

Revelation

Notes #10B

Seal #7 - Trumpet #6: Censorship of Printed Books

Chapter 10

The Roman Catholic **Fifth Council of the Lateran** was held from 1512-1517. During the 10th session of May 4, 1515, a papal bull was issued that essentially established the censorship of printed books.

Leo, bishop, servant of the servants of God, with the approval of the sacred council, for an everlasting record.

Among the anxieties resting on our shoulders we come back with constant thought to **how we can bring back to the path of truth those going astray**, and gain them for God (by his grace working in us). This is what we truly seek after with eagerness; to this we unremittingly direct our mind's desires; and over this we watch with anxious earnestness

It is certainly possible to obtain without difficulty some learning by reading books. The skill of book-printing has been invented, or rather improved and perfected, with God's assistance, particularly in our time. Without doubt it has brought many benefits to men and women since, at small expense, it is possible to possess a great number of books. These permit minds to devote themselves very readily to scholarly studies. Thus there can easily result, particularly among Catholics, men competent in all kinds of languages; and we desire to see in the Roman church, in good supply, men of this type who are capable of instructing even unbelievers in the holy commandments, and of gathering them for their salvation into the body of the faithful by the teaching of the Christian faith. **Complaints from many persons, however, have reached our ears and those of the apostolic see. In fact, some printers have the boldness to print and sell to the public, in different parts of the world, books -- some translated into Latin from Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean as well as some issued directly in Latin or a vernacular language -- containing errors opposed to the faith as well as pernicious views contrary to the Christian religion and to the reputation of prominent persons of rank.** The readers are not edified. Indeed, they lapse into very great errors not only in the realm of faith but also in that of life and morals. This has often given rise to various scandals, as experience has taught, and there is daily the fear that even greater scandals are developing.

That is why, to prevent what has been a healthy discovery for the glory of God, the advance of the faith, and the propagation of good skills, from being misused for the opposite purposes and becoming an obstacle to the salvation of Christians, we have judged that our care must be exercised over the printing of books, precisely **so that thorns do not grow up with the good seed or poisons become mixed with medicines.** It is our desire to provide a suitable remedy for this danger, with the approval of this sacred council, so that the business of book-printing may go ahead with greater satisfaction the more that there is employed in the future, with greater zeal and prudence, a more attentive supervision.

We therefore establish and ordain that henceforth, for all future time, no one may dare to print or have printed any book or other writing of whatever kind in Rome or in any other cities and dioceses, without the book or writings having first been closely examined, at Rome by our vicar and the master of the sacred palace, in other cities and dioceses by the bishop or some other person who knows about the printing of books and writings of this kind and who has been delegated to this office by the bishop in question, and also by

the inquisitor of heresy for the city or diocese where the said printing is to take place, and unless the books or writings have been approved by a warrant signed in their own hand, which must be given, under pain of excommunication, freely and without delay.

In addition to the printed books being seized and publicly burnt, **payment of a hundred ducats to the fabric of the basilica of the prince of the apostles in Rome**, without hope of relief, and suspension for a whole year from the possibility of engaging in printing, there is to be imposed upon anyone presuming to act otherwise **the sentence of excommunication**. Finally, if the offender's contumacy increases, he is to be **punished with all the sanctions of the law**, by his bishop or by our vicar, in such a way that others will have no incentive to try to follow his example. Let nobody therefore ... If anyone however.