

On the Judge of Controversies

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CHAPTER XIX. To Whom the Interpretation of the Scriptures Belongs, and Who Ought to Be the Judge of the True Meaning of Scripture

1. Two questions are here proposed which come into great controversy, and by the resolution of which the Papists, arrogating both to themselves, attempt to drive us from all possession and use of the Scriptures and to create a summary of controversies. For, with themselves as judges, they think they obtain this: that no one has the right to interpret Scripture except those whom they choose for that purpose, and whose interpretation is also subjected to the authority of a single judge among them. Once this is established, there will be no need for Scripture, but only for the sense and decrees of that judge, into which no one is permitted to inquire. Nor will there be a final resolution of faith in Scripture or the Word of God, which will ultimately be resolved in the judgment of the Roman Pontiff. Therefore, they not unwillingly concede that most of the means we have brought forward, and those rules which were collected either by Augustine or by others in the past and are now being collected, are useful for the interpretation of the Scriptures, although they add some on which they wish these rules to depend. But they contend that select craftsmen ought to be those who must use those rules, and that it ought not to be permitted to all to approach the interpretation of the Scriptures indiscriminately and without selection. Regarding this matter, we must see what is to be thought from Scripture, and the state of that controversy, which they deliberately obscure, must be investigated.

2. In this, we first agree, at least in words, that the interpretation of Scripture cannot be fittingly made without the gift of God, which we call the gift of interpretation. Moreover, that gift has been communicated by God to His Church, insofar as the interpretation is salutary and is received with true faith, both by the one who interprets and by those who acquiesce. For since it is the

¹ https://books.google.com.pe/books?id=eXk34z_n0t0C&pg=PA271#v=onepage&q&f=false

light of the Holy Spirit kindled in the hearts of the pious, and the natural man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him (2 Corinthians 4:14), such a gift, from which true faith is built up, cannot exist outside the Church, in the unregenerate. For even if elsewhere, outside the Church, that meaning could be investigated, indeed even found and held as true, it would not, however, be held as the truth of faith and the authentic meaning of the divine Spirit where that Spirit does not breathe. The Papists will also not deny that the gift of interpretation, even when proceeding from the Holy Spirit, is not always joined with the spirit of sanctification in all those who interpret, within the assembly of the visible Church. For some can interpret skillfully and to the point, who nevertheless neither truly believe what they interpret nor do what they propose to others to do from Scripture. Yet God uses their work to lead others to faith and to confirm them in faith. This the adversaries are compelled to admit concerning their own Popes, not a few of whom they know to have been of the most depraved morals, most corrupt, and alien from all piety. If these were faithful interpreters of the Scriptures, indeed (as they themselves wish) authentic ones, there is no doubt that they are compelled to concede that even those who acquire greater condemnation for themselves from the same gift can also excel in that gift for the benefit of the Church.

3. We acknowledge a twofold manner of interpreting Scripture in the Church, according to the nature of callings. There is a common calling of all believers; there is a special calling of those who are employed in ecclesiastical offices. Hence arises that twofold mode, the first of which pertains to public interpretation, which takes place in the Church by those who, instructed with one gift and calling, go before others from the Word of God, whether in writing or in speech. The other ought to be done by each individual faithful member of the Church, for the most part with that public assistance going before, for his own edification, and from the same Spirit, who communicates Himself both to those who are engaged in it from public function and to those who seek the account of their own salvation, seriously asking for it, for public and private edification. Nor do we doubt that, other things being equal, a greater and fuller measure is communicated to the public ministers of the Church, whether they

fulfill their office in some particular church or confer among themselves in a lawful assembly gathered in the name of Christ concerning the true meaning of Scripture, than to individual and private persons, who are neither instructed with so many gifts, nor see with so many eyes, nor can equal the collation and investigation of many by private and simple meditation.

4. We have stated, other things being equal, for if many of those [teachers] act negligently and do not employ the necessary means; especially if they do not so much interpret Scripture from Scripture, but rather, from their own opinions, they drag it unwillingly to their own sense; then not only can it happen, but it will certainly come to pass, that some private individual, who with pious effort, having implored the aid of the Holy Spirit, has devoted himself to this study, will understand the sense of Scripture better than those many who undertake it negligently or with prejudice. For it does not always and necessarily happen that those to whom the instruction of the people is entrusted excel others in the gifts of the Spirit. For God has not bound the spirit of discernment, interpretation, and right judgment to specific titles and ranks, nor was it ever His purpose to compel all other men to depend without exception on them, as if they were destitute of all gift of judgment. Paul said to all the faithful: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21). And John, in his first epistle, chapter 4, verse 1: "Try the spirits whether they are of God." In these admonitions, the Apostles do not specifically indicate some individuals, but they include all to whom they set forth common precepts in those same epistles. These certainly cannot be restricted to those who performed public offices, while excluding others for whom the common reasons for that commended testing were shared; the common danger of negligence; the common benefit of diligence; namely, the increase of spiritual good and the prevention of evils, both of which are necessary for every believer. Therefore, Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, in his book "On the Examination of Doctrines," part 1, consideration 5, says: "It would stand that some simple person, not authorized, might be so excellently learned in the sacred letters that his assertion in a doctrinal case should be believed more than the declaration of the Pope. For it is certain that the Gospel is to be believed more than the Pope. If, therefore, such a learned person teaches that some truth is

contained in the Gospel, where the Pope either does not know or willingly errs, it is clear whose judgment is to be preferred.” Thus spoke he who had not yet learned that private Christians ought to depend entirely on their doctors or prelates in matters of faith.

5. What we say concerning private individuals, to whom we grant, in their proper place and order, the examination and judgment of doctrines and interpretations for their own edification, is not refuted by the Apostle’s question, which is equivalent to a negation, in 1 Corinthians 12:30: “Do all have the gift of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” For although he speaks of the gift of interpretation, which is not for all believers, even for those who desire or ought to desire the greater gifts, such as charity, to which he afterwards exhorts them; yet he does not speak of every interpretation, or any manner of interpreting; since from the comparison with other gifts it is clear that the question is not about the ordinary interpretation of the sense of Scripture, which is in dispute among us, but about the miraculous and extraordinary interpretation of various languages. That gift, bestowed upon some believers in the primitive Church, afterwards completely ceased among Christians, who cannot acquire an understanding of various languages except with the greatest labor. This very point is evident from verse 10 of the same chapter, where he says: “To another, kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues.” And to show that he does not understand these things concerning the public and ordinary office of interpreting, he adds: “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” (verse 11). Here the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation differ, because not always did he who spoke with various languages know the common language of the place in which he spoke with various tongues, but he had need of an interpreter; as is clear from the same Apostle in 1 Corinthians 14:27: “If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.”

6. But if we were to grant that the Apostle denies that all, namely the faithful and Christians, are endowed with the gift of interpreting, with respect to the interpretation of the sense of Scripture, that would in no way harm our cause.

Because that statement would have to be understood comparatively, or with respect to office and public function; with both of these limitations placed, we also deny that the gift of interpreting the Scriptures has been equally conferred upon all; likewise, that the public office of doing so has been imposed upon all. But nothing follows from a statement made in a certain respect to an absolute statement, nor from the denial of one species to the denial of the genus.

7. They cite from 2 Peter 1:20, which says that *no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation*. Here we acknowledge, according to the Hebrew idiom, that *no prophecy is* means the same as if it had said, *every prophecy is not of private interpretation*. From this passage they think they can maintain that no one who is a private individual, that is, who does not hold a public office in the Church, can bring forth an approved interpretation of the prophecies, because it will be a private interpretation, which the Apostle rejects from scripture. Let us grant that Peter refers those words of his to the interpretation of prophecies made by others, not by the prophets themselves, a matter which will need to be examined more fully later. Do they therefore think that there is no difference between the interpretation of a private individual and a personal interpretation, that is, one which depends on someone's own and private sense? Certainly, one who is a private individual, as we distinguish a private person from one placed in a public office, can nevertheless embrace common things, and thus also set them forth and share them with others. Even if these things are set forth by a private person, they will not be ascribed to his private sense if he has them from elsewhere. Therefore, we freely concede this, even if perhaps it cannot be proven from the Apostle's passage that no one ought to thrust forward his own personal interpretation, whether we consider the Prophecies or the entire Sacred Scripture. But this does not prevent any believer from being able to interpret the Scriptures for his own salvation, either immediately, if he is equipped with gifts for that purpose, or at least to examine the interpretations of others for his own salvation, if he does this according to the public sense of the Holy Spirit, which is sufficiently clearly revealed in Scripture itself in matters necessary for salvation. Thus, one who interprets the Prophecies of the Old Testament as fulfilled in the New Testament cannot be rejected as being of private or personal interpretation and taken from his own

inner self, as they say. But only that person can be rejected who, without any foundation in Scripture, in which the Holy Spirit has revealed himself, from his own brain, foists his own inventions upon Scripture.

8. Therefore, that spirit which speaks in Scripture and through Scripture is opposed to the human spirit; its declaration ought not to be considered private, whether it is set forth by a person who is otherwise private, or by one who has been equipped with a public calling. On the other hand, the interpretation of the human spirit will be called private, not only when it is devised by someone from his own inventions, but also if it proceeds from the consensus of many, even of those who hold public office, who nevertheless have not employed the counsel of the Holy Spirit interpreting from Scripture itself. It is certain, therefore, that the Scriptures ought to be expounded not from one's own ingenuity, but according to the dictate of the Holy Spirit. But that dictate is to be expected by no one, whether private or engaged in public ministry, apart from the dictates of Scripture itself. For the Holy Spirit wishes to kindle his light in us through the diligent handling of the word. Nor should it be thought that we must first await an immediate illumination from above from the Holy Spirit before we approach the reading, meditating upon, and searching of the Scriptures, but that light of the Holy Spirit is to be sought and found in the Scriptures and through the Scriptures.

9. These remarks pertain to that passage, as it is commonly understood—namely, concerning the interpretation or meaning of the ancient prophecies to be discerned. Otherwise, we believe that Peter did not have this in view, nor did he intend to prescribe a rule for interpreting prophecies through the same Spirit by whom those holy men of God were inspired. Rather, his purpose was to assert the authority of the Prophecies and to show the faithful that they do rightly in attending to the prophetic word, as to a lamp shining in a dark place. But so that they might derive some fruit from that attentive reading, he wants them first to know this: *no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation*. He then explains what that means: *for prophecy was never brought forth by human will, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*. Therefore, that which was dictated to the Prophets by the Holy Spirit is said not to be of private interpretation, because when they later spoke, as interpreters of God,

they did not do so from themselves. Hence arises the greatest authority of the Scriptures. Serarius, writing on this passage, does not reject this meaning. Namely, it is to be understood concerning the origin of prophecy: it does not come from personal impulse, so that men are interpreters or messengers of God in announcing prophetic speech, but by the impulse of the Holy Spirit. This same meaning pleased the most perceptive interpreter Calvin more, so that Peter says Scripture was not produced humanly or by human impulse. For no one ever approaches reading it well prepared unless he brings reverence, obedience, and teachableness. Moreover, just reverence arises from this, when we determine that God, not mortal men, is speaking to us. Nor is it necessary for us to read ἐπηλύσεως for ἐπιλύσεως, that is, *impulse* instead of *interpretation*; because, with the word ἐπιλύσεως remaining, the meaning will be the same: namely, that the Prophets, in producing prophecies, were not interpreters of their own or private concepts of their mind, but interpreters of the divine mind, which, by the inspiration of His Spirit, had revealed to them things to come, of which they were messengers and interpreters. Thus in Job 33:23: “a messenger, an interpreter,” that is, a Prophet announcing the will of God, or one through whose intervention God explains His counsel to those who labor. So also in the poet, Aeneid 3: “the Trojan-born interpreter of the gods,” and in Book 10: “interpreter of men and gods,” who foretold future things. However, if anyone wishes to retain the earlier and more common meaning, let him do so, provided he acknowledges what Arias Montanus notes briefly, but clearly and orthodoxly. He says: “The same meaning of this passage is as that of St. James: ‘Do not become many teachers, brothers.’ For if the authority of prophecy proceeds not from the will or whim of the speaker, but from the counsel of the dictator, then interpretation also must be sought not from the reader’s ingenuity, but from the mind of the divine Spirit; and thus no one is allowed to interpret the Scriptures according to his own pleasure, but according to the manner which THE SCRIPTURES THEMSELVES demand.” Therefore, it is the same thing to seek the interpretation of Scripture from the mind of the divine Spirit and to interpret them in the manner which they themselves demand. But because he makes this passage parallel to the saying of James, Epistle, chapter 3, verse 1: “Do not become many teachers, my brothers,” it will be helpful to attend to what he also says about that passage. He says: “One is the teacher, Christ; and

consequently, there must be one teaching office of Christ's doctrine, common to all both teachers and disciples: one faith, one baptism, one Church, one Spirit, one God. And here it is a question of the teaching office of the sacred Scriptures in relation to piety, which must be one for all; and it will be one for all if all who wish to be teachers in Christ are disciples of that one discipline alone. For otherwise, if disciples become various and diverse, teachers will also become various, which variety is indeed a matter of endless dispute." This is what we mean: that there is only one teaching office of the Sacred Scriptures, of which all must be disciples, both those who teach and those who are taught. If this happens, then all quarrels and controversies will cease.

10. By this common and unique teaching office, the distinction between pastors, teachers, and the people committed to their care is not removed; nor are those offices abolished which Paul, in Ephesians 4:11, records as having been instituted by Christ, who "gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith." This order, I say, must remain until the second coming of Christ. Private individuals must not intrude into public functions, nor undertake the office of public teaching without being called; nor does any of us grant this to the common crowd, as our adversaries falsely charge. For we acknowledge, on the basis of divine ordination, the necessity of the ecclesiastical ministry. For it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe (1 Corinthians 1:21). And a consequence of that good pleasure is the dependence of human conversion and salvation on the preaching of the divine word, if we consider the ordinary means which God has chosen to use (Romans 10:14): "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" But preaching, whether by spoken word or written word, is circumscribed by the terms of Sacred Scripture. Therefore, this is required of pastors: that they proclaim the word of God without the admixture of human leaven. For since they act as ambassadors in the name of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20), from the nature of the office of ambassadors it is clear that they ought to bring forth nothing of their own;

rather, it is incumbent upon them to show by undoubted testimonies, and to prove to those concerned, that what they say or teach in the name of God proceeds from God himself. For just as ambassadors are not trustworthy, nor can any people safely negotiate with them, unless they show that they act according to instructions and commissions received from the prince, so in the matter of salvation, which is of the greatest importance, it is absolutely necessary that those who profess to be sent by God for the purpose of announcing peace and reconciliation, and of indicating what God wishes to be done by men so that they may enter the path of salvation and attain to life, should demonstrate from an authentic document that they act in earnest, and make this clear to everyone. He would be ridiculous who invited someone to enter into an inheritance without at the same time indicating that he had been named heir in the will, and who therefore did not produce the tablets in which this was clearly and plainly contained, so that it could be understood by the one who was called. The same reasoning applies in the matter we are discussing. Let those who come in the name of God produce their documents and instructions; let them interpret the words of their prince, but in such a way that everyone sees that the gloss, as they say, does not abolish the text. Let them show in the Testament what has been bequeathed to us, and let them not bring from elsewhere things to be supplied, which cannot but be suspect; then all controversy will be removed. They will teach from Scripture; the faithful will learn and acquiesce, but not without judgment, by which they will diligently and attentively weigh whether such things are written, and whether the meaning presented fits and coheres with the matter. If any doubt arises, they will modestly propose it and allow themselves to be taught, but always from the word of God, to which, not to human authority, they will submit themselves. Thus harmony will remain between teachers and learners in the Church, if the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture is the author of the concord.

11. This discernment of judgment is required in the sheep of Christ, who must not allow themselves to be led around like brute animals; for they follow their supreme shepherd because they know his voice, but they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers. (John 10:4-5) Hence those precepts common to all believers, by

which they are commanded to beware of errors and seducers, to test the spirits, to examine all things, etc. (Matthew 7:15-16; 1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)

From these it follows that it is the duty of all believers to inquire diligently into all doctrines that are set before them, and not to embrace anything in matters of faith rashly and without judgment. Moreover, pastors and teachers are not to be heard simply and in all things, but only insofar as they show and prove that what they teach is consistent with the Word of God. Therefore, there must be some immovable rule set before all the faithful by God, to which all doctrines of any men whatsoever ought to be referred, and which must be established as surpassing and outweighing all human authority. If this were not the case, those precepts would be given to us in vain, since they could in no way be observed by those destitute of such guidance. Rightly and aptly does Chrysostom speak on this matter in his 35th Homily on the Acts of the Apostles. When a pagan, wishing to join the Christian Church, objects, saying, "I do not know whom to believe; I am ignorant of the Scriptures, and both sides claim the same," Chrysostom responds: "Indeed, this is greatly in our favor. For if we said we believe on the basis of arguments, you would rightly be troubled. But since we accept the Scriptures, and they are simple and true, it will be easy for you to judge. If anyone agrees with them, he is a Christian. But if someone comes and says that the Scripture supports him, while you say otherwise, explaining the Scriptures differently and twisting their meaning to your advantage? Tell me, do you not have a mind and judgment? And how can I, you ask, judge your matters without knowledge? I would wish to become a disciple, but you are making me a teacher." If he says this, what should be answered, he asks, how should he be persuaded? "We will ask whether this is a pretext for him, and also whether he condemns the pagans? He will certainly say something, for he would not turn to us without condemning his own people. We will ask why he condemns his own, for he does not condemn rashly." He continues later and concludes that, because he has reasons by which he condemns error, since otherwise he would not seek the truth,"the pretext no longer holds for him to say, 'I am a disciple and do not wish to be a judge, nor can I condemn any doctrine'; for just as you were able (he says) to refute what is adulterated, so also, when you come here, you will be able to approve what is beneficial." He had said a little earlier that "it is not the part of a man to accept

simply everything he hears, but that he who has judgment and a mind will recognize everything that is good.” If he attributed such discernment to a man not yet a Christian and hesitating at a crossroads, would he have denied to a faithful Christian, on the basis of the received and known Scriptures, the ability to judge concerning proposed doctrines for his own edification?

12. Augustine, in bk. 13, ch. 23 of his *Confessions*, asks about what a Christian judges. First, he shows that *this judgment belongs not only to those who preside spiritually, but also to those who are spiritually subject to those who preside*, with the distinction of sex, nation, and so on removed, because *in spiritual grace there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek*. He then asks what these spiritual people judge. He responds *that they do not judge concerning spiritual knowledge that is in the firmament, nor concerning the book of God itself, even if something in it is not clear, since we submit our intellect to it and hold it as certain that even what is hidden from our sight has been said rightly and truthfully*. He had given the reason: *For one ought not to judge concerning such sublime authority*. He adds afterwards: *For thus a man, although already spiritual and renewed in the knowledge of God according to the image of Him who created him, is called a doer of the law, not a judge*. What, then, does he judge? “*He judges*,” he says, “*and approves what is right, but disapproves what he finds to be wrong, whether in that solemnity of the sacraments by which those are initiated whom your mercy searches out in many waters, etc., or in the signs of words and voices subject to the authority of your book, as if flying under the firmament, by interpreting, expounding, discussing, disputing, blessing, and invoking you with signs bursting forth and sounding from the mouth, so that the people may respond ‘Amen.’*”

Likewise, *the spiritual person also judges, approving what is right, but disapproving what he finds to be wrong, in the works and morals of the faithful, etc.*” By these words, he attributes to every faithful person of any condition the judgment of those things that are done or said in the Church, which are subject to the authority of the word of God. He enumerates three kinds of these: 1. The solemnity of the sacraments, by which he understands the rites and ceremonies in the administration of sacred things. 2. Interpretations, dissertations, disputations, prayers, etc., which are brought forth by men through the signs of words. 3. The deeds and works of the faithful. He sufficiently indicates the rule

of judgment when he says that all these things are *subject to the authority of the book of God*. From this, it is most clearly evident that from that book, judgment is to be made concerning all things that are done and said in the Church, while the inviolable authority of the book of God remains, as of the firmament, concerning which no one is permitted to judge, since it is of such sublime authority.

13. From these things, an answer can be given without difficulty to the second part of the question, concerning the judge of the true meaning of Scripture and of all controversies pertaining to faith, which question the Papists involve in their sophisms, so that they may raise up the power and authority of Scripture and subject consciences to the opinions of one man. We acknowledge the sole judge of the true meaning of Scripture and of all controversies concerning faith to be God Himself through His Spirit, whose authority alone in matters of faith is supreme, and alone sufficient, and to whom no one can lawfully oppose. No appeal from Him is given or granted, because He can in no way deviate from the truth, or from what is good and just.

14. Moreover, this supreme judge has clearly and fully manifested His will for our salvation to us in the Holy Scriptures, and has determined what He wishes us to believe or do, and thus has presented to us a complete code, in which He has set forth not only His laws and the articles to be believed, but also His judgments, to which whoever wishes to be saved must necessarily adhere. By this instrument, He has led us into all truth (John 16:13), in which He searches all things, even the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). Therefore, let no one pretend revelations of his own private spirit. He willed that there should exist that public testimony of His truth and will in the sacred writings, to which those who are in danger of damnation should be sent, so that they may enter upon the way of salvation. "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29).

15. According to the decrees of that supreme judge, we confess that it is not only permitted, but we contend that it is commanded, to the universal Church in general, and to each faithful person, with order preserved, not that they should judge concerning the truth from authority (for such judgment belongs

to God alone), but that they should indicate to themselves and to others, either through the public ministry, which pastors do in the Church for the edification of many, or through private diligence, which each one ought to do for his own individual consolation, that which God has judged and determined in His word. The voice of Him alone ought to be heard for the decision of all controversies, and so that our faith may rest on a firm foundation, which cannot happen unless its resolution has God as its final term, insofar as He speaks to us through His prophets and apostles.

16. We therefore recognize in the Church, under the one supreme and independent judge, two dependent and subordinate judgments: one is public, the other private. The private judgment is indeed granted to all the faithful, whom the Apostle calls “spiritual” (1 Cor. 2:15), and whom he also urges to judge as experts concerning what he said (1 Cor. 10:15). For them he also prayed that their love might abound more and more in knowledge and all discernment, so that they might approve what is excellent (Phil. 1:9-10). This right of all hearers of the word was acknowledged by Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechesis 12, when he addressed not adult believers but each of his catechumens: *“Do not attend to my comments, for you might perhaps be deceived; but unless you receive the testimonies of the prophets concerning each point, do not believe the assertions.”* This individual judgment of each person is directed by the public law toward private edification. A public judgment is also necessary in the Church, for the sake of public order, as in former times *when two or three prophets spoke and the others discerned* (1 Cor. 14:29). For the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets, so that they may test the spirits to see whether they are from God. The touchstone of this testing is Sacred Scripture.

17. We therefore add this necessary declaration: that each of these judgments is nothing other than a declaration of the divine judgment, which can be made by neither party except through ministry. For the authority and power of judging belong to God alone in His Word, from which the Church, whether in public ministry or in the private use of each member, must pronounce its sentence; otherwise, it is not to be heard. For if it were done otherwise, that public ministry would exercise tyranny and would neither convict nor persuade inwardly; and each private individual, deviating from that rule, would wander

beyond the boundary. Isaiah (8:19) sends the people to their God to seek counsel from Him. But how is this possible if God does not now speak to us in a visible or sensible manner? “To the law,” he says, “and to the testimony.” The action of the Bereans is approved, who consulted the Scriptures after Paul’s preaching to see whether these things were so. Concerning this passage, the Jesuit Lorinus (on Acts 17:11) says: “They are praised by Luke, who daily searched the Scriptures to see if what was preached to them was indeed so.” Here Luke attributes to them judgment and discernment (διακρίνοντες). Hence it is that the Word of God is called by Paul “a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12), and “all Scripture, inspired by God, is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

18. It should be noted, however, that the name “judge” is improperly attributed to Scripture, because, since it is the name of an office, strictly speaking it applies only to a person. Therefore, whenever judgment is attributed to Scripture, by the name “Scripture” the author of Scripture is to be understood; even though Christ also attributes the act of judging to His word in John 12:48, when He says, “The word that I have spoken, that will judge him on the last day,” and in John 7:51, Nicodemus attributed judgment to the law: “Does our law judge a man, unless it first hears from him?” But, speaking more precisely, Scripture is the voice of the judge, by which the judge’s decision concerning a disputed matter is explained to the litigating parties, just as when the rescripts of Caesars or other princes are said to contain their decrees and judgments. But, properly speaking, the supreme judge is God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Yet judgment is attributed to the Spirit because the revelation of divine truth is completed in that person. Otherwise, Augustine, in Volume 4, in his discourse on the five heresies, Chapter 6, also refers the Arian to Christ as the ordinary judge. He says: “You have an ordinary judge; I do not want you to bring forward from various quarters now one authority, now another. I need not an arm-bearer but a lawgiver.” And you ask, “Where do I find him?” But where will you not find him? Hear the prophet saying: “The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver” (Isaiah 33). Elsewhere, he shows how Christ is the judge of controversies, and under Him the Apostles. For thus he writes in Book 2, “On Marriage and Concupiscence,” to Valerius, Chapter 33: “This controversy seeks a

judge. Let Christ therefore judge; let the Apostle judge with Him, because in the Apostle Christ Himself speaks.” Likewise, in “On Grace and Free Will,” Chapter 8: “If it is not from God but from men, the Pelagians have prevailed; but if it is from God, we have prevailed over the Pelagians. Let the Apostle John sit as judge among us, and let him tell us that love is from God.” Clement of Alexandria, in the *Stromata*, Book 7: “He who is faithful of himself is worthy of trust in the Lord’s Scripture and voice, which has been duly made effective by the Lord for the good work of men. We use this very Scripture as a judge for discovering matters.” He adds later: “For we would not have faith in men who make absolute statements, since they are also able to state the contrary. But if it is not enough merely to state absolutely what seems right, but it is also necessary to prove what has been said, we do not await the testimony given by men, but we prove what is sought by the voice of the Lord, which is more worthy of faith than any demonstrations, or rather, which is the only demonstration.” Basil has the same in Epistle 80 to Eustachius the physician: “Let us stand by the decision of divinely inspired Scripture, and to those whose teachings are found to be in harmony with the divine oracles, let the verdict of truth be wholly assigned.”

19. The arguments brought forward by the Papists are not so much probable arguments as they are insults against the Word of God; which certainly, after the state of the question has been established and explained as we have done, spontaneously dissolve. *Scripture* (says Serarius, Prolegomena 10, Question 2) *is deaf to the hearing of causes, dull to examination, mute for the proper pronouncement of a sentence, and utterly unfit as a vicar of God the Judge.* But when Pareus had said, “The judge, or the word of the judge, whether spoken or written, has the same force in judgment; because it is the same thing to be absolved by the judge and to be absolved by the sentence or word of the judge,” Serarius replies: “*These things certainly differ, as the principal cause and the instrumental cause; as a speaking thing and a mute thing; as an animate thing and an inanimate thing.*” But the Sophist considers Scripture in terms of its external matter, whereas Pareus was speaking of formal Scripture, insofar as it is the Word of God, which is distinguished from the judgment of God in reason, not in reality. Moreover, that he impudently slanders Scripture, not without

blasphemy, as deaf, mute, and even dull, is the same fallacy. Scripture is not mute, nor dull, except to the deaf who cannot or will not hear. Certainly, through the Jesuits, wherever they can, it is made mute; for they cut out its tongue or close its mouth, so that it may not utter a voice, and they do not wish it to speak with tongues known to the people; *but it is better to be mute than to speak what no one understands*. As Cicero rightly says in Epistle 11 to Cornificius. Yet Scripture, even against their will, speaks; indeed, it cries out effectively. Romans 3:19: "For we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law." Romans 9:17: "The Scripture says to Pharaoh." Romans 9:27: "But Isaiah cries out concerning Israel." Therefore, there is an evident equivocation in what is called mute by the adversaries, because even if it emits no sound by itself, it is not absolutely mute, since it teaches, rebukes, instructs, and consoles, and that with the most effective and clear words. I know indeed that Cicero, in Book 3 of *On the Laws*, called the law a mute magistrate, but the magistrate a speaking law. In this sense, the same could be said of Scripture and pastors; namely, if magistrates speak according to the law, they are a speaking law; so also, if pastors speak from Scripture, they will be a speaking Scripture. Yet the magistrate will not be above the law, nor will pastors be above the Scriptures; for, as Cicero says in the same place, laws preside over magistrates, namely subordinate ones, such as are all who preside in the Church. The edicts of kings can be called *mute*, until they are made known by the voice of a herald. Yet the herald is neither the judge of the edicts nor their interpreter, much less the supreme one. So Scripture could be called *mute*, which, even if no one spoke it, would still, through reading, set forth divine meanings to each person. *It is the mark of a Christian man*, says Basil in Epistle 167, *to write not for the sake of vainglory, but to present words that are useful and salutary to the brethren*. Thus, by writing, we speak daily, and we are not mute. When the Jesuits commit their blasphemies to writing, they are certainly not mute, though it would be better for them to be mute and maimed, lest by speaking against the Word of God and writing against Scripture, *having two hands and two feet, they be cast into the eternal fire*. Matthew 18:8.

20. II. They object that Scripture is a witness, but it has never been heard that a witness or testimony is a judge. We respond: When judgment is sought

concerning the truth on which each person's conscience relies with firm persuasion, the formulas of human judgments are not to be required, nor is the validity or firmness of divine judgment to be measured by the usual and necessary conditions among men, most of which were devised as a remedy for human weakness, which does not exist in God or in His word. Among men, it is most absurd if someone wishes to be accuser, judge, and witness in his own case. Those who assume all three roles at once exercise tyranny, and the reason for this arises from human defect. Such an exception has no place when it concerns God, who is most perfect, or His law, which is complete. Psalm 19, verse 8. The same one who is a faithful witness, Revelation 1, verse 5, is the judge of all, even in His own cause; the judge of His enemies, and the advocate and judge of those whom He has redeemed. The Holy Spirit is a witness, who testifies together with our spirit that we are children of God: Romans 8, verse 16. Will He therefore be cast down from the throne of justice? What else did the saints intend, who called upon God as a witness against their own soul, in confirmation of their words, than to profess that they bore testimony to the truth before God as judge? Therefore, whatever God testifies passes into a settled matter, and David often, in Psalms 19 and 119, considers the testimonies and judgments of God as the same. Since Scripture is the testimony of the Lord, it will also be His judgment; and since it is a divine witness, it will also be a judge, because to testify divinely is to judge. The adversaries concede that Scripture is the law. But the law, as Marcian defines it after Chrysippus, in the Digest, Book 2, Title 2, Section 2, is the queen of all divine and human laws, which ought to be the president over good and evil, and the prince and guide. Therefore, this argument against God and His law is of no weight; it is most firm against any church or ecclesiastical men who presume to judge apart from or against the law.

21. III. They object: Every judge hears the complaints of both contending parties, inspects, examines, and considers their reasons and foundations. But the Spirit in Scripture does not do this; therefore, insofar as He speaks in Scripture, He is not a judge. We respond: The papists continually deceive with a paralogism from ignorance of the refutation, because they apply what is said about human judgments in cases and disputes of this age to divine judgments

in the matter of faith. But the comparison is flawed, as we have already noted above. Furthermore, where parties are thus heard by a judge, it concerns a matter of fact, not of law. Where it is asked whether someone did or said something, witnesses are needed, and the disputation of the parties must be heard. But where it concerns law, as in the matter of faith, when it is asked what is to be believed or not believed, the judge can define this without hearing the parties. Add also that in human judgments, this is only true of judges of a lower order, whose duty is to pronounce according to the laws, and so they need investigation to inquire, after examining the foundations, which of the litigating parties the laws favor. But this is not required in the supreme judge, who, when a controversial question is simply proposed, can immediately respond, either affirmatively or negatively, without investigation, so that He does not undertake to examine the reasons of the parties, since the supreme reason resides with Him. Regarding the assumption, it must also be said that the Holy Spirit, who is the author of Scripture, was prescient of future things, as is said of David in Acts 2, verses 30 and 31, who had the reasons of all parties most clearly seen from eternity, and therefore could have pronounced His sentence in the Scriptures before they were brought forward. Thus, through the Apostle, in 1 Timothy 3 and 4, He opposed sound doctrine and the mysteries of piety to those who in later times would depart from the faith. Therefore, Augustine, in Book 2 of Baptism against the Donatists, Chapter 6, says: "Let us not bring deceitful scales, where we weigh what we wish according to our own will, saying this is heavy, this is light; but let us bring the divine scale from the Holy Scriptures, as from the Lord's treasures, and in it let us weigh what is heavier; rather, let us not weigh, but recognize what has been weighed by the Lord." With these words, he indicates most clearly what has been done by God, namely that all things, heavy and light, have been weighed in the Scriptures. What now remains for men is not to weigh or judge, but to acknowledge the judgment of the Lord and acquiesce to it.

22. IV. They object: Every judge is endowed with coercive power, by which he can compel transgressors to obedience. But Scripture does not have such coercive authority, nor does the Holy Spirit exercise it through Scripture. Therefore, He does not fulfill the office of judge through Scripture or in

Scripture. Response. Coercive authority is not necessary in a judge of controversies of faith. For one who proposes what is to be believed does not compel, but persuades; nor can anyone be compelled to believe. As for external acts, someone can be compelled, but these are of no importance in religion if internal acts do not precede them. Scripture can convince and captivate the intellect of one who already believes it to be divine, so that he believes things he otherwise would not grasp to be true, because Scripture, which he supposes to be divine, testifies to them. But this does not consist in the power they call coercive, which not only obliges one to believe or obey by right, but also has external force, by which it compels obedience in fact, either by itself or through others. Such power over consciences God alone has; He does not compel the disobedient to obedience, because no obedience before God is compelled, but He does compel them to undergo punishments. But as Augustine rightly said, in this judgment one must seek not an armed warrior, but a lawgiver. Nor is it always true even in civil matters that a true judge compels those among whom he has judged to obedience, if they wish to abuse their power or be refractory and contumacious. In matters of religion, however, it is certain that the Prophets and Apostles, whom the adversaries will not deny were suitable judges, could not compel the Jews to obedience.

23. Christ Himself, when He was unwilling to exercise His absolute omnipotence, could not break or restrain the unbridled stubbornness of the Jews; yet He was not on that account an unsuitable judge of Scriptural interpretation or of controversies of faith. Nevertheless, we do not deny that the Church, against those who cause disturbance and, having been legitimately convicted, refuse to yield, has coercive power through the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, by which it brings such persons into order, removes them from the communion of the external Church, lest they harm others by their example or even by their words, and so that the sheep may learn to beware of them as of wolves. But such action does not pertain to the judgment of controversies, because it presupposes that the decision of the controversy has already been made. It pertains to the exercise of discipline toward obstinate persons, and does not properly concern faith, but the external order preserved in the visible Church. As for the coercion that is exercised by the magistrate, the

vindicator of the divine word, after the legitimate judgment of the Church through Scripture, which this concerns, it is not a matter of ecclesiastical law. It is the Church's role to convict heretics; but those who do not acquiesce, after several admonitions, are to be avoided. Titus 3:10. What the magistrate can do in this matter, and how far he ought to proceed, is a matter for another discussion, which does not properly concern this controversy of ours. The rulers of the churches can be compared to physicians, who have a discerning judgment concerning lepers, entrusted to them by the magistrates themselves; namely, that they discern the sick from the healthy and judge who are infected with leprosy, who are clean from that stain. But the coercive judgment by which they are cast out from the fellowship of citizens pertains to the magistrate; it is also his role to restrain obstinate and seditious heretics or troublemakers with external punishments, whether these touch their bodies, their goods, or anything of the sort, concerning which the Church does not judge.

24. V. They insist: Every judge so declares his sentence that one of the litigating parties clearly knows that it has prevailed in the case, and the other that it has lost the case. But the Holy Spirit in Scripture does not so declare His sentence that one of the litigating parties knows clearly enough that it has prevailed in the case, and the other that it has lost the case. Therefore, the Holy Spirit in Scripture is not the judge. The proof of the assumption is taken from the fact that heretics stubbornly retain their opinion, which they would not do if the meaning of Scripture were obscure and not evident to them. Response. The argument always proceeds from human judgments in civil cases to the judgment of controversies of faith, whose nature we have shown to be different. For in this latter, it is not necessary that there be litigating parties, as in the former. For often in Scripture the judgment of the Holy Spirit is sought by those who do not litigate and are not parties, but who only wish to be taught. Yet it can happen, and not infrequently, that a dispute arises between two or more about the true meaning of Scripture or about some dogma of faith. But then, for the truth of the judgment, it is not necessary that the one who lost the case know this clearly; because even the Papists concede that the dogmas of faith are not evident, otherwise they would not pertain to faith.

25. This alone is necessary: that in Sacred Scripture the Holy Spirit has sufficiently and clearly declared what is to be believed or done, so that it can be shown to those who do not deliberately close their eyes to that light, or who do not reject the use of reason. Therefore, when heretics do not know that they have lost their case by the judgment of Scripture, this happens either because they are unwilling to attend to Sacred Scripture, which shines in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19), or because what Paul reports about the Jews happens to them. Although he persuaded them from the law of Moses and the Prophets from morning until evening about Jesus (Acts 28:23), they still did not believe, but departed (verses 24-25). To these the Apostle later said: "The Holy Spirit spoke through Isaiah the Prophet to our fathers, saying: 'Go to this people and say, "You will hear with your ears and will not understand; and seeing you will see and will not perceive, for the heart of this people has grown dull,"'" and so on. Add to this that in the judgment of faith, for someone to know clearly that he has lost his case, it is not sufficient, as in a political judgment about external matters, that once the judge's sentence is pronounced, it is evident that that external judge has so judged. Rather, it is necessary that he knows that the judge has so judged according to the law and that the judgment is fair and just. Otherwise, who does not know that many are condemned daily by the sentence of judges, yet they know that the judgment they are forced to undergo was unjust, and they can even do so with a good conscience, where only loss or forfeiture of a corruptible thing is at stake? But for someone to undergo a judgment in a matter of faith that is not approved by him according to the law of the supreme judge, this should by no means happen. And thus, as we said at the beginning, there is no logical consequence from the external evidence of human judgments to the evidence of a judgment about a spiritual matter that immediately binds the conscience.

26. VI. They object: It is the role of the judge of controversies of faith to condemn heretics, but Scripture does not do this, for it condemns few or no heretics by name, not Arius, not Eutyches, not Photinus, and so on, who nevertheless ought to have been condemned. Therefore, this must come from another judge. Response: This is pure caviling. Because even if that immediate condemnation through application to persons is not found in Scripture, it is

sufficient that those things are found in it in a general way, which each person, indeed even the heretic himself, can apply to himself. Thus, indeed, he will condemn himself, but it will only be an acknowledgment of a condemnation already made in the Word of God, in which “he who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). Thus Scripture condemns all adulterers and murderers. And if others later pronounce sentence, applying that condemnation by name to some murderers, the whole force of the condemnation depends on the law of God in Scripture, which therefore contains the supreme judgment of God, from which it is not lawful to appeal. 1 Corinthians 16:22: “If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.” There a conditional condemnation is found. Now if there is someone who is convicted in himself that he does not love the Lord Jesus, no other judge is needed; he reads his own sentence. Therefore, since God in Scripture condemns all who introduce destructive sects, do not listen to sound doctrine, or forge dogmas foreign to or contrary to the Scriptures, He sufficiently condemns Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, and the like. For unless they had first been condemned in the Word of God, they could not be legitimately condemned by any ecclesiastical judgment. If Moses accuses the Jews (John 5:45), with whom Christ had a controversy, yet says nothing about them by name, why does he not condemn them by the same action? And certainly this pertains to the office of the supreme judge: to issue universal sentences, which judges of a lower order may later apply to particular cases according to the circumstances. Through these judges, the king or supreme magistrate is said to judge, if they do not depart from his statutes in judging. Otherwise, they will have to give an account of their judgments, being themselves judged if they have erred in judgment. Therefore, what is objected against the supreme judgment of the Holy Spirit in Scripture rather confirms it.

27. VII. They insist: That judge is not the one to whom heretics appeal in matters of religion. But all heretics appeal to Scripture; therefore, Scripture is not the supreme judge of matters of faith. They claim the assumption is obvious, and that the major premise is proven from the fact that no guilty person appeals to one by whom he knows he will be condemned. Response:

Neither the major nor the minor premise is true. For regarding the major premise, nothing is more common than for both parties to appeal to one and the same judge. Often it also happens that one and the same arbitrator is chosen by both parties, by whose judgment each wishes to stand or fall. The Jews appealed to Moses, and Christ summoned the same judge. John 5:45. The Devil himself attacked the Lord from the Scriptures, yet the Lord did not depart from their judgment against him. Therefore, it is not true that the one to whom someone appeals is not a judge, if the one who appeals knows he will be condemned. For sometimes this is done by one who knows it, but in order to delay judgment and harass his adversary. Indeed, it is necessary that the one to whom the accused appeals be recognized as a judge. Furthermore, not all heretics know that they will be condemned by Scripture, or those who know it dissemble it, or think they can evade that judgment. That the minor premise is false is evident from the fact that the Papists are heretics in many respects, who not only do not appeal to the judgment of Scripture, but flee from it as much as they can. Many heretics also existed in the past who declared war on the Scriptures, whom Tertullian called “shunners of the light of the Scriptures,” in his book *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*. Concerning them, he says in the same place that they cannot stand if, having set aside what they think in common with pagans, they are compelled to base their questions solely on the Scriptures. From these things it is clear that what they say, that all heretics appeal to the Scriptures, is false.

28. VIII. They argue, sixthly, that the supreme judge ought to be such that he can be approached by all. But Scripture is not such, because not all can consult Scripture, for example, those who do not know how to read. Response: This is a foolish quibble. For Scripture can be approached by those who do not read it themselves, when it is read by others, either privately or publicly. What if the deaf do not hear and cannot hear the Pope? Will they therefore deny that he is their supreme judge? If someone preaches the Gospel publicly, and is not heard either by the deaf or by those who are placed in more remote seats, does he therefore cease to be a proclaimer of the Gospel? Therefore, it is a fallacy of accident, since the fault is not in Scripture, but in the negligence of certain men, which, however, is remedied in another way, as we have said.

29. IX. There is a sophism similar to this. One who is not visibly present to deliver a judgment is not a judge. The Holy Spirit is not visibly present in Scripture to deliver a judgment; therefore, He is not a judge. Hence arose that insolent and blasphemous taunt of Gretser at the Colloquy of Regensburg: "If the Holy Spirit is the judge, let Him condemn me, and say, 'You, Jacob Gretser, err and are defeated, and your adversary thinks rightly and has prevailed,' and I will yield. But the Holy Spirit cannot do this through Scripture, and would I acknowledge such a judge?" And later: "If He can, let the Holy Spirit do this in person, so that all may clearly hear that I err; but He cannot, therefore He is not the judge as you claim." This is what he said. It is not necessary for a judge to deliver his judgment while visibly present, for it can happen that this is done either through intermediaries or through written responses, even in human judgments. Nor is the presence of the judge or his voice required when his judgment can be otherwise established. Since, therefore, the Holy Spirit speaks through Scripture, even if He does not appear to us in visible form nor utter any articulate voice, His judgment is nevertheless readily available to us, by whose guidance and direction we are able to reach the conclusion of any inquiry concerning faith. As for the Jesuit's taunt, I say nothing else except that the Jesuits are more shameless than the Jews once were. When Christ said to them, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me," and again, "There is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you trust" (John 5:45-47), none of them devised anything like this, to say: "Let Moses then accuse me; behold the book of the law; let Moses speak and say, 'You, O Jew, do wrong in not acknowledging this man as your Savior'; but Moses does not do this, nor can he do it. Therefore, he is not our accuser, as you say." And certainly it would have been much more tolerable to say this of Moses than of the Holy Spirit. But these things are unworthy of being refuted at length, and they are heard by the pious not without horror.

30. X. They object that controversies cannot be settled from Scripture, because when the meaning of Scripture itself is in doubt, which each one tries to claim for himself, there will be no end unless some third party, endowed with the Holy Spirit, pronounces what the true meaning is. I answer: If that third party, whether one individual or a group acting in a common name, pronounces this

from Scripture, then it is false that the controversy cannot be settled from it. If he derives principles outside of Scripture, from which he delivers his judgment, then the controversy will not be settled, but a new one will arise. Bellarmine, in *De Verbo Dei*, chapter 1, admits that the Prophetic and Apostolic books are the certain rule of faith. And in the preface, he agrees that it is common ground among all, both Catholics and heretics, that the Word of God is the rule of faith, by which dogmas are to be judged, and that it is a common principle conceded by all, from which arguments are drawn. If arguments are drawn from the Word, and if a determining judgment is made from the arguments drawn, then certainly controversies will be settled from the Word of God. But it should be noted that controversies are settled or determined and decided either with respect to the matter itself, which has its truth and certainty from Scripture, or with respect to the people who previously disputed and afterwards acquiesce. In the first way, controversies can and ought to be decided from Scripture. In the second way, it is not necessarily required that all controversies be settled, nor can this be expected in this human state. Even so, those who do not acquiesce, after a legitimate examination, and disturb the Church, can and ought to be restrained, as was said before.

31. XI. They object that Scripture admits various senses, and therefore it cannot be determined from it which is the genuine sense; consequently, the Holy Spirit does not judge in Scripture concerning the true sense or concerning all controversies of faith. I respond: Those senses which they call various are either contrary, and thus it is false that Scripture admits various senses; or they are analogous, of which one is principal and the others are derived from it, and then nothing prevents the true and proper interpretation from being discerned; indeed, the other senses that follow from it cannot be extracted without that principal sense. Therefore, what they say, that the Holy Spirit does not judge in Scripture concerning the true sense, is false. For if Scriptures are sometimes twisted into contrary senses, this is to be attributed to the malice of men, not to Scripture. Just as laws are true and good when they are often twisted, now into one sense, now into another, either by forensic pettifoggers or by unjust judges. 1 Corinthians 11:19: "There must be heresies among you," etc. The Church will be subject to this warfare until the end of the age, because (as we have already

distinguished) although controversial matters in the Church can be defined through Scripture, nevertheless, on account of the parties, the warfare will last until the end of the world. If Scripture were so flexible in speech that nothing certain could be extracted from it, Christ would not have provided well for those whom he urged to search the Scriptures (John 5:39), because they would thus be frustrated without benefit. For if Scripture can be so pulled apart into various senses that the true sense is not manifest in matters necessary for salvation, nothing will be so prone as to deviate and to turn aside from the true goal, which is eternal life. But it is most absurd that Christ should have proposed such a means that would not lead by a straight path to the attainment of the end. Rather, it must be proceeded in such a way that those who wish to be confirmed in the way of salvation attend to where in Scripture the seat of any article is, and, mindful that solid arguments are deduced only from the literal sense (whether proper or figurative), they employ a comparison of other parallel passages, from which a certain sense can easily be extracted.

32. To these points, however, Bellarmine objects that many Lutherans and Calvinists have compared Scriptures among themselves with great labor, and yet they could never agree on the explanation of that sentence, "This is my body." I respond: Those who compared as they ought sufficiently agree among themselves. Others did not so much compare Scriptures among themselves as, clinging to the husk of a single passage, they rejected all comparison of other passages, so that they might adhere to a prejudiced opinion, bound more to the authority of one man than concerned about the sense of Scripture. But Bellarmine says that others will say the same about them; who, therefore, will be the judge among them? I respond: The Holy Spirit will always sit as judge in Scripture, whether men submit to his judgment or flee from it. What if the sense of Scripture is so clear, or at least so well known that Scripture does not favor one party, that those who adhere to neither party acknowledge this from Scripture? Then certainly it will be sufficiently established that the matter in Scripture is not so obscure. In this cause, the Papists favor us to such an extent that they acknowledge that the words of the Lord, "This is my body," must necessarily be taken either in the Papist sense or in ours, that is, figuratively;

but they admit the Lutheran sense in no way. Bellarmine, *On the Eucharist*, Book 3, Chapter 19.

33. XII. They object: Scripture cannot be the supreme judge in the cause of religion, because it is not necessary; nor did the Lord command his Apostles to write, but to proclaim the Gospel. Hence they argue: It is necessary that there be some judge in the Church in matters of faith. But Scripture is not necessary; therefore, it cannot be a necessary judge. I respond: The force of this argument depends on the question of the necessity of Scripture, which we have dealt with before. Moreover, when we say that Scripture is the judge, we understand this not by reason of its external form, insofar as it is written, but by reason of its internal soul, that is, the Word it contains—the Spirit judges in Scripture. But no one can deny that the Word of God is necessary. The written law is not absolutely necessary. But after it was written, it is necessary by the will of the prince, even as written; and it is the rule of all judgments that are legitimately instituted. In proving the assumption, they err when they posit as if contrary things: writing and proclaiming or teaching the Gospel. Yet these are not opposed, because one mode of teaching and proclaiming is placed in writing: if the opportunity to address some in person is not given, we instruct them by letters, which the Apostles diligently did.

34. Therefore, that firm point remains, which they will never be able to disturb with their sophistries: that the Holy Spirit, in and through Scripture, judges, decides, and defines all controversies that can arise in the investigation of saving doctrine. He has deposited with His Church the code of His laws, judgments, and decisions, from which every faithful person can take whatever is necessary for his own good and edification. And whoever serves in a public ministry or is appointed a steward in the house of God can take from it whatever is necessary for all the household. For it is important that such persons be appointed in the Church who dispense divine mysteries, but received from that treasury of Scripture as from a most rich storehouse. From this they should pronounce what is to be believed concerning all questions whose resolution is necessary.

35. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, Book 14, Chapter 2, says: “As soon as I was chosen by the praetors to be a judge, I sought out books in both languages written on the duty of a judge, so that I might learn the judicial office from well-known teachers, as they say.” The servants of God ought to bring the same caution, and even greater, to judgment concerning divine things as he applied to judgments concerning human affairs. This is to prevent what Jerome faulted in the bishops of his age from happening even to the most learned among them: that they were concerned not with how to drink in the marrow of the Scriptures, but with how to soothe the people with the flowery speeches of declaimers (*Against the Luciferians*). With whomever we have to deal, for the most part, neither of these things is dear to them; they only strive for this: that they may rule according to their own pleasure. Yet God did not appoint kings in His Church, nor, as in civil administration, magistrates properly so called. Having reserved authority and dominion to Himself, He entrusted only ministry to men, bound and restricted by His instructions, commands, and written records. There that saying of Aristotle (*Ethics*, Book 5) applies: “Let not man rule, but reason.” We will say: “Let not the minister rule, but the word of the supreme King,” because all sound reason in divine things depends on Scripture. Therefore, as Basil well advises (*Moral Rules*, Rule 71, Chapter 2), “Listeners who are skilled in the sacred letters ought, with diligent judgment, to hear what is said by teachers; and from these, to admit what they know to be consistent with Scripture, and on the contrary, to reject what is foreign.” But those who stubbornly wish to defend such perverse decrees should be greatly avoided and opposed.

CHAPTER XX. That there is no assembly of men, no man, however great his dignity, who is the supreme judge of the sense of Scripture or of controversies of faith and of infallible judgment, where the analysis of faith according to the Papists is discussed at length.

1. From what was said in the previous chapter, this follows naturally. But because the Papists leave nothing unmoved to erect the idol of human authority above the Scriptures themselves, we must see what ought to be conceded to men in this matter, and that idol must be cast down. Its mask

terrifies the inexperienced; once it is removed, anyone can safely despise that tyrannical presumption of arrogant sinful man. They decreed in the Council of Trent, Session 4, Decree 2: “that no one in matters of faith and morals may twist Sacred Scripture to his own senses, contrary to that sense which holy mother Church has held and holds, whose office it is to judge concerning the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures, etc.” With these words, what they first prohibit—that no one twist Scripture to his own senses—we also approve, not as prohibited by them, but as forbidden by God in His word, as we have shown above. For those who twist the Scriptures are condemned, to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16), and it is unworthy that Scripture be drawn to anyone’s private sense. But what they add secondly, concerning the sense which holy mother Church has held and holds, is ambiguous. For if this is understood of the true Church, the mother of all believers, it is certain that she holds no sense other than that which Scripture itself suggests to her, to which she adheres. But they understand something entirely different by “Mother Church,” since they arrogate to themselves that they are “the judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures.” For by this decree they intend nothing other than, under the masked name of the Church, to remove all liberty from the Church and to arrogate infinite license to themselves. Thus, whatever sense they have contrived for Scripture according to their own pleasure, it must immediately be embraced, even if it is drawn from elsewhere, indeed contrary to Scripture. And so, finally, it is not lawful for anyone except themselves to handle the Scriptures or to prove anything from them. Indeed, they keep Scripture hidden in darkness, as if preserving the mysteries of Ceres, so that no one may dare to aspire to its understanding. And under the name of the Church, they subject the entire Christian commonwealth to the pleasure and nod of a single man, so that whatever must be held as certain in matters of faith and morals depends on that one man.

2. Bellarmine, in his work *On the Written Word of God*, Book 3, Chapter 3, explains the mind of the Council of Trent as follows: “We agree with our adversaries that the Scriptures must be understood by the same Spirit by which they were written, that is, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the whole question lies in where this Spirit is to be found. We believe that this Spirit, although often

granted to many private individuals, is nevertheless certainly found in the Church.” So says he. However, since for them the Church is not only the assembly of believers, but by this name is also specifically understood the Church which they call representative, the question arises: which Church do they mean when they bind the Holy Spirit to it, and to which an infallible interpretation of Scripture is granted? Bellarmine replies that this Church is the Council of Bishops, confirmed by the supreme Pastor of the Church, or that supreme Pastor together with the Council of other Pastors. Therefore, the judge of the true meaning of Scripture is the Church, that is, the Pope with the Council.

3. Before we proceed further, we must note the perplexity of the Papists. They suppose “that it is absolutely necessary in this world and in the forum of this life to have a judge, properly so called, ordinary and supreme, who may decide controversies about religion that arise among the faithful, and pronounce a sentence concerning them in such a way that it may be clearly evident from his judgment which side has a good or bad cause, and from whom there is no appeal to another judge of the same kind who is a mere man.” (Serarius, *Prolegomena* 10, Question 2, Proposition 1). Moreover, such a judge must be “one who in his judgment can neither be deceived nor deceive” (Proposition 5). Although it is false that such a judge is necessary, and that there is or can be found one endowed with this authority and self-authentication, let us grant that it is as they propose. We ask them to point out such a judge to us. They reply that this judge is the Church. Again we ask to which Church we must have recourse, and where we will find that Church which judges in such a way that it cannot be deceived? They reply: in the Councils of Bishops, representing the universal Church. We go further and say that many councils have erred, which not even the Papists themselves deny. Moreover, for those who are litigating or contending, councils are not always at hand so that they can submit to their judgment, especially universal councils, which are the kind to which that supreme judgment is attributed. What do they say to these things? Bellarmine, in his work *On the Roman Pontiff*, Book 4, Chapter 2, replies that this infallibility is not in the assembly of counselors or in the Council of Bishops, but in the Pope alone. Yet he admits, in his work *On Councils*, Book 2, Chapter 13, that

among his own Catholics there is no agreement concerning the preeminence of Councils and the Pope, and in Chapter 14 he sets forth three opinions of his followers: 1. Those who assert that the Council is above the Pope. 2. Those who say that the Pope is above the Council, and cannot be judged by a Council against his will, but can submit himself to the Council and permit his cause to be judged by it, and if he does so, then one must acquiesce in the judgment of the Council. 3. Those who say that the Pope is so far above the Council that he cannot even submit himself to its coercive judgment. This last opinion he himself follows. Whatever the case may be, the matter still rests among them as an opinion, and those who maintain that the Pope can err and who assert and defend that the Council is above the Pope are not considered heretics.

4. Therefore, the foundation of that supreme judgment wavers from the beginning, and the question of whether it should be deferred to a Council or to the Pope is still under dispute. Nor have they yet dared to include among those things that are to be believed as matters of faith this article: that the Pope cannot err in decrees concerning faith. For thus Bellarmine writes in Book 4, Chapter 2, "On the Roman Pontiff": "This opinion is not properly heretical, for we still see that those who follow it are tolerated by the Church." And in Chapter 7: "Neither was Cyprian a heretic, nor are those who say that the Pope can err now considered manifestly heretical." Stapleton, in Controversy 3, Question 4, states: "To hold the contrary opinion regarding faith, at least as a possibility, does not seem to be heretical, because of the many Catholics who have supported the contrary." Who, then, if he has any sense at all, will choose as an infallible and supreme judge in matters of faith one about whom it is not even certain among his own followers whether he can err or not, and about whom, consequently, it is permissible to hold the contrary opinion without the stain of heresy? No one who does not willingly choose to be completely blind can fail to see on what a fanciful foundation the entire Papal religion, as instituted by the Jesuits, rests. For they want the firmness of all their dogmas to depend on the Pope, so that in the analysis of their faith, faith is ultimately resolved into the judgment of the Pope, who declares what is to be believed or not believed. And they contend that decrees of this kind must be received with the most constant faith. But the foundation of the whole matter is that the

Pope cannot err in decrees concerning faith and morals. From this, they resolve faith in their analysis as follows: All decrees concerning faith and morals issued by the Roman Pontiff must necessarily be believed as true and as proceeding from the Holy Spirit. For example, the decree that traditions are to be received with equal reverence as Scripture is a decree concerning faith issued by the Roman Pontiff; therefore, it must necessarily be believed as proceeding from the Holy Spirit. For the conclusion to be true and a matter of faith, the major premise must be a matter of faith. But this is not yet established among the Papists. Therefore, faith that rests on the judgment of a Pope, about whom it is not heretical to hold that he can err in judging, cannot but fluctuate with uncertain doubt:

Remove the support, the structure suffers ruin.

5. If we prove that the judgment, whether of Councils or of the Pope, is human and not divine, it will necessarily follow that such judgment in matters of faith is not infallible; indeed, it cannot produce faith, which, as our adversaries themselves admit along with us, must be based on divine testimony. That the Pope's judgment is human is evident from the fact that in some matters he can err, as all Papists admit, even insofar as he is Pope and Judge. Thus we argue: He does not have divine judgment who can slip and err even in the smallest matter. But *all Catholics agree* (these are the words of Bellarmine, "On the Roman Pontiff," Book 4, Chapter 2) *that the Pope, even as Pope, or together with a general Council, can err in particular factual controversies that depend chiefly on information and human testimony.* Therefore, the Pope's judgment is not divine. The major premise is self-evident. The assumption is from Bellarmine. The conclusion from the premises is evident. Nor does the exception regarding matters of faith hold. For if one can err in lesser matters, why could he not err in greater ones? Certainly, one who cannot judge with certainty and infallibility in lesser controversies is even less able to judge infallibly in greater ones; for he who denies the lesser to someone also takes away the greater from him.

6. I further add that judgments concerning law depend for the most part on many particular facts, the proof of which cannot be obtained in any other way than through inquiries and testimonies. For example, when the Papists concede

that the Pope cannot establish new articles of faith, but can only declare which articles of faith were established by Christ through the Prophets and Apostles, yet they assert that not all such articles are found in Scripture, but must be drawn from tradition. If the question concerns some such article outside Scripture, the proof of that tradition will certainly pertain not to law, but primarily and directly to fact. For in order to prove that tradition, one must have recourse to the testimonies of history, to the writings of the Fathers, who nevertheless could have been mistaken, and whose records could also have been corrupted. All these are questions of fact, not of law. If some error lies within them, how can a certain judgment about law be pronounced from them? In the very process of determining and fixing the Canon of Scripture, as they say, must one not proceed from fact to law necessarily, according to the principles of the Papists? For them, it is an article of faith that these or those books are canonical, because the Pope so judged in the Council of Trent. If we ask how such a judgment was made, either the Pope learned it by immediate revelation from God, which they will not say, or it was done by examining the testimonies of the early Church. But those testimonies were of men who could have erred. If they say that Pope Innocent in the fifth century so judged, and that others followed his opinion, the question arises whether it was the judgment of the Pope as Pope, or of Innocent as a teacher. Suppose it is granted that he determined this as Pope. We ask how he could have done so with certainty, if he could know it in no other way than through ecclesiastical tradition, since before Augustine and Innocent, not only did the Churches doubt about many books, but they also clearly placed them among the rejected ones, both among the Greeks and the Latins. Therefore, various witnesses had to be examined, who disagreed among themselves. The Pope can err when it comes to particular controversies that depend on information and the testimonies of men. Whether the books of Maccabees are canonical is a particular controversy that, according to the Papists, depends on the testimonies of men. Therefore, in such a controversy, the Pope could have erred, and certainly did err.

7. Moreover, I say that all controversies concerning faith and morals are primarily matters of fact, not of law, except insofar as law is derived from fact.

For all conclusions that must be believed or done in order to obey God rest on testimonies and authorities. But when divine testimony in the Scriptures is set aside, only human testimonies remain, which consist in fact. In these, Councils and Popes, as the adversaries themselves admit, can be deceived and can deceive. Moreover, the method they use in their definitions is clearly human. *The Fathers in Councils* (says Bellarmine, *On the Authority of Councils*, Book 2, Chapter 12) *must seek the matter itself, that is, investigate conclusions by disputing, reading, thinking, and so on.* Gregory of Valencia also acknowledges this difference between the sacred writers and the Roman Pontiff (*Anal. Fid.*, Book 8, Chapter 5). He says: “*We affirm that the sacred writer is rather acted upon by the Holy Spirit, because he writes necessarily in all respects,*” whereas the Supreme Pontiff uses his own free will in defining. But according to the Papists, such is the nature of free will in man, at least as a wayfarer, such as the Pope is, that it can be bent equally toward good or evil. And with all prerequisites on God’s part in place, he can act; he can embrace the truth or reject it. Therefore, according to their opinion, those who teach that the Pope cannot err in defining, and that the Pope uses his free will in defining, are saying contradictory things. For this is to say that he cannot err, and yet that he can err. Certainly, that is not divine truth, which depends on a man’s will, which can be bent to the contrary side.

8. This wound is not healed by the plaster of Thomas Stapleton, in his *Relectiones principiorum fidei doctrinalium*, Controversy 4, Question 2. He says: “*The Church*” (that is, according to the reasoning of Jesuit analysis, the Roman Pontiff) “*does not have infallible and particular direction of the Holy Spirit in each individual means, but can sometimes use a probable, though not always necessary, collection in applying them. The reason is that the teachers of the churches do not have the fullness of divine knowledge, but, as Augustine said of himself in Letter 119, chapter 11, in the Holy Scriptures they often know many more things that they do not know than they know. Nevertheless, the Church is always most certain and infallible in the conclusion of faith. The reason is that its doctrine is neither simply prophetic, nor immediately dependent on revelations, nor simply discursive and relying solely on the weight of reasons or human documents. But its doctrine is discursive in the means, while in the conclusion itself it is prophetic and*

divine. Likewise," he says, "in all councils we see the conclusions and decrees, but we do not see the proofs and arguments, not because it was concluded without arguments, but because they concluded not from the firmness of arguments, but from the suggestion of the Spirit, as the Apostles did in Acts 15." Thus says he, in which statements he both contradicts himself and begs the question. For to argue and use discourse to draw a conclusion, and yet not to draw the conclusion through argumentation but to expect it from elsewhere, is to want to argue and not to want to argue. And clearly, discourse from which no conclusion is expected is useless and frivolous. Nor has it ever been heard of that means can be discursive, and the conclusion that follows from the arrangement of the means does not depend on the discourse. If some proposition is immediately inspired without discourse, which is prophetic and divine, certainly it will not be a conclusion, but an axiom or an oracle. Therefore, as we have said, he contradicts himself; indeed, it is a contradiction in terms to say that doctrine which follows as a conclusion from means is not discursive. Moreover, he begs the question when he says that the conclusion is prophetic and divine. For if this were true, all the canons of councils ought to be placed among the canonical Scriptures and divinely inspired writings, since they are prophetic and divine, if Stapleton is to be believed. But from where, I ask, will he produce the tablets by which God has granted this privilege to that new prophet, whose conclusions are prophetic and divine? Where are the seals, by the inspection of which we might be made more certain that he is not a false prophet?

9. Bellarmine, *On the Authority of Councils*, Book 2, Chapter 11. Although he attributes great weight to the conclusions of councils approved by the Pope, he nevertheless concedes that conclusions are deduced in councils from the Word of God through reasoning; that is, they are not prophetic. Likewise, he concedes that the decrees of councils and popes concerning faith pertain to faith, not with respect to the words, but only with respect to the meaning. He also concedes that it is not heretical to say that in the canons of councils some word is superfluous or not correctly placed, whereas in the prophetic and apostolic writings, not only the sentences but also all and singular words pertain to faith. Thus, there is no agreement among these Cadmean brothers. One wants all

conclusions and canons of councils, without exception of words, to contain prophetic and divine doctrine. The other, however, admits that divine and prophetic scriptures differ greatly from the canons of councils and the decrees of popes. This one wants the meaning of those canons or decrees to be gathered through discourse from means in such a way that the conclusion follows from the premises. That one, on the contrary, wants that doctrine not to be discursive, and that no account is taken of the means in the conclusion, and that this is the reason why mention of arguments is not made in the decrees of councils. After we had written these things, and when the printer had progressed this far, a decree of the University of Paris, issued on the third of December 1626, was brought to us. In this decree, a thesis proposed for disputation by Jean Testefort, a Dominican, is disapproved and publicly condemned as alien to the truth. The thesis is conceived in these words: "*You will rightly say that Sacred Scripture is that which is contained PARTLY in the sacred Bibles, partly in the decretal letters of the Supreme Pontiffs, insofar as they explain Sacred Scripture.*" This thesis approaches the opinion of Stapleton and departs from Bellarmine. Nevertheless, the Rector of the University, the Deans, etc., saw that by such a conclusion, the Bull of Boniface VIII is equated with Sacred Scripture. In that Bull, he shamefully abuses certain passages of Scripture to exalt himself above everything that is called God. They also saw that similar decretals of other popes are added to the canon of the Scriptures. Although they could not tolerate this blasphemy, it nevertheless had its supporters among the clergy, and by their skill, the mouths of those who resisted were closed. Whatever the case may be, the dispute is still under judgment, and those who cannot tolerate that blasphemous comparison are not branded with the mark of heresy. Thus, it is clear to us that these smooth-talking men do not know where to turn, nor do they have anything certain to say. And here again, it must be recalled that the Papists are divided into two parties. Some attribute this infallibility to councils, even against the Pope, and believe that the Pope can err and has erred. Others, on the contrary, believe that conclusions of councils not approved by the Pope do not pertain to faith, and that the Pope alone is the one on whom infallibility depends. Neither party dares to say that what they assert is so a matter of faith that anyone who thinks otherwise is a heretic. Consequently, neither party believes that either the

decrees of councils are divine and prophetic in terms of their meaning, or that the decrees of popes are. Therefore, whatever they put forward on this matter is said only as a matter of opinion. How, then, will they make us certain? So far, therefore, whatever they say, there has been among them no such judge of controversies as they declare necessary for the Church.

10. Their procedure in this matter is clearly ridiculous. They say that only the Pope possesses infallible authority to interpret the Scriptures. We ask for proof. They bring forward the usual passages: "*You are Peter*," and likewise, "*Feed my sheep*." These passages are either clear or obscure. That is, the meaning which the opponents want to be contained in them can be understood easily and without an interpreter by anyone who reads or hears them, or it cannot. If it can, they must admit that Scripture is not obscure, since we can be certain by ourselves, without an interpreter who interprets by authority, about the genuine meaning of the principal passages in which the foundations of religion are contained. If, however, this meaning which they deduce from those passages cannot be understood by anyone who reads or hears them without such an interpretation by authority, we will ask how, then, can it be certain to us that they are to be interpreted in this way and not in another? They will answer, according to their principles, that this can be certain only by the authority of the Church, that is, of the Roman Pontiff, since they teach that Scripture is to be interpreted as the Roman Pontiff interprets it. From this, a clearly nonsensical argument and a begging of the question will follow, because they cannot argue otherwise than in this way: "As the Roman Pontiff interprets Scripture, so it must be interpreted. But the Roman Pontiff interprets the passages of Scripture in such a way as to say that they contain that, just as the Roman Pontiff interprets Scripture, so it must be interpreted. Therefore, as the Roman Pontiff interprets Scripture, so it must be interpreted." No one could be more nonsensical, even if he tried.

11. But let us now proceed more strictly, and more closely uncover that mask of the infallible judgment of the Church, in whose name they triumph. Since it is clear among the Jesuits that whatever authority and infallibility exists in councils and in the universal Church depends entirely on the Roman Pontiff. Because, according to them, neither individual believers in the Church, nor

individual teachers, nor those gathered in a universal or particular synod, possess that infallibility. It is evident that when the authority of the Church is claimed or boasted of, nothing else is meant than the authority of the Roman Pontiff. For in the whole Church, whether you consider its individual members separately or many together, there is no one who cannot err, to whom all the faithful are bound to obey immediately and without hesitation, except the Roman Pontiff, the vicar of Christ, the successor of Peter, the vice-god, the almighty greatest and best. From which it is evident that the authority of the Church is for them nothing but a bogeyman, with which they terrify and delude inexperienced men, or those who care too little for their own salvation. At this time, no one else lies hidden under it than he who was recently Cardinal Barberini, and changed his name to Urban, after being elevated to the papacy by those like him. Because the name of the Church is august, they prefer to lie hidden under it, rather than to come forward into the arena with the Pontiff alone. But we have now made it clear that the name of the Church is put forward, but only the Pontiff is understood, on whose authority faith is to be founded.

12. Indeed, they say that there are many norms or principles, as they call them, of theology, which the Pontiff, whom they establish as the sole judge, may use, or rules, which they concede to be infallible in themselves, namely Scripture, traditions, decrees of previous Pontiffs, decrees of councils. But since we are here investigating the first principle of things to be believed and of theological discipline, in relation to our apprehension or knowledge, they respond in such a way that, according to them, none of those norms and rules, considered in relation to us, has any authority unless they are approved by the judgment of the Pontiff. All Christians confess that Scripture is from God. But if it is asked, how is it certain to me? How do I know that there is a certain scripture that proceeded from God, that that scripture is the one which has come down to us, that it is the same rule, at least, as they wish, a partial rule of those things which are proposed for us to believe? They respond in such a way that they profess that they are certain of it from no other source than from the authority of the Church, that is, as we have shown they understand, of the Roman Pontiff, proposing and teaching in that manner, without whose authority Scripture

would not be given greater credence than other books. Some have said, than the fables of Aesop. Bellarmine says it is not sufficient if the Prophets and other sacred writers say that they received from God what they wrote, because Mahomet says the same about his Koran. If we further ask, how is it certain that Scripture is to be expounded in such and such a way? For example, Matthew 5:26 and 12:32, also 1 Corinthians 3:12 and 13, concerning the fire of Purgatory after this life; they answer that it is certain because the Pontiff approved that interpretation. Therefore, that there is some Scripture, that it is a norm and rule of certain things to be believed, that it is to be explained in this or that way, all these things, in relation to human knowledge, depend on the Pontiff. That is, that which immediately moves minds to give assent to those things which are said in Scripture is the authority of the Pontiff.

13. They seem to make much of traditions, which they even make to proceed on equal footing with the Scriptures. But if we ask, how is it certain that there are such unwritten traditions, which contain articles necessary for salvation outside of Scripture, they will answer that it is certain from the determination of the Pontiff. The same authority also persuades them that the traditions they hold are those very ones which originated from the Apostles; for it cannot be known infallibly from elsewhere that they have been handed down from the Apostles to these our times intact and without any change. If also a question is raised about the meaning of certain traditions, according to them, that same authority will be no less necessary. Therefore, all these things also depend on the authority of the Pontiff.

14. Also related to the mask and the bogeyman is what they are accustomed to repeat from ancient times concerning the decrees of councils and popes. For if someone should ask, from where will it be certainly established that councils or earlier popes issued such decrees? They will answer, of course, from the authority of the Church, that is, of the pope alone. But these decrees need interpretation no less than the Scriptures; indeed, very often there is greater difficulty in them. This is evident from the decrees of the last council of the papists, namely that of Trent, on which many papists have written explanations, and concerning many of its canons they still fight among themselves. From where, then, will the true and genuine meaning finally be

sought? Of course, also from the oracle of the papal voice. That the Council of Nicaea condemned Arius and defined that the Son is consubstantial with the Father—how do I know this? From ancient history. But from history we have only human faith and opinion, not certain and divine faith, even though we need that faith which not only excludes all fear, but by which we know that that decree was suggested to those Fathers by the Holy Spirit. According to the papists, we must refer this to the testimony of the present Church, that is, of the pope. To the same must be referred the certain resolution of the question of whether such decrees are genuine and not falsified, as Bellarmine asserts concerning the decrees of the Fifth and Sixth Synods in book 4, *On the Roman Pontiff*, chapter 11. Likewise, if it is necessary to know in what sense they are to be understood, because they themselves often admit various meanings. Also, if it must be determined what in those decrees pertains to faith and what does not, etc. In these and similar matters, the pope's opinion is for them the whole beginning and end of the entire case. For what they say about Scripture, they must necessarily affirm about the other rules they posit. For if anyone could use traditions or decrees of ancient councils and popes without the pope, and form opinions according to them concerning the dogmas of faith, what would prevent the same from being done by all in the case of the Scriptures? For they will scarcely say (unless they are most shameless) that the Scriptures, at least as far as those things which cannot be ignored without loss of salvation are concerned, are more obscure than the decrees of councils and popes. And doubt can also be cast upon both the integrity of the decrees and their meaning, and their very essence, namely, how much pertains to the definition and determination of the dogmas of faith.

15. It cannot be denied that if the faith of a Christian man rests on the testimony and judgment of the Church, this must be referred to the present Church. For it cannot be known otherwise than from the tradition and testimony of the present Church what the ancient Church taught several centuries ago, unless it is said to be established from the Scriptures by this argument: that the true Church in no way departs from the prescription of the Scriptures, nor has it ever embraced any other Catholic faith than that which is contained in the Scriptures. But the adversaries will never attribute so much to

the Scriptures as to concede that from them alone it can be sufficiently gathered what is to be believed and what was believed in times past. Therefore, according to them, it remains that the present Church teaches and gives assurance of what the old Church taught before our times, and that those writings which today are attributed to ancient teachers are indeed theirs, whose names they bear, and are undefiled and uncorrupted. Since, therefore, the whole matter comes back to the present Church, it is clear from what has been stated above that the entire business devolves upon the Roman Pontiff who is alive at the present time. He, according to the papists, is the foundation of faith and religion; and they have no other ultimate reason for believing than because he so teaches and decrees. They believe that Scripture is inspired by God, and that in it God has revealed himself as one in essence and three in persons, and that this has been believed from the early Church down to our times, for this reason alone. They have nothing else on which to fix their foot, and to this they not so much fall as run willingly. Scripture is obscure to them and lacks credibility unless the pope comes to its aid. What was believed, established, and handed down in the old Church is completely unknown to us, at least in a way that creates certainty, unless the pope testifies to it. For in the present Church, individual teachers can err, indeed many and even all gathered in a council can err, unless they follow the guidance of the Roman Pontiff and rely on his authority. Therefore, only Barbarinus, now Urban VIII of that name, provides certain and undoubted faith concerning the articles and dogmas that concern eternal salvation. To this one man alone, after so many wanderings, the Church has finally been reduced, and that august name which they so greatly boast of becomes the property of a single man, to whom whatever they attribute to the Church in words is in reality arrogated for themselves.

16. If that Barbarini, or Urban VIII, were to fall into madness or descend to the underworld, and the Cardinals could not agree so quickly on a successor; or if, with conflicting opinions, as has often happened before, several were elected and, with a schism arising, it were unknown who among them was the Pope, what then would happen? Let them see to it themselves. If they rely on their own principles, without doubt they would not believe then. For since the Pope alone, not of past time but of the present, gives men certain and undoubted

faith concerning divine revelation, with that principle of faith removed, which they consider necessary for human knowledge, it cannot happen that faith itself does not also waver. The Roman Church has suffered, as Onuphrius notes, twenty-six schisms; of these, the twenty-first lasted forty years, and the twenty-sixth, from Urban VI to the Council of Constance, lasted the same number. Then there were two, sometimes three, Popes. *One raged against the other with censures, so that the Christian Republic then had two Popes*, says Genebrardus in his Chronology for the year of Christ 1389. Who was then the supreme judge and infallible interpreter of Scripture? To whom was one to have recourse in doubts of faith? Were Christians then without faith?

17. But there is another thing that renders the entire Papal faith, even outside of schism, when all agree on one Pope, doubtful, and therefore null. Among them it is held as a certain dogma and of faith that in ministers, when they confect and confer the sacraments, an intention of doing what the Church does is required, so that if the intention is lacking in the administrator, the sacrament effects nothing, indeed it is not even a sacrament. Moreover, that no one can be certain of another's intention, not only with the certainty of faith, but not even with human certainty, is more than certain, except with a certain moral and conjectural certainty, which is opinion rather than certainty, because falsity can underlie it. Therefore, no one can know with the certainty of faith that he or another is baptized, or absolved from sins, or has received any order; and consequently, he cannot know whether he has the power of ordaining, or consecrating, or remitting sins. For if someone is not truly baptized, he is capable of no order, according to the opinion of the Papists. If, therefore, there is no certainty of the Pope's baptism except a conjectural one, and one that consists of opinion, there can be no greater certainty of his ordination. No one can know, as a matter of faith, whether he is a bishop or a priest. But he cannot be the judge of all controversies of faith who is not in holy orders, nor even one of whom it is not certain whether he has been ordained a bishop or not. How, therefore, will the Pope's judgment be certain concerning faith, when his authority, on which the infallibility of his judgment depends, rests on opinion, and that a very uncertain one?

18. This will be more evident if we consider that the same intention which is required in the one baptizing is also required in the bishop consecrating and ordaining, by whose defect the ordination is null. Since, however, the intention of the bishop cannot be certain to anyone as a matter of faith, not even to the bishop himself who consecrates, who cannot be certain with the certainty of faith about his own intention when he ordains someone, much less can he be certain about the intention of those who ordained him. Yet in this matter, if a defect has been admitted, he could have had no power of conferring orders; and thus, whoever have been ordained by him, even if he had intention, have received no order or character. Since, therefore, the ordination of the Pope could have been performed either by that bishop who did not have the intention, or at least by one who himself was ordained by another who did not employ the same intention, it follows that there can be no certainty, let alone certainty of faith, concerning the ordination of the Pope; therefore, neither concerning his authority; therefore, neither concerning his infallible judgment.

19. Moreover, if we proceed further and ascend to ancient times: since ordination, and all authority and jurisdiction of the Popes, according to the teachings of the Papists, depends on legitimate succession; and there can be no succession of office and priesthood or episcopate where there was no true priest or bishop; if in the intention of an ordainer some centuries ago there was a defect, he did not truly ordain; for example, Titius, nor afterwards did Titius ordain Caius, and so on. Since, however, the contrary cannot be established as a matter of faith, neither can there be certainty concerning the authority and office required in the Pope for him to be an infallible judge.

20. These points are indeed very clear, but we add another of no less importance. It is established by the same Papists that not only a lack of intention renders the act of ordination invalid, but also if simony has intervened, and if one of all those involved was a simoniac, everything will be equally disrupted. Pope Leo, in Gratian, Cause 2, Question 1, Canon "Gratia," overturns the ordinations of simoniacs with these words: *"If grace is not given or received freely, it is not grace. Simoniacs, however, do not receive it freely; therefore, they do not receive grace, which works especially in ecclesiastical orders. But if they do not receive it, they do not have it, and they cannot give it to anyone, either*

freely or not freely. What then do they give? Truly, what they have. And what do they have? Certainly a spirit of lying." But that many popes were simoniacs is as certain as it is that some were not simoniacs. Baronius himself, in his Annals, Volume 9, in the year of Christ 912, Section 8, acknowledges that *Rome was dominated by the most powerful and also the most sordid prostitutes, by whose will sees were changed, bishops were appointed, and, what is horrible and unspeakable to hear, their lovers were thrust into the seat of Peter as false popes. After that, there is no mention anywhere of a clergy electing or consenting; all canons were suppressed in silence, decrees of popes were stifled, ancient traditions were proscribed, old customs in electing the supreme pontiff were abolished, and sacred rites and former practices were completely extinguished.* Was the election and calling of these monsters therefore valid, so that the faithful might later use them as judges in all controversies of faith? Could those who were ordained and sent by such men be certain of their ordination? Nor should it be thought that the intrusion of such popes was only for a short time. For, according to Genebrard in his Chronology, Book 2, in the year 901, for *nearly one hundred and fifty years, about fifty popes, from John VIII, who succeeded the holy popes Nicholas and Adrian II, up to Leo IX, completely departed from the virtue of their predecessors, being apostates and renegades rather than apostolic, since they entered not through the door but through the back door, that is, through the tyranny of emperors.* Since this is the case, even as the Papists who most vigorously defend the cause of the popes admit, what certainty can there be of the succession of popes, or of the true ordination of this or that pope? The simony of many popes in seeking the papacy is very well known from the Papist historians themselves. Sigonius, in the seventh book of his work on the Kingdom of Italy, says: *"Boniface, raging thus, returned to Rome from Constantinople, where he had fled, and with a huge sum of money, which he had raised by selling sacred objects, he attracted many to his side, seized John himself, and handed him over to custody; he himself entered the vacant see."* Concerning Alexander VI, the matter is so widely known that there is scarcely any historian who has not exposed his infamy. Pandolphus Collenutus, in Book 2 of his work on the Neapolitan War, says, among other things: *"They accused him of having bought the papacy, and indeed truly so."* The noble historian Francesco Guicciardini has more on the same subject. His epitaph, written by Jacopo

Sannazaro (to whom Bellarmine gave a place among ecclesiastical writers), published in Book 2 of his Epigrams, deserves to be described here on this occasion, so that all may see what kind of infallible judges of controversies of faith the Papists wish to thrust upon us. It reads as follows:

*Perhaps you do not know whose tomb this is,
Listen, traveler, unless you are lazy.
The title you see of Alexander is not that of the Great,
But of this man who recently,
Seized by a lustful thirst for blood,
Overthrew so many famous cities,
So many kingdoms, and put so many leaders to death,
To fill his own children.
He utterly laid waste, drained, and destroyed the world
With plunder, sword, and fire;
He abolished human laws, and no less divine ones,
And even the gods themselves,
So that it might be permitted (alas, the crime) for a father
To defile his daughter's bosom,
And not to refrain from execrable marriages,
Once fear was removed.
And yet in the city of Romulus he presided as Pope
For eleven years.
Go now, name Neros, or Caligulas,
Or foul Heliogabaluses.
This is enough, traveler: shame does not allow the rest.
You may guess, and walk on.*

Behold, indeed, a most worthy judge of controversies of faith, whom the same poet does not hesitate to call “*a lecherous father of a lecherous son.*” That not a few similar men have held the same see is testified by the histories of our adversaries. Since these things are so, let the Papists consider with what conscience they wish to thrust upon us divine oracles, based on the force of that papal authority which depends on succession and ordination, both of

which are not so much uncertain as manifestly false and null, in the judgments of those whose power wavers so greatly.

21. Since, therefore, so many acts and so many men have intervened over so many centuries, it is more likely that some defect occurred among them than that none occurred. For all human affairs are so constituted that it can scarcely happen that in many acts some defect does not intervene. From these considerations we finally conclude that whether Urban VIII was baptized or received holy orders is not certain either to himself or to anyone else. But if he was not baptized, he is not a Christian; if he is not a Christian, he cannot be the head of Christians. If he did not receive the lower orders, he will in no way be suitable for bearing the Pontificate; therefore, he could not have obtained that supreme grace of infallibility

22. What if he himself was intruded through simony? Certainly, no one can have undoubted faith, let alone divine faith, to the contrary. In this case, however, according to the bull of Julius II issued in the year 1505: *If it happens that the election of the Roman Pontiff is celebrated or carried out by him who happens to be elected, or by any one or any of the college of Cardinals, in any way giving a vote, through simoniacal heresy in giving, promising, or receiving goods of any kind, etc., that election is null; no faculty of administering in spiritual and temporal matters is given to the one thus elected or assumed; the same elected one is not Apostolic but Apostatic, and is to be regarded as Simon Magus and a heresiarch, and is utterly incapable of all the aforesaid things. Indeed, he is to be considered as a magician, a pagan, a publican, and is to be avoided as a heresiarch.* All these things are contained in the bull.

23. Let the Papists therefore see on what sand they build the whole edifice of their faith. They say they believe the Scriptures, not moved by the Scriptures themselves; they seek a certain interpretation of the Scriptures and one based on faith, not in the Scriptures, but await it from the mouth of the Pontiff. But the same cause that leads them to give faith to the Scriptures also moves and impels them to believe the divine promises contained in Scripture. Therefore, they believe the divine promises of grace, remission of sins, and eternal glory, on the authority of that man about whom it can not only be doubted whether

he is a true Pontiff, but about whom it is not certainly known to anyone whether he is baptized, whether he is a member of the Church or not, whether he is ordained, etc. Let those who are not destitute of common sense judge whether such a faith is that which cannot be subject to falsehood.

24. But let us grant that it is true and infallibly certain (which they themselves are compelled to be ignorant of whether it is so), namely, that the Pontiff now living in Rome was truly baptized, truly ordained, and is a legitimate Pontiff; this would little benefit their cause, and they will always walk on slippery ground and stick in the mud from which they will not be allowed to emerge if they adhere to their principles. We have shown that the authority of the Church is held by them to be the cause that makes us certain about the Scriptures, their true interpretation, and divine revelation. And at the same time we have shown that by the name "Church" is understood nothing other than one man, the Roman Pontiff, at this time namely Barbarini, who took the name Urban VIII. If arguments are constructed on these principles, for the final judgment by which they presume to obtain their cause against us or any others, they will have to argue in this manner: "Whatever he who is the legitimate Roman Pontiff teaches ex cathedra, and holds and defines as certain and to be held by faith, that is infallibly true and to be held by faith. But Urban VIII is the legitimate Roman Pontiff. Therefore, whatever Urban VIII teaches is infallibly true." Under this conclusion they will afterwards subsume: "But Urban VIII defines that those who deny transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the Mass, etc., err heretically. Therefore, that is infallibly true."

25. The minor premise of the first syllogism cannot be certain with the certainty of faith; and in relation to our knowledge, it does not exclude all fear and suspicion of falsehood. It could only be probable for the Papists themselves, to the extent that it might merit an assent which consists in opinion. However, since opinion accepts one part of a contradiction in such a way that it does not exclude all fear concerning the other part, it is opposed not only to science but also to Christian faith. Therefore, at most, if they approach the matter concerning the vocation and dignity of this Pontiff, they cannot have greater certainty than that of opinion. Yet in the case of the consequences, they objected that the conclusion follows the worse part, not only by reason of the

form but also by reason of the matter and the things involved. Thus, if both premises are evident, the conclusion will also be evident, but not if one premise is evident and the other is not. If one premise is necessary and the other contingent, the conclusion will be contingent, not necessary. If one premise is certain and the other probable, the conclusion will be probable. Likewise, even if one premise is certain by faith, if the other consists in opinion, a completely similar conclusion will follow. Therefore, even if the major premise of the first syllogism were correct, due to the wavering certainty of the minor premise, no other conclusion worthy of faith can follow, only one of opinion.

26. But even if we were to grant that minor premise, and the first syllogism had nothing to which objection could be made, in the minor premise of the second syllogism there will be no less difficulty. There are two kinds of men to whom this judgment of the Pontiff, which they wish to be divine in matters of faith, becomes known. The first are those who hear the Pontiff himself, either when he is decreeing, or when he is approving or confirming what has been decreed by others, or when he is interpreting Scripture. However, such people are very few, indeed often none at all. For the Pontiffs themselves scarcely teach publicly, or expressly approve the teaching of others, unless approval consists in not expressly disapproving. Therefore, such people can hardly measure their faith by the judgment of the Pontiff. Moreover, do not the Papists themselves acknowledge that not everything the Pontiffs say or write, even in theological matters, is a matter of faith? Therefore, another decree will be necessary to discern those things that are to be believed by faith from others; this is certainly so uncertain among them that even now many controversies flourish among Papist doctors, in which some think the matter pertains to the business of faith, others only to probability. Whatever the case may be, those who hear the Pontiff cannot know with certainty of faith whether he teaches something *ex cathedra* or not; yet this is necessary, according to the supposition of the Jesuits, for someone to be certain that the Pontiff does not err in defining. For whatever they can bring forward so that someone might know that he teaches *ex cathedra* consists only in opinion. This is clear from the fact that concerning many decrees they themselves still doubt whether the Pontiff issued them as Pontiff or as a particular doctor expressing his own opinion. For it is not

sufficient for divine faith that what is enough in human judgments about external matters, namely that a judgment is outwardly pronounced either by word or in writing and is put into execution; for this can happen without great prejudice, even if someone rightly doubts the truth of the judgment. But in matters of faith, it pertains to the essence and solidity of the judgment that what is believed to be judged is true by divine faith, and it is also believed by divine faith that that judgment was made, as they say, *ex cathedra*. For it is not sufficient for this if what they say or write is included among the decretal letters, *so that the decree is plainly Apostolic and ex cathedra, since it is established that there are many things in the decretal letters which do not make something a matter of faith, but only declare to us the opinions of the Pontiffs on that matter*, as Bellarmine says in *On the Roman Pontiff*, Book 4, Chapter 14.

27. But even if it were granted that those who hear the Oracle of the voice when the Pontiff himself decides can be certain of his intention in deciding, and can believe by faith that the Pontiff has decreed it, what will happen to others who never see or hear the Pontiff, who have no access to him, and who, even if access were possible, cannot approach him and consult him in doubtful matters? Here certainly most of the Pontificians must be at a loss; for the part of them who approach and hear the Pontiff, compared with those to whom this is never granted, will be scarcely of any number. What, then, will happen to all the rest, whose faith must also be resolved into the authority of the Pontiff and the final judgment? Let some controversy now arise in remote regions, as recently in Spain and Belgium the controversy about the aids of grace, which the Pontiff has not yet defined, and in the meantime many remain in doubt and die doubting, unless perhaps they acquiesce in this: that the Pontiff has not yet defined anything certain, and therefore the matter is not yet a matter of faith for them. But how can those who know that the Pontiff has not yet defined it, or if he finally defines it, how can it be certain to them by faith? They will never see or hear the Pontiff. They will therefore learn it from the report of others, to which report, however, falsehood may be present, because they have no one else as an infallible judge besides the Pontiff, nor even as an infallible messenger whose all reports are to be believed by faith. Therefore, their faith will consist only in human persuasion and opinion. From these things it is clear

that the Pontificians, when they build their religion upon that principle which we have mentioned, do not assent to their dogmas with firm faith, or with Christian and divine faith, which renders the mind unmoved and free from all fear of deception, but only nourish a certain opinion, with which fear of the other side can coexist.

28. These things concern the assumptions or the minor premises of the two propositions. But what if the major premise of the first syllogism, on which the whole force of the conclusion, and also of what follows, depends, is called into doubt? Namely: "Whatever he who is the lawful Roman Pontiff teaches is infallibly true." If, I say, this is denied, how will they prove it? It is necessary that they bring forward principles naturally known, or the authority of Holy Scripture. If naturally known principles, then it will not be believed by divine faith, but will depend on human reason. Moreover, it cannot be proved as certain from principles naturally known. But if they wish to prove it from the Scriptures, then they will necessarily be caught in a vicious circle; and in order to demonstrate this, we shall consider their chief foundation, on which the whole building rests. They produce the words of the Saviour to Peter, Matt. 16, verse 18: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." And John, chapter 21: "Feed my sheep": from which words they infer not only infallibility in interpreting and defining, but also royal dominion, indeed tyranny, over all, not only Bishops, but even the Princes of the Christian world, and other monstrous claims. But if an argument is made, it can scarcely be arranged in any other way than this: Whatever Holy Scripture teaches is true, by divine faith. But Holy Scripture teaches that whatever the Roman Pontiff defines is infallibly true. Therefore: We indeed acknowledge the major premise, as the unique principle of all Christian dogmas; and with us there would be no need of proof. For although there are not lacking arguments that induce and incline one toward it, from antiquity, miracles, the constancy of martyrs, the consent of peoples, even of those divided into various opinions, and the admirable preservation through so many centuries; which, if our case were with an unbeliever, are by no means to be set aside; nevertheless those things do not produce that faith by which, without ambiguity and all fear of deception, a Christian man so assents to the Scriptures that he would rather die a hundred

times than deny them. But Holy Scripture itself, since it is the word of God, itself creates faith in itself, and in this very thing, which is above faith, it has the power of producing faith, namely by a certain virtue and power which it has received from its author, the Holy Spirit. Hence it is that the Thessalonians “received the word of the hearing of God not as the word of men, but (as it truly is) as the word of God, which works in those who believe.” 1 Thess. 2:13. This, compelled by the force of truth, even the Jesuits themselves sometimes acknowledge. “Although there are many things,” says Gregory of Valentia, *Analysis of the Faith*, book 1, chapter 15, “in the Christian doctrine itself which of themselves can win for it faith and authority; nevertheless that seems to me the greatest thing (as has been observed by Clement of Alexandria and Lactantius and others) that by some wonderful power of its own it altogether divinely affects the minds of men and impels them to virtue. Scripture is in simple words and is almost without artifice of speech and ornaments. Nevertheless it so vehemently moves the reader’s mind that no other doctrine does. Which is proof that its authority is altogether divine, not human: for the latter, without the art of words and the kind of cajoling ornament of speech, has no power to produce movement in souls.” Thus he. In which matters, if either he himself were consistent, or others agreed and acknowledged that the authority of Holy Scripture does not depend on anything else, and that it makes faith by itself, there would be no controversy between us and them concerning this matter; and, acknowledging on both sides one and the same principle, which would not need proof, we would consider only what could, or could not, be deduced from that common principle.

29. But from what has already been said, it is most clearly evident that they suspend the authority of Scripture, as far as concerns us, and its true interpretation, upon the authority of their Church, that is, of the Pontiff, in such a way that it cannot create faith unless it is approved and explained by him. Since, therefore, they cannot stand by the major premise as by a certain and indemonstrable principle, it is necessary that they produce proof of their major; namely, that what Scripture teaches is true by the faith. This, by their assumptions, cannot be done in any other way than this: Whatever the Roman Pontiff defines is true by the faith. The Roman Pontiff defines that whatever

Scripture teaches is true by divine faith. Therefore, whatever Scripture teaches is true by divine faith. If we ask for the proof of the major premise of this syllogism, since it is itself the point in dispute, the former syllogism will necessarily return, whose major will be: Whatever Scripture teaches is infallibly true, etc.

30. If we proceed to examine the minor premise, we will see that proof is sought from those passages of Scripture which can lead us to that supreme authority of the Pope only through long and circuitous routes, and those highly ambiguous and doubtful. For what does this mean? The Savior said to Peter: *"You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church."* Likewise: *"Feed my sheep."* Therefore, the Roman Pontiff, when he teaches the universal Church, resolves doubts, defines controversies, possesses divine judgment, and cannot err. For that conclusion to be valid, 1. it must be established that by those words Peter was appointed as the foundation of the Church, and that the right of primacy was conferred upon him above the other Apostles. 2. That these words include infallibility or inerrancy in defining. 3. That these gifts were not personal to Peter, but were to pass to his successors by divine ordinance. 4. That Peter established the seat of his Pontificate in Rome by the Lord's command. 5. That the Pontiff who now occupies that seat was legitimately elected and ordained. All these things must be proven before the truth of the minor premise can be established. Proof cannot be undertaken in any other way than this. Whatever Scripture teaches was conferred upon Peter, it teaches was also conferred upon the Roman Pontiff. But it teaches that it was conferred upon Peter that whatever he defines is infallibly true. Therefore, the same must be thought concerning the Pontiff. The minor premise is disputed and false; but suppose it is true, what will become of the major premise? Before it can stand firm, all the other postulates we have discussed above must be considered true and undoubted, at least these: that what Scripture says about Peter, it says the same about his successor; that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of Peter; and that the one who now presides is the true Pontiff. The first of these is false. The second is also at least doubtful, because it is not a matter of established faith whether Peter was in Rome; even less so whether he established his seat there, and the authors who treat this matter are neither of certain and undoubted

faith, nor do they agree on all points. The third, as we have shown above, rests only on opinion and conjecture.

31. They prove the minor premise of the principal syllogism from those passages of Scripture from which nothing of the sort can be openly gathered; indeed, these passages not only admit but demand and require a different interpretation. How, then, will it be established for us that they must be interpreted in the way they claim? They will not say that those passages are so clear that they can be easily understood by anyone who reads or hears them without an authoritative interpreter. For this would create a great prejudice against the Papal cause, if we could be certain of the genuine meaning of the most controversial passages through ourselves, from Scripture. Therefore, they will refer us to the Pope, whose sole authority judges the genuine meaning of Scripture. Thus, the argument will proceed as follows: Whatever the Roman Pontiff defines is true by divine faith. But the Roman Pontiff defines that Scripture teaches whatever the Roman Pontiff defines is true by divine faith. Therefore, Scripture teaches what he defines, etc. This is clearly the same as saying: Whatever the Roman Pontiff defines is to be believed by divine faith. But the Roman Pontiff defines that whatever he defines is to be believed by divine faith. Therefore, etc. This is plainly insane. According to Papal doctrine and its principles and foundations, the process cannot be otherwise. For they deny that the proposition, "Whatever Holy Scripture teaches is to be believed by divine faith," is self-evident. Therefore, they bring forward another proposition from which they demonstrate it: "Whatever the Pope teaches ex cathedra, as a matter of faith, is to be believed by divine faith." But since that very proposition itself requires proof, they again bring forward the proposition which they had previously supposed needed proof: "Whatever Holy Scripture teaches is true." This was previously considered unknown, while the other proposition about the Pope was considered more known. Now, however, in the same process of continuous demonstration, this one is taken as known, and the other as unknown. Therefore, the same thing, in relation to the same, would be both more known and less known, prior and posterior; indeed, also in relation to itself. This fault in reasoning, Aristotle calls a circle in the first book of the Posterior Analytics, chapter 3, and refutes it with many arguments, showing

that such reasoning produces no knowledge, indeed is not even reasoning, because otherwise the same thing would be prior and posterior. But if someone says that something is prior by nature and something else is prior to us, and thus a good circular demonstration is given, by which what is prior to us is demonstrated from what is prior by nature, and what is posterior by nature is demonstrated from what is prior to us, the Philosopher shows that such reasoning is not a demonstration nor does it produce knowledge, insofar as it proceeds from what is posterior by nature, contrary to the definition of knowledge. Moreover, he proves that demonstrating in a circle is nothing other than simply asserting that if this is, then this is, that is, the conclusion is true if it is true, which is plainly ridiculous. Therefore, circular reasoning coincides with begging the question, and proving the same thing by the same, which is evident in this argument of the Papists. What Scripture teaches is true, because what the Pope teaches is true; and what the Pope teaches is true, because what Scripture teaches is true. They commit the same fault in proving the minor premise of the syllogism; for when we ask them to prove that Scripture teaches that whatever the Pope defines is true, to accomplish this they assume the conclusion of the principal syllogism, which is in dispute, and from it, as if the point in question were not at issue, they make the major premise of a prosyllogism, as is clear from what we have already said. Therefore, the Papal religion stands on no rational basis unless by circular reasoning and begging the question, allowing them to affirm anything licentiously. For there is nothing that cannot be proved in this way.

32. Gregory of Valencia (Volume 3, on Thomas, Disputation 1, Question 1, Point 1, Section 10) to extricate himself, he distinguishes between the cause of faith in itself (why someone believes firmly and infallibly) and the cause for which someone has accepted that faith. Thus, when asked why he believes God is triune, he responds: because God has revealed it. Again, when asked how he knows that God has revealed it, he responds that he does not know this clearly, but nevertheless believes it infallibly, on account of the infallible declaration of the Church. Again, when asked how he knows that such a declaration is infallible, he responds again that he does not know it clearly, but believes it with infallible faith on account of the revelation of Scripture, which he does not

believe on account of another revelation, but on account of itself, although for this very thing the declaration of the Church is needed as a required condition. In these statements, he either says nothing or unwillingly descends to our opinion. For if he concedes that Scripture is believed with infallible faith on account of itself, he agrees with us. As for the condition of which he speaks, provided he does not make it the cause of believing, he will not find us opposed. For we acknowledge that some occasion, whatever it may be, must intervene, which is a condition, a kind of cause without which the faith would not have been held. Today in the Church, such an occasion for many, as also the first motive for believing, is the diligence of parents, who inculcate the Christian religion in their children and set before them and commend the written word of God. But the question between us is not about such occasions and motives, nor does Gregory himself deny that different things lead different people to believe, that these can be fallible, and that they effect nothing except human or acquired faith. Rather, the question is about the genuine and infallible principle, which not only moves the mind of this or that person, but in all who believe, proves the matter and generates faith, and is the first thing believed in itself in the order of composition, and the last in the order of resolution. For when the acceptance or condition that concurred accidentally to accepting is set aside or presupposed, one thing believed (taken in itself, I say) is concluded and deduced from another by consequence, as is known and as is usually done elsewhere. Therefore, if we rest in Scripture and believe it, as the adversary speaks, not on account of another revelation but on account of itself, there should be no great quarrel about conditions, which cannot properly be causes of faith, nor is the ultimate resolution of faith made in them.

33. Becanus, in his treatise on the circle, assumes from philosophy that a circle is committed when we prove this by that, and that in turn by this, before someone who concedes neither and doubts both equally. For example, if I deny that both the mother and the son are honest, one would commit a circle by proving the mother is honest because the son says so, and the son is honest because the mother says so. The reason is that both are equally unknown and uncertain to the one seeking proof, but proof ought to proceed from known things to unknown things, or from conceded things to unconceded things.

Hence, he concedes that a circle would occur if a Christian, before a pagan who admits neither Scripture nor the Church, wished to prove that Scripture is infallible because the Church says so, and that the Church is infallible because Scripture says so. On the other hand, there would not be a circle if you proved one or the other before someone who admits one but denies the other. But this has nothing to do with the question, for the inquiry is not what can be disputed against this or that person; indeed, one can argue and dispute *ad hominem* from any conceded premises, not only uncertain ones but even false ones. And the Papists themselves, when they argue against us, assume the persona of a pagan who does not believe Scripture is divine, so that afterwards, having rejected all arguments and criteria as insufficient for producing divine faith, they may thrust forward the authority of their Church. When proof of this authority is demanded from them, they then bring forth testimonies of Scripture, which they had previously rejected in a pagan spirit as doubtful and controversial, but now Becanus admits that he cannot prove to us that the Church cannot err, etc., unless we first assent that Scripture is true. But if a circle is avoided by the admission of adversaries, he cannot object to us, since when arguing against the Papists, who concede that Scripture is divine and true, we deduce that this same Scripture contains all things necessary for faith, etc. Thus, among the Papists and us, by Becanus's own admission, there is no need for that question: "How do you know that Scripture is divinely inspired?" Yet they repeatedly bring it up, indeed make it the beginning and end of their disputations.

34. Another argument he presents to avoid the circle coincides with the one he demanded regarding Valencia. It is one thing to speak of faith, or the assent of faith in itself, and another to speak of the acceptance of faith, from which a twofold question and a twofold resolution can be established. One concerns the cause of faith in itself, as if I were to ask why you certainly and infallibly believe the articles contained in the Creed. The other concerns the cause of the acceptance of faith, as if I were to ask what impelled or moved you to resolve in your mind to believe articles so obscure and exceeding human comprehension. If the question is posed in the first way, concerning the cause of faith in itself, he says that the entire resolution rests on the authority of God revealing, and

no other resolution should be expected here. But if the question concerns the cause of the acceptance of faith, each person resolves his assent into that motive by which he was led and persuaded to accept the faith of this or that article, which he had not accepted before. However, the question is about the cause of faith in itself, not about the motives for believing, which are various, as Becanus himself acknowledges in chapter 6 of the second part of the later volume of Scholastic Theology. In chapter 8, question 8, he acknowledges that these motives are only extrinsic; extrinsic motives, however, only dispose a person to believe, but do not effect belief. Therefore, in such motives he had to admit that the ultimate resolution of faith cannot be made. We have spoken about these matters above in chapter 3, where we dealt with the existence, authority, and certainty of the sacred scriptures.

35. But Becanus adds in the cited passage that the assent of faith is resolved into the authority of the Church proposing and decreeing what is to be believed, in a directive manner. For that proposition of the Church can be considered in two ways: first, insofar as it is a certain application of the things to be believed. Just as wood cannot be burned by fire unless it is applied to the fire through local motion, so the articles of faith cannot be believed by a person unless they are applied to him through hearing, according to Romans 10:17, “faith comes from hearing.” In this way, the Church of heretics proposes the articles of faith, but due to the lack of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, it cannot infallibly judge and discern. But the Roman Church is infallible in proposing and judging because of the authority of the Holy Spirit; therefore, faith is resolved into its authority, in a directive manner. This is the knot of the controversy, in which the adversary cannot avoid the circle. It is asked why he believes in purgatory and the sacrifice of the Mass. He answers because the Church has proposed both to me. Again it is asked, why do you believe that what the Church proposes as a matter of faith must be held as faith? He answers because it is infallible in proposing and judging. If it is asked again, why do you believe it is infallible? He answers because God has revealed this. Again, if someone asks, why do you believe that God has revealed this? Because Scripture testifies to this. If someone insists, why do you believe that what Scripture testifies is revealed by God? He answers because the Church has

proposed this to me as something to be believed. Thus the matter returns in a circle; thus the adversary runs well, but in a circle. Therefore, Gretser, in his treatise “Whence do you know?” chapter 4, admits that he cannot avoid the circle, but according to the mind of his associate Tanner, he says that not every circle is vicious, and he cites an apodictic regression. But truly, logicians will order both to be flogged if they think that a regression is instituted to prove simply about some thing that it is so, or about an attribute that it exists or inheres in a subject, for example, that motion exists or that generation exists in natural things. For through regression, the syllogism of “that” is converted into “why,” not to produce simple assent to the existence of a thing, but to generate knowledge and to make known the reason why a thing is, about which otherwise no one doubted whether it existed; and thus the principle of knowing and the principle of being coincide, but the latter is not what is being asked about here. Therefore, since in this entire disputation the concern is not with the reason that answers the question why some thing is true, but with the reason that answers the question how we know or recognize it to be true, the Pontificians cannot avoid a vicious circle, in which the knowledge of one thing is proved through the knowledge of another equally controversial thing, and vice versa.

36. These things, however, have been devised by them to avoid being forced to admit such a resolution of faith as plainly rests in Scripture. Therefore, they still ask how it can be known that Scripture is divinely inspired. Nor do they see that whatever they bring forward for their Church, when they say that axiom, that *the Church is guided by the infallible assistance of the Spirit, is the first belief, which, with respect to other articles, has the character of a most sufficient proposer*, can and ought to be said of Sacred Scripture with greater right. For in Scripture, as in a sign divinely instituted and offered, God proposes to us what is to be believed, both concerning the Church and concerning the remaining articles of faith. Malderus, Bishop of Antwerp, in *On the Theological Virtues*, Question 1, Article 2, Section 6, establishes the entire process of faith, *as far as we are concerned (quad nos)*, so that first, indeed, from signs, for example, miracles, we persuade ourselves that the judgment of the Church is infallible; this persuasion is not yet from infused faith, but from arguments weighed in a human

manner, and therefore it can be called human persuasion. Second, we believe by infused faith that the Church is the teacher of truth. Third, we believe whatever this teacher proposes as articles of faith. Hence it happens that Christians, when asked why they believe this or that article, rightly answer by appealing to the authority of the Church, not to the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, as heretics are accustomed to do.

37. In this process of theirs, he admits that that first persuasion is only from human faith, by which one believes that the testimony of the Church is infallible, and that no other divine testimony is required before infused faith, which God works in those who have first persuaded themselves of that by motives, reasons, or signs. If this is so, what will prevent that process from being valid, with greater reason, for believing the certainty of Sacred Scripture? For, as the adversaries themselves admit, there are not a few motives and most solid arguments by which the truth of the Scriptures can be persuaded, as from signs, so that he who embraces it can judge that he has acted prudently. 1. Miracles which were performed in confirmation of the doctrine contained in the Scriptures. 2. The agreement of peoples and nations. 3. The harmony of our faith with true natural light. 4. The holiness of those who live according to that doctrine. 5. The constancy of the martyrs, who poured out their blood for it. 6. The punishment of those who oppose the Christian faith. 7. The efficacy of the preaching of the Gospel, the effect of which is a change of life for the better. 8. The truth of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments. 9. The analogy, agreement, and harmony of the Old and New Testaments, and similar things, which are also proposed by the adversaries themselves, as was said by us in its place. For all these things, individually and collectively, bear witness to the truth of the Sacred Scriptures and prudently persuade that faith should be attributed to them. If we concede that faith which does not ascend higher is human, not yet divine and Christian, they also concede this concerning the faith by which one persuades oneself that the testimony of the Church is infallible. In this matter, therefore, we are equal, nor do they have any grounds to insult us, as if the assent of our faith were resolved into extrinsic motives which do not of themselves produce divine faith. For they require that divine faith be resolved, dispositively, as they say, into extrinsic means, concerning

which we have just spoken. The only difference is that they, in this resolution of theirs, refer all these motives immediately to proving the infallibility of their Church; we, to persuading the divine truth of Scripture, so that through it the truth of the Church may afterwards be established. Therefore, if someone asks another whether he believes all things that are proposed for belief in Sacred Scripture, and he answers, "I believe," we can proceed further: "Were you ever a pagan or such a heretic who did not believe Scripture?" If he answers, "I was," it will be asked, "What first moved you to give faith to Scripture?" He will answer, "Miracles, the agreement of peoples and nations, etc.," or some similar motive. And in this kind of resolution, the Papists stop when it is asked why one believes all things that the Church proposes for belief. But the adversaries cannot deny that such motives can be brought forward immediately for Scripture. Among these, however, must also be placed the testimony of the Church itself concerning Scripture, which persuades only human faith, such as can be had from the agreement of peoples and nations, because the Church, under the aspect of the Church, can be known by no one unless the truth of the divine word is first established for him.

38. Therefore, after this has once been persuaded to someone, by those motives proposed, it is so confirmed from the reading or hearing of Sacred Scripture that, with God working through the Spirit, by infused faith he believes that Scripture is the most faithful instrument and authentic witness of revealed divine truth. From this it afterwards comes about that he believes whatever is proposed from that Scripture and is proved from it to be necessary for faith. And hence it happens that a true Christian, when asked why he believes this or that article, rightly answers by having recourse to the authority of Scripture, not to some private testimony of the Holy Spirit apart from Scripture. Those who do this are deservedly considered heretics, but not those who maintain that the testimony of the Spirit in the heart of each believer cooperates with Scripture, whether written or preached, so that after some reverence for it has been instilled in the mind of man by human motives, it seals in their hearts, in a divine manner, that the matter is so.

39. The adversaries do not dare to deny this either. For even if they posit as a necessary prerequisite for faith that the Church propose and apply to us the

reason for believing (which ought not to be denied, if this is added, that that proposition and application must be made from the Scriptures), they are nevertheless compelled to confess *that the faith by which they receive the authority of the Church, before they believe by infused faith, as proposing the object of faith and the revelation of God himself, can be inferior in certainty to divine faith.* Malderus, in the place cited above. Likewise: *Although it is known by natural light that God is to be believed, yet He is not believed with the certainty and firmness that is required, except through supernatural light. Therefore, there are two things in our revelation by which we are faithful: one corresponds to external speech in human faith, and it is the external speech of God himself, made to us through the Church (why not through Scripture?); the other corresponds to the inner efficacious speech, by which speech or active persuasion, in human faith, occurs through the concurrence of some natural light, by means of which the man who speaks is said to persuade. But in divine faith, of which we speak, this speech and persuasion occurs through supernatural illumination, inwardly in the mind of man, supplying the insufficiency of natural light and elevating the intellect so that it is proportioned to the supernatural act of believing. Because God supplies that light in such a way that, according to Scripture, He is said to teach man inwardly, it is manifest that, in this respect, God speaks to us not only through the Church, but also immediately and inwardly. Therefore, because in this divine revelation, He who speaks outwardly through the Church also penetrates and speaks in the heart, that inner speech of His is, as it were, a completing part, from which, together with that external speech, one complete, as it were, total speech of God is integrated, by which He speaks to each believer.* In this way Catholics are to be understood when they wish faith, even of the common faithful, to be resolved into the testimony of God speaking inwardly, undeservedly rebuked by Michael Medina. These are the words of Malderus, in the place cited above, Section 8.

40. From these things it is gathered: 1. That faith is resolved into the authority of the First Truth, namely God. 2. That all faith, in order to adhere to the First Truth, rests on some revelation of that First Truth. 3. That that revelation becomes known to us through signs which God uses to make His will known to men. 4. That those signs do not produce truly divine faith unless the inner speech of God in the heart of each believer through supernatural light is added.

5. That that inner speech is the completing part of that total speech, which requires both external and internal, without which supernatural faith is not generated in the soul of man. By these things, certainly, he refutes his own calumny, when he attributes to heretics that they have recourse to the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, which he nevertheless acknowledges as necessary for true faith, even of the common faithful. He will perhaps say that his Catholics do not separate that internal testimony, or inner speech, from external speech through the ministry of the Church. But neither do those whom he falsely accuses as heretics imagine any inner speech of God without external instrumental speech. But they say that they have that external speech in Sacred Scripture, which, whether read or heard, is the external speech of God, to which he, in his own followers, joins that inner speech, from which, together with the hearing of the written word, that complete divine speech is made, which is the true resolution of the faith of the saints. This is also what they mean who say that the assent of faith is effectively resolved into God and the infused habit of faith, because God and the infused habit of faith are two principles which effectively concur with the intellect to elicit, as they say, the act of faith, namely in those who have been converted. When, however, a man is converted, even if the habit infused by God does not concur, grace, which they call actual, supplies the place of the habit.

41. Edward Weston, a professor from the English seminary at Douai, in book 3, chapter 26, "On the Threefold Duty of Man," treats this question laboriously and, in the manner of such scholars, intricately. Yet he takes great pleasure in his own discoveries, to the extent that he finds not only fault with the teaching of our writers on this matter but also refuses to rest content with the opinions of his own. For he acknowledges that his modern followers, *in their method of resolving faith, have brought little light to this question through their commentaries*. He specifically criticizes Gregory of Valencia, *who*, in 2a 2ae, q. 1, point 1, *wrongly argued that, since the act of faith must be resolved from the side of the object into the first truth of God revealing, he therefore maintained that this revelation and affirmation, whether the writing of a learned doctor or the words of the Church defining something, is part of the formal object into which the resolution of faith itself occurs. According to Weston, this demonstration* (as he

calls it) *is a condition of the mystery to be believed, not the true objective cause of the assent itself.*

42. He asserts, however, that, considering the threefold act of faith, there exists a threefold way of resolving it concerning any article believed: first, into an effective principle; second, into a formal object; third, into some first act. Following Scotus, he recognizes the effective principle as *a certain internal light by which God inclines and leads us into the truth of the matter itself.* Likewise, the formal object is *the first truth of God itself.* But revelation of that first truth, whether it occurs through the Church, through the Scriptures, through a miracle, through the presence of a witness, or through some other illumination, is not part of the formal reason on the side of the object. And in these two, namely the first truth of God and the internal light of faith, he does not deny that the resolution of the act of believing and of the thing believed consists. Nevertheless, he maintains that there is some truth of the proposer, more known than the truth of the proposed thing, the apprehension of which becomes that first preliminary act leading to faith in that object of the first truth. Into this truth of the proposer, faith is ultimately resolved, not as into a part of the formal object, but as into a condition required for believing it.

43. But they themselves, like the rest, are stuck with water. For first, they are forced to admit that those truths proposed by the proponents, such as miracles, the evidence of the witness, the authority of the Church itself, etc., are not perceived by faith. Otherwise, it would be necessary to determine that even something proposing itself to them exists, and thus an infinite regress would occur. Instead, these truths are perceived by natural light. If this is true, then the resolution of faith, by reason of the proposer, will lead back to some first principle that is not believed by faith, but is perceived either by sense or by any other human reason. Weston felt ensnared here, because from this it seems necessary to go beyond the Church in investigating the reason of the proposer. For since the authority of the Church is also something that must be believed according to him, it too must be proposed by another. Therefore, there will be something more known than the Church, either from faith or from some other kind of knowledge, than that the Church is governed by the Holy Spirit. He responds that he believes the Church, clothed in its signs, presents itself (as he

puts it) to our faith. But when the analysis of faith is discussed, and its ultimate resolution is sought, let those who are of sound mind judge whether one acts prudently who rests in belief, that is, in opinion. Next, he sees that the inconvenience initially posed is not removed: that the entire series of acts of faith rests on human understanding, since it is resolved into those motives that are exposed either to sense or to human reason, and from which reasoning is made, which does not produce faith immediately, but either generates only opinion, or at most some certain but human knowledge. What then does he finally do? It is believable, he says, that the motives that propose the Church are perceived by Catholics not only by natural judgment but also by divine illumination. But why will this not be more believable regarding the motives by which the divinity of Sacred Scripture is proposed to us? Why, regarding what he says about his Church, do we recognize this Queen and bride of Christ from external worship, from golden fringes and a variegated garment, and from the truth of God revealing to us abundantly that the Church is the organ and instrument of the Holy Spirit, even if no authority of Scripture were available to prove this? Why do we not use this with greater right when it comes to Sacred Scripture? Namely, Sacred Scripture, which the Christian world and the agreement of all nations, the confession of Jews and other adversaries of Christianity, testifies to be most well-known, which the truth of prophecies, an incredible and clearly divine conspiracy, and the judgments of God against the profanation of men, Scripture itself, and so many divine miracles, even according to Bellarmine, show to be most true; can and should it be acknowledged as the true word of God, even if no authority of the Church were available to prove or attest this? Especially since he who presumes to discern the golden fringes and variegated garment of the Church without the indication of Scriptures, by the eyes of sense and reason, will rather admire the adornment and world of a harlot than recognize the true ornaments of the bride of Jesus Christ, *who is entirely honored within, clothed in gold fringes, Psalm 45, verse 14.*

44. But it must be especially noted that most Papists have thus far raged against Calvin and the other Orthodox, particularly on this ground: that when the ultimate analysis of faith is discussed, they finally rest in the internal

illumination of the Holy Spirit entering our hearts, so that we might be certain of the truth of Scripture through faith. On this point, they prattle and trifle much about a private and personal spirit, as if we expected some extraordinary revelation, without any external and ordinary presentation of things to be believed through the Scriptures, in the manner of Enthusiasts. Yet even they themselves, though reluctantly, finally admit either that the analysis of faith will end in something human, on which as a foundation the whole series of acts of faith must rest and depend, namely, on signs and marks and the common arguments of the Christian faith, by which the truthfulness of the Church is set before us, or, to avoid saying that, they must admit in each Catholic some divine illumination. But what can that divine illumination be, other than an inspiration proceeding from the Holy Spirit, that light of faith which, in matters revealed and to be believed by faith, is to us what the natural light of understanding is for knowing first principles? For just as all men are endowed with a certain natural light, by which they understand without effort, without arguments, that first principles are true, and no one seeks reasons and arguments when such principles are presented, so also all Christians, illuminated by a certain divine and supernatural light from God, confess the first principles of our faith—even though they are difficult and exceed reason—to be most true. These are the words of Bellarmine on the light of faith, in his first sermon. Serarius also, in his *Prolegomena*, chapter 4, question 4, denies that the secret testimony of the Holy Spirit, or the inner teaching of the Holy Spirit, is rejected by his Catholics. He says: “It is approved, and indeed in such a way that they teach it is necessary not only in this principle of faith, but in all things that are believed by supernatural faith, since they require both a divine illumination in the intellect and a pious movement in the will, and for this purpose they heap up many Scriptures.” There it is also to be noted that he brings forward a saying of Origen, from book 4, chapter 1 of *On First Principles*: “If anyone, with all the judgment and reverence that is due, considers the prophetic sayings, while reading and diligently examining them, it is certain that, being touched in mind and sense by some more divine inspiration, he recognizes that those he reads are not approved by men, but are the words of God, and he will feel from HIMSELF that the books were written not by human art or mortal speech, but by a divine, so to speak, buskin.”

45. Therefore, what Weston says, *that the opinion of Scotus is not related to the error of Calvin, who refers everything to an ultimate, private spirit of his own, because Scotus has the greatest regard for ecclesiastical authority*, is slanderous, and the reason added is irrelevant. For Calvin intended nothing other than what Weston attributes to Scotus in *Distinction 23, Question 1: that God reveals mysteries to us, not by displaying their own truth, but by a certain inner light, by which He inclines and leads us into the very belief of faith. Indeed, the truth of God, which is not visible or perceptible to us, does not immediately move anyone's mind. For this reason, since nothing is found on the part of the object that incites and prompts us to the assent of faith, God Himself supplies the lack of such a thing by infusing into us the light of faith, by which He not only reveals what is to be believed but also directs the mind to the very act of believing. And so, if the resolution of faith is sought, down to that which, holding the place of the object, immediately impels the mind to assent to God, the inquiry will rest in the very light of faith, by which the understanding of a believer is illuminated*. He says that Scotus has regard for ecclesiastical authority. We admit this, and neither Calvin nor we reject it. But we deny that our faith should be resolved into it, even as into an infallible proposer. Scotus denies this along with us, for he concedes only that acquired faith can be conceived from the proposition of the Church. He asserts, however, that *no one believes anyone by acquired faith unless he knows that person can be deceived or deceive, although he believes that person does not wish to deceive; but no one perfectly assents to the words of one whom he knows can be deceived and deceive in what he says, which is the case with any human being, to whom and to no other one assents by acquired faith, on account of that person's veracity*. Therefore, Soto, in *Book 2, On Nature and Grace, Chapter 7*, acknowledged that Scotus recognizes only human authority in the Church. We believe that the authority of the Scriptures, which propose, is divine. But when it first proposes either itself or other things to be believed, it is not yet recognized by us until its authority, outwardly suggested by arguments, is confirmed in our heart by the infused light of the Spirit. This (says Bellarmine, in the place cited above) *is the light of faith, a certain testimony of God, by which it is said to us inwardly in the dwelling of the heart: "It is so, do not hesitate."* Only the Pelagians, despisers of divine grace and most arrogant praisers of their own strength, deny the necessity of this testimony for faith, as the same author most

excellently teaches. But all the faithful have an inner Teacher and Witness, the one of whom John says: "He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony of God in himself" (1 John 5:10).

46. Therefore, the entire controversy concerns the assent of faith, with regard to its directive principle, as they speak; they want this assent to be resolved into the authority of the Church proposing and decreeing what is to be believed, as we have said. We do not deny the direction of the Church, indeed of each minister in the Church, which also in its own way contributes to generating faith. But this is what we deny: that such direction as they posit, namely, infallible direction, apart from Sacred Scripture, is given in the Church; and that it is sufficient for someone to say that he was directed to faith by the authority of the Church, and to stop there. Because we still ask, with regard to the ultimate resolution of the directive principle: "Why do you believe that that Church or that pastor led you by the right way, and did not err while directing you?" To this, one must answer: "Because it made clear to me that it followed Scripture as its guide." If someone does not ascend to this directive resolution of Scripture, but stops at the directive resolution of the Church, Becanus himself admits (*Theological Scholasticism, Part 2, Later Volume, Treatise 1, Chapter 8, Question 8*) that the assent of one who believes on account of the authority of the Church is not an assent of theological faith, but of another, inferior order. This certainly cannot be said of the assent of one who believes on account of the authority of Scripture; for he believes on account of the authority of God speaking in Scripture, and this assent is truly and properly called faith.

47. These points sufficiently demonstrate that the adversaries, while they flee from the testimony of Scripture, throw everything into confusion and attempt to obscure the truth with their futile distinctions. Yet they are often compelled to admit what the matter truly is and to yield, though afterwards they wish to retract their concession. I add this one point: if faith rests on the authority of the Church, then either the Church itself does not believe, or it rests on its own authority, which is most absurd. For authority does not move the one who possesses it, but another. The same can be said of the Pope: either he does not believe in God, or he believes on account of his own authority. If they say that

the Pope believes on account of divine authority, that is, that he believes God immediately, they will have to prove that new revelations are continually made to the Pope by God, which they previously denied. And certainly, if the Pope's faith depends immediately on God, it follows that Scriptures, traditions, decrees of councils, and even discussions and deliberations are useless to him. For if God instills faith in his mind through these things, he does not believe immediately. But if he believes through Scripture as presenting the truth, he has no need of another external authority by which his faith is resolved. Either the faith of the Church and of other believers will not be the same, or if it is the same, then no other authority presenting outside the Scriptures will be necessary for others either, although the ministry of presenting through the Scriptures should never be excluded.

CHAPTER XXI. Certain passages of Scripture are examined, by which the Papists attempt to prove that it is necessary for there to be among men some supreme judge of controversies and of the true meaning of Scripture.

1. So far we have shown sufficiently and more than sufficiently that the Papist religion, which rests entirely on the determination of the Pope, is built on a weak and perishable foundation. The Papists themselves either attack its infallibility, or those who defend it do not consider it so essential to faith that those who hold a contrary opinion should be accused of heresy. Thus the adversaries waver and cut down their own vineyards, and there is no one who, using any prudence in the matter of salvation, would wish to entrust the firmness of his salvation to such a foundation.
2. Yet they seek supports for their most desperate cause in the false application of certain passages of the Old and New Testaments, which must be briefly defended against their quibbles. They say, first, from chapter 18 of Exodus, verse 13, that it is inferred that in the Old Testament there was some supreme and visible judge who alone answered doubts concerning the law, and did not send men to some private spirit. From this they infer that it follows that even now a visible judge and arbiter of all controversies, from whom it is not lawful to appeal, must be acknowledged in the Christian Church. They prove this

because Moses alone answered doubts concerning the law, and did not send men to any revealing spirit.

3. We respond that when our opponents, in establishing and framing the state of the controversy, posit the judgment of private spirit as something asserted by us, as if the controversy rested on whether the private judgment of each individual should be followed in deciding controversies, they are imagining adversaries for themselves to conquer, and they argue against their own inventions, not against our doctrine. The question is whether the Roman Pontiff is the supreme and infallible judge of the interpretation of Scripture and of all controversies of faith, or whether such authority should rather be assigned to the Holy Spirit insofar as He speaks clearly in Sacred Scripture itself. We affirm the latter; our opponents affirm the former, which they do not prove by the argument brought forward. Because from what happened among the people of Israel, and that not always but under an extraordinary economy, the consequence does not hold for what ought always and everywhere to be done in the Christian Church. Let them give us someone instructed with such a divine calling as Moses had, confirmed by so many divine seals; then we will not only receive the tablets of the law from him, but we will also expect the divine interpretation of arising difficulties and doubts. But there was only one Moses among the people, whose office, such as it was in him, did not pass in every respect to a successor. For Moses was a prophet, extraordinarily called, who also exercised the priesthood before his anointed brother Aaron; but from this office, after it was transferred to his brother by God's ordinance, he refrained. Therefore, the consequence of Bellarmine and others does not hold, who, from the fact that Moses exercised the priesthood and performed all its duties together with judgments among the people of God, infer that there must be in the Christian Church one judge of all controversies who holds the highest priesthood. For besides the fact that there is no highest priesthood in the Christian Church that is attributed to a mere man, since it belongs to Christ alone, we deny that Moses was the highest priest. For what he did to establish the Israelite Church at the beginning, he did not do as a pontiff, for example, when he inaugurated Aaron, but as an extraordinary minister and prophet of God. As Elijah, who was not from the tribe of priests, being extraordinarily

called by God, offered a sacrifice, which God declared He accepted with a clear testimony, 1 Kings 18. And certainly Hebrews 5:4 establishes a comparison and distinction between two high priests, Christ and Aaron, not Christ and Moses. Whatever the case, our opponents cannot deny that Aaron was the high priest, who nevertheless was not an infallible judge in controversies of faith and morals. For in the controversy stirred up among the people, whether he should make gods to go before them, being overcome by the people's importunity, he made a calf and proclaimed a feast to it.

4. Furthermore, it is certain that Moses, through his extraordinary calling, was not only employed in establishing religion and ordering divine worship, and in judgments concerning matters pertaining to the moral and ceremonial law, which relate to worship and moral teaching; but he also established political laws, and was initially the sole judge among the people in civil matters. Although, following the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, as is clear from Exodus 18, verse 18, who wisely and prudently set before his eyes that this task was beyond his strength, he consented to the selection of other judges; nevertheless, there is no doubt that he presided over all, and that appeal could be made to him in more serious matters. If, therefore, any consequence is drawn from the fact that Moses was made judge of the people, not only must some supreme judge in the Church be acknowledged, but also in political matters pertaining to this life. But this is not only impossible, but if anyone were to insist on it, he would have all kings and supreme magistrates of republics as his adversaries. Reason itself also dictates that no man is sufficient for this. Finally, if it were granted that such a judgment was ordinary for one man in the Jewish people, the same could not be inferred concerning the necessity of such a single judge in the whole world. For while the people were in the camp, access to him who was the prince in the camp was not difficult; and after the people were brought into one province, not very extensive, the judges of the people, whether ordinary or extraordinary, could choose a place where they could be consulted from the various dwellings of the Israelites; especially the place which God had chosen for himself, where every male was required to appear three times a year. Exodus 23, verse 17, and 34, verse 23. Since this reason is neither the same, nor can it be, in the Christian Church, an

argument is badly drawn from the custom of the people of Israel to the constitution of the Christian Church. But, except for those judges who were given to the people extraordinarily, with extraordinary direction of the Spirit, especially Moses, who had no equal, it is false that in that people there were judges, whether in ecclesiastical matters and those pertaining to religion, or in others, whose judgment was divine, so that they could not err in judging; or whose power of judging was not limited and bound by divine laws.

5. This will be evident from that passage which the adversaries propose secondly, from Deuteronomy 17, verse 8 and following: "If you perceive a matter too hard and ambiguous for you, between cause and cause, leprosy and leprosy," etc. From this passage they thus infer: If the Israelites were commanded in doubtful questions to come to the high priest, and not to their own spirit, it follows that the same should now be done. Or if God once established among his people one supreme judge of controversies among the priests, and did not send the people to Scripture, such a judge must also be acknowledged in the Christian Church, whose judgment is infallible. But the former is true, from the testimony of the law itself; therefore the latter must also be conceded. Therefore, appeal is not to be made to Scripture, but to the Church, that is, according to the interpretation of the Jesuits, to the Roman Pontiff. I answer: This argument labors under many defects. First, because, as has already been said, the consequence does not hold, from what could be done or was done of old in the people of Israel, to what ought to be instituted in the Christian religion, not even analogically. Otherwise, many absurdities would follow; especially since at that time many things, both in persons and in things, prefigured Christ who was to come, of which, apart from Christ, there is no analogy. Certainly, the Papists would not now want priests to marry, and only the children of priests to be admitted to the priesthood, which was done then. Nor would they want there to be only one supreme judge of civil and capital matters in the whole world; for if there were, and it were permitted to appeal from inferior judges to such a judge, the authority of magistrates would be completely useless, and all kingdoms would be overthrown. Certainly, all those matters dealt with in the words of the law, which consist in certain individual things, ought to have a judge accessible and ready for the litigants;

and it would now be a wretched state of affairs if, for all those between whom some dispute can arise, in a case of blood, leprosy, and the like, it were necessary to flock to Rome from all parts of the earth. Moreover, Moses does not speak of one particular priest, but of the priests of the Levitical line in the plural; he indeed adds, "the judge who shall be in those days," but the singular noun can be understood of the assembly of judges, because he adds, "and you shall inquire of them." But what is most important in this matter is concealed by the adversaries: that judge, or those judges, even in those matters of which it is spoken, did not have authority attributed to them by God, nor were the faithful bound to their decisions, except insofar as they taught according to the law of God.

7. Therefore, even if all judgments of any cases whatsoever had been entrusted to the priest at that time without any exception, his decision was limited and subject to the condition of conformity with the law approved by God.

According to the mouth of the law, as the original text there says. Cajetan rightly discusses the conditions of a legitimate judgment. *The third condition*, he says, *is on the part of divine law, namely that it be conformable to their teaching of divine law, whence it is also said in Hebrew, upon the mouth of the law, what they will teach you, and according to the judgment which they will say to you, you shall do; for unless what the priests and the judge teach and judge in ambiguous matters agrees with the mouth of divine law, it is not supported by divine authority.* The Glossa Ordinaria notes there, *It is not said to you that you should obey, unless they teach according to the law.* And Nicholas of Lyra says, *Here the Hebrew gloss says, if he tells you that right is left, or left is right, such a judgment is to be held; this is clearly false, because the judgment of no man, of whatever authority, is to be held if it clearly contains falsehood or error, and this is clear from what is set forth in the text, they will judge for you the truth of judgment; afterwards it is added, and they will teach you according to his law. From which it is clear that if they speak falsely or clearly depart from the law of God, they are not to be heard.* Thus he refuted the interpretation of Rabbi Solomon Jarchi.

Cardinal Bellarmine objects that there is no condition here, but a promise and an assertion, as if God here affirmed and promised that those legal judges would never deviate from the truth in their judgments. But this, accepted

without condition, events prove to be false. For if this were true, it would be necessary that the judges of that people never erred in any judgment.

Therefore, the prophets complained so often about the priests and judges without cause. Nor should Isaiah be heard, chapter 28, verse 7, saying, *The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they have gone astray through strong drink, they have erred in vision, they have stumbled in judgment.* But the pontifical judges could neither have been ignorant nor have erred. Therefore, Jeremiah erred, chapter 2, verse 27, saying, *As the thief is ashamed when he is found out, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets, saying to a tree, You are my father; and to a stone, You have brought me forth: for they have turned their back to me, and not their face.*

8. Did God then wish for such judges and priests to be heard? Or even when the priests and prophets judged Jeremiah thus: “A judgment of death is for this man”? (Jeremiah 26:11). If the promise was absolute, and they could not deviate from the law in judgment, what of that passage in Ezekiel, chapter 22, verse 26: “Her priests have despised my law, and have polluted my sanctuaries; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shown difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.” Indeed, they ought to have judged according to the law, but that they could not have done otherwise, or even that they did not actually do otherwise, is utterly false, as is clear from the passages cited. Paul also denies this when he addresses the high priest in Acts 23:3: “You sit judging me according to the law, and yet, transgressing the law, you command me to be struck?” Here he clearly shows that one who sits to judge according to the law can still transgress it. Moreover, he indicates the condition of a legitimate judgment, namely, that it be made according to the law. From this it follows that the sentence of such judges is not absolute and independent, but conditional. But if someone should object that this can be conceded concerning those who, after the passion of Christ, rather occupied than possessed the high priesthood, it can be replied that Paul did not use such an exception when he was rebuked for having reviled the high priest. For he acknowledged that this ought not to be done according to the law: “You shall

not curse the ruler of your people" (Exodus 22:28). Therefore, he uses the excuse that he did not know that it was the high priest, namely, the one who had commanded him to be struck. I know that many have thought that the Apostle said this ironically, because, having lived among the Pharisees as a Pharisee himself, although the person might have been unknown to him, he could not have failed to judge from the assembly who among the priests was the high priest, especially since he had previously said that the one of whom he spoke sat to judge. But it seems more probable to me that Paul indeed heard a voice uttered by one of those who sat in judgment (for it is established from the end of chapter 22 that the priests and the whole council had come), but did not know from which of them the voice had proceeded. He did not think it had come from the high priest, both because of his authority, from which such a hasty expression of offense was unworthy, and because of his at least feigned sanctity, from which such an unjust voice did not seem likely to burst forth. In addition, that council had not been convened in the usual place, where the order of those judging or deliberating would have been established according to each one's dignity and merits, but near the fortress, where it had been summoned by the tribune and where Paul was. This is indicated by the preceding chapter: "He commanded the priests to assemble," for which the Greek is "ἐλθεῖν," that is, "to come." Therefore, Paul heard a voice in the crowd, and to the one from whom it was uttered, he announced that punishment from the Lord was ready. But those who had come with the high priest were all sitting in judgment.

9. Perhaps someone will say that this interpretation of the passage, which we embrace as more probable, does not suit our purpose, because from it it is evident that Paul did not think his rebuke was directed at the high priest, but at some other one from the assembly of priests. And this is indeed the case. Nevertheless, although Paul shows that he would not have addressed him with such harsh words if he had known his dignity, as far as the matter itself is concerned, he does not retract what he had said: that the one from whom the command to strike Paul had proceeded had transgressed the law while he sat in judgment. This fault is not diminished by the condition of the person, but rather increased. Nor is there any reason for anyone to say that that high

priesthood was not legitimate after Christ had abolished the Aaronic priesthood by his death. For, although Christ had put an end to the legal ceremonies, they had not yet been completely abrogated in fact, because the kingdom of Christ had not yet been manifested. Therefore, the Apostles did not decline that judgment, because they wished to wait until God should abolish it.

10. But what will they say about Caiaphas, who judged Christ to be a deceiver and his doctrine blasphemous? Will they deny that the high priest judged against the law and erred in his judgment? Nevertheless, the Levitical priesthood continued at that time, since the death of the testator, by which it was to be changed, had not yet occurred. Among the Papists there were men like Peter Soto in his *Prolegomena* and Cardinal Hosius, who were not ashamed to deny that the council which condemned Christ had erred; indeed, they asserted that at that time the Levitical priesthood was not lacking the prophetic spirit, the Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth. Hosius, in book 2 against Brentius, says: "Because from the time when our first parent tasted of the forbidden tree, Christ was made guilty of death." Is that so? Was he also made guilty of blasphemy for calling himself the Son of God? Harding, against the Apology of the Anglican Church, says: "The acts of that council were wicked, but the sentence by which they judged Christ worthy of death was just and true," chapter 6, division 3, part 6. But they said that he deserved death because he had spoken blasphemy. Could such a sentence therefore be true? For thus in Mark, chapter 14, verse 61: After the High Priest had asked Christ whether he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, and he had answered, "I am," and added, "You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power," etc., the High Priest, tearing his garments, said, "What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" And they all condemned him, judging him worthy of death. Behold the just sentence, which men of leaden heart and iron mouth make the Holy Spirit the author of. Bellarmine did not wish to rave in this way; in book 2, *On the Authority of Councils*, chapter 8, he acknowledges that although certain words of Caiaphas could be given a good meaning, not all could. For when he said of Christ, "He has blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses?" certainly then he did not prophesy but blasphemed. Likewise, he admits that Caiaphas, along

with the entire council, erred most perniciously in faith when he judged that Jesus had blasphemed for calling himself the Son of God. He therefore responds that the high priests and councils of the Jews could not err before Christ came, but could err in his presence. This response is utterly vain, because there is no reason why they could err in Christ's presence but never before. For then they ought to have erred less, and it is not true what he adds elsewhere, that their error did little harm while Christ was teaching. On the contrary, it did great harm, for they turned the people away from Christ as from a deceiver, and in a controversy of the greatest importance, the judgment of the Church of Israel was lacking, which was necessary if, under the Old Testament, the decision of disputes about faith could not be sought elsewhere than from some visible judge deciding with authority, and not from Scripture. For, as Bellarmine himself admits, "That question, even if it were factual, nevertheless involved a most serious question of faith, namely, whether Jesus was the true Messiah and the Son of God, and therefore true God." If God had established such a judge among his people as the Papists imagine from Deuteronomy 17, such a judge would never have been needed in any case, if he was not needed in this one, where error brought about the loss of all salvation. Nor can Bellarmine show that any exception regarding the time of the Messiah's coming was given to that people. Therefore, if God willed, under penalty of death, that the people obey the high priest in all things without exception and depend on him in every controversy, the Jews who demanded Christ's crucifixion could not be blamed, since the high priest had judged him worthy of death, and they were bound to obey him in all things. If the adversaries consider this absurd, they must necessarily admit with us the limitation and dependence of all judgments on the law of God, under which the entire word of God is comprehended, to which even Christ the Lord appealed. Therefore, to sum up, we say that only God judges absolutely and with public authority in the Scriptures. The priest of old, and the pastor or bishop in this time, judged or judges with delegated, limited, and Scripture-subjected authority, as God's messenger and legate. Every faithful person, in matters of faith, acquiesces in his conscience, by the assent of his faith, to divine authority, and also modestly submits himself to his pastors when they pronounce from the word of God. This order God established in the Old Church, which we also acknowledge in the true Christian Church, and we

submit ourselves to it, obeying our leaders and yielding to them, for they keep watch over our souls as those who must give an account. Hebrews 13, verse 17. But this order instituted by God does not at all favor the arrogant fullness of power and the prerogative of supreme and entirely divine judgment, which the Papists attribute, unlimited and absolute, to the man of sin.

11. From Malachi, chapter 2, verses 7 and 8. They object with these words: "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law from his mouth, because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts." And from Haggai 2, verse 14: "Thus says the Lord God of hosts: Ask the priests concerning the law." From these passages, Bellarmine, in his work *On the Word of God*, book 3, chapter 4, infers that it is not for private individuals to judge the meaning of the Lord's law, but for the priest, who, since he is an angel, that is, a messenger of God, it belongs to him by office to explain the meaning. Response: We also confess that it belonged to the priest by office to explain the meaning of the law. And when the priest did this, the people ought to have submitted to this meaning. But Bellarmine should have proven that this judgment was unlimited and absolute, and that the priests always fulfilled this office well, and that it could not have been done otherwise by them. Not even Bellarmine himself would say this; otherwise, he would be refuted by his own witnesses. For Malachi, whom he cites here, does not show that this was always done, but rather what was once done by true priests, what ought always to be done, and what was not being done at that time. This is clear from the following adversative clause in verse 8: "But you have departed from the way, and have caused many to stumble in the law; you have made void the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts." The Jesuit Sanctius paraphrases this passage as follows: "In his mouth the treasure of divine law and wisdom OUGHT to be preserved, from whom others in all doubtful matters should seek oracles. For since he is a legate of God to men and speaks in His name, he ought to bring nothing other than God's commands and words. But you, contrary to what the priestly name required and what the example of your ancestors urged, neither kept the law, and you caused others not to keep it, either by your example or by YOUR TEACHING." Ribera, from the same order, in his commentary on Malachi, chapter 2, verse 7, number 13, says: "It is not to be read in the present tense, 'they keep,' but 'they shall keep,' as is

evident from the Hebrew and the Septuagint, and from the Chaldean and Jerome, from the more corrected copies. And it is said 'they shall keep,' that is, they ought to keep." To these two, I add another Spanish monk, Messana: "The lips of the priest," he says, "ought to keep knowledge, etc." These are the parts of the priesthood, this is the covenant. "But you have departed from the sanctity of morals and the knowledge of the law, and by the depravity of your life and the ignorance of the law, you have been an occasion of ruin to many. And, to express myself in a single word, you have made void the covenant of the priesthood." Therefore, this passage cannot favor those who establish some infallible human judgment to which one must necessarily adhere. From the sayings of the Prophets, only this follows: that it was the duty of the priests to answer those who asked concerning the law. And then, the priest is called the angel of the Lord, as Cyril well notes on this passage, when he delivers and reports the oracles of God to men, adding or subtracting nothing, but just as he received from God. For angels report to men only what they have received from God. Indeed, faithful messengers also do this, so that they not only say the same thing they received, but even the same words. Such messengers we require, who announce the very words of the supreme judge, not those who, on their own authority, pronounce anything as if from a tripod.

12. Bellarmine cites a passage from Solomon's Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, verse 11: *"The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed, which are given by the counsel of teachers from one shepherd. Of these, my son, be further warned."* In this passage, Bellarmine says, Solomon teaches that one should not inquire further but should fully acquiesce when a judgment has been given by the supreme shepherd, especially when accompanied by the counsel of the wise. If these things are said about the priest of the Old Testament, how much more can they be said about the priest of the New Testament, who received far greater promises from God? So says Bellarmine. In this, he assumes two false things: first, that that shepherd under the Old Testament was the high priest; second, that the counsel of teachers was the counsel of those who were associated with the high priest. The Papists boast that in the interpretation of the Scriptures they follow the ancient interpreters and the consensus of the Fathers. Here, if they were forced to point out even one of the ancients who

either followed such an interpretation or even hinted at it, they would not be able to utter a word. What about the fact that the Jesuits themselves, who have explained the words of the Wise Man, understood “one shepherd” to mean God? For example, Emanuel Sa says, “one shepherd, namely God.” For the Wise Man had learned from his Father that God is the shepherd of his people (Psalm 23, verses 1 and 2), the shepherd of Israel, the leader of the flock, who sits upon the cherubim (Psalm 80, verse 2). Lorinus, a Jesuit, following Vatablus, interprets “by the counsel of teachers” or, as he translates from the Hebrew, “the authors of collections given by one shepherd,” as either those who preserve many things and can be called authors of collected works, or those who gather a multitude to the one worship of God, such as Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and the prophets, who were planted and firmly fixed in truth and holiness, in doctrine and morals. And whatever they handed down by word or writing, it proceeded from one shepherd and was referred to the one shepherd, God. There is one teacher, Christ (Matthew 23, verse 10), and God, who teaches man knowledge (Psalm 94, verse 10). Prophecy was never brought by human will, but holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 2, verse 21). All wisdom is from the Lord God (Ecclesiasticus 1, verse 11), who gives it to all (James 1, verse 5). So says Lorinus, who also understands by “the congregations and counsel of teachers” the unanimous consent in both Testaments, as if all speak with one mouth. “The teachers,” he says, “agree in one sense, being taught accordingly by one common teacher, God.” The same author notes that the Chaldean Paraphrast understands “one shepherd” to mean Moses, who alone fed the people of Israel in the desert. “But we,” he says, “following the Fathers, have explained it much better and with greater right concerning God and Christ. Nor can Moses, although he was the shepherd of so great a people, be called the author of all the words that so many wise men after him handed down, and certainly not of those that preceded him.” Because of this same one shepherd, God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit, all sacred Scripture, as Jerome says, is called one book.

13. Since, therefore, our adversaries admit that that one shepherd is God, from whom all the words of the wise, including all the prophets and apostles, flow, with what conscience do they dare to apply to their own Pontiff what is said

here about one shepherd, whether this is done directly or indirectly? Arias Montanus expressed the sense of the verses in this way:

*The words and voices of the wise are like goads, they are like fixed nails;
they are things which, collected through all books like bees,
are joined together, so that all things are from one shepherd,
who rules men, heaven, and earth.*

Was he, therefore, the high priest under the Old Testament, or the Roman Pontiff at this time? Dionysius the Carthusian explains this passage paraphrastically as follows: The words of the wise men who published the books of Sacred Scripture, and of others who are truly wise, are like goads, because they prick and rouse the sluggish and negligent, and like nails driven deep, that is, they are firm and infallibly true. Through the counsel of teachers, they were given by the one Shepherd, that is, by God, the overseer of all, the supreme Shepherd of His faithful, and were given through Moses and the Prophets, who advised and taught that these things be observed. As if to say: They were not given by me alone and principally. Then, in the New Testament, they were given through the Apostles and Evangelists by Christ, who is the Prince of Shepherds, and who said, "Now your teacher is Christ." "Beyond these, my son, do not seek," that is, nothing that is not in some way contained in the Scriptures. So says he. From these words, the opposite of what Bellarmine intended is clearly deduced. Namely, that one must depend on the one Shepherd, God, who is the author of the doctrine of the wise, which we have in Holy Scripture, beyond which, in matters pertaining to the highest good, that is, to eternal salvation (for the author was speaking about that good), nothing is to be sought. For this is the true and genuine meaning of the entire passage; on the occasion of what the Wise Man had said in verse 14, that he had sought to find words of desire and Scripture that would be uprightness and words of truth, that is, his purpose was to expound that to which, as the most desirable of all things, all our prayers and efforts should rightly be directed, namely, the true and certain opinion about attaining the highest good, which he has written down in this book. He commends the words of the wise men, by whom such things were collected, whose warnings are like goads, by which the lazy are roused, and even those running spontaneously are spurred to quicken their

pace, and, as if with applied nails, are fixed more deeply and adhere more tenaciously. These words were collected in many ways by various teachers, but dictated by one and the same Shepherd of Israel, namely God. From these, it will be surprising if Bellarmine, even with the use of instruments of torture, could extort his conclusion in favor of the infallible judgment of the Roman Pontiff.

14. He brings forward the fifth constitution of the excellent King Jehoshaphat, from chapter 19, verse 8 and following of the second book of Chronicles, in which it is narrated that he appointed in Jerusalem Levites and priests, and heads of families from Israel, to judge the judgment and cause of the Lord for its inhabitants. And that he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall do," etc. "Every cause that comes to you from your brothers who live in their cities, between one family and another, wherever there is a question about the law, about the commandment, about the ceremonies, about the justifications: show them so that they do not sin against the Lord," etc. "And Amariah the priest, your pontiff, will preside in matters pertaining to God," etc. "You see," says Bellarmine, "how clearly the king distinguishes the office of the Pontiff from the office of the king, and attributes to the Pontiff alone the judgment of doubtful points of the law." We certainly see that those offices are distinguished, yet in such a way that the king prescribes to the Pontiff and the priests what they must do, which Bellarmine would not want to be done to Pontiffs and Bishops by kings. We see, secondly, that it is false what Bellarmine sees, that the judgment of doubtful points of the law is attributed to the Pontiff alone; for it is also attributed to the Levites, priests, and heads of families in Israel, in whose assembly the Pontiff presided, but he did not judge alone, nor did the priests and Levites alone, because the heads of families were joined to them, so that even in cases concerning the ceremonial law, the people would have judges from their own order. The king, with the princes of the people and the seventy elders of the people, and the Pontiff with the princes of the priests and the scribes, that is, the teachers of the law, entered into this council, as Sigonius says in his work on the Hebrew Republic, book 6, chapter 7, as can be clearly seen from the Gospels, where the judgment of Christ is discussed. I call the princes of the people the twelve princes of the tribes, who sat with the king; the

elders, however, those whom I have called the seventy senators of the people. Therefore, Joseph of Arimathea, a senator or noble decurion, was also a participant in that council. For it is written that he did not give his consent to the condemnation of Christ along with the others.

15. Bellarmine, who from the analogy of the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews urges the necessity of some supreme judge on earth in controversies of faith, would not wish such a council to be established in which heads of families would also participate in ecclesiastical judgments and give their opinion. But besides this, Bellarmine would have had to prove from the constitution of Jehoshaphat that those judges and Amariah the high priest could never have erred in judging, and that their power was not limited, which is the main point of the whole controversy. If Jehoshaphat had believed this, there would have been no need for that admonition which he added: "Show them, that they may not sin against the Lord, and that the wrath of God may not come upon you and upon your brothers; thus acting, you will not sin." He thought that they could have acted otherwise and sinned in judging, for that was the matter in question. This is what the adversaries deny concerning their own Pope in matters of faith. Otherwise, even if we have already shown that the condition of the Church of Israel was different, being confined within the borders of one kingdom, of one people dwelling together in one region, bound by families, we nevertheless do not object that ecclesiastical judges be established everywhere among peoples professing the Christian religion, who preside over ecclesiastical affairs and controversies in such a way that they indicate and decide from Scripture what may safely be done or believed, and to whom also those who encounter any doubt may be referred. But we deny that from this can be deduced the absolute power of one man in deciding all controversies, so that he is not bound to give any account of his judgment, by which they might persuade and show that it is not human, but the judgment of God. Neither Jehoshaphat nor any of the earlier kings granted this to the Aaronic high priest. Becanus himself, a Jesuit theologian, in his *Scholastic Theology*, part 2, later volume, treatise 1, chapter 7, admits that Moses, before the law was written, settled many controversies by the living voice of God and by oracle; "But after the entry into the promised land, the high priest did not

settle controversies except from the written law.” Hence it is clear that the privilege of Moses did not pass to the high priests, who were bound by the law in their judgments. He insists: “Amariah, your high priest, will preside in those things which pertain to God.” But what is it to preside in controversies except to act as judge? Rightly. But this is not to act as a supreme judge, who alone judges, and on whose infallibility all depend. Rather, he presides in the assembly who collects the votes, and is sometimes even compelled to pronounce against his own opinion; for although compared to each individual assessor he is greater, yet compared to all he is lesser.

16. The example that he brings forward, to prove that controversies of faith pertained to the judgment of the high priest, works very much against the Papists. Among the controversies of faith (he says) there was one principal one concerning the Messiah. But this very controversy, when it was doubted in the time of Herod whether the Messiah had already been born, was referred to the council of priests, over which the high priest presided, as is evident from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 2, verse 3: “But King Herod, hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests (in Greek, the rulers of the priests) and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.” And they said to him: “In Bethlehem of Judea.” For thus it is written by the prophet. Here, first, it is to be noted that what Becanus says is false: that the controversy was raised “whether Christ had been born?” but rather “where Christ was to be born?” For although the priests answered the second question correctly, they neither then answered the first question, nor afterwards could they or would they answer and judge whether Christ had been born; indeed, they judged the contrary, in that they never wished to acknowledge him as the Messiah, in which matter they were neither to be heard nor followed. But in that they answered that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, they did not judge by authority or from some special inspiration, but, as Becanus admits, “The priests, to satisfy their duty, resolved this doubt from Scripture, as from the norm and rule to which they conformed themselves.” Rightly, and this is what we want: that the pastors of the churches should then do from their duty when they decide questions from Scripture and conform themselves to it. But they act against their duty when, neglecting this

norm, they judge from their own sense, which afterwards happened to those priests, as has been said. Let the papal bishops, therefore, resolve doubts from Scripture as a rule, and conform themselves to it; then we will agree among ourselves concerning controversies of faith, and we will acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the one judge, yet so that those who pronounce judgment according to Him speaking in Scripture would not be deprived of their due praise.

17. The same reasoning applies to that saying which Bellarmine cites as the third testimony from the New Testament in chapter 5 of book 3, *On the Word of God*. He uses it to argue from the lesser to the greater, based on the privilege of the Scribes and Pharisees who sat on the seat of Moses, to confirm the privilege of the new Pharisees, who are said to sit on the seat of Peter. Therefore, Christ says in Matthew 23, verses 2 and 3: *The Scribes and Pharisees have sat on the seat of Moses; whatever they tell you, observe and do, but do not act according to their works*. And for this purpose, Bellarmine cites what Augustine writes in Letter 165. When speaking about the order of the Roman bishops, Augustine says: *Even if some traitor had crept in during those times, it would not prejudice the Church or innocent Christians, for whom the Lord, providing, said: Do what they say, but do not do what they do*. However, Augustine's statement has no bearing on our controversy; it only shows that those whose life is evil, if they teach correctly, are to be heard, and that true doctrine should not be rejected because of their wicked morals. On this point, we also agree. Yet it can scarcely happen that someone with impure morals makes great progress in understanding Scripture, since even the adversaries themselves acknowledge that *the first and principal parts of holiness are required for a man to perceive the hidden wisdom of God*. This is something that no one even moderately versed in these same writings is ignorant of, as Acosta admits in *On Christ Revealed*, book 2, chapter 5. Later, in chapter 6, he asserts and proves that *the study of Sacred Scripture requires tranquility of mind and piety, just as the method of knowing necessary for the human sciences is usually considered; for what is more fitting than that holy things be for the holy?* Nevertheless, we acknowledge that if someone presents pure doctrine but has impure morals, the wickedness of his life should not prejudice the purity and truth of the doctrine, and that such people are to be heard but not imitated. This is what the Lord intended when, regarding the

Pharisees, He distinguished what they said while sitting on the seat of Moses from their deeds, which were to be avoided. But the question is: what does it mean to sit on the seat of Moses? For if the Papists understand it as some seat, or even an order, whose prerogative is such that whoever sits in it never falls, or whoever is established in such an order never errs, they are gravely mistaken. The Lord Himself refutes their error, for He taught that the leaven of the Pharisees, not only of their morals but also of their doctrine, should be avoided, and He commanded the people to beware of them. Matthew 16, verse 6. The Lord Himself refutes the false interpretations of the law that the Pharisees and Scribes dictated, in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the Gospel according to Matthew. Therefore, the Pharisees were said to sit on the seat of Moses when they read the law in the synagogues and interpreted it according to the doctrine of Moses; otherwise, they sat on the seat of mockers.

18. Therefore, it does not follow that those who sometimes sit in the chair of Moses, that is, who set forth the doctrine of Moses, always do this and never add anything of their own contrary to the truth. Therefore, to sit in the chair of Moses is to teach from Scripture what is to be believed and done. Those who teach in this way, insofar as they teach thus, are to be heard. Isidore of Pelusium interpreted this excellently in Book 4, Epistle 18. He says, "He mentions the chair of Moses, the lawgiver, for then they speak not their own opinions but those of the Scriptures." Theophylact, commenting on Matthew 23, says, "The Lord speaks of those who sit in the chair of Moses, that is, those who teach the things contained in the law." Even the most learned among the Papists agree with us on this matter. Ben Arias, on Matthew chapter 23, verse 2, says, "Whatever they prescribe according to the prescription of the law, that is, from the chair of Moses, Jesus says is to be received and done." Didacus Stella, also approved by the censors, in his commentary on Luke, Volume 2, chapter 12, page 72, says, "Christ spoke openly of false doctrine under the name of leaven. But did not Christ say elsewhere, 'The scribes and Pharisees sit on the chair of Moses; whatever they tell you, do'? When they spoke good things, that is, those things which Moses had foretold and taught, they were to be heard." The Jesuit Maldonatus also thinks no differently, in his commentary on Matthew chapter 23. When he commands to keep and do those things which the scribes and

Pharisees say while they sit in the chair of Moses, he speaks not of their own doctrine but of the doctrine of the law and of Moses. For it is as if he said, "All things that the law and Moses have told you, when the scribes and Pharisees recite them." Augustine, indeed, in Book 4 of *On Christian Doctrine*, chapter 27, says that the chair, being not theirs but Moses', compelled them to speak good things, even when they did not do good, and that their own chair does not permit them to teach what is foreign. This is to be understood not as if the place or office changed their minds when they taught the people, but because, when reading the text of Moses, which was known to all, they would not have dared at that time to read anything other than what was contained in the codex of the law. Otherwise, as Barradius also rightly notes in *Harmony*, Volume 4, Book 8, chapter 24, "Just as the pulpit does not compel preachers today to speak the truth, so too the chair did not compel the Pharisees and scribes. Yet the pulpit or chair compels one to speak the truth in a certain way, namely, because that place demands the truth." We therefore respond that the Lord's words are to be explained thus: "All things whatsoever they tell you, keep and do; that is, all things that are not contrary to the law of God and His commandments." So also are those words of Paul to the Colossians, chapter 3, to be understood: "Children, obey your parents in all things," and those words: "Servants, obey your masters according to the flesh in all things." Does the Apostle wish children and servants to obey in all things, even those which are not in agreement with the commandments of God? By no means. He requires obedience in all things that it is lawful to do. So also Christ in this passage. Therefore, the leaven of the Pharisees, that is, their corrupt doctrine, was to be avoided, while sound doctrine was to be carried out in works. These are his words, which so support our view that he seems to have undertaken the defense of our cause against Bellarmine and others who misuse this passage. Also, Emanuel Sa, in his notes, says, "All things, that is, those in agreement with the law of God."

19. Therefore, Bellarmine commits a fallacy in the minor premise of his argument, confusing what is said in a certain respect with what is said absolutely. For the scribes and Pharisees were not to be heard absolutely, but with limitation, when they did not teach the doctrines and commandments of

men, Matthew 15, verse 9. Otherwise, one was to beware of their leaven, Matthew 16, verse 6, which the Lord explained in verse 16 as the doctrine of the Pharisees. From this passage, compared with others, we note that three things were to be considered in the Pharisees: two pertaining to doctrine, and one pertaining to life and conduct. First, they read the law of Moses; then they were to be heard. Second, they mixed in the leaven of their own interpretations, by which the true doctrine was corrupted; then they were to be avoided. Third, they led an impure life veiled by hypocrisy; then they were to be shunned. For all these things, the faithful needed the spirit of discernment, lest they cling to those who should be avoided and shunned. But this is what we desire, from which the Papists flee as much as they can. For they do not want hearers to beware of those who have usurped the office of teaching among the people, and they attribute to them, contrary to the word of God, contrary to experience and outcome, infallibility in teaching, as if they were placed beyond all risk of error.

20. They cite from chapter 18 of the Gospel according to Matthew: *"If he will not hear the Church, let him be to you as a heathen and a publican."* Bellarmine observes that here the Lord is indeed speaking of injuries which one person suffers from another, but that this must be understood by a greater argument also of injuries which are done to the whole Church and to God, such as heresy. For He who commands that an adulterer be brought to the judgment of the Church, commands much more that a heretic be brought. However, it cannot happen that he be brought before the congregation of all the faithful; therefore, by the name "Church" must be understood the prelate, as Chrysostom explains, or (as others prefer) the assembly of prelates. For just as a man does not speak or hear except through the head, and yet the whole man is said to speak and hear, so the Church speaks and hears through her prelates. Therefore, if he who does not hear the Church, that is, the pastors of the Church, ought to be as a heathen and a publican, it follows that the ultimate judgment belongs to the pastors. Thus Bellarmine, after long digressions.

21. I reply: That passage greatly opposes the doctrine of the Papists, who maintain that Peter, and in Peter all popes, were established as the supreme judges of all controversies. For Peter afterward asked the Lord, "Lord, how often

shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" By these words he showed that he understood what Christ had previously said about the procedure against a brother sinning against us as spoken to him as to the rest; consequently, he acknowledged that that judgment of the Church concerning a delinquent brother was instituted for him no less than for others. But he is not a supreme judge who, when a brother who has sinned refuses to make satisfaction privately, ought to bring him to the Church to hear its judgment. Since, therefore, Peter was such a one, those who act as his successors ought not to arrogate to themselves any privilege above Peter. It follows that the Pope is also subject to that law: either that he bring to the Church one who sins and will not yield to admonitions, or that he himself, if he sins against his brothers and does not yield to private admonitions, be confronted before the Church, and if he does not hear it, be considered a heathen and a publican. Hence it follows that the Pope is not the supreme judge, not even in lesser causes, much less in greater ones and those which pertain to the whole Church.

22. But to reply directly: Bellarmine cannot deny that in that passage the subject is not the doctrine of faith, but the establishment of ecclesiastical discipline in ecclesiastical censures and the correction of sins. The context of the passage shows this; and because the adversary also admits this, no other proof is needed. But from this it is inferred that the saying of Christ is to be understood of any particular Church, indeed of the rulers of any particular Church, because such persons ought to be heard in moral censures, and can also excommunicate the obstinate and exclude them from the Christian assembly. But the adversaries cannot deny that particular Churches and rulers of Churches can err; therefore, this passage does not deal with any supreme, ultimate, and infallible judgment. If, however, from this saying some privilege of not erring could be deduced, it would follow that bishops cannot err in those censures. But the Papists themselves have not yet dared to attribute this even to the Roman Pontiff and to General Councils. For they concede that Councils and the Pope can err in particular controversies of fact, as we have seen above. From this it is clear that the argument drawn from this passage is irrelevant for proving such a supreme, divine, and infallible judgment in all controversies. Nor did Pope Innocent III dare to claim this for the Church. In the Decretals,

Book 5, Title 39, Chapter 37, “*A nobis*,” concerning the sentence of excommunication, he says: “*The judgment of God always rests on truth, which neither deceives nor is deceived. But the judgment of the Church sometimes follows opinion, which it often happens both deceives and is deceived. For this reason it sometimes happens that he who is bound before God is loosed before the Church, and he who is free before God is bound by an ecclesiastical sentence.*”

23. Jerome, writing on chapter 16 of the Gospel according to Matthew, criticizes the arrogance of bishops and priests who, based on this passage, claimed absolute power for themselves. He says: “Bishops and priests, not understanding this passage, take upon themselves something of the pride of the Pharisees, so that they either condemn the innocent or consider themselves able to absolve the guilty, whereas before God, it is not the sentence of the priests but their life that is examined.” Lombard himself, in the Fourth Book of the Sentences, Distinction 18, letter F, states: “Here it is clearly shown that God does not always follow the judgment of the Church, which sometimes judges through deception and ignorance, whereas God always judges according to truth.” Origen, in Homily 14 on Leviticus, says: “Has someone departed from truth, from faith, from charity? Through this, he departs from the camp of the Church, even if he is not cast out by the voice of the bishop. Conversely, is someone wrongly cast out by judgment? But if he has not acted in such a way as to deserve to leave, he is not harmed; for sometimes he who is cast out is within, and he who is outside seems to be retained within.” From these things, it is clear that the judgment of the Church is not divine and free from all error, nor can such a thing be deduced from the jurisdiction that our Lord granted to the Church, even if, as Bellarmine wished, that judgment were extended to the question of heresy and injuries against the Church, indeed against God. Nor do we deny that the Church, speaking through its pastors, is to be heard not only in ecclesiastical censures but also in controversies of faith; but we deny that this should be done absolutely and without exception. We therefore add: insofar as she hears the voice of her spouse. Let the Church, therefore, be heard insofar as she hears Christ; but if she departs from the word of the heavenly teacher—which we have sometimes shown can happen, and experience teaches—then we deny that she is to be heard. Certainly, if the judgment of the

Church is often erroneous in minor matters, where it concerns disputes and particular injuries, and the harm of this or that person, who would believe that judgment is absolutely to be deferred to her where the salvation of all or the ruin of everyone is at stake? Therefore, the reasoning of our adversaries cannot be proven. From the fact that the Church is entrusted with the examination of minor injuries between quarreling brothers and judgment concerning them, so that one who is convicted of fault and unwilling to be reconciled to his brother or to abide by the judgment of the Church is regarded as a Gentile and a tax collector, they infer that the Church can absolutely define all controversies, even greater ones, and that her judgment is ultimate. For if this were true, it would follow that those who can decide minor disputes between brothers can also judge greater ones, meaning that he who can do less can also do more, which certainly contradicts all right reason. For the court to which definitive judgment is committed concerning some small sum of money cannot judge concerning a estate or a property of great importance; nor can those who are least in the Church, who can judge matters pertaining to the use of this life (1 Corinthians 6:4), issue decrees concerning matters of faith. "And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Corinthians 2:16). If, however, our adversaries contend, without any regard to this or that judge, that in general it is not reasonable to believe that God, who established in the Church an order by which controversies of lesser importance could and should be resolved, would have wanted greater ones to remain entirely undecided, we also do not judge thus. But from this it does not follow that the Church, or any pastor in the Church, is the supreme, infallible, and ultimate judge. This only follows what we have previously conceded: that the supreme judge of all things to be believed in the Church is the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture; that the true Church and pastors rightly fulfilling their office make known the decrees of the supreme judge through their proclamation; and that when they do this, they are to be heard on account of the divine testimony on which they rely.

Whatever the case may be, since they admit that this passage is understood first and primarily concerning the judgment of the Church, that is, of the ecclesiastical presbytery, in particular cases of offenses between brothers, and since they cannot deny that sometimes, due to bad information, the Church can judge otherwise than is right, they will not be able to deduce from this

passage the infallibility of the Church's judgment in greater causes, which are not seen to be directly treated here, but only through some consequence. Or if they wish that the Church cannot err in its judgment concerning doctrine because if anyone does not hear her, he should be regarded as a Gentile and a tax collector, it will also follow, for the same reason, that she cannot err in particular controversies of fact, contrary to what they themselves think and contrary to the experience of all times.