

A TREATISE

ON

THE WORSHIP OF IMAGES.

WRITTEN BY

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A TREATISE
OF
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IN THE NAME, AS IT SEEMETH, OF THE WHOLE CLERGY,

ADDRESSED TO KING EDWARD VI., CONCERNING IMAGES, THAT THEY
ARE NOT TO BE SET UP NOR WORSHIPPED IN CHURCHES.

FIRST PART.

Certain reasons which move us that we cannot with safe consciences give our assents that the Images of Christ, &c., should be placed and erected in Churches.

[When any note is not enclosed in brackets and signed Ed. it is Ridley's own quotation, and merely removed from the text for the sake of uniformity. The Treatise itself was first published by Fox in his "Acts and Monuments." Ed.]

FIRST, the words of the commandment, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," &c. And the same is repeated more plainly, "Cursed is the man which maketh a graven or molten image, &c., and setteth it in a secret place, and all the people shall say, Amen."

Maledictus homo qui facit sculptile et conflatile, etc. et ponit illud in abscondito. Exod. xx. Deut. xxvii.

In the first place, these words are to be noted: "Thou shalt not make to thyself;" that is, to any use of religion.

In the latter place, these words: "And setteth it in a secret place;" for no man then durst commit idolatry openly. So that, comparing the places, it evidently appears that images, both for use of religion and in place of peril¹ for idolatry, are forbidden.

God, knowing the inclination of man to idolatry, sheweth the reason why he made this general prohibition: "Lest peradventure thou, being deceived, shouldst bow down to them and worship them."

Ne forte errore deceptus adoret ea et colas.

This general law is generally by all to be observed, notwithstanding that peradventure a great number cannot be hurt by them, which may appear by the example following.

[¹ Placed where there is danger of their being worshipped. Ed.]

Deut. vii.
Quia sedu-
cent filium
tuum ne
sequatur
me.

God forbade the people to join their children in marriage with strangers, adding the reason: "For they will seduce thy son, that he shall not follow me."

Moses¹ was not deceived or seduced by Jethro's daughter, nor Boaz by Ruth, being a woman of Moab. And yet for all that, the general law was to be observed, "Thou shalt join no marriage with them." And so likewise, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," &c.

In Deuteronomy God gives a special charge to avoid images: "Beware that thou forget not the covenant of the Lord thy God which he made with thee, and so make to thyself any graven image of anything which the Lord hath forbidden thee; for the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, and a jealous God. If thou have children and nephews, and do dwell in the land, and, being deceived, make to yourselves any graven image, doing evil before the Lord your God, and provoke him to anger, I do this day call heaven and earth to witness that you shall quickly perish out of the land which you shall possess; you shall not dwell in it any longer, but the Lord will destroy you and scatter you amongst all nations."

Note what a solemn obtestation God useth, and what grievous punishments he threateneth to the breakers of the second commandment.

In the tabernacle and temple of God no image was by God appointed to be set openly, nor by practice afterwards used or permitted, so long as religion was purely observed; so that the use and execution of the law is a good interpreter of the true meaning of the same.

If, by virtue of the second commandment, images were not lawful in the temple of the Jews, then by the same commandment they are not lawful in the churches of the Christians. For being a moral commandment, and not ceremonial (for, by consent of writers, only a part of the precept of observing the Sabbath is ceremonial), it is a perpetual commandment, and bindeth us as well as the Jews.

The Jews by no means would consent to Herod, Pilate,

[¹ It should be remembered that Moses acted previous to the promulgation of the law in question, and Boaz in obedience to a peculiar, and in his case superior one. Ed.]

or Petronius, that images should be placed in the temple of Jerusalem; but rather offered themselves to death than assent unto it: who, besides that they are commended by Josephus² for observing the meaning of the law, would not have endangered themselves so far, if they had thought images had been indifferent in the temple of God. For as St Paul saith, "What hath the temple of God to do with idols?"

Joseph.
Antiq. lib.
xvii. cap. 8;
lib. xviii.
cap. 5 and
11.
2 Cor. vi.
Quid tem-
plum Dei
cum simul-
acris?

God's Scripture in no place commends the use of images, but in a great number of places doth disallow and condemn them.

They are called, in the book of Wisdom, the trap and snare of the feet of the ignorant.

It is said, the invention of them was the beginning of spiritual fornication; and that they were not from the beginning, neither shall they continue to the end.

In the fifteenth chapter of the same book it is said, "Their pictures are a worthless labour." And again, "They are worthy of death that put their trust in them, that make them, that love them, and that worship them."

Umbra pic-
turae, labor
sine fructu.

The Psalms and prophets are full of like sentences; and how can we then praise that which God's Spirit doth always dispraise?

Furthermore, an image made by a father, as appears in the same book³, for the memorial of his son departed, was the first invention of images, and occasion of idolatry.

How much more, then, shall an image made in the memory of Christ, and set up in the place of religion, occasion the same offence? Images have their beginning from the heathen; and upon no good ground, therefore, can they be profitable to Christians. Whereunto Athanasius agrees, when writing of images against the Gentiles⁵: "The invention of images

Euseb. 4Ec-
cles. Histor.
lib. vii. cap.
18.

[² Ed. Genev. 1635, p. 596. 624. 640. Ed.]

³ "Thus some parent mourning bitterly for a son who hath been taken from him, makes an image of his child; and him who before had been to his family as a dead man they now begin to worship as a god; rites and sacrifices being instituted to be observed by his dependents." Book of Wisdom, xiv.

[⁴ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. vii. c. 8. Ed. Par. 1659, p. 265. Ed.]

[⁵ Athanasius, Cont. Gentes. ἡ τῶν εἰδώλων εὐρεσις οὐκ ἀπὸ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κακίας γέγονε, τὸ δὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἔχον κακὴν ἐν οὐδὲν ποτὲ καλὸν κριθείη, ὅλον ὂν φαῦλον. Par. 1627, tom. i. p. 8. Ed.]

came of no good, but of evil; and whatsoever hath an evil beginning can never in anything be judged good, seeing it is wholly naught."

St John says, "My little children, beware of images;" but to set them in the churches, which are places dedicated to the service and invocation of God, and that over the Lord's table, being the highest and most honourable place, where most danger of abuse both is and ever hath been, is not to beware of them nor to flee from them, but rather to embrace and receive them. Tertullian, expounding the same words, writeth thus: "Little children, keep yourselves from the shape itself, or form of them¹."

Lib. de Co-
rona Militis.

1 Cor. xiv.

Images in the Church either serve to edify or to destroy. If they edify, then is there a kind of edification which the Scriptures neither teach nor command, but always disallow: if they destroy, they are not to be used; for in the Church of God all things ought to be done to edify.

The commandment of God is, "Thou shalt not lay a stumbling-block or a stone before the blind;" and, "Cursed is he that maketh the blind to wander in his way."

The simple and unlearned people who have been so long under blind guides, are blind in matters of religion, and inclined to error and idolatry. Therefore, to set images before them to stumble at (for they are snares and traps for the feet of the ignorant), or to lead them out of the true way, is not only against the commandment of God, but deserveth also the malediction and curse of God.

Nam laquei
pedibus in-
sipientium
sunt.

1 Cor. ix.

The use of images is, to the learned and confirmed in knowledge, neither necessary nor profitable. To the superstitious, it is a confirmation in error. To the simple and weak, an occasion to fall, and very offensive and wounding to their consciences; and therefore very dangerous. For St Paul saith, "Offending the brethren and wounding their weak consciences, they sin against Christ." And Matthew xviii: "Woe be to him by whom offence or occasion of falling cometh; it were better that a millstone were tied

¹ Filioli custodite vos ab idolis, non jam ab idololatria quasi ab officio, sed ab idolis, i. e. ab ipsâ effigie eorum.

[Ed. Par. Rigalt. 1641. p. 126—7. Ed.]

about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than to offend one of the little ones that believe in Christ." And where an objection may be made that such offence may be taken away by sincere doctrine and preaching, it is to be answered, that is not sufficient; as hereafter more at large shall appear.

And though it should be admitted as true, yet it should follow that sincere doctrine and preaching should always, and in all places, continue as well as images: and so that wheresoever an image were erected to offend, there should also, of reason, a godly and sincere preacher be continually maintained; for it is reason that the remedy be as large as the offence, the medicine as general as the poison; but that is not possible in the realm of England, if images should be generally allowed, as reason and experience may teach.

As good magistrates, who intend to banish all whoredom, do drive away all naughty persons, especially out of such places as be suspected; even so images, being "Meretrices," *id est*, "Whores"—for that the worshipping of them is called in the prophets fornication and adultery—ought to be banished, and especially out of churches, which is the most suspected place, and where the spiritual fornication hath been most committed.

It is not expedient to allow and admit that which is hurtful to the greatest number; but in all churches and commonwealths the ignorant and weak are the greatest number, to whom images are hurtful, and not profitable.

And whereas it is commonly alleged that images in churches stir up the mind to devotion, it may be answered that, contrariwise, they rather distract the mind from prayer, hearing of God's word, and other godly meditations; as we read that in the council chamber of the Lacedæmonians no picture or image was suffered, lest, in consultation of weighty matters of the common weal, their minds, by the sight of the outward image, might be occasioned to withdraw or to wander from the matter.

The experience of this present time declareth, that those parts of the realm which think, and are persuaded, that God is not offended by doing outward reverence to an image, most desire the restitution of images, and have been most diligent to set them up again: restitution, therefore, of them by com-

mon authority shall confirm them more in their error, to the danger of their souls, than ever they were before. For, as one man writeth, "Nothing is more certain or sure than that which of doubtful is made certain¹."

The profit of images is uncertain; the peril, by experience of all ages and states of the Church, as afore, is most certain.

The benefit to be obtained by them, if there be any, is very small; the danger in seeing of them, which is the danger of idolatry, is the greatest of all other. Now, to allow a most certain peril for an uncertain profit, and the greatest danger for the smallest benefit, in matters of faith and religion, is a tempting of God and a grievous offence.

SECOND PART.

Probations out of the Fathers, Councils, and Histories.

FIRST, it is manifest, that in the primitive Church images were not commonly used in churches, oratories, and places of assembly for religion; but they were generally detested and abhorred, insomuch that the want of imagery was objected to the Christians by the heathen, as a crime.

Origen relates that Celsus objected the lack of images².

Arnobius saith also, that the Ethnics accused the Christians, that they had neither altars nor images³.

Zephirinus in his "Commentary upon the Apology of Tertullian," gathers thus of Tertullian's words: "That place of persuasion were very cold, and to no purpose at all, except we hold this always, that Christians in those days did hate, most of all, images, with their trim decking and ornaments⁴."

Irenæus reproves the heretics called Gnostics, because that they carried about the image of Christ, made in Pilate's

¹ Nihil magis est certum quam quod ex dubio factum est certum.

² Ed. *Par. Ben.* tom. i. p. 524. Ed.]

³ Ed. *Par. de la Barre.* 1582, p. 137. Ed.]

⁴ Qui locus persuadendi frigeret penitus, nisi perpetuo illud teneamus, Christianos tunc temporis odisse maximè statuas cum suis ornamentis. [Ed. *Col.* 1622, p. 145. Ed.]

time, after his own proportion⁵ (which were much more to be esteemed than any that can be made now); using also, for declaration of their affection towards it, to set garlands upon the head of it⁶.

Lactantius affirms plainly⁷, "It is not to be doubted, that there is no religion wherever there is any image." If Christians then had used images, he would not have made his proposition so large.

St Augustine⁸ commends Varro the Roman in these words: "Since Varro thought religion might be kept more purely without images, who does not see how near he came to the truth?" So that not only by Varro's judgment, but also by St Augustine's approbation, the most pure and chaste observation of religion, and the nearest the truth, is to be without images.

The same St Augustine, in Ps. cxiii., hath⁹ these words: "Images have more force to bow down and crook the silly soul, than to teach it."

And upon the same Psalm he moves this question¹⁰: "Every child, yea, every beast knoweth that it is not God which they see; why, then, doth the Holy Ghost so oft give warning to beware of that which all do know?" St Augustine answers¹¹: "When they are set in churches, and begin

⁵ Made like to the actual bodily form and proportion in which Christ appeared upon earth.

⁶ Gnosticos se autem vocant, et imagines quasdam quidem depictas, quasdam autem et de reliquâ materia fabricatas, habent, dicentes formam Christi factam a Pilato illo in tempore, quo fuit Jesus cum hominibus, et has coronant.—S. Ir. Op. Par. Ben. 1710, p. 105. Ed.]

⁷ Non est dubium, quin religio nulla sit ubicunque simulacrum est. [Ed. Oxon. 1684, p. 203. Ed.]

⁸ *Quum Varro existimaverit* castius sine simulacris observari religionem, quis non videt quantum appropinquaverit veritati? [The words in Italics are not Augustine's.—Ed. Ben. Par. 1681, tom. vii. col. 112. Ed.]

⁹ Plus valent simulacra ad curvandam infelicem animam * * * quam ad corrigendam.—[Ed. Par. Ben. 1681, tom. iv. col. 1262. Ed.]

¹⁰ Quivis puer, immo quævis bestia scit, non esse Deum quod vident: cur ergo Spiritus Sanctus toties monet cavendum quod omnes sciunt?

¹¹ Quoniam cum ponuntur in templis, et semel incipiunt adorari à multitudine, statim nascitur sordidissimus affectus erroris.

[The genuine words of Augustine are:

"Quis puer interrogatus non hoc certum esse respondeat, quod simulacra gentium os habent et non loquuntur, oculos habent et non vide-

once to be worshipped of the multitude or common people, straightway springs up a most filthy affection of error."

This place of St Augustine well opens how weak a reason it is to say, images are a thing indifferent in chambers and in churches; for the alteration of the place, manner, and other circumstances, oftentimes alters the nature of the thing. It is lawful to buy and sell in the market, but not so in churches. It is lawful to eat and drink, but not so in churches. And therefore saith St Paul: "Have you not houses to eat and drink in? Do you condemn the Church of God?"

Many other actions there be, which are lawful and honest in private places, which are neither comely nor honest, not only in churches, but also in other assemblies of honest people.

Tertullian saith he used sometimes to burn frankincense in his chamber, which was then used by idolators, and is so still in the Romish churches; but he joineth withal: "But not after¹ such a rite or ceremony, nor after such a fashion, nor with such preparation or sumptuousness, as it is done before the idols."

So that images placed in churches, and set in an honourable place of estimation, as St Augustine saith, and especially over the Lord's table, which is done (using the words of Tertullian) after the same manner and fashion which the Papists used, especially after so long continuance of abuse of images, and so many being blinded with superstitious opinion towards them—cannot be counted a thing indifferent, but a most certain ruin of many souls.

bunt, et cætera quæ divinus sermo contexuit—cur ergo tantopere Spiritus Sanctus curat Scripturarum plurimis locis hæc insinuare, atque inculcare velut inscientibus, quasi non omnibus apertissima atque notissima, nisi quia species membrorum quam naturaliter in animantibus viventem videre atque in nobismetipsis sentire consuevimus, quanquam ut illi asserunt in signum aliquod fabrefacta atque eminenti collocata suggestu, cum adorari atque honorari a multitudine cœperit, paret in unoquoque sordidissimum erroris affectum," &c. &c.

Ed. Ben. Par. 1681, tom. iv. col. 1261. c.d. } Ed.]
— Basil. 1542, tom. viii. col. 1306.

¹ Sed non eodem ritu, nec eodem habitu, nec eodem apparatu, quo agitur apud idola.

[Tertullian. de Corona Militis. Cap. 10. Ed. Rigalt. 1641. Paris, p. 126. Ed.]

Epiphanius, in his epistle to John Bishop of Jerusalem (which epistle was translated out of the Greek by St Jerome, shewing that it is likely that Jerome disliked not the doctrine of the same), writes a fact of his own, which most clearly declares the judgment of that notable learned bishop concerning the use of images: his words are these: "When² I came to a village called Anablatha, and saw there, as I passed by, a candle burning, and enquiring what place it was, and learning that it was a church, and had entered into the same to pray, I found there a veil or cloth hanging at the door of the same church, dyed and painted, having on it the image of Christ, as it were, or of some saint—for I remember not well whose it was. Then, when I saw this, that in the Church of Christ, against the authority of the Scriptures, the image of a man was hung up, I cut it in pieces," &c. And a little after: "And commanded that such manner of veils or cloths, which are contrary to our religion, be not hanged in the Church of Christ."

Out of this place of Epiphanius divers notes are to be observed:—

First, that, by the judgment of this ancient Father, to permit images in churches is against the authority of the Scriptures, meaning against the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," &c.

Secondly, that Epiphanius rejecteth, not only graven and molten, but also painted images; for if he cut in pieces the image painted on a veil hanging at the church door, what would he have done if he had found it over the Lord's Table?

Thirdly, that he spareth not the image of Christ; for no doubt that image is most perilous in the church, of all other.

[² Quum venissem ad villam quæ dicitur Anablatha, vidissemque ibi præteriens lucernam ardentem, et interrogassem quis locus esset, didicissemque esse Ecclesiam, et intrassem ut orarem, inveni ibi velum pendens in foribus ejusdem ecclesiæ, tinctum atque depictum, et habens imaginem quasi Christi vel sancti cujusdam, non enim satis memini cujus fuit. Cum ergo hoc vidissem in Ecclesiâ Christi contra auctoritatem scripturarum hominis pendere imaginem, scidi illud * * * et præcepi in Ecclesiâ Christi istiusmodi vela, quæ contra religionem nostram veniunt, non appendi.

[Ed. Par. Ben. 1706. tom. iv. col. 828-829. Ep. cx. Ed.]

Fourthly, that he did not only remove it, but with a vehemency of zeal cut it in pieces; following the example of the good King Hezekiah, who brake the brazen serpent and burnt it to ashes.

Last of all, that Epiphanius thinketh it the duty of vigilant bishops to be careful that no such kind of painted images are permitted in the Church.

Serenus, bishop of Massilia, broke down images, and destroyed them, when he saw them begin to be worshipped¹.

Experience of the times since has declared whether of the two sentences were better. For since Gregory's time the images standing in the Western Churches have been overflowed with idolatry, notwithstanding his or other men's doctrine; whereas, if Serenus's judgment had universally taken place, no such thing had happened: for if no images had been suffered, none could have been worshipped; and consequently no idolatry committed by them.

THIRD PART.

To recite the proceedings in Histories and Councils about the matter of Images, would require a long discourse, but it shall be sufficient here briefly to touch a few.

IT is manifest to them that read histories, that not only emperors, but also divers and sundry councils in the Eastern Church, have condemned and abolished images, both by decrees and examples.

Petrus Crinitus, in his book of "Honest Discipline," wrote out of the emperors' books these words²: "Valens

[¹ Præterea indico dudum ad nos pervenisse, quod fraternitas vestra quosdam imaginum adoratores aspiciens, easdem in ecclesiis imagines confregit atque projecit. Et quidem zelum vos, ne quid manu factum adorari posset, habuisse laudavimus, sed frangere easdem imagines non debuisse indicamus. Idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi qui literas nesciunt saltem in parietibus videndo legant, quæ legere in codicibus non valent. Tua ergo fraternitas et illas servare et ab earum adoratu populum prohibere debuit; quatenus et literarum nescii haberent unde scientiam historiæ colligerent, et populus in pictura adoratione minime peccaret. Greg. Mag. Op. Regist. lib. ix. Indict. 2. Ed. Ben. Par. 1705, vol. ii. col. 1006. Ed.]

² Valens et Theodosius imperatores præfecto prætorio ad hunc modum scripserunt. Quum sit nobis cura diligens in rebus omnibus

and Theodosius, the emperors, wrote to the pretorian prefect in this sort: 'Whereas we are very careful that the religion of Almighty God should be kept in all things; we permit no man to cast, grave, or paint the image of our Saviour Christ, either in colours, stone, or other matter: but where-soever it be found, we command it to be taken away, punishing them most grievously that shall attempt anything contrary to our decrees and empire.'

Leo III., a man commended in histories for his excellent virtues and godliness, (who as is judged of some men was the author of the book de re militari, that is of the feats of war, being translated out of Greek by Sir John Cheke, and dedicated to king Henry the Eighth your highness' father³), by public authority commanded abolishing of images, and in Constantinople caused all the images to be gathered together on a heap, and burned them to ashes.

Constantine, his son, assembled a council of the bishops of the Eastern Church, in which council it was decreed as follows: "It is not lawful for them that believe in God through Jesus Christ, to have any images, either of the Creator or of any creatures, set up in the temples to be worshipped; but rather that all images, by the law of God, and for the avoiding of offence, ought to be taken out of churches." Which decree was executed in all places where any images were, either in Greece or in Asia. But in all these times the bishops of Rome, rather maintaining the authority of Gregory, than, like Christian bishops, weighing the peril of the Church, always in the assemblies allowed images.

Not long after the bishop of Rome, practising with Tharadius, patriarch of Constantinople, obtained of Irene, the empress, her son Constantine being then young, that a

superni numinis religionem tueri; signum salvatoris Christi nemini concedimus coloribus, lapide, aliâve materiâ fingere, insculpere, aut pingere, sed quocunque reperitur loco, tolli jubemus, gravissima pœna eos mulctando, qui contrarium decretis nostris et imperio quicquam tentaverint. Pet. Crin. de Hon. Discip. lib. ix. c. 9.

[³ The work "de apparatu bellico, or Tactica," of which the treatise de re militari is the first chapter, was not the work of Leo III., otherwise called Iconoclastes, but of Leo VI. who was surnamed Pacificus, Philosophus, and Sapiens. Cave, Hist. Literaria. Ed.]

council should be called at Nice, in which the Pope's legates were presidents, which appeared well by their fruits; for in that council it was decreed, that images should not only be permitted in churches, but also worshipped; which council was confuted by a book written by Charlemagne, the emperor, calling it a foolish and arrogant council¹.

Soon after this council arose a sharp contention between Irene, the empress, and her son, Constantine VI., the emperor, who destroyed images. And in the end, as she had before wickedly burned the bones of her father-in-law, Constantine V., so afterwards unnaturally she put out the eyes of her son, Constantine VI.

To be short, there never was anything that made more division, or brought more mischief into the Church, than the controversy of images; by reason whereof, not only the Eastern Church was divided from the Western, and never since perfectly reconciled, but also the empire was cut asunder and divided, and the gate opened to the Saracens and Turks to enter and overcome a great part of Christendom. The fault whereof most justly is to be ascribed to the patrons of images, who could not be contented with the example of the primitive Church, being most simple and sincere, and most agreeable to the Scripture—for as Tertullian saith², “What is the first, that is true, and that which is later is counterfeit”—but with all extremity they maintained the use of images in churches, whereof no profit nor advantage ever grew to the Church of God. For it is evident that infinite millions of souls have been cast into eternal damnation by the occasion of images used in place of religion; and no history can record that ever any one soul was won unto Christ by having of images. But lest it might appear that the Western Church had always generally retained and commended images, it is to be noted that in a council holden in Spain, called the Eliberian Council³, the

[¹ See the nine canons of that council (the 2nd Nicene,) Crabb's. Con. Gen. tom. ii. p. 465—6, Ed. Colon. 1551. Ed.]

[² Id esse verum quodcunque primum; id esse adulterum quodcunque posterius. Tertullian. cont. Praxeam, Sect. 2. Op. p. 405. Ed.]

[³ Held at Elvira, near Granada, about A.D. 305. Labbé, Conc. Gen. tom. i. col. 995. Ed.]

use of images in churches was clearly prohibited in this form of words: “We decree that pictures ought not to be in churches, lest that be painted upon the walls which is worshipped or adored⁴.”

But, notwithstanding this, experience hath declared, that neither assembling in councils, neither writings, preachings, decrees, making of laws, prescribing of punishments, hath holpen against images, to which idolatry has been committed, nor against idolatry whilst images stood. For these blind books and dumb schoolmasters (which they call layman's books) have more prevailed by their carved and painted preaching of idolatry, than all other written books and preachings in teaching the truth, and the horror of that vice.

Having thus declared unto your Highness a few causes out of many which move our consciences in this matter, we beseech your Highness most humbly not to strain us any further, but consider that God's word threateneth a terrible judgment unto us, if we, being pastors and ministers in his Church, should assent unto the thing which in our learning and conscience we are persuaded tendeth to the confirmation of error, superstition, and idolatry, and finally, to the ruin of the souls committed to our charge, for which we must give an account to the Prince of pastors at the last day. We pray your Majesty also not to be offended with this our plainness and liberty, which all good and Christian princes have ever taken in good part at the hands of godly bishops.

St Ambrose, writing to Theodosius the emperor, useth these words⁵, that is to say: “Neither is it the part of an emperor to deny free liberty of speaking, nor yet the duty of a priest not to speak what he thinks.” And again⁶: “In

⁴ Placuit in Ecclesiis picturas esse non debere, ne quod colitur aut adoratur in parietibus depingatur. [Can. 36. Crabb's. Con. Gen. Col. vol. i. p. 284. Ed.]

⁵ Sed neque imperiale est libertatem dicendi negare, neque sacerdotale quid sentiat non dicere. [S. Ambros. Op. Ed. Par. Ben. 1690, Ep. xxix. col. 946. Ed.]

⁶ In causâ vero Dei quem audies, si sacerdotem non audies, cujus majore peccatur periculo? Quis tibi verum audebit dicere, si sacerdos non audeat? [S. Ambros. Op. Ed. Ben. Par. 1690, Ep. xxix. col. 947. Ed.]

Heb. xiii.
1 Peter v.

Epist. lib. v.
Epist. xxxix.

God's cause whom wilt thou hear, if thou wilt not hear the priest, to whose great peril the fault should be committed? Who dare say the truth unto thee if the priest dare not?" These and such like speeches of St Ambrose Theodosius and Valentinianus, the emperors, always took in good part; and we doubt not but your Grace will do the like, not only of whose clemency, but also beneficence, we have largely tasted.

We beseech your Majesty also, in these and such like controversies of religion, to refer the discussion and deciding of them to a synod of your bishops and other godly learned men, according to the example of Constantinus Maximus, and other Christian emperors, that the reasons of both parties being examined by them, the judgment may be given uprightly in all doubtful matters.

And to return to this present matter, we most humbly beseech your Majesty to consider, that besides weighty causes in policy which we leave to the wisdom of your honourable councillors, the establishment of images by your authority shall not only utterly discredit our ministers as builders up of the things which we have destroyed, but also blemish the fame of your most godly father, and also of such notable fathers as have given their life for the testimony of God's truth, who by public law removed all images.

The almighty and everlasting God plentifully endue your Majesty with his Spirit and heavenly wisdom, and long preserve your most gracious reign and prosperous government over us, to the advancement of His glory, to the overthrow of superstition, and to the benefit and comfort of all your Highness's loving subjects.
