

Idols and Iconoclasts: Artistic Legacies of the Reformation

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Image of the title page of
Karlstadt's tract against images:
*Von Abtuhung der Bilder und Das
Keyn Bedtler unther den Christen
seyn sollen* (first printed in
Wittenberg: January 27, 1522)

“Images are unnecessary and we are free to have them or not, although it would be much better if we did not have them at all.”

Martin Luther, from the third “Invocavit Sermon”

(see *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann and Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia, 1959). Vol. LI p. 81)



The Wittenberg Altarpiece
(Lucius Cranach the Elder, 1547)

“In the scores of works he produced for the Reformation cause, Cranach made pictures unsuitable for idolatry.”

Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image*

(Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004. p. 32)



Detail from the Wittenberg Altarpiece showing Luther preaching and teaching from the Bible



Detail from the Weimar Altarpiece (completed by Cranach's son Lucius Cranach the Younger) showing Moses with the stone tablets and Luther with the Bible

... all such who in these our days now, abusing the name and authority of Luther, think themselves to be good Lutherans, if they suffer images still to remain in temples, and admit such things in the church, which themselves do wish to be away.

John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*. Vol 5: "The Reformation in Europe"

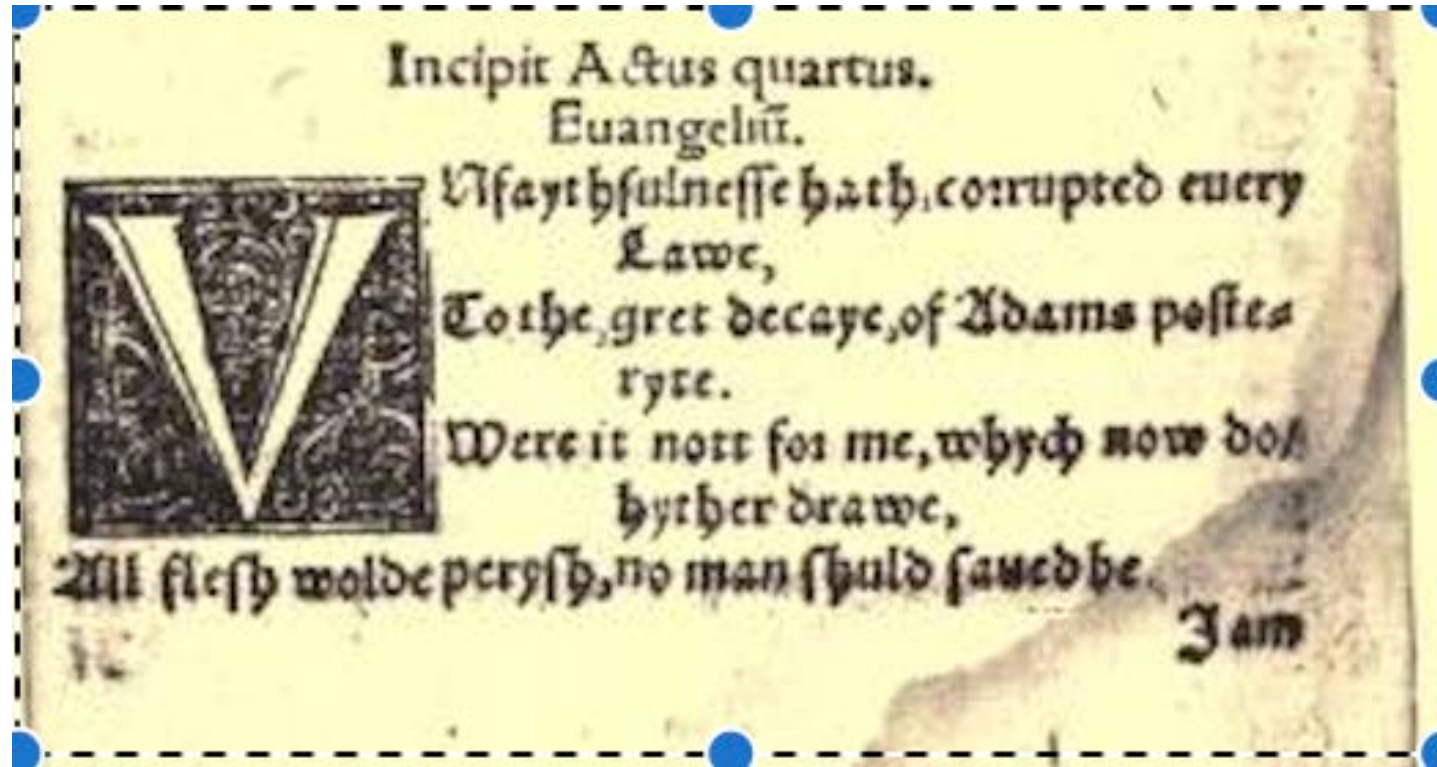


*Hostis Romani vehemens censorq; Baalis
Balæus tali fronte decorus erat.*

aa3.

John Bale, 1495-1563.

Reformed preacher,
propagandist, historian and
playwright; later Bishop of
Ossory.



Close-up of a page from John Bale's *Three Laws* (1538) showing the entry of the allegorical character Evangelium, or the Gospel

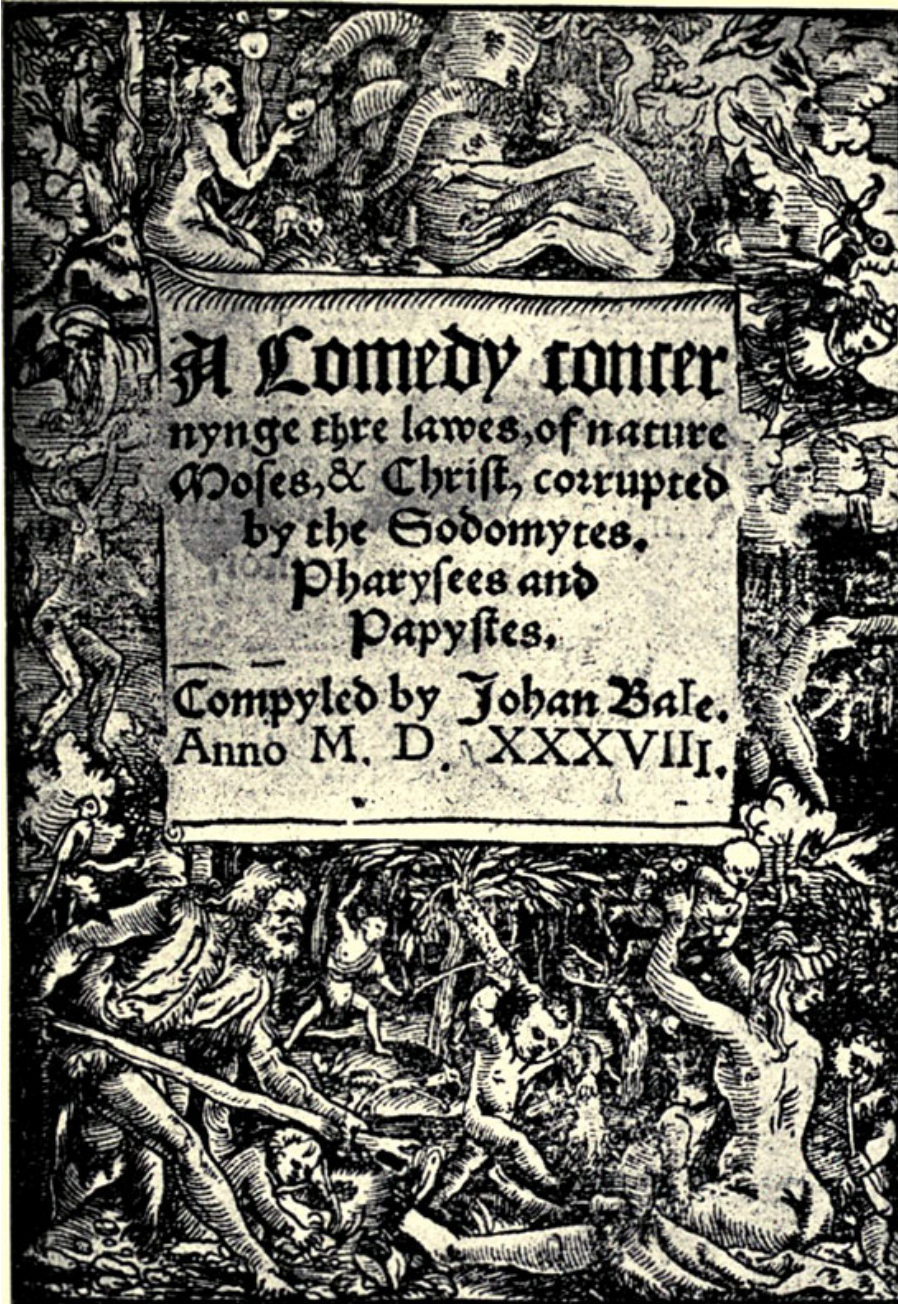


Image of the title page of
John Bale's *A Comedy
Concerning the Three Laws
of Nature, Moses and
Christ, corrupted by the
Sodomites, Pharisees and
Papists* (1538)

Infidelitas

It was a good world whan we had soch
wholsom storyes

Preached in our church on sondayes and
other feryes.

With us was it merye
Whan we went to Berye,
And to our Lady of Grace,
To the bloude of Hayles,
Where no good chere fayles,
And other holye place.

John Bale, *Three Laws* (1538)

See Peter Happé (ed): *The Complete Plays of John
Bale*. 2 vols. Vol. 2. Bury St. Edmunds: St.
Edmundsbury Press, 1985.

Infidelity

It was a good world when we had such
wholsome stories

Preached in our church on Sundays and
other ordinary days.

With us was it merry
When we went to Bury,
And to our Lady of Grace,
To the blood of Hailes,
Where no good cheer fails,
And other holy place.

Now are the knaves bolde
With Scripture to holde,
And teache them every where,
The carter, the sowter,
The bodger, the clowter,
That all wyll awaye, I fere.

At us so they pulle,
Our lyvynges are dulle,
We are now lyke to fall;
If we do not fight
For the churches right,
By the messe we shall lose all.

Now are the knaves bold
With Scripture to hold,
And teach them every where,
The carter, the shoemaker,
The pedlar, the cobbler,
That all will away, I fear.

At us so they pull,
Our livings are dull,
We are now like to fall;
If we do not fight
For the churches right,
By the mass we shall lose all.

John Bale, *Three Laws*

Fides Christiana

Now wyll I forewarde to all the
christen nacyons,
And se in effect these lawes
observed all,
To the abolyshment of the
dreames papystycall.
Now the lyght is come, the
darkenesse dyeth awaye;
I trust in the Lorde men wyll walke
in the daye.

John Bale, *Three Laws*

Christian Faith

Now will I [go] forward to all the
Christian nations
And see, in effect, these laws
observed all,
To the abolishment of the Popish
dreams
Now the light is come, the
darkness dieth away
I trust in the Lord men will walk in
the day.