This, then, is idolatry in its most revolting form. It  
is the offence which stands at the head of the curses of  
the law.  
 “Cursed is the man that *maketh* any graven or molten  
*image*” (Deut. xxvii. 15). Yet it is foretold of Israel,  
that in her, at God’s last purging, shall be found images.  
Micah v. 12, 13.  
 The height of this idolatry was reached in the reign  
of Marcus Antoninus; and of this time Julius Capitolinus says, “*It was not accounted enough, that every stage  
of life, both men and women, every rank and condition,  
rendered the emperor divine honours;* he was accounted  
profane who was not possessed of *his image in his house*,  
when his fortune permitted the purchase of it. Hence  
it happens, that even at the present day, the statues of  
Marcus Antoninus stand in many houses among the  
gods . . . nor were persons wanting who joined to  
affirm that he had predicted many things that actually occurred, in visions of the night. *Hence also a  
temple was erected to him, and priests called Antinonian,  
and associates, and high priests, with all those other institutes which antiquity has decreed to be due to objects of  
worship*.”1  
 Now it is evident that no Christian could render such  
worship to the emperors. This, therefore, was one of  
the great occasions and pretexts of persecuting the  
followers of Christ. “One might say that this worship, however sacrilegious and ridiculous it may appear,  
was regarded as a kind of imperial prerogative, inseparable from the sovereign dignity. Even to hesitate at  
it was a sacrilege, to refuse it a revolt, and it was one  
of the principal causes of the frightful persecutions of  
the Christians.”2  
 Pliny, as has often been narrated, wrote to the emperor  
  
1 Jul. Capitol. p. 30. Hist. August. Script. Lutet. 1620 fol.  
2 Abbé G., p. 212.