

OpenTheo

THE BOOKS OF HOMILIES: Book 1—XI. Against whoredom and adultery

April 15, 2021



Alastair Roberts

For the Easter season, I am reading the Books of Homilies, using John Griffiths' 1859 edition (https://prydain.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/the_two_books_of_homilies.pdf).

If you have enjoyed my output, please tell your friends. If you are interested in supporting my videos and podcasts and my research more generally, please consider supporting my work on Patreon (<https://www.patreon.com/zugzwanged>), using my PayPal account (<https://bit.ly/2RLaUcB>), or by buying books for my research on Amazon (https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/36WVSWCK4X33O?ref_=wl_share).

The audio of all of my videos is available on my Soundcloud account: <https://soundcloud.com/alastairadversaria>. You can also listen to the audio of these episodes on iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/alastairs-adversaria/id1416351035?mt=2>.

Transcript

A sermon against whoredom and uncleanness. And hath always been reputed before God and all good men. And how grievously it hath been punished, both by the law of God and the laws of diverse princes.

Again, to show you certain remedies whereby ye may, through the grace of God, eschew this most detestable sin of whoredom and fornication, and lead your lives in all honesty and cleanness. And that ye may perceive that fornication and whoredom are in the sight of God most abominable sins, ye shall call to remembrance this commandment of God, Thou shalt not commit adultery. By the witch word adultery, although it be properly understand of the unlawful commixtion, or joining together of a married man with any woman beside his wife, or of a wife with any man beside her husband, yet thereby is signified also all unlawful use of those parts which be ordained for generation.

And this one commandment forbidding adultery, doth sufficiently paint and set out

before our eyes the greatness of this sin of whoredom, and manifestly declareth how greatly it ought to be abhorred of all honest and faithful persons. And that none of us all shall think himself accepted from this commandment, whether we be old or young, married or unmarried, man or woman, hear what God the Father saith by his most excellent prophet Moses, There shall be no whore among the daughters of Israel, nor no whoremonger among the sons of Israel. Here is whoredom, fornication, and all uncleanness forbidden to all kinds of people, all degrees, and all ages, without exception.

And that we shall not doubt but that this precept, or commandment, pertaineth to us indeed, hear what Christ, the perfect Teacher of all truths, saith in the New Testament, But I say unto you, whosoever seeth a woman, to have his lust of her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Here our Saviour Christ doth not only confirm and establish the law against adultery given in the Old Testament of God the Father by his servant Moses, and maketh it of full strength continually to remain among the professors of his name in the new law, but he also, condemning the gross interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees, which taught that the aforesaid commandment only required to abstain from the outward adultery, and not from the filthy desires and impure lusts, teacheth us an exact and full perfection of purity and cleanness of life, both to keep our bodies undefiled, and our hearts pure and free from all evil thoughts, carnal desires, and fleshly consents. How can we then be free from this commandment, where so great charge is laid upon us? May a servant do what he will in anything, having a commandment of his master to the contrary? Is not Christ our master? Are not we his servants? How then may we neglect our master's will and pleasure, and follow our own will and fantasy? Ye are my friends, saith Christ, if ye keep those things that I command you.

Now hath Christ our master commanded us that we should forsake all uncleanness and lechery, both in body and spirit. This therefore must we do, if we look to please God. In the Gospel of St. Matthew we read that the scribes and Pharisees were grievously offended with Christ, because his disciples did not keep the traditions of the forefathers, for they washed not their hands when they went to dinner or supper.

And among other things Christ answered and said, Hear and understand, not that thing which entereth into the mouth defileth the man, but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth the man. For those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, breaking of wedlock, whoredom, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

These are the things which defile a man. Here may we see that not only murder, theft, false witness and blasphemy defile a man, but also evil thoughts, breaking of wedlock, fornication and whoredom. Who is now of so little wit that he will esteem whoredom and fornication to be things of small importance and of no weight before God? Christ, which is the truth and cannot lie, saith that evil thoughts, breaking of wedlock, whoredom and

fornication defile a man, that is to say, corrupt both the body and soul of man, and make them, of the temples of the Holy Spirit, the filthy dunghill or dungeon of all unclean spirits, of the house of God, the dwelling place of Satan.

Again, in the Gospel of St. John, when the woman taken in adultery was brought unto Christ, said not he unto her, Go thy way, and sin no more. Doth not he here call whoredom sin? And what is the reward of sin but everlasting death? If whoredom be sin, then it is not lawful for us to commit it. For St. John saith, He that commiteth sin is of the devil.

And our Saviour saith, Every one that commiteth sin is the servant of sin. If whoredom had not been sin, surely St. John Baptist would never have rebuked King Herod for taking his brother's wife. But he told him plainly that it was not lawful for him to take his brother's wife.

He winked not at that whoredom of Herod, although he were a king of great power, but boldly reprov'd him for his wicked and abominable living, although for the same he lost his head. But he would rather suffer death than see God so dishonoured by the breaking of His holy precept or commandment, than to suffer whoredom to be unrebuked, even in a king. If whoredom had been but a pastime, a dalliance, and a thing not to be passed of, as many count it nowadays, truly John had been more than twice mad, if he would have had the displeasure of a king, if he would have been cast into prison and lost his head for a trifle.

But John knew right well how filthy, stinking, and abominable the sin of whoredom is in the sight of God. Therefore would not he leave it unrebuked? No, not in a king. If whoredom be not lawful in a king, neither is it lawful in a subject.

If whoredom be not lawful in a public or common officer, neither is it lawful in a private person. If it be not lawful neither in king nor subject, neither in common officer nor private person, truly then is it lawful in no man nor woman, of whatsoever degree or age they be. Furthermore, in the Acts of the Apostles we read that, when the apostles and elders with the whole congregation were gathered together to pacify the hearts of the faithful dwelling at Antioch, which were disquieted through the false doctrine of certain Jewish preachers, they sent word to the brethren that it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them to charge them with no more than with necessary things.

Among other, they willed them to abstain from idolatry and fornication, from which, said they, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Note here how these holy and blessed fathers of Christ's church would charge the congregation with no more things than were necessary. Mark also how among those things from which they commanded the brethren of Antioch to abstain, fornication and whoredom is numbered.

It is therefore necessary, by the determination and consent of the Holy Ghost and the

apostles and elders with the whole congregation, that, as from idolatry and superstition, so likewise we must abstain from fornication and whoredom. Is it necessary unto salvation to abstain from idolatry? So is it to abstain from whoredom. Is there any nearer way to lead unto damnation than to be an idolater? No.

Even so, neither is there a nearer way to damnation than to be a fornicator and a whoremonger. Now where are those people which so lightly esteem breaking of wedlock, whoredom, fornication and adultery? It is necessary, saith the Holy Ghost, the blessed apostles, the elders, with the whole congregation of Christ. It is necessary to salvation, say they, to abstain from whoredom.

If it be necessary unto salvation, then woe be to them which, neglecting their salvation, give their minds to so filthy and stinking sin, to so wicked vice, to such detestable abomination. You have been taught in the first part of this sermon against adultery, how that vice at this day reigneth most above all other vices, and what is meant by this word adultery, and how Holy Scripture dissuadeth or discounseleth from doing that filthy sin, and finally what corruption cometh to man's soul through the sin of adultery. Now to proceed further, let us hear what the blessed apostle St. Paul saith to this matter, writing to the Romans he hath these words, Let us cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armours of light.

Let us walk honestly, as it were in the daytime, not in eating and drinking, neither in chamberings and wantonness, neither in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of it. Here the holy apostle exhorteth us to cast away the works of darkness, which, among other, he calleth gluttonous eating, drinking, chambering, and wantonness, which all are ministers unto that vice, and preparations to induce and bring in the filthy sin of the flesh.

He calleth them the deeds and works of darkness, not only because they are customarily done in darkness or in the night-time, for every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd, but that they lead the right way unto that utter darkness, where weeping and gnashing of teeth shall be. And he saith in another place of the same epistle, They that are in the flesh cannot please God. We are debtors not to the flesh, that we should live after the flesh, for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.

Again he saith, Fly from whoredom, for every sin that a man commiteth is without his body, but whosoever commiteth whoredom sinneth against his own body. Do ye not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, whom also ye have of God, and ye are not your own, for ye are dearly bought? Glorify God in your body, etc. And a little afore he saith, Do ye not know that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an whore? God forbid! Do ye not know that he which cleaveth to a whore is made one body

with her? There shall be two in one flesh, saith he, but he that cleaveth to the Lord is one spirit.

What godly reasons doth the blessed apostle St. Paul bring forth here to dissuade or discounsel us from whoredom and all uncleanness? Your members, saith he, are the temple of the Holy Ghost which whosoever doth defile, God will destroy him, as saith St. Paul. If we be the temple of the Holy Ghost, how unfitting then is it to drive that Holy Spirit from us through whoredom and in his place to set the wicked spirits of uncleanness and fornication and to be joined and do service to them. Ye are dearly bought, saith he, therefore glorify God in your bodies.

Christ, that innocent Lamb of God, hath bought us from the servitude of the devil, not with corruptible gold and silver, but with his most precious and dear heart blood. To what intent? That we should fall again into our own uncleanness and abominable living? Nay, verily, but that we should serve him all the days of our life in holiness and righteousness, that we should glorify him in our bodies by purity and cleanness of life. He declareth also that our bodies are the members of Christ.

How unseemly a thing is it then to cease to be incorporate or embodied and one with Christ, and through whoredom to be joined and made all one within whore. What greater dishonor or injury can we do to Christ than to take away from him the members of his body and to join them to whores, devils and wicked spirits? And what more dishonor can we do to ourselves than through uncleanness to lose so excellent a dignity and freedom and to become bond slaves and miserable captives to the spirits of darkness? Let us therefore consider first the glory of Christ and then our estate, our dignity and freedom, wherein God hath set us by giving us his Holy Spirit, and let us valiantly defend the same against Satan and all his crafty assaults, that Christ may be honoured, and that we lose not our liberty or freedom, but still remain in one spirit with him. Moreover, in his epistle to the Ephesians, the blessed apostle willeth us to be so pure and free from adultery, fornication and all uncleanness, that we not once name them among us, as it becometh saints, nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not comely, but rather giving of thanks.

For this ye know, saith he, that no whoremonger, either unclean person or covetous person, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God, and that we should remember to be holy, pure and free from all uncleanness. The holy apostle calleth us saints, because we are sanctified and made holy in the blood of Christ through the Holy Ghost. Now if we be saints, what have we to do with the manners of the heathen? Saint Peter saith, As he which called you is holy, even so be ye holy also in all your conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

Hitherto have we heard how grievous a sin fornication and whoredom is, and how greatly God doth abhor it throughout the whole Scripture. How can it any otherwise be than a sin

of most abomination, seeing it once may not be named among the Christians, much less it may in any point be committed. And surely if we would weigh the greatness of this sin, and consider it in the right kind, we should find the sin of whoredom to be that most filthy lake, foul puddle and stinking sink, where into all kinds of sins and evils flow, where also they have their resting place and abiding.

For hath not the adulterer a pride in his whoredom? As the wise man saith, They are glad when they have done evil, and rejoice in things that are stark nought. Is not the adulterer also idle, and delighteth in no godly exercise, but only in that his most filthy and beastly pleasure? Is not his mind plucked and utterly drawn away from all virtuous studies and fruitful labours, and only given to carnal and fleshly imaginations? Doth not the whoremonger give his mind to gluttony, that he may be the more apt to serve his lusts and carnal pleasures? Doth not the adulterer give his mind to covetousness, and to polling and pilling of others, that he may be the more able to maintain his harlots and whores, and to continue in his filthy and unlawful love? Swelleth he not also with envy against others, fearing that his prey should be allured and taken away from him? Again, is he not ireful and replenished with wrath and displeasure, even against his best beloved, if at any time his beastly and devilish request be lettered? What sin or kind of sin is it that is not joined with fornication and whoredom? It is a monster of many heads, it receiveth all kinds of vices, and refuseth all kinds of virtues, if one several sin bringeth damnation. What is to be thought of that sin which is accompanied with all evils, and hath waiting on it, whatsoever is hateful to God, damnable to man, and pleasant to Satan? Great is the damnation that hangeth over the heads of fornicators and adulterers.

What shall I speak of other incommodities which issue and flow out of this stinking puddle of whoredom? Is not that treasure which before all other is most regarded of honest persons, the good fame and name of man and woman, lost through whoredom? What patrimony or livelihood, what substance, what goods, what riches, doth whoredom shortly consume and bring to naught? What valiantness and strength is many times made weak and destroyed with whoredom? What wit is so fine, that is not doted and defaced through whoredom? What beauty, although it were never so excellent, is not disfigured through whoredom? Is not whoredom an enemy to the pleasant flower of youth, and bringeth it not grey hairs and old age before the time? What gift of nature, although it were never so precious, is not corrupted with whoredom? Come not the French pox, with other diverse diseases, of whoredom? From whence come so many bastards and misbegotten children, to the high displeasure of God, and dishonour of holy wedlock, but of whoredom? How many consume all their substance and goods, and at the last fall into such extreme poverty, that afterward they steal, and so are hanged, through whoredom? What contention and manslaughter cometh of whoredom? How many maidens be deflowered? How many wives corrupted? How many widows defiled, through whoredom? How much is the public and common wheel impoverished and troubled through whoredom? How much is God's word contemned and depraved by

whoredom and whoremongers? Of this vice cometh a great part of the divorces which nowadays be so commonly accustomed and used by men's private authority, to the great displeasure of God, and the breach of the most holy knot and bond of matrimony. For when this most detestable sin is once crept into the breast of the adulterer, so that he is entangled with unlawful and unchaste love, straightways his true and lawful wife is despised, her presence is abhorred, her company stinketh and is loathsome, whatsoever she doeth is dispraised, there is no quietness in the house so long as she is in sight, therefore to make short tale must she away, for her husband can brook her no longer. Thus through whoredom is the honest and harmless wife put away, and unharlot received in her stead, and in like sort it happeneth many times in the wife towards her husband.

O abomination! Christ our Saviour, very God and man, coming to restore the law of His heavenly Father unto the right sense, understanding and meaning, among other things reformed the abuse of this law of God. For whereas the Jews used of a long sufferance by custom to put away their wives at their pleasure, for every cause, Christ correcting that evil custom, did teach that if any man put away his wife and marrieth another, for any cause except only for adultery, which then was death by the law, he was an adulterer, and forced also his wife so divorced to commit adultery, if she were joined to any other man, and the man also so joined with her to commit adultery, in what case then are those adulterers which for the love of an whore put away their true and lawful wife against all law, right, reason and conscience. O damnable is the state wherein they stand! Swift destruction shall fall on them, if they repent not and amend not, for God will not ever suffer holy wedlock thus to be dishonored, hated and despised.

He will once punish this fleshly and licentious manner of living, and cause that His holy ordinance shall be had in reverence and honor. For surely wedlock, as the apostle saith, is honorable among all men, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and fornicators God will judge. That is to say, punish and condemn.

But to what purpose is this labor taken to describe and set forth the greatness of the sin of whoredom, and the incommodities that issue and flow out of it, seeing that breath and tongue shall sooner fail any man than he shall or may be able to set it out according to the abomination and heinousness thereof? Notwithstanding, this is spoken to the intent that all men should flee whoredom, and live in the fear of God. God grant that it may not be spoken in vain. In the second part of this sermon against adultery, that was last read, you have learned how earnestly the Scripture warneth us to avoid the sin of adultery, and to embrace cleanness of life, and that through adultery we fall into all kinds of sins and are made bond slaves to the devil, through cleanness of life we are made members of Christ, and finally how far adultery bringeth a man from all goodness, and driveth him headlong into all vices, mischief and misery.

Now will I declare unto you in order with what grievous punishments God in times past

plagued adultery, and how certain worldly princes also did punish it, that ye may perceive that whoredom and fornication be sins no less detestable in the sight of God and all good men than I have hitherto uttered. In the first book of Moses we read that when mankind began to be multiplied upon the earth, the men and women gave their minds so greatly to fleshly delight and filthy pleasure that they lived without all fear of God. God seeing this their beastly and abominable living, and perceiving that they amended not, but rather increased daily more and more in their sinful and unclean manners, repented that he ever had made man, and to show how greatly he abhorred adultery, whoredom, fornication and all uncleanness, he made all the fountains of the deep earth to burst out and the sluices of heaven to be opened, so that the rain came down upon the earth by the space of forty days and forty nights, and by this means destroyed the whole world and all mankind, eight persons only excepted, that is to say, Noah, the preacher of righteousness, as St. Paul calleth him, and his wife, his three sons and their wives.

O what a grievous plague did God cast here upon all living creatures for the sin of whoredom, for the which God took vengeance not only of man, but also of beasts, fowls and all living creatures. Manslaughter was committed before, yet was not the world destroyed for that, but for whoredom all the world, few only except, was overflowed with waters, and so perished. An example worthy to be remembered, that ye may learn to fear God.

We read again that for the filthy sin of uncleanness, Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities nigh unto them, were destroyed with fire and brimstone from heaven, so that there was neither man, woman, child nor beast, nor yet anything that grew upon the earth, there left undestroyed. Whose heart trembleth not at the hearing of this history? Who is so drowned in whoredom and uncleanness, that will not now forever after leave this abominable living, seeing that God so grievously punisheth uncleanness, to rain fire and brimstone from heaven, to destroy whole cities, to kill man, woman and child, and all other living creatures there abiding, to consume with fire all that ever grew? What can be more manifest tokens of God's wrath and vengeance against uncleanness and impurity of life? Mark this history, good people, and fear the vengeance of God. Do we not read also that God did smite Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because that he ungodly desired Sarah, the wife of Abraham? Likewise read we of Abimelech, king of Gerar, although he touched her not by carnal knowledge.

These plagues and punishments did God cast upon filthy and unclean persons before the law was given, the law of nature only reigning in the hearts of men, to declare how great love he had to matrimony or wedlock, and again how much he abhorred adultery, fornication and all uncleanness. And when the law that forbade whoredom was given by Moses to the Jews, did not God command that the breakers thereof should be put to death? The words of the law be these, Whoso commiteth adultery with any man's wife shall die the death, both the man and the woman, because he hath broken wedlock with

his neighbour's wife. In the law also it was commanded that a damsel and a man taken together in whoredom should be both stoned to death.

In another place we also read that God commanded Moses to take all the head rulers and princes of the people and to hang them upon gibbets openly, that every man might see them, because they either committed or did not punish whoredom. Again did not God send such a plague among the people for fornication and uncleanness, that they died in one day three and twenty thousand? I pass over, for lack of time, many other histories of the Holy Bible, which declare the grievous vengeance and heavy displeasure of God against whoremongers and adulterers. Certes, this extreme punishment appointed of God showeth evidently how greatly God hateth whoredom.

And let us not doubt, but that God at this present abhorreth all manner of uncleanness no less than he did in the old law, and will undoubtedly punish it both in this world and in the world to come. For he is a God that can abide no wickedness, therefore ought it to be eschewed of all that tend to the glory of God and the salvation of their own souls. St. Paul saith all these things are written for our example, and to teach us the fear of God and the obedience to his holy law.

For if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare us that be but grafts, if we commit like offence. If God destroyed many thousands of people, many cities, yea, the whole world, for whoredom, let us not flatter ourselves, and think we shall escape free and without punishment. For he hath promised in his holy law to send most grievous plagues upon them that transgress or break his holy commandments.

Thus have we heard how God punisheth the sin of adultery. Let us now hear certain laws which the civil magistrates devised in diverse countries for the punishment thereof, that we may learn how uncleanness hath ever been detested in all well-ordered cities and commonwealths, and among all honest persons. The law among the Lepreians was this, that when any were taken in adultery, they were bound and carried three days through the city, and afterward, as long as they lived, were they despised, and with shame and confusion counted as persons void of all honesty.

Among the Locransians the adulterers had both their eyes thrust out. The Romans in times past punished whoredom, sometime with fire, sometime by sword. If a man among the Egyptians had been taken in adultery, the law was that he should openly, in the presence of all the people, be scourged naked with whips unto the number of a thousand stripes.

The woman that was taken with him had her nose cut off, whereby she was known ever after to be in whore, and therefore to be abhorred of all men. Among the Arabians they that were taken in adultery had their heads stricken from their bodies. The Athenians punished whoredom by death in like manner.

So likewise did the barbarous Tartarians. Among the Turks, even at this day, they that be taken in adultery, both man and woman, are stoned straightways to death without mercy. Thus see we what godly acts were devised in times past of the high powers for the putting away of whoredom, and for the maintaining of holy matrimony, or wedlock, and pure conversation.

And the authors of these acts were not Christians, but heathen. Yet were they so inflamed with the love of honesty and pureness of life, that, for the maintenance and conservation, or keeping up of that, they made godly statutes, suffering neither fornication nor adultery, to reign in their realms unpunished. Christ said to the people, The Ninevites shall rise at the judgment with this nation, meaning the unfaithful Jews, and shall condemn them, for they repented at the preaching of Jonas.

But behold, saith he, a greater than Jonas is here, meaning himself, and yet they repent not. Shall not, think you, likewise the Lacedaemonians, Arabians, Athenians, or such other, rise up at the judgment and condemn us, forasmuch as they ceased from whoredom at the commandment of man? And we have the law and manifest precepts and commandments of God, and yet forsake we not our filthy conversation. Truly, truly, it shall be easier at the day of judgment to those heathen than to us, except we repent and amend.

For although death of body seemeth to us a grievous punishment in this world for whoredom, yet is that pain nothing in comparison of the grievous torments which adulterers, fornicators, and all unclean persons shall suffer after this life. For all such shall be excluded and shut out of the kingdom of heaven, as St. Paul saith. Be not deceived, for neither whoremongers, nor worshippers of images, nor adulterers, nor softlings, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous persons, nor drunkards, nor cursed speakers, nor pillars, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

And St. John in his revelation saith that whoremongers shall have their part with murderers, sorcerers, enchanters, liars, idolaters, and such other, in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. The punishment of the body, although it be death, hath an end. But the punishment of the soul, which St. John calleth the second death, is everlasting.

There shall be fire and brimstone, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The worm that shall there gnaw the conscience of the damned shall never die. O whose heart distilleth not even drops of blood to hear and consider these things! If we tremble and shake at the hearing and naming of these pains, O what shall they do that shall feel them, that shall suffer them? Yea, and ever shall suffer, worlds without end.

God have mercy on us! Who is now so drowned in sin and past all godliness that he will set more by a filthy and stinking pleasure, which soon passeth away, than by the loss of everlasting glory? Again, who will so give himself to the lusts of the flesh that he feareth

nothing at all the pains of hell-fire? But let us hear how we may eschew the sin of whoredom and adultery, that we may walk in the fear of God, and be free from those most grievous and intolerable torments which abide all unclean persons. To avoid fornication, adultery and all uncleanness, let us provide that above all things we may keep our hearts pure and clean from all evil thoughts and carnal lusts. For, if that be once infected and corrupt, we fall headlong into all kind of ungodliness.

This shall we easily do, if, when we feel inwardly that Satan our old enemy tempteth us unto whoredom, we by no means consent to his crafty suggestions, but valiantly resist and withstand him by strong faith in the word of God, alleging against him always in our hearts this commandment of God, *Scriptum est, non meabereths*. It is written, Thou shalt not commit whoredom. It shall be good also for us ever to live in the fear of God, and to set before our eyes the grievous threatenings of God against all ungodly sinners, and to consider in our mind how filthy, beastly and short that pleasure is whereunto Satan moveth us, and again how the pain appointed for that sin is intolerable and everlasting.

Moreover, to use a temperance and sobriety in eating and drinking, to eschew unclean communication, to avoid all filthy company, to flee idleness, to delight in reading of Holy Scripture, to watch ungodly prayers and virtuous meditations, and at all times to exercise some godly travails, shall help greatly unto the eschewing of whoredom. And here are all degrees to be monished, whether they be married or unmarried, to love chastity and cleanness of life. For the married are bound by the law of God so purely to love one another that neither of them seek any strange love.

The man must only cleave to his wife, and the wife again only to her husband. They must so delight one in another's company that none of them covet any other. And as they are bound thus to live together in all godliness and honesty, so likewise it is their duty virtuously to bring up their children, and to provide that they fall not into Satan's snare, nor into any uncleanness, but that they come pure and honest unto holy wedlock when time requireth.

So likewise ought all masters and rulers to provide that no whoredom, nor any point of uncleanness, be used among their servants. And again, they that are single, and feel in themselves that they cannot live without the company of a woman, let them get wives of their own, and so live godly together. For it is better to marry than to burn.

And to avoid fornication, saith the apostle, let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband. Finally, all such as feel in themselves a sufficiency in ability, through the working of God's Spirit, to lead a soul and continent life, let them praise God for his gift, and seek all means possible to maintain the same, as by reading of holy scriptures, by godly meditations, by continual prayers, and such other virtuous exercises. If we all on this wise will endeavor ourselves to eschew fornication, adultery,

and all uncleanness, and lead our lives in all godliness and honesty, serving God with a pure and clean heart, and glorifying him in our bodies by leading an innocent and harmless life, we may be sure to be in the number of those of whom our Saviour Christ speaketh in the gospel on this manner, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

To whom alone be all glory, honor, rule, and power, worlds without end. Amen.