THE ATHANASIAN

A publication of Traditional Catholics of America † Editor: Fr. Francis E. Fenton, STL
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SOME PERSONAL CONVICTIONS

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

(What follows is but a series of simple frank statements, with appropriate comments, of a few of the convictions of a traditional Roman Catholic priest. It contains nothing new for those who have been regular readers of this newsletter over the past several years. All of the subjects to which reference is made have been treated in one or more of the 40 issues of ***The Athanasian*** *which have thus far appeared. What purpose, then, is served by these statements? Mainly to give those who are receiving it for the first time (and there are a fairly good number of them) a clear understanding of the nature of this publication as exemplified in the positions it takes on various matters. If some of the statements have a dogmatic ring, that merely reflects the unwavering convictions I have as to their truth. An adequate case, I firmly believe, has been made in confirmation of that truth in previous issues of* ***The Athanasian*** *as well as in other soundly traditional publications.)*

1. The Conciliar Church is not the one, true and eternal Church and, consequently, those who belong to it—however sincere and well-intentioned many of them undoubtedly are—are not Roman Catholics.
2. The American Conciliar bishops have long since lost the Faith. If there is even one exception, he has very effectively succeeded in keeping it a secret.
3. Since the Conciliar Church is but one more non-Catholic denomination, the one who is the recognized official head of that Church, John Paul II, cannot be a valid pope. Can a man be a valid pope who presides over a non-Catholic Church? In that Church heresy abounds; Communism is all but ignored; Freemasons in clerical garb function in the Vatican; John Paul II supports and promotes an utterly false and heretical religious liberty and condones by word and action the heresy of religious indifferentism (some pope!).
4. The Roman Catholic Church is found and exists today in authentic traditional Catholicism wherein alone is preserved the totality of the Faith.
5. No truly traditional Roman Catholic will have anything whatsoever to do with the Conciliar Church.
6. Communism, Freemasonry and Modernism are the archenemies of the Church. Any and every Catholic worthy of the name has the obligation intelligently to oppose them in whatever moral manner he can do so.
7. In large part at least, the Conciliar Church is what it is because of the presence, power and influence within it of Communists, Freemasons and Modernists. As far as the Communist conspiracy is concerned, the American bishops of the Conciliar Church are one of that conspiracy's most potent allies on the American scene today
8. "Communism is intrinsically evil and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever." (Pope Pius XI)
9. Freemasonry's "aim is the utter overthrow of that whole religious and political order of the world which the Christian teaching has produced..." (Pope Leo XIII)
10. No informed American can honestly have the slightest doubt about the increasingly grave threat posed by Communism to the survival of this nation. Every bit as grave a threat, however, to that survival is likewise posed by the immorality which is poisoning America to the core. If the Communist powers that be but patiently bide their time, they will not have to attack America for, being morally rotten, "it will fall like overripe fruit into our hands." (Lenin)
11. Abortion is murder and the paramount evil of our day, the prime example of the depths of utterly gross and pervasive immorality into which the USA has degenerated. Does any nation deserve to survive which condones and even legalizes the wanton murder of its unborn infants?
12. God and morality cannot be justly separated from politics and government. Separation of

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The Sacred Duty of Catholic Parents

John Kenneth Weiskittel

Last July, for the first time in its 63-year history, officials of the Miss America pageant forced the incumbent to resign because of her "moral turpitude," after they had learned that she was to be the subject of a photo essay in a pornographic magazine. (Apparently there are limits even for the sponsors of a contest that flaunts Christian standards of modesty.)

No sooner had the scandal been brought to light than it was seized upon by the mass media and various special interest groups. Predictably, they all shifted the blame away from the party in question, claiming that, as she was *only* 19 when she posed, she couldn't be held responsible. Since the fallen Miss America is part black, the officials were charged with racism. Because she is a woman, feminists accused the photographer and magazine publisher of being predatory sexists who degraded and exploited her. Never once did these self-righteous "liberals" see fit to suggest any personal accountability by the model; rather, by way of a transposition of values, they have fashioned her a victim, a martyr (Saint Cecilia in reverse?).

Two of the dethroned beauty queen's staunchest supporters have been her parents. Her father advised against her resigning, as he told reporters that it would be "an admission of guilt and she has nothing to be guilty about." Her mother said that they were "proud" of their daughter and that she is "a fine example." This family belongs to a Conciliar "Catholic" parish in New York. (One wonders if this is the same church attended by the striptease "artist" featured some time ago on TV's "Real People" show, whose "pastor" backs her worldly calling on the grounds that she "makes people happy.")

The deposed, for her part, maintained she wasn't "responsible" for the revealing photos ending up in print, since she never authorized them to be so used. Yet she tacitly ignored the bigger issue—posing for them in the first place. Incredibly, she would say: "I am a fighter. I will fight for what I believe is right." In the same prepared resignation statement, she spoke of being "hurt" and "enraged" by the disclosure, but she did not so much as hint that she might have been *culpable* in the sordid affair.

The Peril of Permissive Parenting

The object of mentioning the above incident isn't to censure but only to use it as prelude to discussion of the larger subject of the Catholic parents' duties; how they differ in kind from those found in non-Catholic homes; the sacredness of those duties; and the grave consequences, both temporal and eternal, that come from the inadequate discharge of them. Can there be any doubt, in the above case, that the child is but a faithful mirror of her parents? A Catholic response by them would have been to express shame, to ask for forgiveness for her waywardness and to acknowledge any failings on their part. That they chose to take the opposite course, defending the indefensible, is an unwitting self-indictment.

But the Miss America affair is merely the most visible example of a phenomenon that has reached epidemic proportions in the U.S.: the permissive parent. Millions of children and teens around the country are getting their way from parents who can't say "no" to the whining requests to buy records and tapes of morally debased performers, to attend equally dangerous films and concerts, to dress in emulation of effeminate or "punk" rock stars, to watch irreligious TV programs, and, in general, to become assimilated by the humanistic "youth culture." In the recent presidential campaign we heard Geraldine Ferraro tell us that she would pay for an abortion for her daughter. There is nothing like a mother's love!

While much of the blame for this wave of parental laxity can be placed at the doorstep of radical pediatrician Benjamin Spock for his spawning a generation of educators and child psychologists who popularized and legitimized the concept for millions, he didn't invent it; it has been a problem throughout the ages. In Ecclesiasticus, fathers are admonished to avoid carelessness in correction: "A horse not broken becometh stubborn, and a child left to himself will become headstrong." (Ecclus. 30:8; see the first 13 verses of this chapter for more on the subject.) And there are other examples from Scripture as well. Heli was not a bad man but his excessive indulgence to his sons, Ophni and Phinees, led to their fall. God said of Heli: "For I have foretold unto him, that I will judge his house forever, for iniquity; because he knew that his sons did wickedly, and did not chastise them." (I Kings 3:13) David also was overfond of his sons, Absalom and Adonias, much to his sorrow: the former conspired against him, while the other exalted, saying "I will be king," even while his father lay on his

deathbed. Even after Adonias behaved in this cruel manner, the Inspired Word tells us that David didn't act: "Neither did his father rebuke him at any time, saying: 'Why hast thou done this?'" (3 Kings 1:6)

It has been suggested that permissive childrearing is but a reaction to the cruel, inhuman treatment which other parents show their children. To an extent this is true, for there are those—often of the literal, fundamentalist school of Christianity—who quote the Bible to defend the "spare the rod, spoil the child" view, in ignorance of other passages of Scripture which temper the exhortations of corporal punishment, such as "Be not as a lion in thy house, terrifying them of thy household, and oppressing them that are under thee," (Ecclus. 4:35) and "...provoke not your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4) The failure to observe this fine line has led to tragedy in some Protestant cults over the past year, when fanatical members beat their children to death over mere triflings. As Saint Alphonsus Liguori, patron of moral theologians of the Universal Church, plainly teaches:

> If you love your sons, correct them, and, while they are growing up, chastise them, even with the rod, as often as it may be necessary. You must be careful not to beat them when you are in a passion: for, you shall then be in danger of beating them with too much severity, and the correction will be without fruit; for they then believe that the chastisement is the effect of anger, and not of a desire on your part to see them amend their lives...But of what use is it to correct children by so many injurious words and by so many imprecations? Deprive them of some part of their meals, of certain articles of dress, or shut them up in a room...

But in the same place, Saint Alphonsus is equally critical of the other extreme:

> Great indeed is the misforture of the child that has vicious parents, who are incapable of bringing up their children in the fear of God, and who, when they see their children engaged in dangerous friendships and in quarrels, instead of correcting and chastising them, rather take compassion on them (by this he means *false* compassion), and say: *"What can be done? They must take their course."* Oh! What wicked maxims! What a cruel education!...

Now, some may find his description of such parents and their methods being "vicious," "wicked" and "cruel" as a bit strange, but it is precisely what he meant to say.

Why? Because, our saint replies, "It is very easy, when they are small, to train up children to habits of virtue; but, when they have come to manhood, it is equally difficult to correct them, if they have learned the habits of vice." Solomon expresses the same truth this way: "A young man according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6) Or, in the English poet Alexander Pope's immortal words, "as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined." Human behavior in youth, like a twig, can easily be directed; but in adulthood, like a tree, it has, to a great extent, been cast in the direction it will follow in life and, like the tree, can be changed only by tremendous effort. Saint Bernard speaks in even stronger terms, saying of those who are thoughtless in their parental duties: "They are not fathers, but murderers; they kill, not the bodies, but the souls of their children."

None of this has been lost to the enemies of the Church: the Nazis had their Hitler Youth, while the Communists have Young Pioneers, and the Freemasons have their DeMolay and Rainbow Girls. Lenin claimed: "Give us the child for eight years, and it will be a Bolshevik forever." As early as 1890, in his encyclical *Sapientiae Christianae,* Pope Leo XIII wrote:

> The family may be regarded as the cradle of civil society, and it is in great measure within the circle of family life that the destiny of the State is fostered. Whence it is that they who would break away from Christian discipline are working to corrupt the family life, and to destory it, utterly, root and branch. From such an unholy purpose they allow not themselves to be turned aside by the reflection that it cannot, even in any degree, be carried out without inflicting cruel outrage on the parents. These hold from nature their right of training the children to whom they have given birth, with the obligation superadded of shaping and directing the education of their little ones to the end for which God vouchsafed the privilege of transmitting the gift of life...

Pope Leo continues by sounding a clarion call that is even more significant in our times: "It is then incumbent on parents to strain every nerve to ward off such an outrage, and to strive manfully to have and to hold *exclusive authority* to direct the education of their offspring, as is fitting, in a Christian manner; and first and foremost to keep them away from schools where there is risk of their drinking in the poison of impiety." (emphasis added)

Catholic Education Begins in the Home

Fine, many Catholic parents reading this will say, but Pope Leo is obviously talking about a situation wherein

there is a choice; we have none! And the tragic truth is that these parents probably don't have much of a choice, since the number of truly Catholic schools is even smaller than the number of chapels at which they can attend a real Mass. So what are such parents to do (especially if they are unable to meet legal standards required to teach their youngsters at home)? Are they not then forced to send them to Masonically-controlled government schools or private schools, Conciliar or otherwise?

The picture is undeniably bleak, as there is no satisfactory substitute for the Catholic school system. This, in turn, places a greater burden on mothers and fathers. Yet it should not be reason for discouragement but, rather, an incentive. Leo XIII, writing in the same encyclical previously noted, states: "All should be intimately persuaded that the minds of children are most influenced by the training they receive at home. If in their early years they find within the walls of their homes the discipline of Christian virtues, the future welfare of the State will in great measure be guaranteed." Thirty-nine years after Pope Leo wrote these words, his successor, Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical on Christian education (*Divini Illius Magistri*), says that parents, before any government, are the rightful educators of their youths: "The family...therefore holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate their offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to the strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society and of the State, and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth." Pope Pius quotes Saint Thomas Aquinas, who teaches that it is "contrary to natural justice if the child, before the use of reason, were removed from the care of its parents, or if any disposition were made concerning him against the will of the parents." (Imagine what Saint Thomas would make of the day-care center craze!) Pope Pius speaks of the Socialists' drive to take preschoolers from the home. And Canon Law has expressed the wisdom of the Church on this topic in no uncertain terms: "Parents are under a grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children, as well as to their physical and civil training, as far as they can, and moreover to provide for their temporal well-being."

The Family: A Divine Institution

The responsibility of parents to teach their sons and daughters, at the very least, the rudiments of the Faith is the logical outcome of the family's sacred character in virtue of the Sacrament of Matrimony. And this must be followed by example. Saint Alphonsus writes: "How is it possible for a son to be moral and religious, when he has had the example of a father who was accustomed to utter blasphemies and obscenities; who spent the entire day in the tavern, in gaming and drunkenness; who was in the habit of frequenting houses of bad fame, and of defrauding his neighbor?" In a fable, a crab rebuked his children for walking crookedly, but when they asked to see him walk, so as to learn, he walked more crookedly than they did. So, too, it is with parents for, as a council of bishops has said, "men believe the eyes rather than the ears."

It is with profound meaning that Christ chose to be born into a family. His mother and foster father were of deep faith, confirmed in their works. It is seldom that we read the life of a saint who didn't have devout parents, and the Saint of Saints had parents of such singular piety that He, though God Himself, was pleased to be "subject to them." (St. Luke 2:51) For this reason the Church calls the Holy Family the model of all Christian families.

It is with pride that we can hold up traditional Roman Catholic families as distinct evidence of our fidelity to the authentic teaching of the Church, for nowhere do we see the rash of divorces (often masqueraded as "annulments"), birth control, abortions, disciplinary anarchy and general disregard of Catholic principles as is so scandalously a part of Conciliar Church life. However, this ought to cause prayerful reflection and thanks, and not boastfulness, from traditional couples. The Church has granted an indulgence of seven years for recitation of the following prayer:

> *Lord Jesus Christ, being subject to Mary and Joseph, thou didst consecrate domestic life by Thine ineffable virtues; grant that we, with the help of both, may be taught by the example of Thy Holy Family, and may attain to its everlasting fellowship. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.*

A daily saying of this prayer (or any of those approved for recitation to the Holy Family) might well be part of the prayer life of any family wishing to preserve and to foster its unity and tranquility.†

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The Martyrs, Saint Valentine and Saints Perpetua and Felicitas

by Jill Wiesner

Each year February brings a saint's feast day which is widely celebrated throughout America. However, even for Catholics, the celebration has become a secular one. Saint Valentine was a priest and physician in the city of Rome, a man who turned away from secular interests and gave his life for the Faith, suffering martyrdom in the year 270. During the reign of Emperor Claudius II, Saint Valentine, with the assistance of Saint Marius and his family, came to the aid of citizens who were imprisoned for the crime of Christianity. He treated the wounds inflicted by their torturers and strengthened their souls against the constant spiritual assaults which they experienced.

The Romans regarded the Christians as treasonous to the State because they would not offer sacrifices to the pagan gods. The Romans did not believe in any power but worldly power. All of their interest was in possessions, comforts and pleasures. The highest power they recognized was the State. The emperor was worshiped as a god.

Christians respected the authority of the State, but obeyed its laws only as long as they did not contradict the laws of God. An individual's duty to God came before his responsibility to the State. The emperor, therefore, considered the Christians as a threat to his authority and proclaimed them enemies of the State.

Those who made their living from idol worship were also hostile to the Christians. In the first century, Saint Paul was thrown out of Ephesus by the silversmiths who sold reproductions of the temple of Diana to pagan tourists and who feared that the increase in the number of Christians would be harmful to their business.

In addition, the moral conduct of the Christians was in marked contrast to the depravity of the pagans. The pagans resented this religion which, by the example of its members, condemned their immortality.

Over a period of 300 years the Christians endured ten severe persecutions, the aim of which was the total annihilation of Christianity. The Roman people were incited to such frenzy against the Christians that every misfortune was blamed on them:

> If the Nile overflows its banks or if the Nile fails to overflow, if the skies are not clear, if the earth quakes, if famine or pestilence comes, up goes the cry: "The Christians to the lions!" (Loyola, Sister Mary, O.P., Ph.D., *Visualized Church History;* Oxford Book Company; New York; 1942; p. 19)

The Christians did not seek martyrdom. They led their everyday lives like the other law-abiding citizens of the empire. But those who were arrested and offered the brutal choice of apostasy or martyrdom put their trust in God and stood firm. A few weak souls gave in to threats of the government and fell away. But the great majority, recognizing the treasure they held, defended it with their lives. The trial records of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas (who are commemorated in the Canon of the Mass) were preserved, as was Perpetua's own account of their martyrdom. These documents give a clear picture of what the martyrs had to endure.

Perpetua, a young aristocrat of Carthage, and Felicitas, her slave, were denounced as Christians during the reign of Septimius Serverus in 203 and were arrested with Felicitas' fellow slaves Revocatus, Saturninus, and Secundulus. Vibia Perpetua was 22 years old, with an infant son. One of her brothers was a Christian; the other was a catechumen. Her father, however, was a pagan who loved his daughter but could not understand or accept her Faith. Perpetua described her encounter with him after her arrest:

> We were in the hands of our persecutors, when my father, out of the affection he bore me, made new efforts to shake my resolution. I said to him: "Can that vessel which you see change its name?" He said: "No." I replied: "Nor can I call myself any other than I am, that is to say, a Christian." At that word my father in a rage fell upon me, as if he would have pulled my eyes out, and beat me; but went away in confusion, seeing me invincible: after this we enjoyed a little repose, and in that interval received baptism. The Holy Ghost, on our coming out of the water, inspired me to pray for nothing but patience under corporal pains. A few days after this we were put into prison. (Butler, Rev. Alban, *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints,* Vol. 1; Sarto Books; 1982; p. 319)

After several weeks of imprisonment, the trial was held. Perpetua gave this account of the experience:

> We were placed on a sort of scaffold before the judge, who was Hilarian, procurator of the prov-

ince, the proconsul being lately dead. All who were interrogated before me confessed boldly Jesus Christ. When it came to my turn, my father instantly appeared with my infant. He drew me a little aside, conjuring me in the most tender manner not to be insensible to the misery I should bring on that innocent creature to which I had given life. The president Hilarian joined with my father and said: "What! will neither the gray hairs of a father you are going to make miserable nor the tender innocence of a child, which your death will leave an orphan, move you? Sacrifice for the prosperity of the emperors." I replied: "I will not do it." "Are you then a Christian?" asked Hilarian. I answered: "Yes, I am." As my father attempted to draw me from the scaffold, Hilarian commanded him to be beaten off, and he had a blow given him with a stick, which I felt as much as if I had been struck myself, so much was I grieved to see my father thus treated in his old age. Then the judge pronounced our sentence by which we were all condemned to be exposed to wild beasts. (ibid., p. 320)

The prison into which these young Christians were thrown to await execution was dark, damp and filthy. The prisoners were confined in large groups and the stench was overwhelming. The only light came through a small window near the top of the wall. The food they were allowed was scanty and barely edible. In addition, they were periodically tortured to break their resolve. Throughout, the martyrs inspired and encouraged one another. Saturus, their instructor, voluntarily joined them in prison and continued to guide them. They all prayed daily that Felicitas, who was eight months pregnant, would have her baby before the scheduled day of "games" in the arena. Her child, a daughter, was born two days before the appointed day and was given to a fellow Christian to rear.

The day before the games, according to custom, they were allowed one last meal, which was eaten in public. Saturus told the crowds of gawkers who came:

> Will not tomorrow suffice to satisfy your inhuman curiosity in our regard? However you may seem now to pity us, tomorrow you will clap your hands at our death, and applaud our murderers. But observe well our faces that you may know them again at that terrible day when all men shall be judged. (ibid., p. 322)

On the appointed day, the little group of martyrs walked boldly forth into the bright, sunlit arena. Perpetua and Felicitas were calm, a heavenly joy shining in their eyes. Revocatus, Saturninus, and Saturus (Secundulus having died in prison) spoke to the spectators, warning them of the judgments of God. As they passed the balcony of Hilarian, they told him quietly: "You judge us in this world, but God will judge you in the next." (ibid., p. 322) Each martyr met his death with courage, as the crowd jeered them and cheered loudly for the beasts, which included wild bulls, boars, bears, and leopards. Saturus, dying, told the converted jailer who held him in his arms: "Go, remember my faith, and let our sufferings rather strengthen than trouble you." (ibid., p. 322)

Valentine suffered martyrdom 67 years later. The prefect of Rome first tried, by promises, to turn him from the Faith. Failing that, he condemned Valentine to be beaten with clubs and then beheaded. He was buried on the Flaminian Way. Numerous others joined Valentine and Perpetua and Felicitas in offering their lives for the defense of the Faith. Pope Saint Felix, the visible head of the Church during Valentine's priesthood, gained the crown of martyrdom, as did Saint Cyprian, a bishop; Saint Maximinus, a businessman at Ephesus; Saint Conon, a shepherd; Saint Martinus, an officer in the Roman legion; Saint Philomena, a young, innocent girl; and Saint Tarcisius, a child. Martyrs arose in every corner of the empire, regardless of age or social position. Our Lord shielded all with his strength. The Church, divine in origin and protected by the Holy Ghost, persevered and grew and finally triumphed. The light of Faith grew brighter as pagan Rome withered away.

Saint Valentine is representative of those heroes and heroines who courageously remained true to the Faith. Yet the celebration of his feast day seems more to resemble a certain ancient pagan celebration in which boys drew the names of girls in honor of the goddess Februata Juno. Might it not be more appropriate for Catholics to honor the real Valentine—priest, martyr for the Faith and canonized saint? †

Pray The Rosary Daily

The Question Box

Fr. Francis E. Fenton

Question:
It seems that, whenever I get into a discussion with Protestants on a subject involving religion, they will quote this or that verse or passage from the Bible which, they contend, proves the correctness of their position on the subject under discussion. Now, even though I know that what they are saying and allegedly proving by the Bible on a particular subject is not what our Faith teaches, I must admit that I am at times at a loss as to how to refute them. Since this disturbs me, I would appreciate your thoughts on this matter.

J. M., New York

Answer:
Although Protestants deny the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church, they often manifest a sort of personal infallibility in the certainty with which they quote the Bible. Most of us are quite familiar, I think, with the facility and readiness with which many Protestants quote the Scriptures, not only giving this or that sentence or passage but often even citing chapter and verse. While it is not, of course, the traditional Roman Catholic Bible that they quote, yet we must at least acknowledge the fact that so-called fundamentalist and "born again" Christians have a greater familiarity with their version of the Scriptures than most traditional Catholics have with the true Bible.

The illogical position of Protestantism with regard to the Bible is actually a rather simple thing to prove. One can only wonder why more Protestants do not see this. In many cases, I suspect, the reason is that they simply refuse to consider the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on the subject. If they did, prayerfully and objectively, how could they fail to recognize the falsity of their own position in this matter?

What is known as the Catholic Rule of Faith is this: Holy Scripture and Tradition are the two sources of divine revelation, both of them subject to the understanding and interpretation of the Church. What we may call the Protestant Rule of Faith is this: there is but one source of God's revealed truth, the Bible, to be interpreted and understood not by any divinely established teaching authority but by the individual person. This is Martin Luther's theory of the private interpretation of Holy Scripture, the utter fallacy of which is all too manifest in the many hundreds of Protestant denominations which exist today, all claiming to teach the word of God, yet often contradicting one another on the most vital and fundamental spiritual and moral matters. How can the God of all truth approve blatant contradictions taught in His Name? The Bible is the greatest book in the world because it is the inspired word of God. Yet it remains a book and, as such, it cannot explain itself. Because of the divine nature of its content, it must have an infallible interpreter.

And then there is the powerful argument from history in refutation of the Protestant position regarding the Bible. If the Bible occupies the unique, the indispensable place in God's plan for man's salvation that at least most Protestants say it does, how does one reconcile that position with the following facts of history?

1. Not a single book of the New Testament was written until some ten years after Christ's Ascension, and it was some 65 years after the Ascension before all the books of the New Testament were completed.

2. The particular writings which comprise the New Testament did not exist under one cover until the year 397 when the Roman Catholic Church's Council of Constantinople infallibly identified and specified the books that were the inspired word of God, that is, the books that make up the Bible.

3. It was not until the invention of printing about a thousand years later (about 1440) that the Bible became available in any quantity. So the vast majority of people who lived during the first 15 centuries of the Christian era likely never even saw a Bible. It just didn't exist under one cover for the first four centuries and it was a rare commodity indeed until about the middle of the fifteenth century.

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It would appear, then, that the argument from history against the Protestant position on the absolute supremacy of the Bible is irrefutable. If the Bible, while it is indeed the inspired word of God, is so indispensable for man in the working out of his salvation as Protestantism would have us believe, then literally millions of people haven't fared too well throughout Christian history because the Bible was unknown to them.

Such is a portion of the line of argument against what we may call the Protestant Rule of Faith. The fact is that Christ never commanded His Apostles and disciples to *write anything.* Yes, the Bible is the most precious book in the world and is one of the two sources of divine revelation. But the Church antedates or predates the Bible by some three and a half centuries. It is the Church then—the Roman Catholic Church—which is the ultimate authority on divine revelation as contained in Sacred Scripture. The private interpretation of the Bible is just that: the personal opinion of the individual—hardly a sound basis for determining the eternal, unchangeable revealed truths of Almighty God. How very true indeed the words of one of the most eminent of nineteenth-century converts to the Roman Catholic Church, John Henry Cardinal Newman: "To be deep in history is to cease to be a Protestant."

"Convictions" continued from page 1

Church and state is not the mind of the Roman Catholic Church. Quite the contrary. "God is driven out of politics by this theory of separation of Church and State. He is driven...from the laws by a morality which is guided by the senses alone; from the schools by the abolition of religious instruction; from Christian marriage, deprived of the grace of the sacrament...We must fight this great error of modern times, the enthronement of man in the place of God." (Cardinal Sarto—later Pope Saint Pius X)

13. The rejection by multitudes of God and His moral law is the root cause of the evils of our day. Unless the supreme dominion of God be acknowledged, His revealed truth accepted and the moral order observed which He established, true peace is but a fantasy, an illusion. And where is the entirety of that truth and moral law revealed by God for the sanctification and salvation of all men to be found? In the Roman Catholic Church alone. Nowhere else.†

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