TREATISE III: ON THE CHURCH

Admonition to the Reader.

This controversy was published in the second part of the Examination of the Principles of Faith in the year 1647 in octavo format. It is now presented in an expanded and vindicated form against the objections of adversaries.

On the Church of Jesus Christ our Lord: The Church is a congregation of men, called together by God through the evangelical word, professing the true Christian faith under the governance of legitimate pastors. See On the Unity of the Church, Book I, Chapters 1 and 2.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The original work included marginal annotations that were, at times, difficult to read or accurately associate with specific portions of the text. To preserve these as faithfully as possible, I have created footnotes labeled "Marginalia," placing them alongside the paragraphs to which they most likely correspond, based on the closest proximity fit.)

CONTROVERSY I. WHETHER THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS VISIBLE?

I. The question is asked: Whether the Church is always visible, either by the external profession of faith, or by the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments? For no one denies the visibility of the external profession, through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments.

II. By a visible Church, we understand one whose existence is perceived by sight or by any other bodily sense. For we commonly call those things visible, which come into our knowledge through any bodily sense. Therefore, we have inquired in the formulation of the question whether the visible Church may be found by us, either through the profession of faith, or through the preaching of the Gospel, or through the administration of the Sacraments—most of which pertain to hearing.

III.[1] It is neither a new nor an inappropriate matter to accept visibility in this way, as is evident from the statement of Claudianus Mamertus, presbyter of Vienne: "Since everything incorporeal is invisible, not everything invisible is incorporeal. For voice is not seen, and yet it is bodily." And although, because of the prominence of sight, we use the term "seeing" for matters pertaining to the other senses—so that we often say "see what it sounds like," even though sound pertains to hearing and not to sight—we never say, "hear what it looks like." This is because the superior sense of sight arrogates to itself, by abuse of language, that which properly belongs to the lower senses, although it does not mix their powers with its own. Wherefore, all things that can be sensed by any bodily sense are "visible," if we refer all things to sight. But not all are visible, if we attribute to each sense that which is proper to it.

IV. In regard to the question at hand, all Catholics affirm it, believing in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, which they understand to be shown through the continuous succession of teachers and administrators of the Sacraments, and through the external profession of faith.

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[1] Marginalia: *De statu animae*, Book 3, Chapter 6; *Bibliotheca Patrum*, Tome 4, Part 1, page 683 B.C.

V.[2] Protestants teach in the *Later Helvetic Confession* that the Church can be called invisible, and they give the reason: because it is a hidden body known only to God, beyond human judgment. It is a society of all the faithful, known only to God who knows whom He has chosen. The *Gallican Confession* says likewise: that the Church, even in our own times and in both its conditions, consists of the elect alone, etc. The *Saxon Confession* expresses it thus: "The Church is a congregation of the faithful," etc. See also Calvin in the *Preface to the Institutes*; Amesius, Book 1 *On the Church*, Chapter 2, §2; Bucanus, Locus 41 *On the Church*, §§4–5; Keckermann, Book 4, Chapter 3, page 397; *Synopsis of Pure Theology*, Disputation 41, §Synax., page 76.

VI[3]. After these sufficiently clear testimonies, the *Württemberg Confession*, Article 23, attributes invisibility to the Church. The *Belgic Confession* holds that it pertains to some people of God, though it may not often appear prominently in human society, etc. Crocius holds that the Church will always remain visible. See there also Keckermann, §5, Book 3, Chapter 6, page 408.

VII. But each of these points must be discussed at greater length and more fully in this matter, so that we proceed in order. Protestants in this matter tend to use phrases like "for the most part," "in some way," "it seems as if," etc., so as to appear to say something while in truth they say nothing. See Crocius's objections refuted in *On the Truth of the Church*, Book 1, Chapter 6.

VIII[4]. Likewise, Protestants say nothing when they assert that times may arise in which there is no entire and illustrious assembly in which the pure preaching of the word, the uncorrupted administration of the Sacraments, and the entire worship of God is publicly carried out. They are seriously mistaken if they think the Church's visibility depends on public and unhindered preaching. The primitive Church, under the gravest persecutions, was not invisible, since it shone in martyrs and in its most illustrious teachers. Is the Catholic Church in England invisible because no illustrious assembly of Catholics or public preaching flourishes there? Let them say whether edicts are issued against invisible men, of unknown profession and unknown faith.

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[2] [Marginalia: Chapter 17, Article 16, Article 31.]

[3] [Marginalia: Article 27; Tome 1, Controversy 3, Section 2, No. 3?]

[4] [Marginalia: Crocius *ibid.* No. 23; *Ministers of Scotland*, at Hamilton, Book 1, Chapter 24, Sol. 79; *Synopsis of Pure Theology*, Disputation 40, Thesis 44.]

IX[5]. Bucanus, after Calvin in the *Preface to the Institutes*, wants the Church in the Papacy to have been buried and hidden. But Eilbrachtius admits that this hidden Church had neither its own ministry nor separation from the papist Church as a visible Church. And thus, those who imagine their Church as alive yet buried do not find a visible Church apart from the Catholic Church. For what is that hidden Church, except the company of the elect, which they are accustomed to call the invisible Church? But is not that company of elect, according to the Protestant view, hidden in the Lutheran, Reformed, or any other Church? Does that mean the visible Lutheran Church is the true Church because a company of elect is hidden in it? They will not say that. What then? When they speak of their hidden Church, unless they mean it had its own preaching of the divine word, Sacramental administration, and profession of faith, they say nothing pertinent to the present matter, which concerns the visible Church—namely, the assembly of those who are called, to which they say the Reformed belong, at least for a time.
Crocius, *Commentary on the Augsburg Confession*, Societas q.2, Chapter 28, page 426; *Theology of Geneva*, Thesis 5 *On the Reprobate*, in the Synod of Dordrecht, page 67.

INTERVENTION OF COCCEIUS

XVIII[6]. He says: Although we concede, (1) that the Church of the called — or rather, the multitude of those called, some truly believing in Christ, others lying to Him — is visible, such that the name of Christ cannot be eradicated from the world, even if often, in many places, congregations disappear and the faithful are forced into prisons, into exile, or into caves, forests, deserts, and other hiding places; (2) that the Church will endure until the end of the world; (3) that the Church always has the right to the preaching of the divine Word and the administration of the Sacraments — that is, the Church possesses the right to assemble in a congregation in which the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments administered, and that by divine grace, neither the Word of God can be removed from the world (whether there are those who preach it by the authority of an ordinary office or not, and whether it is preached fully by ordinary ministers or not), nor the Sacraments (which they place, by concession, both in Wittenberg and elsewhere) — still we deny that either the faithful themselves or the legitimate and faithful

[5] [Marginalia: Locus 43? *On the Church*, §7.3, *Epanorthosis* Chapter 12, Annotation 4.]

[6] [Marginalia: *Treatise III, Part I, Disputation 43, Chapter 28*]

ministers can be known, unless through visibility, by which they are recognized as being faithful and as being the Church of God and faithful ministers of God, unless this is from the Scriptures: namely, if they teach and do what is handed down in the Scriptures.

XIX[7]. Response 1. Not one but several errors are exposed here. Cocceius wants the Church of the called to be more accurately termed "the multitude of the called," clearly so that only the predestined among the Reformed constitute the Church. But that the non-predestined also form part of the Church may be understood from what we have earlier cited from the Protestant confessions and doctors themselves. For now, it suffices to instruct Cocceius through the opinion and judgment of the theologians of Geneva: "The elect, externally called to the grace of the Gospel, by calling and cooperation, may for a time be part of the body of the Church, as may also the reprobate."

XX. Response 2. Another error is his statement that the Church has the right to assemble in a congregation where the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments are administered. Although this is true, it does not encompass the full doctrine which Protestants affirm together with us. Let him be instructed by the *Later Helvetic Confession*, Article 18, page 56: "God, for gathering or establishing the Church, and for governing and preserving it, has always used ministers, and will continue to use them as long as the Church exists on earth."

XXI[8]. Response 3. A third error is his assertion that the Church may consist and the Word of God remain in the world even if there are no ordinary ministers to preach it. He must be educated through the *Gallican Confession*: "We believe that since we become partakers of Christ only through the Gospel, His sacred and inviolable doctrine must be preserved holy in the Church by His authority. Therefore, pastors are required in the Church, to whom the burden of teaching the Word and administering the Sacraments is committed." If Cocceius sides here with Corningius, he may see how we have responded to him. The remaining issues pertain to the marks of the

[7] [Marginalia: *On the Unity of the Church*, Book 1, Chapter 5; *Thesis on Reprobation*, Synod of Dordrecht, page 67.]

[8] [Marginalia: *Article 25, Disputation 42, Thesis I.*]

Church. As for the contradiction we presented in §XVII against the Protestants, Cocceius handles it so coldly that it is not worth repeating.

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XXII[9]. It is agreed, 6. That outside of union with the Church through external communion, there is no salvation. See the testimonies of the Protestants in *On the Unity of the Church*, Book 1, Chapter 7. What Cocceius opposes to this proposition is either already refuted in Crocius, Book 1, Chapter 8, or tastes more of gall than of doctrine.

XXIII[10]. With these things established, the matter at hand is: *Whether the Church instituted by Christ is always visible?* Indeed, as St. Augustine teaches: "Schism is a crime of all, because the controversy over the Church is the cause which the people hold."

XXIV[11]. Since there is no salvation outside the Church, it is each person's concern to know to which visible Church he ought to unite himself. This cause (as St. Augustine rightly observed) is clearer in the Prophets concerning the Church than are the testimonies concerning Christ. We therefore say with him (*On the Unity of the Church*, Chapter 3, Tome 7, page 142 D): "There are certainly the Lord's books, whose authority we both acknowledge, in which we both believe, and which we both serve: let us seek the Church there, let us argue our cause there. But let us remember it is the cause of the people, and therefore we designate as open and plain the things which belong to it." Let us set aside, for the time being, ambiguities which may be explained in different ways; not because those things are false which are resolved through explanation, but because they require an interpreter. And these things weigh all the more heavily upon Protestants, since the article concerning the Church, together with us, is held among the necessary articles. See Hoffmann, Locus 29, Thesis 3, page 904, and Thesis 7, page 920; *Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord's Day 7, Question 22; *Gallican Catechism*, Lord's Day 15.

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[9] [Marginalia: *Proof I, Ibid., Theses 4, 5, 6*]

[10] [*ibid.*, Chapter 5, page 143 C.]

[11] [Marginalia: *On the Unity of the Church*, Chapter 2, Tome 7, page 141 C; *Concordance 2, On Psalm 30, at the words 'those who see me'*, Tome 8, page 70 C., *ibid.*, Chapter 5, page 143 B., *ibid.*, Chapter 5, page 143 D.]

PART ONE.

1. THE PROTESTANTS' PROOF FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE.

I[12]. Passage 1: *Adam and Eve sinned. Therefore, the whole visible Church failed, for no other humans were found on earth.*

II[13]. Response 1. We acknowledge the words of Holy Scripture. But nowhere does it say there that the Church was not always visible. 2. Against the argument brought forth, eight usual deficiencies apply; and as a ninth we note: the sin of Adam and Eve did not eliminate the preaching of God's Word nor the administration of the Sacraments—things which pertain to the Church after the expulsion from Paradise. 3. The Protestants strike at us from their own side; and while they wound themselves, they do not harm us. Or, as St. Gregory Nazianzen says in a similar case: *"The same happens to them as to those who, out of fear of death, take their own lives by the noose."* For if Adam and Eve erred in the faith, as they would need to assert in order to make a conclusion, then not only would the visible Church have failed, but even the invisible Church entirely—which the Protestants do not want to admit.

III[14]. Passage 2: *Aaron and the people of Israel offered burnt offerings to the golden calf. Therefore, at that time the whole visible Church failed, including its visible head.*

IV. Response 1. Nothing here is read about the entire and whole people. 2. In fact, Moses in the same passage insinuates the opposite: *"Whoever is for the Lord, let him come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him.* From which it is understood: *Not even all who stood there were idolaters.* See the Dutch gloss on *Exodus 32:26*, and also the commentaries of the Heidelberg theologians, Tremellius, and Junius.

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[12] [Marginalia: *Genesis 3*]
[13] [Marginalia: *Oration 37 (Oration 5 On Theology), page 602 C; Exodus 32*]
[14] [Marginalia: *Exodus 32:26; 1 Corinthians 10:7*]

V. Nor let them say that those who did not sin were in hiding; for where does Scripture say this? And how could those who did not sin fail to profess that they worshipped the true God? Furthermore, what they allege about the visible head is erroneous: for Aaron at that time had not yet been appointed high priest. We may briefly dismiss this objection by saying that the Church at that time did not yet possess the great promises that it did later.

VI[15]. Passage 3: Elijah laments that he alone is left; but the Lord replies: *"I have preserved for myself seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal."* Therefore, the Church at that time was invisible.

VII[16]. Response. Nowhere does it say here that the entire visible Church had failed. For beyond the kingdom of Israel, there was the kingdom of Judah, in which, at the time of Elijah, the worship of God flourished under the pious kings Asa and Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat alone had at hand more than eleven hundred thousand strong warriors, besides others stationed in fortified cities throughout Judah—and besides the women and children. If such a multitude worshipping God is considered invisible, are we not blind?

VIII[17]. But so that the weakness and vanity of this argument be more evident, they should conclude from the seven thousand left in Israel that likewise in preceding ages, many were devoted to the Lutheran or Calvinist faith who had hidden within the Roman Church.
But how will they prove this? Scripture speaks of those *whose knees had not bowed to Baal,* of those who were not members of the idolatrous Church, nor participated in its idolatry. Hence Calvin says: *"Give me one prophet, or a single pious man, who once worshipped in Bethel or performed sacrifice there. They knew they could not do this without defiling themselves with sacrilege."* But the imaginary Protestants whom they suppose to have lain hidden in the Roman Church before the time of Luther not only lived among Catholics, but professed the same faith, participated in the same rites, worshipped in the same temples; and if any were priests, they celebrated the same sacred rites. Of whom is it read that he used other sacraments or ceremonies? Who did not worship the Savior in the Holy Eucharist?—to say nothing of the rest.

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[15] [Marginalia: *1 Kings 19:14, 18*]
[16] [Marginalia: *2 Chronicles 19:4; 2 Chronicles 17:14*]
[17] [Marginalia: *Institutes*, Book 4, Chapter 2, §9]

If such people were saved because, despite supposed errors, they were faithful, then the same must be said of the entire Roman Church: and thus we would not have hidden believers, but the most manifest Church of God—and the Protestants would be separated from us without just cause.

IX. They may perhaps say: If the Church was invisible in the kingdom of Israel, then it may be invisible in any kingdom, even throughout the whole world.

X[18]. Response. Without disputing the antecedent, Scripture does not teach that consequence. Indeed, it is utterly invalid: for it proceeds from division to totality.

XI. Nor is it relevant what Scheibler says: he brings in the example of Elijah to show how God invisibly preserves His Church, even in places where idolatry reigns. But our question is not: *Can God preserve His Church, or does He in fact preserve it in places where idolatry reigns?* Rather, the question here is: *Is the Church of Christ always visible?* Since we affirm it, the example of Elijah is brought forth in vain for the contrary opinion, for it does not touch our affirmation and therefore cannot refute it.

XII[19]. Passage 4: *Many days shall pass in Israel without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law.* Also: *From the sole of the foot to the head there is no soundness in it.*

XIII[20]. Response 1. The custom of Scripture is to speak in reproof so generally as if no one were accepted. Thus Ezekiel says: *"All the house of Israel has a stiff forehead,"* and yet later he asserts: *"Mark a Tau on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are done in the midst of it."* Similarly, the Apostle says: *"O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?"*—and yet he shows that he does not speak of all individually: *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness."* The same Apostle says: *"All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ,"* though he calls the Philippians saints and praises them highly. Therefore, when Scripture speaks in

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[18] [Marginalia: *Treatise III, Proof I, Examination of the Faith*, Book 2, Part 2, Chapters 3 and 4]

[19] [Marginalia: *2 Chronicles 15:3; Isaiah 1:6; Isaiah 56:10; Jeremiah 2:8*]

[20] [Marginalia: *Ezek. 9:4; Gal. 3:1, 6:1; Phil. 2:21; 1:8*]

general reproof, it refers to what is commonly done—not of all individuals in every group, but of groups within each kind. The prophets who made these reproofs were not themselves impious. The Apostles, lamenting the fallen, did not include themselves. Such general reproofs have what is called *accommodated universality.* This was also noted by St. Augustine, *Against the Donatists after the Conference*, Chapter 20, near the end, Tome 7, page 240 D; *On the Unity of the Church*, Chapter 13, near the end, Tome 7, page 150 C. Also, St. Prosper *On the Calling of the Gentiles*, Book 1, Chapters 9–10, in *Bibliotheca Patrum*, Tome 5, Part 3, pages 165–166. See also Delrio (*Adag.* 133), Gordon (Tome 1, Chapter 5, no. 3, page 147), Forer (Tome 1, Book 1, Chapter 4, no. 7, page 77), Canus (Book 4, last chapter, page 228), and from the adversaries, Eilbrachtius (*Epanorthosis*, Chapter 4, Annotation 5, page 18).

XIV. Response 2. The text in *2 Chronicles 15:3* concerns Israel, not the kingdom of Judah. And if the Church was without the true God and without the law—where then is the invisible Church? Has it not perished? Likewise, *Isaiah 1:6* describes the people's sins. *Isaiah 56:10* describes the negligence of the priests. *Jeremiah 2:8* does not concern all. See Tremellius and Junius.

XV[21]. In fact, Calvin reports that the prophets under the Old Testament did not withdraw from communion with the priests and the people, but used the same rites. Therefore, either the Church of the priests and the people was not a true Church, and erred in a necessary article—so that it would not have been lawful for the prophets to maintain communion with it—or it was a true Church, and did not err in a necessary article. And thus the Protestants act in bad faith when they cite those Churches as false and erroneous. See *Theology of Geneva* on Article 5, Thesis 8, in *Synod of Dordrecht*, page 298; Zanchius, Tome 7, *On the Church*, Chapter 7, cols. 78–79.

XVI[22]. Passage 5: *The sacrifice and offering shall be abolished.* Therefore, the whole visible Church will fail.

XVII[23]. Response. That the sacrifices of the Jews ceased with the coming of Christ is acknowledged. But the Synagogue did not therefore fail—it was fulfilled. Nowhere did God

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[21] [Marginalia: *Institutes*, Book 4, Chapter 1, §18]

[22] [Marginalia: *Daniel 9:27*]

[23] [Marginalia: *Romans 11:1; Matthew 5:18; Tome 1, Controversy 3, Section 7.11.30, page 342*]

reject His people: *"God forbid!"* Also: *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfill."* Christ confirms the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees who sit in Moses' seat. But of what sacrifice do the Protestants understand this? Not the sacrifice of the Mass—since even though they claim Antichrist has come, it is not abolished. So what sacrifice do they mean? Let them speak plainly. Crocius rightly says: *"We do not raise this text, because it is clear that nothing is concluded from it."* St. Jerome explains it of the cessation of Jewish sacrifices under Aelius Hadrian, at the final destruction of the Temple (Tome 4, page 518 H). See Tremellius and Junius.

INTERVENTION OF SCHEIBLER

XVIII[24]. Here he objects that the Jewish Church often failed under the Judges, also under the Kings of Judah, in the Babylonian captivity, and in the time of Antiochus.

XIX. Response. Holy Scripture does not say that the entire Jewish Church in the aforementioned times failed in the visible profession of faith or in the use of the Sacraments; and even if that were the case, nothing is proven. Holy Scripture teaches that the Church will always be visible; but it does not teach in which places, or by which persons professing the faith or administering and receiving the Sacraments, the Church has been and always will be visible.

Such matters, since they pertain to historical fact, are proven by histories and the testimony of the ancients—although they do not require the most exact proof, due to the witness of Holy Scripture, which clearly supports perpetual visibility. Hence, when we use the promise of perpetual visibility against the Lutherans, we do not demand that they show the uninterrupted visibility of their Church with rigorous precision, but that they present such testimonies as would prudently satisfy the mind. In doing so, we do them no injustice, since we only demand what cannot be hidden in the true Church of Jesus Christ. Now this cannot be hidden—namely, where the Church was, e.g., thirty years before the controversies began with Luther. Since they cannot demonstrate this, they do not have a Church that is perpetually visible, such as the Church of Jesus Christ is promised to be by Scripture.

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[24] [Marginalia: *Examination of the Faith*, Book 2, Part 2, Chapter 3, §77?.6]

PROSECUTION

XX[25]. Passage 6: *All the priests and elders of the people condemned Christ; and the whole crowd cried out, "Crucify Him."* Therefore, the entire Jewish Church then failed, which was, at the time, the only visible Church.

XXI. Response 1. Whether or not the Jewish Church then absolutely failed, it cannot be inferred that the entire visible Church failed. All the priests had not assembled; and many believed while Christ was preaching. Nowhere in Scripture do we read that all of them fell away. Therefore, that condemnation was not the action of the universal Church, nor of a general council. See Canus, Book 5, last chapter, page 283; and Hosius, *Against the Prologue of Brantius*, Book 2, *On Legitimate Judgment*, page 461, both of whom solidly show that even in that most unjust judgment, truth was judged.

XXII. Response 2. Neither this, nor any of the previous objections, nor other similar ones usually drawn from the Old Testament, touch the issue. For we are here dealing with the *perpetual visibility of the Christian Church*: namely, whether in Scripture it is foretold and promised that the preaching of the Gospel will be perpetual, the administration of the Sacraments of Christ perpetual, and the external profession of Christian faith perpetual. The prophecies and promises concerning the Church of Christ are of a different order, for its covenant is holier and based on better promises than the Jewish Church, of which it was foretold: *"The offering and sacrifice shall cease."* And all agree that, whatever the promises made to it, they do not extend beyond the time of Christ; or rather, that the state of the Synagogue was changed for the better by the coming of Christ. See Stapleton, *The Principles of the Faith*, Controversy 1, Question 3, Article 2, page 39, etc.

XXIII. Passage 7: They now try to prove from the New Testament: *"Fear not, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom."* Therefore, the whole Church at that time was invisible.

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[25] [Marginalia: *Proof I; Mark 14:64*]

XXIV. Response. The flock of Christ was then small, or poor and despised; but it was not invisible—because Christ was speaking of it, and had its members present before Him.

But what says St. Augustine? *"What is it, O heretics, that you glory in small numbers? Was our Lord Jesus Christ handed over to death for this reason, that He might possess only a few as His inheritance?"* And again: *"You commit a sacrilegious injury against Christ the King and Prince: for it is written, 'In the multitude of people is the glory of the King; but in the want of people, the destruction of the Prince.'"* See *Against the Letter of Parmenian*, Book 1, Chapter 17, Tome 7, page 111 E; and Book 2, Chapter 9, page 221 A.

XXV[26]. Likewise, Cassiodorus records that the ancient heretics used this consolation amid their small numbers: *"Many are called, but few are chosen."* But certainly, they did not say this when they had gathered great multitudes to themselves by power. Conversely, the Protestants at the beginning of their rise proclaimed nothing more frequently than: *"Fear not, little flock."* But once they had attached themselves to a large multitude, they ceased boasting of small numbers.

INTERVENTION OF SCHEIBLER

XXVI.[27] He argues against no. 22, saying that the Church of the New Testament has greater promises with regard to the extension of place and the multitude of the faithful—but not with regard to perpetual visibility. Response. We do not read this limitation in Scripture; and if you interpret the most manifest Scripture according to this limitation, you will overthrow all of it.

XXVII[28]. Nor does it matter that the same Scheibler says we take the proof of perpetual visibility from the Old Testament, which speaks literally of the Jewish Church. For if perpetual visibility was promised to the Jewish Church, Scheibler's attempt to weaken that promise is futile, being in contradiction with Scripture. But just as various things are said of David and Solomon in the Old Testament, which nevertheless properly apply to Christ alone, so too many promises made to the Jewish Church belong properly to the Church of Christ. Therefore, if perpetual visibility was promised to the Jewish Church, and if that promise had no fulfillment in the Jewish Church—as

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[26] [Marginalia: *Church History of Tripartite*, Book 9, Chapter 19, Column 164]

[27] [Marginalia: *Examination of the Faith*, Book 2, Part 2, Chapter 3, §13]

[28] [Marginalia: *ibid., On the Unity of the Church*, Chapter 13, Tome 7, page 130 D]

Scheibler claims—then it must necessarily be fulfilled in the Christian Church, unless one is willing to accuse Scripture of falsehood. Thus the Protestants of our time are doing what the ancient heretics did in the time of St. Augustine, who speaks of them thus:
"These, either ignorantly or deceitfully, gather from Scripture such things as were spoken of the wicked or of the devastation of the former people of the Jews—and they twist them to the Church of God, so that it may appear as though it has failed and perished from the entire world."

XXVIII. The things Cocceius says on Numbers 23 and 24 are many, but are more declamatory than disputative. Let the reader see *Disputation 42*, Thesis 9, etc., and judge for himself.

PROSECUTION

XXIX[29]. Passage 8: *When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?* Therefore, the visible Church will fail at the end of the world.

XXX. Response 1. If this passage speaks of both internal and external faith, and if it is said that both will fail, then the conclusion would strike equally against the invisible as well as the visible Church. For the invisible Church cannot consist without internal faith. And Protestants themselves wish that to be perpetual. See, dear reader, how the razor strikes against the whetstone.

XXXI[30]. Response 2. Even if it referred only to the external profession of faith, yet if that were entirely removed, the invisible Church would also cease—for, as the Apostle testifies, *"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* Therefore, there would be no just man, where no one professes the faith. The Dutch gloss admits this refers to the Day of Judgment; and the same gloss, along with the Heidelberg Catechism, teaches that believers will remain.

XXXII[31]. Let us hear the explanation of St. Augustine: *"Some say that what the Lord said, 'Will the Son of Man, when He comes, find faith on earth?' was spoken of the apostasy of the whole world. But we understand it to refer either to the perfection of faith itself—which is so difficult in*

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[29] [Marginalia: *Luke 18:8*]
[30] [Marginalia: *Romans 10:10*]
[31] [Marginalia: *On the Unity of the Church*, Chapter 14, Tome 7, p. 136 B]

men that even in the most admirable saints, such as Moses, something is found that might have wavered or been liable to wavering—or to the abundance of the wicked and the fewness of the good, about which we have spoken sufficiently. For this reason, the Lord spoke as if doubting. For He did not say, 'The Son of Man will not find faith on earth,' but, 'Do you think He will find faith?' But for one who knows and foreknows all things, doubt is inappropriate. His 'doubt' symbolizes our doubt, because due to the many scandals springing up near the end of the world, such human frailty was going to speak this way." See also St. Augustine, *Sermon 36 on the Words of the Lord according to Luke*, Tome 10, p. 52 D; *Letter to Vincentius Rogatus*, Tome 2, p. 68 B; St. Ambrose, *Book 10 on Luke 21*, Tome 3, p. 203 E; St. Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church*, p. 260.

XXXIII[32]. Passage 9: They say: *Antichrist will sit in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.* Therefore, the entire visible Church will cease.

XXXIV[33]. Response 1. The Apostle calls him the *man of sin*, and whether he is Antichrist is not altogether certain, as is evident from the learned disputation of Mr. Grotius. 2. Nothing is said here about the failure of the entire visible Church. 3. If the whole visible Church fails, then the invisible Church would also fail—as was already stated. 4. But who is that Antichrist? If it is the Roman Pontiff, as Protestants claim, Scripture does not say this. 5. Either the Church in which he sits is the true Church of Christ, or it is not. If it is not the true Church, how can it be the *temple of God*? For a false Church is not the temple of God. If it is the true Church, how can it be invisible? Unless Antichrist sits invisibly, is revealed invisibly, and shows himself invisibly.

XXXV[34]. Calvin says: *"We do not simply wish to grant the title of Church to the Papists."* Therefore, according to Calvin, Antichrist does not simply sit in the temple of God—yet Scripture asserts this simply. Calvin concludes: *"In sum, I say that there are churches, insofar as God miraculously preserves remnants of His people there, though miserably scattered and dispersed; insofar as some marks of the Church remain there, and especially those whose efficacy neither the devil's cunning nor human corruption can destroy. But since, on the other*

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[32] [Marginalia: *2 Thessalonians 2:4*]
[33] [Marginalia: See *St. Augustine, City of God*, Book 20, Tome 5, Col. 1350 B–C]
[34] [Marginalia: *Institutes*, Book 4, Chapter 2, §12]

hand, the marks which we ought especially to consider in this debate are destroyed there, I say that it is one thing to call it a church, and another to say it has the legitimate form of the Church."

XXXVI. So then, according to Calvin, Antichrist—i.e., the Roman Pontiff—sits in the temple of God, which nevertheless is not the temple of God, which is not a Church, from which the marks have been removed, and which lacks legitimate form. These are the monstrous dogmas of modernity, more astonishing than those of the Stoic philosophers. See St. Jerome, *Letter 151 to Algasius, Question 11*, Tome 3, p. 203 H; *Paludanus's Vindications* on *2 Thessalonians 2*; St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Book 4 on Genesis*, at the end, Tome 1, p. 138 6.50; Irenaeus, *Book 3, Chapter 6*, p. 247 C.

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XXXVII[35]. As is his custom, Cocceius becomes verbose against the aforementioned points, nitpicking at our statement that the Reformers' interpretation of *2 Thessalonians 2:4* is not altogether certain—something which, as we noted, is evident from the learned disputation of Mr. Grotius. Cocceius, in his usual modesty, supposes that Grotius, with the downfall of his own reputation, favored our cause—though he may well know that others among the Protestants do not subscribe to the common opinion. If he wishes all of them to favor his own views, Cocceius would act as an unfair judge. He also asserts that by citing Grotius's disputation, we display a guilty conscience and a philosopher's cleverness, adding another reason: that we refer to the uncertain conjectures of professors of theology. But well it is that a theologian needs such things.

XXXVIII[36]. It is known to all that we give great weight to the ancients, for we profess the Catholic faith. If the consensus of the ancients is present here, we embrace it; and we reject any contrary opinion. Until we are convinced of that consensus, we leave Grotius's opinion to its own probability. Therefore, there was no need to respond to the writings of Cocceius, Molinaeus, or Maresius against Grotius, because we did not cite Grotius's view as certain.

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[35] [Marginalia: *Disputation 43*, Thesis 182? Thesis 20]

[36] [Marginalia: *Thesis 21; Thesis 22*]

XXXIX[37]. Cocceius offers certain remarks against Grotius, adding: *"If Grotius is to be praised, it is because he was not so shameless as to resurrect those rancid theories about the short reign of Antichrist, his fake miracles, the tribe of Dan, and other such trifles—but instead he rejected them as worthless. Yet if you could have done so, you would not have resorted to such strained fables."* What were once "uncertain conjectures" of the early Church doctors, now are called "rancid fables," and because Grotius rejected them, he supposedly turned to "forced fables. Such is fitting for a theologian.

XL[38]. Later he says: *"It is not my intent now to define whether the Pope is Antichrist."* And after many words he concludes: *"To whom, then, shall we give credence? To the many divine witnesses who assert that after the open assault on the Church (which occurred under the Roman Emperors before Constantine) there would come seduction and a double kingdom in one person—and he, Antichrist? Or to Walenburgius, who sings to us of a splendid Church and a congregation with legitimate pastors, among whom is the Pope, an illustrious head from the other horn and of another city, free of error and teacher of the faith?"*

XLI. Response. A most commendable resolution—that Cocceius does not wish to define whether the Pope is Antichrist. For he knows that not all Catholics will rise in support of the opinion of such a great man, and they will lightly regard his grandiloquence. But should we not rather assent to the many divine witnesses who affirm the perpetual visibility of the Church of Jesus Christ, whose testimonies we will soon produce—rather than to Cocceius, who both acknowledges and attacks the perpetual visibility of the Church?

XLII[39]. His further speculations, in which he is quite self-satisfied, are not worth repeating. From them he concludes: *"If we listen to the Apostles, no greater plague or surer destruction can befall the Church than to subordinate Scripture to the books of the ancients, which have come down to us, and to think these are the pure and sincere fountain of true and saving interpretation. This I therefore say more boldly..."*

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[37] [Marginalia: *Theses 23–25*]
[38] [Marginalia: *Disputation 4*, Thesis 24?, Thesis 12]
[39] [Marginalia: *Theses 13–18; Proof I*]

XLIII. Response. Catholics do not subordinate Scripture to the writings of the ancients; rather, they subordinate the writings of the ancients to Scripture. Yet they do prefer the writings of the ancients to the novelties of Cocceius and other schismatics, and they believe that from the consensus of the ancients—as from a pure and sincere stream—the true and saving interpretation is to be drawn, disregarding the recent opinions of muddy-minded innovators.

XLIV[40]. After much, he says that the objection of the Protestants was poorly proposed by us. But he so entangles his opinion in ambiguities that we cannot tell what he means.
When he catches his breath again, he is entirely ours, subscribing to our position: *"We say that the multitude of believers, confessing with heart and mouth (Romans 10:10), shall not fail. A great confession—provided it is steadfast."*

XLV. At last, he attempts to prove by equivalence that the Roman Pontiff is the Antichrist: *"The city which reigns over the kings of the earth, in which Christ was crucified, and the Roman Empire—these are equivalents."* Response: Let that pass. *"Sitting in the Church" and "being a bishop" are equivalents.* Response: False. Nor do we believe Cocceius himself can reasonably persuade himself of that equivalence—unless he regards any absurdity as a clear truth, so that he might prove himself a true Calvinist to others. *"To sit in the Church" is equivalent to "to rule a city to which kings are subject," and "the Roman Bishop."* Response: Also false. Let him prove the equivalence, if he can. Still not satisfied: *"Sitting in the temple of God" or "the consistory of the temple of God," and "claiming primacy over the universal Church" are equivalents.* Response: Again, false. And from these fabrications, Cocceius concludes: *"Therefore, the Roman Pontiff is Antichrist," since that is what the term 'equivalents' means in Scripture.* Response: A fine conclusion—worthy of such premises.

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[40] [Marginalia: *Thesis 26; Disputation 5, Thesis I*]

XLVI[41]. Passage 10: *I saw a star fall from heaven to earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And smoke rose from the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.* By *sun* and *air* are understood the doctors and the Church, which can fail to such an extent that there does not appear to all, even to outsiders, a complete and illustrious assembly which publicly worships God purely. Likewise: *The woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God, so that she might be nourished there for 1260 days.* By *woman* is understood the Church; *flight* is its dispersion in this world. Therefore, the Church can be invisible.

XLVII[42]. Response 1 to the former passage: We acknowledge an obscuration of the Church; for it is not always equally illustrious, nor always equally widespread, though external visibility never fails. The Protestants seem to require, for visibility, that the Church be seen *de facto* by all unbelievers—or at least, that it be illustrious, like, for example, the Republic of Venice. But if they admit the Church to be perpetually visible, as we stated in the status of the question, that suffices for us. For from that it will follow that the Church is not invisible even to unbelievers, although it may not be *de facto* seen by every unbeliever in the entire world. Indeed, who would deny that the town of Ratingen is visible, even if no American has ever seen it, and perhaps even if the Greeks have never even heard of its name?

XLVIII[43]. Response 2 to the latter passage: That *woman* can be understood as the Church is granted. But that *wilderness* must be understood as an unknown or hidden place is not proven by Scripture. The sons of Israel were in the wilderness, yet neither in an unknown place nor were they unknown. Response 3. Why should not *wilderness* be understood as a withdrawal from vices? Thus it is said: *"I will lead her into the wilderness and speak to her heart."* Likewise: *"Lo, I have fled afar off, and dwelt in the wilderness."* Response 4. Even if the Church were in a wilderness that is unknown, it would not therefore follow that the *whole* visible Church was hidden. For in the same chapter it is read: *"And the dragon was angry with the woman"* (not an

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[41] [Marginalia: *Revelation 9:1; Revelation 12:6*]

[42] [Marginalia: *Part I; Crocius, Tome 1, Controversy 3, Passim; Post-Molinaeus, In Novitatibus Papistarum*]

[43] [Marginalia: *Hosea 2:14; Psalm 54:8, Revelation 12:17,On the Unity of the Church, Chapter 16, p. 153 D*]

invisible or unknown woman) *"and went off to make war with the rest of her seed"* (these are certainly visible and known), *"who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus Christ."* Response 5. That passage concerns a final persecution of short duration—1260 days—which in no way aids the Protestants. Finally, if they want a total defect of the Church of Christ under Antichrist, they destroy themselves, contradicting themselves when they call the Roman Pontiff Antichrist and yet proclaim their own churches as truly Christian and as visible to the whole world. Go now, O Jerusalem, search with lanterns to see whether your Church has hidden in the desert, without a flock, without law, without a shepherd, unfed and invisible. But beware, lest the Lutherans say theirs is the true Church, the Anabaptists theirs, the Socinians theirs, the Reformed theirs—so that in the end, it is recognized that none existed at all, while the endless quarrel could not be resolved even by Solomon's sword. How much better to hear: *"Let us cease seeking that which could not be found in your churches—not because it is hidden, but because it is not."* —St. Augustine, *On the Unity of the Church*, Chapter 16, p. 153 D. See also *Vindiciae Paludani*.

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XLIX[44]. He says that under Antichrist there will be no public exercise of true religion, due to persecution.Response. But what does this have to do with the matter? Can the Church not be visible while undergoing persecution? Was not the primitive Church visible under the pagan Emperors? Will Antichrist persecute an *invisible* Church, or men of *unknown faith*, of *unknown profession*?

L. Most vain is the statement of Scheibler that Antichrist will sit in the Church of God and introduce various errors, while the Church of God still remains. For if Antichrist sits in the Church of God, he is not therefore a *member* of the Church and body of Christ. Scripture does not say that Antichrist will *fill* the Church of God with his errors; for how could it still be the Church of God, if it is corrupted by heresy and idolatry? Meanwhile, according to you, Antichrist sits in the Church of God—and yet whoever separates from that Church, separates from the body of Christ, performs a work of the flesh, and is unfit for the kingdom of heaven.

[44] [Marginalia: *Examination of the Faith*, Book 2, Part 2, Chapters 3.11–14 & 4.11–15]

2. THE PROTESTANTS' PROOF FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

I. They say, first: *In the Creed, we say: "I believe in the Christian Church."* Therefore, we do not see it. Therefore, the Church is not always visible.

II[45]. Response 1. We do not consider it absurd that we both *believe in* and *see* the Church. Let the Protestants tell us whether they believe the Scriptures, which they see. If they affirm: how can that which they see be the object of belief? Or how can that which they believe be seen? Unbelievers see the Scriptures, just as we do; but we believe them to be divinely revealed—unbelievers do not. The same reasoning applies to the Church: Unbelievers see with us the profession of Christians, the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments. Yet they do not believe that these things proceed from divine institution, nor that the Church itself is beloved by God and protected by Him—which we do believe. Did not Christ say that those who do not believe in Him are already judged? And yet He was seen.

III[46]. This distinction was observed by St. John Chrysostom: *"One man,"* he says, *"is I myself, and another is an unbeliever; and we are affected differently by the same things. For I hear that Christ was crucified and immediately marvel at His kindness and love for mankind. The other hears the same and supposes it a weakness."* And after other similar things he adds: *"So it is with the mysteries. Unbelievers hear these things indeed, but are not seen to see them. But believers, having the persuasion that it is done by the Spirit, see the power and efficacy of those things which are hidden."* See Calixtus, *Response to Mainz*, no. 34; Zanchi, Tome 8, *On the Militant Church*, Chapter 24, §24, col. 542; Peter Martyr, *On the Confession of Faith*, p. 435; Melanchthon, *Examination of the Ordinances, On the Church*.

IV. Response 2. The Protestants teach that the Church of the called is visible; and they believe this as well. Therefore, they believe what they see, and see what they believe. There is no reason

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[45] [Marginalia: *John 3:18*]

[46] [Marginalia: *Homily 7 on 1 Corinthians*, Tome 11, p. 62 B, E]

to interpret that article of the Creed as referring to the *invisible* Church, as the *Later Helvetic Confession*, Article 17, p. 50, attempts to do.

V[47]. They say, secondly, from St. Jerome: *"The whole world groaned and was astonished to find itself Arian."* Therefore, the Church is not always visible.

VI. Response 1. The Protestants admit with us that not *all* and *every* bishop defected at the time of Arius. 2. It is certain that many bishops were deceived by error; and therefore St. Jerome says, "the world groaned and was astonished." See Jansenius, *Sponge*, Chapter 76, p. 409. St. Augustine likewise responds to the testimony of St. Hilary which was brought against him (and Scheibler too, with this very objection, placing himself among the heretics): *Epistle 48 to Vincentius*, Tome 2, pp. 69 A–C.

VII[48]. The other passages they bring forth collapse of themselves, once it is noticed that *none* of the Holy Fathers ever said what the Protestants teach—namely, that the Church of Christ is *not* always visible. Even if they did not write about the most severe persecutions, they nevertheless teach what we teach: that the Church of Christ is always visible, because—despite persecutions—it even then shines forth in her strongest members. St. Augustine, *Epistle 48 to Vincentius*, Tome 2, p. 69 D: *"See to it that no one plunders you through philosophy and empty deceit…"*

VIII. The argument from Elijah, presented above in *Proof I, no. 6*, commits a *fallacy of irrelevant conclusion (fallacia elenchi)* when it argues that a *particular* Church can be invisible—which we grant, since we teach that a particular Church can indeed entirely defect from the faith.
As for the rest of the passages, it is not difficult to show that they commit similar fallacies.

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[47] [Marginalia: *Dialogue against the Luciferians*, Chapter 7, Tome 2, p. 427 G]
[48] [Marginalia: *Colossians 2:8*]

PART TWO

1. CATHOLIC PROOF, DRAWN FROM THE COUNCILS

I. In the Council of Trent, it is said: *"I believe in one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The communion of saints."* All Catholics teach that this article is to be understood of the visible Church. Calvin agrees (*Institutes*, Book 4, ch. 1, §2), as does Crocius (*Tome 1, Controversy 3, Section 2, no. 21*).

II. That this article is one of faith, and indeed necessary, is not disputed. Therefore, so long as the world shall last, this article shall remain true and be actually verified in the visible Church. See Keckermann, *Systema*, Book 3, ch. 6, p. 395.

2. CATHOLIC PROOF FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

I[49]. The first passage is from St. Matthew, where Christ says: *"Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world."* This speech is addressed to the Apostles, as dispensers of the mysteries of God. The command to preach the Gospel lies in the word *"teach"*. The command to administer the Sacraments lies in *"baptizing"*. The perpetuity of both is read in the words: *"I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world"*—for the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments are never unnecessary, whether by the Apostles or by their successors. Christ, namely, remains with them, teaching through them and administering the Sacraments until the world's end. See *Dutch and Heidelberg Glosses*, *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, Disput. 40, Thes. 44 and Disput. 42, Thes. 18; Calvin, *Institutes*, Book 4, ch. 3, §6; Keckermann, *Systema*, Book 3, ch. 6, p. 388; Zanchi, *Tome 4*, Book 1 on the Fourth

[49] [Marginalia: *Matt. 28:19–20. Perpetual preaching*]

Commandment, Loc. 4, Question 1, col. 719; and *Tome 8*, *On the Militant Church*, ch. 24, §24, col. 542; Beza, Ames, Book 3, ch. 2, no. 8; Ursinus, *Catechism*, Lord's Day 21, §4; Peter Martyr, *Loci Communes*, Class 3, ch. 3, no. 10, p. 491.

II. Nor should anyone be troubled that the word *Church* is not found in the cited text; since preachers of the Gospel and administrators of the Sacraments are not given *without the Church*. The perpetuity of both was added and foretold by Christ. This observation also applies to the following passages.

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III[50]. Now let us hear what Scheibler says to these things. He admits the Church is visible; nor can he deny that the preaching of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments are visible things; nor that Christ has bound His perpetual presence to them. Where then shall iniquity turn? He says: *"Christ did not promise in Matthew 28 that the doctrine would always remain pure, nor the worship of God uncorrupted."* But what is this, if not to resist the Word of God with reckless boldness? Christ promises to be with the Apostles and their successors teaching what He commanded, and administering the Sacraments. Did Christ command the Gospel to be taught impurely? Did He command an adulterated worship of God? If we are to believe Scheibler, Christ would be present with the heretical preaching of the Nestorians, and with their adulterated worship—because some simple people among them may obtain salvation. Thus is the divine promise twisted, as if Christ were unable or unwilling to fulfill it. But did Christ, in Matthew 28, promise to be present with heretical preaching or corrupt worship? Which Scripture teaches Scripture against itself? Which reason argues against reason? Christ promised to be with those teaching what He *willed*. But heresy and corrupt worship are not His will.

IV[51]. But Scheibler presses on: saying that similar promises were made in the Old Testament, where God did not abandon His people—even in universal idolatry.

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[50] [Marginalia: *Examination of the Faith*, Book 2, Part 2, ch. 3, §§11, 17]

[51] [Marginalia: *ibid.*, §18]

V. Response. We willingly grant that great promises were made in the Old Testament. But if those promises were not fulfilled in the Jewish Church, they must be fulfilled in the Christian Church. And if they *were* fulfilled in the Jewish Church, then much more will they be in the Christian Church. Whoever asserts that God's promises fail is impious. To claim that the entire Jewish Church was idolatrous is false.

VI. Cocceius, on the same passage, produces many things—but either slanderous or irrelevant. [Marginalia: *Disputation 45, Thesis 20*]

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VII[52]. Passage 2: *"And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end shall come."*

Here we see: Preaching *throughout the world,* Followed *immediately* by the consummation—no intermediate period is mentioned. And the *consummation*, in the obvious sense of Scripture, is the end of the world. This understanding does not exclude the interpretation (drawn out by exposition) concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. See *Heidelberg Gloss*, *Keckermann*, *Systema*, Book 3, ch. 6, p. 404.

VIII[53]. Passage 3: *"That you may know how to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."* Here it clearly speaks of the visible Church, in the phrase *"how to conduct yourself."* See *Later Helvetic Confession*, ch. 17; Crocius, *Tome 1, Controversy 3, Section 5, no. 27*; *Dutch and Heidelberg Glosses*, Beza, Zanchi, *Tome 8, On the Militant Church*, ch. 24, §20, col. 540.

IX. The passage concerns the perpetual visibility of the Church, as seen in the words: *"pillar and ground of the truth."* For that quality is absolutely attributed to the Church—and thus always pertains to it. The same sense is found in *Ephesians 4:11*, etc. See: *Later Helvetic Confession*, ch. 17, *Suevic Confession*, art. 15, Calvin, *Institutes*, Book 4, ch. 1, §10; ch. 8, §2, Molinaeus, Book 1, ch. 2, §1, Bucanus, *Loci Communes*, loc. 41, on the Church, §27, no. 7.

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[52] [Marginalia: *Matt. 24:14*]
[53] [Marginalia: *1 Timothy 3:15*]

X. The Protestants claim the Church is not absolutely the pillar and ground of truth, but conditionally—that is, as long as it follows the Word of God. They say it is possible that the Church may cease to be the pillar and ground of truth, if it departs from the prescriptions of the Word of God.

[Marginalia: *Later Helvetic Confession*, ch. 17]

XI[54]. Response 1. Such a restriction or limitation is not read in Scripture; therefore, it must be believed absolutely that the Church is the pillar and ground of truth. Consequently, this is always true of the universal Church. So long as the truth of Scripture endures, this truth endures. Response 2. When one says, *"Man is visible,"* it is understood that he is always so. If someone were to respond, *"This is only true under the condition that he does not become irrational,"* he would be rejected as ignorant, since such a thing is impossible. Likewise, when one says that the Church is the pillar and ground of truth *under the condition that it does not deviate from Scripture*, he does not understand that such a deviation is impossible, while the truth of Scripture stands. Thus even Calvin, somewhere, rejects this limitation: *"The gates of hell shall not prevail against us, unless we yield to them. Satan shall have no victory over us, and the grace given us shall stand, unless we give him place—through our own fault and negligence."*

XII[55]. Let us now conclude the perpetual preaching of the divine Word by the harmonious and clear words of the Prophets: *"The God of gods, the Lord has spoken; He has called the earth, from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, the beauty of His glory..."* Protestants want to say that God was silent for long periods—that the Gospel was not always announced by His preachers. We maintain the contrary, with Scripture and St. Jerome. Hear also Isaiah 62:6: *"Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all day and all night, forever they shall not be silent."* These watchmen—i.e., preachers of the Word—the Protestants claim fell silent, or preached false and superstitious doctrine. But according to Scripture, they shall not be silent. See St. Jerome on that passage, *Tome 4*, p. 266 C.

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[54] [Marginalia: *Book 6 against Pighius*, p. 238]

[55] [Marginalia: *Psalm 49:1, 23*]

XIII[56]. Passage 4: *"As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."* This is the perpetual proclamation of the Lord's Passion in the administration and reception of the Most Holy Eucharist. See: *Scottish Confession*, art. 15; Hoffmann, *Loc. 29*, Theses 3 (p. 903) and 8 (p. 944); Calvin on the passage; *Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord's Day 21, §4; Zanchi, *Tome 4*, Book 1 on the Fourth Commandment, col. 719; *Tome 7*, *On the Church*, ch. 4, col. 64 and ch. 8, col. 87; *Tome 8*, *On Holy Scripture*, ch. 9, col. 356; *Dutch Gloss*, Ursinus, *Lord's Day 28*, §2, no. 2.

XIV[57]. Passage 5: *"Let both grow together until the harvest. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the tares are the children of the evil one."* All admit that this parable refers to the Church. That it refers to the visible Church is evident from the *wicked*, who are said to be within the visible Church—who, according to the adversaries, are found only there. The perpetuity of this visible Church is read in the words: *"Let both grow together until the harvest."* And the harvest is the consummation of the world Therefore, we have a Church that is perpetually visible, perpetually growing—both by the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. See: Calvin, *Institutes*, Book 4, ch. 1, §13; *Dutch and Heidelberg Glosses*. Bucanus, *Loci Communes*, loc. 41, on the Church, §25.

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XV[58]. Cocceius asserts: *"How absurd it is to say that this parable deals with the visible Church, which consists of the wicked."* And later: "That the good and the wicked together are called the Church by Christ, and thus that the Church consists of the wicked"—how, he says, can our brothers go on speaking this way? Yet he admits: the multitude of Protestants, in which there are also tares—whether by the appearance of doctrine, the hope of the faithful, or even the boasting of all—is called the Church; and that tares are in the Church, because the good are mixed with the wicked.

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[56] [Marginalia: *1 Corinthians 11:26 – Perpetual administration of the Sacraments*]

[57] [Marginalia: *Matt. 13:30, 38*]

[58] [Marginalia: *Disputation 47, Thesis 4*]

XVI. Response 1. If we had said what Cocceius falsely attributes to us, we would acknowledge it to be absurd. But since we did not say it, and it is attributed to us with bad faith, Cocceius is guilty of calumny. Our words, just previously stated, were these: *"All admit that this parable concerns the Church. That it concerns the visible Church is clear from the fact that the wicked are said to be in the Church."* Where, pray, did Cocceius read that we said: *"this parable concerns the visible Church which consists of the wicked"*? With what audacity did he add *"which"* (*qua*) to our words—something we neither wrote, nor thought, nor could have written, unless we had deliberately wished to speak absurdly?

XVII. Response 2. Catholic Doctors commonly say—and we say with them—that the visible Church consists of both the good and the wicked. But no one claims that the Church consists *solely* of the wicked. That the wicked are not found except in the visible Church is not denied by Cocceius, who writes: *"The tares are in the Church, where the good are mixed with the wicked.* Therefore, when we sought to prove that the cited parable refers to the visible Church, we said it consists of the wicked—meaning those who are said to be in the Church and are not found elsewhere but in the visible Church. This is enough to establish our argument, whether you say the Church consists of both good and bad, or, with Cocceius, admit that the multitude of Protestants, including tares under the appearance of doctrine or the hope of the faithful or public acclaim, is called the Church.

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XVIII[59]. Passage 6: *"Tell it to the Church; and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican."* Here we read Christ's command to refer fraternal difficulties to the Church, and that the Church is to be heard. That it speaks of the visible Church is evident in the words *"tell"* and *"if he will not hear."* This is a perpetual command, because it is from Christ. There is no limitation, as is clear in itself: the faithful, by appealing to the Church, confess that they are members of the Church. See: *Bohemian Confession*, ch. 8; *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, Disput. 40, Th. 25; Crocius, Tome 1, Controversy 3, Section 2, no. 3, p. 260; Beza, *Dutch and Heidelberg Glosses*; Ursinus, *Lord's Day 21*, §§2–4.

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[59] [Marginalia: *Matt. 18:17 – Perpetual profession of faith*]

XIX[60]. Passage 7 presupposes the perpetuity of the assembly of the elect, which Protestants call the *invisible Church*: *"That every tongue may confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* And likewise: *"With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* Here we read: That Christ is exalted *so that* every tongue may confess Him; That *confession of the mouth* leads to salvation. So either the *invisible Church* professes the faith—and in that case it becomes visible through external profession; Or it does not profess the faith—and then it neither fulfills Christ's exaltation, nor confesses unto salvation, nor remains the invisible Church. Consequently, the notion of an *invisible Church* that is not simultaneously visible involves contradiction.

XX[61]. These testimonies are confirmed by the Prophets: *"I will praise you forever." "They shall remember your name, O Lord, in every generation." "Therefore shall the peoples praise you forever and ever." "We are your people and the sheep of your pasture; we will confess to you forever, from generation to generation." "The righteous confessed your name." "On that day you will say: confess to the Lord, and call upon His name..."* Hear this perpetuity: *"This is my covenant with you, says the Lord: My Spirit that is upon you and the words I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your seed… forever."* See St. Jerome, *Tome 4*, p. 198 A. Another prophet concludes: *"His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise."*

XXI[62]. Passage 8: *"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* This refers to the visible Church, as evident from the words *"on this rock."* Whether the rock be understood as Christ, the confession of faith, or Peter, the foundation of the Church is always something sensible. The word *"I will build"* also shows that the Church of the predestined, built from eternity, is not meant. Perpetuity is read in the words: *"The gates of hell shall not prevail."* Thus, against the Church that confesses Christ, built by a wise architect upon this foundation, the powers of hell shall not prevail. See: Peron, *Reply to Roy*, ch. 56, p. 447; *Bohemian Confession*, ch. 3; Beza, *Glosses*; Crocius, Tome 1, Controversy 3, Section 2, no. 31; Zanchi, *Tome 8*, *On the Militant Church*, ch. 24, §2, col. 542.

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[60] [Marginalia: *Philippians 2:11; Romans 10:10*]

[61] [Marginalia: *Psalm 29:13; Psalm 44:18; Psalm 78:13; Psalm 12:4; Isaiah 59:21; Habakkuk 3:3; Matthew 10:32*]

[62] [Marginalia: *Matt. 16:18; Matt. 7:24 – Perpetual visible kingdom*]

XXII[63]. Passage 9: *"Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle…"* Here we believe Christ sanctifies the Church as His Bride, and cleanses her by water and the Word—things which are without doubt visible. And because we believe this, it must be perpetually true, and perpetually visible. See: *Saxon Confession*, art. 15; *Suevic Confession*, art. 15; Beza, *Glosses*; Bucanus, *Loci Communes*, loc. 41, on the Church, §27, no. 10; Zanchi, *Tome 6*, on this passage, col. 210.

XXIII. We do not deny that many things are ascribed to the Church here which do not apply to the wicked or the righteous when taken individually. But since the visible Church consists of both good and bad, Scripture often rebukes the whole Church by reason of the wicked, and often praises it by reason of the righteous. Thus the Apostle says the Church is cleansed by the washing of water in the word, which is enough to establish the perpetual visibility of the Church.

XXIV[64]. Passage 10: *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, so that it may give light to all in the house."* The Gospel teaches that by *"city"* is meant the Apostles, for it says: *"You are the light of the world."* That it includes the Apostles' successors is denied by none. That this light shines through good works is witnessed by Christ: *"So let your light shine before men…"* Perpetuity is read in: *"A city… cannot be hidden."* So here is a declaration of perpetual visibility, including an admonition of duty. See: *Glosses*, Bucanus, *Loci Communes*, loc. 41, on the Church, §§8, 27, no. 6.

XXV[65]. Conclusion via the Prophets: *"As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God. God has established it forever."* We have, then, a visible Church—a perpetual city of God. See St. Jerome, *Tome 7*, p. 60 A–B. *"I will keep my mercy for him forever." "His seed shall endure forever, and his throne like the days of heaven." "His*

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[63] [Marginalia: *Ephesians 5:25*]
[64] [Marginalia: *Matthew 5:14*]
[65] [Marginalia: *Psalm 47:9; Psalm 88:29–30, 37; Isaiah 9:7; Isaiah 33:20; Isaiah 54:17; Isaiah 60:11*, *Hosea 2:19; Luke 1:33; Luke 21:15; Hebrews 12:26*]

throne shall remain like the sun and the moon, and a faithful witness in the sky." Are they not blind who do not see the Church, shining perpetually like the perfect sun and moon? See St. Jerome, *Tome 7*, p. 112 D. *"His government shall increase, and peace shall have no end. He shall sit on the throne of David and rule his kingdom in justice and righteousness forever."* Listen further: *"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnity. Your eyes shall see Jerusalem, a rich habitation, a tabernacle that shall never be moved…"* See St. Jerome, *Tome 4*, p. 120 D. *"Every weapon formed against you shall not prosper. Every tongue that rises in judgment you shall condemn." "Your gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night, so that the strength of the nations may be brought to you, and their kings led in."* From here the Church is both the kingdom and the bride of Christ: *"I will betroth you to me forever."* A kingdom, by nature, consists of a multitude of people who know each other by visible signs. See: *Daniel 2:44*, *7:14*; St. Jerome, *Tomes 5 & 4*; *Micah 4:7*, Tome 1, p. 156 C.

XXVI. Of this kingdom we read also in the New Testament: *"He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end."* This same kingdom is perpetually and visibly defended by the Apostolic doctrine: *"I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to resist."* And so the Church of Christ is an unshakable kingdom: *"Once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens."* And what is shaken is removed, so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us have grace by which we may serve God acceptably.

3. THE CATHOLIC PROOF FROM THE HOLY FATHERS EXPLAINING SCRIPTURE

I[66]. St. Augustine, on the passage of Matthew 28, introduces the Church speaking: *What is this that I do not understand, that those who depart from me murmur against me? What is this that the lost insist I have perished? Certainly they say this because I was, and am no more: "Declare to me the short span of my days." I do not ask You for those eternal days—they are without end, where I will be, yet I do not seek them now; I seek the temporal days. "Declare to me the short span of my days," not the eternity of my days. As long as I shall be in this present world, declare it to me, on account of those who say: "She was, and now is no more; the Scriptures are fulfilled; all nations have believed, but the Church has apostatized and perished among all nations." What does it mean, "Declare to me the short span of my days"? And it was declared, nor was that voice in vain. What did He declare to me except the way itself, and how did He declare it? "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."*

II[67]. The same Saint: *For if the Church were not to exist here until the end of the world, to whom did the Lord say, "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world"?* That same Augustine (*Tract. 101. in John*, Tom. 9, p. 204 B; and St. Leo, *Serm. 14 on the Lord's Passion*, p. 61 D) testifies that this announcement has the character of a promise. Indeed, he teaches (*Book 6, ch. 8, On Genesis to the Letter*, Tom. 3, p. 234 A) that this same promise applies to all future believers. He also does not wish (*on Psalm 148*, Tom. 8, p. 712 D) that this promise be valid for those parts separated from unity; for it belongs to the whole Church, which, just as it is the Body of Christ, so Christ is the Head of the Church—as the same Augustine affirms (*On the Unity of the Church*, ch. 4, Tom. 7, p. 142 C). See also St. Jerome on the same passage, Matthew 28 (Tom. 6, p. 66 H); on Jeremiah ch. 31 (Tom. 1, p. 301 E); and on Isaiah ch. 41 (Tom. 4, p. 137 H). Likewise, St. Ambrose (or rather St. Prosper), *Book 2, ch. 1, On the Calling of the Gentiles*, among the works of St. Ambrose, Tom. 4, cols. 533 and 534; St. Hilary, *Book 2 On the Trinity*, col. 11 B–C; and St. Chrysostom, *Hom. 15 on Matthew*, Tom. 7, p. 165 C–D.

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[66] [Marginalia: Conc. 2. in Psalm 101. Tom. 8 pag. 469. C.]

[67] [Marginalia: In Psalm 70. Conc. 2. Tom 8. Pag. 313. C.]

III[68]. Concerning the text of St. Augustine that was cited, Scheibler says that Augustine is not talking about a purely visible Church, entirely unadulterated. Response: St. Augustine is speaking of the Church of Christ, to which Christ made His promises. Is a heretical Church the Church of Christ? Certainly no more than adulterated gold is simply gold. St. Augustine writes against the Donatists. They said the Church had perished because of the sins of Catholics. St. Augustine proves the contrary from Christ's promise, teaching that the visible Church of Christ, given the truth of Christ's promise, cannot perish. Scheibler, unable to find a way out, says that indeed the Church of Christ always remains visible, but is not entirely pure and free from errors. But what is this except trampling on Christ's promise and accusing truth of lying? Did Christ promise He would remain with His Church—one which was not actually His, but adulterated and heretical? If a heretical Church is the Church of Christ, then no one can separate from such a Church on account of heresy without committing the crime of schism. For he would be separating from the Church of Christ, which necessarily involves the sacrilege of schism.

IV[69]. Concerning the second passage, Matthew 24, St. Augustine explains: *"Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." You say: "He said that about us. We are the ones; we shall remain until the end of the world." Let Christ Himself be asked, to whom it was said, "Declare to me the short span of my days," and He says: "This Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end shall come." What is it that you said— that the Church certainly existed and now has perished? Listen to the Lord announcing "the short span of my days": "This Gospel shall be preached," He says. Where? "In the whole world." To whom? "As a testimony to all nations." What then? "And then the end shall come." Do you not see that there are still nations where the Gospel has not been preached?* And shortly after: *Therefore, even until the end of the world, the Church is among all nations.* And again: "*May the heretics perish—perish as they are—and may they be found to become what they are not."* Hence, there is no need for an interpreter of: *"And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then will the end come."* (St.

[68] [Marginalia: Exam. sid. lib.2.part.2.cap.3.n.22.]
[69] [Marginalia: Conc. 2. In Psalm 101. Tom. 8 pag. 469. A., Matt 24.]

Augustine, *On the Unity of the Church*, ch. 19, Tom. 7, p. 156 A; and St. Jerome, on Matthew 24, Tom. 6, p. 52 H.)

V[70]. Similarly, St. Prosper: *Let him see how to defend the pronouncement of Truth itself, saying: "This Gospel will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." For indeed—an unthinkable thing to say—the faith of that word would be changed, if four hundred years ago the world was already filled with the Gospel, and yet the coming of the Lord is still delayed.*

VI. The third passage, 1 Timothy 3:15, will be explained by the Holy Fathers in the following controversy; and they will show that the visible Church never errs, which also includes perpetual visibility.

VII[71]. The fourth passage, 1 Corinthians 11:26, is explained by St. Chrysostom: *Then, showing that [the Church] will remain even until the end, he says, "until He comes."* Likewise Theophylact can be seen on that same passage.

VIII[72]. The fifth passage, Matthew 13, is explained by St. Augustine: *The Lord also says regarding the weeds sown above: "Let both grow together until the harvest," that is, the wheat and the weeds. He Himself interprets the harvest to be the end of the world; obviously, the field in which both are sown is the world. Thus, until the end of the world, let both grow throughout the world.* He adds much more in that chapter and in chapter 15 (p. 151 C). Afterward: "*As there is no need for an interpreter of "Let both grow together until the harvest," so who needs an interpreter when the Lord Himself interpreted? And He Himself said, with no one able to contradict—especially since it was from that parable which He Himself gave—He Himself said that the good seed are the children of the Kingdom, the field is the world, the harvest is the end of the world. Let anyone produce even one such thing which might show most openly that Africa (Luther) is proven or that it alone is left among the rest, or that it alone has been preserved for the princes for the renewing and fulfilling of the world."* And soon after: "*But if you cannot do*

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[70] [Marginalia: Ad Savita Gallorum cap.4.]
[71] [Marginalia: In hunc loc. Tom.4.pag.449]
[72] [Marginalia: De Vnit. Eccl. cap. 13.pag.151. A, Cap. 19. Pag 156. B]

what we so justly demand of you—showing this—then believe the truth, be silent, go to sleep; rouse yourselves from fury to salvation." See also St. Augustine, *Epistle 171*, Tom. 2, p. 295 B; and *Book 2 against Parmenian*, ch. 2, Tom. 7, p. 12; St. Jerome, on Psalm 16, Tom. 7, p. 17 E.

IX[73]. The sixth passage, Matthew 18, is explained by St. Chrysostom: *"Tell it to the Church"—namely, to those in authority and presiding.* St. Augustine understands it of those who use the keys of the Church (*Book 1 against Adversaries of the Law and the Prophets*, ch. 17, Tom. 6, p. 250 D). The eighth passage, Matthew 16, will be explained by the Fathers in the following controversy; the same goes for the ninth passage, Ephesians 5.

X[74]. The tenth passage, Matthew 5, is explained by St. Chrysostom: *"A city set on a hill cannot be hidden," etc. Again, by these words He encourages diligence in good living, showing that they should strive to be watchful, as though placed before the eyes of all, contending in the middle of the world's stage.* And soon after: *So that also the unbelievers, hearing these things—one single display of Christ's power—thus, marveling at His power through repeated signs, might adore the majesty of the Lord. For He well perceives what sorts of rewards He promises to those who were even unknown in their own region, namely that they will be celebrated by land and sea, and that to the ends of the world they will come, led on by renown. Indeed, not by fame, but by the manifest effect of benefits and admirable works.*

XI[75]. St. Hilary, in the same way, explains: *"Christ's lamp is not to be hidden under a bushel, nor is it to be concealed under the covering of the Synagogue; but lifted up on the wood of the Passion, it shall provide an eternal light to those dwelling in the Church."* He likewise exhorts the Apostles to shine with the same light, so that by the admonition of their works, God may be imparted to us. See also St. Augustine, *On the Unity of the Church*, ch. 16, Tom. 7, p. 152 B; and *Tractate 1 on the Epistle of John*, Tom. 9, p. 239 B.

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[73] [Marginalia: Hom. 61. In cap. 18. Matt. Tom. 7. Pag. 659. Vid & Tom. 2. Pag. 346. C, D.]

[74] [Marginalia: Hom. 15. In Matt. Tom. 7. Pag. 176. E.]

[75] [Marginalia: In Matt. can. 4. Col. 478. f]

XII[76]. St. Ambrose: *Our faith, placed on the highest mountain of all, that is, on Christ, cannot be hidden by the darkness and ruins of this world; but shining with the brightness of the eternal sun, it illumines us with the spiritual light of grace.*

XIII[77]. Pope Felix, *Epistle 1 to Acacius of Constantinople*, applies multiple passages: *Let us not despair, brother, of preserving the true sentence of our Savior, who promised that He would never fail His Church even to the end of the world; nor did He say it would be overcome by the gates of hell; and that all which is bound on earth by the sacred apostolic teaching would not be loosed in the heavens. Nor let us imagine that, though beset by whatever perils, either the firmness of the blessed Peter will ever yield or the authority of the universal Church will ever be lost; for the more she fears being entangled by the floods of prosperity, the less she is broken but rather, divinely instructed, grows stronger amidst adversity. Hence it must be realized that whoever attempts to sink her—who cannot be submerged by the storms of the sea—he himself, cast down from saving guidance into the depths, is drowned, while she prevails.* See St. Gaudentius, Tract. 14, *Bibliotheca Patrum*, Tom. 4, p. 824 H.

[76] [Marginalia: Lib. 7. In Luc. 11. Tom. 3. Col. 140. H.]

[77] [Marginalia: Conc. Tom. 2. Pag. 447. D]

4. CATHOLIC PROOF FROM THE HOLY FATHERS WHO DO NOT EXPOUND SCRIPTURE DIRECTLY

I[78]. St. Hilary: "*This, then, is His inheritance: to give eternal life to all flesh, that all nations, baptized and instructed, may be regenerated unto life."* And shortly after: "*Having been received into the household of the Lord and enrolled among the family of God, and transferred from the unjust and perverse rule of tyrants into the eternal and divine kingdom."*

II[79]. St. Gregory: "*From whom the whole body, supplied and joined together through ligaments and connections, grows into the increase of God."* And shortly after: "B*ut the Church has the life-giving Spirit, because it inseparably cleaves to its Head, Christ."* See the same author in *Book 1, Homily 8 on Ezekiel*, Tom. 2, col. 1090 B.

III[80]. St. Jerome: "*From this we understand that the Church, though indeed allowed to pass through persecutions until the end of the world, can in no way be overthrown or overcome."* And let this be so, because *the Lord God Almighty*—or, *the Lord God of it*, that is, *of the Church*—has promised that He would do so; whose promise is the law of nature. See on Isaiah ch. 4, at the words *"and the tabernacle"*, Tom. 4, p. 16 H.

IV[81]. St. Ambrose: "*The Church has its seasons of persecution and peace. For it appears to wane like the moon, yet it does not vanish; it may be overshadowed, but it cannot be extinguished."* See this same point in *Luke ch. 8*, Tom. 1, col. 56 L, M; and *Book 9 on Luke ch. 20, On the Vineyard Planted*, Tom. 3, cols. 197–198; and *On Solomon, ch. 4*, Tom. 2, col. 1093. Beautifully said.

V[82]. St. Chrysostom: "*There is nothing more powerful than the Church. O man, end your war, lest you destroy your own strength. Do not wage war against heaven. If you attack a man, you might either defeat him or perhaps be defeated. But if you attack the Church, you will never, by*

[78] [Marginalia: On Psalm 2, col. 648 E]
[79] [Marginalia: On Psalm 5, Penitential, Tom. 2, col. 762 C, D]
[80] [Marginalia: On Amos ch. 9, at the end, Tom. 5, p. 126 C]
[81] [Marginalia: Book 4 on Henam, ch. 2, Tom. 1, col. 48 H]
[82] [Marginalia: Homily when his expulsion was being discussed, Tom. 5, p. 599 B]

any art or device, gain victory over it; for God is infinitely stronger than all. Do they contend with the Lord? Are they stronger than He? God knows: who exerts himself in this endeavor to oppose? Surely you do not know how great He is in power. Look to the earth: He makes it stable within; He subdues it, and what is shaken is made firm. He ordered a trembling city to stand: how much more can He establish the Church? Surely the Church is stronger than heaven; for heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away. And what are these words? "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." If you suspect this word, at least know the faith by which I know it. How many, how great were those who, with tyrannical zeal, strove to overthrow the Church; how many tortures, etc." Many other beautiful things follow. See St. Cyril of Alexandria explaining Hosea 2:19 *"I will espouse you to Me forever"*, *Book 4 on Genesis*, Tom. 1, p. 129 D.

VI[83]. St. Leo: "*Nor can [the Church] be destroyed by any kind of cruelty. The religion founded upon the sacrament of Christ's cross is not diminished by persecutions, but increased; and the field of the Lord is always clothed with seed by its Author, while the grains that fall one by one are multiplied in growth."* See the *Letter of Pope John*, titled *Lex inter clericos*, §8, *Code on the Most High Trinity*.

VII. St. Augustine: "*No one can erase from heaven the constitution of God; no one can erase from the earth the Church of God. He promised the whole world unharmed, and this [Church] has filled the whole world."* The same: "*These two kinds of shepherds (good and bad in morals), with some dying and others rising up, must necessarily persist in the Catholic Church itself until the end of the world and the judgment of the Lord."* (*Epistle 109 to Felicia*, Tom. 2, p. 320 C) See also St. Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, ch. 9, *Bibliotheca Patrum*, Tom. 1, p. 85 B; and *Epistle 162*, Tom. 2, p. 282

[83] [Marginalia: Sermon 1 on the Apostles Peter and Paul, p. 79 B]

USE OF THE CONTROVERSY: ON THE PERPETUAL VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

I[84]. Either the Protestants say that the Church is not always visible, and in the preceding controversy they have not proved their position. Thus they are found to err in a question of the greatest importance.

II. Or else they will certainly admit that the Church is always visible—and so they charge themselves with falsehood, for they teach that according to Scripture, the Church is sometimes invisible. They are like those who, in legal proceedings, deny that a certain document is theirs, and once proven wrong about the authenticity of the document, put forth another excuse; such people are condemned to double penalty by the judge. *Novell. 18, De Trient. & semiß. cap. 8.*

III. Furthermore, it is evident that neither the Lutheran nor the Reformed etc. Church is the true Church of Jesus Christ, because there is a lack of perpetual preaching of the Gospel, which is not found in such churches. Indeed, although in various and discontinuous times certain persons have been mentioned, supposedly as their preachers, that does not suffice to establish perpetuity—especially as those typically named (even in the judgment of the Protestants themselves) published the most shameful heresies that subvert the foundation of faith. If they share in fellowship with these preachers, they likewise share in their condemnation. It also follows that witnesses must be produced who can give a reason for their knowledge—whether from hearing, or from other evidence—which the Protestants do not do. See Hoffman, *Loc. 49, De Eccl.*, Thes. 7, pp. 926–927.

IV. Secondly, it is clear that in the Lutheran Church etc. there is not a perpetual administration of the Sacraments. For since the Sacraments are administered by the ministers of the Church, they would need to designate a perpetual succession of their ministers, which to this day they have not even attempted.

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[84] [Marginalia: Vfus defensivus]

V. Thirdly, it is clear that the Lutheran etc. Church has not perpetually professed the faith. For they say that the Church is often invisible, its state interrupted—sometimes oppressed, as if it were not the Church.

VI. Now proceed, and observe how your doctrine on the Church's interrupted state is not proven from Scripture. Acknowledge that the so-called "restorers" of the Church waver. Indeed, if (as has been shown by explicit testimonies of Scripture and antiquity) you perceive—or rather believe—in the Church's perpetual visibility, admit that this so-called "restoration" is actually a true falling away, and that the Church's interrupted visibility implies a permanent defectiveness.

THE INTERVENTION OF SCHEIBLER

VII[85]. He says first: "The visible Church of Christ exists outside the Papacy, in Greece, Armenia, Russia, the East Indies, among the Abyssinians, by profession of faith, preaching of the Gospel, and administration of the Sacraments, even though they have many errors. For where wheat grows among the weeds, there is the Church of Christ."

VIII. Response 1. The Lutheran themselves admit that the Churches of the Greeks, Armenians, etc. are infected with heresy and superstition. Thus, if you seek to show the perpetual visibility of the Lutheran Church by means of the Greek Church, the Armenians, etc.—and cannot prove it otherwise—you must necessarily acknowledge that the perpetual visibility of the Lutheran Church can only be demonstrated through a Church that is heretical and superstitious. Moreover, if the Greek Church etc., notwithstanding the multitude of errors you admit, is the true Church of Christ, then the Roman Catholic Church—despite the multitude of errors that you falsely charge against it—would also be a true Church of Christ. And so the Lutherans who broke away from it would be stained by the sin of schism.

IX[86]. Response 2. It is absurd and contrary to the Gospel to want to prove the perpetual visibility of the Church by means of heretical churches. Christ—namely, Truth—says: "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to

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[85] [Marginalia: *Exam. sid.* Book 2, Part 2, ch. 4, n. 4]

[86] [Marginalia: Matt. 28:19]

observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Christ promises that He will be with the Apostles and their successors until the end of the world, while they teach whatever He commanded. Whoever asserts that for many centuries there was no Church to which Christ adhered as it taught what He commanded, openly contradicts the truth. Yet Scheibler is compelled to do so by schismatic necessity; so do all Protestants, wishing that Christ might be present with a Church that does not teach all that He commanded but rather sacrilegious heresies. If that is not contradicting Truth to its face, what is?

X[87]. Response 3. Christ—Truth—says: "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end shall come." Christ did not say that the Gospel would be preached in just any manner—so that, in many matters, errors are preached instead of truth, heresies instead of revealed teachings, superstitions instead of salutary doctrines. He says it is "this Gospel" that He Himself was preaching, the same Gospel He wanted preached by the Apostles. It would be impious to say that by "this Gospel that He was preaching," Christ meant only certain points He had preached, together with the contradiction of many other things He had preached. Therefore, Christ promised beforehand that "this Gospel" that He was preaching would be preached throughout the whole world, and then the end would come. Such a Church is what we are seeking: one in which those words were fulfilled. Appealing to a Church laden with many errors, branded with heresy, disfigured by superstition, is not demonstrating a Church in which that same Gospel is preached—the one Christ preached and foretold would be preached in all the world, bringing on the end.

XI[88]. He says, second: "Among the Nestorians many attain salvation; therefore, among them is the Church of Christ."

XII. Response 1. It is one thing to ask whether, among the Nestorians, because of their invincible ignorance of their own errors, some may be saved; it is another thing to ask whether the Nestorian Church is the Church of Christ. We do not doubt that certain persons, born and raised

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[87] [Marginalia: Matt. 24]

[88] [Marginalia: Ibid. n. 6, 1 Tim. 3:15, Matt. 18:17, Matt. 16:18]

among the Nestorians or other heretics, can reach salvation and belong to the Church of Christ by belief in what is necessary as a means of salvation, and in some other necessary teachings as a matter of precept—while invincibly ignorant of other points. But for that reason, neither the Nestorian community nor any gathering of heretics is the Church of Christ, or "the pillar and ground of truth," as the Apostle says; nor is one who "does not hear" that Church to be considered as a heathen or a publican. Consequently, pointing to the Nestorians or any heretical communities does not display the always-visible Church of Christ that Christ promised, which He built upon the rock, and about which He said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

XIII. Response 2. Those who are invincibly ignorant, living among Nestorians or other heretics, do not constitute the visible Church of Christ such as Christ promised. For Christ's doctrine is not announced by those who preach heresy and a different Gospel, nor are such persons—albeit members of the universal Church by invincible ignorance—recognized as such by a profession of the errors they hold in common with the Nestorian or other heretical Church. Consequently, through that kind of preaching, "this Gospel" that Christ promised would be preached is not announced; nor is it by that kind of profession that people are known to observe all that Christ commanded.

XIV. He says, third: "The Lutheran Church is visible, although it is not acknowledged by us as the true Catholic Church; therefore, it is not necessary for a visible Church to be free from error."

XV[89]. Response 1. We do not understand what Scheibler is attempting to achieve with this objection. We grant that the Lutheran Church is visible. We hold that the Lutheran Church is not true. So it does not necessarily follow that every visible Church—whether Nestorian, Lutheran, Arian, or Calvinist—is free from error. We grant that as well. But what does Scheibler conclude from this? Does he wish to say that all those visible Churches are particular Churches of Christ, which together form one universal Church—the Church that Christ loved and for which He gave Himself, "that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the washing of water in the word of life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish"? Nothing more absurd can be imagined.

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[89] [Marginalia: Ephes. 5:25, Matt. 5:14]

And yet, unless Scheibler intends this, we do not know what he does intend. Will he maintain that the Lord spoke of all heretics when He said: "You are the light of the world; a city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor do they light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a lampstand, so that it shines for all in the house"? What greater blindness could there be than calling the darkness of heretics "light," or calling it "the city set on a hill," which not a wise Architect but the author of confusion has built—and calling it "the lamp which shines for all in the house," although in reality they are the blind and leaders of the blind?

XVI[90]. Response 2. The Lutheran Church cannot be shown to have been always visible. Therefore it is not the true Church. Consequently, it is not the Church in which the promises of Scripture were fulfilled and continue to be fulfilled. If the Church of Christ need not necessarily be free from error, then a heretical Church would be the Body of Christ, and Christ would be the head of a heretical Church, and the faithful would have communion with heretics, from whom Scripture commands us to abstain. If a heretical Church is the Body of Christ, then separating from the communion of that heretical Church could not be done without the sacrilege of schism; and thus Protestants, who departed from us on the grounds of alleged heresy, would by their own judgment be schismatics.

XVII. He says, first (to n. 3): "The Gospel that we preach—namely, that we are saved by faith in Christ with repentance—is not ours, nor new, but is contained in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, and was preached by the Apostles in the world and is still believed."

XVIII. Response. The question is not whether the Gospel was preached by the Apostles in the world and still believed. The question is whether the Calvinist Church is that which Scripture foretold would always preach the Gospel.

XIX. He says, second: "That we say Scripture alone is the rule of faith and its principle is ancient. All who have believed in Christ and strive to advance in knowledge and in mortifying the works of the flesh are ours, from Scripture."

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[90] [Marginalia: Disp. 47, Thes. 16]

XX. Response. Whether it is ancient to say that Scripture alone is the rule and principle of faith is demonstrated in our treatise on Testimonies or Traditions. But how do you prove that all those who believed in Christ and strove to advance in knowledge and mortifying the flesh, following Scripture as their guide, belong rather to you than to the Lutherans, Arminians, or Anabaptists? And that they are yours rather than ours, how do you prove it? We objected to your churches the lack of perpetual preaching. You reply about those who believed. But under whose preaching did they believe, and what was preached from age to age to those believers? You reply about those who strove to advance in knowledge and mortification by following Scripture. But you do not say who were the teachers or instructors—this is what the question actually concerns.

XXI. He says, third: "A law contrary to the law of Christ, namely Antichrist's law such as is found in the Council of Trent, could not have been opposed earlier, before it was unmasked. It is therefore ridiculous to ask who among the predecessors preached a denial of the Antichrist's law that had not yet been unmasked."

XXII. Response. Cocceius seems to fear that he might not be considered a sincere Calvinist, so fiercely does he slander the supposed Antichrist. If it is "ridiculous" to ask who among the predecessors preached the denial of the Antichrist's law before it was unmasked, is it not childish to rail against that question with impotent anger, when we, above at number 3—where you direct your accusations—did not raise this question? We objected to you for the lack of perpetual preaching of the Gospel. You (as if seized with dizziness from that single objection) say that the law of Antichrist, as set forth in the Council of Trent, could not have been opposed before it was unmasked. Are preaching the Gospel and opposing the law of Antichrist one and the same thing? If preaching the Gospel consists in opposing the law of Antichrist as contained in the Council of Trent, then no one preached the Gospel before the Council of Trent, because, as you yourself say, it could not have been opposed before it was unmasked.

XXIII. He says, fourth: "All who have resisted the Pope's tyranny and errors in faith and charity, willing to obey God and asking Him to open their eyes, even if they erred in some things, are ours," etc.

XXIV. Response. How do you prove that those who resisted the alleged tyranny of the Pope and his supposed errors in faith and charity, willing to obey God, etc., were more aligned with you than with the Lutherans, Arminians, or Anabaptists? Does everyone who gave the Pope a severe look become one of yours? And why do you not name those who opposed errors and sins in faith and charity? Were you afraid to expose yourself to confusion?

XXV. He says, fifth (to n. 4): "All the Reformed are baptized, and indeed with that baptism which Christ instituted and gave to believers, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Now what then? Is baptism not a Sacrament of faith for the candidates unless we can trace it back through the calling of church ministers? The Catholic Church, too, accepts those baptized even by heretics. For baptism is what it is according to the authority of Him in whose power it is bestowed, not according to the one by whose ministry it is given. *De consecr. d. 4. c. 26.* It is the Donatists' opinion that baptism is invalid if not administered by them. And indeed, both Word and Sacraments and faith can exist in the world without the papal throne."

XXVI. Response. We objected to Protestant churches that they lack the perpetual administration of the Sacraments. Cocceius answers: "All the Reformed are baptized." Goodness, how relevant indeed. Does it follow that "All the Reformed are baptized; therefore in the Reformed Church the Sacraments have been administered perpetually"? No one fully awake would dream such a thing.

XXVII. He says, sixth: "There lurks in this argument the very assumption that only priests may handle baptism. *De consecr. d. 4. c. 19.* Also that only those are priests who are ordained by the Pope through bishops. At least that the true and legitimate ministers of the Church are not those who preside over the Reformed Church. As though, once the faithful are expelled bodily from the communion of Antichrist and his henchmen, it were not permitted to gather in Christ's name, set up certain assemblies, and call and admit tested persons to the ministry of the Word."

XXVIII[91]. Response 1. Again, nothing is being offered that addresses the point. We Catholics teach that in public administration, baptism is to be handled only by priests; Calvinists want it administered only by their own "ministers." Catholics maintain that in cases of necessity even laypeople can validly and licitly administer baptism. We have already demonstrated, in our

[91] [Marginalia: Cap. 19, Cap 55]

Treatise on the Mission of Protestants, how confused the Calvinist position is on this topic. But whose concern is that here? You say: "According to Catholic teaching, those who preside over the Reformed Church are not true and legitimate ministers of the Church." That is correct—this is indeed what we teach. You try to refute it as if it were obviously false: "As though the faithful, when expelled from Antichrist and his henchmen, etc." By what judgment do you claim to be "the faithful" rather than the Arminians or Anabaptists? Schism occurred before any expulsion. Granted, all may gather in Christ's name; no one, however, may set up assemblies separated from the former unity without committing the horrendous sacrilege of schism. Much less can they lawfully call and admit to the ministry of the Word those whom they consider tested—this we have extensively demonstrated in our Treatise on the Mission of Protestants.

XXIX. Response 2. Now, dear Cocceius, suppose that those who preside over the Reformed Church are true and legitimate ministers, suppose that you think it permitted for believers (having supposedly been cast out by a supposed Antichrist) to form gatherings and to call and admit persons tested for the ministry of the Word. Does it follow from this that the Sacraments were administered perpetually in the Reformed Church? Think it over.

XXX[92]. He says, seventh (to n. 5): "We must distinguish between the profession of the Christian name, which is that of everyone who wishes to be regarded as Christian, and that which is made in martyrdom or public preaching; again, between the profession of faith and the private or public rebuke of errors and abuses. There have always been those who held the faith of the foundation and principle and even preached it; likewise, there have always been some who rebuked the errors and sins of the Roman see. But by force of persecution it happened that either they could not remain in the place where they spoke publicly or, if they did speak, they were forced to be silent, for the saints were handed over to beasts. Yet the preaching or faith of both the principle and foundation was not interrupted."

XXXI. Response. A profession of the Christian name by all who wish to be called Christian (including any heretics) is plainly irrelevant. A profession made in true martyrdom is of the highest excellence. A profession of faith made through public preaching could be brought in

[92] [Marginalia: Ibid. Thes. 33]

here, yet it properly pertains to the preaching of the Gospel. The distinction between profession of faith and private or public rebuke of errors and abuses is pointless—both a profession of faith and a rebuke of errors are visible acts. "There have always been those," he says, "who held the faith of the foundation and principle and even preached it." That is a Catholic statement and laudable. But what was the "faith of the foundation" that they held? Among Calvinists there is much discord on this very point, as we have shown in our treatise on necessary articles. "Likewise," he says, "there have been some who rebuked the errors and sins of the Roman See." Who were these people? Which errors did they rebuke? Which sins? The rest is idle talk—though he adds something Catholic when he says: "Nevertheless, the preaching or faith of both the principle and foundation was not interrupted." So then, explain the perpetual preaching and profession of Calvinist beliefs, according to the promises of Scripture; you have not yet done so.

XXXII. We assume, first, what has been proven: that the true Church is always visible. We assume, second, that the Roman Catholic Church (that is, the universal Church that maintained communion with the Roman See) was, in the first centuries after Christ, a true Church. See Calvin, *Institutes*, Book 4, ch. 7, §24; Crocius, Tom. 1, contr. 3, sect. 11, n. 3 & sect. 8, n. 2, p. 354, & sect. 9, n. 10, p. 359; Peter Martyr, *Class. 4, Loc. Comm.*, ch. 6, nn. 6 & 25; *Methodus Augustini*, Part 1, ch. 6.

XXXIII[93]. From here we say: The Roman Catholic Church—once the true Church—must either have defected to another visible Church which continued, in accordance with Scripture, visible down to the present day, or it did not so defect. If the former, that defection must be demonstrated, and the visible Church that remained in the root of truth and succession of faith must be named. Yet Protestants do not even try to do this. If the latter, then the Roman Catholic Church is still at this very moment the true and visible Church of Jesus Christ.

XXXIV. We therefore say that the Roman Catholic Church is the true Church, for it has been perpetually visible, and no one can show that it has defected to another visible Church that still remains.

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[93] [Marginalia: 1 cum 22. ss. probat & praesump.]

XXXV. After this demonstration, we again assume that there is some visible Church at this time to which we must belong. All who are counted Christian are fully convinced of this. Therefore, if neither the Lutheran, the Reformed, the Anabaptist, the Remonstrant, the Socinian, etc., is the true Church (because it lacks perpetual visibility, as we showed above), then the only true Church of Jesus Christ to which one should join oneself is the Roman Catholic Church. And this same conclusion is firmly established on the assumption of the Church's perpetual visibility set forth in Scripture, announced by the Prophets, promised in the New Testament.

XXXVI. Granted that truth so clearly set forth, Protestants may try, by recourse to any timeline they like, to make that visibility appear invisible, interrupted, or oppressed. Let them employ carnal weapons against the oracles of the Holy Spirit. Let them produce later histories contrary to the prophecies of the Prophets; let them elevate their own intellect against the word of Christ, against the most sacred utterances of the Evangelists and Apostles. If they are ashamed of doing this, let them acknowledge the Church's perpetual visibility, and finally see that in the Roman Catholic Church the Scriptures are fulfilled.

XXXVII[94]. Under these conditions, it would not be necessary to examine other questions about the Church; for, as the Protestant Chemnitz rightly observed, "It is most true that the true Church cannot be separated from the true doctrine or faith; that alone is the true Church which embraces and professes the true and sound doctrine, the Word of God." We have shown that there is no true Church besides the Roman Catholic. Consequently, the truth of all doctrines pertaining to faith is found only in the Roman Catholic Church.

THE INTERVENTION OF SCHEIBLER

XXXVIII[95]. Scheibler, constrained by the truth of Scripture and testimonies of Christian antiquity, opens his eyes far enough to say that the Church of Christ, under the New Testament, is always visible. A remarkable and Catholic confession indeed—on the lips of a Lutheran superintendent—one that, if rightly applied, alone would suffice to dissipate the rest of Lutheranism's errors.

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[94] [Marginalia: Part I, Exam. Conc. Trident. p. 78]

[95] [Marginalia: *Exam. sid.* Book 2, Part 2, ch. 4, n. 20]

XXXIX. But so we may understand the direction of a mind occupied by malignant schism, he says that although the Church of the New Testament is always visible, it is not free from every error. What is this if not mocking God and people alike? How can it be the Church of Christ if it is infected with heresies and idolatries? If it is the Church of Christ but mixes error with truth, then the Roman Catholic Church—though it may have had errors—was still the Church of Christ when Luther left it. Therefore, Luther introduced a schism and performed a work of the flesh, excluding himself from the kingdom of heaven.

THE INTERVENTION OF COCCEIUS

XL[96]. He says, first (to n. 32): "That the Church of Christ once shared communion with the Roman Church and its presbytery, and then also with the Roman bishop, is beyond dispute."

XLI. Response. A praiseworthy confession, confirming what we assumed.

XLII. He adds: "But we deny that it was 'Roman Catholic,' or that it wished to be called such, or that it acknowledged the Roman See as the seat of an infallible teacher and the prince of all Churches and supreme magistracy of the whole world, to whose authority submission is necessary for salvation."

XLIII. Response 1. The universal Church that, in the first centuries after Christ, maintained communion with the Roman See is what we call "Roman Catholic." Cocceius denies that it was "Roman Catholic" or wished to be so called. But what fault is there in that title, since we have stated that by "Roman Catholic" we understand the universal Church that maintained communion with the Roman See—a fact he does not deny?

XLIV. Response 2. The question here is not whether the primitive Church recognized the Roman See as the seat of an infallible teacher, prince of all Churches, or supreme magistracy of the whole world, submission to which is necessary for salvation. Those are different questions entirely—irrelevant evasions by a man stubbornly kicking against the truth he has acknowledged.

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[96] [Marginalia: Disp. 47, Thes. 22]

XLV. He says, second (to n. 33): “We say that the Roman Catholic Church—i.e. the multitude that follows the Pope’s authority above Scripture and subjects its own convictions to him—was never truly the Church, though it was in the Church, i.e. mingled with the faithful. That same multitude, formerly gathered together with the faithful, in part defected from that portion of truth that ‘there is no head of the Church except Christ,’ and ‘there is no rule of faith except the Scriptures,’ and from other truths besides. In part, from the absence of earthly superstition into many superstitions; in part from the pure doctrine handed down by the Apostles—some of which was obscured or contaminated but not so grossly and openly corrupted—into the most corrupt doctrine; in part from tolerating the truth to persecuting it; in part from the external society of faithful individuals, whom they persecuted; in part from the Churches from which they separated themselves. For it separated itself from the Greek Churches. It separated itself from all the Churches that instituted the Reformation in Germany, which also existed before the Pope’s servants freely departed from them, and they remained.”

XLVI. Response 1. Where is this “multitude that follows the Pope’s authority above Scripture?” Let Cocceius look for it with his own lamps before talking about it further. Meanwhile he says that this multitude was “mingled with the faithful.” This is a fiction that does not identify any actual faithful. He adds again that this imaginary multitude “once was together with the faithful,” but then defected from “that portion of the truth that there is no head of the Church except Christ, and no rule of faith except Scripture.” We have shown in its proper place in what sense it is true that there is no head of the Church except Christ, and we have treated at length whether Scripture alone is the rule of faith. He says it defected to “many superstitions,” without proof; that it defected to “the most corrupt doctrine,” again without proof; that it defected to persecuting the truth, without proof; that it separated itself from the Greek Churches—this is false; that it separated itself from all the Churches that instituted the Reformation in Germany—this is admitted.

XLVII. Response 2. As we said in n. 33 above, Cocceius must prove our Church’s defection and designate a visible Church that remained in the root of truth and the succession of faith. We added that Protestants do not so much as attempt this. Cocceius does indeed declaim much about our “defection,” inventing whatever he wishes, but he does not even try to designate a visible

Church that continued in the root of truth and succession of faith, from which he claims our Church defected. He says, to be sure, that we separated ourselves from the Greek Churches, but does not dare to say that the Greek Churches from the beginning continued in the root of truth and the succession of faith—for if he were to say that as a Calvinist (who does not communicate with the Greek Churches and is condemned by them as heretical, and likewise charges the Greeks with superstition and heresy), he would make himself ridiculous. Similarly, he says our Church separated itself from those Churches in Germany that instituted the Reformation; but he does not dare assert that those German Churches continued from the beginning in the root of truth and the succession of faith, for otherwise they would not have needed such a Reformation.

XLVIII. He adds: "It is a ridiculous sophism contained in this reasoning, when they presuppose that no defection can occur except from a Church that has a visible seat. And this was the entire effort of the Walemburg brothers, who, for the Church of Christ's faithful professors, substituted a congregation of good and bad subjects under their legitimate pastors (meaning those sent from the Apostolic See), to persuade everyone that these references to 'the light and splendor of the Church' ought to be accepted."

XLIX. Response. Whether the Church has a visible seat is not under discussion here, nor have we dealt with that question. Hence it is false to say that we presume here "that there can be no defection except from a Church that has a visible seat." Thus, the rest collapses.

L. He further adds: "But, believe me, Walemburg brothers, there is as much difference between the visibility of the Church and Christ's kingdom, on the one hand, and the visibility of such a seat, on the other, as there is between the visibility of Pilate and his seat, and the visibility of the Son of God and His kingdom, which is administered by the Holy Spirit. Let them tell me, when Antichrist sits in the Church and holds a seat, how does he defect? Does he defect from the visible seat that he holds, or from the invisible seat on which Christ sits? That one who does not hold the Head—he wants to be the Head himself. And how can the Church avoid sharing in the seat of Antichrist? By holding on to an earthly seat, or by fleeing from it and adhering to the heavenly seat?"

LI. Response 1. “Believe me,” says Cocceius. And what shall we believe him about? That “there is as much difference between the visibility of the Church and Christ’s kingdom and the visibility of such a seat as there is between the visibility of Pilate and his seat, and the visibility of the Son of God and His kingdom administered by the Holy Spirit.” Though Cocceius seems quite serious in demanding faith in his words, we do not accept his word on this.

LII. Response 2. He asks: “When Antichrist sits in the Church and holds a seat, how does he defect?” We, in turn, ask: “What is this seat that Antichrist holds when he sits in the Church of God?” He asks: “Does he defect from the visible seat that he holds?” We answer that Antichrist does not defect from what he holds. He asks: “Does he defect from the invisible seat on which Christ sits?” We say that Antichrist does defect from the invisible seat on which Christ sits, for he is Antichrist. He adds: “He who does not hold the Head, wanting to be the Head himself.” We say: “Whoever does not hold the Head and wants to be Head himself is Antichrist.” As for the term “Head,” that debate is empty. He asks: “How can the Church not share in Antichrist’s seat?” We say: by remaining in the first unity that Christ established, continued to this day, and to be continued until the end of the age. He asks: “Does it avoid sharing in it by holding an earthly seat?” We say: no—by holding the seat Christ instituted. He asks: “Or by fleeing from it?” We say: from what seat? Antichrist’s? Yes indeed. Does he mean fleeing from the seat instituted by Christ? Not at all. He asks: “Or by adhering to a heavenly seat?” We say: that one must never be fled from, for it cannot be abandoned without condemnation.

LIII. He says, third (to n. 35): “No one says that one must necessarily look for a ‘cathedral Church,’ if he believes that Christ gave no seat on earth,” etc. Response. Therefore, in Cocceius’s opinion, we need not join the Roman Catholic Church. And because he sees that it is necessary to designate a certain perpetually visible Church to which we should unite:

LIV. He adds: “The Reformed Church can be safely approached by the faithful,” etc. Response. But does he claim that the Reformed Church has always been visible? He does not dare, and we have already disproved it.

LV. He adds: “Nor is its visibility to be sought if indeed in the Reformed Church this is heard and done,” etc. Response. That the Reformed Church is visible is clear. But Cocceius does not dare to assert that the so-called Reformed Church has always been visible.

LVI. Therefore, our statement remains: there must be some visible Church at this time to which we must unite. And since that Church is not Lutheran, etc., by reason of lacking perpetual visibility, there is no option left but that we unite with the Roman Catholic Church—whose perpetual visibility cannot be denied.