

THE BIBLE ALONE:

IS THIS IDEA TRUE?

Compiled by Rev. K. Robinson from the tapes of Dr. S. Hahn. 1999.

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Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants all believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and therefore it must be true. In fact if it contained any **real** error, there would have to be no God Who has revealed Himself. But the principle that the Bible **alone** is the only rule of faith, (*'Sola Scriptura'* in Latin) without the authority of the teaching of Sacred Tradition, was key to the so-called Protestant Reformation, which will be shown below to be quite dangerously UNTRUE.

All non-Catholic Bible-believers who take their religion, or Christ Himself seriously, will have to face up to this fundamental problem; WHY BELIEVE THE BIBLE? Some find it convenient not to dwell on such a question, for this reveals the great weakness of **non-Catholic Christianity, *its foundation is unscriptural, unhistorical and unreasonable.***

One convert from SUCH Bible-believing Christianity to the Roman Catholic Church, Mr. Scott Hahn, did ask seriously this question. One day he was challenged by a student while teaching in his seminary class. He was asked politely "Professor Hahn, where does the Bible teach that it alone is the infallible guide to truth (or Word of God)?" Scott Hahn was disturbed by the question, and he went to the best scholars of the Protestant Churches in America, only to find the same few quotes that do not prove the non-Catholic position. In fact they show their error in the refutation as given below. Some frankly admitted that it is not a principle in Scripture, but is a given postulate, for the only alternative (the Roman Catholic Church and Tradition) is absurd, thus unthinkable.

After Mr. Hahn had thoroughly studied the question, read many Catholic books, and started praying the Rosary, he was well on the way to conversion. His wife called upon his best friend, and once equally anti-Catholic Scripture scholar, Gerry Matatics, to help rescue Scott from becoming “*Luther in reverse*” as Mrs. Hahn feared. They exchanged reading matter, and both decided to become Catholic at Easter of 1986. Since then, both their wives and children have become Catholic, and Gerry Matatics follows the Traditional Roman Rite of Mass, and in the past has admirably defended it. Both have an apologetics program all over the world, and have been bringing many others, even former Protestant Ministers, into the Faith by demonstrating its biblical foundations. Some have indicated that this issue was the first reason for their conversion - someone showed them there is NO biblical case for Sola Scriptura.

Mr. Hahn now teaches at the Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, renowned for its conservatism, yet also supporting the charismatic (protestant style) movement. Several of the professors follow exclusively the Traditional Latin Mass, and with these Scott Hahn is sympathetic, yet he attends so far the New Order.

The following is condensed from his eight classes given and recorded at the University to **prove the insufficiency of the Bible alone**. It falls into three parts: biblical refutation, historical refutation, and rational refutation.

A) SOLA SCRIPTURA IS UNSCRIPTURAL:

1. Sacred Scripture shows the primacy of Tradition, quite explicit in St. Paul.

“Therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold to the Tradition, which you have learned, whether by word or by our epistle.” 2 Thess. 2:14

“Remember the word of the Lord Jesus, how He said: It is a more blessed thing to give rather than receive”(Acts 20:35), shows that Tradition records even the words of Christ, not found in the gospel. Indeed, St John concludes his gospel account saying...”There are many other things which Jesus did...”(Jn 21:25), which belong to the oral Tradition, left to the magisterium under the guidance of the Holy

Ghost: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you (apostles, but also their successors) into all the truth” (Jn 16:13)

St. Paul goes on promoting Divine Tradition: “For I delivered unto you first of all which I also received...” (1 Cor 15:3), and later in Vs 29, he speaks of an oral tradition (without commenting on it) of those who were “Baptised for the dead” (possibly doing penance for the souls in Purgatory)

2. It also shows the primacy of the Church as the foundation of the Truth, not Scripture:

“... The house of God which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15). “I will build MY Church” (Matt. 16:18). “Tell the Church, if he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican” (ie. excommunicated Matt. 18:17). “He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me.” (Luke 10:16).

3. St. Paul also shows the primacy of the Apostolic preaching before scripture, which, as developed by the popes and councils, we call the magisterium: “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema, ie. *let him be damned to hell* [‘Good News’ version], (Gal 1:8,9).. Thus whoever preaches Sola Scriptura is cursed by the Apostle!

Also ...”Withdraw yourselves from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the Tradition which they have received of us”. (2 Thess. 3:6). This amounts to the old fashioned excommunication *Vitandus=keep away!*

4. The Apostle St. Peter speaks of the inadequacy of Sacred Scripture without the double support of the magisterium and Tradition: “There are...certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and the unstable wrest (ie. twist out of context), as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:16). Hahn makes the apt comment “A TEXT OUTSIDE THE CONTEXT IS A PRETEXT”.

Also “No prophecy of scripture is made by private interpretation...” All Sacred Scripture is called prophecy by a synecdoche (part for the whole), just as all the Old Testament is a figure of the New.

5. The Protestants confuse human and divine traditions:

Human traditions are condemned by Our Lord when they “nullify the Word of God” (Mark 7:13), yet He demanded that even the new Christians should obey the corrupt leaders of the Jews in all that was traditional, ignoring their additions and bad example, until His New Church is commissioned. “The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works do ye not. For they say and do not.”(Matt 23 :2,3.). Where, pray tell, is there Old Testament evidence of a chair of Moses? (Chair = *Cathedra* in Latin, remember : “ex-cathedra”?). There is no written record, Our Lord is quoting a well-known, authoritative and binding Sacred Tradition! Our Lord Jesus Christ was the first Traditional Roman Catholic (High) priest.

6. Protestants refuse the magisterium appointed by Jesus Christ as seen in the historical records of the gospel accounts:

The magisterium is necessary to define things in the deposit of faith that are unclear or become disputed later on, through all the ages. For example, the question arose of what is still necessary, desirable, or allowable of the Old Testament religion. It was settled by a direct vision given to the Pope, St. Peter, about abolishing the division of foods into clean and unclean. (Acts ch.10). The Pope called the first Council at Jerusalem to work out further details of the new Apostolic policy regarding gentile converts, and it decided a few... “necessary things, abstain from blood, from things strangled and from fornication.” (Acts 15:28,29). How are we to decide, 2000 years later, which of these are binding still, which have been abolished since, which are moral or just disciplinary laws? Only the magisterium can decide such things. The latest use of this infallible magisterium was, arguably, in Dec 1994, declaring women priests an impossibility, *de Fide*.

This council of Jerusalem shows us that the Church was making magisterial decisions, binding on the Faithful, before the Scripture was even written. St. Cyprian comments on this, saying how heretics and schismatics corrupt souls: “*You deserter of the Church, enemy of mercy, killer of penitence, doctor of pride, corrupter of truth, traitor to charity...*” (Ep.1 ad Cornelius.)

The charism given to St. Peter was to be handed down even to unworthy successors, just as it did in the Old Testament. The prophet Isaias tells us (ch 59:21) “This is my covenant with them saith the Lord: my spirit that is in thee and my words that I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of thy seed, nor out of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever.”

The office of High Priest continued, such that even St. Paul showed respect for the man appointed for this, evil as he was. Paul called him an insulting term “Whitewashed wall”, then is checked by the servant “would you revile the High Priest?” and Paul answered “I did not know, brethren that he was the High Priest; for it is written, you shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.” (Acts 23:5). St. John notes that Caiaphas was speaking with the spirit of prophesy (*ex cathedra*) even in spite of his evil will, when he asked for the death of Christ for the salvation of the people. “He spoke not of himself, but being the High Priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation.” (Jn 11:51).

Bible believers claim that this prophetic charism is now gone, but how do they know? How do they know who even ranks among the prophets? All regard as a great prophet the famous Elias and his spiritual son, Eliseas (Elijah and Elisha in modern Bibles), yet Sacred Scripture does not record even one of their sermons or letters! Why not, if the written word alone is the Word of God? In fact, one Old Testament patriarch, Henoch, prophesied, saying ...”behold the Lord cometh with thousands of His saints.” (Jude 14), but where is this recorded in the Bible before St. Jude? Nowhere! So clearly the Apostle was relying on the Oral Tradition to authoritatively report the words of the patriarch.

Finally there is the statement of St. Paul to his new young bishop St. Timothy, about those we would call today the Modernists, who... “having an appearance indeed of godliness (*devotion, piety*), but denying the power thereof. Now these avoid (*excommunication!*)...always learning and never arriving at the knowledge of the truth. Now, as Jannes and Mambres resisted Moses (*Where is this in the Old*

Testament?), so also these (Modernists and Protestants) also resist the truth, men corrupted in mind, reprobate concerning the Faith” (2 Tim. 3:5-8.)

B) SOLA SCRIPTURA IS UNHISTORICAL

We have seen above how the Faith was spread by the Apostolic preaching and teaching even before the written Word of God. This is logical, and there must be no contradiction in the oral or the written Word, since all is the Revelation of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, to humanity. He commanded them to ... “Preach the gospel to every creature...”, which is not a command to write letters or gospels, nor is it limited to any time or place; the Catholic Church takes its name and origin from this.

Every possible objection against the Catholic Faith can be proven from Scripture to be without foundation. Yet especially impressive is the historical argument, from the Fathers of the Church. First, the very nature of why we believe which books belong to the canon (list of divinely inspired writings) of the Sacred Text. The council of Hippo in the year 393 defined the canon, excluding several wide-spread erroneous gospels. How do we know today whether they were right or wrong? The councils of Carthage in 397 and again in 419, finalised the canon, and again at Trent in the Sixteenth Century.

We have it ONLY on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church that those seventy two books we call the Bible, are in fact the Word of God. Protestants actually dare to alter by reduction of this canon of the Word of God. Missing from their Bibles are seven full books like Wisdom and Maccabees, and several chapters of the other books, like Danial and Esther. Recall the words of Our Lord in the last book of the Bible... “*If anyone would diminish the words of the prophecy of this book, God will take away his part from the Book of Life*” (Apoc 22:18) and beware! This is not to mention the corrupted translations, often deliberate distortions of the Sacred Text to fit their convenient doctrines.

(cf, Ward’s “Errata of the Protestant Bible” of 1844 <http://one-holy-catholic-apostolic.org/books/errata/Content.htm#Contents>)

In the first Century AD, we have the witness of St. Papius (died 130), that Tradition is necessary. He says...” It did not seem to me that I could get so much profit from the contents of books, as from a living and abiding voice” (ie. the Church’s magisterium). This and the following quotes are taken from a classic text of the Church Fathers, much expanded into three volumes heavily researched and indexed, called “The Faith of the Early Fathers” by W.A. Jurgens, 1984 Liturgical Press, Collegeville MN USA. These books are constantly promoted by G. Matatics, and sells out wherever he goes. This quote of St. Papius is in J. #94.

In the second Century after Christ, St. Ireneaus (died 202) testifies to the need for Tradition before Scripture (J. 210, 211). Also St. Athanasius (died 373) is a witness (J# 791). He calls the results of the Council of Nicea, the Word of the Lord, remaining forever! (J # 792). Also St. Cyril of Jerusalem (died 386) claims that the Holy Ghost inspired even the Septuagint (Greek version rejected by the Jews and Prots, yet favoured by the Apostles and Our Lord Himself in around 300 of the 350 quotes in the New Testament from the Old) See J. 819

Also in the second century somewhere between 155 and 200, we have the evidence of the Muratorian Fragment, discovered in 1740, possibly written by St Hippolytus. It witnesses to the traditional order of readings at Sunday Mass, and shows the confusion among the many local churches (all Catholic) on this question of Scripture, before the authoritative decisions of Rome came along centuries later! Today the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in the 1940’s, are confirming the Catholic position on Scripture and Tradition.

The conclusion of modern scholarship is that the Dead Sea **Scrolls** prove that the Greek **Septuagint** translation of the original Hebrew (ie. Douay Version via Vulgate), is closer than the current Hebrew version in certain passages of the Bible.

<http://www.amazon.com/Mystery-Meaning-Dead-Sea-Scrolls/dp/0679780890>

Very much more could be said of the Fathers, but I urge the reading of this wonderful set by Jurgens. If it is not available, Matatics recommends a Penguin Classic on the same theme available from any public library. The study of the Fathers shows that what traditional Catholics teach and practice was the universal

faith of the first Christians. It is *indisputable*, unemotional, and has led to the conversion of very many, including the great Venerable Cardinal Newman of last century. His autobiography the “Apologia Pro Vita Sua” is still converting intellectuals who are honest and upright today. Thousands have become Catholic through the prayerful seeking of truth, and the study of the Fathers.

C) SOLA SCRIPTURA IS ILLOGICAL

Several reasons why the prime principle of the reformation is quite irrational are given below.

1. Sola Scriptura demands a closed canon and certainty for it to be a valid and workable principle. But WHO SAYS WHICH BOOKS BELONG TO THE BIBLE? As we saw above, it was the authoritative and infallible Councils of the Catholic Church under the Pope, which decided the question. Were they infallible then? Why not now? With due limitation as defined by Vatican Council 1.(Db 1836)

2. Moreover, given a closed canon, even if the Apostles themselves had decided it (which they did not), how to we know that we have an accurate translation in the various changing languages of today? Anyone who has studied another language knows the many difficulties involved. Try putting into French the saying “its raining cats and dogs” and see if the French understand what you mean! Even in one national language, there is need of an authoritative body to interpret the laws, or else the result is anarchy. We Catholics know we have a substantially accurate text, yet not perfect in every detail. How can we be sure of the Word of God? By that teaching authority Christ established, only.

3. Even if there was such a complete and closed canon of Sacred Scripture, for the non-Catholic position it means they would have to be self-authenticating documents. That means they must say they are inspired by God, and we must believe it just because they said it! Yet we know that very few books

of the Bible say they are inspired, and several have no more devotional inspiration (quite different meaning) than accounts of wars or genealogies! In fact many passages of Scripture are nothing but accounts of wars or genealogies!

Luther's test for authentic inspiration was ... "Does it bring man an assurance of salvation?", for Calvin it was the internal evidence of the Holy Spirit! This is the same way the Mormons get people to believe the fancies of Joseph Smith, taken from a Minister's novel, he called the Book of Mormon; by the nice feelings they get when they read it. This does not mean biblical inspiration. Compare a chapter of the Imitation of Christ with a chapter from the book of Philemon by St. Paul. The first is inspirational in the modern sense, but not in the theological sense, and vice versa. This is how Religion became a private affair, purely subjective and of less and less influence for Christ the King over civil life, because of this principle of rejecting Holy Roman Catholic Tradition.

4. Can the Protestants not see how unreasonable it is to deny the power of infallibility to the popes, yet to allow it for the authors of the New Testament? On what grounds do they do this? Some of the NT authors were not Apostles (St. Luke, St. Mark), yet the popes and bishops are direct successors to the Apostles of Our Lord, with the divine promise, "I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world". (Matt. 28: 20).

5. The Protestant position leads to anarchy and to atheism via religious liberty. It effectively makes *every man his own pope*, and has led to literally thousands of conflicting sects making Christianity look ridiculous. Each generation brings the principle to its more logical conclusions. That is why this generation is so material and godless that we truly have reason to fear for our lives from the next generation. They may well impose euthanasia upon all non-conformists (or non-hedonists). Clearly the objective basis of religion has been eroded by false idea that the Bible alone is the Word of God.

The Church loves to protect us like a loving mother, so she forbids us to join any Bible Society of Protestant influence. She even prohibits the reading of vernacular bibles, published without approval and suitable annotations. Cf. Pope Gregory XVI (Db 1632. Also Pius VII quotes St. Augustine, *“For heresies are not born except when the true Scriptures are not well understood, and when what is not well understood in them is rashly and boldly asserted”*. (Db 1604). The Pope goes on... “If we grieve that men renowned for piety and wisdom have, by no means rarely, failed in interpreting the Scriptures, what should we not fear if the Scriptures, translated into every vulgar tongue whatsoever, are freely handed on to be read by an inexperienced people who, for the most part, judge not with any skill, but with a kind of rashness.”

WHAT TO DO? Learn the roots of your Faith, pray the Rosary, come to the Traditional Latin Mass, support the true reform movement in the Church, keep away from liberalism, modernism, protestantism and all false scholarship in all its forms.

RELIABLE BIBLICAL RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<http://drbo.org/>

<http://www.corneliusbiblecommentary.faithweb.com/>

<http://www.realdouayrheims.com/>

<http://www.globalserve.net/~bumblebee/ecclesia/summa/index.htm>

<http://socrates58.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.scripturecatholic.com/>

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