

ON KISSING THE IDOLS

"Whenever Ephraim spoke, men were in awe; he was a prince in Israel. But then he worshipped Baal, and for his guilt he died. And still they go on sinning, making metal gods of silver, idols in human form, and craftsman's work---and these they call their "gods"!

And men at a sacrifice, men offer kisses to calves!"

HOSEA 13:1-2 Moffat Trans.

We are all born idolators. THOMAS ADAMS

A made god is no God. MATTHEW HENRY

Man's mind is like a store of idolatry and superstition; so much so that if a man believes his own mind it is certain that he will forsake God and forge some idol in his own brain. JOHN CALVIN

And the LORD said unto Elijah....."yet I have left me seven thousands in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." 1 KINGS 19:18

From both Cicero and Tacitus we learn that it was not uncommon practice to salute the hands and even the very mouths of the 'gods'.

It was usual also to kiss the feet and knees of the images, and to kiss the doors of the temples, the pillars, and posts of the gates.

The Muslim who go on pilgrimage to Mecca kiss the black stone and the four corners of the Kaaba.

In the sprinkling of holy water the Romish priest kisses the ASPERGILLUM with which the ceremony is performed; and at the procession on Palm Sunday, the deacon kisses the palm which he presents to the Priest.

This mark of reverence was shown in ancient times either by kissing the idol itself, or by kissing one's own hand, and then throwing it out towards the idol.

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NOTE: Kissing the foot or toe has been required by the popes as a sign of respect from the secular power since the 8th century.

The first who received this honor was pope Constantine I. It was paid him by the emperor Justinian II, on his entry into Constantinople in 710. Valentine I, about 827, required everyone to kiss his foot, and from that time this mark of reverence appears to have been expected by all popes. When the ceremony takes place, the pope wears a slipper with a cross, which is kissed. In more recent times, Protestants have not been required to kiss the pope's foot, but merely to bend the knee slightly.

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