

The Catholic Dictionary and the Brown Scapular.

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CONTINUED.



IF St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, how is it that he is not mentioned in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans? If Our Lady was conceived without sin, how is it that so important an exception to the general law is omitted by the Apostle when declaring the universality of original sin? This style of argument is the more mischievous, because in many cases it can only be refuted by an hypothesis, and such a refutation sounds like a confession of weakness. If an author, whose works are not in our hands, is cited as omitting certain facts which he ought to have mentioned if he had known them, we are driven to suggest *possible* reasons, why he may have omitted them. We may be absolutely certain of the truth of the facts, but we are at a disadvantage when we urge a *supposed* reason for his silence, which may or may not have been the true reason. The sceptic knows this, and this sort of appeal to ignorance often serves him as an effective method of destructive criticism. Happily, however, we are able to refute M. Launoy far more satisfactorily than by such considerations as these. Of the three authors adduced by the writer in the *Catholic Dictionary*, we are able to give a good account of two, while the third is the distorted offspring of M. Launoy's ignorance or carelessness, cited more carelessly still by the *Catholic Dictionary*. We will take first of all the one whose silence carries the greatest weight with the assailants of the story respecting the supernatural origin of the Scapular, Thomas Waldensis. The Carmelites of other countries (such is the argument of Launoy) might perhaps be ignorant of the wonder that had taken place in England; but even if their silence can be explained, the omission of any mention of the Vision in the works of Thomas Waldensis, the Englishman who is defending the sacramental or quasi-sacramental character of the religious habit against the blasphemies of the Wickliffites, is quite conclusive. It is impossible that he should

not have known of this wondrous vision, or that knowing it, he should have neglected so triumphant an argument in his favor. Here the writer in the *Catholic Dictionary* follows blindly in the steps of the "wonderful learning" of its Gallican authority and his condemned works. The answer to this is a very simple one. So far from this story being suitable to the work of Thomas of Walden, nothing would have been more inopportune than its introduction into a controversial work such as he was engaged upon. He was battling with heretics, the bitter enemies of the Religious Orders and religion in general. To drag in the account of this supernatural vision would have been most imprudent. It would have been a veritable casting of pearls before swine. It would only have provoked his enemies to fresh blasphemies against all things sacred, and especially against the Holy Mother of God. What should we say of a Catholic writer who should adduce some of the most wonderful miracles adduced by St. Alphonsus in the "Glories of Mary," by way of refuting the objections of Protestants to Catholic devotion to Our Lady? When we are engaged in combating those who deny the essentials of our holy religion, we meet them on their own ground, by facts which they cannot deny, by arguments within their comprehension; we do not bring forward untimely those extraordinary favors, which God in His mercy sometimes vouchsafes to His saints. Thomas Netter, of Walden, like a wise man, kept his own counsel, and shrank from exposing to the obloquy of the blasphemer the token of love that the Order of Carmel has received from the Holy Mother of God.

We next come to Father Phillip Ribot, (or Ribot) Provincial of Catalonia. For a long time we sought in vain for the treatise referred to, but at length, through the courtesy of the Carmelite Fathers, we have had an opportunity of consulting it. We will give a brief account of its contents, and leave our readers to judge whether the silence of its author respecting the apparition to St. Simon Stock is any sort of argument against the reality of the vision. Father Ribot's book is simply a digest of the writings of four celebrated writers, who preceded him: John, Bishop of Jerusalem, in the fifth century; St. Cyril, of Constantinople, (A. D. 1170), Gualielmus de Sanvico,