directly, and being figures of nothing but folly, and for fools to gaze on, till they become as wise as the blocks themselves which they stare on, and so fall down as dead larks in that gaze, and being themselves alive, worship a dead stock or stone, gold or silver, and so become idolaters, abominable and cursed before the living God, giving the honour due unto him which made them when they were nothing, and to our Saviour Christ to redeem them being lost, to the dead and dumb idol, the work of man's hand, which never did nor can do anything for them, no is not able to stir, nor wants to move, and therefore worse than a vile worm which can move and creep.

[ 82 : 11 ] The excellent king Josias also did take himself no hurt of images and idols, for he did know well what they were. Did he therefore, because of his own knowledge, let idols and images stand?

Much less did he set any up. Or rather, did he not, by his knowledge and authority also, succour the ignorance of such as did not know what they were by utter taking away of all such stumbling blocks as might be occasion of ruin to his people and subjects?

Will they, because a few took no hurt by images or idols, break the general law of God, thou shalt make to thee no similitude, etc.? They might as well, because Moses was not seduced by Jethro's daughter, nor Boaz by Ruth, being strangers, reason that all the Jews might break the general law of God, forbidding his people to join their children in marriage with strangers, lest they seduce their children, that they should not follow God.

Wherefore, they which thus reason, though it be not expedient, yet it is lawful to have images publicly, and do prove that lawfulness by a few picked and chosen men, if they object that indifferently to all men which a very few can have without hurt and offence, they seem to take the multitude for vile souls, as he saith in Virgil, of whose loss or safeguard no reputation is to be had, for whom yet Christ paid as dearly as for the mightiest princes, or the wisest and best learned in the earth, and they that will have it generally to be taken for indifferent, for that a very few take no hurt of it, though infinite multitudes besides perish thereby, show that they put little difference between the multitude of Christians and brute beasts, whose danger they do so little esteem.

Besides this, if they be bishops or parsons, or otherwise having charge of men's consciences, that thus reason, it is lawful to have images publicly, though it be not expedient, what manner of pastors show they themselves to be to their flock, which thrust unto them that which they themselves confess not to be expedient for them, but to the utter ruin of the souls committed to their charge, for whom they shall give a straight account before the prince of pastors at the last day, for indeed to object to the weak and ready to fall of themselves such stumbling blocks is a thing not only not expedient, but unlawful, yea, and most wicked also.

[ 84 : 28 ] Wherefore it is to be wondered how they can call images set up in churches and temples to no profit or benefit of any, and to such great peril and danger, yea, hurt and destruction of many, or rather infinite, things indifferent.

Is not the public setting up of them rather a snare for all men and the tempting of God? I beseech these reasoners to call to mind their own accustomed ordinance and decree, whereby they determined that the scripture, though by God himself commanded to be known of all men, women, and children, should not be read of the simple, nor had in the vulgar tongue, for that, as they said, it was dangerous by bringing the simple people into errors.

And will they not forbid images to be set up in churches and temples, which are not commanded but forbidden most straightly by God, but let them still be there, yea, and maintain them also, seeing the people are brought not in danger only, but indeed into most abominable error and detestable idolatry thereby.

Shall God's word, by God commanded to be read unto all and known of all, for danger of heresy, as they say, be shut up, and idols and images, notwithstanding they be forbidden by God, and notwithstanding the danger of idolatry by them, shall they yet be set up, suffered, and maintained in churches and temples?

O worldly and fleshly wisdom, ever bent to maintain the inventions and traditions of man by carnal reason, and by the same to disannul or deface the holy ordinances, laws, and honours of the eternal God, who is to be honoured and praised for ever.

[ 85 : 59 ] Amen. Now it remaineth, for the conclusion of this treaty, to declare as well the abuse of churches and temples by too costly and sumptuous decking and adorning of them, as also the lewd painting, gilding, and clothing of idols and images, and so to conclude the whole treaty.

In Tertullian's time, and hundred and threescore years after Christ, Christians had none other temples but common houses, whither they, for the most part, secretly resorted, and so far off was it that they had before his time any goodly or gorgeous decked temples, that laws were made in Antoninus Verus and Commodus the Emperor's times, that no Christian should dwell in houses, come in public baths, or be seen in streets or anywhere abroad, and that, if they were once accused to be Christians, they should by no means be suffered to escape, as was practised in Apollonius, a noble senator of Rome, who, being accused of his own bondman and slave that he was a Christian, could neither by his defence and apology learnedly and eloquently written and read publicly in the Senate, nor in respect that he was a citizen, nor for the dignity of his order, nor for the vileness and unlawfulness of his accuser, being his own slave, by likelihood of malice moved to forge lies against his lord, nor for no other respect or help could be delivered from death, so that Christians were then driven to dwell in caves and dens, so far off was it that they had any public temples adorned and decked as they now be, which is here rehearsed the confutation of those impudent, shameless liars, which report such gloriously glossed fables of the godly and gorgeous temples that St. Peter,

Linus, Cletus, and those thirty bishops their successors had at Rome until the time of the Emperor Constantine, and which St. Polycarp should have in Asia or Irenaeus in France, by such lies, contrary to all true histories, to maintain the superfluous gilding and decking of temples nowadays, wherein they put almost the whole sermon pith of our religion.

But in those times the world was won to Christendom, not by gorgeous, gilted and painted temples of Christians, which had scarcely houses to dwell in, but by the godly, and as it were golden minds and firm faith of such as in all adversity and persecution profess the truth of our religion.

And after these times, in Maximian and Constantius the Emperor's proclamation, the places where Christians resorted to public prayer were called conventicles, and in Galerius Maximinus the Emperor's epistle, they are called oratories, and Dominica, to say places dedicate to the service of the Lord.

[ 88 : 30 ] And here, by the way, it is to be noted that at that time there were no churches or temples erected unto any saint, but to God only, as Saint Augustine also recordeth, saying, We build no temples unto our martyrs.

And Eusebius himself calleth churches houses of prayer, and showeth that in Constantine the Emperor's time all men rejoiced, seeing, instead of low conventicles, which tyrants had destroyed, high temples to be builded, Lo, until the time of Constantine, by the space of above 300 years after our Saviour Christ, when Christian religion was most pure and indeed golden, Christians had but low and poor conventicles and simple oratories, yea, caves under the ground called cryptae, where they, for fear of persecution, assemble secretly together, a figure whereof remaineth in the vaults which yet are builded under great churches, to put us in remembrance of the old state of the primitive church before Constantine, whereas in Constantine's time and after him were builded great and goodly temples for Christians called basilicae, either for that the Greeks used to call all great and goodly places basilicas, or for that the high and everlasting king, God and our Saviour Christ, were served in them.

But although Constantine and other princes, of good zeal to our religion, did sumptuously deck and adorn Christians' temples, yet did they dedicate, at that time, all churches or temples to God or our Saviour Christ, and to no saint, for that abuse began long after in Justinian's time.

And that gorgeousness then used, as it was born with as rising of a good zeal, so was it signified of the godly learned even at that time, that such caste might otherwise have been better bestowed.

Let Saint Hirom, although otherwise too great a like and a lower of external and outward things, be a proof hereof, who hath these words in his epistle to Demetriades. Let other, saith Saint Hirom, build churches, cover walls with tables of marble, carry together huge pillars, and gild their tops or heads, which do not feel or understand their precious decking and adorning.

[ 90 : 33 ] Let them deck the doors with ivory and silver, and set the golden altars with precious stones. I blame it not. Let every man abound in his own sense, and better is it so to do than carefully to keep their riches laid up in store.

But thou hast another way appointed thee, to clothe Christ in the poor, to visit him in the sick, feed him in the hungry, lodge him in those who do lack harbour, and specially such as be of the household of faith.

And the same Saint Hirom toucheth the same matter somewhat more freely in his treaty of the life of clerks to Nepotions, saying thus, Many build walls and erect pillars of churches, the smooth marbles do glisser, the roof shineth with gold, the altar is set with precious stone, but of the ministers of Christ there is no election or choice.

Neither let any man object and allege against me the rich temple that was in jewellery, the table, candlesticks, incense ships, platters, cups, mortars, and other things all of gold.

Then were these things allowed of the Lord. When the priests offered sacrifices and the blood of beasts was accounted the redemption of sins, howbeit all these things went before in figure, and they were written for us upon whom the end of the world is come.

[ 91 : 44 ] And now, when that our Lord, being poor, hath dedicate the poverty of his house, let us remember his cross, and we shall esteem riches as mire or dung. What do we marvel at, that which Christ calleth wicked mammon?

Whereto do we so highly esteem and love that which St. Peter doth for a glory testify that he had not, hitherto St. Hirome? Thus you see how St. Hirome teacheth the sumptuousness amongst the Jews to be a figure to signify, and not an example to follow, and that those outward things were suffered for a time until Christ our Lord came, who turned all those outward things into spirit, faith, and truth.

And the same St. Hirome upon the seventh chapter of Jeremy saith, God commanded both the Jews at that time, and now us who are placed in the church, that we have no trust in the goodliness of building and gilt roofs and in walls covered with tables of marble, and say, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.



For that is the temple of the Lord wherein dwelleth true faith, godly conversation, and the company of all virtues. And upon the prophet Agi he describeth the true and right decking or ornaments of the temple after this sort.

I, saith St. Hirome, do think the silver wherewith the house of God is decked to be the doctrine of the scriptures, of the which it is spoken, the doctrine of the Lord is a pure doctrine, silver tried in fire, purged from dross, purified seven times.

[ 93 : 12 ] And I do take gold to be that which remaineth in the hid sense of the saints and the secret of the heart, and shineth with the true light of God, which is evident that the apostle also meant of the saints that build upon the foundation of Christ, some silver, some gold, some precious stones, that by the gold, the hid sense, by silver godly utterance, by precious stones, works which please God, might be signified.

With these metals the church of our saviour is made more goodly and gorgeous than was the synagogue in old time. With these lively stones is the church and house of Christ build it, and peace is given to it forever.

All these be St. Hirome's sayings. No more did the old godly bishops and doctors of the church allow the outrageous furniture of temples and churches with plate, vessels of gold, silver, and precious vestures.

St. Chrysostom saith, in the ministry of the holy sacraments there is no need of golden vessels, but of golden mines. And St. Ambrose saith, Christ sent his apostles without gold and gathered his church without gold.

The church hath gold, not to keep it, but to bestow it on the necessities of the poor. The sacraments look for no gold, neither do they please God for the commendation of gold, which are not bought for gold.

[ 94 : 27 ] The adorning and decking of the sacraments is the redemption of captives. Thus much St. Ambrose, St. Hirome, commendeth Exuperius, Bishop of Toulouse, that he carried the sacrament of the Lord's body in a wicker basket and the sacrament of his blood in a glass, and so cast covetousness out of the church.

And Bonifacius, Bishop and Martyr, as it is recorded in the decrees, testifieth that in old time the ministers used trine and not golden vessels. And Zephyrinus, the sixteenth Bishop of Rome, made a decree that they should use vessels of glass.

Likewise were the vestures used in the church in old time very plain and single and nothing costly. And Rabanus at large declareth that this costly and manifold furniture of vestments of late used in the church was fet from the Jewish usage and agreeeth with Aaron's apparelling almost altogether.

For the maintenance of the which in Ascentius the Pope pronounceeth boldly that all the customs of the old law be not abolished, that we might in such apparel of Christians the more willingly become Jewish.

This is noted not against churches and temples which are most necessary and ought to have their due use and honour as is another homily for their purpose declared nor against the convenient cleanliness and ornaments thereof but against the sumptuousness and abuses of temples and churches.

[ 95 : 47 ] For it is a church or temple also that glistereth with no marble shineth with no gold nor silver glittereth with no pearls nor precious stones but with plainness and frugality signifieth no proud doctrine nor people but humble, frugal and nothing esteeming earthly and outward things but gloriously decked with inward ornaments according as the prophet declareth saying the king's daughter is altogether glorious inwardly.

Now concerning outrageous decking of images and idols with painting, gilding, adorning with precious vestures, pearl and stone what is it else but for the further provocation and enticement to spiritual fornication to deck spiritual harlots most costly and wantonly which the idolatrous church understandeth well enough for she being indeed not only an harlot as the scriptures calleth her but also a foul filthy old withered harlot for she is indeed of ancient years and understanding her lack of natural and true beauty and great loathsomeness which of herself she hath doth after the custom of such harlots paint herself and deck and tire herself with gold pearl stone and all kind of precious jewels that she shining with the outward beauty and glory of them may please the foolish fantasy of fond lovers and so entice them to spiritual fornication with her who if they saw her I will not say naked but in simple apparel would abhor her as the foulest and filthiest harlot that ever was seen according as appeareth by the description of the garnishing of the great strumpet of all strumpets the mother of Hordom set forth by St. John in his revelation who by her glory provoked the princes of the earth to commit Hordom with her whereas on the contrary part the true church of God as a chaste matron espoused as the scripture teacheth to one husband our saviour Jesus Christ whom alone she is content only to please and serve and looketh not to delight the eyes or fantasies of any other strange lovers or wooers is content with her natural adornments not doubting by such sincere simplicity best to please him which can well skill of the difference between a painted visage and true natural beauty and concerning such glorious gilding and decking of images both God's word written in the 10th chapter of the prophet Jeremy and St. Hyrome's commentaries upon the same are most worthy to be noted first the words of the scriptures be these the workman with his axe hewed the timber out of the wood with the work of his hands he decked it with gold and silver he joined it with nails and pins and the stroke of an hammer that it might hold together they be made smooth as the palm and they cannot speak if they be born they remove for they cannot go fear ye them not for they can neither do evil nor good thus saith the prophet upon which text

St. Hyrome hath these words this is the description of idols which the Gentiles worship their matter is vile and corruptible and whereas the artificer is mortal the things he maketh must needs be corruptible he decketh it with silver and gold that with the glittering or shining of both metals he may deceive the simple which error indeed hath passed over from the Gentiles that we should judge religion to stand in riches and by and by after he saith they have the beauty of metals and be beautified by the art of painting but good or profit is there none in them and shortly after again they make great promises and devise an image of vain worshipping of their own fantasies they make great brags to deceive every simple body they dull and amaze the understanding of the unlearned as it were with golden senses and eloquence shining with the brightness of silver and of their own devisers and makers are these images advanced and magnified in the which is no utility nor profit at all and the worshipping of the which properly pertaineth to the Gentiles and heathen and such as know not God thus far of

Saint Jerome's words whereupon you may note as well his judgment of images themselves as also of the painting gilding and decking of them that it is an error which came from the Gentiles that it persuadeth religion to remain in riches that it amazeth and deceiveth the simple and unlearned with golden senses and silver shining eloquence and that it appertaineth properly to the Gentiles and heathens and such as know not God wherefore the having painting gilding and decking of images by Saint Jerome's judgment is erroneous seducing and bringing into error specially the simple and unlearned heathenish and void of the knowledge of God surely the prophet Daniel in the eleventh chapter declares such sumptuous decking of images with gold silver and precious stones to be a token of antichrist kingdom who as the prophet foreshoweth shall worship God with such gorgeous things now usually such outrageous adorning and decking of images hath risen and been maintained either of offerings provoked by superstition and given in idolatry or of spoils robberies usury or goods otherwise unjustly gotten whereof wicked men have given part the images or saints as they call them that they might be pardoned of the whole as of diverse writings and old monuments concerning the cause and end of certain great gifts may well appear and indeed such money so wickedly gotten is most meet to be put to so wicked and use and that which they take to be amends for the whole before God is more abominable in his sight than both the wicked getting and the more wicked spending of all the rest for how the Lord alloweth such gifts he declareth evidently in the prophet

Issei saying I saith the Lord do love judgment and I hate spoil and raveny offered in sacrifice which the very Gentiles understood for Plato showeth that such men are supposed that God doth pardon wicked men if they give part of their spoils and ravine to him take him to be like a dog that would be entreated and hired with part of the prey to suffer the wolves to weary the sheep and in case the goods wherewith images bedecked were justly gotten yet is it extreme madness so foolishly and wickedly to bestow goods purchased by wisdom and truth of such lewdness lactantius writeth thus men do in vain deck images of the gods with gold ivory and precious stone as though they could take any pleasure of these things for what use have they of precious gifts which understand nor feel nothing even the same that dead men have for with like reason do they bury dead bodies fast with spices and odours and clothed with precious vestures and deck images which neither felt or knew when they were made nor understand when they be honoured for they get no sense and understanding by their consecration thus far lactantius and much more too long here to rehearse declaring that as little girls play with little puppets so be these decked images great puppets for old fools to play with and that we may know what not only men of our religion but ethnics also judge of such decking of dead images it is not unprofitable to hear what Seneca a wise and excellent learned senator of Rome and philosopher saith concerning the foolishness of ancient and grave men used in his time in worshipping and decking of images we saith Seneca be not twice children as the common saying is but always children but this is the difference that we being elder play the children and in these plays they bring in before great and well decked puppets for so he calleth images ointments incense and odours to these puppets they offer up sacrifice which have a mouth but not the use of teeth upon these they put a tiring and precious apparel which have no use of clothes to these they give gold and silver which they who receive it meaning the images lack as well as they that have given it from them and Seneca much commendeth

[ 103 : 40 ] Dionysius king of Sicily for his merry robbing of such decked and jewelled puppets! But, you will ask what doth this appertain to our images which is written against the idols of the Gentiles?

Altogether, surely for what use or pleasure have our images of their decking and precious ornaments? Did our images understand when they were made? Or no, when they be so trimmed and decked?

Be not these things bestowed upon them as much in vain as upon dead men which have no sense? Wherefore it followeth that there is like foolishness and lewdness in decking of our images as great puppets for old fools like children to play the wicked play of idolatry before as was amongst the ethnics and Gentiles.

Our churches stand full of such great puppets wondrously decked and adorned garlands and coronets to be set on their heads precious pearls hanging about their necks their fingers shine with rings set with precious stone their dead and stiff bodies are clothed with garments stiff with gold.

You would believe that the images of our men saints were some princes of Percy land with their proud apparel and the idols of our women saints were nice and well-trimmed harlots tempting their paramours to wantonness whereby the saints of God are not honoured but most dishonoured and their godliness soberness chastity contempt of riches and of the vanity of the world defaced and brought in doubt by such monstrous decking most differing from their sober and godly lives and because the whole pageant must thoroughly be played it is not enough thus to deck idols but at the last come in the priests themselves likewise decked with gold and pearl that they may be meet servants for such lords and ladies and fit worshippers of such gods and goddesses and with a solemn pace they pass forth before these golden puppets and down to the ground on their marrow bones before these honourable idols and then rising up again offer up odours and incense unto them to give the people an example of double idolatry by worshipping not only the idol but the gold also and riches wherewith it is garnished which things the most part of our old martyrs rather than they would do or once kneel or offer up one crumb of incense before an image suffered most cruel and terrible deaths as the histories of them at large do declare and here again their allegation out of Gregory I and Damascene that images be the layman's books and that picture is the scripture of idiots and simple persons is worthy to be considered for as it hath been touched in diverse places before how they be books teaching nothing but lies as by St. Paul in the first chapter to the Romans evidently appeareth of the images of God so what manner of books and scripture these painted and gilt images of saints be unto the common people note well

[ 106 : 29 ] I pray you for after that our preachers shall have instructed and exhorted the people to the following of the virtues of the saints as contempt of this world poverty soberness chastity and such like virtues which undoubtedly were in the saints think you as soon as they turn their faces from the preacher and look upon the graven books and painted scripture of the glorious gilt images and idols all shining and glittering with metal and stone and covered with precious vestures or else with Kyria and Terence behold a painted table wherein is set forth by the art of the painter an image with a nice and wanton apparel and countenance more like to Venus or Flora than Mary Magdalene or if like to Mary Magdalene it is when she played the harlot rather than when she wept for her sins when I say they turn about from the preacher to these books and schoolmasters and painted scriptures shall they not find them lying books teaching other manner of lessons of esteeming of riches of pride and vanity and apparel of niceness and wantonness and peradventure of whoredom as Korea of like pictures was taught and in Lucian one learned of Venus Nydia a lesson too abominable here to be remembered be not these think you pretty books and scriptures for simple people and specially for wives and young maidens to look in read on and learn such lessons of what will they think either of the preacher who taught them contrary lessons of the saints and therefore by these carven doctors are charged with a lie or of the saints themselves if they believe these graven books and painted scriptures of them who make the saints now reigning in heaven with God to their great dishonor schoolmasters of such vanity which they in their lifetime most abhorred for what lessons of contempt of riches and vanity of this world can such books so besmeared with gold set with stone covered with silks teach what lessons of soberness and chastity can our women learn of these painted scriptures with their nice apparel and wanton looks but away for shame with these colored cloaks of idolatry of the books and scriptures of images and pictures to teach idiots nay to make idiots and stark fools and beasts of Christians do men

I pray you when they have the same books at home with them run on pilgrimage to seek like books at Rome Compostela or Jerusalem to be taught by them when they have the light to learn of at home do men reverence some books and despise and set light by other of the same sort do men kneel before their books light candles at noontime burn incense offer up gold and silver and other gifts to their books do men either feign or believe miracles to be wrought by their books I am sure that the new testament of our saviour Jesus Christ containing the word of life is a more lively express and true image of our saviour than all carved graven molten and painted images in the world be and yet none of all these things be done to that book or scripture of the gospel of our saviour which be done to images and pictures the books and scriptures of laymen and idiots as they call them wherefore call them what they list it is most evident by their deeds that they make of them none other books nor scriptures than such as teach most filthy and horrible idolatry as the users of such books daily prove by continual practising of the same

O books and scriptures in the which the devilish schoolmaster Satan hath penned the lewd lessons of wicked idolatry for his dastardly disciples and scholars to behold read and learn to God's most high dishonour and their most horrible damnation have not we been much bound thank you to those which should have taught us the truth out of God's book and his holy scripture that they have shut up that book and scripture from us and none of us so bold as once to open it or read on it and instead thereof to spread us abroad these goodly carven and gilted books and painted scriptures to teach us such good and godly lessons have not they done well after they ceased to stand in pulpits themselves and to teach the people committed to their instruction keeping silence of God's word and become dumb dogs as the prophet calleth them to set up in their stead on every pillar and corner of the church such goodly doctors as dumb but more wicked than themselves be we need not to complain of the lack of one dumb parson having so many dumb devilish vicars

I mean these idols and painted puppets to teach in their stead now in the mean season whilst the dumb and dead idols stand thus decked and clothed contrary to God's law and commandment the poor Christian people the lively images of God commended to us so tenderly by our saviour Christ as most dear to him stand naked shivering for cold and their teeth chattering in their heads and no man covereth them are pined with hunger and thirst and no man giveth them a penny to refresh them whereas pounds be ready at all times contrary to God's word and will to deck and trim dead stocks and stones which neither feel cold hunger nor thirst Clemens hath a notable sentence concerning this matter saying thus that serpent the devil doth by the mouth of certain men utter these words we for the honour of the invisible God do worship visible images which doubtless is most false for if you will truly honour the image of God you should by doing well to man honour the true image of God in him for the image of God is in every man but the likeness of God is not in everyone but in those only which have a godly heart and pure mind if you will therefore truly honour the image of God we do declare to you the truth that ye do well to man who is made after the image of God that you give honour and reverence to him and refresh the hungry with meat the thirsty with drink the naked with clothes the sick with attendants the stranger harbourless with lodging the prisoners with necessities and this shall be accounted as truly bestowed unto God and these things are so directly appertaining to God's honour that whosoever doeth not this shall seem to have reproached and done villainy to the image of God for what honour of God is this to run to images of stock and stone and to honour vain and dead figures as God and to despise man in whom is the true image of God and by and by after he saith understand ye therefore that this is the suggestion of the serpent Satan lurking within you which persuadeth you that you are godly when you honour insensible and dead images and that you be not ungodly when you hurt or leave unsuccoured the lively and reasonable creatures all these be the words of Clemens note I pray you how this most ancient and learned doctor within one hundred years of our Saviour Christ's time most plainly teacheth that no service of God or religion acceptable to him can be in honouring of dead images but in succouring of the poor the lively images of God according to St. James who saith this is the pure and true religion before God the Father to succour fatherless and motherless children and widows in their affliction and to keep himself undefiled from this world true religion then and pleasing of God standeth not in making setting up painting gilding clothing and decking of dumb and dead images which be but great puppets and Mormons for old fools and dotage and wicked idolatry to dally and play with nor in kissing of them capping kneeling offering to them incensing of them setting up of candles hanging up of legs arms or whole bodies of wax before them or praying and asking of them or of saints things belonging only to God to give but all these things be vain and abominable and most damnable before God wherefore all such do not only bestow their money and labour in vain but with their pains and cost purchase to themselves

God's wrath and utter indignation and everlasting damnation both of body and soul for ye have heard it evidently proved in these homilies against idolatry by God's word the doctors of the church ecclesiastical histories reason and experience that images have been and be worshipped and so idolatry committed to them by infinite multitudes to the great offence of God's majesty and danger of infinite souls and that idolatry cannot possibly be separated from images set up in churches and temples gilded and decked gorgeously and that therefore our images be indeed very idols and so all the prohibitions laws curses threatenings of horrible plagues as well temporal as eternal contained in the holy scripture concerning idols and the makers maintainers and worshippers of them appertain also to our images set up in churches and temples to the makers maintainers and worshippers of them and all those names of abomination which God's word in the holy scripture giveth to the idols of the gentiles appertain to our images being idols like to them and having like idolatry committed unto them and God's own mouth in the holy scriptures calleth them vanities lies deceits uncleanness filthiness dung mischief and abomination before the Lord wherefore God's horrible wrath and our most dreadful danger cannot be avoided without the destruction and utter abolishing of all such images and idols out of the church and temple of God which to accomplish

[ 115 : 43 ] God put in the minds of all Christian princes and in the meantime let us take heed and be wise O ye beloved of the Lord and let us have no strange gods but one only God who made us when we were nothing the father of our Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed us when we were lost and with his Holy Spirit who doth sanctify us for this is life everlasting to know him to be the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent let us honour and worship for religion's sake none but him and him let us worship and honour as he will himself and hath declared by his word that he will be honoured and worshipped not in nor by images or idols which he hath most straightly forbidden neither in kneeling lighting of candles burning of incense offering up of gifts unto images and idols to believe that we shall please him for all these be abomination before God but let us honour and worship God in spirit and truth fearing and loving him above all things trusting in him only calling upon him and praying to him only praising and lording of him only and all other in him and for him for such worshippers doth our heavenly father love who is the most purest spirit and therefore will be worshipped in spirit and truth and such worshippers were Abraham

Moses David Elias Peter Paul John and all other the holy patriarchs prophets apostles martyrs and all true saints of God who all as the true friends of God were enemies and destroyers of images and idols as the enemies of God and his true religion wherefore take heed and be wise O ye beloved of the Lord and that which others contrary to God's word bestow wickedly and to their damnation upon dead stocks and stones no images but enemies of God and his saints that bestow ye as the faithful servants of God according to God's word mercifully upon poor men and women fatherless children widows sick persons strangers prisoners and such others that be in any necessity that ye may at the great day of the Lord hear that most blessed and comfortable saying of our Saviour Christ come ye blessed into the kingdom of my father prepared for you before the beginning of the world for I was hungry and ye gave me meat thirsty and ye gave me drink naked and ye clothed me harbourless and ye lodged me in prison and ye visited me sick and ye comforted me for whatsoever ye have done for the poor and needy in my name and for my sake that have ye done for me to the which his heavenly kingdom

God the Father of mercies bring us for Jesus Christ's sake our only Saviour mediator and advocate to whom with the Holy Ghost one immortal invisible and most glorious God be all honour and thanksgiving and glory world without end Amen