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THE TEMPLE

*WHAT AGREEMENT HAS THE TEMPLE OF GOD WITH IDOLS?
2 CORINTHIANS 6:16*

THOMAS ADAMS



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A Sermon Preached at St. Paul's Cathedral on the 5th of August,
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By Thomas Adams.

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**TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE, SIR
HENRY CAREY, Lord HUNSDON,
Viscount Rochford.**

MY LORD,

Among the many absurdities that give us ample reason to detest the Religion of the current Roman Church, this appears to me as one of the most significant: they have filled all the Temples under the command of their shrewd Hierarchy with Idols, transforming the worship of the Invisible God into the adoration of visible Images. They invoke the Saints through these Images, and dare not serve the Lord without them. It is as if God had revoked His unchanging Law and now required worship only through Images. I have observed this particular trait among the various characteristics of that assembly: they strive to condemn what God has justified and justify what He has condemned. In the former case, God has clearly directed our Justification solely through faith in the merits of Christ, a notion they vehemently dispute. In the latter case, He has (not without mentioning His Jealousy) forbidden any form of worship that carries even the slightest hint of idolatry, an injunction they fervently maintain. How many extensive volumes they have written against the Second Commandment! It seems they are not content with removing it from their Catechisms; they dogmatically contradict it to the entire world. First, they incite the people to plain rebellion, and

then they attempt to redeem them with a clever distinction. Thus, they exhaust their intellects in an effort to legitimize through distinction what God has unequivocally declared illegitimate through His definitive decree. It is as if the Papal Decrees were the laws by which the world would be judged on the Day of Judgment. But who would esteem a grand and venerable house that has been infected by the plague or seized by thieves? And who, in their right mind, would align themselves with a Temple that, despite claiming long-standing tradition, majestic architecture, and other such privileges and royalties, is found to be tainted by superstitions and defiled by innumerable Idols? Why should we take pleasure in dwelling where God has refused to dwell with us?

I present this argument to your Lordship not as a novel concept but as something in which your well-experienced knowledge can enlighten me. Only with the assurance of your esteemed name have I taken the liberty to share this brief Discourse with the world, encouraged by the long-standing evidence of your unwavering devotion to the Truth and the gracious Piety of your most noble Mother, the greatest source of encouragement for my humble endeavors on this earth. May God's choicest blessings continue to multiply upon her, yourself, your devout Lady, and your esteemed Family. These blessings are continually sought by

Your Lordship's humble Servant, THO. ADAMS.

THE TEMPLE.

What agreement has the Temple of God with Idols? - 2
Corinthians 6:16

It is unsuitable for those who will be far apart in the afterlife to be too closely associated in this world. The Sheep and the Goats are currently mixed together, and none can distinguish them here, but only the one who will separate them in the future—the right and left hand of the last Tribunal shall declare them. However, those who differ from us in Faith and Profession are evident, and we are frequently charged with non-intermingling. The closer this mismatched conjunction, the more intolerable it becomes. Sharing the same board is bad, sharing the same bed is worse, but sharing the same Temple is the worst of all. Thus, the Apostle begins his discouragement, saying, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers," and ends it with the question, "What agreement has the Temple of God with Idols?" Various types of seeds in one field, diverse kinds of animals in one yoke, different fabrics in one garment—all of these were explicitly forbidden under the Law. So, should multiple Religions be allowed in one Church under the Gospel?

The absurdity of such a mixture is illustrated here through several oppositions, all of which are interrogative in tone, conveying a negative sense. Righteousness and Unrighteousness, Light and Darkness, Christ and Belial, the Believer and the Infidel—these cannot coexist, have no fellowship, harmony, or association. So, what agreement has the Temple of God with Idols?

I need not artificially divide these words, for they are inherently divided by nature. Just as "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder," it can be said that "What God has put asunder, let no man join together." The purpose of the Text and the subject of my Discourse is to separate Idols from the Temple of God. The Holy Ghost has already divided them for me. They cannot agree in His verdict, so they should never find agreement in our practice. Cursed is the one who attempts to settle this dispute. The Temple is holy, while Idols are profane—it is not lawful to mix the sacred with the profane. The Temple is for God, while Idols are for the Devil—God and the Devil cannot be reconciled. Therefore, just as two hostile nations, after some peace negotiations where neither side approves

the proposed conditions, break off in anger, saying, "In this, we both agree that we do not agree at all," let it be agreed here that no agreement can be reached. In settling disputes between individuals, families, or kingdoms, "Blessed are the peacemakers," but in reconciling Christ and Belial, the Temple of God and Idols, "Cursed are the peace-makers." Here, let great triumphs in war be waged. God Himself initiated the conflict in Paradise, His Apostle has now sounded the Alarm, and he deserves a curse who calls for a retreat.

But just as no battle can be fought effectively without order and military arrangement, no discourse can be made profitable without some method. Therefore, let us consider the Temple as God's Castle and Idolatry as its invasion. This Castle is singular, while Idols are numerous. The Champions appointed by God to defend His Castle are primarily Princes and Pastors, the Magistrates and the Ministry. The adversary forces fighting against it are the Devil's hired Soldiers. The Fortress on one side is the Divine Scripture, the sacred Word of God, while the Engines, Artillery, and Assault Instruments on the other side are Idols, Traditions, and the carnal inventions with which the corrupt heart of man seeks to batter it. This Siege is continuous, this feud unrelenting, and the difference irreconcilable. However, in the end, the war shall conclude with the ruin of these enemies, the triumph of the righteous, and the eternal glory of God.

Although this war is entirely spiritual, it is viewed in different ways. There is a physical Temple and a mystical Temple, external Idols and internal Idols, ordinary Soldiers and extraordinary Soldiers. Every Christian, as they are a Temple of God, faces the assault of Idols. There is a civil war, a rebellion within them, with which they are constantly engaged. In this militant state of the Church, none are exempt—only those who fully indulge in their own corruptions are not a Temple of God but a Synagogue of Satan, a cesspool of impurity rather than a Sanctuary of holiness. Thus, from one general concept, many specific instances arise, and you may say, "Behold, a company," as Leah said of her son Gad, "a Troupe cometh." Yet, all these branches have one root. They are like the wheels of a clock,

briefly taken apart for examination before being put together again. Let not their number discourage your attention. When a wealthy worldly favorite sent his servant to secure lodgings, he informed the Host, "Tonight, the Lord of such a Manor, the Landlord of such a Town, the Keeper of such a Forest, the Master of such an Office, the Lay-parson of such a Parish, a Knight, a Justice of Peace, a Gentleman, an Usurer, and my Master will come here." Alas, the Host replied, "I do not have accommodations for so many." "Be content," the servant replied, "for all these are but one man." So, if you are concerned about your memory's capacity to entertain so many observations, take comfort, for they all converge to this one conclusion: there is no agreement between the Temple of God and Idols.

The Temple.

That which was built by Solomon was rightly called the Wonder of the world: a magnificent and glorious Monument, situated on the hill of Zion, inviting passersby to behold it and astonishing their eyes upon seeing it. It was made of white Marble on the outside, while the interior was adorned with Cedar and Gold—only the finest materials were used, all beautiful, precious, and enduring. Such was the splendor of that holy Structure that all nations admired it, and throughout history, it has been celebrated. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion." When the favor of heaven shone upon Jerusalem, the joy of the entire earth was Mount Zion. It is fitting that He who made the world a dwelling place for Man should have a house in this world made for Himself. Moreover, it could not be too costly since all the materials used were His own. Every decrepit Cottage is too good for Satan; no structure could be too sumptuous for God. While His people dwelt in Tents, He was

content to dwell in a Tabernacle. In the wandering condition of Israel, He wanted His own house to be mobile so that they would never move without Him. However, when their settlement was established in the promised Land, He desired His Tabernacle to be transformed into a Temple, so that as they dwelled where He appointed them, He might also dwell among them. The former was for movement, the latter for rest; the former for progress, the latter His permanent abode. Throughout this time, God had only one House at a time: first, the Tabernacle, then it gave way to the Temple, and when Solomon's Temple was defaced, it was succeeded by Zerubbabel's Temple. Now He has many houses, as many as there are nations, congregations, and individuals professing Christ. We have our own houses, so why should God be deprived? A Prince has more than one residence; why should the King of Heaven be limited? Although a King can only dwell in one house at a time, God, regardless of the number, can simultaneously fill them all. He has a house of flesh, as every Believer is His Temple; a house of stone, like this physical structure, which is also His Temple; a house that is neither of flesh nor stone, but immaterial and immortal in the heavens. Just as Christ said that in His Father's House, there are many Mansions, so in His Father's militant Church, there are many houses.

It would be futile to inquire about what God should do with a house when we consider what we do with our own—what else but dwell in it? However, the manner in which God dwells in His house seems to be a question, given that the Apostle says He does not dwell in Temples made with hands. Indeed, He does not dwell in them as we dwell in ours. Our houses protect us, but God protects His house. Our houses encompass us, but God encompasses His house. We are only within our houses, and they are outside of us, but God is so within His house that He is also outside it, elsewhere, everywhere. Moreover, His house is within Him. While we are absent, we cannot keep our houses, yet even when we are asleep in them, they serve to keep us. God can never be absent from His house, and the keeper of this Temple never sleeps. Now, every physical Temple where the

Saints assemble, the truth of the Gospel is preached and professed, the holy Sacraments are duly administered, and the Lord's Name is invoked and worshipped is the Temple of God.

Why is it called His Temple if not to testify to His presence? When Cain stood excommunicated for murdering his brother and was not allowed to approach the designated place of God's service, it is said that he was cast out from the presence of the Lord. Some have interpreted a similar scenario when Jonah fled from His presence; he fled from the place where the Prophets were accustomed to stand, ready to be sent by God. Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord; that is, before the Altar of the Lord. That which occurred before the Ark or Altar, in the Tabernacle or Temple, was said to be done coram Domino (before the Lord). However, too many people come to the Temple with so little reverence, as if they thought God was not at home or did not dwell in His own house. But the Lord is present in His Temple. In vain shall we hope to find Him elsewhere if we do not seek Him here. "I will be in the midst of you, gathered together in My Name," not just anywhere or everywhere, but here. While no place excludes Him, this place is certain to have Him. He fills all places with His presence, and He fills this place with His gracious presence. Here, He both hears us and is heard by us. He hears our prayers and teaches us our lessons. No place offers up faithful prayers in vain; no place has such a promise of being heard as the Temple. It is the Lord's Court of Audience, His Highness Court of Requests. Here, humble souls present their grievances, and from there, they return laden with graces. Why do many lack goodness? Perhaps it is because they are negligent in public worship. They do not seek the Lord where He may be found and therefore deserve to miss Him where they claim to seek Him. Why should they expect to find God in their private chambers when they do not care to seek Him in His Temples? When we need the assistance of a friend, do we wait until we chance upon them or until they come to us, or do we rather go to their house? Peter and John went up to the Temple at the hour of Prayer. They deemed it insufficient to pray in their private chambers; instead, they joined the Congregation, as a Royal Navy transports its

holy merchandise to heaven. "Lift up your hands in the Sanctuary, and bless the Lord." Pure hands are accepted in every place, but especially in the Sanctuary. What follows? "The Lord that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion." It is not said, "The Lord that made heaven, bless thee upon earth," nor "The Lord that made earth, bless thee out of heaven." Rather, it is "The Lord that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion." Blessings originate from heaven and are mediated through Zion. In the Temple, let us seek; in the Temple, we shall find those precious treasures and comforts of Jesus Christ.

This Temple is not without its enemies. In addition to those profane Politicians who, like Eustathius, believe that Temples serve no purpose, or those Massilians who, as reported by Damascene, added contempt for Temples to their other Heresies, or those Pseudo-Apostles who scoffed at a Temple full of Suppliants, considering it a house full of fools, or those who share Jeroboam's mindset, diverting the people from God's house in Jerusalem to establish himself as the ruler of Israel—apart from these, the Temple of God has two kinds of foes.

1. The Anabaptists tell us that the old superstition has made those houses more suitable for stables than for churches. They claim that these places should no longer be called Temples of God but Temples of Idols. Similarly, they suggest that during those corrupt times, the Passover was not called Pascha Dei (Passover of God) but Pascha Iudaeorum (Passover of the Jews). By the same logic, they would have us remove all princes because some have misused their power. However, we maintain that even though evil individuals may abuse good things, if a kingdom were not a lawful State, individuals like David and Josiah would never have become kings. Good people do not make use of evil things. Even when the Temple in Christ's time had become a den of thieves, He still offered up devout and holy prayers within it. It is a gross ignorance to fail to distinguish between a fault that arises from the nature of the act itself and one that arises from

the misuse of something good. The former is simply evil, while the latter is only accidentally evil. No one tears down their house because impurity has been committed in one of its rooms. Offenders should be removed from the Temple, but the Temple should not be demolished due to offenses. Christ said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you," not completely taken away, but only taken from the Jews. When God threatened the same to Saul, He did not mean to eliminate the existence of kings or return to the former state of judges. No, only Saul would lose the kingdom, but Israel would not lose the kingdom. It is a maxim in nature that things dedicated to God should not be used for worldly purposes. It is a principle in philosophy that what is rightly given cannot be taken away. And among our children, there is a proverb: "To give a thing and take a thing is fit for the Devil's darling."

2. The sacrilegious, to whom God is indebted if they allow His Temple to stand, are bold enough to take from Him for its maintenance, either by sharing half or leaving Him with nothing. There are many who pray in the Temple, yet they also prey on the Temple, just as a thief would pay homage to a house during the day that they intend to rob at night. But why should I touch that sore spot that is already dead flesh? Or speak against sacrilege in a world that delights in it? Where lawyers are paid, hired, and bribed to defend sacrilege, God and His poor ministers may as well remain silent. Something should be spoken for the sake of Zion, but I find neither the right place nor time for it here. We know that Abigail did not tell Nabal of his drunkenness until he was sober. When God pleases to awaken you from this intoxication, then we may find an opportune moment to speak to you. But may God spare you from Nabal's fate, so that when this sin is brought to your conscience on your deathbed, your hearts do not die within you like stones. Let me beg one thing of you in the Name of Him whom you wrong in this manner: However, you persist in robbing the Temple of its rightful salary, do not stand to justify it. By imploring mercy,

perhaps you may be saved, but by justifying the injury, you can only be lost. Just as King Francis I of France said to a woman kneeling and crying for justice, "Stand up, woman, for justice I owe you; if you beg for anything, beg for mercy." So if you request anything from God, let it be mercy, for He owes you justice. In this regard, may God be merciful to you all.

It was David's fervent prayer: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His Temple." Many recite David's words, but not with David's heart. "One thing I have desired" pertains to the past, and "this I will still seek after" refers to the future. I have desired it for a long time, and I will persist in this pursuit until I have obtained it. What is it? To dwell in some of God's houses all the days of my life and leave them to my children after me—not to possess them for my own benefit, but to serve Him there with devotion. Some people love the House of God too much; they love it to "have and to hold." However, since the conveyance is not done by the Minister but by the Lawyer, their title will ultimately be found void. And if there is no "unless first" to prevent them, on the great day of universal judgment, the Judge of all the world will condemn them. By this way, the closer to the church, the farther from God. The Lord's Temple is meant to draw us closer to Him, not for us to take it away from Him. If we love the Lord, we will love the habitation of His House and the place where His Honor resides. By humbly frequenting His Temple here below, we may become noble saints in His House above—the glorious kingdom of Jesus Christ.

These are the enemies of the Temple: the first seeks to separate the Lord from the Temple, and the second seeks to separate the Temple from the Lord. Let me conclude this point with two watchwords.

1. The first concern pertains to us, the Ministry, who serve in the Temple. It has long been said, "All good or evil comes from the Temple." When the pastor is righteous and the people are

righteous, he may say to them, as Paul said to the Corinthians, "Are you not my work in the Lord?" On the other hand, when the pastor is corrupt and the people are no better, they may say to him, "Are you not our destruction in the world?" It is no wonder that a desecrated Temple leads to a disorderly people. A wicked priest is the worst creature on earth; no sin is as dark as that which appears under a white surplice. The iniquity of clergy members is all the more heinous when considering the holiness of their position. Their sin is like a rheum that rises from the stomach to the head, then drips down onto the lungs, corroding the most noble and vital parts until the entire body is corrupted. The immoral sons of Eli were especially intolerable because they sinned within the Tabernacle. While their sacrifices could atone for the sins of others, no sacrifice could atone for their own sins. Many souls were cleansed by the blood of the animals they shed, but their own souls became fouler by it. Through the same service, they expiated the offenses of the people and multiplied their own. Our clergy members do not possess a guaranteed entry to heaven. Such individuals are like deeds and instruments used to convey land, enabling others to enter the kingdom of heaven while themselves having no share in it. It is not impossible for individuals to show others the way to heaven with their words while leading the way to hell with their actions. Neither a Jewish ephod nor a Roman cowl can exempt wrongdoers from punishment. Therefore, God commanded the executioners of His judgments, "Begin at my own sanctuary," and the Apostle tells us that judgment shall begin at the house of God. When Christ assumed His prophetic office, He began the reformation at His Father's house. Let our devout and holy behavior prevent this, and through our reverent conduct in the Temple of God, let us honor the God of the Temple. Our goal should be to bring forth spiritual children for our elder Brother and to win souls for Christ. Never cease to work for Christ, for He has worked for us. If Christ, while on the Cross, had given me a vial containing drops of His own blood, how carefully would I have preserved them, how highly would I have esteemed them,

how close to my heart would I have kept them? But He did not deem it fitting to entrust me with those drops; instead, He has entrusted me with a flock of His lambs, those souls for whom He shed His blood, souls that were dearer to Him than His own blood. Let me therefore expend my care, love, and labor on them, so that I may present them as holy saints to my beloved Lord Jesus.

2. The second concern applies to all Christians: that they beware of despising the Temple of God because of the abuses of men. Just as the altar cannot sanctify the priest, the unholiness of the priest cannot profane the altar. His sin is his own and cannot make you guilty. The virtue and comfort come from God, and it is still capable of making you holy. When we read that the sin of the priests was great before the Lord because people abhorred the offering of the Lord, we all acknowledge that it was wrong of the priests. And I hope no one thinks that the people behaved rightly in response. Even if their sins, even their persons, were worthy of abhorrence, should people therefore scorn the sanctuary and cast contempt on the service of God, as if it were due to the vices of man? By doing so, we add our own evil to the evil of others and offend God because we are offended. Must we not only be displeased with the faults of men but also quarrel with God? Do we not justly provoke Him to abhor our souls when we unjustly scorn His service? Know that He is capable of sanctifying your heart even through the ministry of a man whose heart He has not yet sanctified. The virtue lies not in the human action but in the divine institution. We say this about the sacraments themselves, and even more so about the ministers: "These do not give us what God gives us through them."

However, this age is plagued by such wanton levity that we choose the Temple based on our preference for the preacher. Thus, we restrict the free Spirit of God from blowing wherever He pleases, as He must rely on the grace of the speaker to bestow grace upon the hearer. While Paul links faith to hearing, they seek to link hearing to

faith, believing that the holiness of the individual determines the fruitfulness of the sermon. This attitude elevates Paul and Apollos, whereas Paul himself says that they are both nothing. God alone grants the increase, and who can appoint through whom He will bring it? Let the seed be good, and the soil be good, and the Lord will produce fruit, regardless of the sower. Yet, while you treat hearing as a matter of amusement, preaching too often becomes an exercise of wit. Words are but images of substance, and as you will soon hear, it is not lawful to worship images. It is a dangerous misstep for the Temple when anything other than the glory of God and the salvation of souls through Jesus Christ becomes the focus.

This concludes the discussion on the Temple. Now I must move on to the next point.

Idols.

The term "idol" comes from the Greek word meaning resemblance or representation and is similar to the Latin word "image." Initially, both words had positive connotations. However, over time, the corruption of language followed the corruption of society, and now "idol" refers only to the image of a false god. Every idol is an image, but not every image is an idol. However, any image made and used for religious purposes becomes an idol. Popery, in particular, is filled with images of God, which are idols. For instance, an old man sitting in a chair with a triple crown on his head, pontifical robes on his back, a dove hanging from his beard, and a crucifix in his arms represents their image of the Trinity. This picture serves as a god in their churches and as a sign in their taverns. In many of their cities, it is commonly said that a gentleman resides at the Trinity, and his servants reside at God's head. They seem to do this as if they were

trying to repay their Maker: because God made man in His image, they, by way of recompense, make God in man's image. However, they would not dare to do this without removing the second commandment from their catechisms and expunging the entire Decalogue from their consciences.

I do not intend to engage in a polemical discussion about this point by examining their arguments. Such matters are more appropriate for the school than the pulpit. Oh God, that either the school or the pulpit in Christendom should be troubled by this! How could anyone dare to question what the Lord has so plainly and explicitly forbidden? Besides the wickedness, how grievous is the absurdity? How can a body without a spirit resemble a spirit without a body? How can a visible picture resemble an invisible nature? How would the king take it as an insult to have his picture made in the likeness of a weasel or a hedgehog? And yet, the difference between the greatest monarch and the tiniest ant is insignificant compared to the disparity between the finite and the infinite. If they argue, like the Anthropomorphites, that the Scripture attributes hands, feet, and eyes to God, why, therefore, may they not represent Him in the same forms? But we say that the Scripture also speaks of God covering us with the shadow of His wings; why, then, do they not paint Him like a bird with feathers? If they claim that God appeared to Daniel in a certain form because He is called the Ancient of Days, we respond that God's commandments, not His appearances, are our rules. We will be judged by the former, not the latter. It is a fanatical religion to neglect what He commands us to do and to imitate what He has done, as if we were to despise His laws and attempt to mimic His thunder. God is too infinite for our souls to comprehend, so why should we labor to confine Him within the narrow bounds of boards and stones? Certainly, that which cannot be imagined should not be imaged. But some may argue that Christ was a man, so why should His image not be made? To this, some answer that no one can make an image of Christ without omitting the most important part of Him, which is His divinity. It was the unity of the Godhead and humanity that made Him Christ, and surely this cannot be depicted. But why

should we create an image of Christ without Christ's authorization? The Lord has prohibited the making of any image, whether of things in heaven, where Christ is, or of things on earth, where Christ was, for the purpose of worshiping them. Until God revokes that command, what can justify this practice?

Their images of the saints, employed for religious purposes, make them nothing less than idolaters. It is a feeble excuse to claim that the honor bestowed upon the images reflects on the represented saints. When they dress an image, does the saint become more fashionable or warmer? When they offer something to an image, does the saint become richer? When they kneel before an image, the saint does not consider himself worshipped any more than a king feels honored when someone speaks to his picture in his presence. Some of them are compelled to confess openly that the image itself is worshipped. But if the saints in heaven could speak on earth, they would disavow the honor that detracts from their Maker. Just as Calvin is not afraid to say that the Blessed Virgin would consider it less of an offense if someone were to pull her hair or trample her in the dirt than to place her in rivalry with her Son, God, and Savior. But they tell us that they do not worship the images of false gods as the pagans did, but only the images of God's own servants and chosen friends. Will the jealous God tolerate this? That His honor be taken from Him on the condition that it is not bestowed upon His enemies but on His friends? In the Scriptures, idolatry is called adultery. Should a woman be exonerated because she commits adultery only with her husband's friends? Is this done with good intentions or out of love for Christ? It is a feeble excuse for a wife to claim that she loves her husband greatly and therefore needs another man to kiss and embrace in his absence, all in the name of her love for her husband.

By nature, we are all prone to idolatry. When we were little children, we loved dolls, and as grown men, we are inclined to love images. Just as dolls are idols to children, idols and images are like dolls to men. It seems that idols are most suitable for children. Therefore, the

apostle issues his caution, "Babes, keep yourselves from idols." Just as all our knowledge comes through our senses, we naturally desire a tangible object of devotion. It is easier for us to see pictures than to comprehend doctrines and to address prayers to images of men rather than to conform man to the image of God.

They cannot excuse themselves from idolatry by claiming that they place their trust in God, not in the images of God. When the Israelites made their golden calf and danced around it, one calf after another, they were not so foolish as to consider that beast their God. However, superstition can befuddle the mind to the point that it makes us not men before it makes us idolaters. What do they say? "Make us gods that shall go before us." Every word is wicked, absurd, and senseless. First, they had witnessed the power of God in numerous miraculous deliverances before their eyes. The voice of God had barely ceased thundering in their ears. He had declared, "I am Jehovah; you shall have no other gods," and they trembled as they heard Him speak amidst the flames. Yet they dare speak of another god. Second, the singular number was insufficient for them: "Make us gods." How many gods did they want? Is there more than one? Third, "Make us gods." Were not the gods they sought to make strange gods indeed? Instead of acknowledging God as their Maker, they commanded the making of gods. Fourth, they placed this charge upon Aaron, as if he were capable of making a god. Aaron might have been involved in ruining a man, either himself or others, but he could not create a man, not even a single hair, let alone a god. Yet they said to him, "Make us gods." Finally, what were these gods supposed to do? "Go before us." Alas, how could they go when they were unable to stand? How could they go before others when they could not move themselves? Oh, the foolishness of men who fashion blocks to worship! Otherwise, how could those who are made in the image of God fall down before the images of creatures? They call upon weakness for health, pray to the dead for life, and request a prosperous journey from that which cannot take a single step forward.

Yet, as bad as their sin was, let us not exacerbate it with our lack of charity. We should not believe them to be so unreasonable as to consider that calf a god or that the idol they made brought them out of Egypt three months prior. They intended to worship the true God through the calf, and yet even that idolatry, at best, was condemnable. Charity compels us to hope that the Papists do not take that board or stone for their God, yet we also find that God considers them idolaters. They tell us (with a new distinction) that they forbid the people from giving divine worship to images, but we say they would be better off forbidding the people from having images. A block lies in the highway, and a watchman is stationed to warn the passers-by, "Be careful, there's a block here." But what if the watchman falls asleep? Which is the safer course, to remove the block from the way entirely or to trust the safety of the passengers to the watchman's vigilance? As for their watchmen, they are often as lifeless as the images themselves. How can one block remove another? When Jeroboam set up his two idols in Israel, he recruited priests from the common rabble; the lowest of the people were good enough for such a counterfeit devotion. Wooden priests were suitable attendants for golden deities. Similarly, when Micah made a costly idol, he hired a destitute Levite. The painter likewise excused himself for depicting Peter and Paul with overly rosy and high-colored faces, arguing that although they were pale from fasting and preaching while they lived, they must now blush with shame at the errors and ignorance of their successors, for they boast of such qualities with great noise.

In conclusion, if it were as easy to convince idolaters as it is to confound and trample down their idols, this labor of refutation would have been unnecessary or quickly resolved. However, if nothing can reform them from this superstitious practice, let them consider their dreadful sentence. Their place shall be outside, among the dogs, along with those desperate sinners who are incapable of forgiveness. The idol that they made their strength shall be like tow, and the maker or worshipper of it like a spark, and both shall burn together in eternal fire, with no one to extinguish them. May the

Lord open their eyes to see and sanctify their hearts to acknowledge that there is no agreement between the temple of God and idols. This is the next point I shall address as succinctly as possible and with the faithfulness I owe.

There are certain points that the contentious passions of men have driven further apart than they were initially, causing an unnecessary commotion. However, things that are inherently contradictory and opposed by God's ordinance can never be reconciled. An enemy can become a friend, but enmity can never become friendship. The air that is currently light may turn dark, but light can never become darkness. Contraries in their essence cannot be combined. A sick body may recover to health, but health can never be sickness. A sinner may be made righteous, but sin can never become righteousness. Fire and water, peace and war, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, faith and infidelity, religion and idolatry can never be reconciled. There can be no agreement between the temple of God and idols.

God is the being of all beings, while an idol is nothing in the world, as the Apostle states. All and nothing are most contrary. Idolatry completely eradicates faith, a fundamental aspect of Christian religion, for an idol is a visible thing, whereas faith pertains to the invisible. An idol is a false representation of things seen, whereas faith is a true evidence of things not seen. Moreover, God can defend himself, save his friends, and punish his enemies, but idols cannot avenge themselves like gods or hide from their assailants like humans.

The foolish Philistines believed that the same house could accommodate both the Ark and Dagon, as if an insentient statue were a suitable companion for the living God. In the morning, they came to thank Dagon for the victory and to prostrate themselves before him, thinking that the God of Israel had been defeated. However, they found their keeper lying prostrate before the prisoner. Even if they had initially, of their own accord, placed him in a

posture of humble prostration with reverential awe, God would not have tolerated such indignity. Yet, since they dared to place their idol side by side with their Maker, let them go and read their foolishness on the temple floor and confess that the one who brought down their god so low could bring them even lower. The Lord owes such shame to all those who attempt to make agreements between Him and Belial. Yet they do not consider that this god of theirs, who is unable to stand or rise, how can he raise us up? It is strange that whereas Dagon used to stand and they used to fall before him, now Dagon has fallen and they stand, needing to assist their own god. Yes, their god seems to worship them from his prostrate position and requests the help from them that he was never able to provide. Yet they place him back in his place, lifting up to him those hands that helped lift him up and prostrating their faces before him, before whom he lay prostrate. Thus, idolatry can transform people into the very stocks and stones they worship: "They that make them are like unto them." But will the Lord tolerate this? No, the next fall shall shatter the idol to pieces so that they may clearly perceive how God scorns a competitor and that there is no agreement between Him and idols. So, what is the difference between the Philistines and the Papists? The Philistines wanted to place God in the temple of idols, while the Papists want to place idols in the temple of God. Both agree on this point, that they want to make God and idols agree with each other. However, Manasseh discovered to his detriment that an idol may not be tolerated in the house of God.

How futile are the efforts to reconcile our church with that of Rome when God has set forth this barrier: there is no agreement between Him and idols. Either they must accept the temple without idols, or we must accept idols with the temple, or this compromise cannot be made. There is a dispute between Spain and the Netherlanders regarding the right to that country, but if the inhabitants do not fortify the coasts well, the raging sea will soon settle the controversy and, with the force of its waves, take it from both sides. There is a contestation between us and the Papists as to which is the true church, but if in the meantime, we do not diligently defend the faith

of Christ against idols, superstition will quickly decide the matter and seize possession of the truth from both of us. A proud and obstinate mindset prevents them from yielding to us, and God and His holy word forbid us from yielding to them. They want idols or no temple, while we want the temple without idols. Now, until an agreement is reached between the temple and idols, no reconciliation can be hoped for between us and them.

I, Paul, say to you that if you are circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. If he could not tolerate a little leaven in the lump, what would he have said about a little poison? If Moses' combination of the ceremonial law with the Gospel was offensive to him, how would he have tolerated Christ and Belial, light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness, the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, the table of the Lord and the table of devils, the temple of God and idols? When tuning an instrument, we do not meddle with the strings that are already in tune but adjust the rest to create proportion and harmony with the former. May the same God who, in His gracious mercy, has placed us in the right and harmonious accord of truth, bring them into true agreement with us, but never allow us to regress to them. So far, the contention between us has not been about circumstances, but about substance; not about boundaries, but about the entire inheritance. It concerns whether God or man, grace or nature, the blood of Christ or the milk of Mary, the written canon or unwritten tradition, God's ordinance in establishing kings or the Pope's usurpation in deposing them, shall take precedence in our consciences and be the rule of our faith and lives.

We have only one foundation, the infallible word of God, while they have a new foundation, the voice of their Church, which they presumptuously equate in certainty with the former. We have only one head, and that is Christ, while they have acquired a new head and dare not believe anything contrary to him, regardless of what Christ may say. Christ is the bridegroom of our church, while they have a new husband. When Rome was a holy church, she had a holy

husband, but now, as Christ said to the woman of Samaria, "He whom thou now hast, is not thine husband." The one they have now is an adulterer, not a husband. Thus, we have foundation against foundation, head against head, husband against adulterer, doctrine against doctrine, faith against unbelief, religion against superstition, the temple of God against idols. These are so diametrically opposed that the two poles would sooner meet than these can be reconciled. Michael and the dragon cannot agree in one heaven, the ark and Dagon cannot coexist in one house, Jacob and Esau cannot dwell together in one womb, John and Cerinthus cannot share one bath, the clean and the leprous cannot reside in one camp, truth and falsehood cannot be found in one mouth, the Lord and Mammon cannot inhabit one heart, religion and superstition cannot rule in one kingdom, and God and idols cannot coexist in one temple. The foolish old hermit was sorry that God and the devil were at such odds and he attempted to make them friends, but the devil told him to spare his labor as they had eternally fallen out. Equally futile is the endeavor of the person who seeks to bring about an agreement between the temple of God and idols.

I conclude this point with a word of caution. Avoid places of infection and do not come near the influence of idols, for it can suffocate the zeal of God's temple in your hearts. When the Israelites turned away, they sought after gods, but why did their chosen god take the form of a calf? What could be the reason for this shape? Most likely, they encountered a black calf with white spots in Egypt, which was worshipped there. This image remained in their minds, captivating their hearts, and now they longed to see it erected before their eyes. Egypt continued to linger in their thoughts. When they craved food, they remembered the fleshpots of Egypt. And now, lacking Moses, they turned to Egyptian idols. They brought gold from Egypt, and that very gold was contagious. Even the earrings and jewels from Egypt were suitable for creating idols. The burdens of Egypt led them to seek the true God, but the examples of Egypt led them astray towards false gods. What is the purpose of those who wander to Rome and other superstitious places, if not that they are weary of the

Church of God and seek to bring home idols? Even if it were granted that there is some small measure of truth among them, who would be so foolish as to seek their grain among a heap of chaff, especially when they can have it at home, winnowed and purified?

Merely encountering evil is dangerous, and it is rare for our eyes not to convey this poison to our hearts. I have heard of some who, even after toiling in the Spanish galleys, returned home as slaves to their superstitions. Egypt has always been an unfortunate place for Israel, just as Rome is for England. The people sojourned in Egypt and brought home one calf. Jeroboam sojourned there and brought home two calves. It is likely that an old woman had also sojourned there and brought home many. The Roman idols may not take the shape of calves, but they possess the same sense and meaning as those calves. To fill the temple with calves is to make religion complicit in abominations.

Consider this carefully, you who have no qualms about attending superstitious gatherings. It will be difficult for you to dwell in a temple of idols without being tainted. It is as strange for us not to sin with the sins of the place we inhabit as it is for pure liquor stored in a musty vessel not to take on the scent of the cask. Egypt taught even Joseph to swear, and Peter learned to curse in the high priest's hall. If we are not scorched by the fire of bad company, we will certainly be blackened by the smoke. Even the healthiest body can be infected by a contagious atmosphere. Indeed, a person may travel through Ethiopia without being changed, but they cannot reside there without their complexion being altered. How has the common practice of others led men to the devilish habit of swearing or the beastly habit of excessive drinking, as they themselves confess? Superstition, if it finds a secret liking in the heart, like the plague, lingers in the very clothes and, after a long period of concealment, erupts in an unexpected infection. The Israelites, despite their wandering in the wilderness, continued to bear the scent of Egypt. God said, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." It is not surprising that God called His Son out of Egypt, but what about our Israelites?

Are they so certain about their sons when they send them to Egypt or any other superstitious place? It was their presumption to send them there, and it should be their repentance to call them out.

The familiar association of orthodox Christians with unbelievers has always been strictly forbidden by God, and the closer this connection, the more dangerous and displeasing it is to the one who forbids it. No one can choose a worse friend than one whom God considers an enemy. When religion and superstition come together, they often produce a hybrid generation. If David marries Maachah, their offspring will be an Absalom. If Solomon loves idolatrous women, he is set up for downfall despite his wisdom. Other foreign women tempt only to lust, but these tempt to misreligion. By joining his heart with theirs, he separates it from God. When one religion aligns with another, it frequently produces an atheist, someone devoid of any religion. I do not say that this is a sufficient cause for divorce after it has occurred, but it is a reason for restraint before it happens. They may be one flesh, but they are not one spirit. The difference in religion or virtue does not cause a divorce here; that is left to the great Judge's sentence in the future. The believing husband is no further from heaven, even if he cannot bring his unbelieving wife along with him. The righteous shall not raise the wicked to heaven, nor shall the wicked drag down the righteous to hell. *Quod fieri non debuit, factum valet.* However, is there no tree in the garden other than the forbidden one? Is there no one for me to love who does not hate the truth? Yes, let us speak to them honestly, as the sons of Jacob spoke to the Shechemites in their deceptive plan. We cannot give our sister to an uncircumcised man. Either you consent to us in the truth of our religion, or we will not consent to you in the communion of our fellowship.

Saint Chrysostom calls this a clear denial of Christ. He who eats meat offered to idols, *Gustu negavit Christum*, has denied Christ by his taste. If he handles those things with delight, *Tactu negavit Christum*, he has denied Christ by his touch. Even if he refrains from touching or tasting, if he patiently observes the idolatry, *Visu negavit*

Christum, he has denied Christ with his eyes. If he listens to those execrable incantations, *Auditu negavit Christum*, he has denied Christ with his ears. And if, disregarding all these, he merely takes pleasure in the smell of incense, *O doratu negavit Christum*, he has denied Christ with his sense of smell. It is said of the Israelites, "They were mingled among the heathen." What followed? Immediately, they learned their ways. Some claim that the reason the raven did not return to Noah's ark is that it encountered a dead carcass along the way. Why do we pray, "Deliver us from evil," if not to imply that there is an infectious power in it that can corrupt us? Let us act in accordance with our prayers, and pray that we may act accordingly. Yes, Lord, free us from Egypt, distance us from Rome, separate us from idols, deliver us from evil, for Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

So far, we have conducted a literal examination of the text concerning the physical temple, external idols, and the impossibility of their agreement. Now, let us turn our attention to a moral exposition that is more applicable to ourselves. Here, first

The Temple of God

The Temple of God is synonymous with the Church of Christ. We often use these terms interchangeably, referring to the Church as a temple and the temple as the Church. The physical temple in the time of the Law was a symbol of the spiritual temple in the time of the Gospel. The former had three sections: the porch, the holy place, and the holy of holies. The porch symbolized baptism, which serves as the entrance into the Church. The holy place represented the communion of the Church on earth, separated from the world. The holy of holies, which only the high priest entered once a year,

foreshadowed the glorious kingdom of heaven, where Jesus entered once for all. There was a common court in the temple accessible to all, regardless of their state of cleanliness or circumcision. Within this court was another court exclusively for Israelites, and only those who were clean were allowed to enter. There was a third court reserved for the priests and Levites, where the laity could not go. They could bring their offerings up to this point but were not permitted to go any further. Inside the temple itself, there was a room where the Levites could not enter, but the priests could. And there was another room where only the high priest could enter, and that only once a year. Some aspects of the Christian Church are open to all, including hypocrites and sinners with impure hearts. They have access to God's holy ordinances and tread in His courts, just as the Pharisee attended the congregation and Judas partook of the communion. Other aspects are private and reserved for the faithful, where they commune with God and find solace in His gracious presence.

The physical temple, with its three divisions, served as a clear representation of the Church in three degrees. The first represented the external and visible aspect of the Church, open to all who profess Christ. The second represented the communion of the invisible Church on earth. The last represented the highest heaven where God's glorified saints reside. These divisions of the spiritual house of Christ do not surpass one another any more than the most polished corners of the temple surpass the spiritual and living stones of the Church. What are pebbles compared to sapphires or marbles compared to diamonds? However, some are more enamored with lifeless monuments than with living saints. As it has been lamented, "The Church shines on the walls but mourns in the poor." Yet, temples are built for the sake of men, not men for the sake of temples. What value does a magnificent building hold when the entire world is not worth a single soul? Lifeless walls hold little significance compared to the living temples of the Holy Spirit, and even our own bodies are temples in comparison to the body of Christ, His Church. And the earthly Church, the militant Church, is but a

small part of God's universal Church. God has His chosen people in every corner of the world.

If our spiritual eyes could truly behold the beauty of this temple, we would consider it better to be a member of the Church than to be the ruler of a kingdom, just as the wise emperor thought. We would regard this one thing as surpassing all worldly glories. When King Henry IV of France was told about the vast dominions of the King of Spain, he responded, "He is the king of Castile, and I am the king of France. He is the king of Navarre, and I am the king of France. He is the king of Portugal, and I am the king of France. He is the king of Naples, and I am the king of France. He is the king of the Sicilies, and I am the king of France. He is the king of New Spain, the West Indies, and I am the king of France." He considered the kingdom of France to be equivalent to all of them. Similarly, O Christian, find solace in the fact that you are a member of the Church, despite any lack in your mortal pilgrimage. Another may possess more wit or knowledge, but you are a Christian. Another may have more earthly honour and prestige, but you are a Christian. Another may possess more wealth and riches, but you are a Christian. Another may have vast possessions, but you have an inheritance in heaven because you are a Christian. David considered it more blessed to be a doorkeeper in God's house than to be a king in his own home. If our hearts were truly sanctified, we would regard all worldly honours as inferior to the fact that we are part of this spiritual temple, members of Jesus Christ.

Idols.

Any human invention in the name of God is simply an idol. Anything we devise outside of God's teachings or replace Him with is an idol to

us. No matter how much we deceive ourselves by attributing all the glory to God, He will ultimately hold us accountable for our falsehoods. Can a person speak deceitfully for God or tell lies for His glory? He is not so lacking in ways to honor Himself that He needs us to resort to lies. The doctrine of universal grace may seem to bring glory to God, but He Himself declares it to be a lie, as He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and harden whom He will. To claim that Christ performed many miracles in the womb may appear to honor Him, but who can say it is anything but a lie? Surely, we find no mention of such in Scripture. To assign specific roles to the departed saints, such as overseeing women in childbirth or being the patron of a city or country (not to mention their supposed protection of animals, with one saint for hogs and another for horses), may seem to honor God by honoring them. But it is a lie and a direct contradiction to His universal providence. It is as absurd as if flies were to appoint the positions and responsibilities within a kingdom. To suggest that the saints in heaven have knowledge of events in this world or the condition of their loved ones or children below, perceiving them through the reflection of God as in a mirror, is a fabrication that seems to honor God but, in truth, dishonors Him by making creatures as omniscient as their Creator. Furthermore, how absurd is it to claim that when John saw Christ in Patmos, he saw everything that Christ saw? If I stand on the ground and see a man on top of a high tower, do I see everything he sees? If the sight of the viewer is to be measured by the sight of the one being observed, then it would follow that someone looking at a blind person would see nothing at all. And who cannot see the fallacy in this reasoning?

To assert that all worship offered to the Virgin Mary reflects back to the honor of her Son and God is a gross falsehood. The idolatrous Jews could have made the same claim when they worshipped the Queen of Heaven. Their fanatical vision of the two ladders reaching up to heaven while Christ was preparing to judge the world—one red ladder with Christ sitting at the top and the other white ladder with the Virgin sitting at the top—when the friars were unable to ascend the red ladder and kept falling down, Saint Francis invited them to

climb the white ladder of our Lady, where they were received. Did this truly bring honor to Christ? Does it imply that the red blood of our Savior is less capable of bringing people to heaven than the white milk of His mother? That must be the moral or meaning behind it. Or consider the observation of Barrhadius, the Jesuit, who had the audacity to question why Christ did not take His mother with Him in His ascension to heaven. He then answered his own question by saying, "It may be, Lord, for fear that Your heavenly court would be unsure of who should go to meet whom, whether they should go to meet You, their Lord, or her, their Lady." As if Christ had made the wise decision to leave His mother behind to prevent her from sharing in His glory. Did this truly bring honor to Christ? To suppress knowledge of God by preaching that Ignorance is the mother of Devotion provides little basis for honoring God. Ascribing false miracles to living or departed saints may seem to honor God, but surely He will never thank anyone for it. When Saint Augustine was sick, a blind man came to him, expecting that he could miraculously restore his sight. But that good father sent him away with a rebuke, saying, "Do you think that if I could cure you by a miracle, I would not also cure myself by a miracle?"

It is a foolish notion that God would be glorified by a lie. Our judicial astrologers, who bind people's destinies to the stars and planets, pretend to honor God by attributing such power and influence to His creations. But in reality, they are nothing more than idols. Although the sun and moon are good and necessary, worshipping them is outright idolatry. It was not Mercury who made the thief or Venus who made the prostitute. For instance, when a husband beat his adulterous wife and she complained that he was being unnatural by striking his own flesh, arguing that it was not she who committed adultery but Venus acting through her, he replied that he was not beating her but rather beating Venus within her or, more accurately, Venus being absent from her.

To apply this to ourselves, we must be careful not to devise our own methods of worshipping God beyond what He has prescribed. Every

master in his own household determines how he wishes to be served. The one who requires our service expects it to be done in His way, or else He expects us to serve ourselves rather than Him. Shall we consider ourselves wiser than our Creator, as if we know better what would please Him? Should heaven bless that which was devised against its will? Doesn't God threaten to add plagues to those who add to His commandments? If such inventions were good and necessary, why did God not command them? Was He lacking in wisdom? If they are not necessary, why do we practice them? Is it not our presumptuous folly? The Lord becomes jealous when we rival Him, not only with false gods but also with false worship. Nothing is more dangerous than concocting our own ways of serving Him. In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. Is it not grievous for people to lose all their efforts in the most important matter of their lives? That so many sacrifices, prayers, financial offerings, bodily afflictions, and anguish of souls should all be in vain? It is like a dog that hunts counter, expending great efforts with no result.

Evil deeds may sometimes have good intentions, but those good intentions are met with evil consequences. Many people invest their labor, wealth, and even shed their blood, only to receive torment instead of gratitude. When the Apostle instructs us to mortify our earthly members, he does not mean for us to be violent towards ourselves but towards our sins. There is one form of mortification that involves separating ourselves from the world, and there is another form that involves expelling the world from within us. A body emaciated by scourging, weakened by fasting, and exhausted by pilgrimages was not the mortification Saint Paul spoke of. Who demanded such practices from you? When no command is given, no reward is promised, no punishment is threatened, what outcome can be expected but shame? Must we either do nothing or do that which is worse than nothing? Shall we offer so much, endure so much, and all in vain? *Quis haec à vobis?* Let the one who set you to work pay your wages. Never rely on your own reason when God has clearly forbidden it. The person who allows their faith to be overruled by

reason may have a well-fed reason but a feeble faith. A follower of Christ must deny themselves, and that includes denying their reason, for one's reason is an integral part of oneself. If reason takes the lead in divine matters, it quickly persuades the will, and the will commands the affections. Thus, this new triumvirate governs the Christian, rather than faith. But just as when three ambassadors were sent from Rome to reconcile the discord between Nicomedes and Prusias—one troubled by a headache, another afflicted with gout, and the third a fool—Cato amusingly remarked that the embassy lacked a head, a foot, and a heart. Similarly, a person who allows reason, will, and affections to usurp faith will lack a head to comprehend the truth, a foot to walk in the ways of obedience, and a heart to receive the comforts of salvation.

Hence, it happens that the most abhorrent sins are transformed into idols by placing our own reasoning against the clear will of God. Lies are attributed to the Father of truth, and truth to the Father of lies. Breach of faith and perjury are deemed orthodox opinions. Yes, that execrable monster, which we remember on this day, treason itself, is deemed good doctrine. That vile and stigmatic idol, that gross devil, is worshipped. "Si fas cadendo coelestia scandere," if this is the way to the kingdom of heaven, if in this way men can merit to become stars in the firmament by staining their hands with the royal blood of princes, what Jesuit would not be a star? When such are their principles, such must inevitably be their practices. What if God condemns treason to hell, when the Pope elevates it to heaven? What if the Divine Scripture ranks traitors among dogs and devils, when the Pope numbers them among saints? It used to be said, "Ex quolibet ligno non fit Mercurius," every block is not fit to make an image. Yet now, the most monstrous sin that the devil has ever shaped in his infernal forge is not only practiced but even justified by the doctrine of Rome. What shall we call sin when murder and treason are deemed religious acts? Alas for our age, to bear witness to such impieties! That our descendants should ever read in our annals: In such a year, on such a day, traitors conspired against their lawful and gracious sovereign, and that in those days there was a sect

of men who, through their voluminous writings, labored to justify those horrendous deeds. But, oh, may those pestilent monuments be devoured by oblivion as quickly as the authors and abettors themselves are engulfed in confusion. And may the same God deliver us, His people, from their conspiracies, just as He has delivered His Church from their idolatries.

So we have looked abroad, but do we not have idols at home? Oh, how fortunate it would be if they were as far from the temple as they are from agreement with it! I will not dwell too much on this revelation, but there are three main idols among us: Vain Pleasure, Vain Honor, and Riches. It is to be feared that these three vanities have more followers than the Trinity that created us. The first is an idol of indulgence, the second an idol of pride, and the last an idol of materialism.

1. Vain Pleasure: Oh, how many foolish worshippers flock to this merry goddess! She has a temple in every corner. Intoxication sits in taverns, offering smoky incense and sacrificing libations of drink to her. So, if a man were to prophesy about wine and strong drink, he would be considered a prophet suitable for this age. But preaching sobriety is seen as dry doctrine. We praise wine for its excellence, but if it could speak, as it can take away speech, it would complain that through our abuse, both its excellences are lost. For the excellent wine is ruined by the excellent man until the excellent wine has ruined the excellent man. Oh, that a person should take pleasure in that which dehumanizes them, that they should allow a thief in through their mouth to steal away their wit, that for a momentary indulgence of the throat, they should kill not only the first Adam, their reason, but even the second Adam, their regeneration, thus committing two murders at once! In every brothel, this idol has her temple, where the bed of impurity serves as the altar, the prostitute as the priest, and the offering is burning flesh offered to Moloch. It is not uncommon for a person to make an idol of their mistress and spend more time in

courtship with her than in prayer, to spend more on her physical appearance than on their own soul. Images were lifeless idols, but painted popinjays are living idols. Pleasure extends far beyond what I can currently survey. This can be called an idol of indulgence, fluid and unsatisfying.

2. Vain Honor is the idol of fools; no wise person has ever sought happiness in shadows. Its temple is pride, its altar ambition, its service flattery, and its sacrifice insolence. Silly Sennacherib made an idol of a chariot, and no wiser was the Prince of Tyre to make an idol of his own intellect! People mistake the path to greatness when they neglect the path to goodness. As long as a person chases their shadow, they waste their time and efforts. For the sun is behind them, and their shadow is always ahead, unattainable. But if they turn their face toward the sun and follow it, their shadow will follow them. In vain does a person pursue honor, their shadow, while turning their face away from virtue and goodness; they will miss what they labor so hard to catch. But if they set their face toward Christ, the Sun of righteousness, and strive for the eternal prize, their shadow will accompany them. "For those who honor me, I will honor," says the Lord.

God resists the proud, and rightly so, for the proud resist God. Other sins may divert a person from God, but pride brings them directly against God and brings God against them. There is nothing in this world worth our pride; even moss can grow on a stone. Pride is always dangerous, but especially so when it inflates us with a presumption of merit. Thus, the Romanists presume to do more good works, and those more perfect than God requires, so that He becomes indebted to them and bound to provide satisfaction. However, undoubtedly, God will more easily tolerate sins that we repent of than the righteousness we presume. "I am not as other men are," said the Pharisee, and the clock of his tongue kept better time than the dial of his heart. Indeed, he was not like other men; surely he resembled none of those who would be saved. Humility is a

difficult lesson to learn, so much so that Christ had to come down from heaven in person to teach it.

Pride is often associated with good works and virtues. This Saul loves to be among the prophets. Thus, if a person has a considerable measure of sanctification and assurance of eternal life, it will be difficult not to be proud of that. Pride has harmed many, but humility has never done any harm. When a man enters a door, he stoops; the door is high enough, yet he stoops. You may say he doesn't need to stoop, but as Bernard said, there is no harm in his stooping; otherwise, he may bump his head, whereas this way, he is safe. A person may carry themselves too high on the favor of God, but there is no danger in stooping; there is no harm in humility. I would rather be the lowest of God's servants than the noblest among His enemies. The honor of this world is at best but a golden dream, from which people commonly awaken in contempt. This is an idol of pride.

3. Wealth is the idol of the covetous person. Job describes its canonization: "He makes gold his hope and says to the wedge, 'You are my security.'" Just as treason sets up a new king in place of David, covetousness sets up a new god in place of Jehovah—Mammon. But, as Luther remarked, "O miserable god that cannot defend itself from rusting or being robbed." And, even more miserable, is the person who entrusts their safety to that god which they themselves are obliged to protect. Micah did not worship his silver until it was fashioned into the form of an idol. These individuals spare themselves the effort of fashioning idols and worship the very metal. The superstitious adore "Aurum in Idolo," gold in the idol; the covetous find "Idolum in Auro," an idol within the very gold. "Metalla" seems to sound like "post alia necessaria," that is, after other necessary things—once they had cultivated the land, sown seeds, gathered fruits, and discovered other means of sustaining life, they began to dig into the bowels of the earth. Oh, that humans would hold so dear that which should be most expendable, that they would

admire what can be most easily done without! Mammon has its temple—the world. God has His temple—the church. Yet, many bypass God's temple to enter Mammon's, offering a semblance of reverence to God as they pass Him by on their way to the world. Hence, so many obtain wealth, but so few godliness. The poets imagine Pluto to be the god of hell and the god of riches (as if riches and hell had the same master). Sometimes they depict him as lame and slow, and at other times nimble as fire. When Jupiter sends him to a soldier or scholar, he limps; when he sends him to one of his panders, he flies like lightning. The moral is that wealth that comes in God's name comes slowly and requires diligent labor, but wealth acquired with an evil conscience is both rapid and abundant. This is the main god of the worldling, with all the others subordinate to him. "Si modo Jupiter mihi propitius sit, minores deos flocci facio"—as long as Mammon favors them or their Great Diana multiplies their gains, they scorn the other minor gods, believing that a little money can buy them all. This is an idol of materialism.

No Agreement

You cannot serve God and Mammon; you may argue for it, but you can never reconcile the two. Gehazi cannot pursue forbidden riches without forsaking his master. Some here have made fine distinctions, claiming to serve God more economically and please Him as cheaply as possible. They have resolved not to do evil, though they may profit from it. Yet, for the sake of gain, they will come as close to evil as they can without crossing the line. But when it comes down to it, they will prioritize a single ounce of gold over their conscience. Just as the inhabitants of Judea who served both God and idols truly served neither, these hagglers, who desire two masters, actually have none.

When the evil day arrives, the world, their master, will reject them, and then their master, Christ, will not receive them. Such competition is scorned by Him. Man was created to serve God, and the world was made to serve man. Thus, the world, at best, is only the servant of God's servant. Therefore, if we claim to be God's servants, it is both an indignity and a preposterous act to take our own servant and make them a competitor with our Master. God says, lend, give, clothe, feed, shelter; Mammon says, take, gather, extort, oppress, plunder. Which of these is our God? It is the one we obey the most. The same argument can be made for pleasures, honors, or anything else that is delightful to our flesh and blood. The love of this world is enmity against God, and the East and West will sooner join forces than reconcile these two.

It is the devil's particular aim to bring these idols close to the temple. He finds no pleasure in ruling over his own hell; he desires Paradise. It has been wisely observed that Christ chose poor fishermen as the most suitable recipients of His teachings and as the founders of His Church because Satan disdained to stoop so low as to tempt them. He sought to outmaneuver Christ among the kings of the earth and the great scholars, never suspecting these simple fishermen. But when he realized he had been deceived, he sought to make their entire profession suffer for it. He bears a long-standing grudge against their whole tribe. In the past, he passed them by and tempted the great scholars, but now he would sooner tempt them than kings and emperors. The Church does not judge those who are outside but those who are within, and Satan would rather cause one from within to stumble than a hundred from outside. He desires them all, but he particularly loves a religious soul. He would devour it more eagerly than Rachel devoured her mandrakes. The fall of one Christian pleases him more than the fall of many unbelievers. No king wages war against his loyal subjects but against rebels and enemies. The devil is too cunning to waste his malice on those who serve him willingly. He cares less about multiplying idols in Babylon than about getting one into Zion. He desires to maintain priests of Baal in the land of Israel, as it were, under God's very nose, or to set up calves at

Bethel in scorn of the temple. This is his ambition. The fox seldom preys near its den, and Satan does not meddle with his own. They are as secure as temptation can make them. What jailer places more chains upon the shackled criminal who loves his prison and would not escape? The pirate does not waste a shot on a coal ship; instead, he targets the rich merchant. "Cantabit vacuus," the empty traveler can pass unmolested; it is the full barn that invites the thief. If we did not belong to the temple, we would not be assaulted by so many idols. If we were not Christians, we would face fewer temptations.

The more potent and malicious our adversaries, the more resolute and strong our resistance must be. The colder it is outside, the more the internal natural heat fortifies itself and guards the heart. It is the mark of the ungodly to bless idols. If we do not wish to be counted among them, let us protect ourselves from idols. Just as we have banished physical idols from our temples, let us also drive these spiritual idols out of our hearts. Let us declare with Ephraim, "We have heard God and seen Him. What more have we to do with idols?" The vices of the religious bring shame upon religion. The sight of this has caused even the bravest champions of Christ to shed tears. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law." David was one of the greatest heroes of the world, unmatched in his time, yet he wept. Did he tear apart a bear like a kid? Rescue a lamb from the mouth of a lion? Defeat a mighty giant who challenged the entire army of God? Did he, like a whirlwind, overwhelm and defeat his enemies? And now, like a child or a woman, does he weep? Yes, he had heard the name of God blasphemed, witnessed the desecration of His holy rites, seen His commandments ridiculed, and witnessed violence against the pure and undefiled chastity of that holy virgin, Religion. This moved that valiant heart to tears. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes." Likewise, Paul speaks of those who are enemies of the cross of Christ, and he tells of his tears shed for them. With such great courage, he endured stripes and persecutions, faced perils of all sorts, fought with wild beasts in Ephesus, was caught up to heaven, and learned his divinity among the angels. And now, does he weep? Yes, he had seen idols in the temple and impiety

in the Church of God. This caused that mighty spirit to melt into tears. If we see these idols in others or feel their presence within ourselves and remain silent, we give God and the Church just cause to complain about us. May the Lord deliver His temples from these idols.

However, thus far we have discussed matters in general terms, and you may say, "What is said to everyone is said to no one." Therefore, let me now move on to specifics.

The House of God

Is every Christian: just as the Church is his grand Temple, so every individual is his small temple. We are not only, by His grace, living stones in His Temple, but living temples in His Zion, each carrying within us a little shrine of His infinite Majesty. Wherever God resides, there is His Temple; therefore, the believing heart is His Temple, for that is where He dwells. Just as we, poor earthly creatures, have our existence in Him, so He, the God of heaven, has His dwelling in us. It is true that the highest heavens cannot contain Him, yet He chooses to inhabit the humble abode of our renewed souls. What would a house made by human hands be to the God of spirits if there were no spirit made without hands for Him to dwell in? Here, if the Body is the Temple, then the Soul is the Priest; if the Body does not offer, the Sacrifice will not be accepted.

In this Spiritual Temple, the Porch is the first part, which we may consider to be the Mouth. Therefore, David prays to have a guard placed at the door of his lips to protect the entrance of God's Temple. This may be one reason for the former practice of greeting with a kiss; they kissed the gate of God's Temple. Here, the Fear of God acts

as the Gatekeeper, ready to admit His friends and determined to keep out His enemies. The Gatekeeper must be especially vigilant against two types of foes: one, a traitor who goes out through evil speaking, and the other, a thief who sneaks in through excessive drinking.

The Holy place represents the sanctified mind, what St. Paul refers to as the Inner man. Here, we find the riches and ornaments—the divine graces. Here, not only Justice, Faith, and Temperance perform their roles, but the entire Choir of heavenly virtues harmonizes together.

The Holy of holies is the purified Conscience, where the Cherubim of Faith and Love stand, along with the Mercy-seat, shadowed by the wings of those glorious Angels. From this Propitiatory, God bestows the gracious testimonies of His good Spirit, bearing witness with our spirits that we are His children. In this Sacred space, the Lord engages in conversation with the soul, listens to her humble confession, and grants her sweet absolution. It is a place that neither man nor Angel can enter; only the High Priest Jesus comes, not just once a year but daily, imparting such invaluable favors and comforts that cannot be expressed in words.

Here, we find the Ark that preserves the Royal law and the Pot of heavenly Manna. The former restrains us from future sins with a blessed prevention, while the latter assures us of forgiveness for past sins with a blessed consolation. Let us also consider the golden Candlesticks, symbolizing our enlightened understanding through which we perceive the will of our Maker and discern the path to our eternal peace. And let us not forget the Tables of Shew-bread, representing our holy memories that keep the bread of life constantly available within us. Indeed, Memory is the treasury of this Temple, safeguarding those celestial riches, allowing us to draw upon them when needed. Here, we also find the Veil and the silken curtains and costly hangings—the Righteousness of Christ, which renders us acceptable to God, concealing our own weaknesses and adorning us

with His virtues. Here, the Altar for sacrifice exists in the contrite heart. The beast to be slain is not found among our herds but within our affections; we must sacrifice our lusts. The knife to slay them, which would otherwise slay us, is the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. The fire to consume them is holy zeal kindled within us by the inspiration of God.

There are other sacrifices for us to offer in this Temple, on this Altar. In addition to our praises and prayers, we must show mercy and perform charitable deeds. What is devotion without compassion? What is sacrifice without mercy? If your brother has something against you, or if you possess something that rightfully belongs to your brother, your offering will be repulsive to God. The Church once complained that her stones were clothed, while her children were naked—that those who were curious found matter for their pleasure, but the distressed could not find bread to sustain them. Thus, St. Augustine says, "If you have a fat bull, sacrifice it to the poor." Though they cannot drink the blood of goats, they can partake of the flesh of bulls. And while God declares, "If I were hungry, I would not tell you," He will acknowledge on the last day, "I was hungry, and you fed me. Come, you who are blessed." The poor serve as God's letters of commendation to us, and our prayers serve as our letters of commendation to God. If we refuse to listen to them, how can we expect God to gratify us? Therefore, O Christian, you are a mobile Temple of the living God.

Let this teach us all to adorn these Temples with fitting graces. Superstition does not care how much it lavishes on material shrines: towering columns, marble pillars, elaborate monuments that remain oblivious to their own adornments; bejeweled crucifixes, images clothed in silks and tissues, with embroidered canopies and tables adorned with pearls and diamonds. Thus generous is superstition to its own excesses. Oh, that our religion would do something for these ancient and dilapidated walls! But how much more precious are these spiritual Temples within ourselves? How much nobler should their furnishings be?

Firstly, if we are the Temples of God, let us be holy, for holiness, O Lord, befits Your House forever.

Secondly, it is a House of prayer; we must engage in constant prayer. If you wish to pray in God's Temple, pray within yourself.

Thirdly, the resounding praises of God must be heard in these Temples. Let each person speak of His honor. The Lord is pleased to inhabit the praises of His people. In Psalm 48, it is said, "We have thought of Your loving kindness, O God, in the midst of Your Temple." This means that we think of His mercies even in the depths of our own hearts. Let us meditate upon His mercies there and resound His praises.

Fourthly, the Inhabitant arranges all the rooms of His house. If God dwells in us, let Him rule over us. Submit your will to His word and your affections to His Spirit. It is fitting for each person to exercise authority over their own house.

Fifthly, let us rejoice when He is within us and not cause Him any disturbance. Let not the filthiness of any room cause Him to dislike His dwelling place. Cleanse all the untidy corners of sin and perfume the entire house with Myrrh and Cassia. Strive to draw nearer to your Landlord. Others come home to their houses, but here the house must strive to come home to the Inhabitant. Whenever God draws near to you, meet Him on the way and welcome Him to His rightful abode.

Lastly, if we are the Lord's houses, then we are no one else's. The material Temples are not to be used for common purposes; how much more should the spiritual ones be used solely for God's service? Let us not alienate His rights. In this way, He will declare, "This is my house; here will I dwell, for I have delight in it." May we, therefore, adorn these Temples with graces that please God and make Him delight in dwelling within us.

Idols

These are the Temples: the Idols that inhabit them are better known to us than how to expel them. They are our lusts and excessive desires, the rebellions of our corrupt nature that wage war against the Soul, defile the body, and bring disgrace upon the Temples of God's Spirit. So, I move on from them to the final point: there can be

No Harmony

between these libidinous Idols and the spiritual Temples. God will not dwell with such inhabitants. If there is impurity present, will the source of all purity tolerate it? Will Christ dwell with an adulterer? He, who allows no unclean thing to enter His heavenly city, will He Himself dwell in an impure city below? Oh, contemplate how detestable that sin is which not only takes the members of Christ and makes them the limbs of a prostitute but even transforms Christ's Temples into foul brothels. Our hearts are the Altars from which we send up the sweet Incense of devout prayers and cheerful thanksgivings. If the smoke of malicious thoughts is found there, will God accept our offerings? Is it possible for a person to please their Father if they refuse to reconcile with their brother? The Lamps of knowledge and sobriety are burning within us; will the deluge of alcohol extinguish them? Will the Lord dwell in a drunken body? Must we cease to be His Temples when we become vessels for excessive drinking? There is Manna, the bread of life within us; will Epicureanism and gluttony corrupt it? There is peace within us; will

pride and contention drive it away? There is heavenly love within us; will the love of the world banish it? Can the graces of God coexist with the vices of Satan? Will the Temple of God tolerate Idols? No, these Eagle's plumes will not endure mingling with common feathers. This heavenly gold scorns the mixture of base and counterfeit metals.

Let us search our hearts and thoroughly examine them. If we do not cast out these Idols, God will not acknowledge us as His Temples. My House shall be called a house of prayer: this was God's intention. But you have made it a den of thieves: this is man's misappropriation. Let us be cautious not to misappropriate God's house, recalling how He has avenged such profanation with scourges. We have been bought with a price; therefore, let us glorify God both in body and spirit, for they belong to Him. They are His acquisition, His Temple, His inheritance, His dwelling place. Do not lose such a gracious owner through the most ungracious sacrilege. You see many ruined houses that were once royal palaces. Learn from those lifeless spectacles to protect yourselves from similar fates, lest God say of you, "This was my house, but because it embraced Idols, I have forsaken it."

Or what if we do not erect Idols within these Temples but make the Temples themselves Idols? What if we do not say, "Make us gods," like Israel, but make gods of ourselves? What if we dress altars and construct shrines to our own intellects, kissing our own hands for the good they have brought us? If we attribute something to ourselves, how can Christ be everything to us? Do we justly criticize those who worship the Beast of Rome and yet find a new form of idolatry within our own homes? Shall we refuse to adore the Saints and Angels and yet give divine worship to ourselves, mere dust and ashes? If victory crowns our battles, if abundance fills our storehouses, or if success rewards our efforts, must the glory of it all be attributed to our own achievements? This rivalry is not tolerated by God, the mixing of so many Temples with nothing but Idols. But as the Lancashire Justice said of the ill-shaped idol, "Though it is not handsome enough to be a

god, it will serve as an excellent devil." Thus, proud dust and ashes that claim the honor due to God and appropriate it for themselves, even if too repulsive for a Temple, are fit enough to be an Idol. When David prays, "Deliver me from the evil man, O Lord," Saint Augustine, after much contemplation and searching, finally discovers who that evil man is: "Deliver me from the evil man, deliver me from myself; Deliver Augustine from Augustine; I am that evil man." So, of all Idolatries, may God deliver us from the superstitious worship of ourselves. Some have idolized their rulers, some their lovers, some their creations, but countless others have idolized themselves. A person who has no Idol, no small god in a box, no particular sin in their heart to which they grant indulgence and affection, is a rare individual indeed.

The only way to rectify all this is for each person to begin with themselves. It is in vain to condemn faults elsewhere that we tolerate at home. A person becomes ridiculous when they leave their own house on fire to extinguish their neighbor's. Let each person remove a burning ember from this fire, and the flames will die out on their own. If every soul purges their own Temple, all will be free of Idols, and God will accept each one. A multitude is nothing more than a heap of vanities. The more we take away, the fewer we have remaining. When a field is overrun with weeds, the best course of action to ensure a bountiful harvest is for each person to weed their own plot. When we desire to cleanse the street, let each person sweep their own doorstep, and it will be done swiftly. But as long as everyone criticizes and no one amends, we are merely speaking against Idols while our Temples remain uncleaned.

Let us pray for universal repentance, like a virtuous Josiah, to purify the houses of God, so that lust and profanity, pride and greed, deceit and immorality, malice and drunkenness are no longer found among us. Let everything unclean be cast out, and let nothing unclean be allowed in. In doing so, the Lord will dwell in us contentedly, and we shall dwell in Him with comfort. Here, we shall be a Temple for Him, and in the future, He shall be a Temple for us. Thus, we encounter

that glorious City described as follows: "I saw no Temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple." We are God's Temples on earth, and God shall be our Temple in heaven. May the Spirit of God sanctify us to this end and forever be sanctified within us. Amen.

Some may have prejudged in their criticism, long before now: "How does this relate to the matter at hand? What does it have to do with the business of the day?" I could have preempted this objection by comparing Idolatry to Treason: one being a breach of loyalty to the Lord, the other a breach of loyalty to the Lord's Anointed. Idolatry is treason against God, and Treason is a form of idolatry against the King. Through divine grace and our holy obedience, may we all be delivered from both. I conclude with an application to the present time.

This is one of those blessed days celebrated in commemoration of the deliverance of our gracious Sovereign, and it is fitting that the deliverance of a King, especially such a King, deserves a day of celebration. When God delivers a private individual, it is as if He is reenacting their Creation. But the deliverance of a King is always a notable entry in the Lord's Chronicle. The story of how he was endangered and how he was saved has been recounted here on numerous occasions, and in more detail than I have the strength, skill, or time to match. It seemed a difficult time indeed when a King was imprisoned, with no protection but his Innocence, and no loyal subject but a Traitor. However, there was One with him who was stronger than all who opposed him. A good Prince has more than one protector: 1. a subsidiary guard consisting of mortal men, 2. an inner guard in the form of a clear Conscience, 3. a spiritual guard in the prayers of his faithful subjects, 4. a celestial guard in the watchful and mighty Angels, 5. a divine guard in his Maker's providence, which surrounds him with a wall of fire that both preserves him and consumes his enemies.

But my intention is not to divert your thoughts back to his peril but to stir your hearts with gratitude for his preservation. He is justly called the Defender of the Faith: he has always defended the Faith, and the Faith has always defended him. He has preserved the Temple of God from Idols, and therefore God has preserved him from all his enemies. Surely, the Providence that delivered him from those early Conspiracies, which he faced from his infancy, intended him for some extraordinary benefit and unparalleled good for the Christian world. He who granted him life and Crown (almost) simultaneously has miraculously preserved both from all the raging hostilities of Rome and Hell. When the Lord delivered him, what did He do but deliver us all? Let us rejoice in his safety, as the Romans did at the recovery of Germanicus, when they rushed to the Capitol with lamps and sacrifices, singing with shouts and acclamations: "Salva Roma, Salva Patria, Salva Germanicus" - "The City is safe, the Country is safe, and all is safe in the well-being of Germanicus." As we contemplate the blessings we enjoy under his gracious rule - the security to pass down our hard-earned wealth to our descendants, the peace that shelters us and allows us to educate our children in the ways of the Lord, the ability to construct Temples and Hospitals without fear of savage violence tearing them down, the freedom to worship without disturbance or toil, the preservation of our Temples from profane Idols and the purity of God's Service from superstitious inventions, the protection of our temporal lives and the tranquility for our souls to be saved - let us, for such a King of men, bless the God of Kings. Let us sing for his deliverance, both privately each day and publicly on this day, in our congregations: "Salva Britannia, Salva Ecclesia, Salva Jacobus" - "Our Kingdom is safe, the Church of God is safe, our entire Estate is safe, we are all safe and blessed in the security and well-being of King James." Oh, may we truly emulate the Israelites' rejoicing and imitate it faithfully. Let us, with prepared hearts and devout affections, magnify His glorious Name as this great Assembly, and if possible, by some extraordinary expression of united gratitude, penetrate the very skies and join in the chorus of celestial choirs singing "Honor, praise, and glory be to our gracious God for all His merciful deliverances of both Prince and people." Yes,

let us say "Amen" with our whole hearts, and let Amen, the faithful witness in heaven, the Word and Truth of God, also say "Amen" to it. As for ourselves, let us sincerely repent of our past sins, amend our lives with religious fervor, forsake all our internal Idols, serve the Lord with pure hearts, and may God deliver both Him and us from all our enemies, now and forever. May this be granted by God's mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and in the name of the Holy Spirit. To whom, three persons but one eternal God, be all praise and glory, obedience and thanksgiving, world without end.

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