

On Sacred Scripture

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¹ <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb11244684?page=8,9>

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Problems Concerning Scripture

Reply to GEORGE de RAAD, of 'sGraven-Polder, Zeeland. 23 June 1649.

The principal controversies concerning Scripture have been treated by Zanchi, in the first treatise *On Scripture*, and by Rivet, in the *Isagoge*; and among the opponents of the Romanists: Whitaker, Francis Junius, Lubbertus, Amesius against Bellarmine, and Lubbertus in his reply against Gretser, and finally Chamierus. With these may be compared, among the writers of commonplaces, Polanus, Tilenus, Alting in his *Didactic and Elenctic* works; and, among academic theses, those of Pareus, Gomarus, Piscator, Bernard Sohn, the theses of Leiden, Saumur, Sedan, and others—whom it would be too tedious to list here.

As for problems and particular questions which are accustomed, or may be able, to be raised concerning Scripture, Kellet (one of ours) touches upon not a few in his *Theological Miscellanies* (written in the English language); and among the Romanists, Nieremberg in his books *On the Origin of Scripture*, where he mixes in many vain and curious matters. For the explanation of some things, the reading of the *Library* of Sixtus of Siena will contribute something.

Authors who touch upon this or that particular question we have indicated in Part 1 of the disputation; and below, as occasion is given, we will indicate more. In the first part we provided a collection of those things whose explanation the matter, the time, and the necessity of students seeking counsel then required. Now we shall add certain other matters, concerning which we previously in private lectures made inquiry according to our syllabus of problems.

Problem 1: *Whether it is an article of faith—i.e., of faith and necessarily to be believed—that Scripture is the Word of God.*

Answer. Make distinctions: 1. Between the thing itself, or the material and content of this Scripture in general, and the external forms and special modes of writing, such as, for example, that this part was written in such a language, in such a style, etc. 2. Again, between the canon taken collectively, and its integral parts indefinitely, and the same canon taken distributively, that is, its individual parts—greater, lesser, and least—considered definitely and one by one. 3. Additionally, between faith (or a conclusion) about the principle of faith, and a conclusion from the principle of faith concerning any other theological truth.

Concerning the first: Affirm, from Rom. 10:14, 17; 1 Cor. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2 Tim. 3:15, 16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:20. Concerning the latter: Deny.

Problem 2: *Whether the inscriptions or titles of the books of Scripture are authentic.*

Answer. Distinguish the titles. Some indicate the name of the writer; others the subject matter of the book; others both; others the first word or the first words of the book.

Let this therefore be the conclusion: I do not see that it has thus far been certainly demonstrated that all prefixed titles—as they are today prefixed in Hebrew and Greek copies—are, in themselves, canonical and God-breathed (θεόπνευστον).

Where, however, in the sacred text itself either the entire title or the author's name is expressly written—such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Solomon (Proverbs), etc.; and in the New Testament, Paul, James, Peter, Jude, the Apocalypse—the titles nevertheless are not, as God-breathed and as “Scripture” (γράφη), credible in themselves, as they are written there outside the context; because it certainly is not established that they were immediately prefixed and written by the writers themselves in a God-inspired manner, and as part of the sacred text. Rather, they are credible mediately and by consequence, insofar as they are rightly drawn out of the sacred text by way of conclusion; and thus they are rightly prefixed to those books, by way of prophecy, according to the analogy of faith.

Let, therefore, the distinction remain between the text and the title collected and derived from the text—as between an infallible norm and a normed thing that is fallible; though in fact here it does not mislead and is not false, because it agrees with the norm.

The same must be determined concerning the titles Sepher Bereschit, Elle schemot, Echa, etc., with respect to the formal writing and prefacing outside the sacred context.

Further, it can be investigated whether the titles given by the God-inspired authors in the New Testament to the books of the Old Testament (e.g., Luke 24:44 compared with Luke 20:42; Acts 2:25 and 4:25 and 13:33) were first conceived by them then, by a special revelation and infallible authority; or whether they are historically—and no less authentically—reported, as though

those books had always been thus prefaced in the canon of the Hebrews by the direction of the Holy Spirit, as part of Scripture.

But concerning other titles—such as, among the Hebrews, *Sepher Hammelachim*, Joshua, Words of the Days, Ketuvim, the volume of Esther, the Former and Latter Prophets, etc.—in part nothing certain can be established by divine faith; in part it is clear that they are from Jewish teachers and scribes.

Concerning Greek titles—such as Genesis, Exodus, etc., Paralipomenon, Chronicles, Laments of Jeremiah, etc.—and likewise concerning Syriac and Arabic titles, with their often longer inscriptions and subscriptions to the books of the New Testament, it is certainly established that they are of human interpretation and authority.

The same we say of the addition or epithet “the Theologian” in the Apocalyptic title: that it is from human authority they are compelled tacitly to admit; since all of ours say that that title was attributed to John by the ancients, but no one says it was attributed by Christ, or the Apostles, or by John himself.

This problem, however, has its own practical uses:

1. That we may carefully distinguish the sacred text from the inscription, even when the inscription is very true and very well composed from the sense and analogy of Scripture—indeed even when it is woven together and, as it were, soldered from the very words of Scripture itself—no less than we distinguish it from subscriptions, marginal notes or glosses, and from the summaries (hypotheses) of chapters and books.

2. That, consequently, we may neither omit nor misclassify what belongs, in edition, public reading, and exposition of Scripture:

- We must not omit, as if they were glosses, additions, or human prophecies, the words of the context that contain the “titular” subject-matter of a book (for example, *Mischle Scelomo*), or of some psalm (for example, Psalms 34, 51, 73, etc.).

- Yet, on the other hand, we must not read aloud to the church the titles or prefixed inscriptions *as though they were part of the sacred text*, nor explain them in our preaching or prophecy as though they had that status; nor should we draw

theological doctrines and demonstrations from them as from a θεόπνευστος (“God-breathed”) principle of faith, and bind the consciences of believers by them.

In this regard, I recall that in an edition of the Dutch Bibles in small octavo, some years ago, through the ignorance or carelessness of the editors, all the titles of the Psalms were omitted.

3. That we may respond to the Papists with distinction, not in only one way, when they raise questions about titles that name the writers of the books—asking with what confidence we hold, and how certain we are, that the book of Matthew is Matthew’s and not another’s, and similarly concerning the writings of Samuel, Joshua, John, Solomon, David, Paul, Peter, etc.

Concerning some books, namely—for example—the Proverbs of Solomon, the Prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Epistles of Paul, James, Peter, Jude, and the Apocalypse of John: we hold this not only with human faith, from prefixed titles and the common consensus of the Church, but also with divine faith, by a theological demonstration drawn from the authentic text of those books at the beginning.

Concerning the Gospel of John, we believe the same, although the inference is not of equal force, since he neither expressly mentions his own name at the beginning nor elsewhere, but only by way of a circumlocution in John 19:26, compared with 21:24.

Concerning Paul as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the proof is more difficult. Beza attempted to accomplish this not unhappily in his notes; yet he leaves to each person freedom of judgment as to what he will think.

Concerning the three Epistles of John, the investigation is also laborious.

Concerning some others—for example, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, the books of Samuel, Job, Ruth, Esther, etc.—we know only by conjecture; or by human faith from the perpetual consensus of the Church; or we remain learnedly ignorant. For this has never been written in the sacred text; nor was it necessary to be held by divine faith who the writer or amanuensis was, provided that we acknowledge those books to be θεόπνευστοι (“God-breathed”), and that their principal author is the Holy Spirit.

Problem 3: *Whether the accents of the original Hebrew and Greek text are authentic; or whether they were later added by human judgment and by grammatical, and therefore fallible, authority.*

Answer. Concerning the euphonic or musical accents of the Hebrews, according to which, when reading, they chant: I do not see why they should be affirmed; concerning the tonic accents, I do not see why they ought to be denied. For these, as contributing to the integrity of etymology and syntax, we prefer to concede that they can go almost step for step with the vowel points (on whose authenticity see Part I, Select Disputation 1), rather than to defend the opposite position.

Concerning the Greek accents of the New Testament, I prefer simply to affirm that it is beyond doubt that they then belonged not only to the elegance of the language and writing, but also to their integrity. For what is noted about accents formerly not being written—mentioned by Lipsius in his book *On the Pronunciation of the Latin Language*—belongs to an earlier age; nor do I think it can easily be proved from inscriptions or monuments of the Greeks and of those using the Greek language in Apostolic times.

The use of this problem is that we may be warned to change nothing concerning the accents against the constant reading of the manuscripts, nor to allow others to change anything here.

Problem 4: *Are the marginal readings authentic, equally as the very words of the text?*

Answer. Some years ago, in a syllabus of bare problems, I denied this. Now I explain.

The affirmative view, as far as the marginal readings of the Old Testament are concerned, is held by Broughton; and Ainsworth, a preacher of the Separatists and Brownists at Amsterdam, follows him in most rabbinical-theological matters—otherwise a man extremely well versed in Hebrew and in the phraseology of Scripture.

The most learned Paget, in his English treatise expressly against the Brownists, refutes him in the appendix, chapter 4, pages 3, 5, 7. I discussed this in the first part of my selected disputations, page 35.

However, I deny it universally:

- 1) because my problem is directly opposed to the universal affirmation of Broughton's contrary opinion and denies it; and
- 2) because it expressly adds, "equally as the very words of the text."

Now, these questions differ:

1. Are the marginal readings, that is, the Qere, authentic?
2. And are they equally authentic as the Kethib?

That is: are both the words of the text and the marginal readings simultaneously and equally authentic—just as Broughton and Ainsworth maintain concerning the Masoretic readings of the Old Testament (which exceed the number 850, and among which are those that decree that whole words must be added in reading, or removed, or other words substituted)?

Amama, in the *Antibarbarus Biblicus*, takes a different view: he thinks, in general, that the Qere is to be preferred to the Kethib.

Let us see what reasons, if any, are raised against us—or can be raised.

I. A "reason" that is no reason, from human authority

Namely: because in all translations, especially the Vulgate, the marginal reading is often preferred to the text.

Reply.

- 1) By turning the argument back: therefore they are not equally authentic. This argument refutes itself, or it commits the fallacy of missing the point.
- 2) The theological inference from a human fact to a right is not sound. Let those who are not papists say whether and by which translations they wish to stand and be bound, and by which they think orthodox theologians should be bound—since from that sort of theological argumentation one could draw conclusions establishing heterodoxy and corrupt theology.
- 3) The Vulgate translation—which is said especially to do this—is cited here with little propriety by the Reformed. How much authority and dignity it has among us is shown, among others, by Erasmus and Beza in their notes, by Whitaker, Chamier, Rivet, and other opponents of the papists, and by Amama in his censure of the Vulgate translation.

II. Reason

Sometimes, even in the original Hebrew and Greek texts, a marginal reading is to be preferred to the text.

Reply

1. Let the argument be put in proper form:

- Whatever readings are at times to be preferred in the Hebrew and Greek textual readings, those are authentic.
- But marginal readings are at times to be preferred, etc.
- Therefore, they are authentic.

The minor premise is proved by two examples—Psalm 22:17 and Matthew 27:6—out of many more, namely, those which occur here and there.

Response. This is the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi* (missing the point). What ought to have been concluded and proved was that marginal readings are equally authentic as the textual ones. But this is not done. On the contrary, the argument—or middle term—employed directly proves the opposite: namely, that only one of the two readings is authentic, or that one is more authentic than the other, which is what Ainsworth intended.

But I would like the phrase “to be preferred” (*praeferendum*) to be explained.

- If it is meant that the *ketiv* is sometimes not authentic and therefore to be rejected, then the opinion of the most learned Amama is adopted (in the *Antibarbarus Biblicus*). He thinks that the *ketiv* of Psalm 22, as arising from human corruption and not from divine authority, ought to be driven out of the text and the *qere* substituted in its place. In that case, it is not concluded that it is “equally [authentic],” etc.

- But if they do not wish, by assigning authenticity to the *qere*, to remove authenticity from the *ketiv*, then different degrees—and an inequality, a “more and less”—of *theopneustic* authority must be explained and solidly proved by theological reasons, and then suitably applied to both readings.

Reply to the minor premise and its proof: it is not pressing.

1. First, because one particular example or another does not establish the universality of the question—something my problem had distinctly and separately denied with respect to the readings of the Old Testament and the readings of the New Testament—yet which Ainsworth and Broughton had expressly affirmed concerning the Old Testament.
2. Second, why, for proving so great a matter, were not more examples produced—those which are said to occur everywhere? The Roman Catholics often make loud claims about many insoluble difficulties in Scripture; and then, when all their little oil-flasks have been exhausted, they bring forward a very few that have some difficulty—just as Jacob Capellus noted (*Historia sacra et profana*, pp. 29–30).
3. Third, I do not see, from Psalm 22 and Matthew 27:9, how the two passages cited make two examples of readings which would be either the only authentic ones, or equally authentic, or more authentic, than the words of the text.

For in Matthew 27:9 no marginal reading appears—in any edition. And Beza notes that all manuscripts consistently have it exactly as it is now read in the text. No one has ever tried to untie that knot—which has tortured interpreters—by appealing to the authenticity of a marginal reading supported by most, or even some, manuscript codices. This assertion, therefore, is empty.

4. Fourth, as to the *qere* and *ketiv* of Psalm 22:17: we discussed that in Part 1 of the *Selecta*, pp. 52–54, and we do not repeat it. To the kind reader who has leisure—and if these matters touch anyone—I offer an examination of the solution to that knot, so that he may either approve it or, by the reasons brought forward, persuade us of one more solid and evident. Up to this point, without prejudice to anyone, I have thought this to be the safest.
5. Fifth, whatever the value of that solution may be, nothing can be concluded from it for all Greek marginal readings of the New Testament—not even for one—nor even for all, or at least most, Masoretic (that is, marginal) readings of the Old Testament; not even for some, or even for that single one, Psalm 22:17—namely, that they are equally authentic as the words of the text.

This is especially so since the opponent infers something far different: that marginal readings are to be preferred to the textual ones—that is, that they are either the only authentic ones, with the text condemned and rejected as human

corruption; or at least more authentic, and therefore to be followed while the text is left aside. This is what the Greek interpreter, the Vulgate, and others commonly do in the cited place.

Moreover, the most learned Amama also wanted the *kaari* to be driven out of the text and the *karou* substituted—so far is he from acknowledging equal authenticity in the *qere* and *ketiv*.

Lastly, the opponent adds these words

“Which is what that part of the Masorah concerns which is called *qere u-ketiv*, which Buxdorf also defends (*Tiberias*, ch. 13).”

But Buxdorf, in the cited chapter, does not defend it; he only explains the *qere* and the intention and aim of the Masoretes, and finally concludes as follows:

“In all these and similar cases, their single and common aim ought to satisfy us—an aim always directed to this: that they might preserve in all things their legitimate and genuine form, which they found authentic in the books themselves, and leave no place among posterity for change or corruption in any affection of the words.”

Let the lines and words now be shown by which, in that chapter, he “defends” Masoretic readings—over more than 840 words of the text—as to authenticity, as being preferable, namely with the text abandoned or condemned as corrupt, even in those places where the Masoretes decide that whole words must be added, omitted, or substituted for others. Let it be shown, above all, by what words and reasons Buxdorf has defended the antithesis of my thesis concerning the equal authenticity of *qere* and *ketiv*.

I wish nothing to be taken away from the usefulness of the Masoretic art, which Buxdorf defends in chapter 21. But this has nothing to do with the equal authenticity of Masoretic readings with the sacred text—no more than do concordances, indexes, thesauruses, keys, and the like for Scripture, whose remarkable usefulness everyone acknowledges.

III.

My reasons against the equal authenticity of the marginal readings are not examined or refuted; nor is the antithesis proposed by my opponent—about

preferring marginal readings—even explained: namely, why not all, but only some, and how many, and why these rather than others, are to be preferred to the textual readings in the original Hebrew or Greek Scripture. Nor is it stated what certain distinguishing marks there are by which apocryphal marginal readings should be distinguished from authentic ones; and these, again (if indeed in some places both are authentic), the more authentic from the less authentic; and whether, and why, I should here prefer the textual reading to the marginal, and elsewhere conversely.

Should all the textual readings of the Old Testament, from which the quotations of those same texts in the New Testament differ, be emended and literally translated in conformity with the New Testament quotations? But if this ought not to be done in all cases, by what certain distinguishing mark shall I discern where it ought to be done, and where it ought not?

Are the “Hebrew sources” of the Old Testament and the “Greek sources” of the New Testament—sources which our writers maintain against the Roman Catholics have remained whole and uncorrupted—to be understood as the textual readings, or only the marginal readings (namely, where variant readings are placed in the margin), or both together; either all, or only some? But if the second or third be asserted, by what unconquerable and compelling arguments can this be proved, so that nothing is conceded here to the Socinians or to the Roman Catholics?

To this accumulation there is added a question that must be clearly set forth: how, from a quotation in the New Testament or from the Greek version of the Seventy, one can peremptorily judge concerning the integrity or corruption of the original text, and thus concerning its alteration by substituting *to keri* in place of *to ketif* somewhere—so that this assumption is not granted to the Roman Catholics: namely, that the places of the Old Testament which are cited in the New Testament and do not agree word for word with the Hebrew text, but agree rather with the Greek (and there are not a few such, as will appear to one who surveys the parallels, for example, in the manner of Franciscus Junius), are to be taken according to *to keri*; or that, where *keri* is silent, it must be restored according to the analogy of faith from the New Testament, and thus—and only thus—must be translated by interpreters literally and closely, so that they may agree in all respects with the New Testament quotations.

If this is conceded, they would more easily infer these consequences as their own: that the Hebrew text is corrupted in many places; that the Greek version as it is now is to be preferred to the Hebrew text; indeed, that it is authentic, at least in those places. Let one consult Augustine Justinian, in his treatise on the Greek edition of the Seventy; or Possevinus, book 2 of *Bibliotheca selecta*, and in *Apparatus sacer* under the entries “Aristeas” and “Septuaginta”; or Wouwerius in his *Syntagma* on the Greek and Latin version of the Bible; or Morinus, book 1 of his *Exercitationes biblicae*, and in the prefaces prefixed to the Paris Greek folio edition; or Leo Castrius, or Bonfrerius in the biblical prolegomena; or Bellarmine with the *Hyperaspistes* of Gretser, book 2 *De Verbo Dei*.

But our writers contend, on the contrary, that New Testament citations were often made according to the sense, not according to the words, or not without paraphrase and application by the *theopneustoi* (God-breathed) writers; and that therefore no prejudice against the integrity of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament can be inferred from this. Others prefer to rest in this solution: that the writers of the New Testament used the Greek translation then commonly received, as far as it was sufficient for their aim and contained enough to prove the main point of the matter; so that it seemed to them neither to approve nor to disapprove the grammatical and literal Greek translation then in use; and consequently nothing can be concluded from this fact of theirs against the integrity of the Hebrew text. See Junius in the work cited, and Whitaker, Chamier, and Rivet as cited above.

And why should it not be permitted to doubt whether that mixed Greek version (which is called “the Seventy,” but in truth is not) — since it has been variously interpolated by various persons — was, after the New Testament was written, altered in the places cited by the New Testament writers, by certain perverse zealots ignorant of the Hebrew language, and brought into a literal form taken from the New Testament?

Whatever may be the case regarding the authors and the authority of the Greek version that is now extant, the Reformed do not think—nor ought they to think—so highly of it that, for that reason, they ascribe authenticity to the marginal readings of the Masoretes (that is, of men neither infallible nor faithful), either in all cases or in even one single case, and detract from the sacred text itself. Let one consult, concerning the defects of that version and

consequently its slight authority, the Roman Catholic antagonists cited above, and what Hottinger scatters throughout his *Anti-Morinian Exercises* on the Samaritan Pentateuch; for he, too, treats this expressly in the dissertations proposed at Zurich in the years 1647 and 1648, in which he inquires carefully into the causes of those defects.

But let those who have only just greeted the Greek and Hebrew languages at the threshold compare the Davidic Psalter with the Greek version, and they will see how pitiable are the defects of that translator. It would have been desirable that a new Greek version made from the Hebrew had been produced by Scaliger (from whom some expected it), or by Broughton, who had promised this somewhere (and who, in my judgment, was abundantly equipped for this task, if anyone was).

Problem 5: *Do the Reformed reject all traditions?*

Answer:

1. Yes—inasmuch as (namely) the Papists, together with the Council of Trent, put them forward as a principle of faith, of equal authority with the written Word of God. For even if some traditions were true and exactly conformed to the Scriptures in regard to their matter (that is, materially), they still would not be formally the Word of God, proceeding from His immediate and infallible revelation. And it is in this respect alone that we reject them.
2. Yes—concerning those traditions which conflict with the Word of God and yet are imposed as if they were divine teachings. These we reject both materially and formally.
3. Yes—concerning all those traditions which contain regulations prudently and decently established regarding the determination of indifferent matters (adiaphora) or of circumstances: not indeed materially, but formally, insofar as they are claimed to be either the immediate and God-breathed (θεόπνευστον) Word of God, or at least a necessary conclusion, an article, or a doctrine of faith that immediately and of itself binds consciences.
4. Yes—concerning that tradition of all traditions, by which divinity and authority are asserted for the canon of Scripture (constructed from its integral parts), and by which it has thus far been preserved. For although, if they are

considered materially, they are for, from, in, with, and out of Scripture, and thus do not go astray or oppose Scripture; yet formally they do oppose it, insofar as they are regarded as prior to Scripture and more authoritative, and the final analysis—or at least a further step—is placed not in Scripture itself and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, but in these traditions. And in this respect we reject them.

5. Yes—collectively, concerning the whole body or system of traditions, insofar as it is imposed upon the consciences of Christians as the unquestionable canon of our faith, to be received with an equal affection of piety and reverence; and yet it appears nowhere and is shown nowhere.

Therefore we reject the mere non-being, or pure nothingness—along with chimeras buzzing in the void, the agitations of Democritus’s atoms, and the contemplations of Platonic Ideas. Never has any council or pope, never has any theologian up to this point dared to compile a catalogue of traditions, to distinguish the canonical from the apocryphal, and to indicate the authors—or authentic lists—of each individual one.

Problem 6: *Does an understanding of Scripture occur also in the unconverted, or in those who are unregenerate?*

Answer: Concerning sanctifying and saving understanding: No. Concerning understanding that only, or simply and theoretically, illuminates and convinces of the truth of the Gospel and of other dogmas of faith: Yes—but only through some general help, or a certain general grace of the Spirit who enlightens and convinces.

Problem 7: *Whether an interpretation of some passage of Scripture can be analogous to the faith, and yet not be analogous to the text?*

Answer. Formerly, in the published syllabus of problems, I had denied it—with a distinction. Now I explain my problem, having first set down explanations and distinctions of the terms.

1. On “the faith which is believed”

By *the faith which is believed* you understand either:

1) All, without exception, the θεόπνευσται (God-breathed) truths that pertain to faith and morals—i.e., to their most complete integrity—which are set forth in the Word of God; and therefore, by necessity of the divine command, no believer ought to contradict them;

or

2) The chief and principal truths, necessary for the being of faith—that is, necessary to faith and morals by necessity not only of precept but also of means. These some call *fundamental*, others *necessary*, others *of faith*, others *articles of faith* strictly so taken; others, with the Apostle (2 Tim. 1:13), call them the *hypotyposis* (pattern) of sound words.

This distinction is most well-known and most common, so that there is no need to explain or prove it at greater length—especially since I have expressly treated it in Part 2 of the *Select Disputations*, under the title *On Fundamental Articles and Errors*, where I also cited many authors.

2. On what is called “analogous,” i.e., “agreeing with,” the faith
That which is *analogous* (or agreeing) with the faith is said to be either:

- properly, or
- improperly and catachrestically.

Properly, it is that which agrees with the faith—that is, that which is in every respect conformable, consonant, “συρρόθμον,” and rightly fitted to the truth of the faith, whether taken in the former or the latter sense. Such are *gold, silver*, etc., in 1 Corinthians 3.

Improperly, it is that which does *not* agree with, nor is rightly fitted to, the truth of the faith taken in either the former or latter sense; but which, to the faith taken in the former sense and to Holy Scripture (with respect to this or that part), is opposed first, most nearly, and immediately—and consequently, to the faith taken in the latter sense (that is, to the necessary and fundamental articles of faith), it is opposed indirectly and in some manner (for truth indeed agrees with truth; nor does darkness agree with light, chaff with wheat). Yet it does not oppose them in such a way that, whether first or indirectly, by a necessary, proximate, and evident consequence, it overthrows some fundamental article of

faith and necessarily brings about its ruin—so that, if such an error or false interpretation of Scripture is posited, that article cannot stand.

Such are the *stubble* in 1 Corinthians 3, and those things which the less mature—though truly faithful—did not yet fully understand (Phil. 3:15; Heb. 7:1, 3).

3. On the “analogy of faith”

The *analogy of faith*, according to which every prophecy and every explanation of Scripture ought to be established, is taken either:

1) broadly and adequately, to signify the rule of faith, i.e., the whole θεόπνευστος (God-breathed) Scripture;

or

2) strictly and more narrowly, to signify the chief and necessary heads of faith (necessary by necessity of means), i.e., its principal and fundamental articles.

In the first way it is taken at Romans 12:6 by Strigelius, Grynaeus, Willet, Gomarus, and Cartwright against the Rhemists—although he prefers that the analogy be explained by the *measure* (μέτρον) in verse 3.

In the second way it is taken there by Calvin, Faius, Gualter, Melanchthon, and Beza—although the last prefers it to be taken of the *measure of inherent faith*, i.e., that by which one believes, as in verse 3, compared with Ephesians 4:7 and 1 Corinthians 12:7.

In this way also it is explained by the Arab, the Syrian, Erasmus, Rollock, and Ludovicus de Dieu.

Therefore there are three expositions of this passage; for the rest can be reduced to these.

Heerbrand, and with him Andreas Osiander, in notes on the cited place, apply it particularly to clear passages of Scripture—especially where the seat of that argument is, i.e., where that matter is expressly treated—from which they assert that an interpretation must be drawn.

Deodatus, in notes on his Italian translation, the earlier edition in quarto (the later folio edition is not at hand), explains it as the rule and mutual agreement of all parts of Christian doctrine treated in the authentic Word of God.

The analogy of faith, taken according to the first exposition, coincides with the *τύπος* of Romans 6:17, concerning the whole doctrine of the Gospel, as it is explained by Beza, Deodatus, Gomarus, Willet, Cartwright, the Dutch notes, the recently published English notes, and other interpreters.

But the analogy taken according to the second exposition coincides with the *hypotyposis of sound words* (2 Tim. 1:13), as most interpreters explain it—although Cartwright against the Rhemists contends that Scripture is denoted there, and in Romans 6:17.

With these points thus set forth, we deny—without any absurdity—that an interpretation not analogous to the text is analogous to the faith, provided that “faith” is taken in the former sense.

We deny again that it is analogous to the faith—whether the faith is taken in the former or in the latter sense—provided that “analogous” is taken in the former sense, that is, properly. For something false, and directly and immediately repugnant to the *θεόπνευστος* sense, dictate, and truth of Scripture in this or that clause, or period, or section, cannot be said to be analogous—healthily agreeing, well fitting, and well adapted—either to the system of Scripture (which is *πᾶσα θεόπνευστος*) or to the outline (hypotyposis), that is, the system of the chief truths of faith.

For how can things of a different kind, being heterogeneous, fit well and be adapted—stubble to the foundation (1 Corinthians 3), or darkness to light (2 Corinthians 6), or straw to wheat (Jeremiah 23)? That is, how can ignorance or human error (opposed to the divine truth of Scripture) fit the hypotyposis or exemplar of the primary and chief divine truths which are revealed in that same Scripture?

Finally, we deny that a false interpretation of any text—one that directly repugns the literal sense and *θεόπνευστος* truth somewhere—can be according to the analogy of faith, with “faith” taken in the former sense.

Thus, for example, someone may interpret a text, according to his own intention, in line with the analogy both of the context and of the faith, in order to prove the Trinity, or the Deity of Christ, or original sin, etc. Yet, in itself and in reality, it contributes nothing to proving the intended point, since the gloss conflicts with the text; and consequently such an interpretation, considered in

itself, contributes nothing to the analogy of faith, nor is it according to it—if we wish to speak properly.

On the other hand, some orthodox interpreter may interpret a text, according to his intention, toward and according to the analogy both of the context and of the faith—so that he concludes that from it the Trinity is not proved, or the Deity of Christ, or original sin, etc. Yet, in itself and in reality, it does contribute to proving the intended point, so that, once that interpretation is granted, it fits the analogy of faith exceedingly well.

In both false interpretations we approve the interpreter's intention, although we disapprove the thing itself; and we distinguish the end of the work from the end of the worker. Yet, provided only that he faithfully retains the principal thesis and truth concerning the Trinity, or the Deity of Christ, or original sin, we do not charge him with overthrowing the whole analogy of faith, and consequently with being to be numbered among the heretics.

But if someone objects that it is absurd for this to be denied in our problem, whatever distinction is devised—because it would follow from this that nevertheless all are heretics—

“For a heretic is whoever departs from the analogy of faith to such a degree”—

Response:

1. Our problem speaks of interpretation, that is, of the work, and expressly denies that such an interpretation (namely, a false and erroneous one) is analogous to the faith. It does not speak of the one doing the work, or of the hearer of the interpretation, nor does it say that he departs from the analogy of faith.
2. And even if it had said so, what is alleged would still not follow. For it is false that one who departs from the analogy of faith by only so much or so little is a heretic. It is one thing to say that something is not the analogy of faith—and consequently that an interpretation of the context and its author deviates from the analogy of faith, in both senses in which it is taken—and another thing to deviate from it in such a way as to overthrow it completely, so that it cannot consist with it either in itself or in any subject.

Someone who wrongly interprets James 2:13 in order to persuade others of the immensity of divine mercy—although he most strongly intends the analogy of faith—still departs from it only in this respect: that the interpretation is not analogous to the context, and therefore not to the faith. Yet he is not therefore a heretic.

So too, someone who interprets the texts of Genesis 2, Zechariah 12, Ecclesiastes 12, Hebrews 12 in such a way that he denies that from them the creation of the human soul can be proved; or someone who interprets the texts of Romans 5:19, 1 Corinthians 1:30, etc., all in such a way that he denies that from them the imputation of Christ's active righteousness can be proved—does not bring forward interpretations analogous either to the context or to the faith; and consequently, to that extent, he departs from the analogy of faith, whether taken in the former or the latter sense. Yet no pious and learned person will say that the author of such an interpretation is therefore a heretic.

And in the same way, judgment must be made concerning very many other interpretations, as being like stubble by no means analogous and fitting to the foundation—whose authors, however, do not thereby remove the foundation itself.

Therefore the quality, quantity, and form of the deviation must be distinguished. In the same way, pious people, when they sin, depart from piety and a good conscience to such a degree (and this more or less), but not wholly, or totally.

Problems Concerning Scripture

PART TWO

Response by Adrian à Sypestyn, of Utrecht. 4 July 1649

Problem 8: *From what source is the authority of Scripture, and on what does it depend?*

Response. The Roman Catholics, following Bellarmine, distinguish authority as it is in itself, and authority as it relates to us. But although this distinction is futile—since all authority of something written or spoken exists and is described relatively, not absolutely, with a definite and necessary reference to human beings (to whom it belongs to render a definite faith and obedience toward Scripture, and submission to it as the rule and law of the supreme Lawgiver)—nevertheless, granting this distinction (not conceding it), we will now use it *ad hominem* against them; and, setting aside the divinity of Scripture (that is, its authority *in itself*), we lay down two conclusions concerning authority as it relates to us.

1. Conclusion

Authority (αὐθεντία), authenticity (αὐθενσία), trustworthiness (ἄξιопισία)—that is, credibility in the *objective* sense, insofar as it is a principle of knowledge (γνώσεως), and either a principle, or part, or article of the faith that is believed—is Scripture itself as it is presented, read, and heard.

For no other principle or external means can be imagined here by which that certainty and authority could be demonstrated beforehand, or with certainty. Just as the first and most general theoretical principles, in the objective sense as the first and highest knowledge (γνώσις) within the class of things believable or knowable, admit of no higher principle or means by which they could be demonstrated: so among visible things, light is first and visible of itself, by which all other visible things are seen, while it is seen by nothing except itself. In the same way, the trustworthiness (ἄξιопισία) and authority of divine revelation and of Scripture shine and radiate of themselves, and pour forth on every side from themselves signs and marks of divinity, and so present and press them upon the eyes of human beings (who have eyes, and to whom Scripture is proposed)—as those signs and arguments collected by theologians show, when they prove the divinity and authority of Scripture against atheists, pagans, etc.—that they

cannot fail to see them, and be sufficiently convinced of it: if not passively, then at least actively.

For the authority and trustworthiness of divine testimony, as it relates to us, is and ought to be as great as the authority of the witness and author. Now, that God—being the first and absolutely perfect truth—can bear irrefragable witness concerning himself; that is, that his testimony about himself, and any immediate revelation whatsoever, can bear witness about itself and by itself, and can be credible: see John 8:1; John 5:6.

Nor can any other principle or external means—distinct from Scripture and prior to it, superior to it (whether *in itself* or *as it relates to us*), more certain and better known—be given or devised, which is by nature suited to demonstrate to us the authenticity and trustworthiness (ἀξιπιστία) of Scripture certainly and infallibly, or to shed a clearer light than Scripture itself sheds.

But if any atheist or unbeliever should object, we will defend this and answer the contrary arguments. Compare the writers *On the Truth of the Christian Religion* and *On the Divinity of Scripture* against atheists, Epicureans, pagans, Muhammadans, Libertines (or Enthusiasts), etc., cited elsewhere.

And if the Roman Catholics defend Scripture together with us, we have what we want. If, however, they attack it against us, we will count them in the same company, and will receive them—like traitors and betrayers of Scripture—as deserters to the camp of atheists, pagans, and others alien to the faith, in the same manner as we know their associates were received by the Apostles (Acts 14 and 17), by the Fathers, and by the Scholastics.

But it is objected:

1. *Objection*

That traditions, the Church, councils, and the Pontiff are a principle or means prior, superior, and more certain (at least as it relates to us), by which the authority of Scripture can certainly be demonstrated to us. See Gregory of Valencia, *Treatise on the Analysis of Faith*, and Viguier's *Institutions*, ch. 14, p. 140; and our opponent Cornelius Jansen in the *Sponge*, where he says that the Church is the means between us and Scripture.

Response. First, there is nothing among these things which the Roman Catholics do not attempt to demonstrate from Scripture itself as a prior and better-known principle and means—just as the Jews are accustomed to prove the authority of unwritten traditions from Deuteronomy 17. Only look at the Roman Catholics' disputations on Traditions, the Church, Councils, and the Pontiff; and compare what we shall say below about the circle.

Next, as to what Jansen says—that the Church (that is, the Roman Pope alone, or together with a council) is the means between us and Scripture—I ask: What is the means between Scripture and the Pope, or the Church, by which the authority and trustworthiness (ἀξιολογία) of Scripture can thus be demonstrated infallibly to the Pope or the Church, so that, with a pious affection and reverence (as the Council of Trent speaks), he is bound to receive it and to impose it on others? Whatever they answer here, they will see themselves falling into such an external means to which they will attribute the demonstration of itself and testimony about itself—even though falsely.

2. Objection

A particular and extraordinary revelation or inspiration made to someone will be a principle or means distinct from Scripture, and prior and better known than Scripture itself.

Reply. First, this would not be a means or an external principle and object—the thing about which we are speaking. Next, the Roman Catholics themselves admit that all visions and revelations must be tested by Scripture, as we have shown in Part 2, Select Disputations, under the title *On the Testing of Spirits*.

2. Conclusion

Just as there is no objective certainty of the authority of Scripture unless it has been implanted and inherent in Scripture itself by God alone, the author of Scripture; so there is for us no subjective certainty of the same, that is, no formal conception of the authority of Scripture, unless God inwardly illuminates and persuades us through the Holy Spirit.

For Scripture itself, as an external principle, shining with its own proper light (with no foreign thing intervening as a principle or means of demonstration or conviction), is of itself and in itself trustworthy, that is, credible, and by nature fit

actively to convince—no less than the light of the sun is of itself and from itself visible, that is, naturally fit to illumine.

So also the Holy Spirit is an internal, supreme, first, independent principle, actually opening and illuminating the eyes of our mind, and effectively persuading us, from Scripture, with Scripture, and through Scripture itself, of the credible authority of Scripture—so that we, being drawn, may run, and, having been passively convinced within ourselves, may rest satisfied.

Reasons for this assertion

1. Reason

From the clear testimonies of Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:12; 1 John 2:27; John 16:13; and John 6:44, 46.

2. Reason

Because God alone (not the Church, or the Pope, or a council, or tradition, or the testimony of the Church about tradition, or the consensus of the doctors) is able to work within a man's mind and will, and to illumine it, bend it, draw it to assent, and cause it to act—as is admitted.

Therefore, as to the faith by which we certainly believe and receive the authority of Scripture—that is, as to the inner acts of the mind and the formal conceptions—the effective internal principle of these, from which they arise and into which their final analysis must be resolved, cannot be set down as any external principle whatever, or means, or help, or motive, but only the Holy Spirit inwardly urging and certainly persuading.

3. Reason (from absurdities)

First, because otherwise a circle is committed, and within the same kind of principle (namely, an external one) there is reciprocal reasoning from one to another—for example:

Why do you believe the Church or the Pope when he testifies concerning the authority of Scripture? Because Scripture says that the testimony of the Pope or the Church is trustworthy? And why do you believe Scripture as trustworthy? Because the Pope or the Church says that Scripture is trustworthy, and therefore that the testimony of Scripture (specifically Matthew 16; John 21; 1 Timothy 3:16) is authentic.

Second, because then the testimony of God, and therefore God himself, the first truth, would not be trustworthy unless by or because of the testimony of men—namely, of the Pope, or of a council, or of the Church—contrary to John 5:34 and Romans 3:4.

It would be as if someone were to say that the sun is not bright for us, or even visible, unless a torch is lit; and that the king's diploma, by which he grants to someone dignity or privilege, is not authentic for that person unless the authority of a viceroy, or royal official, or the people is added and intervenes.

Third, because it would follow that a man, or men (namely, a council, the Church, the Pope), could inwardly shape and illumine the human mind, infuse or impress assent there, and so on. But this is absurd.

Fourth, because whatever they may argue or object against our analysis in the Holy Spirit, they always confuse the faith which is believed with the faith by which it is believed; the objective concept of the authority of Scripture with the formal concept of the same—that is, with the act of our mind conceiving and receiving that proposed authority.

Finally (to apply here Thomas's distinction), they confuse the principle on the side of the thing understood or to be understood, with the principle on the side of the act of understanding.

Clarification concerning “our” position.

When our writers have recourse to the Holy Spirit as the first and only principle in this question, they properly have regard to the latter member of the distinction just stated. Therefore, within these lines the Roman Catholics ought to have argued. But because here it would shame them even to open their mouths against these points, they flee—as is their customary way—to confusions, evasions, hidden disgrace, quibbles, and buffooneries (the usual refuges of a bad cause).

4. Reply, ad hominem

Since those among them who are better—together with the ancient Church and with Thomas—confess, against crude Pelagianism, that all our good is God or from God; so that in supernatural matters we can do nothing and accomplish nothing without grace, whether the more general grace of illumination or the

special grace, both the first and the second, by which we are determined to the first and second acts of faith and of the other virtues: it necessarily follows that the ultimate analysis of this assent concerning the authority of Scripture rests in the grace of the Spirit—either regenerating and sanctifying, or at least aiding by a more general illumination.

And this is what Augustine himself confesses in this very matter (Confessions, book 6, chapter 5):

“Then, little by little, O Lord, with a most gentle and most merciful hand, shaping and settling my heart, etc., you persuaded me that those who would not believe your books—whose authority you have established among almost all nations—were to be blamed; nor were those to be listened to, if any perhaps should say to me: ‘How do you know that these have been conveyed to the human race by the Spirit of the one true and most truthful God?’”

And the Roman Catholics themselves put forward a similar analysis (though not truly), when it is asked whence there is an inward and certain knowledge—a fiducial assent in the mind—and, in accordance with it, a consistent confession in the mouth of the pope, of a council, of a cleric, of a layman—of any Papist—concerning the authority of the apocryphal books, of traditions, of canon law, and concerning the truth of the entire system of Papist doctrines, rather than in the mind and mouth of Protestants and of others who dissent from the Roman Church.

For all these things are externally proposed to them as to be believed no less than to the Roman Catholics. Is this from the Holy Spirit, or truly from the devil and corrupt nature? I do not doubt that they will answer: from the former.

They therefore see that, among themselves, one must go beyond traditions, councils, the pope, the Church—and that the ultimate analysis is made in the Holy Spirit. For when they are asked why, in these and other questions, they rest in the Council of Trent or in papal decrees, they will answer: because the Holy Spirit dictated them, and they have his infallible assistance.

Therefore I infer: you rest more in the Holy Spirit himself, persuading you inwardly, that the pope and a papal council are always led by the Spirit into all truth.

From what has been said, the easiest solution of two knots is now evident—knots which they are accustomed to throw before us as though inexplicable.

1. *Objection: This doctrine colludes with the Enthusiasts.* It is about the collusion of this doctrine with the Enthusiasts; as though each of us were to attend to his own spirit, etc.

Reply.

1. First, the Enthusiasts and Libertines differ from us by the whole heaven: they, despising the necessity and use of Scripture, put forward their fanatical spirits beyond and against the dictate of Scripture. We, however, acknowledge the undeserved and efficacious grace of the Spirit, bearing witness inwardly and persuading concerning Scripture—together with Scripture, from Scripture as externally set forth—according to 1 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 3:5; Acts 16:14; Ephesians 1:17–18; Colossians 1; Psalm 119:18, 26, 27; etc.

2. Second, if enthusiasm is objected against the Roman Catholics—since they ascribe their better judgment and assent in these matters, above Protestants and other dissenters, not to the devil or corrupt nature, but to the Holy Spirit, the first author of all truth—we would like to see what plausible answer they would give, such that they do not evade their own objection about enthusiasm, and such that they absolve us from it.

3. Third, we will show below that this collusion must be attributed to them.

2. *Objection concerning a circle.* See the devices used by Becanus in his treatise *On the Calvinistic Circle*, by which he tries to force us into a circle.

Reply. First: There is no circle, since the authority of Scripture—so far as it is proposed externally as an object to be believed (i.e., in the objective concept)—is said to be certainly knowable through no other created and external principle than through itself. And when, from the question about credibility (as it pertains to the objective concept), one passes to the question about the principle of our actual assent, or of the formal concept in our mind, concerning the object already mentioned—namely, the authenticity and *autopistia* (self-attestation) of Scripture—then it is not the same kind of question. Nor does one proceed from principle to thing principled and back again, within the same kind of principle.

For just as it is one thing to ask about light and its visibility, and another thing to ask about the act of seeing, or my formal vision, by which I see that light as an object; again, it is one thing to ask about the principle or cause of visibility, and another to ask about the principle and cause of formal vision, or the act of seeing. And just as it is one thing for some principle first knowable to our mind to be proposed (e.g., “Nothing can both be and not be at the same time”), and another thing for there to be the very act of mind by which I know that principle—so also, etc.

Second: The Roman Catholics commit a perfect circle when they move from one external principle to another, and back again, within the same kind of principle: namely, from Scripture to the Pope or a council, and in turn from the Pope or a council to Scripture. And thus the Pope or a council, by imposing its external decrees and dictates, sends the ignorant, or those who contradict, or those who doubt, either to the Holy Spirit perpetually assisting, speaking, and dictating to it in the secret chamber of the breast; or to the Holy Spirit in whom, for example, the holy Council of Trent was legitimately assembled—as it testifies of itself in sessions 2, 3, 4—and conversely.

What, I ask, will they answer here, so as not to free us from a circle? The same can be applied to any papal theologian or layman, to whom an external dictate, or the spirit of the Pope, is proposed; and who, by his own internal spirit, judges concerning that dictate and that spirit of the Pope or of the council, and approves it with full and certain assent of mind (as he thinks), with a conscience that cries out; and at the same time rejects and condemns the opposite spirit of the Reformation.

Problem 9: Whether Christian theology is purely scriptural, and consequently whether orthodox Christians—especially theologians—can, in contradistinction to the adversaries or despisers of Scripture, be called “scripturists.”

Reply. Affirmative. Because Scripture is the sole principle of faith and theology; and because it is perfect, making us wise unto salvation; and because it ought to be heard and read by all; and because the faithful are called “sons of Scripture” or “of the Scriptures,” as we gather from Hebrews 12:7 and Acts 3:25.

From this foundation, that distinctive epithet “Evangelicals,” used after the times of the Reformation in opposition to the Roman Catholics—especially in

Germany—can rightly be explained and defended. Roman Catholics, mockingly and in derision, call the Reformed “scripturists,” as Albert Pighius does (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, book 1, chapter 2); and they call them “biblical brothers” and “biblical sisters,” as Johannes of Gouda, a Jesuit, does in a polemical booklet published in the vernacular language in the year 1611, in octavo, against Gomarus, Castellanus, etc. Papal declaimers likewise designate our men with the same title from the pulpit.

Although this mockery, as far as those who hurl it are concerned, even brings with it blasphemy against God, the author of Scripture (as can be gathered by analogy from 1 Peter 4:14, 16), yet as far as we are concerned it is an honorific title—one which we would not wish to exchange for titles such as: anti-evangelicals, devourers of postils, devourers of myths, adversaries of the Scriptures, fugitives from the light of the Scriptures, deuterotists or Talmudists, Kabbalists, traditionalists, legend-mongers, brothers of ignorance, lovers of enthusiasm, vendors of marvels, and “mirions,” implicit believers and “carbonaries,” etc.

They will be able to devise no reasons for their mockery except their heresies—if not their blasphemies—against the necessity, authority, perfection, clarity, and reading of Scripture, which is to be permitted, indeed even commended, to all Christians. These you have widely noted among their above-indicated antagonists, and refuted from Scripture, and moreover from the Fathers, and even from some domestic witnesses.

They have as companions in this attack the Jewish Talmudists, who, out of contempt, call certain persons of their own nation *Karaim* (קראים), that is, *Karaeans*—i.e., “scripturists,” or “textualists”—and they number them among the *minim* (טוֹיִם מִנִּים), that is, heretics and sectarians, because they reject Talmudic “deuteroses” (δευτερώσεις), and aim to interpret the Scriptures from the Scriptures of the Old Testament alone, and from the received interpretation of their ancestors.

See concerning the modern Samaritans, part 2, selected disputation, under the title *On the Conversion of the Jews*, in the Appendix, p. 143. On these same persons, after and beyond Scaliger, Schindler, and Buxtorf, Selden reveals certain things in [...] book 1, *On the Year of the Hebrews*, chapter 2.

But someone may object:

1. *Objection.* Among the Roman Catholics—not only (as Possevino, Bellarmine, Sixtus of Siena, Philip Alegambe), but also among the Reformed—in catalogues of books and methods of theological study, theologians are distinguished as *textual*, or *scriptural*, from others: namely, *catechetical*, *systematic*, *elenctic*, etc.

Reply. Such persons are not distinctly named in order to mock or insult (as is done by the Roman Catholics noted above), but only so that they may be distinguished from all others who do not handle theological matters in that way from the text of Scripture—whether according to and following the order of titles or topics, or according to controversies which opponents raise. In brief: it does not indicate a different theology or another principle, as though there were some theology that was non-scriptural either wholly or in part; but only a different method of treating the same theology.

2. *Objection.* But there is a natural theology; therefore it is not wholly scriptural.

Reply. First, we are speaking properly of *Christian* theology as such—that is, of supernatural theology—which we rightly call wholly and purely scriptural, and to be held by faith alone. Next, natural theology itself, strictly so called (whose main points are these: that God exists, that there is God's providence, that God is to be worshiped, etc.) is called “natural,” not as though it did not have Scripture as its principle and were not scriptural, but because it also has the light of nature and reason as a secondary principle. Nevertheless, its notions and demonstrations must always, for believers, be subjected to examination and final analysis in Scripture as the primary and genuine principle of natural theology, and as the adequate and only principle of supernatural theology. Let whoever has leisure consult part 2, selected disputations, title “On Human Reason in Matters of Faith.” From this we draw the following consequence: it is wrongly argued about God, angels, the existence and immortality of the human soul, etc., and about hypotheses pertaining to these matters—and freedom for such disputations is wrongly demanded—on the ground that they are purely philosophical, not theological, or scriptural; since, nevertheless, they undermine the truths of theology and of Scripture. See the Remonstrants' *Apology*, fol. 41b, 42a.

3. *Objection.* Not only the Roman Catholics, but also the Reformed grant that theology is rational and reasoned; and they are accustomed to prove their

doctrines not only from bare testimonies of Scripture, but also with added reasons, and to refute the antitheses of “falsely named knowledge” (ψευδωνύμης σοφίας). Therefore theology does not seem to be purely scriptural.

Reply. I deny the consequence. For in different respects they call it both scriptural and rational/reasoned; nor do the light of nature and reason (since they are from God, Rom. 1:19–20) and the light of Scripture conflict with each other. How, moreover, reason is excluded from Scripture and from scriptural theology, and how it is not excluded, we have explained distinctly in the disputation just cited from part 1, selected disputations, title “On Human Reason in Matters of Faith.” Further, proofs drawn from reasons—which theologians, while placing the texts of Scripture for the most part in the front line, sometimes distinguish—do not show that those proofs are not scriptural; but only that they are not drawn immediately, or equally closely, or directly from Scripture, but through the connection of a consequence or of consequences—yet in such a way that it must always be understood that they have their foundation in Scripture.

4. Objection. But the interpretation of Scripture, and likewise theology, is sometimes distinguished into ecclesiastical and scholastic.

Reply. The thing itself is not distinguished, nor are distinct principles of the one and the other implied; but only a different method, or manner, of presenting theology.

Problem 10. *What is the ready method of refuting the Roman Catholic traditions, which they make equal to Scripture—indeed, even prefer to it—so as to teach people that traditions arise out of the “parchments and darkness” of the Scriptures (so they call them: Costerus, and Cornelius Jansenius, theologian of Louvain, in the Sponge)?*

Reply. If we set forth these three points to be considered from their own conscience and admission concerning the said traditions (especially the dogmatic and “Apostolic” ones, as they call them):

1. Confession. That there is no canonical writing, no authentic writer (whether historian or theologian), who reports or testifies that this or that thing necessary for faith and morals of life was handed down or instituted by Christ or the Apostles. For no one would say—on the testimony of, for example, Justin, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Augustine, etc., asserting that there is an apostolic dogma

concerning the millennial kingdom, or concerning Anabaptism, or concerning the Eucharist of infants; much less on the historical report of Eusebius, Theodoret, Socrates, etc.—that it must be believed with divine faith, equally as the God-breathed writers of the books of the Bible. How, then, with the Council of Trent will they “receive” traditions and the Scriptures with an equal affection of piety and reverence, when they plainly do not receive the writers or witnesses of traditions with equal reverence alongside the prophets, apostles, and evangelists? This argument is hinted at by the careful and subtle opponent of the Roman Catholics, Antonius Zadeel, in his treatise *On the Written Word of God*, etc.

2. Consideration

As to the point that men are understood to be transferred from sheer non-being to being, from nothing to something—namely, to *traditions* alongside the Bibles which, in the original languages and in Latin, Greek, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and also in some vernacular ones (such as French and Dutch), are published among them by the decree and authority of the Council of Trent or of the Roman See:

Yet the traditions about which they dispute, and for which they contend as though they were the safest rule of faith, have had no actual existence down to the present day. Nor has any council, any pope, any sacred congregation of cardinals, any chapter, any university, any writer or theologian, dared—or been able—to collect, enumerate, or set them forth; much less to distinguish canonical traditions from apocryphal ones (as they admit them to be), and to procure and prescribe for the Church a certain, authentic, and corrected edition of them.

Both of these things, however, the Roman See, together with the Council of Trent, has provided—according to its own judgment—in the case of the Bible.

Hence it is evident with what knowledge and conscience they claim that they receive Scripture and traditions with equal affection of piety and reverence; and how shamefully they deceive their wretched dependents with mere non-entities, feeding them on mere chimeras, so as to teach them, like Aesop’s dog, to chase a shadow and throw away the substance.

3. Consideration

They cannot appeal to the testimony and authority of the Church with respect to determining traditions.

First, because it is equally chimerical and unknown what and where that ecclesiastical power is—whether in the pope, that is, or in a council. For nothing has thus far been defined here as a matter of faith; and consequently nothing should or can be believed here with that common divine faith to which falsehood cannot be subject.

Second, because as long as the supreme and infallible judge (who, according to their theology, must be visible and must speak visibly) does not speak here, the Papists cannot know their other principle of faith—and indeed one more useful and necessary (according to them) than Scripture—nor can they have recourse to it. Consequently they have no divine faith (without which no one is saved), because they have no principle of faith. For it is impossible for there to be what is derived from a principle without a principle.

Therefore there is here no speaking judge standing between traditions (that is, the unwritten word) and papal subjects; no principle, namely one that is actual; and no Scripture either, since (according to them) it is certainly not possessed except from tradition and through tradition; and finally, no actual faith.

Third, because Toletus, in his *Instruction of Priests*, when he enumerates six principles of Christian doctrines, sets down as distinct and different the decree or judgment of the Church and the traditions. Therefore they must not be confused here, nor should one be subordinated to the other; for what is subordinated cannot be a principle of faith into which its final analysis is made.

Fourth, since the final analysis of traditions is into the pope or the Roman Church, a circle is committed here; for example:

“It is authentic and cannot err in judgment about traditions—or about this and that tradition—because it cannot err in this tradition of traditions: “That the pope, or the Roman Church, cannot err.”

Therefore the traditions of the Roman Church will have to be believed, and indeed with divine faith, because the tradition of the Roman Church decrees this.

It can be added that, according to them, the pope can err in histories and matters of fact; but the foundation of any tradition is history and the narration of facts. Therefore, etc.

Fifth: because they cannot, at least from us, demand in any form that we embrace traditions—since they have never indicated to us that body, or genuine canon, of traditions which we would be bound to embrace as a second principle of our faith. For there is no affection for what does not exist, no desire for what is unknown; and where no law has been promulgated, no obedience to that law can be demanded.

If they perhaps press upon us the Church or the Pope and his authority, we say that they are committing a *begging of the question*. They ought, therefore, to dispute with us from common principles conceded by both sides, and not from a principle accepted only by the affirming party—that is, from the authority of the Pope or of the Papal Church, which we oppose.

And thus far.

If anyone further desires to know which traditions—out of an infinite number, or rather from the infinite potential of traditions—private teachers in the Papacy now and then timidly point out, like dogs drinking from the Nile; and which, on the other hand, very many others commonly try to prove from the Scriptures—let him consult our disputants indicated above, and our “desperate case” against the Papacy, where Peter a Soto is cited, and John of Rochester, who ventured to indicate a few dogmatic traditions, and Viguerius, who dared to indicate ritual traditions.

Marnix, Lord of Saint-Aldegonde, collects many ritual traditions in the *Table of the Differences of Religion*, or in the former volume of *Alvearius Romanus*, in the French and Dutch edition. Molinæus, in his treatise *On Traditions* (in French), collects a great number of dogmatic traditions throughout theology—traditions which the Papists everywhere strive to prove from Scripture, but in vain.

An innumerable number of ritual traditions may be seen in Durandus' *Rationale*, and in Johann Baptist de Rubeis' *New Rationale of the Divine Offices*, and in John Stephen Durandus *On Rites*, etc.; in Bartholomew Gavanti's *Treasury of Rites*; and in John John James' *Compendium on Ceremonies*; in the Flemish treatise *On the Ceremonies of the Church* by John David the Jesuit; and in other liturgical and

ritual writers—whom, in part, we have indicated in Part 3 of the Select Disputations, under the title *On Sacramentals*. Yet we see that, whenever the itch for trifling and contradicting has seized them, they summon all these things from the Scriptures.

We have touched upon some of those absurdities in Part 3 of the Select Disputations, under the title *On the Jubilee, Feasts, Processions, Rosaries, and the Canonical Hours; the Agnus Dei; Staurolatry*, etc.; and in Part 1, *Ecclesiastical Politics*, book 2, tract 1, chapter 4; and book 4, tract 4, ...

Problems Concerning Scripture

PART THREE

Response by JOHN SIKO, a Hungarian of Transylvania. 9 July 1649.

Problem 11. *Whether the Reformed, or rather the Pontificians, have an authentic edition of the Bible.*

Response: Of the Pontificians, the former is denied; the latter is affirmed.

By these conclusions we determine the matter.

1. Conclusion

The Reformed, by common faith, have an authentic Bible: namely, the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. That this text is authentic, not even the Papacy denies, or dares to deny—at least according to the common faith—so that to think the opposite is heresy.

See the preface to the commentary on the Psalms by Simeon de Muis, Professor of Hebrew Letters at Paris; and his little book *On the Authority and Truth of the Hebrew Edition* (1631), which Valerian de Flavigny, Doctor of the Sorbonne and Professor of Hebrew Letters, fortifies with this approval:

“That, having ascertained the truth, he has found that the things disputed in that little book are so clearly established and so solidly confirmed that, concerning the truth of the most sacred Hebrew edition, no one will be able henceforth—though even against its detractors—to doubt any longer.”

Many others could be cited; but I do not wish to do what has already been done. Let students see Rivet in the *Isagoge*, Ramburtius in the most learned disputation *On the Authority of the Old Latin Interpretation*, Sedan, year 1631.

2. Conclusion

Laymen in our churches have vernacular translations—none indeed authentic in themselves (nor is this necessary)—yet such that, through them, they may hear the Holy Spirit speaking in the original languages (to which, in doubtful matters and controversies, one must always return, according to Jerome’s saying inserted into canon law): not indeed immediately, but mediately and through an interpreter. Thus they can be sufficiently instructed and confirmed for their salvation in the mysteries of faith.

In the same way the Popes, Cardinals, Bishops—even Papal Councils (according to the stronger votes)—hear and read the original text and are accustomed to judge concerning its authority and integrity, and concerning the comparison of the Latin Vulgate and the Greek of the Old Testament, and other translations, with it. For it is certain, and Bellarmine confesses from experience, that there are few bishops who are skilled in the original languages. With even greater right we say the same of popes.

But someone may object.

1. Objection

All the interpreters of the Reformers are, as we admit, fallible. Therefore they provide no infallible word of God, no authentic translation. The same must be said of men skilled in the original languages, if any such are consulted face to face by laymen in doubtful matters or controversies.

Response 1.

The same must be said about French, Dutch, and other vernacular translations produced in the Papacy from the authentic (as they themselves claim) Latin Vulgate text: they cannot be approved by Popes or Councils, since they are ignorant of those languages—unless either implicitly, or through an interpreter, or through certain delegates or agents (mandataries) skilled in those languages. Yet all those people are fallible.

The same must be said about the traditions, as they call them, “apostolic,” and about bulls, *motu proprio*, papal briefs, and also about the decrees of the Council of Trent, which unlearned people are bound to receive as necessary matters of faith—indeed, in many places, all who are admitted to public offices in the commonwealth must even swear an oath to the decrees of the Council of Trent. Yet all these things are done through fallible interpreters, whose translations, whether made in writing or by word of mouth, the Pope cannot authenticate by himself and infallibly—unless he claims (like the Apostles, he himself being, κατ’ ἐξοχήν, “the Apostle” par excellence) to be endowed with the gift of tongues, and shows it in fact.

Response 2.

That inference is not valid: “Whoever has, possesses, holds, guards or preserves, presents, carries, reads, writes, prints, translates, explains, hands down the word

of God or Holy Scripture, or in any way is engaged with it by buying, selling, handing over, opening, investigating, meditating, or comparing it, is fallible; therefore Scripture itself is fallible; and thus nowhere and in no place is any Scripture θεόπνευστος (God-breathed); consequently there is no principle of the Christian faith; and thus the process leads to scepticism or enthusiasm”—namely, so that it is said either that nothing here can certainly be known or believed, or that all the faithful, from the time of the Apostles up to this day, are guided and taught by an infallible and immediate revelation of the Spirit.

Response 3. Nor is this inference valid: *Individual interpreters, preachers, commentators, printers, press-correctors, and all who arrange editions of the Bible among the Reformed—indeed, all who, whether internally or externally, are engaged with the Bible—are fallible; therefore they always, in fact, are deceived and deceive.* Much less does it follow that the entire Reformed Church—taken collectively on earth, and not papal—simultaneously and once for all is wholly deceived and deceives in the procuring, safeguarding, and publishing of genuine editions of the original Bibles and good translations.

What if someone were to argue in the same way about copyists, sealers, carriers, shopkeepers, translators, heralds, defenders, visitors, censors, printers, booksellers, receivers, and readers of papal bulls, *motu proprio* acts, briefs, and decisions of the most holy congregations of cardinals? *All are fallible; therefore all in fact are deceived and deceive; and therefore nothing of this kind, from the claims of the Roman See throughout the whole world, should be accepted.* What, I ask, would they answer other than that the final analysis of Roman credulity and obedience rests in the Pope—and not in those whom we have just named, whether helpers or executors or promulgators of papal decrees?

We truly and rightly say that the final analysis of our faith rests in the infallible Word of God, not in the fallible minds, memories, hands, and so forth, of those whom divine providence uses as instruments in reading publicly, transcribing, and correcting for the press—and consequently in preserving, defending, and presenting to the faithful the genuine edition and correct translation of Scripture.

I will turn this same inference back against their own papal traditions, whose heralds, messengers, defenders, copyists, printers, and so forth, are fallible.

I turn it back much more strongly against the correction and “authentic” edition of the Vulgate interpreter of the Bible, which—according to the Tridentine decree—Sixtus V boasted that he had produced by means of correction with his own hand. Yet after him Clement VIII did not believe this; nor did the men of Louvain; nor did Francis Lucas; nor did Bellarmine, who was one of Clement VIII’s correctors. See the preface that Francis Lucas placed before his book on the Roman correction, and Thomas James’s *Papal War, or the Discordant Concord of Sixtus V and Clement VIII concerning the Vulgate edition*; and Rivet’s *Isagoge*, or Ramburtius’s disputation cited above.

I turn the same inference against missals and breviaries (concerning whose edition—not infallible, but deceptive, that is, faulty and corrupted—Francis Lucas speaks in the place cited), against pontificals, ceremonials, and similar public Roman “authentic” writings.

Therefore, in all those matters, every single papist would have to have perpetual recourse to the sole oracle of the infallible living voice of the Pope; and one would no longer be able to rely on any writings or corrections allegedly made by the Pope’s own hand (as Sixtus V is said to have sent to the press Bibles corrected by himself). For his hand is not known to each individual papist; and even if they knew it, doubt would still always remain whether someone might not have forged it by imitating his hand.

But as for the oracle of the living voice, it cannot be heard, face to face, by all and each person in daily doubts; nor does it fall to every man to travel to Corinth. Nor would the Pope suffice to be heard and to instruct everyone face to face. Finally, that they may see the force of their inference, I put before them the argument of the skeptics: *The mind of each man, and the external senses, can be deceived; therefore nothing is known with certainty*. When they have clearly solved this, they will see that their Neo-skepticism is likewise overthrown.

2. Objection.

But the Pontificians, all and each, have some authentic Bible: either the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament; or the Greek Old Testament; or the Latin Vulgate—and that either from an edition before the Council of Trent, or from an edition after the Council of Trent, namely that of Sixtus V, or of Clement VIII, or of the Louvain editors.

Response 1. They have not yet fixed upon it here; they have not yet come to rest. Why, then, should there not be among them those who wait and seek? Why might they not be able to hope for a fourth, fifth, sixth, and so on—perhaps still to be given—surpassing all the earlier ones in perfection or completeness?

Response 2. Whatever each person might say he has as “authentic,” yet by no common Roman “authentic” faith are such Bibles theirs, because nothing has been defined here as a matter of faith; and in a perpetual labyrinth of doubts and contradictions the doctors torment themselves. Let one see the candid confession and wish of Bañez on *I*, q. 1, art. 8; and of Salmeron in the prolegomena to the Bible, tome 3; and of Andradius, book 4, *Defense of the Council of Trent*. Of that wish no one has yet obtained fulfillment.

Problem 12: *Are the writers of the New Testament accustomed (at least in many passages, or in most) to use not the genuine language of the Greeks, but either an impure and barbarous Greek, or else a special language, called Hellenistic?*

Answer: There are some who utterly deny the New Testament style any purity of Greek, and think it abounds with solecisms and barbarisms. Others do not deny the phraseology its brilliance and elegance, but seem to wish to make it a peculiar language, as though distinct from Greek, which they call *Hellenistic*.

I. Refutation of the first opinion (that the New Testament Greek is impure and barbarous)

The first opinion is sufficiently refuted by a moderate reading of Greek authors, compared with the style of the New Testament, and by an examination of the notes of Erasmus, Camerarius, Beza, Casaubon, and Scultetus in their *Exercitations* on the Evangelists and on certain Epistles; and of Heinsius and Grotius on the New Testament; and of John Price, an Anglo-Briton, who more recently published his notes on Matthew and Acts (thus I wrote in the year 1649; but afterwards, in the year 1660, the same man’s notes on Luke, and several Epistles, and the Psalms, were published).

Above all, and expressly, Henry Stephanus defends the purity and elegance of the New Testament style in a most learned preface prefixed to his 16mo edition of the New Testament (1576). It is remarkable that after that time it was not continually reprinted, either separately, or together with editions of the New Testament, or together with the notes of someone on the New Testament. To

him may be joined Sebastian Pfochen's diatribe *On the Purity of the Greek Language of the New Testament*.

If there are any who cannot attend to these matters—whether because of their circumstances, or because they cannot devote themselves in earnest to theological study and to sacred philology—such persons will still be able to learn something from the scholia of Piscator, and from Pasor's New Testament lexicon and manual with the little books appended to each, and from the excellent syntax of Sylburg, inserted into the Greek grammar written by the method of Ramus (which is different from the syntax of the same author published with the grammar of Clenard): namely, that in the meanings of words, their inflections, and their syntax (whether proper or figurative), the language of the Greeks is to be found.

II. On foreign words and Hebraisms in the New Testament

As for certain few words—some Latin, and some Hebrew, as it were technical—and Hebrew idioms, most of them derived from the Old Testament, and some also from the then-received theology of the Hebrews (whether ecclesiastical or scholastic): these can no more produce barbarisms and solecisms than Greek technical terms borrowed by Latin philosophers, physicians, and other writers, or the elegance and phrases of Homer, Theocritus, and others borrowed by Virgil (on which see Henry Stephanus, Peter Nannius, Eobanus Hessus, and the commentaries of John Ludovicus de la Cerda) can detract from the Latin speech of those authors.

Those exotic words in the New Testament, after Angelus Caninius, Ludovicus Ballester in his *Onomatography*, and Drusius, were collected and explained by the above-mentioned Georgius Pasor in an appendix to his New Testament lexicon.

The Hebrew idioms from the Old Testament were diligently explained by Beza in his notes; and the rarer ones were noted here and there by Buxtorf in his incomparable *Grammatical Thesaurus*; and after him by Glassius in *Sacred Philology*.

Something still seemed to be lacking to Broughton in Beza, because he was not furnished with equal learning in Targumic, Rabbinic, and Talmudic studies as he certainly was in Greek and in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. But besides the

fact that it could be asked whether so great an apparatus is necessary (on which below), we think some supplement ought to have been provided here by Broughton—a man most thoroughly equipped in this respect—who could have completed the matter, if only he had wished to treat it fully and expressly, and not piecemeal and scattered through various little books of his, published partly in Latin and partly in English.

But Drusius contributed greatly to this in ten books of *Praeterita*, and in the second part of his annotations on the New Testament. And perhaps learned men will provide still more. Among them, Gilbertus Gualmin, in his notes on the life of Moses, promises an explanation of Hebrew antiquities with reference to the New Testament.

An opportunity was also given here to Andrew Schott in his *Adagials on the New Testament*, if he had been imbued with Oriental letters no less than with Latin and Greek.

III. The second opinion (a distinct “Hellenistic dialect”) and its origin

The later opinion takes its origin from Scaliger, who first (unless I am mistaken), using here by privilege the name “coiner of terms” (*onomatopoios*)—which Aristotle claims for philosophers—called it the *Hellenistic* dialect. He was followed by Drusius, Casaubon, Glassius, and Heinsius; see Heinsius frequently in his *Exercitationes* on the New Testament.

IV. On Hellenistic Jews, their Bibles, and the Septuagint (questions not pursued here)

Concerning the Hellenistic Jews, and the Bibles they used, and concerning the history of the translation of the Seventy, various historical-philological questions can be raised and are commonly raised; but these are not of this place.

Let the curious reader of these matters consult Scaliger’s notes on the New Testament, and his *Animadversions on Eusebius* p. 124, and *Canon Isagogicus* p. 272; and Drusius in *Praeterita* book 5; Grotius’s notes on Acts 6:1, 9:29, and 11:20; and the notes of Ludovicus de Dieu on Acts 9:29; Hottinger, Professor at Zurich, his disputation on the Greek edition of the Old Testament attributed in common speech to the Jerusalem interpreters of the Seventy; and Cornelius à Lapide’s

commentary on Acts 6:1 and 9:29; and Salmasius's treatise *On the Hellenistic Language*.

Those who love learning may also compare the judgment we have given in our diatribes on philology and sacred history.

As to the question that has been proposed, we grant that the style of the New Testament can be called Hellenistic, that is, Hebrew-Greek, or Hebraizing, because it very frequently expresses Hebrew idioms in Greek words. Yet not in such a way that the following consequence should be drawn from it: that it is not the Greek language, but something different from it—at least in the way Italian or French is different from Latin, or Danish and English are different from German, or Arabic is different from Hebrew, or any other daughter of the same mother (see Scaliger's treatise *On the Languages of Europe*) is different from her other sisters. That Scaliger intended anything of this sort does not seem likely to me. But if anyone wishes to add this train to Scaliger's opinion, I admit I do not see how this can be asserted without "analogy."

Nevertheless, to this extent I agree with them: without knowledge of Hebraism, countless phrases of the New Testament cannot be thoroughly explained from Greece's Greek itself. And perhaps for this purpose they have so greatly exaggerated the difference between the style of the New Testament and the style of Greek authors.

Meanwhile, I warn our students not to be so stimulated by this opinion toward the study of the oriental languages that they become more negligent in the study of Greek learning—as if it did not contribute so much to understanding the New Testament, and as if it were enough, without reading Greek authors, merely to make the style of the New Testament familiar to oneself by use itself and (as it were) to learn its manner of speech; or, if any controversy should arise about it, to consult some lexicon.

I confess: without the use and aid of lexicons and grammarians—Hesychius, Suda, Pollux, and the more recent writers, Favorinus, Budé, Constantine, Henri Estienne, Aemilius Portus; and the Greek scholiasts on Homer, Hesiod, Aristophanes, Pindar, Callimachus, Apollonius, Thucydides, Theocritus, etc.; and very many more recent scholars in their notes and commentaries on authors, for example Camerarius, Xylander, Vulcanius, Sylburg, Scaliger, Casaubon, etc.—

theologians, physicians, and others, not even philologists and professors of the Greek language, can be equally wise at every hour. Yet it must not be allowed that, without reading and comparing Greek authors, we should always see with another's eyes—especially in view of the example of excellent theologians, who by their published writings have abundantly testified to their own learning in Greek, and some of whom even taught the lexicographers themselves to be wise.

Such men, among others, now occur to me: Oecolampadius, Melanchthon, Illyricus, Strigelius, Musculus, Gualter, Beza, Chemnitz, Chytraeus, Aretius, Johann Wilhelm Stuckius, Franciscus Junius, Whitaker, Broughton, Schultetus, Coppenius, Nicholas Fuller, James Capellus, Samuel Petit, Richard Montacute, Chamier. Among the Roman Catholics: Gentianus Hervetus, Billius, Gretser, Fronton du Duc, etc. I now also study those who are still living today.

Problem 13: *Whether the Gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew by Matthew himself?*

Reply. Besides some ancient writers, the Roman Catholics affirm this in Baronius (at the year 34, § 165), in the Immaculate (Sa.), and in Cornelius a Lapide on Matthew, p. 44, where he cites the ancients.

Others, however, prefer that it was written in Syriac, and that the Syriac text we have today is authentic, as Widmanstadius and Guido Fabricius Boderianus in the preface to the Syriac editions; Mariana in the scholia. Matthew Galenus asserts the same about the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the preface to that Epistle.

Among the Protestants, Casaubon admits this opinion in Exercises 15 against Baronius, chapter 12, and in Exercise 16, p. 115; and Kirstenius in the published Arabic-Latin Lives of the Evangelists, p. 29. Glassius, book 1 of Sacred Philology, tract 4, section 2, p. 294, leaves the matter almost in the middle, though he inclines more to the negative.

The Roman Catholics also lay this to Münster's charge in Cornelius a Lapide (in the place cited), adding that he sold and foisted his Hebrew edition as the genuine authentic text of Matthew. But Münster hints at nothing of the kind in the dedicatory epistle (which I would have the reader now examine) or in the notes on the Hebrew Matthew.

If a Lapede had reported—on another’s authority (as he is accustomed to do in most things, especially those that concern facts and oriental literature)—that Jean Cinqarbres (Joh. Quinquarboreus), a man of the Roman Catholic profession and professor of the Hebrew language at Paris, did this, he certainly would not have departed from the truth. For that man, in his preface, when in the year 1551 he had caused that Hebrew Gospel of Münster to be reprinted at the press of Martin Juvenis, wrote this statement: “But who could doubt that this very Gospel is the one which St. Matthew wrote in Hebrew?”

Another Hebrew translation of Matthew, which was published from the library and care, if I am not mistaken (for now I do not have a copy at hand), of Tillet, Bishop of Meaux, is very different from Münster’s; and by Mercer, its editor, it is by no means sold as the original text.

Therefore we determine briefly as follows:

1. *Conclusion.* It must by all means be maintained that the present Greek text is authentic—whether it is the original, or from a translation by Matthew himself, or by John, or by any other θεόπνευστος (“God-inspired”) writer—as Casaubon, Sixtus of Siena, a Lapede, and others rightly hold, at least as to the latter point.

2. *Conclusion.*

Erroneous and by no means harmless is the opinion of those who claim that the present-day Syriac text (which Widmanstadius was the first to have published), or the printed Hebrew text (whether Münster’s or Tilius’s), is the original.

For nothing else can be established about the Syriac translation except this: that it is not especially ancient, nor was it commonly received in the Eastern regions (where the use of that language formerly existed, or still exists), since several other translations were there, and still exist. On this point, see Louis de Dieu in his notes on John 7 (last verse), and John Peacock in the preface to 2 Peter and to the Syriac–Latin edition.

As for the Hebrew translation of Münster and Tilius, it is sufficiently clear—even Mercer himself freely admitting it—that it is not the original text of Matthew; nor is it even the one which Jerome says existed in his time. Indeed, Lapede, in the cited place (p. 45), explicitly rejects both editions (Tilius’s and Münster’s) as spurious, and suspects that they arose from Jewish cunning, in order to

undermine confidence in the Greek and Latin editions. Certainly it is written neither in the Syriac or Chaldaic then in common use, nor in ancient Hebrew, but in a more recent form, by a Jew—or rather by a Jewish convert.

Although, however, the question of Matthew's first writing—whether it was in Hebrew or in Greek—did not seem to Beza, Casaubon, or Glassius to be of such great importance, it is nevertheless better and safer to hold, with Cajetan and with most of our writers, the negative view—especially since no reason, not to say a necessary one, but not even a particularly probable one, supports that opinion (or rather conjecture) of the ancients; rather, arguments not unfitting recommend the contrary.

Lest I repeat what has already been done, see Gomar's dissertation, which he appends to his diatribe on the genealogy of Christ; and Jacob Capellus, in the *Vindications of Casaubon*, book 2, chapter 8.

Problem 14: *Whether Mark's Gospel was written in Latin?*

Answer: The affirmative is maintained by Baronius (on the year 45, § 31) and by Possevinus (in the *Apparatus*). But John Mariana, in his scholia, says that this is plausible.

The Reformed hold the negative view; and Lapede approves that position in his commentaries on Mark (p. 561), by various reasons and testimonies, which may be seen there.

Nevertheless, he adds in the same place that this reconciliation can be admitted with Genebrard, Barradius, and Bellarmine, if it is said that Mark wrote both in Latin and in Greek—so that the Greek text is authentic, and indeed written first, and afterward translated into Latin by Mark himself.

The reasons and authorities asserted for the affirmative are these:

I. Reason

Because he wrote at Rome for the benefit of the Romans; therefore he wrote in Latin.

Reply: The minor premise is just as uncertain as the conclusion. The writer on Mark under the name of Chrysostom says that he wrote in Egypt. Other Fathers, on the contrary, affirm that he wrote at Rome; and so does Eutychius, in the

Origins of the Alexandrian Church. The major premise can also be denied: for Rome at that time was called “Greek,” because of the familiar use of the Greek language. See Cicero’s speech *For Archias*.

II. Reason

Because Damasus, in the Life of Peter, testifies to it.

Reply: This writing is spurious and sprinkled with not a few fables, so that it cannot even attain the weight of human testimony. See Rivet, *Sacred Criticism*, book 3, chapter 14; and Possevinus himself in the *Sacred Apparatus*, and Baronius, and the Councils in the Venetian edition.

III. Reason

Because the Syriac Interpreter testifies to it at the end of Mark’s Gospel.

Reply:

1. It is equally uncertain whether those subscriptions and postscripts were added by the Syriac interpreter himself, or rather by some other scribe.
2. Granted that it was the interpreter himself, it is still not established who he was, or of what authority. At least that he is not especially ancient is conceded by Lapede himself in the cited place.
3. Finally, let it be proved that by the term “in the Roman manner” (Romanè), expressed by the Syriac word רומית (*rehoumoit*), the Latin language properly so called must necessarily be meant—if, indeed, anyone wishes to apply Selden’s observation (no. 28) in his commentary on Eutychius, where he proves at length that *Raumia* in Arabic writers also denotes the Greek language.

But to state the matter as it is: neither in that passage of Eutychius, saying that this Gospel was written “in the Roman language,” nor in the postscripts of the Syriac interpreter just cited, is it to be understood of any language other than Latin—since, for the sake of distinction, the same Eutychius there says that Luke wrote באליאונאניא (*baliaunania*), that is, in the Ionian or Greek language (although Selden’s Antiochene codex reads היתורותיה (*balraumia*), which reading is undoubtedly corrupt). And Selden himself indicates this a little later (pp. 160–161). And thus the Syriac interpreter, for the sake of distinction, adds to John’s Gospel that he spoke it *jannoit*, that is, in Greek, at Ephesus; and to Matthew’s, that he preached it *gnebroit*, that is, in Hebrew, in Palestine.

Let us therefore stand by our first and second replies.

IV. Reason

Because the subscription of the Arabic translator, published by Erpenius, says that it was written in Latin; just as it says that the Gospel of Luke and John was written in Greek, and that of Matthew in Hebrew.

Reply.

1. The Arabic–Latin edition of the Evangelists, printed at Rome by the Medicean Press in 1619 (folio), contains nothing of this sort in its prefaces (for no subscriptions appear there).
2. That these subscriptions are not very ancient, and therefore have little authority in testimonies of this kind, is clear from the addition of the Roman term **אלפרנגי**, that is, “Frankish” or “of the Franks.” For the language, people, or Western Roman Empire was not distinguished by Easterners under the name “Franks” before the division of the Empire and its transfer to the Franks and Charlemagne. On this designation “Frankish,” “of the Franks,” among Greek and Arabic writers, see the most learned Selden in the place cited.

V. Reason

Because Armacanus, Cantacuzenus, James of Voragine, in the passages cited from Mariana, affirm the same.

Reply. Along with Mariana in that same place, these are, indeed, petty authors. The same I say of Peter Ciacconius in *Peter*, year 56, whom Selden cites. But I break off the arguments of Baronius, Bellarmine, and Possevinus—if any of them differ from those already refuted here—intending to examine them on the next opportunity.

Problems Concerning Scripture

PART FOURTH

Reply to Gerbrand Schutter, of Alkmaar, 8 September 1649

There remain, for the solution of Problem 14, the arguments in favor of the Gospel of Mark, §1, having been written in Latin.

VI. Reason

It is also held among the Greeks and Syrians (as Genebrard notes in his *Chronography*, and Nazianzen in the poem on the four Evangelists). Thus Possevinus, in the place cited.

Reply.

1. In that poem on Christ's miracles among the Evangelists, he does not say it was written in the Latin language; rather, he explains that it was published for the Latins in the poem *On the Genuine Books of Scripture*, saying that Matthew wrote Christ's miracles for the Hebrews, Mark for the Italians, Luke for the Greeks, and John for all. And who would conclude from this that John wrote in all languages?
2. Even if he did say this, what then? Not even the opponents themselves would wish to be bound by the authority of Nazianzen either in dogmatic or historical matters—much less that we should be bound. Lest we go far afield: in this very matter, and concerning this same poem, they betray themselves all too plainly. Here is the scholium of Jacobus Billius, abbot of Prunay: "Among the spurious, many books of Scripture are excluded here (namely by Nazianzen in the poem cited) from the catalogue of the true and genuine, which nevertheless the holy Church has pronounced to be true and lawful, and has restored them, as it were, to their rightful standing. But in Gregory's time, nothing certain had yet been decided about this matter."
3. To the authority of Nazianzen we oppose Jerome, *Epistle* 123, and Augustine, book 1, *On the Harmony of the Evangelists*, chapter 2, who testify (as Possevinus there admits, and Baronius at year 45) that he wrote in Greek.
4. Whatever Nazianzen may have said, Possevinus still does not prove that the Greeks (that is, the Fathers) held this view—unless perhaps he wishes, in this one Nazianzen, to include the entire Greek Church collectively; and then, in turn, to grant us that, from this poem of the one Nazianzen, it is concluded by the authority of all Greek antiquity against the apocryphal books.
5. Still less does it appear from this that the ancient Churches and Fathers

throughout all Syria held this view, since he produces no testimony and no author. Genebrard's reliability and authority are of no value among us.

VII. Reason

Moreover, Cardinal Sirleto, a very learned man, had noted certain improper Greek words in the Greek Gospel of Mark, which appear to derive from a Latin copy—whether (as they say) the original—having been translated into Greek in a semi-Latin manner. Thus Possevinus.

Reply. There is no valid inference: a few Latin words occur—indeed, also Latinisms—therefore it was written in Latin. Why should not the New Testament be said to have been written in Hebrew? And the Gospel of John in Chaldaic, or targumic? And the Acts of the Apostles, and other books, to have been written in Latin, because words occur there such as *spira*, *linteum*, *census*, *sudarium*, etc., and other Latin terms? As for what he adds there: “And yet they report that the Gospel of Mark itself is preserved at Venice; which, when he was staying at Aquileia, he is said to have written—sent by Peter, they say, to found that church.”

Reply. I admit that I cannot grasp whether, with Baronius, he wishes to claim that a Greek copy is preserved there, or rather a Latin one. But the phrases “they report,” “they say,” sufficiently indicate that he is selling smoke to the unwary reader.

VIII. Reason

This very point is chiefly recommended by that reasoning: because Mark, since he was Peter's interpreter—if he wrote the Gospel for the benefit of the Romans (which is held to be most fully established)—what reason was there for him to write in Greek rather than in Latin? Especially since Tiberius the Emperor, by his authority and example, caused the same Greek language at Rome to fall out of use among the best people, and so forth. Thus Baronius, year 45, §—where he cites Suetonius, *Tiberius* ch. 71, and *Claudius* ch. 16.

Response. Mere conjectures, and sand without lime. For:

1. Above we have seen how certain it is that he wrote at Rome for the benefit of the Romans.
2. Granted that he wrote for their benefit—does it follow from that that he wrote in Latin? Why is it not similarly inferred that Luke wrote in Syriac, because he

wrote for the benefit of Theophilus, a noble citizen of Antioch, while he himself was an Antiochene, as is shown from Clement, *Recognitions*, book 10, last chapter—Baronius likewise, year 58, § 32.

3. What is added about the Greek language falling out of use produces no valid consequence. Did authors, therefore, in the Roman Empire—indeed, even in the city itself—cease, after the times of Tiberius and Claudius, to write in Greek? The contrary is shown by so many volumes published in Greek, both ecclesiastical and secular, the catalogue of which we could present from the chronicles.

IX. Reason

Mark was Peter's interpreter, and from Peter's preaching he took what he wrote as the Gospel. Since, therefore, it is certain that Peter spoke to the Romans in the Roman language, how could Mark have written in Greek rather than in Latin? Thus Baronius, § 41.

Response. The antecedent is confirmed by mere conjecture, or at most by human testimony; and the consequence is plainly a straw one. As if someone were to say that Luke was Paul's interpreter, and wrote the Gospel from Paul's mouth; and that Paul spoke Syriac to Theophilus and the other Antiochenes; and consequently that Luke wrote in Syriac, not in Greek.

After a matter so well managed, Baronius concludes: "Therefore, by these almost necessary reasons, we are not only persuaded, but are almost bound and tightly constrained, and we are plainly compelled, to affirm that the Gospel of Mark was composed by him in Latin rather than in Greek." The reader, therefore, has a semblance of certainty of Roman-ecclesiastical antiquities (in matters of faith, according to their dictates, one clings more and more safely to these than to the very word of God) almost, nearly, and, as it were, sealed by Baronius.

X. Reason.

What Possevinus stammered and muttered, Baronius explains in this way in the same place: "It is reported by tradition rather than by the sure testimony of the ancients, that Mark himself translated into Greek his Gospel, which he had written in Latin at Rome, when he was staying at Aquileia—having been sent there by Peter to establish that church—and that the original itself, to be preserved for a long time, was finally transferred to Venice."

Response. With such stories he is accustomed to detain and lead the reader astray—stories in which he himself does not believe. And these, namely, coals increase the treasury of antiquities.

Problem 15: *Whether any translation of Scripture is, in itself, authentic; and whether the Eastern translations are superior and more useful than the modern Western ones, and therefore ought to have greater authority among us.*

Answer (first part): I simply deny it. This has been proven sufficiently and more than sufficiently by Whitaker, Chamiers, and Rivet—whom one should consult.

Answer (second part): I also deny the latter claim, regarding usefulness and authority either in itself, or as far as concerns the *φιλοψευττες* (those who can compare them with the originals). For they do not doubt that the Zurich translation (Tigurina), those of Pagninus, Arias Montanus, Münster, Beza, and the Dutch, English, French, Italian (both Brucioli and Deodati), Spanish (that of Cyprian de Valera), and German (that of Piscator) express the original text more faithfully and accurately than the Eastern translations.

Certainly, the Arabic Old Testament (if indeed it was produced in the East and not at Rome) cannot be read in the Psalms without weariness and indignation any more than the Greek and the Vulgate. Better is that Arabic version of the Pentateuch, procured by Jews in Africa and published by Erpenius. The Syriac of the Psalms is far better, as also that of the New Testament, and likewise the Arabic New Testament—yet none of these is better than the Western versions just mentioned. See Gläsius, *Philologia Sacra*, p. 168.

The Ethiopic Psalter, almost entirely (with a few exceptions), is fashioned after the Greek translation; as will immediately be evident to anyone who merely greets it at the threshold; and this is also admitted by its editor Potken in the preface. Whatever is found from the books of the New Testament in that language that was published at Rome was either produced there as an aid and comfort to the Vulgate interpreter, or, if brought from Ethiopia, it was published there not without Roman interpolation. Indeed, in the Psalter, Psalm 14, this is evident.

Scaliger not obscurely indicates that a translation of the Acts of the Apostles was made at Rome from the Italian of the Vulgate by some Abyssinian, a papal

dependent and subject to the Roman Church, in *De emendatione temporum*, p. 182.

The authors of the Ethiopic translation of Matthew seem to betray themselves, in that—like the Maronites (who in the year 1182 subjected themselves to the Roman Church)—they acknowledge the Roman See.

Concerning the Coptic, Armenian, Persian, and Iberian versions (which are said to be available at Rome): if they are published there through the pupils of the College of the Propagation of the Faith, nothing else can be expected.

Therefore, there is no reason why, from the darkness and barbarism of today's Easterners—especially those at Rome who have become papists—we should expect any new or exceptional light, or display scraps of sentences from them in foreign characters, as though they could in any way harm the lights of Western interpreters and translations (especially those of Beza or Arias Montanus in the New Testament).

Concerning the Targums, one should think thus: that they are very useful *ad hominem* in disputations with the Jews; otherwise, since they often depart too far from the original text—indeed, and in many places “Rabbinize” or “Talmudize.” See on them the special treatise of Helvicus, and Tremellius’ preface to the Latin version of the Targum on the Twelve Prophets; Buxtorf’s *Bibliotheca Rabbinica*; Bartholomew Mayer’s *Sacred Philology*, part 3; Francis Tayler’s preface to the version of the Jerusalem Targum on the Pentateuch; and Christopher Cartwright’s preface to his notes on Genesis.

We concede that the Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, etc. versions can have a similar use among Easterners, if indeed we must deal with them concerning religion. For if they are alien from the Roman Church—as commonly all are (except the Syrian Maronites on Mount Lebanon)—they will certainly listen to their own local versions, produced in the East. But if they favor Rome, or depend on it, they will admit only their own versions, either fabricated at Rome, or interpolated there, or at least published there.

Besides, these versions serve for the knowledge of those languages which are offshoots of Hebrew and have great kinship with it—such as Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic—without which those who are seriously devoted to Hebrew studies can scarcely do.

As for the remaining languages, which are neither mothers nor daughters nor sisters of Hebrew (I mean Persian, Armenian, Coptic, Turkish): I judge that for a theologian some knowledge—or at least a taste—of them is by no means unbecoming or idle, both for more properly understanding the worship and antiquities of those churches, and also for explaining certain words that occur in Holy Scripture and in the Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Greek languages.

Only let it be guarded against, lest by love of these things someone grow weary of the better gifts already bestowed upon our Westerners since the time of the Reformation, and—through an itch for novelty—dislodge well-founded ecclesiastical and straightforward explanations of Scripture from their place; and lest he make more of those Eastern versions because the languages are exotic and unknown to more people.

And this is my judgment concerning the comparison of the original Scripture with various versions, whether Eastern or Western.

But if anyone prefers to mock such things rather than learn, seek, or inquire—let him enjoy his own judgment; we will enjoy ours.

I wrote these things thus in the year 1649. But afterwards there came out the Samaritan, Arabic, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Persian translations in the London Polyglot edition of the Bible.

Problem 16: *Whether—and consequently toward a solid theological learning—the knowledge of Rabbinism contributes anything to the equipment for translating and explaining the Old, indeed also the New Testament.*

Answer. I affirm it, and for several reasons.

1. First: so that we may understand their commentaries on Scripture (especially those which they call *Perushim*, distinctly from *Midrashim*; that is, textual or literal, grammatical, philological). For of these it may be said no less that they are the fathers of Hebrew-biblical learning, than the Scholastics were called by Julius Caesar Scaliger the fathers of human wisdom. Let at least the one who has not read them consult the excellent *Thesaurus* of Pagninus, enlarged and supplemented by Mercerus, Bertram, and Cevalerius.

2. Second: so that very many phrases, sayings, proverbs, and antiquities of the Scriptures may be unfolded all the more successfully. See Broughton in his commentaries on Daniel, and Drusius' works everywhere, and on the words of the New Testament; Buxtorf's preface on Rabbinic abbreviations; the notes of Angelo Canini on the words of the New Testament. But, so that I may pass over Fagius, Cocceius, L'Empereur, Selden, Schickard, Buxtorf the son, and other cultivators of this learning, as well as certain commentators on Scripture who deserve mention: among the most recent I point to Theodor Hackspan, who attached his own treatise to the *Nizzachon* of R. Lipman which he published, in which he deliberately proves the varied and manifold use of Jewish writings in theology. Let lovers of learning, I pray, read him; and they will not have labored in vain. The usefulness of Rabbinic writings is also shown especially by Ainsworth in his very learned English notes on the Pentateuch, where he frequently draws Talmudic streams from Maimonides' *Jad Chazaka* into this field; but—to speak truly—he is too indulgent toward them. This was noted in him by the excellent theologian, and his well-known fellow countryman Paget, in the appendix to his refutation of the Brownists (in English).
3. Third: so that from them they may learn the history of the errors and blindness of the Jews, and thus engage with them more successfully.
4. Fourth: so that from them they may gather true and sound points to set against the Jews—or, if they are false, at least use them for forcing them into contradiction and absurdity. Let Hackspan, in the place just cited, be consulted; and also the one who, after him, very recently treated this matter expressly: Christopher Cartwright, in the preface to his selected Targumic-Rabbinic materials on Genesis.

Yet, by way of caution, I add: the Rabbinic-Talmudic apparatus is not, simply speaking, necessary for the solid and ecclesiastical interpretation of most—or even many—passages of the New Testament, as some appear to assert hyperbolically.

Problem 17: *What judgment should be made about the Samaritan Pentateuch, which is now published with the Paris Royal Bibles?*

Answer. Morinus, in his *Exercises on the Samaritan Pentateuch*, endeavors to ascribe purity and authenticity to it; but against him Simeon Muis, professor of

the Hebrew language in Paris, vindicates the authenticity of our Hebrew text; and after him Hottinger, in his *Anti-Morinian Exercises*, where he shows the manifold corruption of that edition. Nevertheless, we readily grant some use to the Samaritan edition—namely, in comparison with the Judaeo-Samaritans, who hold it alone to be genuine and authentic. Further, concerning the Samaritans, and their worship, language (which is none other than Syro- or Chaldeo-Hebrew), and the diversity, origin, antiquity, etc. of their characters, it must be treated elsewhere.

Problem 18: *Should supplements of sentences or phrases be inserted into translations by the interpreter?*

Answer. As to sentences, we absolutely deny it. As to phrases, we distinguish.

- If by *phrase* you mean an interpretation, or a word—whether catagorematic or syncategorematic—which by the force and necessity of syntax, or of a purely grammatical consideration of the speech, is necessarily required in the language, for example, in Dutch, French, etc., then we certainly concede it.

- But if by *phrase* there is meant a word or words which, when the whole discourse is considered logically and according to its real interpretation of meaning, are inserted by a necessary consequence, we prefer—and it is altogether safer—that such implied elements be inserted in commentaries, or written in the margin; or else that a careful distinction be made between the sacred text itself, or the letter of the text, which is presented by that translation simply, plainly, and sincerely, and the exposition by a commentary or paraphrase upon that text, or directed to that text. But let someone raise an objection.

1. Objection. Enough and more than enough precaution is taken if supplements of this kind are distinguished from the letter of the text by another typeface.

Answer. I reply that it is safer if they are written in the margin; for in this way we remove from ourselves every occasion of error, and from our opponents every occasion of quibbling. For the less learned do not always notice that distinction; and in time that difference might be neglected by printers. Be that as it may, at least then our opponents will not beat us down with their quibbles—such as the one about the falsified text of Romans 3:28 through Luther's translation, which by the force of sense and consequence supplies only; although the Syriac version,

inserted by the Roman Catholics into the Royal Bible work, and published several times separately by their own people through Widmanstadius, Boderianus, and Plantin, supplies the same by its *balehoud* (“only,” “alone”).

2. Objection. The purity, grace, and elegance of the language into which the translation is made cannot be maintained otherwise.

Reply.

1. This cannot be said of all the additions that occur in Latin and vernacular translations.

2. It is better to attend to fidelity and sincerity in presenting the inspired Scripture than to the purity and polish of the language. Therefore, I do not disapprove of Arias Montanus, who preferred to offend against the polish of the Latin language rather than fail to express closely the Hebrew or Greek letter.

Problem 19: Has no one brought greater learning and a fuller equipment of languages to the translation of Scripture after Jerome than Jerome?

Reply. Casaubon reports, in a letter prefixed to his Greek epigrams translated from Martial, that Scaliger indeed judged so. But I do not yet see on what grounds this can be said.

If you look at the Old Testament, why did Pagninus, Arias Montanus, Leo Juda (that is, the Zurich translators—and Vatablus, who most approved that version), Münster, Tremellius, and Junius bring a smaller oriental apparatus than Jerome? And if Bonaventure Cornelius Bertram, Fagius, Cevallerius, Buxtorf, Elias Hutter, Broughton, Schindler, L’Empereur, and other Christian Rabbis had wished to translate, why would they not have done work equal to his?

As to Beza’s equipment for translating the New Testament, his incomparable notes bear witness—concerning which there is a splendid encomium by Scaliger in the epitaph that Beza wrote. In knowledge of Biblical Hebrew idiom, as also of the Greek language, he yielded nothing to Jerome (to speak most modestly).

Jerome never possessed complete rabbinic and Talmudic learning (that “extra weight” which Broughton missed in Beza). Indeed, I would even say that Scaliger himself was better furnished for this work; for by assiduous reading and meditation on Scripture through so many decades, and by handling theological

matters, he would have surpassed him as easily—since in knowledge of languages he was in no way inferior.

I grant, indeed, that the learned men of this present and the preceding century abound in many aids which Jerome then lacked, and that through him and others the ice has been broken successively, and now more can be added with what they discovered. But it does not follow from this that no one better furnished has approached this work, or even can still approach it.

Problems Concerning Scripture

PART FIVE

Reply to THOMAS PETER BORSAL, a Pannonian-Hungarian. 13 Feb. 1650

Problem 20: *Should we place greater trust in the interpretations of Scripture by the orthodox (whose writings remain), or rather in those of more recent writers—though not absolutely, but hypothetically; not as norms, but as guides and handholds, insofar and to the extent that they are analogous to Scripture?*

Reply. I affirm the latter (the more recent), for these reasons:

1. Because of greater knowledge of the original languages.
2. Because of greater and better knowledge of sound and sober philosophy and method (especially logic), since not a few of the Fathers philosophized rather thinly; and others had not sufficiently unlearned the prejudiced errors of Platonic philosophy and of the pseudo-philosophers among the Gentiles, which they had imbibed from early age.
3. Because of a greater and better apparatus, and greater and better aids to interpretation, which the earlier writers lacked—such as multiple concordances, indexes or thesauri, keys, and so forth; along with the frequency of schools and academies, and studies and exercises of every kind—philological, philosophical, and theological—within them.
4. Because almost all the sayings and doctrines of Scripture have been debated and tossed about in many ways, and repeatedly, over a long succession of years by ancient and new heretics.

To such a degree do those institute theological studies unhappily who place the beginning, or the first help, of genuine interpretation in the reading of certain Fathers—if not in a flighty and commonplace glance. The result is that, clinging to feeble, uncertain, and confused—often also scanty—conceptions, they can never strive toward any solid theology; or they strike upon the rocks of errors and prejudices; or, after at some point comparing and inspecting the interpretation and theology of recent writers (with which their commonplace and scarcely half-theological improvisations cannot compete), they fall into an accusation against orthodox interpretation, and thus slide into some skepticism, or neutralism, or some syncretistic papism.

The corruption of scholastic theology is reduced chiefly to two sources: namely, interpretations and opinions rashly adopted—often also badly understood or applied—from the Fathers, and from glosses and postils collected from various parts; and, secondly, any and all sayings and maxims of Aristotle rashly and slavishly put forward or imposed, not rarely badly understood and worse applied.

Let anyone who has leisure compare Part 1 of the Select Disputations, under the title “On the Fathers and Scholastic Theology,” where we treat these matters more fully, and at the same time indicate the proper use of the Fathers and the scholastics.

Examples of absurd or unfortunate patristic interpretations may be observed in brief in Beza’s notes and in Cornelius a Lapide’s commentary.

Problem 21: *What should be thought about “supplementary” (so to speak) interpretations?*

Answer. A supplement is twofold: either textual, meant to obtain a verbal interpretation; or historical, pertaining to real explanation and commentary. Concerning the former, we spoke above in Problem 18.

The latter, in turn, is fourfold: it either adds and supplies (1) a cause, or (2) a circumstance of place or time, or (3) an action, or (4) a quality, or some other adjunct of persons or actions.

In general we disapprove all such things, if they are forced upon people as genuine interpretations, or if they are introduced into ecclesiastical doctrine and preaching as though they were part of it—without distinction, caution, or prior warning. The reason is evident:

1. Because we ought not to be wise beyond what is fitting (Rom. 12). And he who speaks should speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4). Let the opponents of the Papacy be consulted in the questions concerning the perfection and interpretation of Scripture.
2. Because divine faith ought not to be produced, preserved, or stirred up by fables (2 Pet. 1:16) or by vain conjectures, but by the Word of God alone—which is able to make us wise unto salvation. Especially since there is danger partly of

deception and seduction, and partly of scandal. For the more unlearned would easily persuade themselves that these human additions, no less than the matters and histories expressed in Scripture, are objects of divine faith and ought to be received with the same affection of piety and reverence as those. The wise of this age, and all who openly or secretly shun the light of Scripture or oppose it, would from this seize an occasion to slander, claiming that all the deeds and doctrines of Scripture—and consequently the mysteries of the Christian faith—are uncertain, doubtful, and foolish, as being supported by, or interwoven with, fables and deceptive conjectures.

But let us consider these supplements in particular, so that their vanity may be more clearly seen.

1) Supplements of the first kind: *Aetiological*

These, without Scripture, explain impulsive or final causes, or the adequate reasons, of plans, sayings, and deeds of every kind that are recounted in Scripture. Commentaries, postils, sermons, and “sacred annals” in the Papacy teem with such worthless assumptions. Would that the Fathers—especially the writers of the intermediate age—had not paved the way here. Indeed, would that some of our own had refrained more from those oft-worn aetiologies of the Fathers and others—whose proof, if anyone demanded from the Scriptures, would yield no other answer than: “It seems so to me,” or “I read it somewhere in some author.”

To aetiological supplements may also be referred the identification of persons—for example: what were the names of the Magi; of the bridegroom at Cana of Galilee; of the sinful woman in Luke 7; of the one who pierced Christ’s side in John 19; of the thieves on the cross in Luke 23; of Cleophas’s companion in Luke 24; and so on. A cornucopia of stupid and inept aetiologies you will find in Durandus’s *Rationale of the Divine Offices*.

2) Supplements of the second kind: *Peristatic* (circumstantial)

These, without Scripture, note the places or times of events—for example: at what hour or watch of the night, and on what day and month, Christ’s birth occurred; to what place in Egypt Christ came, and where he stayed with his parents; from what definite side of the mountain or what definite spot, and in what posture of body, Christ ascended into heaven; and so forth.

3) Supplements of the third kind

These, without Scripture, supply actions, adjuncts, or even entire events and narratives. Shameful and almost infinite examples occur everywhere among the Roman Catholics. To make a compendium, consult Bonaventure and Ludolph of Saxony on the life of Christ; or the life of Christ described by Jerome Xavier and, by his order, translated into Persian—published clearly and elegantly in Latin by Louis de Dieu, with necessary critical notes.

But if those authors are not at hand, let the commentaries of Cornelius a Lapide on the Evangelists and Acts be examined—especially on the first two or three chapters, on the history of the passion and resurrection.

Refutations of the evasions and objections that might be brought forward on behalf of those supplementary interpretations I reserve for another occasion.

Problem 22: What is to be determined concerning allegorical interpretations?

Answer.

1. Allegorical interpretations are not the genuine sense of Scripture

They are not genuine interpretations of the sense of Scripture (which is only one). Therefore, they are not to be admitted as proofs in theological arguments concerning matters that pertain to faith and morals.

See the solid determination of our theologians against the threefold mystical sense—namely the allegorical, tropological, and analogical—in Chamier, or Rivet in the *Isagoge*, or Ames in *Bellarminus Enervatus*.

2. Yet not all allegories are to be rejected

Nevertheless, we do not for that reason reject all allegories. For if they are found in the Scriptures, they must be explained there, and brought over into theological teaching—just as all tropical expressions and words, especially metaphorical ones, which are so many contracted similes.

However, this caution must be observed: allegories must not be applied further for proof than Scripture itself applies them.

But if, for the explanation of theological dogmas of Scripture, ecclesiastical or scholastic allegories are introduced from elsewhere, this alone must be observed: that it be done modestly, soberly, consistently, learnedly, and worthily, in

keeping with the holiness and gravity of Scripture and theology. Moreover, such things are to be used only as clarifications to illustrate, not as arguments to prove, nor are they to be said, as sacred and mystical symbols, to mystically signify something.

To these difficulties and cautions must be referred and subjected what Maximilian Sandæus discusses at length concerning symbolic theology and its kinds, and what Classinus compiles concerning the mystical wisdom of the Egyptians.

Therefore, we reject:

I. The bad habit of allegorizing and of theologizing symbolically

We reject the bad habit of allegorizing and of theologizing symbolically, which prevailed among not a few of the Fathers and writers of the Middle Ages, especially among the Papists, and still prevails.

To pass over sermons and commentaries on Scripture for the present: when theologians have explained the game of chess theologically; the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid mystically or allegorically; the deeds of the Romans morally; the procedure of Belial against the human race in the form and pattern of a legal process—they do not seem to have acted with sufficient modesty and seriousness.

Among more recent writers, among the Lutherans, Jacobus Herrenschmit in the year 1634 published a *Neo-Symbolic and Theologico-Politico-Physical Postil*, in which he proposes and sets forth each Sunday pericope hieroglyphically and emblematically, for example: Andrew by a *loxia*; Christ by a rooster; Thomas by a camel; and so forth. If anyone wishes to read him, he will perhaps doubt whether these devices can be used with sufficient decorum and modesty for a sermon—although the speculative use of similarities and the comparison of things and authors that are brought forward there is not bad in itself.

The same must be said of Sandæus's Evangelical Device, or *Forest of Symbols*, published in the year 1640; where, among other things, God is represented by a player (p. 167), by an alchemist (p. 35), the divinity of Christ in humanity by fire in iron (p. 231), and the righteous man in the way of God's commandments by a dancer (p. 692).

II. An enthusiastic and libertine method of interpreting and theologizing

We reject an enthusiastic and libertine method of interpreting and theologizing, by which sacred history and its literal or historical sense—especially concerning the birth, life, passion, etc., of Christ the God-man (Θεάνθρωπος)—is emptied out.

Concerning this, perhaps elsewhere something must be said expressly.

III. The “excessive” and transcendent theology of so-called mystical theology

We reject the “excessive” and transcendent theology (as they call it) of mystical theology, concerning which see *Exercises of Piety*, chapter 3, where it treats of meditation.

IV. Methods of philosophizing that wrap themselves in allegories

We reject methods of philosophizing—Pythagorean, Lullian, Neo-Hermetic, etc.—which involve themselves in allegories, or flee to them, or engage in cabalizing.

Problem 23: *What is to be determined concerning cabalistic interpretations?*

Answer.

1. Conclusion: If “cabala” means allegorical or anagogical interpretation

If by *cabala* is understood an interpretation of an allegorical or anagogical sense (as Sixtus of Siena judges the true and genuine cabala ought to be understood, in his *Bibliotheca*, book 2, p. 78), then certainly the same must be said of it as in the preceding thesis.

To this belong illustrations of similarities and dissimilarities, both plain and wrapped in riddle, emblem, apologue, etc.—concerning which we give warning in the *Diatrobe on Sacred Philology*.

2. Conclusion: If it means a simple comparison or bare comparative speculation

If by it is understood a simple collation and comparison, or bare comparative speculation, both of words and of distinct things occurring in Scripture—without any causal account, or deduction and collecting of one from another, whether from the prior as a cause of being, or only from the posterior as a reason or cause of knowing—then it is not bad in itself.

Things agree either in qualities, or in actions, or in relations—specifically in time, place, number, words articulated by letters and syllables. This can have some place in the outer layers of interpretations of Scripture (for it by no means penetrates or reaches the kernel), provided only that every notion of mystery, or of symbolic signification, or of mystical and sacred sealing—as though intended and delivered through Scripture by the Holy Spirit as Author—is absent.

3. Conclusion: If it means a certain mystical concord and theological demonstration

But if it is understood as some common or mystical mutual agreement of universal or singular things—especially of persons—through supernatural or natural dependence, subordination, coordination, and from that a certain and theological demonstration and interpretation of Scripture is taken: then it is certainly vain, dangerous, and superstitious.

The first general reason is that such interpretations and demonstrations are without the Scriptures; therefore, they are illegitimate. For Scripture teaches it nowhere—nor do sound reason and sober philosophy.

The second is drawn from the absurd consequence: for in that way anything whatever could be deduced and inferred from anything whatever, provided only that some correspondence of letters, or syllables, or numbers, or figures, etc., could be detected—so that Scripture and theology would finally collapse into many ridiculous and absurd things.

The third is drawn from those who devised it: because its origin—or at least its principal cultivation—comes from faithless Jews; and it easily drags after itself a whole train of superstition, vain curiosity, magic, and divination. It plays along with the Jews and weaves that veil, or constitutes a great part of it, of which 2 *Corinthians* 3, etc. speaks; but it casts darkness upon the true sense of Scripture and turns people away from saving truth.

And thus let it be concluded against the Jewish Kabbalists and the mystical commentaries which they call *midarshin* or *derashin* (see their writings noted in Buxtorf's Rabbinic Library); and also against those Papist theologians who, to be sure, indulge in Kabbalistic methods (as Franciscus Georgius in his *Problems on Scripture*), especially those who openly defend Kabbalah, such as Gaffarel in the treatise *On the Hidden Mysteries of Divine Kabbalah*. Reuchlin's works *On*

Kabbalah and *On the Wonder-Working Word* should also be consulted, as well as Archangelus of Borgo Nuovo, and other Kabbalistic writings published by Pistorius in folio in such-and-such a year.

But let us run through several kinds of Kabbalah, so that its vanity may appear all the more clearly.

Kabbalah can be distinguished into verbal and real.

Verbal Kabbalah includes: *gematria*, *notarikon*, *temurah*, *atbash*, etc. On these, see Buxtorf's abbreviations, the Rabbinic lexicon, Rittangel in the notes on *Jetzira*, p. 29; Senensis, book 2 of the *Bibliotheca*, pp. 172, 177; Cunaeus, book 2, *On the Hebrew Commonwealth*, ch. 8; Glassius, *Sacred Philology*, part 1, pp. 373, 394; Alsted, book 1 of the *Mnemonics*, ch. 29—where you will also find other cited authors.

Gematria, which the orthodox rightly call *arithmancy*, is the most vain and superstitious of all. For by what divine, immediate, infallible revelation—or by what solid reasoning—will it be established that, because the letters of the alphabet mark the same number in two words that signify distinct things, the identity of those things, or their correspondence in causes, effects, properties, etc., or the dependence of one upon the other (as upon a cause or a subject, etc.), is thereby indicated?

Examples among the cited writers—and in Reuchlin, Archangelus of Borgo Nuovo, and similar Kabbalistic admirers among the Papists—when examined, will show its vanity. To this should be referred all that Bongus contains in his thick book *On the Mysteries of Numbers*, if indeed any efficacy is attributed to numbers.

Real Kabbalah is either philosophical or theological.

In the philosophical kind, *physics* or *cosmology* excels. See an example of it, displayed in the tabernacle of Moses, in Senensis, book 3, p. 177.

The theological kind concerns the names of God and the number of angels—here, concerning names set forth by 12 and 42, etc. But where has God taught that attributes concerning God, angels, etc., are to be hunted out and

demonstrated from letters compared and transposed, or from numbers gathered from that comparison or transposition?

Someone may object: Christian teachers—even some of ours—approve Kabbalistic methods and by them defend the truth of religion against the Jews.

Reply: If they approve it in itself and through itself (which I scarcely believe), then I certainly cannot approve of them; but if they have used it as *arguments to the person* (ad hominem), they certainly do not oppose our position. See the prolegomena of the distinguished l'Empereur to *Halichot Olam*.

Problem 24: *What is to be decided concerning types in Scripture—explained and applied—likewise concerning the number 666 (Rev. 13). Whether these are not forms of Kabbalah, and whether they grant us permission to practice the Kabbalistic art with respect to any other texts of Scripture and the mysteries of faith, as well as moral matters.*

Answer. Yes indeed—after the Rabbis, the Roman Catholics would have it so: they all promote the mystical sense, that is, a mystical interpretation of Scripture; and some of them even defend a kind of Kabbalah. See Senensis and Sandeus in the place cited; Cornelius a Lapide on Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 5:12, especially; and Serrarius, pp. 34–35, where he treats of the name of Jesus; Tholosanus in the *Syntax of the Marvelous Art* and in his commentary on the same; Pererius on Exodus 3, disputations 7, 8, and 9; Bongo on the mystery of numbers.

But these attempts are futile: for it belongs to no one to give and institute a type, or any sacred and mystical symbol, that figures past and future things—whether in an ordinary and perpetual way until the time of reformation, or in an extraordinary way—except to God alone (just as we judge concerning the sacraments). Thus, it must be learned from God's revelation and word alone in what God institutes that symbol, or by what symbols He has wished to express and set forth to us doctrine about God and diverse matters—for example, whether Mount Zion, the Ark of Noah, the city of Jerusalem, the land of Canaan, etc., mystically figure and present this or that to us: this depends on God's will and indication.

Therefore, it would follow that all other mountains, all arks or ships, likewise cities and regions of which Scripture makes mention, set forth and signify the same things. But this inference is invalid.

I say the same concerning the number of the name of Antichrist in Revelation 13, which Senensis in the place cited adduces as Kabbalah.

But these matters are to be explained expressly and more fully in the questions concerning symbols, mysteries, and types. Some occasion to speak of Kabbalah is also given in the disputations on prophecy and on superstition. On this subject write the Rabbinic authors; and among the Roman Catholics, Galatinus, Pico, Archangelus of Borgonovo, Franciscus Georgius, Gassarellus, etc.; likewise Kabbalah-inclined philosophers, Lullists, Neo-Hermetic writers, etc. And among our own, thinking better on this point: Alsted in the place cited; Wendelin in *Physical Contemplations*, section 1, p. 46; Sennert against the Paracelsists, ch. 13; and even among the Roman Catholics themselves, Mersenne on Genesis, and others.

So I wrote in the year 1650; but afterward, when the third part of the selected disputations was published, under the title *On Superstition*, I added an appendix on Kabbalah, p. 226. And in the second part of the selected disputations, under the title *On Prophecy*, we noted something about extended and far-reaching interpretations of the Scriptures.

Problem 25: *What is to be thought of the thirteen methods of the ancient Rabbis for interpreting the Pentateuch. These were collected by R. Ishmael, and published and explained in Latin by Philippus de Aquino, Paris, at the press of Joh. Laquehay, in the year 1629.*

Answer. They have nothing in common with Kabbalah; rather, they are nothing other than the same number of rules for investigating the literal and genuine sense of Scripture. Rules of this kind—general and specific—are commonly urged by our writers in the prolegomena to commentaries and in controversies concerning Scripture; and likewise by Roman Catholics, for example Salmeron in his prolegomena, Cornelius a Lapide, etc., in many places.

Problem 26. *Whether, and in what way, the judgment of decision concerning disputed interpretations and theological doctrines is attributed by our theologians*

to God alone, or to the Holy Spirit; and elsewhere, by others, to Holy Scripture; and again elsewhere, by not a few, to the Church or to a council on earth

Answer. By a proper distinction, these points can easily be reconciled.

§ I.

The first point is this: to God alone, properly—considered as absolute, independent, and the supreme judge, as the first truth revealing both externally and internally—there is ascribed an absolute, supreme, infallible judgment of decision. For He possesses the authority of persuading and convincing, of convicting and assuring minds and consciences, because He alone can enter into human minds and hearts and work within them.

But to Scripture there is ascribed, on earth, a supreme and infallible judgment—as to the first and supreme revealed truth, that is, as the sentence of the supreme judge (into which, as into an external principle, the final analysis of faith is made); and consequently as to an infallible dependent judge—not properly so called, but metonymically, that is, as the sentence of the supreme judge. For this reason Scripture is also said to speak to us and to judge or accuse us (Hebrews 12:5; John 5:45), in a figurative manner.

Therefore, when our theologians affirm either of these, or both, they by no means contradict either themselves or their own party.

§ II.

The second distinction is this: a *judgment of decision*—that is, a judgment of *definition*, or a *decisive* and *definitive* judgment—is said, distinctly and in contrast with a *judgment of discretion* (or *discretive* judgment), in a threefold respect:

1. In relation to God. In this sense, every judgment on earth—even that of the Prophets and Apostles—can be called *discretive* and *approbative*; and, in this respect, it is more properly an indication of the supreme judgment than a judgment. Hence those prophetic formulas: “Hear the word of the Lord,” “Thus says the Lord,” etc.
2. In relation to Scripture. In this sense, every judgment of whomever on earth (except that of angels, and of Prophets or Apostles dogmatizing by living voice and in writings, which is collateral with the judgment of Scripture) is only

discretive, that is, a judgment of *discretion*; and those who judge most truly are, more properly, *assessors* than *judges*.

3. In relation to other men, and this in two ways.

First: insofar as, by a *discretive* judgment—private, subsequent, and approving—each of the faithful tests and discerns all things in conscience (1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Thess. 5; 1 John 4:1).

Second: insofar as individual believers, privately—and even teachers and others, sometimes in public councils—supply deliberative judgments and brotherly counsel, yet without the authority of a vote or of a decisive judgment, because they are not competent ecclesiastical judges.

And thus a *judgment of decision*, or *definitive* judgment (namely, public, antecedent and prior, directive, authoritative, and potestative), is distinctly attributed to ecclesiastical predecessors, presbyteries, synods, and councils; who therefore can also be called, by name, a *judgment of decision*.

This is proved:

1. From those things which have been said concerning the famous Synod of Dordrecht in the year 1619, which was a lawful and competent judge of decision in the Belgian churches and in their name, and whose judgment was to be regarded as decisive concerning the Remonstrant controversies. See the Acts of the Synod of Dordrecht, Sessions 3, 25, 26, 64. And compare Isaac Junius, *Antapologia*, pp. 38, 39, 40; Vedelius, part 1, *Arcana of Arminianism*, book 2, ch. 6.

2. From those matters which are commonly disputed against the pretended power of the Remonstrants and others concerning the authority of the magistrate in sacred things. See Sopingius against the Anonymous (namely Grotius), *Good Faith of Sibrand*, at no. 54; Walaeus, *On the Power of the Magistrate in Sacred Things*, pp. 203, 205, 218, in the French quarto edition; Jacob Revius, on the same matter, questions 5, 8, 9; Guillaume Apollonius, on the same, part 1, selection 2, ch. 4.

3. From those things which are disputed for the lawful power of presbyteries and synods, against the opinion of the Independents: in Rutherford, *Defense of the Scottish Presbytery*, ch. 14; and some London ministers, in the book entitled *The Divine Right of Church Government*, ch. 4; and Paget, *Defense of Church Government*, part 2, ch. 1 (which three are published in the English language);

and Zadeel, or rather the Gallican Church, in the *Confirmation of Discipline*, etc., against Morelles, in French in octavo; Guillaume Apollonius, *Confidence concerning certain controversies*, ch. 6, question 1; Spanheim, in a letter to William Buchanan, class 3.

Finally, ecclesiastical canons composed in the Reformed churches agree, where they treat of synods. Most recently after all, the reverend assembly of English theologians, in the ecclesiastical order composed at London in 1648, published in English, p. 27, attributes to synods the power and authority “to judge and determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience in a manner agreeable to the word of God.” The judgment of the Church, and the judge of decision.

4. From those things which our writers commonly dispute against the Romanists in the matter of councils and of judges of controversies, where they expressly attribute to churches and synods sentences and judgments of decision, definition, and determination. See Davenant, *On the Judge of Controversies*; Sutlivius, book 1, against Bellarmine, *On Councils*, ch. 1, p. 270; Whitaker, *On Councils*, question 3, ch. 2; Chamier, tome 1, book 3, ch. 1, 11, 15; Alsted, in the supplement to Chamier, book 3, ch. 3 and 8; Pareus, in the *Eirenicum*, ch. 5, p. 26; Prideaux, lecture 22, ch. 3; Ames, in *Bellarminus Enervatus*, tome 1, disputations 8 and 10, and tome 2, disputation 3 and following.

In all these, Calvin went before them in the *Antidote to the Articles of Paris*, art. 19, and in *Institutes*, book 4, ch. 9, §13.

5. From those apologies by which, against the cavils of the Romanists, they contend that it is not abolished by the sentence of the Protestants that every controversy in the churches on earth is to be settled by the definition, decision, adjudication, and determination of the judgments of councils. See Hunnius and Heilbrunneus against Tanner—that is, in the apology for their disputation at Regensburg—pp. 351, 415, 428; Franciscus Junius against Bellarmine, and from that, with him, Bogermann against Grotius’s *Piety*, pp. 208, 209, 212, 215, 220, 221.

Molinaeus, in Treatise 1, *On the Judge of Controversies*, chapter 18 (compared with chapter 11), makes judgment a middle thing between *decision* and *discernment*, and attributes to it some authority and decision.

6. From those things which the writers of commonplaces commonly teach concerning the ecclesiastical power of judging, sanctioning, establishing,

condemning heresies, etc.—all of which sound like nothing less than a judgment and a judge of decision. See the Genevan Theses of Beza and Faius, disputation 62; Daneus, book 1, chapter 8, §§ 43, 44; Sohnius in the Heidelberg disputations, disputation 2; Polanus, book 1, chapter 45; the Leiden Synopsis, disputations 5, 30, 32, 33 (compared with disputation 49, § 28; 50, 51, 53, 70, 72); Diestius in the *Enchiridion Theologicum*, locus 29, thesis 5, and question 31; the Salmurian Theses published in the year 1641, pages 104 and 110–112; Wendelin in the *Prolegomena to Theology*, chapter 3.

From our own writers: Pareus on Romans 12, doubt 5; and after him Vedelius in the *Collegium* of Theological Disputations, disputation 22—who attribute to the magistrate not only a judgment of discernment, but also of definition and decision (that is, accidentally, namely with respect to the Word of God, as Vedelius speaks). However, stated absolutely in this way, we do not approve it. Let whoever regards this as important compare Part 1 of *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book 1, treatise 2, chapter 2 and following.

Johann Gerhard, in his *Isagogical Disputation* 2, chapter 15, § 5, says that authentic and ineffable judgment ought to be attributed to the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures, and to the Church judging according to the rule of Scripture. A fuller explanation of this distinction he perhaps gave in his *Commonplaces*, but that work was not at hand for me at the time.

But perhaps someone may object: properly speaking, it cannot be called judgment, or a judge of decision, on this earth.

Response:

1. Let it then be called improperly, analogically, in a certain respect, and in some manner.
2. If “properly” denotes the first analogate of an imperfect genus, it is certainly granted that God is properly a judge of decision—yet in such a way that the Church and synods, in their own kind, as the second analogate of the judge of controversies, may also be called a judge of decision.

2. *Objection:* Then some ultimate, definitive, and supreme judgment on this earth seems to be conceded.

Response: Granted, with a distinction—namely that it is ultimate *in a certain respect* (κατὰ τι), not simply. See Alting’s *Elenctica*, p. 301. And in this way

Melanchthon and Pezelius are to be understood, part 7, argument and response, p. 204; and the British theologians in the Synod of Dordrecht, session 29; and the Genevans there, p. 102.

3. *Objection:* Then definitive judgment on earth seems to walk in equal step with the judgment of God and of Scripture.

Response: By no means. For what, in comparison with the private, subordinate, consequent, approbative, and discerning judgment of any believers, is called public, governing (ἡγέμενον), ordering, of authority, of jurisdiction, ultimate, supreme, regulative, an “armed sentence” (namely in the external forum of the Church), a synodical decree, a canon, etc.—that same thing, in another respect and in comparison with the judgment of God (absolute, independent, simply and of itself supreme, ultimate, infallible), is called and must be called dependent, inferior, ministerial, secondary, limited, conditioned, fallible. Nor does it possess any authority or power that binds the conscience except secondarily, mediately, indirectly, ministerially, hypothetically, accidentally, and through another—not through itself. See Davenant, the cited treatise, part 1, pp. 3, 195, 200.

4. *Objection:* Then those judges of decision—namely God, Scripture, and the Church or a synod—seem to be placed in the same order.

Response: Denied. They are most diverse and distant by the whole kind—just as Christ and all the faithful are prophets, priests, and kings; and the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven belong to Christ and to the Church or its ministers. Therefore the Church or a synod is, and can be called, a judge of decision in relation to any private persons who examine and decide—but a fallible and limited one; whereas God alone is infallible and absolute. See this distinction in Davenant, the cited treatise, p. 127, and on Colossians 2:22; and Alsted in the *Didactico-Polemical Theology* and in the *Theological Distinctions*.

THEOLOGICAL DISPUTATION ON THE JUDGE AND NORM OF FAITH.

Respondent: ABRAH. MONTANUS, at Midwoud, North Holland, 18 June 1668.

Although this question has already been fully and solidly explained by our writers, so that nothing seems to be lacking for producing its proper knowledge, yet because some—by the counsel and preference of a new method, content with goods that arise within themselves—look into nothing from the most excellent writers of commonplaces or the most careful treatise-writers on this controversy (perhaps they do not even know them by name), we think we will do something worthwhile if we repeat this necessary doctrine anew and apply it.

§ 1. The terms that occur here are: faith, judge, norm.

Among theologians, faith sometimes signifies *the faith which is believed*, that is, the truth and doctrine of faith, or of the Christian religion; and thus it is used in Jude, v. 3. At other times it denotes *the faith by which we believe*, that is, an act or habit of the mind; and thus in Philippians 1:6; Ephesians 2:8; 2 Timothy 1:5. These differ from one another as an object differs from the act tending toward that object; for example, as γινωσκόν and γινώσις; as the *knowable* and *knowledge*; the *visible* and *sight*.

A judge is one who declares law to the people subject to him—generally to the whole people—by establishing, sanctioning, explaining, and applying the law, and by settling disputes that have arisen concerning that law.

The norm, or rule of judging, is the law itself as promulgated, which is the measure of what is right and what is wrong.

§ 2. The following questions can be raised here:

1. Who is the judge of faith or religion, and of controversies concerning faith or religion? With this question almost coincides the question: Who is the interpreter of Scripture?
2. What is the norm of faith or religion? With this question almost coincides the question: What is the norm of the interpretation of Scripture?

For the right determination of the first question, the following must be known beforehand.

1. A judge is so called either properly, or improperly (metonymically).

A judge, properly so called, is a person. Metonymically, the law is called the judge, and also the sentence of the judge, delivered and pronounced according to the law. Thus the law is said to judge both the cause and the person whose cause it is. John 7:15: “Does our law condemn anyone...” etc.; and 5:45: “There is one who accuses you, Moses,” that is, the Scripture of Moses.

So Cicero, in *On Duties*, says that a law is nothing other than a command; and in the book *On Laws*: “Laws always speak with one and the same voice to all.” And in *On the Orator*: “It can truly be said that the magistrate is the law speaking, but the law is the silent magistrate.”

2. A judge is either supreme, whose authority is highest and unassailable, so that one cannot or ought not appeal from him; or inferior and delegated, a minister of the supreme judge.

To the question, with our own side we answer as follows.

Conclusion I. The supreme, absolute, independent, infallible judge—properly so called—of faith and of controversies concerning faith is God alone, speaking externally and objectively through his Word, and internally and subjectively through his Spirit, or through the illumination of his Spirit—judging and persuading in hearts.

He is also the supreme and infallible interpreter of Scripture—through the Word and Scripture externally, and through the illumination of the Spirit internally. But if we wish to speak by way of appropriation, the supreme, absolute, infallible judge and interpreter of Scripture is the Holy Spirit, speaking to us in Scripture and through Scripture, and speaking within us and inscribing in us the sense and truth of Scripture—making us understand, assent, and believe, so that we may do, and understand, believe, and act.

And thus the Reformed and Protestants approve and defend the supreme, absolute, and infallible judgment belonging to God or the Holy Spirit. These same also approve and defend such supreme and infallible judgment

(concerning which the disputed question properly turns) as attributed to Scripture, inasmuch as Scripture is the sentence, pronouncement, and dictate of the supreme Judge, of supreme essential truth.

Conclusion II. The inferior, dependent, delegated, and ministerial judge is either extraordinary or ordinary.

The extraordinary judge is anyone θεόπνευστος (“God-breathed”) or θεοδίδακτος (“taught by God”), immediately and extraordinarily inspired by God. Such were the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists, who were led into all truth (John 16:13; 15:26–27; compare Galatians 1:1; 2 Peter 1:21). And these had the testimony that they would not depart from the Word and revealed divine truth, nor err in doctrine; and therefore they are called infallible—not absolutely (for absolute infallibility is a property of God), but hypothetically, by reason of divine gift, direction, and assistance.

Conclusion III. The ordinary, inferior, dependent, ministerial, fallible judge is either public, deciding or determining, or private, discerning.

The public judge is one who judges with a directive and governing prior judgment (ἡγεμονικῶ and directivo); and such are the ordinary and lawful teachers, pastors, and presbyters—whether single (Hebrews 13:17; Malachi 2:7) or many gathered into one in sacred assemblies, namely presbyteries and synods (Acts 15:2–23; Matthew 18:17 and following).

The private judge, judging with a judgment of discretion, is any adult believer—that is, anyone who believes actually and formally; any spiritual and intelligent person who judges all things (1 Corinthians 2:19 and 10:15), who ought to test the spirits, prove all things, and hold fast what is good (1 John 4:1–2; 1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Corollary I

That assertion—that God (who is absolutely and essentially infallible) can deceive if He so wills—must, at the very least, be called ill-sounding and offensive to pious ears.

The very famous Peter Molinaeus, in his *Judgment on the book of Moses Amyraldus*, etc., published at Rotterdam in the year 1649, book 2, chapter 2, page 94, makes the following judgment about a similar statement:

“It is new and altogether unfamiliar to Christian ears to say that Christ indeed could not have willed to sin, yet could have sinned if He had willed.”

And in chapter 6, p. 76:

“The whole book (of Amyraldus),” he says, “crackles with impossibilities, and continually posits impossible conditions, etc.: that God wills to grant salvation to men under an impossible condition, etc. Christ could not have willed to sin; yet He could have sinned, if He had willed. Finally, those little words *if only, provided that* are found more than two thousand times in this book, by which the learned man posits an impossible condition. Therefore, with good reason he calls his doctrines *Hypotheses*, that is, suppositions, so that not without cause a great man may be called a ‘hypothetical’ man.”

Thus far Molinaeus; see him there at greater length, as he demolishes those hypothetical assertions.

We add: What if, for the sake of showing off one’s cleverness, someone were to assert that God can sin, die, fall sick, sleep, act unjustly, deny Himself, lie in a promise and oath (contrary to 2 Timothy 2:13 and Hebrews 6:18), if He so wills? Such an asserter, with his “if He so wills,” should be sent to 2 Timothy 2:23: “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid,” etc.

Add that God can change Himself into a bodily substance—finite, dependent—or into some accident inhering in a substance; that He can positively produce Himself pre-existing, as He is thought to produce pre-existing Christ in papist transubstantiation by changing bread into Christ; that He can produce a creature infinite, eternal both before and after, independent in existence and in operations; that He can make two contradictories true at the same time; that He can produce another God or other gods equal to Him or superior to Him; that He can make what has been done undone, and restore virginity to a woman who has known a man, or make a violated woman a virgin, or raise up a virgin from ruin, as Jerome speaks—add to these that the Son of God, the great God and

Savior Christ, can assume and personally unite to Himself a sinful human nature; that in the assumed human nature He can sin, and consequently that the divine person—and the great God—can be damned (which Durandus and certain other Scholastics have absurdly, profanely, and blasphemously asserted), with the added phrase, “if He so wills.”

Add that God can command a man, under the penalty of eternal condemnation, to believe that there is no God; to worship and religiously honor and obey the devil, or the evil god of the Manichees; to blaspheme the true God; and that, with faith, trust, obedience, love, fear, and the other acts of the virtues prescribed in the first commandment of the Decalogue (according to interpreters of the Decalogue and our Catechism, and the catechetical writers on question 93), he should be carried and directed toward a stone, a crocodile, the serpent of Epidaurus, the sun, other planets, the devil, Vejovis, a quartan fever, etc.—“if He so wills.”

How monstrous, how horrible, how abominable such propositions would be—propositions in which it would be presupposed that God can will to do such things, or can will to be able to do such things.

But if they say that they do not maintain that God can will, nor will the being-able-to-do, then let them see how absurd and unstable this assertion will become: “God can do it, if He can will to do it,” that is, “He can, if He can”; namely, He can do it, if He can will to do it—for by the will of God all things are. Genesis 1: “God said, Let there be a firmament,” etc.

But thus to trifle idly, boldly, and profanely with the tremendous, adorable, incomprehensible glory and majesty of our God—to play in this way, to talk nonsense in this way—is neither wisdom nor piety in those who tremble at the word of God (Isaiah 66), whose dread is God (Isaiah 8), and who work out salvation with fear and trembling; who heed this saying: “Even to speak true things about God is dangerous.”

The hypothetical argument for the universality of Christ’s death has been refuted by us in part 2, selected disputations, under the title *On the Merit of Christ*.

Corollary II

Man's natural reason, or the human intellect, is not, nor can it be called, infallible.

Corollary III

That infants in the mother's womb exercise internal human actions—that is, that they rationally will and understand, apprehend simple things, compose and divide, reason discursively; philosophize about natural and secular matters; and *theologize* about divine and spiritual matters—can be proved neither by Scripture nor by reason.

Corollary IV.

Since the particular right and power of judging and interpreting the Scriptures belongs to the leaders in the Church, and this by virtue of their office and calling (as has been proved by us elsewhere), it is wrong that the use of that power—indeed even the ministerial teaching authority (διδασκαλική) itself—should be denied; and that this unlearned and wicked sarcasm should be hurled at them: that preachers seem, or think, that they possess the Bible by contract and by emphyteutic right.

§ 3. This question almost coincides with the first:

Who is the interpreter of Scripture?

Here again it must be considered:

1. That the interpreter is either supreme, absolute, infallible, from whom it is not possible—or ought not—to appeal; or inferior.
2. That “interpretation” is here understood as real interpretation, by which the genuine sense of Scripture is opened and taught.

To the question we respond with these conclusions:

1. Conclusion. The highest, independent, infallible interpreter of Scripture is the Holy Spirit, interpreting in Scripture and through Scripture, and teaching, persuading, and bringing to conviction the genuine sense of each passage. For the Spirit leads into all truth (John 16:13). And no one can name the Lord Jesus except by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3); therefore neither can anyone know him in and from the Scriptures and receive him by faith. “Did not our heart burn

within us, while he spoke to us on the way, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32). He illumines the eyes of the mind, opens hearts so that they attend (Acts 16:1). He puts his laws into their hearts and writes them upon their minds (Hebrews 10:16).

2. Conclusion. The inferior and dependent interpreter is either extraordinary or ordinary. The extraordinary interpreter is God-breathed (θεόπνευστος), one who, moved immediately and extraordinarily by the Spirit (2 Peter 1:23), acts and rightly interprets the Scriptures. The ordinary interpreter is dependent and fallible, and is either public and leading (ἡγemonikòς), that is, directive; or private.

Corollary 1. Scripture is called the interpreter of Scripture and the judge of controversy—not properly, but metonymically. Nor is there any reason for opponents to assail such a phrase slanderously. In Scripture such expressions occur: “The word that I have spoken, it will condemn him on that last day” (John 12:48). And: “And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons...” (Hebrews 12:5). Compare the places cited above in the preceding thesis, by which it is proven that Scripture is metonymically called judge and interpreter; and add Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is living...” and “it discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

“Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, book 3, chapter 28: When we wish to search the Scriptures, either it turns out that the matter has no controversy; or, if it does, it is determined from the same Scripture, by witnesses of it found wherever and applied.

“Likewise, the same author, book 2, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, chapter 33: This controversy requires a judge, and who will be the judge? Let Christ judge; let the Apostle judge with him, because in the Apostle Christ himself speaks.

“Optatus of Milevis, book 5: A judge must be sought from heaven; but why do we knock at heaven, when we have here in the Gospel the Testament?

Corollary 2. The leaders in the Church of the New Testament—namely, teachers and pastors—are, in a special sense, interpreters of Scripture, and are so called; just as jurists in the highest tribunals are both judges and interpreters of laws.

This is because they have authority and power (if they are fit), by virtue of an office lawfully conferred upon them and imposed on them, to interpret, preach,

and apply the Scriptures publicly in the Church (Acts 6:4; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 1:17; Titus 1:9).

This is because in the Old Testament the priests and Levites were interpreters, endowed with a particular power of interpreting (Malachi 2:7; Deuteronomy 1:15 and 33:10; 2 Chronicles 23:4 and 26:29; Luke 11:52; Matthew 2:4).

§ 4. The second question is:

What is the rule (norm) for the interpretation of Scripture?

Here it must be known beforehand:

1. What is meant by a norm.
2. With respect to which judge and interpreter a norm is here said to be a norm.

I. “Norma” (Greek: κανών)

“Norma,” in Greek κανών, in the proper sense used by geometers and architects, means an instrument for a straight line—namely, a geometric and architectural tool used to raise a straight line in the same plane upon a straight line. Its synonyms are *regula* (rule), *amussis* (εὐθύς), and *libella* (level). It also signifies the tongue or pointer of a balance, which must be “normal,” that is, properly aligned.

Improperly, or metaphorically, among political writers it signifies a law or right, which is the rule of living well.

A “norm” is distinguished into:

- a straight one, which is inflexible and cannot be moved from its straightness; and
- a Lesbian or leaden one, that is, a flexible one.

Concerning this, Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, book 5, chapter 10) explains why not everything is comprehended under law, nor can a law be enacted concerning everything, and why there is need of a decree of the people. For the matter, he says, being indefinite, the rule (κανών) is also indefinite—just as the leaden rule used in Lesbian construction is. For it is twisted and bent to the shape of the stone, and the rule does not remain the same; so too a decree of the

people can be fitted and applied to daily matters. In this way, the Papists, unskillfully, compare Holy Scripture to a Lesbian and leaden rule.

“Canon,” metaphorically so called, occurs in Galatians 6:16: τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχεῖν, where it signifies a completely straight path according to strictness, as though made according to a rule. Likewise, Philippians 3:16: πλὴν εἰς ὃ ἐφθάσαμεν, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν κανόνι—“Nevertheless, to what we have attained, let us walk by the same rule.” Here Theophylact says: “By the same rule, that is, by the same faith, by the same boundary. For a rule admits neither addition nor subtraction; therefore do not alter the commands of the Spirit.”

Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, book 2, chapter 3) says that by pleasure and pain we “canonize” (κανονίζειν) our actions—that is, we direct our actions as by a rule. Thus, commonly among theologians, Scripture is called a “canon,” and the books of Scripture are called “canonical books.”

A synonym of “norm” is μέτρον, “measure.” Concerning measure and what is measured in general, discussion is found in metaphysics. Aristotle says that a good man is the measure and canon of good and evil.

II. The norm for interpreting Scripture

When the “norm of the interpretation of Scripture” is asked for, what is meant is an instrument, medium, or principle by which, from which, and through which the interpretation of Scripture and judgment concerning the sense of Scripture ought to be made.

With respect to the supreme Judge and Interpreter, no external and created norm is sought, nor can there be one—but only with respect to an inferior and subordinate interpreter and judge. For God, who is the first and the last, who is independent, who is the cause of causes, cannot be caused, determined, regulated, defined, or modified by anything outside and above Himself, nor can He depend on anyone. And Scripture is the effect and work of God; it is from God; it is the law and sentence of the supreme Legislator and Judge.

We therefore answer the proposed question: Scripture alone is, for inferior judges or interpreters, a certain, infallible, inflexible principle and norm—of faith (that is, of what is to be believed), of interpretation, and of judgment—from which one cannot, or ought not, appeal.

Proof 1: from Isaiah 8:20; 2 Peter 1:20–21. Here add all the arguments usually brought forward for the divinity, authority, self-authentication (αὐτοπιστία), and trustworthiness (ἄξιοπιστία) of Scripture.

Proof 2: from John 17:17: “Sanctify them by Thy truth. Thy word is truth.” Now truth is the measure of our intellect or of our judgment; our understanding or our judgment is not the measure of truth.

Consequences

Consequence I. Therefore the Church, or the Pope, or a Council is not the supreme and infallible judge or interpreter, nor a certain and infallible norm of judgment and interpretation, nor the principle and foundation of faith or of saving truth revealed by God.

Consequence II. Nor is the private and familiar spirit of each individual, speaking inwardly without Scripture, or besides Scripture, or above Scripture—such as fanatical Enthusiasts are accustomed to boast of.

Consequence III. Nor is right reason, or the natural intellect; nor clear and distinct perception; nor a judgment of the will; nor λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (the inward word); nor innate ideas of knowable things; nor Platonic recollection; nor the reason and will of a regenerated man.

Consequence IV. Nor is a “cacodemon,” although it is called a *daimon* (δαίμων)—from whom the Jesuit Peter Cotton sought an interpretation, judgment, and indication of Scripture, and from the devil, among other things, he asked: by what saying of Scripture purgatory could be proved; which passages, able to produce faith, had been corrupted by heretics; concerning the Genevan Bible, “What does God wish me to know through you?” I have mentioned him elsewhere, in *On the Desperate Cause of the Papacy*, book 2, section 2, chapter 10. See Benedict Turretin’s preface to the *Defense of the Faithfulness of the Genevan Translation of the Bible*, year 1619; especially the same author’s *Requête*, etc., or *Examination of the Dialogues of Cortoni*, etc., year 1620, page 59.

Corollary V. Philosophy is not in the mind of some man, nor in a book: *Peripatetic, Platonic, Stoic, Epicurean, Lullist, Paracelsian* or so-called *Hermetic, Ramist, Eclectic* or *Scholastic*.

I. It is the common philosophy of the schools of Christendom—least of all *Cartesian*, which would like to be named and numbered among the philosophical sects—unless what happened to Jonah’s gourd should happen to it.

§ 5.

Against these determinations one might object from Romans 12:6: “Having, however, different gifts according to the grace that is given to us; whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith” (κατ’ ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως). From this it seems to follow that the analogy of faith is the rule and standard of our interpretation and judgment—which we say is Scripture.

Response. There can be a twofold interpretation of this passage.

I. First interpretation

One interpretation is that ἀναλογία means the same as the measure of faith (μέτρον πίστεως), that is, the extent, dimension, measure, mode, or proportion of one’s faith and of the revelation which he has received from the Lord. Thus it agrees with verse 3: “For through the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you not to think more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sobriety, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith” (ἐμέρισε μέτρον πίστεως).

In this way Paul exhorts to modesty (σωφροσύνη), which keeps us within the bounds of our calling; and he warns against self-will (αὐθαδεία), excessive loftiness, pretended wisdom (δοκησισοφία)—so that they do not seem to themselves to be too wise, or to know everything, or to be the only ones who know—and against curiosity, boldness, meddlesomeness (πολυπραγμοσύνη), and rashness, by which they presume to take up and, in a masterly way, prattle out, dictate, and display things that exceed the measure of faith and knowledge granted to them by God.

Such an exhortation he presses in 2 Corinthians 10:12–13: “For we do not dare to class or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves; but they do not understand that they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves. But we will not boast beyond our measure, but according to the measure of the rule apportioned to us—that is, the measure which God distributed to us—we will boast that we have reached even to you.”

Compare also “the measure of the gift of Christ” in Ephesians 4:7: “But to each of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”

For there is one Spirit who distributes to each his measure of grace as he wills (1 Corinthians 12:11): who entrusts five talents to one and two to another (Matthew 25).

This interpretation—as sufficiently fitting the wording, aim, and context (vv. 3 and 6), and other passages of Scripture—is held by Melancthon, Martyr, Tossanus, Rollock, Francis Junius, the English notes, and among the Roman Catholics, Lapide. The Syriac translation also suggests this interpretation when it explains κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν, etc., as *according to the measure of his faith* (aich meschouchto de haimonouth). Likewise the Ethiopic: *according to the proportion of his faith* (haimonoutoun, i.e., his faith). The Arabic translates κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως as *alai mikdari alamanat*, i.e., *according to the measure of faith*.

Therefore, if this interpretation of the passage is admitted, it will in no way be possible to infer anything against the rule of Scriptural interpretation asserted by our writers.

II. Second interpretation

The other interpretation is that by the analogy of faith are understood the principal axioms of faith or of saving doctrine, which are distinctly set forth in the Scriptures; and the collection of these might be called “the pattern of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13). Or they are those things which (as some speak) are expressed in the common Christian creeds: the Apostolic (as they call it), the Nicene, the creed of Athanasius; also in the Ephesian and Chalcedonian determinations, conceived and proposed from and with Scripture, or according to Scripture; and also in the Decalogue and the Lord’s Prayer.

So the sense here would be: the interpretation of some text of Scripture, or the explanation of some subject-matter or question, must be carried out in such a way that it agrees with—and does not contradict—the formulas and axioms of Christian doctrine or faith proposed in the sacred writings, and accepted from there by those to whom he writes (Romans 1:5–6, 8, 11–12).

This interpretation is held by Strigelius. Pareus prefers it to the former, because he thinks it fits the circumstances of the text better. Beza and the Dutch notes

propose both. Andreas Osiander, in his notes on the Latin Bible, more fully sets forth this second interpretation, from Heerbrand, as follows:

“First of all, this must be observed: when some passage of Scripture seems to conflict with other passages, that passage must be tested by the analogy of faith (which is the perpetual rule of all Holy Scripture). And indeed the interpretation must be taken from other clear passages—especially from those very passages where the seat of that argument lies; that is, where that matter is treated expressly.”

If, therefore, someone should embrace this latter interpretation, nothing can from it be set in opposition to the common and orthodox opinion concerning Scripture as the infallible norm for the interpretation of inferior interpreters, whether private or public. For either this assertion—drawn from this Scriptural text as thus explained—coincides with the assertion we proposed above, or it is subordinate to it. There, the whole of Scripture, and all its parts and texts indefinitely, are called the norm of interpretation. Here, certain parts or certain texts of Scripture (among which are those texts or parts where the proper “seat” of this matter lies), containing general, necessary, principal axioms of saving doctrine, are called the norm and μέτρον (measure) of interpretation. Thus, he who says that in the Epistle to the Romans the justification of the sinner before God and the way of salvation are taught, does not contradict the one who says that in the books of the New Testament, or in Scripture, the justification of the sinner and the way of salvation are taught.

Consequence I. It was slanderously alleged in the vernacular booklet of a certain anonymous Remonstrant “darkener,” published some years ago, that the public notes on Romans 12:6 had been snatched at and maligned—as if they made our Belgian Catechism (which is a human writing) the norm of faith and of the interpretation of Scripture. Thus the notes read:

“By analogy is understood either the measure of faith which has been given to someone by God, as in verse 3 and Ephesians 4:7; or the analogy and agreement of the heads of Christian doctrine, clearly expressed in Holy Scripture and in the articles of faith; which are as a rule, according to which every interpretation of Scripture ought to be made.”

What is absurd here?

Consequence II. Just as the principal doctrines drawn from the Scriptures (provided that those with whom we have to deal, or before whom we must act, do hold them) can be regarded as an analogy, a μέτρον (measure), a norm, to which a particular text or the explanation of a controversy ought not to be repugnant—so also our Catechism, κατ' ἄνθρωπον (“according to man”), can, in its own manner—if you prefer, as an indication of the norm, and as something prejudged and presupposed—be called a norm, to which a particular text, or the explanation of a question made by one who embraces the Catechism and has solemnly subscribed to it, ought not to be repugnant.

Consequence III. These hypotheses—these things granted and postulated—nevertheless, absolutely nevertheless and in itself, Scripture is the one and first principle from which and out of which the truths of faith [are drawn]; and the one norm according to which interpretation [is made]; and the one term into which the final analysis of the faith that is believed [resolves].

Compare what we previously noted concerning the analogy of faith in the disputation “Problems on the Explaining of Scripture,” part 1, above, page 10.

APPENDIX to the preceding Disputation, concerning the Judge and the Norm of Faith, written on 13 January 1669, and inserted here.

Given the occasion, we produced this disputation on the Judge and the Norm of Faith—written up and printed on 18 June 1668—in order that, as in an outline (ὥς ἐν τύπῳ), we might present to our students the common and orthodox opinion of Protestants and the Reformed, sketched and set forth again, which in recently published and scattered pamphlets had been attacked no less ignorantly than insolently.

At that time we did not set out the reasons for the common orthodoxy, nor did we refute in form the objections against it; because we supposed that this had been done sufficiently by Papist and Socinian antagonists, and that the chief sources of solutions lie in a simple and distinct explanation of the orthodox position and the rejection of the antitheses—especially since the most learned theologians, in refuting the petty booklet “On Philosophy as the Interpreter of Scripture,” etc., circulated in our Belgium, in Latin and in the vernacular, by some initiate of Cartesian philosophy and Socinian theology (though with his name suppressed), have cut well into the sinews of the heterodox and profane opposition, and have faithfully and accurately defended the common opinion of the Reformed.

Here I give an indication of writings of those who previously set forth distinctly the common opinion of the orthodox, in opposition to the Pontifical or Socinian heresy, or also defended it.

Helvetic Confession, ch. 2.

Belgic Confession, ch. 5.

Zanchi’s Confession, ch. 1, art. 14. The same treats this more fully in his *Treatise on Scripture* (octavo), and in his works in folio.

Kimdoncius, preacher of Middelburg, called to a professorship of Theology at the Academy of Heidelberg, published there eight books *On the Written Word of God*, and dedicated them to the senate and people of Middelburg in the year 1595 (octavo). See there book 7, ch. 10.

Marnix of Saint Aldegonde, in the disputation with Michael Baius, theologian of Louvain, on the Eucharist; and in the *Tableau* (French, octavo; and Dutch, quarto).

Davenant, *On the Judge of Controversies*, and *On Habitual Righteousness* (folio). There see ch. 4: the thesis proposed and proved, with testimonies of the Fathers also added.

Rivet, in the *Isagoge on Scripture*, ch. 19–20.

Du Plessis-Mornay, in the treatise *On the Church*, published in French in the year 1599, ch. 5, where he disputes that no other judge of controversies can be had except Scripture.

The same, in the preface to the book *On the Mass*.

Chamier, in the *Panstratia*: on Scripture, book 1, ch. 2; and book 6, ch. 10; and book 16, ch. 1–2.

Peter du Moulin, *On the Judge of Controversies* (French, octavo).

Whitaker, Francis Junius, Ames, Sibrandus Lubbertus, against Bellarmine, in the controversy on Scripture, on book 3 of Bellarmine's *On Scripture*, ch. 3.

John White, in the English treatise entitled *The Way to the True Church* (folio), p. 15 and following.

Andrew Willet, in the *Synopsis of Popery* (English, folio).

John Reynolds, in the colloquy with Hart (folio), ch. 2, p. 31 and following, and p. 43.

Whitaker, *Against the Reasons of Campion*, in the response to the first reason, p. 35 (octavo edition).

Writers against the Socinians and the Remonstrants

John Hoornbeek, vol. 1, *Socinianism Refuted*, ch. 5–7.

Trigland, in the *Antapologia*, ch. 2–3.

Isaac Junius, in the *Antapologia*, p. 66 and following.

Writers of commonplaces and of academic disputations

Tilenus, *Syntagma*; Walaeus, *Commonplaces*; Polanus, *Syntagma*; Leiden *Synopsis*; Festus Hommius, theses or disputations on Scripture, disp. 9.

Saumur Disputations (quarto).

Sedan Disputations (quarto).

The *System* of Andrew Essen, a part or vol. 1 (quarto).

His *Synopsis* (octavo).

Regnerus Vogelsang, professor at 's-Hertogenbosch, *Theological Exercises* (quarto), exercise 10, p. 241.

The same, disputations against the *Philosophy of Scripture as Interpreter* by an anonymous author.

Alting, *New Elenctic Theology* (quarto).

Samuel Maresius, *System* (latest edition, 1659, quarto), especially his *Orthodox Belgium*, art. 5, § 6, p. 88.

John Jacob Grynaeus, theologian of Basel, disputations, part 1, p. 49 (quarto).

Martyr, in the *Commonplaces*, class 1, ch. 6, § 5, 6, 12.

Wendelin, *Theology* (latest edition, quarto), in the prolegomena, ch. 3, thesis 6.

Henry Flockenius, theologian of Harderwijk, vol. 1 of theological works, locus 5.

Francis Junius, *Theological Disputations*, published with his works (folio).

Maccovius Revived, in *Polemical Theology*, ch. 1, question 6, p. 3 (quarto edition).

The same, in *Anti-Socinus*, or *Method of Disputing*, ch. 8.

Henry à Diest, theologian of Deventer, in the *Enchiridion of Christian Theology*, locus 3; and in the *Catechetical Mellificium*, in the prolegomena, under the title *On Scripture*, question 9.

Samuel à Diest, theologian of Harderwijk, in disputation 2 *On Scripture*, in the year 1664.

Sharp, in the *Theological Course* (quarto).

Gomarus, in *Anti-Costerus*, book 2, ch. 2, published separately (octavo), and with his works (folio).

The theses and disputations of Pareus (octavo edition).

His volume of disputations, published by his son John Philip Pareus in the year 1611: disputations 2 and 4.

Tronchin, theologian of Geneva: disputation *On Scripture*, with Henry Blanche Teste of Aix as respondent, 21 Feb. 1629, § 17, 18, 43.

The same, disputation *On the Controversies about Scripture*, with Simeon Gascherius as respondent, 12 July 1628, § 25, 35, 36.

John Hoornbeek, *Theological Institutions*, ch. 2, § 22.

Nicolaus Vedelius, in the *New Theological Opuscles*, where the disputations of the Hungarian college (disp. 1 and 2) are found. The same, in *The Secrets of Arminianism*.

Wollebius, in the *Compendium of Theology, Pre-knowledge*, § 17.

John Cloppenburg, theologian of Franeker, in the *Syntagma of Selected Exercises* (octavo), year 1645: there, disputations on the Canon of Theology, disp. 1, 2, 11, and following.

Cluto, in the *Idea of Theology*, disp. 1, § 23–27, 48, and the corollaries.

Writers against the Libertines and the Enthusiasts

Johannes Crocius, against the Weigelians, ch. 1, question 1.

Philip Marnix, Lord of Saint Aldegonde, against the Enthusiasts (Dutch, octavo).

Daniel Tossanus, against Schwenckfeld (German, octavo).

John Hoornbeek, in the *Summary of Controversies* (octavo), under the title *On the Enthusiasts*.

Johannes Gerhard, in the second part of disputations (octavo), where there are disputations against the Weigelians.

From Protestants in Germany.

Proceedings of the Regensburg Colloquy, year 1601, in quarto, published by the Lutherans: see there pages 251, 254, 255, where the Papists deny

and sarcastically reject the judgment of the Holy Spirit and of Scripture. The Protestants, on the contrary, assert that the Holy Spirit is the judge (pp. 234, 235), and that Scripture is the judge (pp. 22 and 231).

An Apology of the same colloquy, by Heilbrunner and Hurnius, in octavo.

The treatise of Josua Stechmann, *On the Infallible Judge of Controversies*, published together with his *Photinianism*, 1626, in octavo.

Meisner's *Catholic Consultation*, part 2, article 2, section 2, and article 3, section 2; and part 3, on reason XI. Lessy, p. 559.

Johann Gerhard's *Commonplaces*.

His *Theological Disputations*, second part, p. 1591, in octavo.

His *Catholic Confession*. See there part 1, book 2, Special, article 1, chapter 3, p. 209, quarto edition, year 1634.

Heerbrand's *Compendium of Theology*, p. 21, in octavo, 1594.

Statius Buscher, in the *Synopsis of Theology*, chapter 1.

Previously, two main objections were raised against the orthodox view concerning the Spirit as judge—externally by Scripture, internally by illumination of the mind and an effective persuasion in the hearts of the faithful.

- 1) The first is this: that neither Scripture nor the Spirit speaks, and consequently they do not judge between disagreeing parties.
- 2) The second is this: that those who claim the judgment of the Holy Spirit clothe themselves in the blasphemous fanaticisms of Enthusiasts, Libertines, and the present-day “Tremblers” in England (in the vernacular, Quakers).

The first—setting aside other people's absurd statements in the past—is evident from the Regensburg Colloquy of 1601, where the Jesuit interlocutors, in a clear voice, called upon the Holy Spirit, saying: “We are disputing here; let Scripture now speak, let the Holy Spirit speak, and let Him say: You, Gretser, with your colleagues, are in error; you, Heilbrunner, with your colleagues, speak the truth; and immediately we will submit.”

Whether any very recent proposals of the orthodox view, put forward by the Reformed writers indicated above and hitherto defended against Papists, Libertines, and Socinians, merely stammer—time will teach; and the most learned theologians stand ready, in a state of preparedness, to bring these matters into the light and to scatter them.

As to the second point—about the “enthusiasms” and fanatics of their own spirit being fastened upon the orthodox view—after the Papists (Bellarmine and other very recent writers), certain pamphlets seem to whisper such a thing in the midst of the Reformation: not so much out of wickedness and malice (as I would rather think of some) as out of ignorance—both of an enthusiastic monster, and likewise, in this part, of the Reformed theology, in an elementary way.

What the opinion of the Reformers is, in the preceding disputation on the judge and norm of faith, and above in the disputation on Scripture, part 5, we have explained. From there—or from any of the writers just mentioned, and above, p. 45 and following—let them learn it before they condemn whatever they do not know, or corrupt themselves in whatever they know naturally, etc.: Epistle of Jude, verse 10.

What the fanaticism of the Enthusiasts and Libertines is, let them learn from the writers indicated above and in our library; and from there let them gather that light and darkness are most improperly joined together. They will be about to do so in a compendium, if from the *Sum of Controversies* of the famous J. Hoornbeek—colleague of ours in this academy for some years—they learn, in book 6, the opinion of the Enthusiasts; where on p. 381 he rightly teaches that this is common to all Enthusiasts (of whom there are many kinds): that, against the Word of God and the rule of Holy Scripture, they love to be led by their own spirit, and from it to interpret that Word, etc.

And how could even slander dare to impute such a thing to the Reformed and Protestants—who are zealots and champions of the authority, perspicuity, and perfection of the Scriptures against Papists, Socinians, Enthusiasts, atheists, Gentiles, and Mohammedans—namely, that they would attempt such a thing? Much less that, in the midst of the Reformation, someone Reformed or Protestant in profession and name would attempt something similar.

Compare the immediately preceding disputation *On the Spiritual Man*. More rightly, we above in the disputation *On the Spiritual Man*, and the famous Mr. Cloppenburg—formerly our colleague in ecclesiastical ministry, of like mind (in his theological exercises or disputations)—charge the Papists with symbolizing (i.e., siding) with the Enthusiasts. Let them extricate themselves, if they can.

Indeed, concerning the Socinians and others who follow them—even if not at an equal pace—one could deservedly say that they are not so far from the Enthusiasts as the Reformed and Protestants are: since they strive, or seem to strive, to assign judgment, interpretation, and the norm to philosophy or to their own reason, but to take it away from Scripture and from the Spirit.

Whether the reason implanted by God in man, or the mind, or the human soul as “a particle of divine breath,” or “ideal philosophy” clearly and distinctly perceived, is anything other than *logos*, or spirit, or the essential internal word; or whether God could be further sought by wicked Enthusiasts and by “perfect,” “spiritual,” “deified” men (as they call themselves), may be asked.

At least those who have, as their profession and with accuracy, examined Sebastian Franck, Henry Nicolai, and other Enthusiasts of this kind, have discovered that those lofty and “transcendent” bombastic expressions about God, deity, spirit, the living internal word—essential, substantial—amount to defining these things as reason and one’s own natural disposition.

Melchior Adam, in the *Life of Luther*, p. 131, notes from a letter of Luther to the people of Antwerp that Anabaptist-Enthusiasts, or Libertines, had been roaming there, whose articles were these:

1. Every man has the Holy Spirit.
2. The Spirit is nothing other than our reason.
3. Whoever does not have the Holy Spirit has no sin, because he lacks reason, which they call the Holy Spirit.

What those “structures” about infallible reason—about the truth of everything that is clearly and distinctly perceived by anyone’s mind and approved by the will—are supposed to mean, time will one day teach; unless that gourd dies first, and unless the agitators, warned or confounded by their doubts and by the structure of their Babylonian tower, desist.

The Reformed make the testimony of the Spirit—and an internal revelation, inspiration, inner speaking, persuasion—necessary in these three matters:

- I. That they may be made certain, or may certainly believe and accept, the divinity of Scripture.
- II. That they may know, believe, and accept the true sense of Scripture and the truth of the doctrines contained in Scripture.
- III. That they may certainly know and believe that saving grace is granted and to be granted to them in this life, and that glory is to be granted after this life.

But this spiritual revelation, this faith, this confidence, is not particular, not extraordinary; rather, it is ordinary, common, and equal for all regenerate, sanctified believers (2 Cor. 4:13; 2 Pet. 1:1, 3, 4; Eph. 4:3, 4). Compare the Catechism, questions 1, 21, 24, 52, 53, 54, 56, 58, 60.

As to the Spirit's internal operation, illumination, and persuasion in the hearts of men—by which He would bear witness to them, give assurance, and make them certain of the divinity, authority, and canonicity of Scripture—this, asserted and defended by the Reformed, is rejected by the Papists and the Socinians: the former referring this certainty of knowledge and faith to the Pope or the Church, the latter to the reason of each individual man.

The second illumination and internal and subjective certainty of the Holy Spirit—both sides, tending toward Pelagianism, reject, attributing this to free will.

Although among the Papists there are not lacking those who, following Augustine's view about first and second grace, make their final analysis not into free will but into the same efficacious grace, that is, into the Holy Spirit enlightening, inwardly moving, pre-moving, predetermining, drawing, and causing one to run—and causing us to do so that we do.

The third operation of the Spirit—applying to each of the elect, called according to purpose, bearing witness to them and making them certain about their grace and glory—the Papists commonly reject as a non-entity. This is evident in the controversies about justifying faith and about the certainty of salvation, where they substitute a moral or conjectural certainty, that is, their much-sung *epoche*—that is, doubt.

Concerning the first and second operation and illumination of the Holy Spirit, we must deal here, with respect to the question of the absolute, supreme, and infallible interpreter and judge of faith and controversies—against Papists, Socinians, Remonstrants, and others who seem either wholly or partly to desire and to bring forth their theses and rejections.

The Papists, grossly, profanely, and insolently, laugh at the speech, judgment, and testimony of the Holy Spirit and of Scripture. They call Scripture mute, and the Holy Spirit mute or not speaking. “Let Him speak,” they cried in the Colloquy of Regensburg (as cited above). But though they challenged Him, He was not heard—according to them.

The speech, testimony, and judgment of the Holy Spirit asserted by the Reformed they transfer to the vaunted “proper spirit” of the Enthusiasts—that is, to a carnal fantasy, a diabolical illusion—as may be seen in Cornelius a Lapide (above, in the disputation on the spiritual man, cited). In this they are not wholly unlike certain more recent writers, who are marked by Orthodox theologians with this name.

As for the objection itself and the slanderous Enthusiast accusation, we respond as follows: if the external speech of Scripture, and its hearing, ...