

CANDLES, CROSSES, ALTARS, PICTURES: WHAT DO THE HOMILIES SAY?

Church Association Tract 224

Candles:

“In the day it needeth not, but was ever a proverb of foolishness to light a candle at noontime; and in the night it availeth not to light a candle before the blind; and God hath neither use nor honour thereof. Lactantius saith, ‘Seemeth he therefore to be in his right mind which offereth up to the Giver of all light, the light of a wax candle for a gift?’” — *Homily against the Peril of Idolatry*.

“Where the devil is resident, and hath his plough going, then away with books and up with candles; away with Bibles and up with beads; away with the light of the Gospel and up with the light of candles, yea, at noon days.” — *Sermon by the martyred Bishop Latimer, when the Act of Uniformity passed the House of Lords*.

Crosses:

“All crosses to be utterly defaced, broken, and destroyed.” — *Archbishop Grindal (called by Lord Bacon “the greatest prelate of the land”) in his Instructions to Laity*.

“We are threatened with a revival of the follies of a bygone superstition. A suspicious predilection has been manifested for the emblem of the cross.” — *Bishop Maltby in his Charge, 1841*.

Altars:

“Churchwardens shall see that in their churches and chapels all altars be utterly taken down....and that the altar stones be broken and bestowed to some common use.” — *Orders of Archbishop Grindal the Reformer*.

“I need not remind you of the remarks of Mr Justice Willes in a recent case in which he censured even the Clerk of the Justices for using the word ‘altar,’ and having regard to the Judgement of the Privy Council in the case of *Westerton v. Liddell*, I cannot allow a plea to be filed in this Court which calls the communion-table an ‘altar.’ If this case goes elsewhere, I should be blamed for allowing such a word to go from this Court.” — *The Worshipful Chancellor Christie, M.A., in the Consistory Court of Manchester, 1873*.

Pictures:

“But away for shame with these coloured cloaks of idolatry, of the books and scriptures of images and pictures to teach idiots, nay to make idiots and stark fools and beasts of Christians.

“The New Testament of our Saviour Jesus Christ containing the Word of Life, is a more lively express and true image of our Saviour than all carved, graven, molten and painted in the world be.” — *Homily against the Peril of Idolatry*.

Note.

Lighted Candles (unless for the purpose of simply giving light in a dark church) are illegal and have been condemned by the Privy Council and other Courts of this Realm. In *Read v. The Bp. of Lincoln* the bishop was acquitted by the Privy Council solely on the ground that the incumbent of the church was the party responsible for this breach of law.

Stoles (though not Scarves) are illegal of whatever colour, and have been condemned by the Judgement of the Dean of Arches.

Note.

The Homilies of the Church of England are certain sermons appointed by authority to be read in Churches, and are declared by Article XXXV to “contain a godly and wholesome doctrine,” and are “to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.” To these Articles every Clergyman at his Ordination has subscribed.