

When the Lord says: "What God has joined, let no man put asunder," He teaches clearly that it is God Himself who joins the spouses and seals their union so that neither can break it. Why, then, in Protestantism, does man, or magistrate, or parliament, dare to separate the spouses? Is it not because they labor under the impression that *they* united them? Divorce is but a fatal consequence of civil marriage. Given that God has nothing to do with wedlock, man arrogates to himself the right of legislating over the contract, over the matrimonial tie, and of dealing with the whole matter of marriage according to his fancy. Hence the fact that in certain countries the marriage contract has less stability than any ordinary contract.

The Catholic Church alone, to whom the sacred ties of wedlock have been intrusted, has not let them be shattered in her hands. She commanded respect for that divine contract even from the most corrupt cities, from the latter Romans, from the barbarous nations and throughout the Middle Ages. During fifteen centuries her voice was heard and obeyed. The bold licentiousness of the great, as well as of the common people, was compelled to yield before her heroic resistance.