In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

(Signature)

Department of Comp.Lit

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date 14.10.1993

DE-6 (2/88)
Abstract

The thesis examines the debate about iconoclasm during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth century by tracing the development of iconoclastic thought from the conflict between Martin Luther and Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt (1521/22) through the Swiss Reformers and Jean Calvin up to the time of the English Puritans. Karlstadt's iconoclastic treatises were read in Switzerland and much of their content adopted, defended and refined by men like Leo Jud, Ludwig Haetzer and Ulrich Zwingli. The introduction of Jean Calvin's hermeneutics of synecdoche revolutionized iconoclastic thought, because it increased the weight of the idolatrous offense and also explored the subjective mental aspects of image worship. Secondly, I discuss the reception and adoption of Calvin's synecdochical hermeneutics by the English Puritans to show that the Puritans' uncompromising attitude towards image worship, as well as their call for a consistent application of the ten commandments to every aspect of the social and political spheres of life, is based on Calvin's hermeneutical tool. Furthermore, the connection between image worship, the Eucharist controversy and the Puritan view on music in worship is explored. Attention is also given to the most important analogies and metaphors which were used in the iconoclastic debate, predominantly the equation of unfaithfulness to God and the breaking of His covenant with the violation of the marital covenant through adultery. Because the Puritans' iconoclastic writings and actions were based on their love for God, their motivation for a reconstruction of worship and society ought to be seen as primarily theological, rather than political, and they themselves deserve to be seen not as aesthetic barbarians but as God-fearing men who acted out of a genuine concern for the individual's as well as for their nation's relationship to God.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Karlstadt: Luther's Friend or Foe?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2. The Development of Karlstadt's Image Theology</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3. &quot;Von Abtuhung&quot;</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4. Luther's Response</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karlstadt's Doctrine Refined</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Zwingli and the Zürich Debate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Bullinger's Decades</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. Luther and the Exodus Allegory</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin and the Hermeneutics of Synecdoche</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rise of English Puritanism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1. Historical Background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. The Heart of Puritanism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Puritans and the Decalogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Seven</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenant Theology and Spiritual Adultery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eight</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pope as Antichrist</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Nine</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fear of Judgment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Ten</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Egypt Analogy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eleven</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Psychology of Image Worship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Twelve</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Educational Value of Images</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Thirteen</td>
<td>The Eucharist as Image Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Fourteen</td>
<td>Iconoclastic Propaganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Fifteen</td>
<td>Extremism?: Puritans and Music in the Liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to briefly express my appreciation to those people who contributed to the realization of this thesis. First, I owe much to Dr. Dennis Danielson, whose sixteenth-century seminar inspired the topic for my thesis, and whose knowledge on the subject of iconoclasm provided the necessary direction and focus for my research. Secondly, I would like to thank Dr. Mark Vessey who agreed to sit on the reading committee, despite his already overloaded schedule, and who gave me great encouragement to continue with my research in the field of Puritan writings. Thirdly, I would like to thank Dr. J.I. Packer from Regent College for his reading of the manuscript and the correction of some important details. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Steven Taubeneck without whom I would have never finished the Master's Degree neither on time, nor as successfully as I did. Without his painstaking reading of each draft, as well as without his advice concerning style, logic, and choice of audience, this thesis would still be uncompleted.
Introduction

The topic of iconoclasm has experienced a renaissance over the recent years, and several "definite" works on this phenomenon have appeared on the literary scene. Books such as Charles Garside's *Zwingli and the Arts*, John Phillips's *The Reformation of Images*, Margarete Stirm's *Die Bilderfrage in der Reformation* and especially the recent publications, Carlos Eire's *War against the Idols* and Maraget Aston's excellent work *England's Iconoclasts*, seem to say everything there needs to be and can be said on the topic of iconoclasm. There are a few considerations, however, which I believe justify another paper on the topic. First, all the works I mentioned deal with those figures of the Reformation who are most prominent to the twentieth century eye and often neglect the less known, but also very important, writers of Protestant iconoclastic literature. Studies of continental iconoclastic literature consider Luther, Calvin and the Swiss Reformers, as well as the Anabaptist writers (who, for the most part, were the radical extremists among iconoclasts), but fail to mention their influence on the Puritans. Similarly, the works which deal with the English Reformation and do trace the influence of the German and French speaking iconoclasts on Puritan literature, to a great extent neglect the most influential Puritan writers. Great Puritan theologians such as Richard Sibbes, John Owen or Thomas Watson are not mentioned in even the most exhaustive studies such as Margaret Aston's scholarly work. Usually the only Puritans mentioned are Richard Baxter, William Perkins, and misguided extremists like John Reynolds. One purpose of this paper is therefore to amend this marginalization, and expose to the reader the opinions of those writers who truly represent the spiritual core and conviction of the English Puritans. These authors were mostly Pastors who dealt with the issue of images and pictures in worship at the grass root level, the "battlefront" so to speak, rather than in theoretical abstraction. Their writings are full of humour and wit, replete with allegories and illustrations, and constitute an urgent appeal against idols. These Puritan works are an essential part of England's literary history,
and a careful reading of them may aid us in understanding the influence these men had on their congregations.

The second reason for the writing of this paper is a reaction to Margaret Aston's judgment of iconoclasts. She states in her introduction: "Perhaps it is impossible to study the Reformation for long without becoming aligned--if one does not start off by doing so. Historians are not supposed to take sides, but they can hardly help having sympathies; indeed they are not likely to sound very alive unless they do so" (Aston 16). She then declares her antipathy towards the Reformer's zeal for destruction and says that she cannot regard them as "great-hearted men". I readily concede the inevitability of a personal bias, but find it difficult to accept Margaret Aston's aversion to the iconoclasts. Unfortunately, her stereotypical view of them as cultural barbarians is quite common among those who neglect the historical background of the debate. The ecclesiastical debates of the sixteenth century were determined by two major aspects which are difficult to understand from a modern point of view. First of all, a holistic, unified world view which was anchored in the metaphysical realm, resulted in antithetical thinking and argumentation. God was the universal reference point, and one could either be right or wrong in one's arguments. Secondly, passing judgment on the iconoclasts is greatly complicated by the contemporary attitude towards art. Of all the works mentioned, Charles Garside shows the greatest understanding for the problem at hand. He points out that what is designated as "Renaissance Art," the destruction of which we condemn, was once created for the very purpose of the mass and image worship (Garside 3-4). In writing about iconoclasm, the contemporary situation of the reformers and the importance of liturgy for worship has to be kept in mind. Once image worship was theologically accepted, the liturgy deviated from the more simple apostolic format, the art of image making flourished, and with it the sculptors and painters of the 16th, and 17th century. The reformers did and could not see art as separate from liturgy and worship, as we do today. Art as a form of entertainment without the religious component was largely foreign to them, but where it existed outside the
worship context it was not condemned. Zwingli, for example, sanctioned statues of magistrates and emperors. When Luther went to Rome, he did not see art, but relics, and we have to be careful not to condemn the reformers as tasteless philistines because they did not have the mind of a twentieth century connoisseur of art. They were theologians who were concerned with the purity of their relationship to a personal God. To them the existing art was connected to the Church and its liturgy and expressed an unbiblical doctrine. The fighting and refutation of this doctrine automatically and necessarily included the reformation of the liturgy. Luther said in the Formula Missa of 1523 that "there is scarcely one of the handicrafts in all the world which does not contribute a great part of its activity and desire its gain from the Mass." The artifacts that were destroyed were part of a liturgical art. The liturgy that produced what we now understand as Renaissance art was based on a certain theology, which the reformers attacked. When we try to detach this vital connection and regard art for art's sake we not only fall into idolizing ourselves, but also seriously misunderstand and distort the motives of the Reformers.

This paper is not a direct defense of iconoclasm, but a defense of the Reformed Calvinistic and Puritan motive against images. I do not believe one has to be a philistine in order to smash images. One could even possibly come up with a mere social or political explanation for the phenomenon of iconoclasm by stating that images were removed as a symbol for centuries of oppression by the Roman Catholic church. An example from our more recent history is the removal of Lenin statues in East Germany as well as in Russia. Many voices were raised against this practice, with arguments ranging from the artistic value of the statues to their service as memorials of an oppressive regime. But those who had been subjected to that regime needed a visual symbol and sign of its demise and therefore did not regard its former symbols of power and oppression as art, but as a signifier of tyranny which had to be destroyed. The same could be said for the images, shrines and relics of the Roman Catholic Church seen by the Reformers as symbols of the greed for money, power, and corruption the church had demonstrated, and by which it had drained
the wealth of many a nation and channelled it to Rome.¹ But a political and economic justification of iconoclasm cannot lead to a satisfactory analysis, because the roots of iconoclasm are theological. Therefore the second purpose of this paper is an attempt to argue that the iconoclastic thought of the authors mentioned and their desire for other ecclesiastical reforms did not constitute a mere reaction to the social and political circumstances of their time. Rather, their motivation stemmed from a religious conviction, that is from their personal relationship with the God of the Old and New Testament, whom to betray and offend would be to repeat the mistake of ancient Israel, namely spiritual idolatry. The identification of idolatry with adultery is therefore at the very root of the debate, and, as we shall see, formed one of its most popular arguments.

Lastly, it is necessary to give a brief working definition of iconoclasm in order to clarify the use of the term for this paper. I would like to define an iconoclast as anyone who either physically destroys images, pictures and idols, or advocates these activities in his writings. There has to be room within this general definition, however, to distinguish between those theologians who spoke out against images and advocated their orderly removal and those radicals who delighted in iconoclasm for mere destruction's sake. The necessity of such a definition is seen in Margaret Aston's book, whose vague definition of an iconoclast creates unnecessary ambiguities. By avoiding a clear definition of the term "iconoclast," she gives the impression of a tacit identification of the Reformed theologians with those groups and individuals who delighted in destruction. The identification, however unintentional and implicit, of iconoclastic thought with anti-aestheticism or an unappreciative view of the arts, is a fundamental error which has often wrongly been

¹One should not forget that the splendour and riches of that city were to a great part financed by countries such as France, Germany, and England. After all, monetary grievances triggered the Reformation in Germany, to which many princes and rulers did not consent out of religious conviction but because of a desire for sovereignty and for liberation from the economic enthrallment by the Roman Catholic church. At the Diet of Worms, even enemies of Martin Luther signed the "Hundred Grievances" of the German Barons, a document which protested the constant flow of German money from the trade with relics and pictures to Rome. The duke George of Saxony, one of Luther's greatest opponents, was the first to address the Diet on the monetary extortion of the nation through relics, masses and indulgences (Wylie vol.1 327).
attached to the Reformed image theology, and has tenaciously been carried over to our modern day view of the Puritans.

Since iconoclastic riots and the consequent debates and formulations of an image theology first occurred in Germany, I will begin this paper with a more or less detailed account of the background and the arguments of that debate by focusing on the main figures involved, Martin Luther and Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt. By following the geographical dissemination of Karlstadt's doctrines, I will briefly look at some of the Swiss reformers and finally arrive at the Puritans, the examination of whose writings will form the main body of this paper. In the conclusion I will attempt to show that despite its primarily spiritual nature, the liturgical debate about idolatry has affected the realm of politics and altered the popular concept of the monarchy.

1. Luther and Karlstadt: The Origins of the Iconoclastic Debate

The iconoclastic controversy during the Reformation of the sixteenth century had a thorough and long lasting impact on theology and the liturgy of the church as well as on the progress of the Reformation in Germany. My intention in this segment of the paper is to study the origin of the iconoclastic debate within the ranks of the reformers. The importance of the disagreement between Martin Luther and Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt is twofold. First, it contains almost all of the arguments that resurface during the next decades and even centuries, as the Reformation reaches other countries and in particular England, where the struggle between the Anglican Episcopalians, Catholics and the Puritans re-enacts the continental iconoclastic drama. Second, the quarrel between the two theologians also anticipated the schism in the Protestant camp, a dispute that was eventually to develop into the irreconcilable Reformed and Lutheran factions at the decisive Marburg conference in October 1529 (Wylie vol.i, 554-62).
The Lutheran position regards the issue of images as neutral and distinguishes between the picture and its use. Luther therefore not only tolerated images as long as they were not worshipped, but even recommended their use for the preaching and teaching of the gospel. He used images extensively for his first New Testament in 1522 and developed a unique method of pictorial exegesis, where the prints in themselves showed the fulfillment of Old Testament promises through the coming of Christ (Schmidt 8). The Reformed development of image theology may be termed the Zwinglian view of images, although it was clearly, though less systematically, stated first by Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt in his treatise *Von Abtuhung der Bylder und das keyn Bedtler unter Christen seyn sollen* (1522). This view uses the Lutheran premise that the root of idolatry is to be found in the heart of man and not in the picture itself, but it arrives at a different conclusion. Pictures and idols are seen as identical (at least in connection with worship), and will inevitably lead to idolatry, because human depravity will use any possible opportunity to deviate from the pure worship of God.

It is important not to regard the debate as an abstract theological discussion which took place in a socio-political vacuum. There was a strong political motivation for Luther's intervention. Furthermore, his personal dislike of Karlstadt also contributed to his willingness to regard Karlstadt as a heretic and to his refusal to be reconciled to him. Some historians have stated that the debate was primarily about church politics (Preus 2), whereas others see theological differences as the genuine reason behind the conflict between Luther and Karlstadt (Eire 66). My thesis is that although political considerations did initially induce Luther to return from his exile on the Wartburg in 1522 and to reassume his role as the leader of the Reformation, his differences with Karlstadt were essentially theological. The ensuing debate seemingly forced Luther to develop a theology of liturgy and worship contrary to that of Karlstadt, but in reality it only crystallized and hardened already divergent theological opinions. Luther could have been reconciled to Karlstadt over a matter of church policy, but never over a matter of faith. And at the end of the clash,
Luther clearly looked upon Karlstadt as an irreconcilable heretic ("Denn er [Karlstadt] predigt nicht den Glauben und kann ihn auch nicht predigen, als ich nun erst leider sehe" SS.XX,138). The initial conflict over the implementation of reform developed into a theological and exegetical dispute that ended with Luther's judgment of Karlstadt as a Zwickau prophet and heretic. I will first try to describe the personal relationship between the two Wittenberg doctors and then move on to the political context in order to finish with the actual arguments used by both sides. The main focus will be on Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, not only to counterbalance the unjust condemnation he often receives from Lutheran scholars, but also because his arguments are much more elaborate and his position on the iconoclastic issue is generally not as well known as Luther's.

1.1. Karlstadt: Luther's Friend or Foe?

Karlstadt's academic career began with studies in theology and canon law at Erfurt (1499-1503), and at Cologne (1503-4). He received his Master in Philosophy at Wittenberg in 1505, and took his degree as Doctor of Divinity in 1510. He became one of the earlier celebrities of Wittenberg because of his scholastic learning, and in 1513 was made professor at the university. Soon after his appointment to a theological chair, he made a journey to Rome, where he received his doctorate degree in canon law, after which he returned to Wittenberg in 1515. At first, he vigorously opposed Luther's opinions, but was soon won over by his colleague's convincing argumentation from scripture.² One of the greatest problems with Karlstadt's profile is his character assessment. It is difficult to judge his character objectively, because Lutheran scholars like Müller and Dau see in him the source of all evil in Wittenberg, whereas Ronald S. Sider and Herman Barge rather criticize

²For an excellent account of Karlstadt's theological development and conversion to Luther's Augustinian theology see Ronald S. Sider's *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt*, 6-19.
Luther's cooperation with the authorities to expel him, and laud Karlstadt as the more courageous innovator. But even Barge admits that Karlstadt was imperious, presumptuous and much given to pride. Karlstadt seems to have also been rather impulsive by nature (Dau 32). Luther himself is reported to have said during one of his table talks that "Karlstadt returned from Italy with great haughtiness [Hoffart], which suits him well" (Luther's Tischreden, ed. Förstermann II.353). Another testimony to this pride occurred in 1517, when Karlstadt entered into a dispute with the elector Frederick over the investiture of a pastor in his parish Orlamünde. Karlstadt, who was essentially in the right, used his position to show off his legal skills in a presumptuous letter to the elector (Barge vol.i, 62-64).

Karlstadt also lacked Luther's farsightedness in doctrinal matters. In 1517, Karlstadt had broken with his former specialty and declared the discipline of scholasticism as useless (Dau 28). But he failed to see that his new position on scholasticism, if consistently applied, had to affect his entire theology. Although he discarded justification by works, he retained the scholastic subtleties which legitimized image worship. In September 1517, for example, Karlstadt vigorously attacked scholastic theology in a public debate. Yet in April of 1517, when the elector had his collection of relics exhibited at the Stiftskirche in Wittenberg, Karlstadt defended and lauded this custom. Luther opposed him, declaring that the regulation concerning the place of confession stated a mere privilege, but not a command because the forgiveness of sins cannot be restricted to any locality. Karlstadt replied angrily: "Luther, if I believed that you seriously hold this view, I should prefer charges of heresy against you with the Pope" (Dau 33). Luther in turn never really

\[3\]Indem so Karlstadt vornehme Beziehungen angeknüpft hatte und seinen Ruf im Steigen sah, erhielt sein Selbstgefühl neue Nahrung. Auch sonst bekundeten einzelne Züge, daß er-stolz auf die neu errungene juristische Würde-den Kopf hoch trug. Karlstadt verriet jene Fähigkeit die Juristen zu eigen sein pflegt, die Summe der zustehenden Machtbefugnisse genau einzuschätzen und des allgemeinen Rechtsgefühls unangesehen, geltend zu machen...Die Landgeistlichen des Orlamünder Pfarrsprengels hatten in Karlstadt einen peinlichen und gestrengen Vorgesetzten (Barge vol i.57)
seemed to have liked Karlstadt and did not think him capable of contributing greatly to the cause of the Reformation. After he had watched Karlstadt's desperate efforts against Dr. Johannes Eck during the Leipzig debate, he said, "[Karlstadt] dishonoured, instead of honouring, our cause. He is a most unhappy debater, of an appallingly dull mind" (Dau 129).

Besides a personal dislike, there were also political and strategic reasons why Luther treated Karlstadt with more aggression and hostility than a mere difference of opinion might warrant. There are two main reasons that may have prompted Luther to intervene and resume the leadership in Wittenberg. First, Luther had been informed by his friend Spalatin, the chancellor and chaplin of the elector Frederick, that the duke's Catholic cousin, Duke George of Saxony, anxiously awaited an opportunity to denounce the Reformation to the emperor in order to mobilize the imperial army (Reichsarmee) to effectually terminate any innovations (Stirm 26). Luther was fully aware that iconoclastic riots, especially if they occurred in a building under the emperor's jurisdiction and not under that of the magistracy, such as the Stiftskirche in Wittenberg, would furnish his enemies with a convenient excuse for military action. However, Luther did not merely act as a tool of his ruler. The second reason for his intervention was the Reformer's concern for the "Evangelium," which he perceived to be slandered and abused by the so-called 'Zwickau Prophets' through their claims of special revelation and spiritual guidance apart from scripture. The trio of Nickolaus Storch, Mark Stubner and Mark Thomas, who had been evicted from Zwickau by an orthodox pastor, began to stir up the people of Wittenberg against ecclesiastical and civil authority (D'Aubigné 326). Luther recognized that their heretical spiritualism formed the basis for a rebellious and subversive spirit, which soon manifested itself in disorder and small riots. The interconnectedness of political unrest with practical theology makes it nearly impossible to determine the exact reason for Luther's return. One indication for the pre-eminence of a theological concern is the fact that Luther had been informed about Karlstadt's abrogation of the Catholic Mass
(winter 1521) and smaller iconoclastic incidents, but chose to ignore them, because these actions were essentially in accordance with his teachings (Friedenthal 390). It was not until these unrests became more frequent and Luther began to see the teachings of the Zwickau Prophets as their cause, that he felt the necessity of restoring order.

Unfortunately, Luther unjustly identified Karlstadt with the Zwickau movement. Although it was Philip Melanchton who had pushed for innovations in worship and who had defended the Anabaptist tenets of the Prophets, and although Luther's former colleague Gabriel Zwilling had preached most of the incendiary sermons attributed to Karlstadt, the Orlamünder doctor was the focal point of Luther's attack. It is true that Karlstadt had demanded the removal of images, but he had been quite cautious in his approach. In a public disputation with the Augustinian monks in 1521 over liturgical changes, Karlstadt clashed with Melanchton, who was impatient. Karlstadt insisted that all the Wittenbergers must first be persuaded by preaching. Melanchton said that there had been enough preaching, it was time to act, whereupon Karlstadt retorted: "By all means, but without tumult and without giving opponents an opportunity for slander" (WB, No.18, p.48). To prevent disorder, Karlstadt also urged that no action should be taken without the consent of the Wittenberg magistracy. It is not quite clear why Luther so vehemently attacked Karlstadt as the sole cause of the unrests in his Invocavit sermons when he returned from his exile. Barge rightly points out that the apparent similarities of Karlstadt and the Zwickau prophets were only superficial. A close assessment of their respective opinion shows how far removed Karlstadt's endeavours of reform were from the Anabaptist

---

4 Barge states that Gabriel Zwilling's preaching was much more violent than that of Karlstadt: "Eine bedenkliche Situation wurde erst geschaffen als der Augustinermönch G.Z. in offener Propaganda für einen Umsturz der herrschenden katholischen Ordnungen eintrat. Bislang war Karlstadt in der ganzen Angelegenheit wenig hervorgetreten, und sicherlich ist es falsch, mit seiner akademischen Lehrtätigkeit Zwillings radikales Vorgehen in direkten Zusammenhang zu bringen (314-15)."

5 Adhortabatur item, ut, si ommino missam sublatam vellent, facerent id cum consensus magistratus Wittenbergensis, ne quid offendiculi inde nasceretur in vulgo" WB, No.15, p.34).
heretics. It is certain, however, that Luther saw the same unorthodox spirit in Karlstadt as in the Prophets: "Darum habe ich wohl gesagt, Dr. Karlstadt ist nicht ein mörderischer Prophet; er hat aber einen aufrührischen, mörderischen, rottischen Geist bei sich, der wohl heraus führe, wenn er Raum hätte" (SS.XX, 144).

1.2. The Development of Karlstadt's Image Theology

Karlstadt's criticism of icons was not a novelty in Germany. Martin Luther himself had already criticized the abuses of image worship and pointed out the poverty in Germany caused by the Roman Catholic relic trade, a year before Karlstadt published his writings (Babylonian Captivity 80). Yet Karlstadt's treatises deal more specifically with church liturgy than those of Luther, and therefore provoked an urge for drastic changes which Luther was not yet willing to concede. Karlstadt's iconoclastic doctrine was not a spontaneously adopted concept, but it had developed out of his criticism of the mass and monastic vows. The tract "Von Gelübden Unterrichtung" (1521), deals not only with monastic vows but with a variety of general aspects pertaining to monasticism and contains Karlstadt's first written argument against images. Karlstadt rejects monastic vows when they are jointly addressed to God and the founder of a particular monastic order. A vow should be made to God alone, not to a creature or a saint. Complete trust in God, says Karlstadt, is possible only through circumcision of the heart by the spirit ("geistliche Beschneidung"). As a result of this circumcision, all other creatures, saints, and idols must be cut out of the heart ("alle anderen Heiligen, alle Engel, alle Kreaturen von sich-in Stücke, so Gott allein zuständig abgeschnitten"). Karlstadt then concludes: "Alle äußerlichen Bilder sind von wegen innerlicher Bilder verboten" (Barge vol.i, 268).

6Eine Kluft trennte die Anschauungen von der religiösen Denkweise Karlstadts. Nur bei einer an der Aussenseite der Erscheinung haftenden Betrachtungsweise ergeben sich gewisse Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den Ansichten beider (Barge i, 403)
Karlstadt's argumentation certainly shows legalistic tendencies, but it also proves that a simplistic rejection of his reasoning as merely pertaining to externals is incorrect. He justifies an outer reform by appeal to a preceding inner change.

Herman Barge shows convincingly that Karlstadt's zeal against images and pictures was a natural extension of his doctrine of the Eucharist. Karlstadt published a series of theses wherein he criticizes the pomp and splendour of the mass, and links the issue of the mass to that of images ("Wie die Bilder Christi, der ruhmreichen Jungfrau und anderer Heiliger in den christlichen Tempeln beseitigt werden m ü ssen, so auch der feierliche Pomp, mit dem das verehrungswürdige Sakrament hierhin und dorthin getragen wird" [Barge, vol.i, 126]). In almost all of Karlstadt's earlier treatises and tracts that deal with the issue of the Eucharist, he attacks the Roman Catholic abuses more vehemently than does Luther. In his Eucharistic doctrine Karlstadt again displays a tendency to legalism which Luther could later use as the main weapon against him. Rather than making the partaking of the supper in both kinds a matter of choice, Karlstadt proclaims that anyone who does not partake of the cup actually sins against God: "Wer allein das Brot ißt, sündigt nach meiner Ansicht" (Barge vol.i, 290).

In his reforming zeal, Karlstadt moved from criticizing the mass to the use of art in liturgy. His first disputation "Ober den gregorischen Gesang" not only shows his general dislike of art in any form, but also the peculiar arguments he employed to support his criticism. He calls the Gregorian chant "Geschrei" and demands: "Wenn du also willst, daß der Gesang im Gottesdienst weiter bestehen bleiben soll, so mag es ein einstimmiger Gesang sein, auf daß sei ein Gott, eine Taufe, ein Glaube, ein Gesang" (Barge i,368). The orthodox

---

7"Bei diesem Eifer war vorauszusehen, dass man sich nicht damit begnügen werde, die durch Abschaffung der katholischen Messe sinnwidrig gewordenen Einrichtungen zu beseitigen. Karlstadt schritt weiter zum Angriff gegen die künstlerischen-und zwar gleichweise die musikalischen, wie bildlichen Bestandteile des katholischen Kirchenkultus. Die innere Verwandschaft solchen Vorgehens mit dem der späteren Puritaner leuchtet ohne weiteres ein" (Barge i, 368).
Lutheran Erasmus Alberus, a former student of Karlstadt, commented on his professor's peculiar logic: "If Karlstadt was correct, one could also say that because there is only one God every human being should only have one eye, one ear, one hand one foot one knife one shirt and one penny." Yet the impression of Karlstadt's argumentation on Alberus as a student was such that Alberus was tempted to tear up his hymnbook in righteous anger (Barge 371). This anecdote indicates the general sense of anticipation of the times. The rediscovery of the scriptures as guidelines for the Church was so new and exciting that in the zeal to purify the Church from superstition, not every argument was carefully weighed, but rash action was often taken as if the well-being of one's soul depended on it. It is this general mood which explains the impact of Karlstadt's later tracts "Von Abtuhung der Bylder" and "Die Schwachen."8

Karlstadt's preoccupation with liturgy indicates that the main theological difference between him and Luther was a divergent approach to soteriology. Luther saw justification by grace as the central proof of God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit. Karlstadt regarded salvation as an important starting point, but one that should not be dwelt upon. His emphasis was on moral regeneration. He saw the "Fruits of the Spirit" as evidence of the outworking of the Holy Spirit and as proof of salvation. Ironically, this subtle shift to visible evidence for genuine Christianity reintroduces a righteousness of works similar to that of the Catholic system previously condemned by the Reformers (Barge ii, 146).9 Luther recognized immediately the legalistic tendency of his colleague (a characteristic he had also witnessed during the preparations for the Leipzig debate [Dau 32]) as being potentially dangerous to the Reformation, since it affected every aspect of doctrine as well as liturgy. Carlos Eire, in his book War against Idols, states that "[O]utwardly, the

8Full title:"Ob man gemach fahren und die Schwachen mit Ärgernissen verschonen soll in Sachen, so Gottens Wille geschehe"(1524).

9"Luther sieht in der Glaubensrechtfertigung, Karlstadt in der sittlichen Wiedergeburt den Kern des Heilsvorganges."

fundamental issues dividing the two men seem to have been issues of religious policy, not so much of theology, but inwardly their disagreement stemmed from differing interpretations of the nature of worship" (66). It seems to be more correct to say that the disagreement stemmed from a different view of what it means to be saved, for the dispute over worship was only a manifestation of a divergent opinion on soteriology and the process of sanctification. Luther could regard many things, including image worship, as secondary doctrines, because he saw salvation by faith and reliance on the Holy Spirit for sanctification as central, whereas Karlstadt had to push for external innovations, because his theology depended on external signs as proof for the inward change. The distinction of the respective theologies not only helps to explain Luther's tolerance of images and Karlstadt's impatience for their removal, but also shows that Luther's arguments were not merely a clever ploy to undermine his opponent's arguments (Eire 66), but instead pointed at the root of the problem.

1.3. "Von Abtuhung"

In his treatise "Von Abtuhung der Bylder," Karlstadt uses arguments which later reappear in Zwingli's and Calvin's writings on the same subject. Some of Karlstadt's arguments have to be seen in context with one important insight Luther lacked, namely the practical reality of image worship. Karlstadt's basic thesis was that despite all assertions to the contrary, people do in fact trust images and thus transgress the biblical command to trust God alone. "Sieh, wie Gott allerlei Bilder verbietet, darum das Menschen leichtfertig sind, und geneigt, sie anzubeten. Deshalb spricht Gott, du sollst sie nicht anbeten, du sollst sie auch nicht ehren" (AB 7.24-26). Within this context, Karlstadt's first premise in the treatise may appear less legalistic: "Das wir Bilder in Kirchen und Gotteshäusern haben ist unrecht und wider das erste Gebot. Du sollst nicht fremde Götter haben" (Lietzman, 4.21-22). Pictures in churches are automatically idols. Karlstadt's argument was legalistic in a
sense. God's prohibition in the decalogue is the authority for removing them. Even if they were helpful, the prohibition would preclude their use (AB 11.15-18). And yet much of the treatise is a convincing argument that despite proper teaching, the corruptness of the human heart will always tempt people to place in images the hope and trust which belongs to God alone. Despite the assertions of iconodules that the worship was not directed to the object but its transcendental signified, Karlstadt saw that the images were, in fact, treated as gods. Thus his legal prohibition has a rational basis. Luther never fully conceded that the inclination of sinful man to pervert the pure worship instituted by God would inevitably lead to image worship. In his desire to prevent any encroachment upon Christian liberty and to quench the heresies of the Zwickau Prophets, Luther simply overlooked the practical reality of human depravity.

Karlstadt's two other main premises in "Von Abtuhung" are also worth quoting because they show the importance he ascribes to images:

ii Das geschnitzte und gemalte Ölgötzen auf den Altaren stehen ist noch schädlicher und teuflischer

iii Darum ist es gut/nötig/löblich und göttlich/das wir sie abtuhn/ und ihr Recht und Vorteil der Scrifft geben (Lietzman 4, 23-26).

The attribute "teuflischer" in the second premise as a moral characteristic of images illustrates a striking and prominent idiosyncracy of Karlstadt's writing, namely the personification of images. Immediately after stating his premises he says: "Christus sagt, mein Haus ist ein Haus des Gebets/ und [ihr] macht eine Grube der Mörder daraus/betrügliche Bilder ermorden alle ihre Anbeter und Preiser wie es geschrieben steht" (AB 4,27-30). To picture the images as murdering the souls of the pious is indeed an image which must have contributed significantly to iconoclasm. Whether or not Karlstadt intentionally furnished images with a personality and life of their own is not clear, but given the superstition which still had a hold on many of the lay-people, it explains the vehemence
of the iconoclasts' proceedings, often mutilating statues of saints as if these pieces of wood did indeed possess personhood.

More specifically, Karlstadt's second premise pertains to the desecration of the altar, an argument which continued throughout the iconoclastic debate of the Reformation. Karlstadt ascribes a special holiness to the altar by saying that although images in a church are bad enough, it is especially evil to have them on the altar. It is not clear whether he himself believed that the altar had a particular aura of holiness, or if he played on the belief of the uneducated lay-person. He does, however, buttress his point with the argument that to put a picture on an altar is evil since the Pope prohibits a lay-person to stand at the altar for fear of desecration (AB 8,12). Karlstadt does not seem to have noticed the inconsistency of his thought. By declaring the placing of images on an altar as particularly evil, he attributes special importance to the altar, which shows that he was not entirely emancipated from the Roman Catholic superstitions he so vehemently attacked.

The last premise also forms the basis for arguments Zwingli and Calvin were to employ later. When God's attributes such as omniscience, omnipotence and mercy are given to the idols, man has arrived at the depth of degradation because he expects to be helped by an image he made with his own hands ("So machen alle Menschen fremde Göter wenn sie empfangene Wohltaten jemand anderes zurechnen als dem wahrhaftigen Gott" AB 7,2). Furthermore, if God had wanted to have images in the Church, he would not have explicitly forbidden them. Lastly, Karlstadt describes images and pictures as simply antithetical to the Word of God. Christ told his disciples: "Meine Schäflein hören meine Stimme. Er sagt nicht, sie sehen meine oder der Heiligen Bilder" (AB 8,35). He contends that the Pope has given the same honour to pictures which the scriptures ascribe exclusively to the Word of Christ. Karlstadt's ultimate conclusion is that pictures negate the presence of God ("Wo Bilder sitzten kann Gott nicht sein" [AB 10,32]). Connected to the antithesis
of word versus picture is the emphasis on the spiritual over the carnal aspects of worship. Karlstadt also uses the content of the pictures in churches to bolster his argument. He correctly observes that most of the pictures either depict Christ as a child or as nailed to the cross, so that his power displayed by his resurrection is never portrayed ("Die Kraft Christi lehren sie gar nicht" [AB 10,19]). And since without spiritual power no one can come to Christ, the focus should be on the spirit of Christ and not on his body ("Ohne die Kraft Christi wird niemand selig. Ohne die leibliche Gestalt Christi werden viele tausend selig, das ist sicher" [AB 10,20-21]).

The final two aspects that emerge in Karlstadt's work are his preference for books and the call for a simple obedience to God's word. Margarete Stirm correctly writes that Karlstadt advocated the abolition of pictures of any kind in churches, and likewise in the private home of a Christian (Stirm 40). Karlstadt, as one who never liked art and always preferred books to pictures, sets out to prove that pictures, in themselves, are useless, by disproving the argument of libris laicorum which states that pictures are the educational tool of the lay person. His conclusion is that pictures are useless, but that the usefulness of books is undeniable (AB 12,23). Yet even if there were the slightest possibility that pictures might aid in worship, Karlstadt states that simple obedience to God's Word outweighs by far the supposed edification of an image and that pictures should be banned from both churches and private homes ("Demnach sag ich obgleich emn Bild das Anzeichen eines guten Dinges hätte, selbst dann sollten wir sie nicht in Kirchen und unter Gläubigen leiden"11). Karlstadt's finishing sentence touches a point that also forms the core of Calvin's argument for the rejection of images as biblia laicorum, namely the ineffectiveness

---

10 War Against the Idols p.59:p.66. Barge and Sider also discuss this well known argument in such detail that I will not elaborate on it in this paper.

11 Also: Schau, selbst wenn ich zugebe, dass Laien etwas Nutzen und seligbarliches aus Bildern könnten lernen, so dürfte ich das dennoch nicht gestatten gegen das Verbot der Schrift und des Götlichen Willen (AB.11. 15-17).
of images as a revelation and a pathway to God (Stirm uses the term Erkenntnisvermittlung [186]). Karlstadt does not expand the argument but simply states that nobody can come to God by honouring pictures (AB 22.25).

1.4. Luther's Response

While Karlstadt's arguments against images had developed steadily from his criticism of the mass, Luther was in a sense disadvantaged by having to respond almost extemporaneously to Karlstadt's reasons against images as outlined in the preceding pages. Luther's response is mostly contained in his eight invocavit sermons and the tract "Wider die himmlischen Propheten." Since Luther did not have time to develop a systematic image theology on his own, it is not surprising if his response to Karlstadt neglects many of his opponent's more plausible arguments. Luther limited himself to a refutation of Karlstadt's legalism and concentrated on two main areas:\footnote{Since Eire's War Against Idols gives an apt description of the most familiar arguments, such as Luther as an iconoclast of the heart and his accusation of Karlstadt's new works righteousness, I will concentrate on the less well known contentions.} the meaning of the Decalogue and consideration for the weak Christian's conscience. In the debate between Luther and Karlstadt, the validity of the law, particularly in reference to the interdiction of images, became a main issue. In his "Von Abtuhung der Bylder" Karlstadt anticipated Luther's argument: "Etliche Bilderküsser sprechen, das alte Gesetz verbietet Bilder, und [aber] das neue nicht. Und wir folgen dem neuen, nicht dem alten Gesetz" (AB 21). Karlstadt's statement summarizes Luther's stand on the validity of the law when it came to the interdiction of images.

In the context of the iconoclastic dispute, Luther promoted a rather
antinomian view of the decalogue. He called the law "des Juden Sachsenspiegel," in reference to the legal code of Saxony which could be modified by the ruler in accordance with the changing circumstances of the Dukedom, and was restricted to that particular realm. In using this argument, Luther tried to undermine Karlstadt's reasoning that the prohibition of images is just as valid as the first part of the initial commandment "you shall have no other God's before me." Luther argued that the word of God itself is time specific (Zeit-und Situationsgebunden [Stirm 50]). Therefore, God's prohibition of making images, i.e. the second part of the first commandment, was meant only for the Israelites because they were surrounded and threatened by pagan nations. Karlstadt was quick to point out the arbitrariness of Luther's time-specific view. In his treatise "Die Schwachen," Karlstadt asks how one is to know what part of the decalogue remains effective and he forbids that anyone "may judge [scripture] according to the good measure of his heart" (Sider 51). Luther also criticises Karlstadt's literal exposition of the biblical text regarding images, especially of the word "machen" which Luther subordinates to the word "anbeten" (to worship):"Denn dieser Spruch du sollst keine Göter haben ist ja der Hauptspruch. Darum muß das Wort "machen," "Bilder," "dienen" und was mehr folgt, ja nicht weiter zu verstehen sein, denn dass keine Göter und Abgötterei daraus werde" (SS XX,140).

The second important aspect of Luther's refutation is the consideration of the weak, for whose sake one should proceed slowly with the removal of images and the introduction of a reformed mass. Luther was concerned that a weak conscience might become ensnared

---

13 It should be pointed out that the way in which Luther describes the function and importance of the law specifically in his dispute with Karlstadt should not be taken as Luther's genuine view. It is a distorted perspective born out of the attempt to silence his opponent. In order to undermine Karlstadt's arguments from the Old Testament law, he had to lessen the importance of the law, especially the validity of the second commandment. A holistic assessment of Luther's writings attests to his Reformed view of the decalogue as a valid moral law.

14 Luther's Sachsenspiegel analogy should also be seen in the context of his natural theology where he makes the precarious proposal, that the mosaic law remains valid only as far as it is congruent with the natural law written on man's heart, which would also exclude the interdiction of images (SS XX, 153).
by the rash actions of the iconoclasts, if idols were removed before the superstitions in the heart. One should build up one's neighbour ("nach dem Nächsten sehen") rather than intimidate him by unwarranted proofs of freedom from images (SS XX, 10). Karlstadt responded in "Die Schwachen" by simply inverting Luther's argument, claiming that Christian charity may well serve as an excuse to allow abuses to continue ("Ärgernis und Liebe des Nächsten ist ein teuflischer Mantel der Bosheit"). Since the decalogue is binding as moral law, and the interdiction of images is part of that law, one cannot let consideration for one's neighbour interfere with Christian duty. Otherwise every moral commandment could be kept only when the weaker brother has learned to keep it, which would effectively prevent any reformation: "To be specific, I ask whether I should leave idols standing which God commands me to take away until all the weak follow in their removal? I ask further whether I may blaspheme God as long as the others do not cease blaspheming?" (Sider 53). Karlstadt then shows the need for the obedience which God's authority demands, by drawing an analogy to disobedient subjects of princes who are thrown into the tower for not obeying the law, and implies that God expects the same obedience to his commandments (Schwachen 256).

The debate between the two theologians was never brought to a conclusion since Luther, who managed to convince the authorities to expel the Zwickau Prophets from Wittenberg, exiled Karlstadt along with them. The conflict between Luther and Karlstadt was more than a simple clash between an antinomian and a theonomist. Both had convincing arguments. Luther displayed a tolerance and sense for order that was desperately needed because of the various sects which began to cause tumult all over Germany. Yet in his effort to refute Karlstadt's theology he manoeuvred himself into an

---

15Luther refers to Cor.9:19-23 in his first sermon SS.XX, 10. His following exegesis of the passage is very similar to his comments on eating meat on Friday which, like destroying images, might lead to a guilty conscience in a weak Christian and so turns freedom into bondage SS XX, 56). The reference here is most likely Rom 14:22-23, where Paul says "everything that does not come from faith is sin."
antinomian position. Furthermore, he failed to realize the potential threat images posed to lay persons due to the idolatrous inclination of man's nature, although he believed in human depravity (Bondage of the Will 41).

Karlstadt never objected to Luther's premise that preaching must precede the removal of images, but he advocated that the images and other Catholic superstitions must be removed to avoid possible relapses into heresy ("Die Schwachen" 65). On the other hand, Karlstadt's emphasis on the "Fruits of the Spirit" resulted in a legalistic tendency which, combined with his graphic language, helped to induce violent behaviour. Karlstadt should not be too severely judged. He did not once openly call his parishioners to violent action. To make his writings the cause of Wittenberg iconoclasm is just as wrong as to say that Luther's writing caused the peasant revolt in Germany. While the theologians wrote about things spiritual, the lay-people often mistakenly applied the same principles to temporal matters, largely because that was the way Roman Catholicism had trained their minds to think. Luther's intervention and his re-instituting of most of the Catholic liturgical forms and his consequent cautious proceeding with the implementation of innovations proved to be effective for the control of sectarians like the Zwickau prophets. Yet his personal conduct toward Karlstadt during and following the iconoclastic debate is questionable. If the famous encounter of the two Reformers at the "Black Bear" (Sider 48-48) has been passed down to us correctly, the final hostility and separation of the two Reformers seems to be just as much based on a personal dislike on Luther's part and a proclivity to vanity on that of Karlstadt as on a different image theology.

The dispute between Luther and Karlstadt demonstrates that theology rather than politics was the motivating force of iconoclasm. Politics and the social sphere, however, could not escape the outworking of theological conviction, because of the natural integration of theology and politics in Reformation times. Both men fought on the basis of differing expositions of the Decalogue and a diverging view of soteriology. Their motivation was primarily theological and as the further development of the debate will
show, this motivational pattern becomes a characteristic feature of iconcolastic thought. This is especially true of John Calvin and the Puritans, who adopted the French reformer's image theology.

2. The Dissemination of Karlstadt's Doctrine

From Germany, the phenomenon of iconoclasm spread southward to Switzerland. Zwingli had been led to embrace the leading principles of Protestantism and to preach them in 1516, almost a full year before the publication of Luther's Theses (Cunningham p.213). But the propagation of iconoclastic doctrine in Switzerland did not begin until Karlstadt's writings were published. Karlstadt's influence on Zürich iconoclasm has been conclusively established. 16 The first published treatise in Zürich, dealing exclusively with images, was based on Karlstadt's treatise "Von Abtuhung" and constitutes a major link in the chain of publications that lead to Zwingli's treatise against images incorporated in the "Answer to Valentin Compar." This tract written by Ludwig Haetzer was titled: "The Judgment of God Our Spouse as to How One Should Hold Oneself toward All Idols and Images." Haetzer's treatise contains several basic aspects of image worship which, once established, continued to be used as arguments against idolatry by Zwingli, Calvin and, later, the Puritans.

The main points of contention were: The identification of image worship with adultery; the impossibility of depicting the spiritual; consequently the inadequacy of pictures as books for the illiterate; the fact that obedience to God's commandments overrides any tolerance of pictures for the weak Christian's sake, and finally that a jealous God, demanding a pure worship might punish those who disobey the second commandment.

16 A detailed analysis of Ludwig Haetzer's and Zwingli's debt to Karlstadt is provided by Charles Garside jr. in "Haetzer's Pamphlet against images" Mennonite Quarterly Review, 33-34, (1959-60): 23.
Zwingli himself used Karlstadt's fifty-three theses "De cantu gregoriano" for his iconoclastic treatise incorporated in the larger work "Answer to Valentin Compar." Zwingli's adaptation of Karlstadt's arguments and the fact that Haetzer's iconoclasm is largely a rehash of "Von Abtuhung" shows the Swiss reformers' dependence on Karlstadt's earlier work. It can be said that Karlstadt is indeed the first German-speaking reformer to formulate the radical Reformed sacramentarian thought regarding the pictorial in religious worship.17 In addition to this direct influence, Karlstadt's earlier treatises on the subject of the "Lord's Supper" were widely distributed and eagerly read among the Swiss reformers. These treatises already contained the seed for his resolute stands against images, because as shall be seen at a later point, the bodily presence of Christ in the bread is closely linked to the image question. The distribution of these tracts is commonly attributed to Karlstadt's brother in law, Dr. Gerard Westerburg of Cologne, who had just witnessed the decisive encounter between Luther and Karlstadt in Jena. He travelled to Zürich with a view to establishing a common front against Luther and to publishing Bodenstein's sacramentarian tracts.18 Finally, Karlstadt himself, forced by Luther's actions to leave Orlamünde, went to Heidelberg, Strassburg, and Zürich, where he met almost exclusively with the more radical leaders of the Reformation, possibly because their attention gratified his vain desire for recognition (Müller 23).19

17 The term "radical" for the Zwinglian position on the sacraments is meant to distinguish it from Calvin's view. Zwingli reduced the sacraments to mere symbols of commemoration, whereas Calvin attributed to them intrinsic qualities through the operation of the Holy Spirit in the believing partaker and retained a mystical quality of the sacrament.

18 Karlstadt's seven tracts were: "Whether from the Holy Scripture it can be proved that Christ is in the Sacrament with body, blood and soul" (Basel 1524); Ob man gemach verfahren soll und die Schwachen mit Ärgernissen verschonen soll in Sachen so Gottes Wille angehen"; "Von dem wider christlichen Missbrauch des Herrn Brot und Kelch" (1524); Vom greulichen Mißbrauch des heiligen Abendmahls"; "Vom Priestertum und Opfer Christi"; "Von Anbetung und Ehrerbietung der Zeichen des Neuen Testaments"; "Von beiden Gestalten der heiligen Messe" (1521). In: The Radical Reformation (195).

19 The Swiss radical branch of the Reformation under the leadership of Conrad Grebel (also Simon Stumpf and Felix Mantz, Ludwig Haetzer), had first tried to establish a connection to Thomas Müntzer, with whose help they hoped to establish a unified Protestant Reformation which would supersede the -in their eyes- too hesitant and often erroneous efforts of Martin Luther. Failing to receive an answer from Müntzer, Conrad
The proliferation of Karlstadt's doctrines had a double impact on the Reformation, which unites the two opposing schools pertaining to the Orlamünder reformer. Barges' glorification of Karlstadt as well as Müller's cold denunciation of him as a seditious heretic both confirm his importance for the iconclastic movement. It is true that Karlstadt caused disunity in the Protestant camp through his battle with Luther and potentially weakened the success a unified Protestantism and a peaceful reformation might have had. On the other hand, his expulsion from Wittenberg carried the seed of iconclastic thought into Switzerland, where it bore fruit in the Reformed faction of the Reformation, culminating in the systematic iconclastic doctrine of John Calvin. The next important step towards the reconstruction of a purer worship was to be taken by the Swiss reformers Leo Jud and Ulrich Zwingli.

3. Karlstadt's Doctrine Refined

3.1. Zwingli And The Zürich Disputation

Karlstadt's treatise "Von Abtuhung" in many ways marks the beginning of the iconoclastic debate, because it contains most of the essential arguments in relatively crude terms. In a similar way, the second Zürich disputation contains in a nutshell the more refined Swiss Reformed position on images. This debate was one of three great disputation conducted in Zürich to examine the liturgical questions which Zwingli had raised. The outcome of the three disputations was the abolition of the Mass in Zürich, the interment of the relics of the saints, the removal of images, the smashing of the organ in the cathedral, permission to eat meat in Lent, and permission for the Priests to marry. As

Grebel turned to Karlstadt instead. The details of Grebel's attempt to win Münzer for a radical reformation and his hostility against Luther are found in William's The Radical Reformation chapter 5.2.5 "Eucharistic Controversy" (181-193).
Bainton notes, the reforming efforts of Zwingli are very similar to Karlstadt's and show the association of three major issues: "no images, no music, no physical partaking of God, who must be worshipped in spirit" (Baiton 86). Thus the seemingly separate issues of the Eucharist, images and the use of instrumental music in worship are inextricably interwoven.

The second Zürich disputation took place from October 26 to 28 in 1523 and contains basically the same arguments which Karlstadt had already mentioned in his "Von Abtuhung." However, the second disputation contains a few interesting variations partly because Ludwig Haetzer's booklet on iconoclasm had sold very well and borne much fruit. Images and idols lost much of the respect and adoration they had enjoyed earlier. This fact was demonstrated by the cause for the Zürich debate. The reason for the debate was the theft of a large and valuable wooden cross which belonged to the miller in Stadthofen. Proclaiming that their action was justified by the biblical prohibition of images, the culprits wanted to sell the crucifix and give the proceeds to the poor. The small council considered this deed sacrilege, arrested the two thieves, and sentenced them to death. Most members of the council, despite their inclination to the Protestant doctrine, still cherished images. But some representatives stated that, although the theft itself should certainly be punished, the principle of iconoclasm was laudable. Therefore the criminals should only be penalized "bürgerlich" but not "peinlich," i.e. not with the death penalty (Reformationsgeschichte Bullinger 1, 127). Because a unanimous decision could not be reached, the matter was then transferred to the great council, which was well-disposed toward the "new" doctrines of Zwingli. This council then ordered the disputation, and requested it be conducted on the sole basis of the scriptures, a requirement which was strictly observed. In fact, the environment in the council was so thoroughly Protestant that when the Catholic priest

---

20Ludwig Haetzer also compiled, edited and published the records of this disputation in December 1523. Zwingli's "Kurze Christliche Einleitung" had already been published on November 17th, and distributed to all priests and pastors with the admonition that the Bible is to be read concerning these things and that disobedience of this order was to be punished (ZW 668).
Heinrich Lüti affirmed: "Alles was der Papst ordnet, macht und setzt, das is recht und mag nit fälen," Leo Jud felt confident enough to interrupt him with laughter (Akten in ZW 2, 697). Regarding the thieves, a compromise was struck and the death penalty was converted into banishment from the country.

The documents of the disputation show that Ulrich Zwingli is the direct heir of Karlstadt's antipathy to the Roman Catholic Eucharist. Like Karlstadt, Zwingli also moves from attacking the mass as idolatry to the interdiction of image worship. Like Karlstadt before him, Zwingli regards the Roman Catholic celebration of the Eucharist as one of the most blatant and blasphemous idolatries. The Catholic priest turns the bread with the Latin dictum "Hoc est meum corpus" into the actual flesh and blood of Christ, giving the clergyman a mediatorial position within the worship context since the meaningfulness and "effectiveness" of the Eucharist depends not on God, but on the act of transubstantiation performed by the priest. Zwingli's attack on the idolatry of the mass as he perceived it was therefore twofold. He not only criticized the fact that an object made of ordinary dough kneaded by man's hands should become God, but also that a holy and sovereign God should be subject to his creature's commands, by obediently entering into the bread at the words of the priest. The aspect of the sovereignty of God Zwingli employs against the Eucharist was to become an important argument of the Reformed theologians against images. They contested that pictures allowed man to choose the time, place and - most importantly - the form for his communication with God, which subjects Him to man's will.

The records of the disputation also indicate why in all probability the progress of iconoclasm in the reforming Swiss cantons was more effective and orderly than in Germany. The federal system then already in place in Switzerland called for disputations of new political and ecclesiastical laws, which were then either accepted or rejected by the votes of the councils. The changes in the liturgy were therefore much more thoroughly discussed and the weakness of the Catholic argument in favour of images was more publicly displayed than in Germany. There seems to have been a greater sense of order and submission to the
authorities since the cantons and cities were already ruled by councils and not by a duke or king, against whose final word the German governing bodies did not have much power. If Luther and Karlstadt would have had to debate their opinions before a council rather than before congregations and university assemblies, it might well have changed the face of the Reformation in Germany. Luther might have seen that Karlstadt's opinions (at that time) were less radical than those of the "Schwärmer" he was unhappily associated with. Furthermore, Luther could not have held such an advantageous position. His influence on the elector Frederick contributed much to the silencing and exiling of Karlstadt, whereas a more democratic vote on Karlstadt's fate might have allowed him to remain in Orlamünde.

While at this point in the Reformation Zwingli was mostly concerned with the abolition of the mass, his friend and colleague Leo Jud spoke mostly on the image question during the disputation. Leo Jud's introduction constitutes the typical Reformed position on the law in respect to icons and images. His argument simultaneously affirms the importance of the decalogue and denies the validity of ceremonial Jewish law for the Christian church. According to Jud, the ceremonial law of the Old Testament church with all its ornaments, the ark of the covenant, and the liturgy of the temple worship were shadows of God's grace which, just as the brass serpent and other signs, pointed toward the coming of the ultimate sacrifice, the messiah Jesus Christ. With his death and resurrection, however, the signs and pointers had become obsolete and a return to them would constitute a willful disregard for Christ's sacrifice. Jud followed this cogent argument up with one of the most impressive statements against pictures and for the spiritualization of worship in German reformation literature: "dann alles unser anbetten sol geschehen in dem geyst und in der warheit [Jo.4.24]. Wo der geyst ist, da falt hin alle bildnus; dann das fleisch ist nut nütz, der geyst

---

21Das gott eerinen schlangen hat heyssen auffrichten ist ein figur und schatten des alten testaments, und bedeutet die erhöhung unseres erlösers Jesu Christi am crütz, als der herr selbs anzucht und erklärt Joh.3.17). ...So nun die wahrheit hie ist, so bedörfftend wir der figur nit mehr; sodas liecht uffgat, verschwinden alle schatten undfinsternus. Darum folgt nit us dem das uns Christus gezimme die bildnus des crützes odeer des gekrützigeten herren Jesu zu haben;" (ZW 2 696).
aber macht lebendig” (ZW 2 696). This important premise also determined Jud’s answer to the Catholic representative Heinrich Lüty’s objection that, although it may be granted that God himself cannot be pictured, the incarnation of God, Jesus Christ, may well be portrayed and used for contemplation.22 Jud retorted that not only should we worship Christ in the spirit, since his body had been withdrawn into heaven, but that the very fact of Christ’s presence in heaven in combination with the second commandment makes a picture of him unlawful. Because if the interdiction of images in the first commandment23 included pictures of anything in heaven, and if Christ was indeed physically in heaven, then he must not be portrayed in a picture (Ihr hörend, das die wort gottes klar und heyter sagend, das wir weder dern dingen, so im himmel...bildung oder abcontrafeying machen söllend [2.Moses 20:4]. Ist nun Christus im himmel-das ich wol gloub-, so hat er ye verbotten, das man inn nit abbilden sölle. Ist das nit klar gnug?” (ZW 2 679)24. The legality of picturing Christ, because he is a fleshly manifestation of God, will also reappear in the Puritan discourse about images.

Shortly after the disputation, Huldrych Zwingli himself wrote several treatises against the idolatry of the mass. In "Eine kurze christliche Einleitung," a brief summary of the Christian faith he had prepared for distribution after the second Zürich disputation, Zwingli dealt for the first time in a systematic way with the issue of images. The order of

22Lüty: Ja ich weyß wohl der gotheit halb sol man inn nit abmalen. Es ist aber nit verbotten, Christum, so fern er ein mensch ist, abzubilden. Ich wyß sust wohl, das got niemmant gesehen hat...Da aber alles allein uff die luter (reine) gotheit reicht (ZW 2 697).

23At this time, Zwingli and Jud had not isolated the interdiction of images as a separate commandment. Zwingli’s exegesis of the first commandment shows, however, that he regarded the interdiction as the second part of a twofold division under the umbrella of one commandment which he saw as a warning against the two main reasons for idolatrous worship: "Sich, das ist das erst gebott, darinn sich gott harfür stelt für unseren got. letz verhiit er die diing, die uns möchtind von ihm abführen...Also, das ist ien stick, das uns von got ziehen mag: frembde göt. Das ander stuck, das uns abfuhen mag, sind bilder” (ZW 2 657).

24The arguments against a picture of Christ and against his bodily presence are closely connected. Jud states here that because Christ’s body is in heaven, he may not be pictured, and Zwingli’s main argument against transubstantiation is the fact that since Christ’s body is in heaven he cannot be bodily present in the bread at the same time.
topics in this Christian manual reflects the intertwining of iconoclasm with other important theological issues. The chapter on images is preceded by one against the abolishment of the law and followed by a section on the mass. Zwingli's and Karlstadt's view of iconoclasm is largely dependent on the continuing validity of the law as an important rule of conduct. And since the ten commandments mention explicitly the interdiction of images, the decalogue provides the main pillar of support for their stands. Naturally, an iconoclastic theology based on that interdiction necessarily has effects on the liturgy of the mass.

Zwingli's treatise also introduces an Erasmian and typically humanistic approach to the hermeneutics of iconoclasm. An example of this approach is the way he bases his refutation of images on a proper translation of the Greek text in the "Christliche Einleitung":


Another example of the new humanist scholarship, which demanded a return to the original languages in the biblical text, is the encounter between Zwingli and Hans Widmer. Widmer represents the traditional Catholic view that the Vulgate translation is inspired scripture itself. The occasion of the verbal duel between Widmer and Zwingli was the close connection which image worship has to the monetary fraud of some of the Roman Catholic

25Original: Da man aber einredet, die bild sygind uns im niuen testament nit verboten, ist ouchletz; denn wo man findet im niuen testament "idolum" oder "simulachrum, da sollt man im tutsch lesen: bilder oder glichehns. Laß sich hie niemand irren, ob er in dem niuwich uBgangenen niuen testament an den vorgezeygten orten findet dis wort "abgöt" oder "frümbe gött"; es sollt all weg darfür ston 'bilder' oder 'glichehns.' 'Idolon,' hemoeon [!]' spricht Hesichius 'ist den latinen simulachrum,'tüücs: ein bild oder glichehnus. letz bsich und andre ort und lug demnach, ob die bild och im niuen testament verbotten sygind oder nit. Act.15 ist ein bericht der Christen zu Herusulem, das sich die Christen sollind hüten vor vermaßung der bilden.
churches that took money for the alleged miracles worked by relics and statues of saints. The Catholic chaplain Hans Widmer tried to defend the practice of praying to the saints as biblical: "Laudate dominum in sanctis eius, lobend got in sinen heiligen." But Zwingli quickly pointed out to his opponent that the correct translation from the Hebrew word "bökodscho" was not "sanctis," but the accusative object "sancto," which then translates as "in sinem heyligen ort, da dann got wonte, und nit bökadeschau" (ZW vol.2 713).

Zwingli, like Karlstadt, rejects Luther's argument that the interdiction of images was only binding for the Israelites in the Old Testament, and cannot be applied to the apostolic church. Zwingli reminds his reader that the Christian has the same weak human nature as the Israelites and therefore is just as prone to be led away from God by images as the Jews had been (655). He also dismisses the excuse that pictures in the church are merely to serve as reminders, which are not prayed to (Und da man spricht "Ich bett sy nit an; sy lerend mich und manend", das ist alles eine fabel" 656). According to Zwingli, the main contention is not the praying to images as actual living beings. No intelligent person would mistake a piece of wood for an actual angel or saint. But like Karlstadt before him, Zwingli stresses the importance of outward obedience to God's command not to show any sign of respect to these statues. "Er verbület aber hie alle eere, also, das man vor inen nitt nigen [sich verneigen], biegen [verbeugen] knüwen, zünden [Kerzen anzünden] noch reucken [reuchern /to burn incense] soll." Zwingli's rejection of praying to the saints is also worth mentioning because of the way he uses the word "paint" in this context. He says that we are not to emulate the saints themselves, which one could well paint or erect as statues for that

---

That Zwingli was indeed rhetorically very apt and witty in his remarks is also shown by the following incident: Hans Widmer again stated that the adoration of saints is allowed if they are honored as the parts of the body of Christ ("die glider Christ"(713). And their pictures are also allowed since their presence induces contemplation ("objecta movent sensus"). Zwingli very briefly replied that first of all the chaplain should not offer the council his opinion, but only the truth of scripture where images are explicitly forbidden. Furthermore, do we not need the saints as examples (Vorbilder; whereby in this connection Zwingli probably intentionally used the pun contained in the expression Vorbilder in connection with the images of the saints), since Christ is the only perfect example we should emulate.
purpose, but rather their faith and trust in God. Statues and paintings only allow us to see
the outward deeds and actions of the saints, but their strength, their faith, cannot be
expressed pictorially. Faith has to be "painted" (gemalt) on the heart, and that can only be
done through the study of scripture. In contrast to Karlstadt, Zwingli permits historical
paintings and gospel stories in private homes, as well as ornaments in the church. This
toleration is characteristic for the Reformed view on pictures. After all, it was Karlstadt's
radical rejection of all pictures which allowed Luther to remark cynically that if his
opponents condemned pictures, they would also have to condemn his Bible, which after all
was illustrated with pictures from Lukas Cranach. Luther was unable to differentiate in this
respect and categorically grouped everybody who spoke against pictures with his radical
opponents, or "Schwärmer," as he called them.

Zwingli's most lucid treatise against images is incorporated in his "Answer to
Valentin Compar." Compar, the land secretary of the Canton Uri, sent a letter to Zwingli in
late 1524 or early 1525 (K.D. Kluser, 38), criticising the reformer's theology and
iconoclasm. Zwingli's "Answer" reveals how much of his image theology rests on a
scriptural basis of a man-God relationship. He defines anything as "strange god" (abgot)
that diverts the believer's attention from God, including pictures, images and relics. Any
substitute for God, whatever it may be, is an idol which needs to be cast down. Idolatry is
for Zwingli as much a psychological process as it is the outward recognition of saints or

27Dazu so wir sprechend: "der heyligen bilder zeygend uns an, was sy gethon und gelitten ahbend, das wir
ouch thugend ". Jie sol man uns fragen, wenn doch unser weck gerecht sye. Müssend wir ie sprechen: So
es im glouben, derouch die liebe gottes ist, bescheid, so gevallend sy got 1.Cor.13. Wyter fragt man uns:
UB was grund hand die heilgen sóéchs geton? Werden wir sprechen: UB warem glouben. Jetz sol man uns
zeygen, wo man ihren glouben *gemalet oder gebildet hab*, so können wir inn nit zeigen denn in iren
hertzen. So muß ie volgen, daß ouch wir lernen mussend den glouben notwendig in unseren hertzen sin,
wellind wir útzid gotseveelligs thun den mögen wir ab den wänden nit erlernen, sunder wir müссend inn
allein von dem genädigen ziehen gottes us sienem eigenen Wort lernen. Sich, hie erfindend wir, das uns die
bild nun an usswendige blöheit führend, und mögend das hertz nit glöubig machen. Also sehend wir wohl
usserlich, was die heiligen geton habit; aber den glouben darous alle ding besehen mussend, mögend uns
die bild nit machen. So wir nun den glouben luter (rein) und unbefleckt haben, sich, so werdent wir unser
selfbspoten, das wir so einen unwissenden, blöden glouben hand gehebt, das wir gwennet, sy man manind
uns so es doch alles ytel is on den glouben.
relics. He speaks of "inward idols" (inneren götzen), by which he means anything that replaces God in a person's thought as the only object of faith (ZW 2, 710,7). The fault lies not in the statues or pictures, but like Luther (and one may add Karlstadt), Zwingli locates the evil of idolatry in man's heart. He says about St. Christopherus, for example, that "I do not mean that he is an idol, but that you are allotting to him that which is God's alone" ZW 4, 99, 26-28). It is man who seeks to gain protection from someone else than God. This process leads to increasing dependence on the idol until the idolater has to give it some shape and form. Zwingli says that "by nature man falls upon these things which are placed in the realm of the senses (ZW 92, 15-16)." Zwingli holds the view that every man is by nature idolatrous, a flaw which makes an ideal state of pure worship impossible. The internal "Abgöterei" therefore, is an unsolvable problem, but outward images can and should be dealt with, since they are "spiritually seductive" and may entice to idolatry.

Zwingli did encounter some resistance to his urgent appeal for an immediate, albeit orderly removal of images in Zürich. His close friend Konradt Schmidt28 first confirmed in a very moving speech the danger of misdirected faith, namely faith in a distorted picture of Christ in man's heart: "Dann, so die menschen in irem hertzen Christum Jesum anders bildend unnd im ein andere gestalt machend dann uns denselbigen das götlich wort fürmalet, ist es ein grosse abgötery, daß man uß gott einen abgot machet" (Zw 2, 702). A false picture of Christ, meaning a false theology and perception of him, then induces the people to run to the saints and images to seek what Christ is incapable of or unwilling to do.

According to Schmidt, image worship changes the almighty Christ into "ein ungenugsam, onmechtig und eyn unwillig bild [picture]. The result is that, although image worshippers

---
28Konrad Schmid, born c.1476 at Küssnacht, Ct. Zürich as son of a wealthy peasant. He studied at Basel and obtained masters of philosophy and B.A. in theology. In 1519 he became a member of the Johaniter monastery in Küssnacht and later became a pastor in that parish. He joined the reform movement under Zwingli quite early and defended his doctrine publicly for the first time in a sermon during the "Kreuzgang" in Lucerne in 1522. He was present at almost all important confrontations and disputations Zwingli was involved in against the Catholics and Anabaptists. He also fought in both the Cappler wars and died on the battlefield during the second battle of October 11, 1531.
claim to revere God, they have actually turned him into an idol "und machen also uß dem waren got eynen waren abgot." Schmidt clearly states that whether or not idolatry takes place is dependent on the correct "picture" of Christ in one's heart. This argument may help to solve an apparent inconsistency in the reformers' approach to the subject of iconoclasm. On the one hand, the reformers and later the Puritans condemned pictures and allegories, and yet on the other hand, they used them whenever they could to illustrate their teachings.

The English historian and literary critic Sir John Seeley, for example, in his criticism of *Paradise Lost*, accuses John Milton of condemning sensuous worship while at the same time having a mind "inveterátely plastic and creative" and being unable to think even on religious subjects, "without forms distinctly conceived." Seeley criticizes the apparent hypocrisy that the "iconoclast is at the same time an idolater" (Dowden 176). But as Konrad Schmidt states here and John Bunyan writes in his "Apology," it depends on the right kind of analogies and pictures being used (Bunyan vol.3, 85). If based on the right doctrine and biblical concept of God and his redemptive plan (what Schmidt calls "das war bild Christi im hertzen" 706), then illustrations can be eminently helpful. Unlike Karlstadt then, who regards pictures as absolutely antithetical to the word of God, the Swiss Reformed agree with Luther that pictures, as long as they are rooted in God's word, may be used in evangelism. Also unlike Karlstadt, Konradt Schmidt urges the council to wait with the implementation of iconoclasm until the greatest part of the Swiss population has been converted to the Protestant faith. Like Luther, Schmidt has complete trust in the word. Interestingly, he, like Zwingli earlier, also uses the image of God's word painting a right picture on the individual's heart to illustrate his point: "Nun das götlich wort malet und schreipt uns den [Christus] vor als einigen mittler und erlöser...So man aber hie von der abthuung der bilden handeln wil, ist min radt, daß besser sye, die erst und gröste abgötterey und schädlichen hild im hertzen,...werde zuvor abgethun uß dem hertzen, ee [bevor] und man dieussere [äußerén] bilder abthyge [abschaffe], an denen die menschen noch hangend."

The second half of the quote proves Schmidt's concurrence with Luther's view that
preaching as a means for the destruction of inner idolatry would precede external
iconoclasm. Zwingli also shared his colleague Schmidt's concern for the immature Christian
when he conceded that one should not deprive the lame of his crutch without providing a
new one, or he would fall to the ground ("Man sol ie dem schwachen sinen stab daran er
sich hept [hält] nit uß der hand ryssen, man gebe im dann ein anderen, oder man fellet inn
gar ze boden" 704).

However, although Zwingli agrees in principle with this Lutheran argument and
appreciates his colleague's concern for the weak, he also reminds the council that the
seductive impact of these images can affect even the mature Christian and one should not
wait too long with orderly iconoclasm unless many people relapse into their old idolatrous
habits. Zwingli realizes that part of the problem was the popular belief that any item which
is contained in a church building is more sacred than the same item would be in a private
home, and that often some mediatory purpose is ascribed to pictures or statues simply
because of their location in the church. Physical setting (Standort) and a wrong piety
(Haltung des Betrachters) are thus the two important reasons for the popularity of external
image worship (Stirm 147). Zwingli also builds his appeal for immediate removal of images
on his view of government. He states that, if the Protestants were only a small minority in a
heathen country, they could not possibly demand of the ruler to abolish his idols ("Also, so
wir hie under den Heyden wärind, so mußtend wir sy ouch lyden"). He alludes to the folly
of the crusades where the Christians forced the Turks to abolish their idols ("warum wolt
ich dem Türggen sine bild umbwerffen?" 708). But in Switzerland, the whole population is
Christian in the sense that they all share one common church history. And no Christian
ruler or nation should erect idols. As far as the weak are concerned, Zwingli differentiates
further than his colleague between those who are indeed weak Christians and those who are
completely indifferent to the faith: "Es sind zweierly ergernus. Etlich verergrend sich nit,
das sy kranck und schwach im glouben sygend, sunder das sy gar gotlos sind. Das is nit
infirmitas, ja es ist ein rechte, ware malignitas; dann sy gloubend gar nit.-Etliche sind
Zwingli urges that, in any case, the striving for a nation's collective obedience to God's law is more important than to wait until even the last person of the nation has been converted and images have been cut away from his heart:

Sölte man mit den götzen warten, bis das sich gar niemant mehr-wie üwer meinung ist- darüber verergete, so geschähe dem gebott gottes in ewigkeit nit gnug, damit er die götzen heißt hyn und abweg thun. Derglychen, sölte ma die usseren götzen nit abweg thun, bis das die inneren götzen der anfechtung abgethon wärind, so keme es niemar [käme es niemals] darzu, das man die bild abthäte; denn wir werdend von den sünlichen anfechtungen nimmer ledig oder frei (ZW vol.2. 707).

As already mentioned, this last conviction, that man will never be completely free from the influence of sin, provides Zwingli's main reason to abolish idols, because they will always pose a threat and snare even to the strongest Christian. Luther, on the other hand (probably due to his salvation experience which he regarded as liberation from the bondage of the law and righteousness of works), sometimes went too far in condemning Old Testament practices, so that in the case of idolatry he did not accept the validity of the Reformed argument of giving obedience to God priority over the consideration for the spiritually weak. In other words, despite his understanding of the law as the pointer to Christ, Luther could never understand the Reformed view that, although the Old Testament was indeed partly abolished by the New, it was to a greater extent also fulfilled and therefore subsumed in the New Testament as well.

3.2.Bullinger's Decades

The next important link in the development of image theology, which culminated in Calvin's systematic approach, was Zwingli's successor Heinrich Bullinger (1504-75). This Protestant reformer was an important link between the continental and the English
Reformers. With Zwingli's death on the battlefield at Cappel, the Swiss Reformation had lost its most prominent ecclesiastical leader and theologian. Bullinger was chosen as his successor, and he was one of the Reformers who travelled to England in response to King Henry's appeal for advice concerning his divorce from Catherine and his separation from the Pope. Bullinger was one of the most effective instruments of teaching Protestant Reformed thought to English divines (D'Aubigne vol. 2 355-57). The publication of most interest for this paper are his *Decades* (1549), which were mandatory reading under the Edwardian Reformation along with the Homilies and Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. The main innovation in comparison to Zwingli is that Bullinger clearly presents the interdiction of images as a separate command, whereas Zwingli had still used it as part of the first commandment. Bullinger's exegesis already anticipates the later Calvinistic and then typically Puritan division into internal and external worship. Thomas Boston defines the concept this way: "As the first command fixeth the object of worship, so [the second commandment] fixes the means and ways of worship" (Boston vol.2 127). Bullinger already uses this division by expressing the first and second commandment as a description of inward and outward worship respectively: "In the first commandment the Lord did teach and draw out before us the pattern of his inward worship and religion; now here, in the second, he amendeth that which might be amiss in the outward rites and ceremonies" (Bullinger Vol.1-2 22).

Bullinger, like Zwingli and Calvin, declares the addictive nature of idolatry and combines this compulsion with the effect image worshipping has on the monetary policies of the church as it inflates the ecclesiastical bureaucracy: "after images are once received, there is no end or measure of expenses and toil. This doth experience teach to be true." One of

---

29 Henry Bullinger and Thomas Cranmer had become acquainted as early as 1531. In 1536 several young Englishmen (John Butler, Nicholas Partridge, Bartholomew Traheron, Nicholas Eliot) sat under Bullinger's teaching in Zürich and were later also instructed by Calvin in Geneva.

30 A more comprehensive comment concerning image economy is: "For wheresoever an idol is, there must the idolaters set him up an altar, and build him a temple. And all these again require keepers and
Bullinger's most impressive passages is an exhaustive explanation as to why "God will not be likened to anything" (224). He answers this question by contrasting God's presence and spiritual power with the helplessness of the idols. He calls attention to the fact that God the originator and preserver of all life cannot possibly be contained in, or reached through, inanimate pieces of wood ("An idol breatheth not; God giveth to other a breathing spirit. How then and wherein are the twain alike?" [225]). To Bullinger, the very designation of a picture as an image of God is not only inappropriate, but constitutes an actual insult to the deity. Bullinger tries to explain the seriousness of this insult by referring to the German insult "Ölgötze", which means literally "painted images: Among us, he that calleth another an idol or image, doth seem to have spoken in reproach of the other: For we know that idols are counterfeits of men and not men indeed; and therefore do we call him an image, that is a sot, a fool, a dolt, an idiot, and one that hath no wit, nor knoweth any more than he heareth of other. Why then henceforward should we any more call images the likeness of God? (225)"

Bullinger holds that even the signs of God's presence given to the Old Testament church were not in any way meant to resemble God, but were signifiers of the immanence of his presence, rather than the likeness of that presence. The signs were actually meant to direct man's attention to the spiritual rather than elevate the sign to an object of worship. Thus the ark of the covenant, for example, was constructed in such a way that the carved cherubim covered it with their wings, "signifying thereby that no mortal man could look God in the face"(226).

Another important aspect of Bullinger's thought is his dimensional concept. Throughout the eighth sermon of the Decades, which deals with the Apostle's Creed, the Swiss Reformer warns of attributing human conceptions and dimensions of space and time to biblical statements such as "He sitteth at the right hand of the Father" (150). To picture overseers, ministers or priests, sacrifices and offerings, ceremonies, furnitures, holy-days, cost and labour that will never be ended" (223).
God mentally as an old man with "bent hams," Bullinger says, is to repeat the blasphemy of
the anthropomorphites. In the same way, to be next to God or to "depart far from him is
not to be understood according to the distance of places" (149), but as the state of the soul
before God. By undermining the space-time concepts then prevalent in the Roman Catholic
exegesis, Bullinger effectively destroys the basis for the cults of saints, relics and image
worship. His concepts of space and time are based on Zwingli's arguments against the
bodily presence of Christ in the bread and logically lead to a denial of an image or picture of
Christ: "Furthermore, for Christ our Lord and very God, though he have taken on him the
nature of us men, yet, that notwithstanding, there ought no image to be erected"(230).
Bullinger argues that since Christ "drew up his humanity into heaven," the attention of the
worshipper is to be directed towards heaven, a location which the Reformers did not
understand to be the actual firmament, but merely a term for the place where Christ dwells
with the rest of the trinity ("that so often as we pray, we should lift up the eyes of our minds
and bodies into heaven above" 230). Bullinger also argues that the sending of the Holy
Spirit as a comforter points to the erection of a spiritual kingdom which abrogated the
pedaic time of Christ, because he no longer instructs in the flesh but through his spirit.
Thus communication with God should be conducted spiritually and not through pictures.
Bullinger's last argument against a picture of Christ anticipates Thomas Watson's clear
denial of a picture of Christ for the same reason. Since Christ is God as well as man, and
God cannot and may not be portrayed, a picture of Christ violates the second
commandment. Watson puts it like this: "It is Christ's Godhead, united to his manhood,
that makes him to be Christ; therefore to picture his manhood, when we cannot picture his
Godhead, is a sin, because we make him to be but half Christ--we separate what God has
joined, we leave out that which is the chief thing which makes him the Christ" (Watson, 62).
3.3. Luther And The Exodus Allegory

The last important aspect for our discussion is Bullinger's understanding of the law. He employs the allegorical interpretation of ancient Israel's liberation from Egypt as the Christian conversion through which the believer is liberated from the bondage of sin: "For it is evident that the Israelite's free departure out of Egypt, was a type or figure of the delivery of the whole compass of the earth, and of all the kingdoms of the world, which should be brought by Christ our Lord, who hath now already set all the world free from the bondage of sin and hell" (219). The importance of this particular allegory necessitates a second and closer look at Luther's relationship to the allegorical interpretation of Old Testament history, because in contrast to the Reformed theologians, as the Reformation historian Margarete Stirm asserts, Luther rejected the allegorical comparison which Bullinger so readily espouses (Stirm 50). Luther's personal salvation experience is characterized by the opposition of law and grace. His understanding of God's holiness and his own inability to keep the requirements of God's law enhanced the joy of his liberation when he believed in justication through grace by faith alone (Bainton 25-27). But he also had a very difficult time with anything that seemed to infringe upon Christian liberty, especially anything which was derived from the old Jewish religion. One may even say that Luther was in some ways a dispensationalist and to some extent incapable of arriving at a holistic view of the Bible, as Calvin later did, because he did not recognize the grace of God in the Old Testament.

31 Bullinger justifies his view by stating: "But if any man doubt this, let him diligently consider with himself the meaning of the ceremony and sacrament of that bodily deliverance, I mean, the very Passover. For what is he that knoweth not that the paschal lamb did in figure represent Christ our Redeemer? Are Paul's words unknown who says: 'Christ our Passover is offered up?' The words of the prophet Esay also, in his fifty-second chapter, are apparently known; where he compareth the delivery of Israel out of Egypt with the a redemption of all the world wrought by Christ from the slavery of sin" (219).

32 For a detailed comparison between the Luther's and Zwingli's relationship to the law and Grace see Gottfried W. Locher's Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981. Chapter eight; "The Characteristic Features of Zwingli's Theology in Comparison with Luther and Calvin" (142-232).
Therefore Luther rejects any looking back to the events of ancient Israel. He speaks of a sign or symbol (Zeichen) by which the believer may remember, approach, and worship God. There is a different sign for the Jews than for the Gentiles. The Jew's sign (Das Zeychen da bey [wobei, wodurch] die Juden Gott ergreiffen sollen) is the opening of the 10 commandments: "I am the Lord your God who has led you out of Egypt." This sign ties the Jews to the mosaic law. Luther's view on the law is not entirely clear, but he sometimes does seem to imply that the Jews could somehow, through the prescribed sacrifices, attain pardon for his sins. In contrast, the Reformed teaching holds that the Old Testament saints were saved by looking forward in time and placing their trust in the Messiah who was to come while the Christian has the privilege of assurance of his coming. But Luther does not see this connection and differentiates between the Jewish and Christian dispensation by giving the Christian a different sign by which to grasp or rather worship God, namely the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ: "Ja sie (die Christen) haben auch ihr eygen Zeychen und Wort, nemlich das: O Gott, ein Schepffer hymels und der Erden, der du deinen Son Jhesum Christum für mich ynn di Welt gesand hast, das er für mich gekreuzigt würde, stürbe und am dritten Tag wieder auferstinde... "(KG 425 1.21-25). The Reformed theologians, however, had a much more unified view of the Old and New Testament, and regarded the Egypt allegory as ultimately biblical. In order not to digress too much on this allegorical aspect of the iconoclastic debate I will discuss the details of this analogy in a later chapter and for now follow the development of Karlstadt's teachings.

The Swiss reformers did not merely adopt Karlstadt's arguments, but refined them. Zwingli's method of interpreting scripture through scripture in the original languages gave him a great advantage over his Catholic opponents, who argued mainly from tradition.

Unfortunately there is no room within this paper to explore a possible connection between Luther's anti-Semitism and his rejection of the Old Testament law. One has to be extremely careful not to establish such a link rashly, because the rejection of many of the Jewish Ceremonies has a mere theological basis and has no connection to any racial bias against Israel. In fact, according to most of the Reformed writings, every Christian is a Jew by adoption and should consider it a privilege to share in the spiritual promises of the Israelites.
Moreover, as the records of the Zürich disputation show, most of the Catholics' understanding of the biblical text was not contextual but limited to selective reading. Zwingli and Bullinger strengthened the validity of the Old Testamental interdiction of images, based mainly on man's sinful nature, and advocated the immediate removal of images, albeit in a less radical manner than Karlstadt. The next and most decisive step towards a succinct and definite image theology was taken by a French Reformer, whose concepts form the basis of the Puritan perspective on images and pictures in worship.

4. John Calvin and the Hermeneutics of Synecdoche

Earlier we saw that Karlstadt's arguments against pictures and images had been adopted, refined, and passed on from Haetzer, through Leo Jud and Zwingli to Heinrich Bullinger. The arguments have, with a few alterations, remained the same. The impossibility of picturing the spiritual, the obedience to the second commandment (whether or not it was recognized as such is of lesser importance), the natural proclivity of man to idolatry, and image worship as spiritual adultery, still form the essential arguments against image worship. But with the appearance of John Calvin on the stage of the iconoclastic drama, a profound change took place in the argument against images; a change which to a great extent shaped the arguments and literary form of the English Puritans against the Roman Catholic doctrine in general, and the issue of image worship in particular. This change was Calvin's concept of synecdoche, a hermeneutical concept which has been mentioned (Stirm 169-170) but to my knowledge has not been given the attention it deserves. Calvin's' synecdochal reading of the decalogue added greater weight to the seriousness of spiritual adultery, and increased the guilt incurred by a trespass, since it showed the Christian the full extent of the law's meaning. Calvin's hermeneutics not only intensified the interdiction of images, but also stressed the psychological, subjective aspect of image worship. Since a synecdochical reading widened the scope of the interdiction, the
worshipper now had to engage in a self-examination to determine whether or not he was about to commit idolatry.

Synecehoche is a figure of speech in which a part signifies the whole, or the whole signifies the part (Holman 497). In Calvin's case it is the former principle which is employed in the reading of the law. Calvin does not impose this trope on the biblical text, but rather explains it as an already existent biblical principle, which is God's pedagogical device to reveal to the Christian the full extent of his commandments. Calvin begins his analysis of the decalogue by saying that "the commandments and prohibitions always contain more than is expressed in words" (Inst.II.viii.8). Luther had already said the same when he opposed Karlstadt's too literal reading of the text and suggested that often the contextual meaning (Wortsinn) of a passage rather than its literal (Wortlaut) reading renders the true meaning of God's teaching. Calvin expresses the same idea when he says:

> Obviously, in almost all the commandments there are such manifest synecdoches, that he who would confine his understanding of the law within the narrowness of the words deserves to be laughed at. Therefore, plainly a sober interpretation of the law goes beyond the words; but just how far remains obscure unless some measure be set (Inst.II.viii.8).

That measure, as Calvin clearly realizes, is the problem of this hermeneutical approach; "we ought to temper this principle that it may not be for us like a lesbian rule, on which we rely to twist scripture without restraint, thus making anything we please out of anything" (ibid). Unlike a contemporary deconstructionist textual interpretation, Calvin always believed the Bible to be an objective and truthful revelation of God so that the reader could be led by the Holy spirit "with firm steps to the will of God." But how far may interpretation overstep the limits of the words themselves, so that it "may seen to be not an appendix added to the divine law from men's glosses, but the lawgiver's pure and authentic meaning faithfully rendered?" (ibid). Calvin's solution is a common-sense approach. One has to determine
the main reason of the commandment or, as Calvin puts it "ponder why it was given to us."

Calvin's language is so clear that it is best to let him illustrate his own method:

The intent of the first commandment is that God alone be worshipped. Therefore the substance of the precept will be that true piety - namely the worship of his divinity - is pleasing to God; and that he abominates impiety. 

1]Thus each commandment we must investigate what it is concerned with; [2]then we must seek out its purpose, until we find what the Lawgiver testifies there to be pleasing or displeasing to himself. [3] Finally from this same thing we must derive an argument on the other side in this manner: If this pleases God, the opposite displeases him; if he commands this, he forbids the opposite (II.viii.8).

Calvin extends this three-step approach even further. He takes it for granted that concern for the opposite of the command is also imperative, "for by the virtue contrary to vice, men usually abstain from vice." But then he adds, "We say that the virtue goes beyond this to contrary duty and deeds." Applied to the sixth commandment Calvin's exegesis demands not only to abstaining from wronging anyone or desiring to do so: "Besides this, it contains, I say, the requirement that we give our neighbour's life all the help we can" (viii.8). Calvin's inquiring mind, however, is not satisfied with the actual content of the law but also wants to know, why God did "as it were by half commandments signify through synecdoche what he willed, rather than express it?"(II.viii.8). Calvin's answer is that each commandment draws attention to the worst possible manifestation of the particular evil God wants to prohibit, in order to instill genuine fear of that particular evil with all its ramifications in man's heart.34

According to this reading, the prohibition of the sixth commandment, "thou shall not murder," also includes any kind of anger or hatred against one's fellow man. The necessity for this method Calvin once more sees in man's depravity, which does not allow him to see the heinousness of a sentiment like anger in the sight of a holy God. Man, because of his

34"God has set forth by way of example the most frightful and wicked element in every kind of transgression, at the hearing of which our senses might shudder, in order that he might imprint upon our minds a greater detestation of every sort of sin."(Inst. 1, 376).
fallen nature, would not consider anger and hatred as things to be cursed, but Calvin states that "when they are forbidden under the name of murder, we better understand how abominable they are in the sight of God, by whose Word they are relegated to the level of a dreadful crime" (ibid).

The acceptance of Calvin's synecdochal reading by the Puritans is reflected in the format and methodology of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The section concerning the decalogue states as one of the hermeneutical rules to be observed for the right understanding the law:

That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded; where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included that under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocation hereunto (183-84).

The Westminster assembly has not only adopted Calvin's synecdochal reading of the ten commandments, but also brought the same principle to bear on the practical application of the commandments. Adhering to the second commandment not only entails abstinence from any impure worship, but also forbids "the tolerating of false worship" and enjoins the "opposing of all false worship" (WC 192). Thus the adoption of Calvin's hermeneutical principle leads directly to the passionate Puritan resentment of image worship, because not only was it forbidden by scripture, but, according to the synecdochal reading, its toleration was also a breach of the commandment. If one reads the Puritans with synecdoche as a hermeneutical tool in mind, their passion and drive for the abolition of images and impure worship becomes much more understandable. However, there are also other factors which influenced their views. Before analyzing some of the Puritan writers and their style, it is important to give a brief background of Puritanism in order to put the movement into its proper context.
5. The Rise of English Puritanism

5.1. Historical Background

Although Puritanism as a spiritual attitude begins with William Tyndale in the early
sixteen hundreds (Ryken xvi), English Puritanism as a movement is commonly
understood to have begun with Dr. Hooper's rejection of his appointment as Bishop of
Gloucester, based on the "impious" oath and the priestly surplice he would have to comply
with according to the liturgy of the Church of England (Neal 46-47). What most popular
church histories fail to mention, however, is that Hooper was influenced by the vestment
debate in Germany, while he was exiled in Zurich during Queen Mary's reign, a fact which
provides a definite historical link between Puritanism and the rejection of popish vestments
by the German Reformed Church during the Interim. After the Schmalkald war (1546-47),
Charles V was in the long-awaited position to settle the religious disputes in Germany as he
pleased. The creed he framed for his northern subjects was called the "Interim," since it was
only meant to be a temporary solution until a general council could be held to
authoritatively restore religious unity—meaning Catholicism—in Germany. The church
historian Wylie calls the new creed "the old faith of Rome, a little freshened up by
ambiguousities of speech and quotations from scripture" (vol. 2, 118). The Interim sought to
enforce, among other things, the supremacy of the Pope, the dogma of transubstantiation,

35 Dr. Packer states in the preface to Ryken's work that "Puritanism as a distinctive attitude began with
William Tyndale, Luther's contemporary, a generation before the word "Puritan" was coined and went on to
the end of the seventeenth century, several decades after the "Puritan" had fallen out of general use... into
the making of Puritanism went Tyndale's reformatting biblicism, the piety of the heart that broke surface in
John Bradford, the passion for pastoral competence that John Hooper, Edward Dering and Richard
Greenham exemplified, [and] the view of scripture as the 'regulative principle' of worship and ministerial
order that fired Thomas Cartwright."

36 Hooper rejected the traditional oath "By God, by the saint, and by the Holy Ghost" as impious, because
"God only ought to be appealed to in an oath, forasmuch as he only knows the thoughts of men (Neal 47).
the invocation of the saints and justification by works, all of which are closely connected to image worship. In northern Germany, where the arm of the Emperor could hardly reach, the Interim had little effect, but in southern Germany, where a great part of the nobility had remained Catholic, it was strictly enforced and met with much opposition. Phillip Melanchton and the Wittenberg divines adopted Luther's line of reasoning and sanctioned the Interim under the principle that its doctrines conflicted with the Augsburg confession only in indifferent matters.\(^{37}\) This argument of indifference, which Luther had already employed in the dispute over pictures with Karlstadt, caused a great debate among the German clergy. Most of them believed that the Roman Catholic rites and ceremonies were maintained in order to draw the people more easily back into the superstitious ignorance that existed prior to the Reformation. Therefore the question arose whether or not it was lawful to obey things indifferent, if they were used as a pretense to reintroduce unscriptural practices. The dispute split the German Protestants into two camps: Those who complied with the Interim were called adiaphorists, and those who opposed it became known as the Reformed Church of Germany (Neal vol. I 46).

In Zürich, where Dr. Hooper resided (1547-49), the counter-reaction to the Interim was particularly strong, and his later rejection of "popish vestments" in England cannot be merely dismissed as a petty difference which he should have complied with. Rather, the vestment controversy has to be understood in the German context of the Interim with its imposition of Catholic liturgy. For Hooper and the later Puritans, the vestments as well as images were not a mere political issue but primarily one connected to a spiritual liberation of the mind from their perceived oppression by Roman Catholic theology. The superstition many people attached to the habits of monks and surplices of Priests are well documented. And just as the authors of the Interim knew that the reintroduction of images and Catholic

\(^{37}\) It must be stated in fairness to the Wittenberger theologians that the copy of the interim sent to Wittenberg had been slightly manipulated in order to ensure the consent of the Wittenberger doctors.
rites would prevent the enlightenment of the common folk, the Puritans thought that the removal of them would force the people to return to a pure apostolic form of worship. The Puritans were concerned first of all with the individual's relationship to God, and only subsequently interested in national and regional politics. John Owen explains the Puritan perspective on idolatry as one of ignorance versus wisdom; true spiritual knowledge versus a misguided concept of how God is to be worshipped. The whole Puritan concept of worship and idolatry is erected on--and stands or falls with--the assumption that the Bible is the infallible word and revelation of God to man. Man, says Owen, is an "animal of tradition." Since the people were ignorant of the scriptures and did not know God aright or were familiar with the internal spiritual aspect of worship, their participation in the worship was limited to the external aspect. This external dependence on the church together with the people's disinclination to change their traditions rendered them helpless puppets in the hands of the Catholic Clergy who had the "advantage of the popular favour" (Owen vol.15, 30). If Owen's assessment is correct, and it does seem to correspond to historical facts, then the Puritans advocated intellectual freedom over enforced unity.

Hooper brought these principles into England upon his return in 1549, and although Archbishop Cranmer was inclined to agree with Hooper, Ridley and the other bishops successfully prevented a further reformation of the Church of England liturgy. Hooper consulted with Martin Bucer at Oxford, Peter Martyr at Cambridge as well as with various other Swiss and Genevan divines, all of whom confirmed that the traditional rites and habits were scripturally unjustifiable and should be abandoned. However, they advised Hooper to comply with the current regulations and wear "popish attire" for unity's sake, which Hooper did at his consecration. Later, however, he mostly preached without them, thus becoming the proverbial thorn in the flesh of the other bishops. The vestment controversy occupied Germany, Switzerland, and England at that time and its importance as a background to iconoclasm has not been duly recognized. The vestment debate is linked to the image question in its concern about external aspects of worship. The Puritans who advocated
iconoclasm like, Owen, Sibbes, Howe, Watson and others, should not be seen as philistines who advocated the destruction of liturgical art of mere pleasure, but as those who had a genuine concern for their parishioners who were deeply steeped in superstition and as those who feared a return to a dominion of Roman Catholicism. The bigotry of which the Puritans are frequently accused seems to be more evident in such men as Whitgift, Bancroft, and Parker. These men defended the Church of England as the only true church on the authority of which liturgical practices could be enforced on the penalty of deprivation, imprisonment, torture, and execution.

Also connected to the issue of adiaphora and image-breaking is the precedent which had been indirectly set in Germany by Karlstadt, namely the removal of images on divine rather than on civil authority. The same issue reoccurred in the dispute between the Puritans and the Church of England about the power of the civil authority in ecclesiastical matters. Most of the bishops of the Church of England willingly subscribed to the position of the monarch as supreme head of the Church, and therefore also accepted his/her determination concerning the liturgical aspects on which the Bible was silent, such as pictures, vestments, and the like. The Puritans however, many of whom were inclined to a Presbyterian or Congregationalist form of Church government (Hetherington 43), believed the decision in these things should be left to the individual's, or the congregation's, conscience, and that it was unscriptural to relegate authority in these matters to the magistracy (Gillespie p.54). The nonconformist's refusal to wear priestly garments or to comply with pictures in the churches was therefore not only based on Calvin's image theology, but also on a different conception of the powers of the church and state. More than anything else it was this view for which the bishops of the Church of England and the monarchs, who wanted to reserve all power for themselves, persecuted the Puritans.

---

38Margaret Aston's remark that "Karlstadt had given a spur to unauthorized image-breaking" is misleading, because although Karlstadt did threaten divine punishment if the magistracy would delay the removal of images, he frequently urged against violence and disorder (Aston 40).
5.2. The Heart of Puritanism

Possibly the most essential aspect, however, to an understanding of the Puritan position on images, is the Puritan's relationship with God. Without an understanding of their genuine love for God, their image theology will remain a mystery. J.I. Packer says in his book *A Quest For Godliness* that ever since the publication of Daniel Neal's *History of the Puritans* in 1738, the Puritan movement has been looked upon as having its root in disagreements over external causes, in a power struggle between church and state. It should rather be approached as a movement at the heart of which stood a fervent desire for spiritual revival and reconstruction (Packer, 37). It is in this context that Puritan iconoclasm should also be seen. The Puritans were not Philistines who enjoyed the breaking of statues because of their aversion to art, but ministers who longed for liberation from the merely external liturgical faith of Roman Catholicism by substituting for it a more personal relationship with God. The Puritans saw their relationship with God as a love affair which did not engender a sterile and somber attitude towards art, but on the contrary evoked almost rapturous and poetic articulations of their joy. Thomas Watson's chapter on love in his *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*, for example, is one of the most poetic and beautiful expressions of a devoted soul in Puritan literature. Their affection for God also forms the basis for the Puritans' hatred of anything and anyone who claimed to be a Christian but did not love God. It was the coldness of heart toward God they regarded as the root of apostasy, the turning away from God's law.

This uncompromising attitude explains why the Puritans saw idolatry as such a heinous sin. "Love," so Watson, "is a holy fire kindled in the affections, whereby a Christian is carried out strongly after God as the supreme good" (6). The formal nature of this love consists in "delighting in an object Complacentia amantis in amato [The lover's delight is in his beloved]". It cannot be mentioned often enough, that most of the misconceptions of Puritanism lie in a wrong image of them as legalistic, callous religionists.
Nothing could be further from the truth. Their relationship with God was a love-affair with the supreme being they regarded as the origin in which all reality was anchored. That is why they understood so well the book of Hosea, where God's relationship with Israel is expressed as a marriage. Steeped in these biblical allegories, the Puritans preached that the betrayal of God through false worship is the same as a wife's committing adultery with another man (It is not sexism, by the way, which determines the wife as the culprit, but the biblical precedent that the Christians are all part of the bride of Christ). Following the biblical representation, the Puritans said that God's jealousy is evoked when idolatry is committed and images are worshipped. Watson expresses this concept as follows: "Love to God must be active in its sphere. Love is an industrious affection; it sets the head studying for God, hands working, feet running in the ways of his commandments (7)". To sum up the Puritan premise of a Godly life with Watson's own words, love to God must be "...superlative. We may give to the creature the milk of love, but the spouse (the church i.e. the Christian) keeps the juice of her pomegranates for Christ." The source of Watson's extremely erotic language is the Song of Salmon. The pomegranates stand for the breasts of the wife who allows the touching of these symbols of nourishment and intimacy only to her lover. A love relationship with God, then, is vital for an understanding of Puritan literature, as well as their rejection of idolatry which they saw indeed a provocation toward God who could issue "a bill of divorce" (Watson 18). In order to set some limitations for this paper, I have reduced the selection of Puritan writings to four divines, Richard Baxter, Thomas Watson, John Owen and Richard Sibbes. There is no particular preference attached to this choice, although I must concede to have selected Baxter as a contrast to the other Puritan writers because of his more tolerant approach to liturgical preferences.
It is important to begin the survey of Puritan arguments against images with the
decalogue, because it is the foundation of Puritan image theology and the Puritan exegesis
of the ten commandments constitutes a summary of the various Reformed positions. One of
the most popular exegetical works on the decalogue was written by Thomas Watson (1620-
1686), and is contained in his exposition of the Shorter Catechism, drawn up by the
Westminster assembly. Since the commentary closely follows the format of the
Westminster document, it is not surprising that Watson chose the popular form of
catechetical questions as a framework for his exposition.

Watson's treatise *The Ten Commandments* presents a typical example of Puritan
exegesis in which the influence of Calvin's exegetical practice and image theology become
eminently apparent. Like Calvin, Watson regards as the chief end of man the glorifying of
God through obedience, and the rule of the demanded obedience is contained in "the written
word" (Watson 1). In order not to misunderstand the Puritan approach to the abolishing of
images as a slavish and unwilling obedience to the yoke of a harsh commandment, it is
important to note Watson's caution that the "ingredients" for proper worship require it be
given "cum animi prolubio (free and cheerful)." The will to pure worship cannot be
imposed, but has to come from a fervently believing heart. The laws of God have to be
kept out of love, not out of a legalistic spirit (Watson 2). After all, as Watson points out,
the "sum of the ten commandments" is "To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with
all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves"
(Westminster Confession 299). The formulation of this answer already contains the pattern
for the Puritan image theology. Commandments have to be kept out of love, and anyone
who truly loves God will want to adhere to them and thus abhors idolatry. Furthermore,
the words "heart," "mind," "soul," and "strength" indicate that the whole person should be
clean of idolatry. Finally, since the catechism is based on Calvin's principle of synecdoche,
the duties towards one's neighbour not only include the consideration for the weak Christian, but also demand that idols be abolished for the good of the neighbour, since they are a threat to his spiritual well being.

Because their theology depended so much on the ten commandments, the Puritans ardently defended the validity of the entire decalogue for the Christian church against the Lutheran position. Most Puritans held that though the judicial and ceremonial laws of the Old Testament are abrogated, the decalogue as a standard of moral law "remains in force." It is the "standard of truth, the judge of controversies, the pole-star to direct us to heaven" (Watson 12). The Puritan Richard Baxter similarly states that the commandments are the first thing in Christianity which the natural man needs to be taught, since they are "[the] constitution of the kingdom of God over men described, and the administration, or governing laws of his kingdom" (Baxter vol.4, 119). And since the moral law is man's "spiritual directory" (14), it may not be obeyed partially. "Some," complains Watson, "obey some commandments, not others; like a plough which when it comes to a stiff piece of earth, makes a baulk, but God who spake the words of the moral law will have all obeyed."

The Puritans also upheld the Reformed position concerning the partition of the tables, a violation of which they regarded as a violation of God's will. Therefore the Roman Catholic sin lies in the manipulation and omission of the law: "They leave the second commandment out of their catechism, because it makes against images; and to fill up the number of ten they divide the tenth commandment in two. Thus they incur that dreadful condemnation: If any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life" (Watson 15). Watson does not advocate a system of merit or righteousness of works, as one may suppose. He is very well aware of the fact that "to obey the law in a legal sense--to do all the law requires--no man can." True obedience "consists in a real endeavour to observe the whole moral law" (ibid). And as far as the Puritans were concerned the Roman Catholic system did not undertake this endeavour.

Richard Baxter also sees the Roman Catholic division of the decalogue as a falsification of
the biblical text. The first question he puts to the reader in his section on the commandments is: "How prove you against the papists, that this [interdiction of images] is not part of the first commandment." (Baxter 122). He cites three facts as proofs. First, the fact that the second commandment contains a different subject matter from the first; second, that scripture itself speaks about ten commandments while the papists' division would only allow for nine, and third the historical tradition "by which we can prove that the papists falsify" (122). The seemingly anti-Catholic bias of the Puritans has to be understood in context of their covenant theology, in order not to misunderstand this Puritan antipathy as based only on political or social reasons. The Puritans attacked the Roman Catholic liturgy, because, as we shall see in the next chapter, based on their covenant theology, the Puritans had to condemn Catholic worship as idolatrous.

7. Covenant Theology and the Analogy of Spiritual Adultery

There exists a close connection between loving God, the keeping of the law, and the analogy of spiritual idolatry as adultery. For the Puritans this connection was rooted in their covenantal theology and provides their basic motivation for iconoclasm and anti-Catholic sentiments. They regarded all transactions of God with his chosen people as covenants. God's dealing with Adam was termed "the covenant of works," and his promise of redemption to man after the fall the "Covenant of Grace," which was confirmed in the covenant with Abraham. Likewise the giving of the law constituted the "Mosaic Covenant." The Puritans regarded the moral law as an important part of the mosaic covenant which was still valid, and represented the rule of the covenant between God and the Christian. The essence of this covenant is captured in the first two commandments. David Clarkson explains:

39The Puritans were anti-Catholic only in a doctrinal, but not in a personal sense. Many of them had friendly relations with Catholics, but were uncompromising on the issues of liturgy and worship.
Such idolaters [who have other gods] are not in covenant with God. It is the
covenant of grace alone which gives right and title to the kingdom. Those that are
not in covenant, have no title to heaven....They are not in covenant; for the first
article of the covenant is, that we take the Lord for our God, and that we have no
other gods but him. But idolaters have many other gods. Their hearts never
subscribed to the covenant of grace (Clarkson vol. 2,305).

Clarkson's reasoning shows the connection of covenantal theology and iconoclasm. The
covenant was made with the elect people of God, who were Abraham's seed. By
implication the Puritans suspected that those who were open idolaters were most likely not
within that covenant, because idolatry "is that spiritual whoredom, with which a covenant
with Christ cannot consist, [and] which excludes from the inheritance of the kingdom"
(Clarkson 307). For the Puritans the Roman Catholic liturgy violated the covenant
requirements and those who openly identified with Romanism were in danger of losing their
eternal life. In light of this theology, it is not surprising how seriously the Puritans took the
problem of image worship. To them it was a matter of life and death.

Most of the allegorical connotations of the Puritan discourse stem from this
covenant concept. The argument is the following: First, God has chosen the Christian, just
as he formerly chose Israel and therewith imposed his covenant on the elect. Second, the
elect's response to God's grace is that he cannot but respond to God's gracious covenant:
"To have God to be a God to us, is to enter into solemn covenant with him, that he shall be
our God. After choice the marriage covenant follows. As God makes a covenant with us,
so we make a covenant with him" (Watson 50). Since the covenant with God is compared
to a marriage covenant, a host of allusions and allegorical comparisons are made possible.
Man's actions and God's reactions are expressed in sexual and marital terms. Idolatry is
described as unfaithfulness in marriage: "A wife cannot lawfully have two husbands at once;
nor may we have two gods" (Watson 55). The breaking of the second commandment is
therefore regarded as adultery, and a compelling reason to abolish images is God's jealousy
and his consequent wrath against the covenant breaker. Watson states: "God looks upon it as breaking the marriage-covenant, to go after other gods." Consequently, God may justly "divorce" his unfaithful wife (55).

The analogy of the unfaithful wife invites a view of the Roman Catholic church as an unfaithful spouse, because in the eyes of the Puritans the liturgy had degenerated over the centuries, and the present Roman Catholic liturgy was a perversion of the pure apostolic worship. Therefore the church, as represented by the Catholic dogma, had broken the covenant. The trend-setter for the connection of the Roman church to an adulterous spouse is again John Calvin, who in his commentary on Hosea frequently uses the biblical example of God and the adulterating Israel to describe Roman Catholic worship. To begin with, Calvin establishes the general importance of a pure worship by making it the glue that holds the covenant together: "Then it follows that the marriage between God and men so long endures as they who have been adopted continue in pure faith, and apostasy in a manner frees God from us that he may justly repudiate us" (Vol.2, 83). The church is God's spouse, of whom He demands "spiritual chastity," which Calvin interprets as idol-free worship. In his next step, Calvin then directly applies the marital allegory to the church of Rome, which he portrays as a prostitute because of its corrupt liturgy.

Since such apostasy prevails under the Papacy, and has for many ages prevailed, how senseless they are in their boasting, while they would be thought to be the holy Catholic Church and the elect people of God? For they are all born by wantonness, they are all spurious children. The incorruptible seed is the word of God. But what sort of doctrine have they? It is a spurious seed. Then as to God all the Papists are bastards. In vain then they boast themselves to be the children of God, and that they have the holy mother Church, for they are born by filthy wantonness (Vol.2, 83).

Here Calvin also plays on the biblical concept of "sonship" where the covenant children are called sons of God. Calvin polemically contrasts this privilege of filial relations with the illegitimate offspring of Papism and links both family relations to the respective qualities of
worship and doctrine. God's true children possess sound teaching and are legitimate children. The Catholic doctrine, however, can only give birth to a "spurious seed" with idolatrous concepts of worship which lead inevitably to a liturgy that is only concerned about external splendour. This deduction allows Calvin to directly link Roman Catholic rites and ecclesiastical festivities to the spiritual adultery which the Church of Rome committed:

This the superstitious usually do when they celebrate their feast-days; for they think that a great part of holiness consists in the splendour of vestments; and we see that this stupidity prevails at this day among those under the Papacy; for they would think themselves to be doing great dishonour to God, or rather to their idols, were they not to adorn themselves when going to perform sacred duties... as a strumpet, in order to allure men, paints herself, and also dresses splendidly, puts on her ornaments, and decks herself with jewels and gold (CC vol. 7, 56).

Richard Sibbes (1577-1635), a prominent Puritan minister at Cambridge, echoes Calvin's sentiments in his series of sermons entitled "The Returning Backslider." He agrees with the polemical concept of "Granting that the Pope is the antichrist and Rome to be Babylon and Babylon to be the mother of all fornication" from which he concludes that "there can be no reconciling of these two religions" (381). Sibbes states the premise for his view of idolatry and its connotation to the marital allegory very clearly: "Ephraim hates idols, for idolatry is spiritual adultery. Religion is, as it were, a conjugal act of marriage; so that a breach in religious worship is a breach of spiritual marriage. Now the worshipping of idols being a breach of the conjugal act of marriage betwixt God and the soul, spiritual adultery, it must needs be abominable" (378). In another sermon based on a passage from Hosea (14:3), Sibbes links the Roman Catholic church directly to the idolaters of ancient Israel. He asks the congregation the question: "Whether the papists [are] idolaters or not, like unto these Israelites, who say (being converted): Neither will we say unto the works of our hands Ye are our Gods?" (ii, 288). The answer to this catechetical question is an
emphatic yes and effectively links the Roman Catholics to Egyptians, invoking a comparison between the bondage of Egypt and that of true believers under the papacy. Thomas Watson also confirms the allegories which other reformers had already employed. In his analysis of man's relationship to God (16) he states that this relation "imports the relation of a husband" and he illustrates the covenant union of God and his people as a marital union. Idolatry is to be regarded as "spiritual adultery" and to worship any other deity than God is "to break wedlock" (25).

John Owen introduces another metaphor within the "whore context," a comparison Calvin had already hinted at, namely that of cosmetics. Owen uses the analogy of make-up in his refutation of Cane's arguments. In his Vindication of The Animadversions On Fiat Lux, he objects to Cane's remark that the Roman church is "a most pure flourishing and mother church" that "[the church] has lost her native beauty and we know that no painting of her (which is all you can do) will render her truly amiable unto a spiritual eye" (xiv 213). The "make-up analogy" is fascinating not only because it evokes the picture of an old prostitute which has to use "paint" in order to fake youth and innocence and hide the truth of her corrupt trade, but also because it carries with it the notion of a false image. Most of Owen's contemporaries would immediately see the Roman Catholic splendour and pomp as the facade to which Owen alludes: a thin veneer of beauty beneath which lurk corruption and seduction. Once the Roman Catholic Church was thus branded as a prostitute steeped in spiritual idolatry, the head of that institution was also seen as being inevitably implicated.

40Ans. I answer, Yes; as gross as ever the heathens were and worse. The very Egyptians, they worshipped none for gods but those who were alive; as a papist himself saith (though he were an honest papist), the Egyptians worshipped living creatures, but we are worse than they; for we worship stocks and stones, and a piece of bread in the sacrament" (ii 288).

41The full title of the Catholic production, printed just after the Restoration in 1661, was: "Fiat Lux; or a general conduct to a right understanding in the great combustions and broils about religion here in England, betwixt Papist and Protestant, Presbyterian and Independent, to the end that moderation and quietness may at length he happily ensue after so various tumults in the kingdom."
in the crime of spiritual infidelity. The Papal history with its excesses provided an excellent target for the reformers.

8. The Pope as Antichrist

The pattern used by Calvin to regard the Roman Church as the "whore of Babylon" and to see the Roman liturgy and superstitions as spiritual adultery before God, shaped the language as well as the arguments of the iconoclastic debate. The identification of the woman in the book of Revelation "sitting on seven Mountains" and having on her forehead written, "Mystery, Babylon the Great," with the Roman Catholic church was not new. After all, one of Luther's most prominent works was entitled "Die Babylonische Gefangenschaft." In the same work, Luther frequently calls the Pope "Endchrist" or "Antichrist" (Die Schmalkalder Artikel 253 Band 2). Within the context of unfaithfulness and idolatry the Pope was seen as the chief idolater and deceiver. The Pope himself was seen as the supreme idol, who set himself up in the place and as an image of God. The Puritan John Owen also regards the Pope as an image of the antichrist, although he is much more careful in his assessment than Luther:"...while the greatest part of men amongst us look upon him as the Antichrist foretold in the Scripture..., others, who think not so hardly of him, yet confess he is so like him, that, by the marks given of Antichrist, he is the likeliest person on the earth to be apprehended on suspicion" (167).

According to John Owen, the Pope is not only an external idol, but has also set himself up as an idol of the heart. Owen sets up an interesting correlation between the Pope as a false picture of Christ and the worshipping of images. One must remember that the prominent mark of the Antichrist was the abomination of desolation when he sets himself up in the Jewish temple to be worshipped (Dan 9:26-27). The Puritans transferred this illustration to the temple of the heart where Christ alone was to reside through the Holy Spirit. The temple concept was so common that John Howe used this illustration as the basis for his treatise "The Living Temple," in which he describes man's heart as a temple of
God's spirit. The temple has become "defaced" through the fall and lies waste, so that "the noble powers which were designed and dedicated to divine contemplation and delight, are alienated to the service of the most despicable idols" (Howe 225). John Owen avails himself of this well-known illustration and establishes that the Pope himself is an idol which usurps God's rightful place in the "temple," particularly in the heart of the Romanist. Since the Pope sets the precedent of supreme idolatry by having his mediatorial image adored in men's hearts rather than that of the true mediator Jesus Christ, Owen calls him "the corrupt fountain and spring of all the false worship, superstition, and idolatry wherewith the faces of many churches are defiled" (xiv 166).

John Howe is less careful in his assessment of the "head of the church." In his sermon "Deliverance From the Power of Darkness" (preached on Nov. 5th, 1703), he likens the liberation of England from Roman oppression to the delivery from Satan's power ("we are to look upon that deliverance, which this day we more particularly commemorate, now almost a hundred years ago, as a defeated plot of the devil" Howe vol. 3, 194). If Roman Catholicism is a "plot of the devil", the Pope, who claims to be the infallible vicar of Christ becomes necessarily a satanic instrument of oppression: "As if Christ had changed names with the devil, and laying aside that of a Saviour, had chosen to be called Abaddon, or Apollyon, the common destroyer of mankind" (Howe 197).

9. The Fear of Judgment

The identification of the English nation with ancient Israel in connection with the concept of the covenant raises the question of God's jealousy and judgment. England's economic and moral poverty was attributed to its adherence to Roman Catholic religion. Just as Karlstadt had warned the magistracy that a refusal to remove idols would incur God's wrath, so the Puritans also warned that any return to the idolatrous worship God had so graciously delivered them from would result in punishment.
The fear of God's wrath for the law-breaker was a concept which was not regarded as incompatible with God's love. That "dreadful condemnation" was rather the just reaction of God, the faithful husband, to the adultery of his unfaithful and covenant-breaking spouse. The conditional sanctions and threats were intensified by the Puritan understanding of God's presence which they derived from the exegesis of the words "before me" in the first commandment. The precedent to the particular attention to the words "before me" is set by Calvin, who says that "the phrase that follows 'before my face' makes the offense more heinous because God is provoked to jealousy as often as we substitute our own inventions in place of him. This is like a shameless woman who brings an adulterer before her husband's very eyes only to vex his mind the more" (Inst.II.viii.16). Heinrich Bullinger translates these words in German as meaning "Zu mir, oder nabend mir; oder lass michs nit sahen vor meinen augen" (Decades, 220). Bullinger is of the opinion that, as a result of God's omnipresence, this wording denies any idols either in private or in the open, since God even "beholdeth our hearts, and hidden secrets of our hearts" (ibid). The Puritans adapt this exegesis, but also add another application. The word's "before me" imply that image worship is based on the wrong concept of a distant and harsh God. The claim of the Roman church to worship God by the images shows their distant relationship to God. Watson argues that it is "absurd to fall down to the picture of a king when the king himself is present, much more to bow down to the image of God when God himself is present" (27). In light of God's ubiquitous presence the Puritans saw image worship as "a sin which enrages God, and makes the fury come upon his face"(Watson, 26).

The threat of God's jealousy and wrath was seen by the Puritans as inseparably belonging to the second commandment. John Calvin's exegesis of the decalogue already shows the inclination to regard the threat adjoined to the interdiction of images as an integral and vital part of the commandment. Calvin argues that the threat "which is subjoined to the commandment might have been read as one of the sanctions..., yet I have been unwilling to separate it from the second commandment"(CC vol. 2, 125). The
conditional warning attached to the commandment had great importance for Puritan writing and preaching. Since God had graciously liberated England from the yoke of Roman Catholicism, a return to image worship and idolatry would inevitably incur God's wrath upon the English nation. Thomas Watson, for example, thinks it imperative that the English nation should not return to idolatry, or "go back to Egypt" as he figuratively expresses it. The reader in Puritan times would know that Israel's request rather to return to Egypt than to trust in God for their deliverance, even after all the signs and wonders God had done for them (meaning the liberation from Roman Catholic bondage), represented the ultimate rebellion. Watson states polemically that if England did return to the slavery of Egypt, "the leeks and onions of Egypt (image worship and Romish doctrine) would make us sick"(27). In this he echoes Calvin's opinion who says: "God who has not spared a foreign nation will much less pardon His people; inasmuch as it is a greater crime, and fouler ingratitude to forsake God when once He is known, and to cast aside the teaching of His law, than to follow errors handed down from our forefathers" (CC v.2, 125). The Puritans' identification with the Israelites who were led out of the idolatrous Egypt also contains another important allegorical element - an element that made idolatry a matter of spiritual life and death.

10. The Egypt Analogy

The example of Israel's delivery from Egypt also has great significance in iconoclastic literature as an analogy for the salvation of the Christian. John Calvin had already said that God's statement in the first commandment, "I am the Lord your God who led you out of Egypt," still has meaning for the Christian, because the mentioning of deliverance has a spiritual basis:
Yet let this be agreed upon: deliverance is mentioned in order that the Jews may
give themselves over more eagerly to God, who by right claims them for himself.
But in order that it may not seem that this has nothing to do with us, we must regard
the Egyptian bondage of Israel as a type of the spiritual captivity in which all of us
are held bound, until our heavenly Vindicator, having freed us by the power of his
arm, leads us into the Kingdom of freedom (II.viii.15).

According to Calvin, the Israelites' delivery from Egypt "foreshadowed" the Christian's
release from "the devil's deadly power (381)." It is vital to realize in this context what
conversion meant to the Puritans. One either was a spouse, chosen by God, who kept the
marriage contract and maintained pure worship, or one returned to the Egyptian bondage
and idolatry and suffered its ultimate penalty, namely "divorce" from God, which meant
eternal death. The spiritualization of Israel's history and ceremonial rites can already be
seen in Konradt Schmidt, who is the first of the Swiss Reformers to link the covenant
concept and its initiation rite of circumcision to the second commandment. He follows the
biblical precedent of interpreting the Jewish circumcision rite as foreshadowing the
circumcision of the heart, which is the biblical figure of speech for salvation. He calls this
circumcision "the image of God's covenant with his people," and interprets it as meaning
that the cutting away of flesh may be seen as the purging of all false images from sinful
heart: "Der Herr wird din hertz beschneiden, uff das das inn [ihn] mit ganzem hertzen ind
aller seel lieb habest, das ist: Got würdt von dinem hertzen alle creaturen und frembde gött
abschnyden, uff das du ihn allein mit vollem hertzen liebest" (ZW vol.2, 705). Schmidt
pictures conversion as iconoclasm of the heart, which will inevitably result in the voluntary
iconoclasm of external images.

The Egypt allegory as symbolizing liberation from the bondage of sin by is not of the
Reformed tradition's own making, but is based on a biblical precedent which the Reformers
and especially the Puritans imbibed through their studies of the psalms. In the Psalms, the
liberation of Israel from Egypt is likened to a spiritual rebirth, and therefore the conversion
of the Christian, which also constitutes a rebirth, can be spoken of in the same way. Also,
according to Bullinger, the book of Isaiah, chapter 52, compares the delivery of Israel from Egypt to Christ's redemptive work (Bullinger 212). In the New Testament the book of Hebrews, in chapters three and four, speaks about the rebellion of the Israelites who had been called out of Egypt in the desert and compares it to the spiritual rebellion of those who are called by God. Similarly the author spiritualizes the entering into the promised land, which he compares to the Sabbath rest, as the reconciled state with God which the believer may attain through trust in the messiah Jesus Christ. The popularity of this allegory may be seen in the fact that most of the Puritan expositions of scripture as well as their tracts on the topic of idolatry use this illustration. The Puritans especially liked to use it for the salvation of England from the Roman Catholic dominion which it had endured for hundreds of years.

Thomas Watson, for example, makes much use of the Exodus allegory. With typical Puritan exhaustiveness he delves into the question: "Why does the Lord mention the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt?"(24). He concludes that God wants to remind the Christian of the greatness of the deliverance. This greatness does not lie so much in the fact that Israel was enslaved by Egypt, but that it was "infected with idolatry." God delivered Israel from the "pollutions of Egypt," pollution denoting the worship of images. Watson directly relates this deliverance to the Reformation in England:

See the goodness of God to our nation, in bringing us out of mystic Egypt, delivering us from popery, which is Romish idolatry...[England] worshipped God in a false manner; and it is idolatry not only to worship a false god, but also to worship God in a false manner. Such was our case formerly; we had purgatory, indulgences, the idolatrous mass the Scriptures locked up in an unknown tongue, invocations of saints and angels, and image-worship (27).

For the Puritans spiritual idolatry, which was the precedent to outward adoration of images, meant spiritual death. To them the propagation of the Roman Catholic faith with its idolatrous foundation meant the quenching of spiritual life and was therefore to be avoided at all costs.
So far, we have seen how the Puritan exegesis of the decalogue with its covenantal context explains the ultimately biblical origin of the marriage and Egypt allegories employed by Puritan writers. But more than that, the sexual connotations of a male female relationship, as well as the punishments which are threatened when the divine husband’s jealousy is aroused, explain the seriousness of the Puritan approach to the question of image worship. They whole-heartedly agreed with Calvin that "the pure worship of God...is ever to have the first place, and that justly; for on this depend all the duties in life" (CC 84). The question remains, however, how the Puritans applied their image theology in their advice and sermons to the laity. Because of their pastoral concern for their congregations, the Puritans tried to probe into the mental processes of idolatry and image worship. The exploration of the relationship between the worshipper and the sign or image is really the heart of Puritan iconoclastic literature. In a sense they were more than anything else ecclesiastical psychologists, "physicians of the soul" (Haller 27), who saw the external image worship as symptom of an inner cancer of idolatry.

11. The Psychology of Image Worship

The exegesis of the decalogue with the use of specific hermeneutical principles such as synecdoche, analogies, and the principle of covenant theology is not the only way in which the Puritans are indebted to Calvin. They also adopted his image psychology. Like Zwingli before him, Calvin had based his image theology on the premise of total human depravity. And since Calvin believed that pure worship, which is identical with a correct knowledge of God, is the source of the Christian's well being (Eire, 197), false worship becomes the most serious problem of the church (Eire 199). In the context of the iconoclastic debate, Calvin rephrased the Psalmist's confession of his sinful nature (51:5):
"every one of us is, even from his mother's womb, a master craftsman of idols" (CC Acts of Apostles 48.562). One of Calvin's most important contributions to image theology is his ability to give a hitherto academic debate an eminently practical aspect. Carlos Eire states:

It was Calvin more than anyone else who "formulated a comprehensive theology of idolatry by carefully defining the nature of the reverential act in its metaphysical context. By examining what happens in the act of worship itself, Calvin is able to juxtapose human desires and capabilities with the objective reality [and demands] of God. In doing so, he turns a theological problem into a very practical consideration. What happens when a person kneels in church? Calvin analyzes the act of worship, by separating it into two spheres, the objective and the subjective" (Eire, 212).

Calvin's "objective sphere" is the ultimate objective reality of God's "world," whereas man's creaturely perspective is rather a dimmed perception of reality. Every act of worship represents an attempt to cross the threshold between these two worlds. Therefore the outward act of worship has automatically a transcendent significance which should not be taken lightly and necessitates that the outward act conforms as best as possible to God's pure and transcendent nature. Calvin's systematic analysis of worship had the effect that the merely emotional rejection of images on the one hand, and the abstract scholastic subtleties for image worship on the other, were replaced by an eminently practical dimension. What happens when a worshipper kneels down, or receives the sacrament? Since Calvin believed that there is ultimately only one real God, namely the one revealed in scripture, all acts of worship ultimately have reference to him and should therefore conform to the spiritual nature of God. Thus a worshipper make sure that he or she kneel before the God of scripture and not before a man-made image or even mental construct which distorts the true spiritual nature of God.

---

42 The Psalmist's original statement was: "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me"
But rather than simply repeating Carlos Eire's excellent analysis of Calvin's image psychology, I would like to show how carefully the Puritans developed this idea. The Puritans were, contrary to a common misconception, much more interested in the "pulse of the Soul" as Richard Sibbes called it, than in mere external aspects of the liturgy. Calvin's practical image theology appealed to the Puritans because they were Pastors and had to deal every day with lay people who were confused by the academic debates about image worship. The questions Calvin had asked were the same practical question the Puritan ministers tried to answer in order to clarify the complicated issues for their congregations. These Pastors felt that all theoretical distinctions in image worship which characterized the academic debates confused the lay people rather than providing help for them. John Owen voices his concern about the laity when he says:

Alas poor souls! they know little of those many curious windings and turnings of mind, through the meanders of various distinctions, which their masters, prescribe to preserve them from idolatry, in that veneration of images which they teach them, when it is easy for them to know that all they do in this kind is contrary to the express will and command of God (xiv 124).

Richard Sibbes agrees with Owen that, although pictures in themselves cannot harm anyone, they should be removed for the sake of the common people, who cannot comprehend scholastic differentiation but are caught in the superstition they have been taught: "For though they say they give not Latria, worship to the image, but Dulia, service, but can common people distinguish? who give worship to all alike?" (Vol. 2, 126).

The concern for their congregations prompted the Puritans to probe into the relation of the images and the mind. As "physicians of the soul," they were fascinated by the correlation of the mind and idolatry. David Clarkson, for example, wrote a long treatise with the title: "Soul Idolatry Excludes Men Out Of Heaven" (Clarkson vol.2, 299-333). He states that "every reigning lust is an idol, and every person in whom it reigns is an idolater (300)." Among the "reigning lusts" is the "lust of the eye," which Calvin also recognizes as
the greatest evil because it is man's desire for visual proofs and manifestations of God, which constantly exposes him to the danger of open idolatry (Inst.I.ii.8). Clarkson articulates very nicely the Calvinistic sentiment on worship in his definition of idolatry:

There is a twofold worship, as all agree, due only to God, internal and external. 1. External which consists in acts and gestures of the body. When a man bows to, or prostrates himself before, a thing, this is the worship of the body; and when these gestures of bowing, prostration, are used, not out of a civil, but a religious respect, with an intention to testify divine honour, then it is worship due only to God. 2. Internal, which consists in acts of the soul and actions answerable thereto. When the mind is most taken up with an object, and the heart and affections most set upon it, this is soul worship, and this is due only to God; ...it is the honour due only to the Lord to have the first, the highest place, both in our minds and hearts and endeavours (305).

The Puritans maintained that both the internal and outward elements of worship have to be kept pure, since God is the God of both body and soul, yet the inner idolatry always precedes the external. And it is in the mind of man that the battle against idolatry is really fought, and where human depravity proves to be most dangerous to the worshipper. Clarkson reflects Calvin's doctrine of total depravity when he says: "Every natural man, let his enjoyments, privileges, accomplishments, be what they will, is an idolater" (306). In order to demonstrate the helplessness of the creature against secret idolatry which is "spiritual adultery" (306), he compares its danger to a "mischievous person lurking in your house, with an intent to murder you, or set your house on fire." The faculty of the mind which creates images he terms "chambers of imagery" with "idols in every room, in every faculty of man's soul which he worships in secret" (307). Clarkson states in comparing internal and external idolatry, that genuine inward worship toward the signs ("outward things") is far worse than outward worship given to the signs ("outward things"), because the inward worship is based on an unregenerate heart. According to Clarkson there is only one solution to end that human weakness, namely conversion. Conversion is "the turning from idols." When man is converted by God's sovereign grace, he changes from a "habitual
idolater" into a person who can control the drive for idolatrous worship (They are not guilty of habitual idolatry as unrenewed men are... And so the difficulties objected are overcome" 307). Clarkson's argument leads to an important conclusion, which is often overlooked, namely that according to Puritan logic someone who practices open idolatry is in all likelihood not a Christian. Zwingli had already so hinted during the disputation, but the Puritans' covenant theology and their Calvinistic uncompromising stand on the purity of worship made it clear that an open idolater is not of God's Kingdom. This realization may help to explain why approximately 2000 Puritan ministers chose to leave the Church of England in 1662, rather than subscribe to the Act of Uniformity, which in their eyes imposed idolatrous practices of worship on them.

John Owen also writes extensively about the psychology of image worship. He writes, somewhat like Luther, that image worship of the inner man is "the very substance of the [first] command " (Owen xiv, 127). But he immediately adds the importance of the interdiction of images because of the inherent weakness of that inner man. This subjectivity of the imagination is an aspect of image worship which Owen in particular tries to draw attention to. He states that "the whole relation between the image and the pretended prototype depends solely on the imagination of him that made it, or him that reverenceth it" (127). And it is indeed this subjectivity where the danger of image worship has its roots, and which is addressed in the first commandment through the words: "Thou shalt not make to thyself" (127). Owen puts it this way: "This creative faculty in the imagination is that which is forbidden to all the sons of men in the "Non facies tibi." In other words, Owen says that in order to be able to have a clear picture of God, one must not look to the subjective fancies of one's own imagination, but rely on the objective revelation of God's Word. Because of the evil inclination of man's subjective faculties, Owen denies that pictures can be neutral within the worship context. Pictures are not simply void of educational value, but they educate in a deceptive way, they create completely subjective misrepresentations of God in man's heart. Consequently, according to Owen, it doesn't even
matter what shape or form the image has, since it depends on the individual's subjective impressions and imaginations what value and character is ascribed to the statue that is worshipped. The signifier does not matter so much as the signified which is determined individually. The signifiers are interchangeable, or to put it in Owen's words: "I desire to know...how any image ...comes to represent him to whom it is assigned, or to have any religious relation to him, for instance to St. Peter rather than to Simon Magus or Judas, so that the honour done unto it should redound to the one rather than to the other" (127). For John Owen the mind is the decisive battleground. He denounces any outward influences which could negatively affect the mind. He even condemns preaching, if it has no other goal than to create pictures in the listener's mind. Owen denies that "the sole end of preaching the cross and the death of Christ is to work out such representations of the mind, as oratory may effect for the moving of corresponding affections"(125). Owen implies that such a wrong concept of preaching often explains image worship. If preaching only serves to create pictures in the mind which then are supposed to trigger affections, the heart (i.e. the soul) is not affected, and the Word is misused. William Haller in his study of Puritanism has pointed out the effect of Owen's iconoclastic attitude towards preaching. The Puritans laid aside literary allusions, conscious Euphemism, and far fetched metaphysical metaphors in favour of homely similes, parables, exempla, moral parables and the like (Haller 23). The Puritans wanted to make themselves understood and felt in order to educate their parishioners. These divines felt that one of the main oppositions to their objective was the images and pictures that were purported by the Catholic dogma to be educational devices.

12. Educational Value of Images

John Owen's emphasis on preaching that convicts the heart rather than evoking images in the listener's mind raises the issue of the educational value of pictures and images. Do images and pictures teach, and furthermore, do they stimulate the mind to a
contemplation of God? These questions were by no means unanimously agreed upon within the Puritan camp. As we have seen, Karlstadt clearly rejected the pedagogical aspect of pictures and so did the Swiss Reformers and Calvin. Contrary to most of the Puritan writers, however, Richard Baxter does not share John Owen's rejection of fanciful mental images. When it comes to liturgy, Baxter presents an interesting mixture of Calvinist and Lutheran thought, a mixture which may well arise out of his conciliatory spirit that yearns for peace within the church. He laments the contentions that have arisen about the manner of God's worship, and "the cruelty, and blood, and divisions, and uncharitable reviling which have thence followed, and also the necessary regard that every Christian must have to worship God according to His will" (CD 553). He locates the root of these problems in the fact that the people who advocate idolatry in worship are those who are not Christians themselves and only deal with the issue out of academic or selfish interest (CD 553).

Baxter tries to reconcile the Lutheran adiaphoristic and Karlstadt's iconoclastic position on images, which sometimes results in a slightly confusing reading of his instructions regarding image worship. Although Baxter sees the danger of idols and insists on an integrity of the worshipper that demands outward conformity to the inner conviction, he is one of the most tolerant and careful of the Puritans when it comes to the question: "Is all use of images lawful?" (553). Baxter, like Luther, allows pictures, even to "fetch holy thoughts and meditations from them," as long as they do not lead the worshipper astray. However, Richard Baxter's adherence to the Anglican liturgy seems to entice him into the same "error" as Luther. He makes very fine distinctions as to when images are allowed, without considering whether the lay people really have the capability of comprehending these sophistries. For example, he allows one to make images of fire or light as signifying the "inaccessible light in which God is said to dwell" (CD 698). He also speaks in favour of the use of statues depicting angels, as long as "we take it not for an image of their true spiritual nature, but an improper representation of them, like a metaphor in speech." The images of Saints are also laudable since "the beholding of them [we are reminded of] our
duty, and excited to imitation of them." According to him, it is not only "lawful" but actually "a great part of the believer's work to have Christ's image very much upon his imagination, and so upon his mind." The faithful should mentally picture Christ "in the manger, in his temptations, in his preaching, in his praying, with thorns, as crucified etc." It is especially the mental image of the crucified Christ which should admonish the Christian to humility and Christian conduct ("A crucifix well befitteth the imagination and mind of a believer").

Contrary to Baxter, John Owen absolutely rejects any pedagogical or even contemplative value in pictures. He makes his position very clear in an answer to a Catholic treatise called On A Treatise Entitled Fiat Lux (1661), which is probably the most representative piece of writing for his dealings with Catholic accusations against Protestant worship. In his work, Owen refutes the arguments of a certain Friar Cane for the use of images by the Church of Rome. In response to the Catholic author's delight about the pictures and images in Churches during his travels, Owen responds that "it was well for him [Cane] that he travelled not in the days of the apostles, nor four or five hundred years after their decease." The Puritan goes on to explain that only Pagans and Gnostics worshipped with the help of images at that time and that the author, if he identified true religion with images, would have to align himself with them (xiv 123). Contrary to Baxter's opinion, John Owen also strongly objects to Cane's premise that images and pictures "are apt to cast into the minds of men...excellent thoughts" which help the worshipper to approach God (123). In his refutation of this argument, Owen links the environment of an image-filled church to the character of the worshipper in a very subtle way. He states that: "A man,

---

43 In contrast to his opponent, the friar John Vincent Cane, Owen does not use a polemical approach to the image problem but cannot altogether suppress the occasional sarcastic comment either. A representative example of John Owen's sarcasm and dry humour is his answer to one the author's arguments for Catholicism that "Protestants are beholden to the Catholics for their universities, benefices, books, pulpits, gospel." Replies Owen, "For some of them not at all; for the rest, as the Israelites were to the Egyptians for the tabernacle they built in the wilderness"(xiv 93).
indeed distraught of his wits, might possibly entertain some such fancies upon his entering of a house full of fine pictures and images; but that a sober man should do so is very unlikely" (124). Hence a reader is prompted to draw the inference that the Catholic's mind is in confusion, whereas the Protestant man is informed, sober and rational in his worship to God. As already mentioned, concerning the educational value of pictures, Richard Baxter tries to combine the adiaphoric and iconoclastic opinions on image worship. In spite of the fact that his advice is reminiscent of the Roman Catholic line of reasoning for the use of images, and stands in stark contrast to John Owen's mental iconoclasm, Baxter also advocates a pure worship. He is just as uncompromising as Calvin in his denunciation of nicodemism. Based on the premise that "God is the God of the body as well as of the soul," Baxter rejects any dissembling on the part of the worshipper. "For though a man renounce in heart all other gods, yet if he be seen to bow down before an image he seemeth to the beholder to mean as idolaters do, while he symbolizes with them (123)" This "symbolizing" not only includes pictures, but also "all doctrines...that falsely represent God, and all worship and acts pretended to be religious, which are unsuitable God's holy nature, attributes, will, or word, as being profanation, and an offering to God that which is unclean" (124).

One of the great questions throughout the iconoclastic debate, in reference to the effect images have on the worshippers mind, was the question whether Christ could be "lawfully" represented in a statue or picture. It was universally accepted among the iconoclasts that statues of Mary and the saints were forbidden. A picture of God himself was unanimously rejected as well. Richard Baxter explains: "pictures are the signs of corporal things, and it is blasphemy to think [of] God like a bodily substance"(Christian Directory 122). But what about Christ, who was an incarnation of the spiritual and therefore, like the sacraments, constitutes a divinely sanctified manifestation of God? Baxter follows the standard Catholic line of argument when he says: "As Christ was man like one of us, so he may be pictured as a man." He does add that a picture of Christ is
acceptable only if Christ is not worshipped through the picture and the picture not addressed as Christ. Thomas Watson represents the uncompromising side of the dispute concerning the Christ-image. Bullinger had already said that a picture of Christ was unacceptable, and Thomas Watson builds on Bullinger's argument. In form of the popular catechetical dialogue, Watson asks the question: "If it not be lawful to make the image of God the Father, yet may we not make an image of Christ, who took upon him the nature of man?" Watson's answer, though not sounding as sophisticated as Bullinger's, is forceful in its simple logic:

No!....It is Christ's Godhead, united to his manhood, that makes him to be Christ; therefore to picture his manhood, when we cannot picture his Godhead, is a sin, because we make him to be but half Christ--we separate what God has joined, we leave out that which is the chief thing which makes him to be Christ"(62).

Watson represents the majority of the Puritans with his argument against a picture of Christ. It should be said in defense of Baxter, however, that his comparatively liberal concept of image worship is based on a well grounded fear of legalism. He adds to each permission of images and pictures the caution that he admits these things only on occasion, simply for the reason that he does not want to prescribe laws which would restrict Christian liberty. In essence, Baxter is very Lutheran in his approach to images, with the difference that he is much more thoughtful and careful in his definitions. In contrast to Luther he makes most of his statements contextually, for a certain situation, a method which reflects Calvin's systematic approach to worship. There are literally hundreds of questions in Baxter's Christian Directory concerning this issue, most of which begin with "is it lawful" and then give the specific context in which a decision regarding idolatry has to be made.45

45Baxter carries this method even to the extent of analyzing stage-plays, since they also operate with signs by way of impersonation, which like an image does not represent reality, but a mere sign through which reality is to be perceived. Baxter does not denounce stage plays per se, as long as a play propagates virtue and godly values. "I think it possible to devise and act a comedy or tragedy, which should be lawful, and very edifying." The problem, then, is not the stage play itself but the kind of plays which are shown.
The educational aspect of images touches upon the question of semiotics and leads to a very important aspect in the debate, the question of the presence of God. The picture, the statue of a saint, and the crucifix signified God's presence for the respondent and were supposed to evoke pious thoughts in him. But the Puritans clearly denied this aspect of images, because it subjected God to the will of his own creation. Since the Catholic theologians used a similar line of reasoning when it came to the rite of transubstantiation, the metamorphosis of bread into God became one of the major issues of the debate.

13. The Eucharist as Image Worship

The danger in writing about the iconoclastic debate is that one may reduce the arguments to the oversimplification of material versus spiritual. I hope to have shown that the arguments are more complex and that the debate is really based on a true (according to biblical description) versus a false or at least distorted view of God's attributes and dynamic qualities. Nevertheless, the carnal-spiritual conflict looms large in the debate. The Puritans stressed the fact that man is a slave to his senses, especially to that of the eye. Therefore humankind cannot bear the thought of an invisible God, who in his very essence is entirely different from man, his creature. Thomas Watson states that man is prone to idolatry "Because we are led much by visible objects, and love to have our senses pleased. Men naturally fancy a god that they may see. The true God is invisible, which makes the idolater worship something he can see" (25). The desire to freeze God's eternal presence in time is regarded as the basis for the making of images. Calvin said that images are made "God's ears" (I.xi.10) as if they were a connection from the visible into the invisible world. Calvin says that no man is stupid enough to mistake an image for a spiritual entity. It is

because Baxter says: "I think I never knew or heard of a lawful stage play, comedy, or tragedy, in the age that I have lived in" (CD 700).
rather the desire to have an "ear of God" which prompts man to the use of images: "Now it appears that men do not rush forth into the cult of images before they have been imbued with some opinion too crass - not indeed that they regard them as gods, but because they imagine that some power of divinity dwells there" (I.xi.9).

The desire to arrest the presence of God at man's choosing links the Eucharist to the issue of image worship. The Puritans saw the rite of transubstantiation as an attempt to control God's presence among a congregation in the visible sign of the host. Because of the two components, making the invisible God manifest, and the subjection of God to man's will, the mass was seen as the epitome of idolatry. The preacher and martyr John Bradford (c.1520-1555) polemically sums up the Reformed position on the mass: "Ah, wretches then that we be, if we will defile either part with the rose-coloured whore of Babylon's filthy mass-abomination! It had been better for us never to have been washed than so to wallow ourselves in the filthy mass abomination" (vol.1, 390). The reference to the whore of Babylon as well as the use of the word abomination refer to the fact that the bread becomes an idol which is set up in the church instead of God. Bradford explains his position in a letter to Richard Hopkins more clearly when he says that "the mass [is] of all idols that ever was the most abominable, and blasphemous to Christ, and his priesthood, manhood and sacrifice" (vol.1, 392), and that those who attend it are "grievous sinners, and breakers of the second commandment" (319). Bradford also calls God's sentence of damnation on all idolaters a "terrible sentence to all mass-mongers and worshippers of things made with the hands of bakers, carpenters etc.!" (393). Bradford denies the Catholic claim that, just like images in churches, the mass was of edification to the worshipper. The mass, says Bradford, like the pictures was pretended by the Roman church to be a means of instruction for the lay people, but "at length was delivered to destroy preaching" so that "ignorance came into the church of God when preaching was put down and massing came up" (vol. 2, 292).
The controversy of the Eucharist is especially interesting since the bread and wine as a token of God's presence were viewed by the Reformed camp as the only legitimate images, or representations of God's presence. God knew about the creaturly weakness for visible signs, and therefore introduced certain legitimate ones. As one of the reasons against images, Calvin says that "somehow or other it seems to me unworthy of their holiness for them to take on images other than those living and symbolical ones which the Lord has consecrated by his word. I mean Baptism and the Lord's supper...by which our eyes must be too intensely gripped and too sharply affected to seek other images forged by human ingenuity" (vol. 1, 144). The reformers agreed that the idolatrous perversion of the only visible signs God had explicitly sanctioned was deplorable. However, even within the Protestant camp there was disunity about the exact nature of these signs. The different position in Eucharist debate could be expressed in Saussurean language as follows: The "radical" Zwinglian sacramentarians claimed that the elements were merely symbols or signs which point to the signified, whereas the orthodox Catholic opinion was that the signifier is (contains) the signified. The third position was the Calvinistic one. Calvin retained some of the mystery that Zwingli and Bullinger had discarded. Taking an intermediary position Calvin claimed that the signifier did indeed constitute the signified, and that not only by the faith of the partaker but also through the sign itself (R.Dabney 810-11). Whereas Zwingli denied the presence of the flesh in the bread, Calvin asserted that the believer experiences the spiritual as well as the bodily presence of Christ, but without any change of the substance in the bread.

Despite the varying positions among the Protestants, all agreed that the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation was the epitome of image worship for the Reformed theologians. Heinrich Bullinger termed the host "Das Götzenbrot" (The Idol bread) or

---

46Luther's position of consubstantiation is really the orthodox Catholic one merely without its sacrificial component, and with the modification that the bread is present as well as the true human body of Christ.
"brötinen Christum" (Christ made of bread), and his criticism of the worshipping of the host is probably the most interesting one. First, he condemns the monetary schemes and greed of the Church in connection with the Supper. He laments the fact that the bread has been turned into a veritable commodity (Kauffmanschatz) and idol (Werke, 51). Second, Bullinger describes the moment of transubstantiation as an attempt to violently force Christ from his heavenly dwelling into the bread:

...dieweil wir sagen, das brot seige Christus und nit Christus bildnuß. Derthalben wir ihn von himmeln schrentzend, darin er einist gefahren ist und sülichend ihn dann hierumb, wie es uns beliebt, jagend ihn mit einer schällen von einem tempel zum ander, von einem dorff bauernhaus zum andern, und wer daherkömmt, dem können wir einen hergott machen unnd geben (52).47

Bullinger then speaks against this attempt to control God's presence as a violation of His sovereignty and a reduction of God to the limited mental capacity of the worshipper. Richard Sibbes likewise sees the worshipping of idols as an attempt to arrest God's presence. Sibbes defines idolatry as fixing "his presence to that we should not fix it; to annex it to statues, images, crucifixes, the picture of the Virgin Mary and the like (287). The argument of Christ's bodily presence in the bread also shows how Luther's tolerance toward pictures as well as toward the corporal presence on Christ in the elements are related. The Reformed theologians rejected any attempt to confine God to a certain locality which would misrepresent his divinity. Luther, however, since he held the belief that Christ was bodily present in the sacrament, did not see the related problem in the representation of God in pictures. Therefore he could say that pictures and images in churches are in

47Whereby we try to be smarter than the heathen in calling the bread not Christ, but a picture of Christ. Therefore we tear him from heaven where he had once ascended, and drag him through the mud as we please, chase him with a bell from one temple to the next, from one farm house to the next, and whoever comes we can produce a god for him and give it to him.
themselves indifferent, whereas the Reformed theologians equated a picture in the church (unless it was for mere historical information) with an idol.

14. Iconoclastic Propaganda

Another aspect of idols which has to be dealt with is a literary component of the war against idols. The Puritan iconoclastic literature contains striking examples of the polemics used in the debate. Usually the Puritans tirelessly presented Catholic objections to Protestant worship in the form of questions in their writings, and then tried to refute them systematically. On occasion, however, the Puritan writers employed iconoclastic propaganda which was directed at the heart of the reader. These striking illustrations create certain counter-images in the reader's mind, images, which make idols appear horrific and harmful to the individual. These images were often accompanied by an urgent appeal for the removal of such dangers from the liturgy. Richard Sibbes is a master of drawing such illustrations:

What if there were liberty given for men to go about the country to poison people! Would we endure such persons, and not lay hold of them? So in that we are freed from Jesuits who go about the country to poison the souls of God's people...See from hence that there can be no toleration of that religion, no more, as was said, than to tolerate poiseners" (Vol.2, 288).

The vivid imagery of the "popish" religion as poison is unique with Sibbes, who doesn't stop at the concept of poisoning, but extends this metaphor to feeding and poisoned nourishment; "as they said of coloquinida in their pottage (2 Kings 4: 40), so there is death in the pot of Romish Religion" (288). Later on he adds the drink to the meal by accusing the papists of being "drunk with the whore's cup" and he follows up with the warning that "we know a drunken man dares do anything." The comparison of the idolater with that of
a drunkard gives rise to connotations of addiction and also of a certain stupor which serves Sibbes as an explanation why reasonable human beings worship objects made out of stone rather than a living God. They worship idols "partly because they are drunk, and partly because they are stupid, like the idols they worship" (380).

These poignant illustrations of the deadly spiritual effect of images are reminiscent of Karlstadt's example of the knife that has to be taken away from a playing child to secure the infant's safety. Illustrations like this served greatly to influence the common folk and raised a strong emotional resentment against Roman Catholicism among them. In another allegory, Sibbes sums up the contagious nature of image worship and idolatry which may be conveyed through the reading of "wrong" literature:

In this case it is with the soul of man as with water, that relisheth of that soil through which it runs, if it run thorough a hot soil, as baths through a sulphury soil, it tastes of that. So the spirit of man tastes of those authors he runs through" (381).

Richard Baxter, in spite of his tolerance, also employs the "poison analogy" to his assessment of magistracy's right to impose its liturgical preferences on congregations:

If an apothecary or physician, or king, command his servant to sell arsenic to all that will buy it, without exception, the servant may not lawfully sell it to such as he knoweth mean to poison themselves or others by it. If the commander be a sober man, the servant ought to suppose that he intended such exceptions, though he expressed them not. But if he expressed the contrary, he commanded contrary to God's command without authority, and is not to be obeyed (123).

---

48 Although it should be noted that according to several historians, after the successive tyrannies of Henry, Mary and Elizabeth the non-conformists and a great part of the populace suffered exceedingly, under the infamous Stuart cupidity for absolute power. Thus the populace entertained already a great degree of hostility toward Catholicism.
It should be observed, that compared to many tracts and treatises in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the seemingly outrageous polemics used by the Puritans were relatively harmless. They served as illustrations to gain the attention of the public mind and were allowable as long as they weren't excessive and distracted from the gospel message.

Bunyan points to the biblical precedent of illustrations when he says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{The Prophets used much by metaphors} \\
\text{To set forth truth; Yea, who so considers} \\
\text{Christ, his apostles too, shall plainly see,} \\
\text{That truths to this day in such mantles be}
\end{align*}
\]

(Bunyan vol.3, 86).

The fact that Bunyan had felt compelled to write his "Apology" shows that some people were overly zealous in their striving for purity in all ecclesiastical and religious matters. One of the best instances where the desire for purity of worship bordered on extremism is the musical element of the liturgy.

15. Extremism?: Puritans and Music in the Liturgy

As with all reform movements, there were in Puritanism extreme opinions concerning the purification of liturgy. In their zeal to return to a truly apostolic and biblical way of worship and to get rid of "man's inventions" (CC, Baxter 705), some Puritan individuals and groups went to the other extreme of legalism by trying to establish a rigid standard for worship and therefore creating the same oppression which the Episcopalian system had imposed on them. One of the best indicators for this extremism is the use of instrumental music during worship and the opposition against written prayers in liturgies. The anti-musical pattern which accompanied the phenomenon of iconoclasm appeared quite early in the Reformation. Karlstadt, for example, removed the church organ out of his parish at Orlamünde and instated the singing of Psalms. Some Puritans followed his
example and, although they cherished organ music outside the worship context, removed
the organs as human innovations and snares of idolatrous Roman Catholic worship.
Richard Baxter opposed these extreme measures in his writings. He said that a return to
apostolic worship in all its simplicity may be misleading, because the circumstances have
changed. He corrects his colleague William Perkins' statement that since the apostolic
church had no organs, the church of England should also do without them. The early
churches, says Baxter, often lived under persecution and "they had not temples, nor always
a fixed meeting place" (CD 705). Baxter counters the popular argument that instrumental
music in the church merely pleases the "carnal mind of pleasure" with the remark that one
"may say as much of a melodious, harmonious concert of voices, which is more excellent
music than any instruments." In a very practical way, Baxter demolishes an argument which
is still used in some Presbyterian churches today to justify Psalmody as the only legitimate
form of church music: "For whereas they say it [instrumental music] is a human invention;
so are our tunes (and meter and versions). Yea, it is not a human invention; as the last
psalm and many others show, which call us to praise the Lord with instruments of
music" (705).

There are generally two important facts which have to be taken into account when
discussing the Puritans' estimation of music. First of all, there has hardly been a greater
distortion of facts than in the case of the Puritans and the arts. Percy A. Scholes' book The
Puritans and Music shows how much the still current opinion of the Puritans as aesthetic
barbarians is a result of poor scholarship and research.49 John Milton's poetry and the case
of John Bunyan, who carved himself a Flute out of his prison stool, are only the most
common examples against the calumny that Puritanism and Art are incompatible. The
Puritan Oliver Cromwell was a lover of choral song, possessed an organ and employed a
private organist. For his first daughter's wedding, Cromwell engaged an orchestra of forty-

eight and had 'mixed dancing,' and for his second daughter's marriage he himself took some part in a vocal-dramatic performance (Scholes 5). Instead of suppressing the arts, during the eleven years of Puritan rule in England, music flourished as never before. For example, opera in England began first under Puritan rule with "The Siege of Rhodes, &c.," in 1656, and flourished as never before (ibid).

The second important consideration is that many of the seemingly austere interdictions depended on the Puritan view of the Sabbath. In accordance with Calvin's hermeneutics of synecdoche, the substance of the Sabbath is "[rest] from our own works, and a conscientious discharge of our religious duty" (Watson 93). As with the second commandment, the fourth was adopted as part of the moral law of God, and therefore not seen as abrogated by Christ's coming. And just as the Puritan application of the second commandment and the consequent iconoclasm was restricted to liturgy and worship, so the fourth commandment was only to be observed within the God-given parameters, namely on Sunday. The Puritans did not follow a double standard. In a fallen world, one had to work for his living and "religion gives no warrant for idleness" (Watson 97). Yet the Sunday was to be kept as a day where the soul was to do "angels work" and "delight in the goodness of God." And any distractions, such as music, sports and other pastimes which were part of the weekly activities, were to be avoided on that day. Therefore many of the Puritans' statements about art and music are to be seen in the Sabbath context, and cannot be applied generally.

Not only music, but also written works were sometimes targets of extreme opinions. Even Richard Sibbes in his writings raises the "popish books and writers" to the status of idols which should be destroyed. Concerning censorship, the Protestant should "learn this of the Papists, who hate our books, burn them or lock them up safe." Baxter condemns the radical abrogation of pictures and images and written prayers in the religious context as Karlstadt had done, and it is worth quoting his opinion in full. It not only constitutes a tolerance which was rare among the Puritans when it came to worship, but also
demonstrates an amazing insight into the connection between the word as a sign or signifier of the ideas created in the mind:

As the word image is taken in general for signs, there is no question, but they are frequently to be used; as all men's words are the images, that is the signifiers of his mind; and all men's writings are the same made visible. It is therefore a blind confounding error of some now among us (otherwise very sober and good men) who accuse all forms of prayer and of preaching as sinful, because (say they) they are idols, or images of prayer and of preaching; they are neither engraven nor painted images of any creature; but all words are or should be signs of the speaker's mind (CD 698).

Baxter is of the opinion that there is such a close connection between sign and signifier, that a purification of any signs -as in the case of the written prayers- would lead to ridiculous consequences. Baxter alludes here to a controversy about external forms of worship, which demonstrates the danger of extremism as regards spiritualizing and purifying worship. The mere usage of the Lords prayer in its original form and the use of sermon notes was already seen as idolatry and as an adherence to mere outward forms which hindered the free unfolding of God's spirit within the Christian50. Baxter takes this extremity to its utmost conclusion when he says that:

All words are signs but never the more for being premeditated written. But because prayer in the full sense is desire expressed, therefore the expressions are not the signs of such prayer, but part of the prayer itself, as the body is of the man. And if you will only call the inward desires by the word of prayer than the words are the sign for such prayer. Nor is a form, that is fore-conceived or premeditated words (whether in mind or in writing) any more an image of prayer, than extempore prayer is. And according to this [extreme] opinion, all books are sinful images and all sermon notes, and the printing of the Bible itself, and all pious letters of one friend to another, and all catechisms (CD 698).

50Some examples of this extremist attitude are found in The Writings of John Greenwood (1587-1590) in his "Answer to George Gifford's Pretended Defence of Read Praiers and Devised Litourgies" (30-92).
Baxter's approach to liturgy is characterized, at least where worship is concerned, with an emphasis on the internal worship and the desire to avoid disunity among Christians in matters of worship. If everyone was more concerned about their own growth as a Christian and so would become strong enough to bear some of the imposed liturgical burdens, there would be much more of "Catholic Unity" in the church of England. Baxter concedes the damage that the use of pompous music and certain liturgical forms may hold for a weak brother, yet one should not make a law out of that consideration and therefore Baxter would wish church music to be installed, but only "where the congregation can accord in the use of it."

In most places where the Reformed position gained ground, the abolition of instrumental music accompanied the removal of idols from the churches. Karlstadt's first action in his parish church in Orlamünde had been the removal of idols and the dismantling of the church organ. In 1524, the Zürich council legislated several liturgical changes including the suspension of instrumental and vocal music in the worship services. Zwingli and Calvin both argued that any such liturgical elements as instrumental music and adornment in churches were founded on the Jewish conception of a church and therefore should be abolished as shadows and types of the Jewish dispensation. "To sing the praises of God upon the harp and the psaltery," says Calvin "unquestionably formed a part of the training of the law and of the service of God under that dispensation of shadows and figures; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving" (On Ps.72.22). Once again, at the root of the Reformed position is the knowledge of God. Calvin observes: "We are to remember that the worship of God was never understood to consist in such outward services, which were only necessary to help forward a people as yet weak and rude in knowledge in the spiritual worship of God." Calvin continues to say that with the appearance of Christ, all such crutches should be thrown away and therefore a more spiritual worship instituted. The Roman Catholic use of images and church organs are rejected as such "crutches" by Calvin: "From this it appears that the Papists,...in employing
instrumental music cannot be said so much to imitate the practice of God's ancient people as to ape it in a senseless and absurd manner, exhibiting a silly delight in that worship of the Old Testament which was figurative and terminated with the Gospel" (CC vol.5, 495).

Some Puritan ministers and their congregations followed what they believed to be Calvin's correct interpretation of scripture and removed organs from their churches. James Begg recounts, for example, that the Westminster assembly had stated in a letter to the Scottish national assembly that: "plain and powerful preaching" had been set up and "The great organs at Paul's and Westminster taken down," and "all by authority in a quiet manner, at noonday without tumult" (James Begg 31-32). The Dutch Reformed Church also adopted the Reformed liturgy. In 1581, the National Synod at Middleburg declared against instrumental music, and the Synods of Holland and Zealand adopted the same resolution: "That they would endeavour to obtain of the magistrate the laying aside of organs, and the singing with them in churches" (Girardeau 158).

It seems difficult not to agree with Richard Baxter's condemnation on banning instruments from worship. On the other hand, if one tries to understand the rejection of organs and instrumental music from the service as a part of the general rejection of Roman Catholic worship, the action of the Reformers may appear less harsh. Richard Baxter's tolerance in this matter was rare for his time, and one should not condemn the Puritans too quickly, especially in light of the fact that they loved and practiced all kinds of musical entertainment outside the worship context.

16. Conclusion

The literature of the Puritans should be approached with an adequate understanding of their reasons for iconoclasm. Only when Puritan literature is seen as an essentially theological body of writing that is based on a Calvinistic reading of the Bible, can their
motivation for iconoclasm be understood. This motivation stems from their biblically-based anthropology and a theistic world view. The Puritans thought that man is created in God's image with a built-in drive to worship Him. However, they thought, human depravity has changed man's original righteousness into a constant proclivity to idolatry. They believed that when man rebels against God, the compulsion to worship does not disappear; instead it necessarily refocuses on something or someone else. For the Puritans idolatrous worship distorts human life at its center, because the center of life is worship. Thus a reformation of society must begin with worship, because right worship implies both a right knowledge of God and a re-alignment with reality. It follows that the Protestant iconoclastic controversy as reflected in the literature under discussion is not a political affair but primarily a theological one. Yet because of the holistic thinking of the Puritans, no sphere of reality could escape the outworking of their inner conviction. Their consistent alignment of their lives with their metaphysical views of reality affected their stands on church and civil government.51

Because of the Puritan's holistic view of man and his need for reformation in connection with the prevalent world view of the sixteenth century, we can state that the Puritans were not religious fanatics who had nothing better to do than fill page after page with religious rhetoric in order to incite a rebellion against the established religion. Contrary to our day, the sixteenth century generally believed in the metaphysical reality of God as a basis for all religion and life. Therefore, the arguments about liturgical aspects that might seem petty and insignificant to us were debates over symbols and signs pointing to a certain conception of God and reality. The liturgical creed of the worshipper was part of his identity and an expression of his world view. The charge of the reformers was that

51 The outworkings of the Puritan world view into the spheres of civil politics has led some scholars to believe that their writings were merely politically motivated. Michael Walze in The Revolution of the Saints, and Quentin Skinner in The Foundations of Modern Political Thought argue that Calvinist iconoclasm was merely a political movement, which reacted to the current political and social exegencies. A detailed discussion of their views is found Eire's War Against the Idols (p.281-310).
the Catholic liturgy distorted reality and focused on man rather than on God. Such a claim could only be made and substantiated with the Bible as a universally accepted point of reference. The acceptance of the Bible as a divine revelation and anchor of reality was indeed the "rock" on which these men stood. The constant reference to scripture marks the development of the iconoclastic doctrine from its inception to the apex it reached in Calvin.

The Puritans were not narrow-minded fanatics, but rather they were social visionaries, who sought to make their spiritual conviction a visible reality. This goal could be achieved only through the operation of divine grace, by which man's depraved and rebellious nature was changed into one that could adhere to God's law out of love. The attempt to establish a "New Jerusalem" in the American colonies comes as close to the Puritan ideal as history allowed. Their view of civil and ecclesiastical government alike was affected by their consistent application of their spiritual conviction, and no other man influenced the Puritan mind more than John Calvin.

As we have seen, the arguments of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt have retained their force into the 17th and even the 18th century, largely due to the adaptation of them by men like Zwingli and Calvin. But the importance of John Calvin's influence on the debate in general and on Puritan literature in particular cannot be overstated. His influence was twofold. First, he brought the academic discussion of idolatry down to a very practical level that enabled the Puritans to integrate his view in their pastoral theology. Secondly, his synecdochical exposition of the Decalogue exerted a tremendous influence on the Puritan exegesis. Calvin's hermeneutical tool added new depth and dimension to the understanding of the second commandment. Calvin's influence is not confined to the literary form of the exposition, although the Puritans have certainly made use of that. The proverbial thoroughness and exhaustiveness of Puritan exposition reflects the synecdochical principle. For example, when preaching or writing on a particular passage, the text was first "opened" by giving the context of and purpose of the passage. Then the meaning of the text was explored and finally a practical application given (Packer 284).
But Calvin's contribution lies even more in exegetical content than in literary style. It is important to realize that Calvin's synechdocal interpretation was a revolutionary innovation. He explored every possible angle of the commandments and extended their scope and meaning to cover every possible area of life. The commandment which had previously required passive obedience now demanded positive action. Furthermore, the realization of man's depraved and sinful nature, whose inclination to idolatry was manifested in the Roman Catholic liturgy, was greatly emphasized. The Puritan's literary works prove their adoption of Calvin's principle. Their writings on the Decalogue denounce any degree of internal and external idolatry with the help of all possible literary and rhetorical means. They try to reveal idolatry in all its various degrees and hidden dangers, thus necessitating an uncompromising stand on the issue. The Puritans faced much opposition, of course, and went through many hardships in order to avoid compromising their conviction that images of the mind as well as physical images are contrary to God's word. But these hardships only encouraged the Puritans to pursue their dream of a society built upon God's principles.

Especially the Puritan independent and congregational faction, who believed strongest in the practical implementation of Calvin's theology as they perceived it, had a large influence on English politics, as is seen by the abortive attempt of the Westminster assembly to institute a Presbyterian church government. The conviction that idolatry is a sign of spiritual blindness contributed to their innovative view of the King as subordinate to God's law, as set forth in Samuel Rutherford's Lex Rex. Despite their primarily spiritual motivation, the Puritans' view on idolatry is undoubtedly connected to the execution of King Charles the first in 1649; not because the Puritans disputed the divine right of Kings; in fact many Puritans disagreed with the death penalty as too harsh a sentence. But they believed that a King who set himself up as an idol irrespective of God's interdiction of images usurps the purity of God's law just as an image does in the context of worship.
Bibliography of primary sources


Neal, Daniel. *The History Of The Puritans; Or Protestat Nonconformists From The Reformation In 1517 To The Revolution In 1688.* London: Thomas Tegg and Son, 1837.


