

QUESTION VIII.
On the Perfection of the Scriptures.¹

From what we have said about the purpose for which the Scriptures were inspired—that is, for our salvation—it is clearly apparent what must be answered to the eighth question, which concerns the perfection of the Scriptures. This question asks: Whether all things necessary for our salvation are abundantly and clearly contained in the sacred writings, or not. The Papists deny this, and they do so in order to push their foul traditions as necessary for salvation, and thereby increase their profit. For almost all Papist traditions pertain to profit, and profit is what they have devised under the guise of grace. And if there are any among them who, convinced by the most effective reasons, testimonies of Scripture, and authorities of the Fathers, concede that all things necessary for salvation are contained in the Scriptures, they add a gloss: that this must be understood either explicitly or implicitly. But they add this so that they may somehow defend their foolish and illogical inferences, which they draw from certain passages of Scripture and by which they confirm their idolatries. We will respond to their arguments at the end. For now, according to our method, we will answer the question and then confirm it.

We answer, therefore, with this proposition:

PROPOSITION 1. Holy Scripture contains all things necessary for our salvation, and that clearly; and therefore nothing beyond its open testimony is to be admitted in religion as necessary either to believe or to do.

EXPLANATION.

First, when I say "necessary for salvation," it should be noted that there is a twofold kind of things necessary for salvation: one of those things which are necessary in themselves and always—such as to trust in God, to believe whatever God delivers, to fear and love God, to call upon God in all necessities, and finally to be ready for His sake to endure all things. Likewise, with respect to our neighbor: to love our neighbor and help him in all things we are able. Likewise, with respect to ourselves: to live holily and chastely, to keep our vessels in sanctification, and always to maintain a good conscience. These things are in themselves and always necessary for salvation—not as causes of salvation, but first as so commanded by God to us that we may never omit them in the least part or for any cause without incurring God's wrath and bringing death upon ourselves; second, as effects of justifying faith, and without which no one can be saved, so connected that they cannot be separated

¹ <https://books.google.com.pe/books?id=YCh0jPo41kUC&hl=es&pg=PA367#v=onepage&q&f=false>

from it. And in these consists the internal worship and true piety. And concerning these Christ says in Matthew 23: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees... for ye pay tithe of mint... and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith." By Christ's testimony, some things in the Law are weightier, others less weighty—that is, some are necessary in themselves and always, others not so. Therefore He adds concerning those weightier matters: "These ought ye to have done"—as if to say, these were necessary in themselves and always; the others not so.

Second, another kind of things necessary for salvation is of those which are not in themselves or always, but for another reason and to be observed at a certain time. In this kind are sacraments and all ceremonies, fastings, and whatever pertains to external and bodily worship. For these were instituted for the sake of something else, not for themselves; therefore they are necessary not in themselves but for another reason. For example: Baptism was instituted for the confirmation of the covenant—that is, that by this sign and seal both God's promises toward us and our faith and obedience toward God (which are the two parts of the covenant) might be sealed and confirmed. And what I say of Baptism, I wish to be understood also of the Lord's Supper. Therefore it is not always necessary that we receive them: but Baptism once, the Lord's Supper at certain times, and each when there is opportunity of time, circumstances, and persons. For even if someone were to depart this life without receiving Baptism—and that for no other reason than because he could not receive it due to shortness of time or lack of water or a minister—we would not say that he therefore incurred eternal death, provided those things of the former kind were not lacking: faith, repentance, a good conscience. Such also were the sacraments and ceremonies of the old law. The Jews were bound to be circumcised—not for its own sake, but for the confirmation and sealing of the covenant into which they were received; and not always, but once, and that on the eighth day, not before. They were bound to offer sacrifices, to celebrate the Passover—but at certain times and in a certain place. Hence, therefore, it appears how these are necessary for salvation—not in themselves or always, as the former things—as we have declared.

Moreover, these exercises and works of the fruitful kind are a part of divine worship, namely the external part. Thus we have the whole worship of God: the interior, which the Apostle in 1 Timothy calls godliness, and the exterior, which he calls in the same place bodily exercise. Therefore, when I say in the proposition that Scripture contains and hands down all things that are necessary for salvation, I understand this not only concerning internal worship but also concerning external worship: the former is necessary in itself and always; the latter, however, for the

sake of something else and not always, as has been explained by us. Now we hold the explanation of that phrase, "necessary for salvation."

Secondly, when I say "clearly," I understand either in itself, or through itself, or in its principles and through something else. In itself and through itself, as when a matter is explained in distinct and express words; for example, that believers in Christ are to be baptized. For Christ commanded this in distinct words in Matthew 28 and Acts 2: "Those who received the word were baptized." And in Acts 8, Philip says to the eunuch, "If you believe with all your heart, it is permitted," namely to be baptized. But in its principles and through something else, as that the infants of believers are also to be baptized. For although there is no express command about this matter, it is nevertheless clearly gathered from its principles, that is, from the causes on account of which baptism ought to be conferred upon someone: namely, that whoever is received into the new covenant with Christ is to be sealed with this seal for Christ himself. For this is a manifest principle in Scripture: whoever are received into the covenant of God are also to be sealed with that sign by which God has commanded them to be sealed—as in the Old Testament by circumcision, in the New by baptism (Genesis 17; Matthew 28). There is also this other clear principle: the infants of believers belong to the covenant of God and are received into the covenant (Genesis 17: "I will be your God and the God of your seed after you"). And Christ says concerning infants, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19; Mark 10). And 1 Corinthians 7: "The children of believers are holy," namely to God. Therefore, the doctrine that the children of believers are to be baptized is clear: if not in itself and through itself, at least through something else—that is, from those principles concerning the covenant, concerning the sign of the covenant, and concerning those received into the covenant. Now we also hold the explanation of this phrase: that all things pertaining to salvation are handed down clearly in Scripture.

Thirdly, when I add "to the end as necessary either for believing or for doing," I embrace all things that pertain to religion. For all things pertain either to faith or to works and actions: to faith, dogmas; to actions, precepts of the law. Therefore, by this particle I show that nothing concerning religion can be handed down that is not contained in Scripture; and consequently, it is permitted to no human being to establish in the Church either dogmas of faith or precepts concerning sacraments and other actions binding conscience. Now let us come to confirmation.

Confirmation

1. To this pertain whatever we have brought forward above from Scripture to show

that Scripture was inspired and set down in books through holy men so that nothing of those things which pertain to salvation might be hidden from us, and so that it might be an instrument for us unto eternal salvation. For from this one may argue thus: Scripture was handed down for this end, that nothing of those things which pertain to true piety and are necessary for obtaining eternal life might be hidden from us, and so that it might be an instrument for us unto eternal salvation. This has been demonstrated before. Therefore, Holy Scripture contains all things that are necessary for salvation, and that clearly; otherwise they would be hidden from us if they were not also handed down clearly. Now I will bring forward specific arguments and testimonies.

2. That doctrine concerning religion and eternal salvation, to which God wills nothing to be added or taken away, must be perfect; and therefore it ought to contain all things that are necessary for salvation. Who can doubt this proposition? For it is deduced from the definition of perfection. That is perfect in its kind to which nothing in that kind can be added or taken away. Apply this definition of perfection to whatever things you wish, and you will see it to be most certain and most true. Thus Scripture calls God perfect because nothing can be added to him in essence, virtue, or power. Thus we call a man perfect as a man to whom nothing is lacking either in soul or body; and to whom also nothing can be taken away without his soon ceasing to be perfect. Therefore the proposition is most certain: That doctrine concerning religion and eternal salvation, to which nothing can be added or taken away, is perfect, and therefore contains all things that are necessary for salvation, and that clearly. But such is the doctrine of Holy Scripture and Scripture itself, as I will soon show. Therefore, etc.

That Scripture is such that nothing can or ought to be added to it or taken from it is clear from these passages: Deuteronomy 4: "You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it."

Let another respond and say: "Nor do we think that anything should be added to those things which pertain to internal and therefore spiritual piety and the worship of God; but the controversy is only about external ceremonies."

I ask you, consider for me what things the Lord is speaking about in that chapter, Deuteronomy 4. About what things? About ceremonies, sacred rites, and judicial laws. For thus it says in Hebrew: "And now, Israel, hear: Hachukim, hamichpatim," that is, statutes and judgments. That word Hachukim properly signifies ceremonies, rites, worship. Therefore, the Lord wished to teach that not only to the moral precepts concerning internal worship, but also to the precepts about ceremonies

and rites, nothing is to be added or taken away.

But if you say, "Why then did Christ change them when he instituted Baptism?" The response is easy: the same Lord willed that at that time those ceremonies should be changed and others succeed them, because they were imposed only until the time of correction, Hebrews 9.

If you object: "Therefore that precept has nothing to do with us," I reply: On the contrary, that is clear if you consider the purpose of the precept. What is the purpose? That we should obey simply those things, and indeed only those things, which God has commanded, adding nothing, taking away nothing. Therefore, since God through the Son has also handed down precepts concerning the ceremonies of the New Testament, and wills that you obey them simply, the force of that precept remains: "You shall not add, nor take away."

Moreover, Christ also clearly commands the same in Matthew 28: "Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." What is this but "do not add, do not take away"? Likewise, what is that which the Apostle says in 1 Corinthians 11: "I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you"? Is it not that neither to me nor to any man is it permitted to teach concerning the Supper otherwise than we have received from the Lord? That is, it is not permitted either to add or to take away.

What also is that which he says in 1 Timothy: "Command and teach these things," unless it is not permitted either to add or to take away? What also is that which Tertullian in his book "On Prescription," page 109, distinguishes Christians from heretics: that heretics adulterate the Scriptures by addition, subtraction, transposition; but Christians by no means? Therefore, the force of that precept in Deuteronomy about not adding or taking away anything in the precepts of God, even concerning ceremonies and instituted rites, remains perpetually and pertains to us.

The same precept is repeated by Solomon in Proverbs 30: "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to those who trust in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar." Here through Solomon the Holy Spirit extends that precept to the whole doctrine of God: that nothing is to be added to the divine doctrine and word; and he adds the reason, because it is pure. Therefore, since also the doctrine of Christ is the word of God, and it is most pure, it follows necessarily that nothing is to be added to it; consequently, it is so perfect that it contains all things pertaining to true piety.

Solomon adds that the word of the Lord is a shield to those who trust in it. Therefore, it avails against all enemies: Satan, the world, sin. So in Ephesians 6: "the shield of faith," because indeed we trust in the word of God. Therefore, the argument brought by us stands, deduced from the definition of perfect and complete doctrine.

Next follows the argument from the effects of perfect doctrine.

That doctrine is most perfect which makes one wise for obtaining salvation and eternal life; which perfectly instructs a person for every good work; through which one is regenerated as a child of God; through which one is freed from the slavery of sin and Satan; which finally saves a person, makes them blessed, and unites them to God and Christ. For these are those effects which are sought and expected from doctrine concerning religion; so that having obtained these effects, we desire nothing further nor have any need.

But such is the doctrine of Holy Scripture.

1. That it makes one wise for salvation and eternal life is clear from 2 Timothy 3: "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation."
2. That it instructs for every good work is clear from the same passage: "All Scripture is inspired by God... that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."
3. That through it we are regenerated is clear from 1 Peter 1: "Born again, not of mortal seed but of immortal, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."
4. That it frees from the slavery of sin: John 8: "If you abide in my word... the truth will set you free."
5. That it saves is clear from Romans 1: "The gospel... is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes," namely in this gospel.
6. That it makes one blessed is clear from Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man... whose delight is in the law of the Lord."
7. That it unites us with the apostles and with the Father and his Son is clear from 1

John 1: "We write these things to you so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

4. From the efficient and final cause: God inspired this Scripture to the Fathers—Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles—and through them composed and recorded it in books for our salvation, that is, for the salvation of all the elect (Romans 4 & 15; 2 Timothy 3; 1 Timothy 4). It is useful for teaching—namely, all piety; for reproof—namely, all error; for correction—that is, for amending every evil life and bad conduct; for training in all righteousness; and, in sum, so that a person may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing and having no defect, but being a whole new creation. Therefore, God gave this Scripture so perfect that nothing can be lacking in it pertaining to salvation and eternal life. Otherwise, God would be accused either of ignorance—for not knowing how to give what is perfect; or of envy—for not being willing to give what is perfect; or of powerlessness—for not being able to give and leave behind what is perfect. All these are blasphemies against God's wisdom, goodness, and omnipotence.

5. From the instrumental causes, or from the office of the Apostles, who were the amanuenses of Christ and the Holy Spirit: Christ taught all the doctrine that pertains to our salvation (John 15: "All that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you"). He commanded the Apostles to preach and make known this same doctrine of salvation to all others until the end of the world, so that they too might share in salvation (Matthew 28: "Preach the gospel, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"). This commandment concerns the duty of the Apostles in revealing the Gospel to all nations until the end of the age. For this is declared by the promise: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). "With you," that is, with the Apostles. "In your ministry." How long? "Until the end of the age." Therefore, their duty was to preach until the end of the age. But they could not do this by living voice, because they had to die. Therefore, their duty was to commit the whole sum of the Gospel to writing and to preach it through writings to all until the end of the world. Moreover, the Apostles were obedient to Christ and loved all the elect, even us, and were zealous for our salvation. They also knew and were able to commit the whole doctrine of salvation to writing and transmit it to us. Therefore, it cannot be doubted without insult to the Apostles that they committed the whole doctrine of salvation to writing and transmitted it to us.

This argument is confirmed from the Apostles as amanuenses of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and from their office, by an argument leading to absurdities:

1. If the Apostles did not leave us in writing all things necessary for salvation, it

would follow first that they either did not know, or did not will, or forgot, or were unable to accomplish this. But all these are most absurd and blasphemous even against the Holy Spirit Himself. For the Holy Spirit was in them, spoke through them, wrote through them, filled them with love and wisdom. Therefore, they knew—because they were full of wisdom; they willed—because they were full of love toward all posterity; they did not forget—because the Holy Spirit does not forget what is necessary for our salvation; they were able—because the Holy Spirit supplied the strength. Therefore, just as they wrote what we have, if anything else beyond this had been necessary, they certainly would not have neglected to write it.

2. It would follow that John lied when he said (John 20:31), “These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” By these words he testifies that he omitted nothing of what was necessary for salvation.

3. It would follow that Paul acted foolishly and imprudently in his writings. For in his epistles—how many and on how many subjects he wrote!—even about very minor matters, such as the manner of prophesying, women covering their heads, collections and on what day they should be made, and countless other such things. If, therefore, he who wrote so diligently about these matters had omitted anything necessary for salvation, how great would have been the Apostle’s imprudence, foolishness, and negligence? But it is clear that they encompassed in writing the whole sum of doctrine necessary for salvation (Luke 1:1–4; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4: “I make known to you the gospel which I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, through which you are saved,” etc.).

IN SEVERAL SCRIPTURES

Home, visit in that. Thus Ezekiel 20: “I made known to them my statutes and my judgments, which if a man does, he shall live.” But he does not threaten death except to transgressors of his word.

2. Matthew 19: “If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

3. Mark 16: “He who believes (the Gospel) will be saved.” Therefore, those things which are imposed beyond Scripture are not necessary.

4. Jeremiah 19: Many Jews, moved by the example of Abraham, who was willing to sacrifice his son, sacrificed and burned their sons in fire, undoubtedly with this intention, that they might please God, as if this were pleasing to him. But he himself condemns this deed and threatens destruction, and among other things says: “I did not command this, I did not speak it, nor did it come into my heart.” This passage teaches that not all examples in Scripture are to be imitated; but we need only the

word of God and those examples insofar as they are consistent with the law of God, delivered to all.

5. Luke 16: "They have Moses and the Prophets": as if to say, these are sufficient for knowing what is necessary for salvation.

6. 1 Corinthians 1: The Apostle, concerning the Gospel which he preached to the Corinthians, says that they are filled with all knowledge (which is necessary for salvation), so that no other revelation or teaching is to be expected by them except the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, when indeed he will appear at the end of the world. For thus he says: "I thank God that you have been enriched in him (Christ) in all speech and all knowledge, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore, beyond the Apostolic doctrine and the Gospel of Christ, nothing else is to be admitted, but we ought to be content with that doctrine and await the coming of Christ.

7. 2 John 1: "Whoever abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son." Therefore, the doctrine of Christ is sufficient for salvation. But what is the doctrine of Christ? That which was delivered from the beginning through the Apostles before the death of John himself. For thus he says in 1 John 2: "Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Father and the Son." What he said above, "Whoever abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has the Father and the Son," here he says, "If what you heard from the beginning abides, you will abide in the Father and in the Son." Therefore, the doctrine of Christ is that which was delivered from the beginning. Whatever therefore was invented afterward does not pertain to the doctrine of Christ. But he who abides in that has the Son and the Father. Therefore, the doctrine delivered from the beginning by the Apostles is sufficient for salvation.

8. Colossians 1: "Whom (Christ) we preach, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ."

Therefore, the Apostolic doctrine alone contains all wisdom and is effective for rendering man perfect in Christ. In the same place: "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, he has reconciled in the body of his flesh, if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you heard." From this is drawn the proposition: If anyone abides in that faith which the Apostles preached and is not moved away from the hope of that Gospel which was preached by the Apostles and heard at that time throughout the whole world, he certainly partakes of the benefit of Christ, that is, reconciliation with the Father, and is holy and blameless in the sight of God. This is from the Apostle. But the doctrine which is now taught in the Papacy concerning the Mass, invocation of the dead, etc., was not then preached by the Apostles nor delivered throughout the whole world. Therefore, etc.

I judge that our doctrine has been sufficiently confirmed by testimonies of Scripture. Now therefore I shall proceed to testimonies of the Fathers.

Irenaeus, Book 3, Chapter 1: "For we have learned the plan of our salvation through no others than those through whom the Gospel came to us; which indeed they then proclaimed, but afterward by the will of God delivered to us in the Scriptures, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith. For it is not lawful to say that they preached before they had perfect knowledge, as some dare to say, boasting themselves to be correctors of the Apostles." Here he teaches three things: 1. The Apostles knew all things pertaining to salvation. 2. They first communicated these same things to us by word. 3. What they previously proclaimed, they left written for us.

The same, Book 2, Chapter 46: "Since all Scripture, both Prophetic and Evangelical, can be heard openly and without ambiguity and similarly by all," etc. "Because concerning the thought of those who hold contrary opinions about the Father, nothing has been said openly either in expression or without controversy in any Scripture at all; and they themselves testify, saying that in secret these same things were taught by the Savior not to all," etc.

We have fed some of the disciples who are able to understand, etc. And in chapter 47: We ought to believe God, rightly knowing that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, being spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit; but we, insofar as we are lesser and last in relation to the Word of God and His Spirit, accordingly also lack knowledge of His mysteries.

In the same book, book 5: It is necessary to flee to the Church, to be brought up in her bosom, and nourished by the divine Scriptures. The Church was planted as a paradise in this world. "Of every tree of paradise you shall eat," says the Spirit of God—that is, feed on every Scripture of the Lord.

Tertullian, in *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, among many other things, writes this: "But for us, it is not permitted to indulge anything from our own will, but to choose what someone has introduced from his own will. We have the Apostles of the Lord as authors, who themselves did not choose anything from their own will to introduce, but faithfully delivered to the nations the teaching received from Christ. Therefore, even if an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, let him be anathema to us." A little later he says: "All the words of the Lord are set forth for all." In his work *Against Hermogenes*: "I adore the fullness of Scripture, which reveals to me the Creator and His works. But in the Gospel I find further the minister and arbiter of righteousness. But whether all things were made from some underlying

matter, I have nowhere yet read. Let the workshop of Hermogenes teach that it is written, or let him fear that woe destined for those who add or take away." In *De Resurrectione Carnis*, he calls heretics "shunners of the Scriptures," and says: "Take away from heretics what they share with pagans—that they propound their questions from the Scriptures alone—and they cannot stand." Again, in *Against Heresies*: "We have no need of curiosity after Christ Jesus, nor of inquiry after the Gospel," etc. In *De Carne Christi*, he says: "Nothing is to be received which does not have the testimony of Scripture."

Justin Martyr took refuge in the Scriptures so that he might be safe in all things. In *Dialogue with Trypho*, and in *Exposition of the Symbol*, page 195: "In matters of religion, one must not act by human authority."

Cyprian, in book 1, epistle 8: "It is sacrilege whatever is devised by men." Also, to all: "One must always have recourse to the Scriptures." In epistle 63 to Caecilius: "Christ alone is to be heard, and no one else," etc. Especially in epistle 74: "Where is this tradition from? Does it descend from the Lord's and Gospel authority, or come from the commands and epistles of the Apostles? For God testifies that those things which are written must be done, and sets them forth for reading, saying: 'This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth,' etc., that you may observe to do all that is written in it. Likewise, the Lord sending His Apostles commands to baptize the nations and teach them to observe all things whatsoever He commanded." Then he adds: "If therefore it is commanded in the Gospel, or contained in the Epistles or Acts of the Apostles, that those coming from any heresy should not be baptized, but only have hands laid on them in penance, let this divine and holy tradition be observed."

Origen, in tome 1, homily 1 on Jeremiah: "It is necessary for us to call the Holy Scriptures to witness. For our understandings and explanations without these witnesses have no credibility. And that which is said, 'In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall stand,' applies more to the proof of an interpreter than to any number of men—so that a word of understanding may stand firm, taking two witnesses from the New and Old Testament, or three witnesses from the Gospel, the Prophet, and the Apostle. For so every word shall stand." Likewise in homily 5 on Leviticus.

Also in tome 1 on Matthew, homily 25: "We ought to bring forward the sense of Scripture as a witness for all words which we utter in teaching, as confirming the sense we expound," etc. See the passage—sufficiently extensive and clear.

Again, on Romans chapter 3: “Paul sets an example for teachers of the churches, that what they speak to the people they should bring forward not relying on their own opinions, but armed with divine testimonies.” A little later: “If so great and such an Apostle does not believe that the authority of his own words can suffice unless he teaches that what he says is written in the Law and the Prophets, how much more ought we, the least, observe this: that when we teach, we bring forth not our own opinions, but the thoughts of the Holy Spirit.”

Again, on chapter 16 of Romans, book 10: “See how near to peril are those who neglect to exercise themselves in the divine literature, from which alone the discernment of such examination is to be recognized.” He teaches similarly in homilies 3 and 10 on Genesis.

Basil, in *Moralia*, Rule 80: “If whatever is not of faith is sin, but faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, then without doubt whatever is outside divine Scripture is not of faith—that is sin.”

In *Moralia*, Rule 26: “Whatever we say or do ought to be confirmed by the testimony of the divine Scriptures.”

In *Confession of the True and Pious Faith*, page 47: “It is a most manifest argument of unfaithfulness and a most certain sign of pride if anyone wishes to reject anything of what is written or introduce anything of what is not written, since our Lord says: ‘Who...’”

They hear my voice, but do not follow another. Likewise, the Apostle, taking an example from men in Galatians 3, most vehemently forbids that any of the things which are contained in the Divine Scriptures be taken away or anything be added that is not there. The same in Epistle 80 to Eustathius: We do not think it right that the customary manner of speaking which prevails among them should be held as a law and canon of right doctrine. For if custom is valid for proving right doctrine, it is also permitted for us to imitate them in this matter entirely. Let us therefore stand by the judgment of Scripture inspired by God, and to those dogmas which are found to be in harmony with the divine oracles, let the verdict of truth be entirely assigned. The same in *Quaestiones*, Question 1, page 560: And of those things which are in use among us, some—both of words and of things—have been distinctly handed down in the Scriptures, others have been passed over. Those which are written are by no means to be omitted; but concerning those which have been passed over, we have a rule handed down by Paul: All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient.

Athanasius, in the book *Against Idols*: The holy and divinely inspired Scriptures suffice for EVERY instruction or indication of truth. Note that word *every*: and it stands thus in the ancient copies, both the Basel and the Lyon, lest any Jesuit slander that we have added it. The same in the *Synopsis*: Scripture is the anchor and support of our faith.

Chrysostom, Volume 2, on Matthew, Homily 1: There is need of the Scriptures because many corrupt doctrine. Homily 49: Those who are in Christianity should apply themselves to the Scriptures, because no other proof can be true Christianity than the divine Scripture. In the same place: When you see the abomination of desolation, that is, impious heresy, flee to the mountains, etc. The mountains are the Scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets, about which it is said: You shine wonderfully from the eternal mountains; and about the Church it is said: Her foundations are in the holy mountains. See also on Matthew chapter 7, Homily 20, and chapter 11, Homily 52. The same, Homily 13 on Genesis: Scripture does not allow the hearer to err, etc. But because many do not seek something useful from the Holy Scriptures, but for the sake of pleasure lend their ears to those who handle such things, and therefore not to those who are more helpful, but to those who are more pleasing. In order that they may be able to hear, they seek: I beg that, with all such ears closed, we follow exactly the canon of Holy Scripture. The same in Volume 4, on 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, Homilies 3 and 10, says: All things that are necessary are clear in the Scriptures. The same in Homily on Psalm 95: We ought not to say anything without witnesses and by mere thought of the mind. For if anything is said without Scripture, the thought of the hearers limps, now assenting, now hesitating, and sometimes rejecting the speech as frivolous, sometimes receiving it as probable. But when a testimony of the divine voice has proceeded from Scripture, it confirms both the speech of the speaker and the mind of the hearer. The same, Homily 1 on the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians: How is it not absurd, not to trust others concerning money but to count and calculate it oneself; but in more important matters to follow simply the opinion of others—especially when we have the most exact balance, indicator, and rule, I mean the assertion of the divine laws? Therefore I beseech all of you to set aside what seems good to this or that person, and to inquire into all these things from the Scriptures. The same, Homily 58 on the beginning of John chapter 10: He rightly calls the Scriptures the door, because they lead us to God and open to us the knowledge of Him; they themselves make sheep, they themselves guard and do not allow wolves to break in. For as a very strong door they keep out heretics and establish us in safety, nor do they allow us to go astray even if we wish. And: He who does not use the sacred Scripture but climbs up another way—that is, not by the door—is a thief. The same,

Homily 9 on the Epistle to the Colossians: Do not expect another teacher. You have the Word of God. No one can teach you like this. This is the cause of all evils—that the Scriptures are ignored. The same in Homily 9 on 2 Timothy: If there is anything we need to learn or to be ignorant of, let us learn it in the Scriptures. The same in *On Prayer and the Spirit*: If any of those who are said to have the Holy Spirit says something from himself and not from the Gospel, do not believe him. Manes says that the Sun and Moon are makers. Where have you read this? Since he does not read these things written but speaks from himself, it is manifest that he does not have the Holy Spirit. The same in Volume 4 on the Epistle to Titus, Homily 1: The Gospel contains all things—both present and future—honor, piety, faith; at once it included all things with the word of preaching. For just as a herald preaches before all present in the theater, so also we preach publicly, in such a way that we add nothing but preach only those things which we have heard.

To the Epistle to Paulinus, which is prefixed to the Bibles.

Volume 2, against Helvidius, page 13.

Volume 8, on Psalm 98 and on Psalm 86.

In the Commentary on Haggai, chapter 1, pages 229–230.

Volume 9, on Mark, chapters 13 and 23.

What does not have the authority of Scripture is as easily despised as it is approved.

Volume 9, in the Epistle to Titus, chapter 1:

Without the authority of the Scriptures, garrulity does not gain belief.

Ambrose, Volume 1, *On Virgins*, Book 3, section 114:

He shows that one is not a Christian when one asserts something in religion without the testimony of Scripture.

The same author in the Commentary on Luke, chapter 16.

In Book 1 *To Gratian on Faith*, chapter 4.

In the Commentary on 1 Corinthians 4, Volume 4.

Augustine, Book 2 *On Christian Doctrine*, chapter 9:

In those things which are openly set down in Scripture are found all that pertains to faith and morals—namely, hope and charity.

The same, Volume 6, *Against Priscillian and Origen*, to Orosius, chapter 8.

Likewise, *Against Faustus the Manichaeon*, Book 10, chapter 5.

Volume 7, *On Nature and Grace*, chapter 61.

Also, *Against Maximinus the Arian*, Book 3, chapter 14:

Neither should I bring forward the Council of Nicaea, nor you that of Ariminum, as if to prejudge the matter; neither am I bound by the authority of this one, nor you by

that one. Let matter contend with matter, cause with cause, reason with reason by the authorities of the Scriptures.

The same author, Volume 2, Epistle 42 to Madaurus; Epistle 157 to Optatus.

Volume 7, *On the Unity of the Church*, chapter 3.

On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, Book 2, chapter 36.

On Baptism Against the Donatists, Book 2, chapter 6:

Let us bring forth the divine balance from the Holy Scriptures, and weigh in them what is of greater importance.

The same author, *Against Cresconius the Grammarian*, Book 2, chapter 32:

The ecclesiastical canon is established, to which belong the books of the Prophets and Apostles, according to which we may judge other writings, whether of believers or unbelievers.

See also Epistles 48 and 11, Volume 2; and Volume 9, on John, chapter 10, Tractate 40.

Many similar passages occur in this Father.

Leo the First in his Epistle to Fabian teaches the same.

Many more testimonies could be adduced from other Fathers as well; but now method requires that we respond to the contrary arguments of the Papists.

Arguments Against the Perfection of Scripture:

That Christ did not teach all things necessary for salvation; and if He did teach them, not all were written by the Apostles, but many were left in the Church through tradition.

There are three classes of arguments which the Papists bring forward against this doctrine:

1. Some are taken from certain sayings of Scripture—but wrongly understood—by which it seems concluded that not all things necessary for salvation were written, but many were only left in the Church through tradition.
2. Some are taken from certain dogmas and institutions which are admitted by all churches as pious and true. They contend that these do not have clear testimonies in Scripture; therefore there are some things necessary for faith and hence for salvation which are not in Scripture.

3. Finally, some are taken from the Fathers, who seem to establish many things as necessary to be observed in the Church which nevertheless do not have certain testimony in Scripture.

To the Arguments of the First Class:

John 16: "I have yet many things to say unto you," etc.

From this they infer:

1. Therefore Christ did not teach all things necessary for salvation.
2. But after the Gospel He left many things to be taught by the authority and revelations of the Holy Spirit—partly through the Apostles, partly through the successors of the Apostles and the Church until the end of the world.
3. Moreover, those many other things cannot be other than those which the Church has hitherto defined and defines.
4. Therefore it must be believed that whatever has been established in the Church besides the Gospel—especially by the Fathers in Councils which represent the whole Church—all these things are from the Holy Spirit.

Response:

Before I respond, it must be noted that this argument is not new and invented by the Papists. It is ancient and was devised by ancient heretics in the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian. Thus the Manichaeon said that he was that promised Spirit who ought to bring new truth. See Augustine, *Against the Fundamental Epistle*. For in order to thrust their heresies upon the churches, they abused this saying of Christ to show:

1. That the Apostles did not know all things.
2. And therefore He did not teach all things necessary for salvation.

And indeed they used a pretext to persuade more easily of this. For they said that it was fitting for them to yield—that it was fitting to yield to the authority of

It is a disgrace and contrary to the dignity of the Church to say that all things were handed down by the Apostles, as if no other things were reserved. Let Tertullian's *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, page 103, and Irenaeus, Book 3, Chapter 1, be read. From what these Fathers write there, the things I have said are gathered. Therefore, we see that the ancient Papists have recalled heretics into the Church.

Now to the response.

Response 1 in general, then to the principal paralogisms.

In this passage there is a paralogism, which they call a fallacy of diction—that is, arising from ignorance of the true meaning of this saying of Christ. For they interpret Christ's words as if He said that He had not yet taught them all things that pertain to salvation, but that He reserved this duty for the Holy Spirit, who would later teach what remained necessary for their salvation. But they are mistaken. For Christ here is not speaking of things necessary to know for obtaining salvation—these He had already revealed, as in John 15: "All things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." Rather, here Christ speaks of those things which pertained to the Apostles' own consolation.

For they had been greatly afflicted with sadness because the Lord had spoken of His departure from this world—that is, of His death—as if, being deprived of Christ's bodily presence, they would also be deprived of all help, every teacher and comforter, and left alone in this world as weak and like orphans. But Christ shows that they are so far from having to be afflicted on account of His departure that they ought rather to rejoice. Why? Because this would be most beneficial for them; indeed, it would be harmful if He did not depart from this world. Therefore, He set forth this proposition: "It is expedient for you that I go away."

How so? He explains and proves it, saying: "Unless I go away, the Paraclete will not come to you"—as if to say, this would be detrimental to you. "But if I go, I will send Him to you"—as if to say, this will be most beneficial for you. It follows: "Therefore it is expedient for you that I go"—as if to say, if it is expedient, you have reason to rejoice, not to be sad.

But how will it be beneficial for us if You send this Spirit, the Paraclete? He proves it from the effects of the Holy Spirit in the Apostles themselves. "For when He comes," He says, "He will convict the world (namely, through you) concerning sin," etc. That is, He will not be with you as I am in this bodily presence outside of you, but He will dwell in you, in your souls, filling them with wisdom and fortitude for speaking and convicting the whole world—not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles, even the wisest, strongest, and holiest.

Concerning what things? Concerning sin: namely, that all who do not believe in Me are still in sin. Concerning righteousness: namely, that true righteousness before God is not placed in works that can be performed by men, but in My obedience, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and perpetual intercession with the Father for those who believe in Me. And this is: "Because I go," etc. Therefore,

through Me alone are men justified. Concerning judgment: namely, that the prince of this world is already condemned, and consequently all who are of this world are to be condemned with him; and on the contrary, those who are not of this world but believe in Me will be blessed with Me in the presence of the Father to whom I go.

This is the sum of the Gospel doctrine. The sense is: This Spirit will be effective in your preaching because He will convict... Therefore it is expedient that I go. Accordingly, these things ought to console you—namely, that the Holy Spirit will be effective through you.

Afterward He adds: "I have many more things to say to you," etc. What are these other things? Augustine says they cannot be known since the Lord did not explain them. True—but if the Lord at least indicates them in passing, if not properly and specifically, at least in general?

First, from the context—that is, both from the scope of this discourse and from what precedes and follows—it appears that Christ here speaks both of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which He was about to pour out upon the Apostles and of those things which the Holy Spirit was about to accomplish through the Apostles, now equipped with His gifts, for glorifying Christ. Above He says: "It is expedient that I go." He proves it because the Holy Spirit will descend upon you, and then He through you will convict. After these words—"I have many things," etc.—the Lord continues His discourse about the same Spirit and about what He was about to work in the Apostles and through the Apostles, saying: "He will guide you into all truth." Likewise: "He will declare to you the things that are to come." Likewise: "He will glorify Me." All these things pertain to the scope and to that proposition: "It is expedient for you that I go." Therefore also these "many things" about which He says, "I have many things to say to you," pertain to the same and are to be understood concerning the same gifts and effects of the Holy Spirit—that is, what He was about to accomplish through the Apostles.

Then from those things which afterward the Holy Spirit accomplished in the world through the Apostles—admirable and astounding things, and which never...

What the Apostles thought they would achieve, and what they could never have persuaded themselves of, we understand from the many things about which Christ says, "I have yet many things," etc. What does the Holy Spirit do in the Apostles, and what through the Apostles? He equipped the Apostles themselves with wonderful and many gifts: knowledge of the Scriptures and true understanding of the Prophetic Oracles, acquaintance and use of all languages, the power to perform

astounding miracles, virtue and effectiveness in speeches, such greatness and fortitude of spirit, and such fluency in speaking, that they feared nothing for Christ's sake. Concerning these gifts, partly in the Acts and partly in the Apostolic Epistles, 1 Corinthians 12, they themselves never hoped that they would be furnished with so many and such great gifts.

Then through these thus instructed, He converted the world, and all nations in a short time to Christ: He demolished (as Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 10) every height, all fortifications, all the counsels of the world, and compelled the rebels to obey Christ: He brought it about that kings submitted their necks to Christ: He overthrew idols and established the kingdom and faith of Christ. How great are these things? Certainly, the Apostles could never have persuaded and believed these things for themselves, nor even thought of them, especially because the conversion of the Gentiles to Christ and the propagation of grace to the Gentiles was unbelievable to them. But afterward, through the Holy Spirit, they saw the thing itself: then they knew, etc.

To this pertains that passage in Ephesians 3: "For this cause," etc., up to verse 7. These are those many things which Christ then kept silent about because the Apostles could not then understand them; but He promised that He would bring it about that at length they would be led into the truth of these things through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, He wished to conclude that it was expedient for them that He go to the Father, and so lift their sadness and on the contrary console them.

Now let us see how all the words fit together here. "I have many things," etc., which certainly pertain to your consolation. About what many things? About this Spirit, which He is about to give you, and what He will accomplish through you. "But you cannot bear them now": that is, but you could never persuade yourselves and believe these things—indeed, not even understand them—so many and great are they. "But when that Spirit comes," etc., that is, And indeed at present you cannot understand those things; yet through the Holy Spirit they will be done in you, and then you will see the truth and fulfillment of these things: that Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth.

What all truth? Into the truth of all these things which I now keep silent about, but which will come to pass: He will lead into truth, to be beheld, to be looked upon with your eyes: as if He said, He will lead you into the actual matter and bring it about that what I now keep silent about on account of your weakness, and what you cannot now grasp with your mind, then you may perceive with your very eyes and as it were touch with your hand. The sense is: The Holy Spirit will fully accomplish

in reality what I silently promise.

He confirms this from the faithfulness of the Legate, that is, of the Holy Spirit whom Christ was about to send as His legate and executor of His counsels and promises. Therefore He says, "For He will not speak from Himself," etc. He makes the Holy Spirit His legate and His executor, just as He Himself had been the Legate of the Father and executor of His commands. And just as He had proven that He had been a faithful legate of the Father from this, that He spoke nothing from Himself nor did anything from Himself, but only spoke what He had heard from the Father—whence He said, "I do not speak from myself"—so here He shows by this same manner of speaking that the Holy Spirit will be His faithful Legate and executor. For that legate is called faithful who speaks nothing from himself and does nothing except insofar as he has it in his mandate.

This therefore is what He means when He says: "For He will not speak from Himself, but whatever He shall hear," namely from Me, "He will speak through you and do." Therefore also below He says, "He shall take of Mine." The sense is: There is no doubt that the Holy Spirit will bring about in you and through you those many and admirable things which I have decreed to be done through you; but I keep silent about this on account of your weakness; and so you are to be led by Him as if into the actual presence to perceive the truth of all these things.

Why is there no doubt? Because He will be My faithful legate and executor. "And the things that are to come, He will show you." Some interpret thus: The things that are to come for you while living, namely concerning the conversion of the Gentiles: those He will announce to you, that is, make plain. How? By accomplishing it in reality and putting it into execution. And so Ephesians 3: "Now it is revealed to His holy Apostles and prophets through the Spirit."

But it can also be referred to future things after their death: as if He said: Not only will He bring about through you while living those wonderful things I keep silent about, but also what will happen after your deaths on account of the doctrine which you will preach, He will indicate to you. Therefore He foretells that they will be endowed with the gift of prophecy, that is, of foreseeing what will happen in the Church. We see this fulfilled. The Apostles foretold about future things in the Church.

But, the Antichrist: yet they also foresaw how Christ would always triumph. What kind of prophecy about the Antichrist is so clear, so evident, as that in 2 Thessalonians 2? What about the Apocalypse? Are not these also great gifts of the

Spirit? He concludes: He will glorify me, that is, through you, as if to say, This is the highest point, that the Spirit will glorify me through you. How? By propagating my kingdom, by fulfilling the oracles of the prophets. Certainly, this glorification would not follow if I did not go and send this Spirit. Therefore, it is expedient that I go.

Wait: he speaks about doctrine and about things which they had not heard before. Yet the first inference does not follow: Therefore, the Apostles did not hear all things necessary for salvation from Christ. For first, it could be that there were other things which did not pertain to the sum of doctrine about salvation: such as that the Holy Spirit was going to inspire them with a prophetic spirit, so that they might foresee future events, just as we see the Apostles foretold many things through the Holy Spirit, as in 2 Thessalonians 2 concerning the Antichrist; 1 Timothy 4: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons," etc. Therefore, that reasoning is illogical.

Second, even if he was speaking about the doctrine of salvation, it still does not follow that the Holy Spirit was going to deliver new doctrine and that it had not been delivered previously by Christ. For the words can be explained thus: "He will guide you into all truth," not unheard and new, but into the old truth heard from me; yet in a different way than I, he will guide into truth—that is, if you have forgotten, he will bring it back to memory; if it was not well understood, he will cause you to understand it better. And Christ teaches this interpretation when he says about his Spirit in John 14: "He will teach you all things" (that is, persuade you more effectively), "he will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." Therefore, it is a fallacy of accident. For he is not speaking about new doctrine, but about a new way of teaching.

And what is it to infer, "Therefore Christ did not teach all things to the Apostles," except to say that Christ lied when he said in John 15: "All that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you"?

Third, suppose even that Christ, when he said these things, had not yet revealed all things to the Apostles. Does it follow: Therefore he never revealed them himself? On the contrary, here Christ promises that he will tell them other things. For there is a clear promise: "I have yet many things to say to you." Not now, but at another time. Therefore, he did say them eventually. For the promise stands. But when did he say them afterward? Answer: After the resurrection. Did he say many things to them a year after the resurrection which he had not said before? Read the Evangelists, Matthew 28 and Mark 16: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every

creature." "Behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age." And does he not speak about himself, but about the Holy Spirit? Answer: As if it were not the same—Christ who spoke in the Apostles is also the Spirit of Christ.

To the second inference: Suppose he left many things to be taught by the Spirit.

1. It does not follow that these were among those things which are necessary for salvation. For Christ's statement about these remains true in John 15: "All that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." But what are those many things? Those which pertain to the form of the Church, as many things in the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 12–14; likewise about future events.

2. But suppose they are among those which are necessary for salvation. Then it follows from this that the Apostles eventually knew all things through the Spirit of Christ. For if Christ promises this, certainly he fulfilled the promise. But he promised by saying: "He will guide you into all truth." Who then would dare to say that the Apostles did not know all truth? And so Tertullian explains and argues in his book "On Prescription," page 103, and Irenaeus in Book 3, Chapter 1 concludes the same. This is the ancient heresy of Valentinus and other heretics, that the Apostles did not know all things necessary for salvation.

But then (someone says) they knew all things, yet they did not teach all things, but only part. Answer: It is also impious to think this. For if they did not teach them, either they did not teach on purpose because they did not want to. But this would have been the crime of envy and against charity and against their office; or out of forgetfulness—and this is against the Holy Spirit who dwelt in them, as if he forgot with them about our salvation. These things are absurd. Therefore, what you say—that they taught only part—is false. For this reason Tertullian and Irenaeus contend that the Apostles taught all things which were necessary for salvation.

But you say: They taught, namely by mouth, but they did not write all things.

Answer: If they did not do this, either they omitted it on purpose, or out of forgetfulness, or out of inability. All are absurd: since the Spirit supplied charity, memory of our salvation, and strength.

2. It would follow that Paul was very imprudent, who wrote many things about matters not so necessary if he had neglected necessary ones. So Irenaeus, Book 3, Chapter 1.

Thus the third inference collapses. For if they all wrote down necessary things: Therefore it is not through the Church that the Holy Spirit from time to time...

He teaches new things. But this is against the Apostle in Hebrews 1: "In these last days (that is, no longer after this to speak new things) he has spoken to us by his Son." And it is against the Fathers Tertullian and Irenaeus.

Fourth Inference:

It must be believed that whatever has been established by the Fathers in Councils—especially those representing the whole Church—apart from the Gospel, all these things are from the Holy Spirit.

But:

1. They cannot hand down anything without the word of Christ (Romans 10). How then do you prove from the Scriptures that what the Church has handed down without the Scriptures is from the Holy Spirit?

2. How can those things be from the Holy Spirit which conflict with the Scriptures? For example, the Canon of Constantinople concerning not giving the chalice. Thus, Scripture is utterly scattered.

And when you say, "These are all those things," I reply:

1. Augustine on this passage: "Who is he who dares to say what those things are, since Christ did not wish to explain them?"

2. The many things you claim to be those cannot be so. For Christ said concerning them that the Apostles could not bear them. But these things are not so difficult to understand that they cannot be borne. Therefore, etc.

What then has the Holy Spirit reserved for himself? To teach anointing, baptizing bells, and similar trifles?

II. The Second Passage: John 21, at the end

"There are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

Reply: But the same Evangelist teaches that he wrote as much as suffices for our salvation (chapter 20, at the end), saying: "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." Therefore, the doctrine is perfect, because through it, by faith received, we can obtain eternal life. So Cyril on John, book 12, chapter 68; so Augustine on this passage: "Note that the Evangelist does not say, 'Christ taught many other things,' as if this doctrine handed down from the mouth of Christ were imperfect; but he speaks of miracles and deeds."

Moreover, even if he said, "He taught many other things," yet it could not be

understood that these many—that is, diverse—things are such that what we have does not suffice for salvation. But they do suffice, as this same John testifies.

Therefore, etc.

It is therefore a fallacy of accident: because from what is other in number, you argue to what is other in substance—or a case of homonymy.

But you will object: If he did or taught nothing else—that is, diverse from what we have—and yet he did and taught many other things, and these are not necessary for salvation (because we have all necessary things in the extant Scriptures), it follows that Christ did many superfluous things.

Reply: This is a paralogism of non-cause as cause. For this is not the reason why he performed and taught many other things—namely, that he might teach diverse doctrines—but it was so that he might set forth the same doctrine in various ways of teaching and confirm it with various miracles. Therefore, it does not follow that they were superfluous, since they had their own purpose. A similar case: The Apostle to the Romans also teaches with various and many arguments that man is justified by faith alone. Are then all arguments superfluous except one principal one?

The interpretation is confirmed by the testimony of Chrysostom. Acts 1: “I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach.” He did not say “all,” but “about all,” namely, those things necessary for salvation.

III.

After the resurrection, for 40 days Christ was with his disciples, speaking about the kingdom of God; and yet Luke and the Evangelists describe very few things.

Therefore, not all things were written.

Reply: He spoke about the kingdom of God, but not about things diverse in substance from those which he had taught even before his death. Nor does it follow, “Therefore they were superfluous,” because they served to confirm the Apostles in the doctrine of the Gospel which they had already heard and received. And so Cyprian explains in Tractate 40 (which is on the vanity of idols), at the end: For he appeared for 40 days so that they might be instructed anew in the vital precepts, etc.

IV. Acts 20

The Apostle says that Christ was accustomed to say, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Yet no Evangelist recorded this. Therefore, not all things were written.

Reply: What is more inept than this argument?

1. If it was not written by the Evangelists, it was written by the Apostle Paul.
2. Even if this saying had not been put into writing, nevertheless the doctrine of salvation would not on that account be defective.

V. Acts 15

"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us that you abstain from blood, from what is strangled, from idol offerings, and from sexual immorality," etc. Therefore, they learned certain things from the Holy Spirit and not from Christ.

Reply:

1. Nothing new was established here which had not already been handed down summarily in the Law before. Concerning idol offerings and sexual immorality it is clear; concerning the other two—what is strangled and blood—it is clear from this: that they prohibit nothing except to avoid giving offense to weak brothers from Judaism by their liberty. But that in matters of indifference one ought not to offend a brother by scandal, the Prophets and above all Christ had taught before (Matthew 18): "Whoever causes one of these little ones to sin..."

1. They say that it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, but not to Christ. They do this to show that the Holy Spirit dictated to them the same thing that Christ had previously taught about not causing offense to weaker brothers, and thus to confirm what Christ had said about the Spirit: "He will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak." Therefore, it does not follow that they learned anything new then; rather, this was nothing but a declaration of what Christ had said in John 14: "He will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

VI. 1 Corinthians 7: The Apostle hands down and establishes many things in the churches which he did not receive from Christ. Therefore, Christ did not teach all things necessary for the salvation of the churches.

For example, in 1 Corinthians 7, he commands a believer to retain an unbelieving spouse if they are willing to stay; if not, to let them depart. And afterward he says, "I give this instruction, not the Lord." Likewise in chapter 14, there are many other such instances.

Response: The antecedent is denied—namely, that the Apostle did not receive from Christ what he taught. For he says plainly in 2 Corinthians 13: "Do you seek proof of Christ who speaks in me?" Likewise, concerning those precepts handed down by him in the church, he plainly says they are the Lord's commands, saying: "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that what I write are the Lord's commandments."

But in 1 Corinthians 7 he says, "Not the Lord, but I."

Response: The Apostle makes a distinction among the precepts of Christ. Some are those which were delivered expressly from his own mouth to all the apostles, such as that a wife (of the same religion) is not to be dismissed except for adultery. Others are not expressed immediately from the mouth of Christ, but are gathered from his general teaching about charity through the Holy Spirit, by whose guidance the apostles interpreted the Scriptures—as in that passage in 1 Corinthians 7.

Therefore he says, "I think that I also have the Spirit of God." For that fits beautifully with charity. I say the same about other precepts in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14. Therefore, it is a fallacy of ambiguity, because "precept of Christ" is taken in two ways, as has been declared. But the Papists always take it in only one way.

VII. 1 Thessalonians 4: "You know what precepts (ἀγγελία, that is, received mandates) we gave you through the Lord Jesus." And yet these are not written; nor does he explain what they were. Therefore, many mandates of Christ were left in the church through the apostles without writing.

Response:

1. We grant that here the Apostle is speaking of precepts or mandates which are received and handed down by transmission. For he who commands is said to διαγγέλλειν—that is, to signify by himself; but he who announces, as if having received it by transmission—that is, to signify through another—and therefore the Apostle here speaks of those things which he had received from Christ by voice, not in writing—just as in 1 Corinthians 11 concerning the Supper he says, "I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you."

2. But what they say afterward—that these are not written, nor does he explain what they were—we deny. For immediately the Apostle declares what these mandates of the Lord were, saying: "For this is the will of God—your sanctification—that you should abstain from fornication," and so on up to these words: "Therefore whoever rejects this rejects not man but God." Therefore these mandates of the Lord are written. So let the Papists be ashamed for writing these most impudent falsehoods.

VIII. 1 Corinthians 11: When he had taught that women ought to be veiled when they pray or prophesy in church, he afterward adds: "If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God." Behold, he urges them (he says) to take care that women be veiled and obey without contention in a matter of no great importance; and he urges this by the custom of the church alone, without any Scripture. Therefore, the church is to be obeyed even in light matters without contention, only on account of custom.

Response:

1. To the antecedent: I know many interpret it so that those words—"We have no such custom"—refer to the veiling of women; as if he said: "If anyone refuses to veil women and wishes them to be without a veil, let him do as he wishes. As for us Hebrews and the churches of God, we have no such custom—namely, of permitting women to be with uncovered head." Nevertheless, it pleases me more that these words refer to being contentious, so that the sense is: "If anyone in this indifferent matter is unwilling to acquiesce to our judgment but wishes to contend—we

certainly do not wish to contend. For we have no such custom—namely, of contending—nor do the churches of Christ." And so it is. The true Christian avoids empty contentions.

2. To the inference: Nor do we deny that the customs of the church are to be observed even in light and indifferent matters—and that for the sake of peace and charity—provided those things do not conflict with the word of God; and provided they remain indifferent—that is, not imposed as necessary for salvation and under penalty (as the Papists call it) of mortal sin; and provided they are free from superstition.

Concerning superstition. But what does this have to do with the matter under dispute and with the customs that are in the Roman Church, either conflicting with the Word of God or connected with superstition and with snares of conscience? We are speaking here of those things which are necessary for salvation, not about indifferent matters. Therefore, this passage has no bearing on the issue.

IX. 1 Corinthians 11

After explaining the essential matters concerning the Lord's Supper, Paul then said, "The rest I will set in order when I come." Here, they say, the Apostle promises that he will set in order in person and orally those things pertaining to the manner of communion and celebrating the Supper, and other matters pertaining to the state of the Church. There is no doubt that he fulfilled his promise. Therefore, there are many things pertaining to the good and salvation of the Church which are not written.

Response to the Antecedent:

1. That word "I will set in order," which in Greek is *διατάξω*, does not always signify establishing new statutes; it also signifies putting into order things which were previously confused. And the Apostle uses this word in this sense in 1 Corinthians 7 when he says, "And so I ordain in all churches"—that is, I order, I direct—namely, that each should remain in his own calling and not confuse political orders: let a slave remain a slave; let the circumcised not become uncircumcised. Therefore, from this passage in 1 Corinthians 11, nothing can be concluded about new ordinances instituted by Paul in the Corinthian Church concerning the Lord's Supper or other matters. For it could be that he spoke about many serious matters which were confused and disturbed in the Church, and promised that when he came he would take care that all things be restored to their former good state—such as the fact that they were divided among themselves.

2. As for their saying that he set in order how the Mass was to be celebrated and communion to be received—who would tolerate such absurdities?

Regarding the Inference:

We concede that many things were instituted by the Apostles in the churches which are not written; but we deny that there were such things as were necessary for salvation.

X. 2 Timothy 2

“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me before many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Here, they say, the Apostle is speaking of the doctrine of salvation. He says that he handed it over to Timothy not through writings, but orally before many witnesses; and yet he does not explain it. Therefore, there has been left in the Church a doctrine necessary for salvation which nevertheless is not written.

Response to the Antecedent:

If they prove that this doctrine was not explained by the Apostle in his books, we will grant it. How could so great an Apostle write so diligently about many indifferent matters—as is clear in the epistles to the Corinthians and to Timothy—and afterward neglect to commit to writing that doctrine which was necessary for salvation? Therefore, their inference—“Therefore some doctrine necessary for salvation has been left in the Church without writing”—is a complete syllogistic fallacy.

XI. 2 John (Canonical)

“I have many things to write to you, but I do not wish to write with pen and ink; for I hope to come to you and speak face to face.” Therefore, they say, he taught many things orally which are not written.

Response:

1. He does not say “to teach and hand over the doctrine of salvation,” but “to speak face to face.” Therefore, there were certain more private matters pertaining only to them which he did not wish to commit to writing. Hence they conclude nothing

about the doctrine of salvation.

2. Even if he were speaking about the doctrine of salvation, it does not follow that it is therefore not contained in his epistles.

XII. John 14–16

Likewise, they argue: The Holy Spirit is promised to the Church, that He will always be with her and lead her into all truth. But this would be superfluous if all things were written. Therefore, etc.

Response:

The minor premise is denied, and it is a fallacy of non-cause. For the reason why the Holy Spirit is given to the Church and to individual believers is not so that He may continually teach new doctrine, but there are many other reasons: that she may be guided in her actions; that she may be defended from Satan; likewise, that she may be preserved in the received doctrine and in the faith. Therefore, it concludes nothing.

XIII. Acts 10–11

The Apostles, even after receiving the Holy Spirit, were ignorant whether the Gentiles were to be admitted to the grace of the Gospel. Therefore, they did not learn all things from Christ or immediately from the Holy Spirit, but long afterward, when it pleased God. Therefore, the same happens in the Church, so that many things are revealed successively.

Response to the Antecedent:

1. They assume falsely; on the contrary, Christ Himself had often foretold it, as in Matthew 8: “Many will come from the east,” and Matthew 28 and Mark 16: “Preach the Gospel to every creature,” and “Teach all nations.” But that they doubted even after the resurrection was because it seemed absurd and unheard of that the Gentiles should be partakers of grace.

2. This matter was not of that kind which are necessary to be known for salvation; but we are disputing about those things. Therefore, nothing is concluded.

XIV. Finally, the name “Tradition” is urged from the Epistles of Paul, as in 1 Corinthians: “I praise you, because you hold all things in my memory, and as I delivered to you, you hold the traditions.” The Greek words are not expressed here. In 2 Thessalonians: “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold the traditions that you were taught, whether by our speech or by our letter.”

Now, traditions are doctrines, ordinances, and institutions not written but handed down by hand, and for this reason they are called traditions. Therefore, the Apostles left many things in the Church not written—both concerning the doctrine of salvation and concerning ecclesiastical ordinances. Hence, not all things necessary for salvation are contained in the Holy Scriptures.

Response to the Major Premise:

We grant that many unwritten traditions were instituted and left by the Apostles in the churches.

Response to the Minor Premise:

The name “Tradition” is not taken in only one way. Hence, here there is homonymy.

1. Sometimes it is taken for doctrine, however first delivered—whether by living voice only or by writing. Thus, in Acts 6, the written Law of Moses is called tradition: “This man (speaking of Stephen) does not cease to speak words against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him saying that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses delivered to us.”

In 2 Thessalonians: “Hold the traditions that you were taught, whether by speech or by our letter.” Therefore, even if he teaches something by letter alone, he calls it tradition.

2. It is taken for doctrine first delivered by living voice without writing, but afterward also put into writing. Thus, in 1 Corinthians 11, the doctrine concerning the Lord’s Supper, which he first delivered by voice and afterward also in writing, he calls by the name of tradition, saying: “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you.”

So also in 1 Thessalonians 4: “We ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you ought to walk and to please God, so you do walk, that you may abound more. For you know what instructions we gave you”—and immediately he repeats in writing part of what he had delivered by voice.

In 2 Thessalonians 2: “Hold the traditions that you were taught, whether by speech (first) or (afterward) by our letter.”

In this way, the whole doctrine of the Gospel contained in the Holy Scriptures can be called tradition, because it was first delivered by living voice and afterward put into

books. Thus Cyprian often calls the whole doctrine of Christ contained in the Holy Scriptures “the Lord’s tradition.”

3. It is taken for doctrine and institution delivered to the Fathers by voice only and by perpetual succession—as if handed down through hands to posterity without any writing—which many Greek Fathers call the “unwritten word.” Such was the doctrine before Moses, delivered to the Fathers and continued down to Moses without any writing.

Therefore also in the Apostolic Epistles there is often mention of “traditions” and “teachings”; nevertheless it does not follow from this that the Apostles instituted many traditions in the Church which are not contained in the Holy Scriptures. For I will always say that what they first delivered by voice they afterward summarized in writing—as concerning the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11; likewise in 1 Thessalonians 4 concerning precepts for an honest life; likewise concerning ecclesiastical orders, about which in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14.

Further, I grant that some things were instituted by the Apostles which they did not leave in writing; yet I will always say—and so I contend—that nothing was instituted by them which did not have its foundation in the Word of God, that is, in the Prophetic Scriptures and in the doctrine of Christ later also comprehended in the books of the Evangelists.

Moreover, I say that those things which they did not leave in writing were not necessary for salvation. Therefore this argument also concludes nothing against our thesis: “All things necessary for salvation are clearly contained in the Holy Scriptures.”

To the arguments of the second class:

1. It is necessary for salvation to believe and know that what we have in the books which are called Canonical is the Word of God; and about this there is no controversy. But this Scripture does not deliver. For it does not explain which are Canonical and which are less so; but this is had from tradition alone. Therefore some things necessary for salvation are not contained in the Holy Scriptures but are had only from the tradition of the Church.

Response:

The Minor is denied—namely, that Scripture does not deliver that it is the Word of God and that this is recognized only by the tradition of the Church. For by us in the second question concerning the Scriptures it has been declared by what means we can certainly recognize that this Scripture is the Word of God; and in sum it has been demonstrated that the tradition of the Church greatly assists in this matter but does

not suffice; that the work of the Holy Spirit is needed, opening eyes to recognize and persuading; but this being had, Scripture forthwith shows itself whose word it is. For even the first Fathers recognized this by no other means except partly by tradition and partly—and chiefly—by the Holy Spirit witnessing within.

The dignity, truth, and heavenly majesty of Scripture itself demonstrate this. Therefore, it is a fallacy of false cause.

For it is not only the tradition of the Church that accomplishes this, but also, and primarily, the dignity of Scripture itself, revealed to us through the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, if this argument were valid, the following would also be valid: The Church is that which first preaches the Word and this doctrine—that Christ is the Son of God and true God. Therefore, that Christ is true God we have only from the Church through tradition, and not from the Scriptures. But this is impious. Therefore, etc.

I know that there have been some, both among the Fathers and among our own, who write that we have this from the tradition of the Church alone; but they mean with respect to the beginnings of this knowledge and its first testimony, not with respect to true and certain knowledge. That which is certain and firm always remains, as in Romans 10: "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." Therefore, one cannot truly believe this to be the Word of God except by hearing this word, through the work of the Holy Spirit enlightening and teaching.

II. The article concerning the Trinity is necessary for salvation, by the consensus of all; and yet we do not have this from the Scriptures, but from the tradition of the Church alone.

Response: The second part of this proposition is most false and impiously written. Therefore, our faith in the first article of our religion depends not on the Scriptures, but on the tradition of the Church alone. The contrary is taught by the Scriptures themselves, both in the Old and New Testaments, as I will show elsewhere. Two passages shall suffice for now: John 16: "When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all truth. He will take what is mine." Here you have the Father, from whom Christ was to send the Holy Spirit; you have the Son, who sends the Holy Spirit; yet Scripture everywhere teaches that there is only one God. 1 John 5: "There are three who bear witness in heaven," etc. Tertullian, against Praxeas, asserts—contrary to what the Papists say—that all Scriptures preach the Trinity and one God.

III. That Christ is coequal and consubstantial with the Father we all believe, and it is a necessary article in the Church. Yet it is not held from the Scriptures, but from tradition. Therefore, etc.

Response: The assumption is false. Zechariah 13: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man who is my companion," says the Lord of hosts. Strike the shepherd. This is to be understood concerning Christ, because Christ cites this testimony concerning himself. John 10: "I and the Father are one." John 5: "Making himself equal with God." Also, "I am in the Father and the Father in me." John 10: "You, being a man, make yourself God." Then, how therefore did the Fathers refute Arius if he could not be convinced by the Scriptures? How is that true—that Scripture is sufficient? Augustine against Maximinus demonstrates this from sacred Scripture.

IV. That there are two natures in Christ, human and divine, is an article necessary for salvation to know. But it is not in the Scriptures.

Response: This is most false. John 10: "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again." Therefore, God and man. 2 Corinthians 13: "He was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by the power of God." 1 Peter 3: "Put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit," etc.

V. That there is nothing expressed in the Scriptures concerning two wills in Christ.

Response: On the contrary:

1. There are in Christ two distinct natures, human and divine. Therefore, two wills. For each has its own will.
2. The Fathers condemned the Monothelites in the Sixth Council of Constantinople from the Scriptures. Therefore, etc.
3. Luke 22: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done."

VI. That there is nothing in sacred Scripture concerning the soul and mind of Christ.

Response: I deny it. Matthew 26: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death." Hebrews 2: "In every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." Luke 2: "Jesus increased in wisdom." Therefore, he had a mind where wisdom resides.

VII. That the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son—as all concede—is nevertheless not in the Scriptures. Therefore, etc.

Response: Augustine, against Maximinus, bishop of Ariminum, Book 13, Chapter 11 and following, proves the contrary from the Scriptures. John 15: "I will send him from the Father," etc.

VIII. Concerning the virginity of Mary even after childbirth—and yet from where can it be proved from the Scriptures?

Response: Epiphanius, against the Antidicomarianites, Book 3, Volume 2, attempts to prove it from the Scriptures. Others do likewise. But I will say this: we believe it because it is pious to think thus concerning the Virgin Mary, since we have no certain testimony to the contrary, and for many other reasons. For the rest, I deny it.

Such an article of faith is that whoever does not believe this must therefore be considered a heretic, or that person will suffer eternal death.

IX. No one is unaware how necessary it is that we believe and confess the Apostles' Creed with firm faith. Yet it is not in the Scriptures.

Response: Although this specific form and order of words is not found there, the entire substance of the doctrine is present. Therefore, this is a fallacy of accident.

X. They say that we do not have an explicit command in the Holy Scriptures concerning the baptism of infants, and yet we affirm that all are to be baptized.

Response: Although there is no express command of Christ in words on this matter, it is nevertheless clearly and necessarily gathered from the Scriptures themselves, as from the doctrine of the covenant and the children of believers, as we have shown above. For Christ commands that all who are received into His covenant be marked. Matt. 28. Moreover, the children of believers are received into the covenant. 1 Cor. 7. Likewise, Mark 10: "For of such is the kingdom of heaven."

XI. That women are to be admitted to the Lord's Supper is not expressed in the Holy Scriptures, for Christ celebrated the Supper only with His disciples.

Response: Although no women are recorded to have been present at that Supper, it does not follow that Christ's doctrine does not hold that women are to be admitted to the Supper. For the Apostle clearly says that what he delivered to the Corinthians he received from the Lord, 1 Cor. 11. And he taught that women also ought to eat of the Lord's bread. Moreover, he proves this by saying "man." Now "man" signifies both woman and male. Likewise, the sacrament of the Passover was eaten by women as well as by men; therefore, also Christ's Supper, which succeeded in its place. Also, women ought to eat spiritually of Christ's flesh just as men do. John 6:

“Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you.” Therefore, also of the sacrament of the flesh.

XII. The descent of Christ into hell is not expressed in the Holy Scriptures, and yet we all confess it in the Creed.

Response: Although it seems to some that this clause was added long after the first councils, such as Nicaea, etc., and there is no mention of it in the creeds of the ancient councils, nevertheless it is clear that this was gathered from the Scriptures. I do not speak now of the meaning of these words, but of the words themselves. For in Psalm 16, which is about Christ, as Peter testifies in Acts 2 and Paul in Acts 13, Christ speaks thus to the Father: “You will not leave my soul in hell.”

XIII. That Mary is and ought to be called the Mother of God.

Response: Indeed, this was defined according to the Scriptures by the Fathers in councils, such as Chalcedon, etc. Likewise, Luke 1: Elizabeth says: “And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” Whom does she call Lord? God. Therefore, “mother of the Lord” and “mother of God” are the same. Likewise, Luke 1: “That which is born of you, holy one, will be called the Son of God.” If that which is born of Mary is the Son of God and God, who does not see that she is and ought to be called the Mother of God, on account of the hypostatic union of two natures and the communication of properties.

XIV. That the souls of the blessed, immediately upon being released from the body, see the divinity by clear vision, etc.

Response: Indeed, this is held among other places in 2 Cor. 5. For there he clearly sets forth a twofold state of believers: one in this body, the other outside the body. And while we are in the body, he says we are absent from the Lord. When we are released from the body, he says we are absent from the body and present with the Lord. Therefore, the souls of believers, released from their bodies, migrate to the Lord and stand before Him and see Him.

XV. Concerning the sanctification of the Lord’s Day, we do not have it in the Scriptures; and yet there is no one who does not sanctify this day.

Response: Indeed, we gather it from the Scriptures: Rev. 1; Acts 20; 1 Cor. 16. For what used to be done on the Sabbath day, the Apostles transferred to the Lord’s Day, as is clear there; nor did they do this on their own authority, but by the will of God, who willed that even the Sabbath day, insofar as it was ceremonial, should be changed; since all ceremonial laws were imposed only until the time of correction, Heb. 9.

Arguments of the Third Class, taken from the Fathers.

The most ancient Fathers, who were either disciples of the Apostles or at least lived not long after the times of the Apostles, testify that many things pertaining to piety were instituted in the Church by the Apostles orally alone, concerning which no Apostolic writing exists; and the Fathers mention many of these traditions; and they say that no less faith is to be placed in these than in the Scriptures; and they appeal to these when disputing with heretics.

Therefore it is false that...

You (the Pontificals say) claim that everything necessary for salvation and pertaining to piety is contained in the Scriptures. They attempt to prove that assumption by bringing forward the testimonies of the Fathers.

1. Irenaeus, in Book 2, Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4, teaches in summary that there are two foundations upon which the Christian religion rests: first, the Holy Scriptures; second, Apostolic tradition. True Christians appeal to these two. On the contrary, heretics either deny the Scriptures—if not entirely, at least in part—or deny tradition, or deny both. Therefore, when the Scriptures are denied or rejected as imperfect, he teaches that one must take refuge in the Apostolic Churches, and especially in the Roman Church, where the pure Apostolic tradition is preserved. This is the summary of Irenaeus's doctrine concerning these traditions. He was writing against Valentinus and his disciples, who did not acknowledge the one God, the Creator of Heaven, proclaimed by the Prophets.

2. Tertullian, in his book *On Prescriptions Against Heretics*, first establishes the rule and summary of faith, which is contained in the Apostles' Creed: this affirms one God and one Son of God, Christ. Second, those who do not accept this are heretics, and he teaches that they should not be admitted to any disputation from the Scriptures. And this is the first prescription against heretics: because even they (those he deals with, the Marcionites) do not accept all the Scriptures, and those they do accept they corrupt with omissions and additions. Likewise, because they also say that we pervert the Scriptures, therefore one must not appeal to the Scriptures nor set up a contest in them.

Second: If the Lord Jesus Christ sent the Apostles to preach, then no other preachers are to be received except those whom Christ appointed; because no one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. But what the Apostles preached—that is, what Christ revealed to them—ought to be proved

(that is, through other witnesses) only through those same churches which the Apostles themselves founded by preaching to them orally, and afterward also through their Epistles.

Third: If this is so, it is clear that every doctrine which agrees with those Apostolic Churches and with the original deposit of faith must be considered truth: hold without doubt that which the Church received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, and Christ from God. All other doctrine must be judged false which savors of anything contrary to the truth of the Churches, the Apostles, Christ, and God.

And because heretics said:

1. The Apostles did not know everything;
 2. If they knew it, they did not preach everything;
 3. And if they preached it, the churches received it differently than the Apostles taught—
- therefore he adds another prescription:

Fourth: The churches received from the Apostles just as they preached. And because heretics added that even if the churches received rightly at first, yet afterward they erred and fell away from the truth—as the churches of Galatia and Corinth—he therefore points to those churches which the Apostle praises for steadfastness in faith, such as the Philippians, Ephesians, etc. It is not likely that all churches erred into one faith. Among all there is always one and the same faith. Therefore it is truth, not error.

Fifth: That is true and of the Lord which was delivered earlier; that is foreign and false which was introduced later. Such is the Church's doctrine of one God—that is primary; later came the heresy of Marcion and Valentinus.

But because heretics might perhaps say that they too existed in the time of the Apostles, he therefore refers to the successions of bishops and says: Let them show the origins of their churches by tracing back the order of their bishops until they come to someone who heard an Apostle—as our Catholic churches can do.

But even if they fabricate this, they will accomplish nothing; because their doctrine compared with Apostolic doctrine will be pronounced different and contrary; nor would any Apostle or Apostolic authority be theirs (p. 107). And so he adds: Churches which existed after the time of the Apostles can demonstrate by this form—that is, by an argument drawn from doctrine—that they are Apostolic Churches; but heretical churches can prove by neither this form (namely from

doctrine) nor by another form (namely by resolving back through succession of bishops all the way to the Apostles themselves) that they are Apostolic.

Sixth: But against this he adds another prescription: Those are not Apostolic Churches which still retain those doctrines which the Apostles condemned—whether they existed in the time of the Apostles or afterward. See the passage on p. 107.

Summary: He shows by this rule concerning doctrine which one is chiefly recognized as belonging to Apostolic Churches and which is not. Therefore he says on p. 109: “Whence then are strangers and enemies to the Apostles...”

Do you not see the diversity of teaching that each person, according to his own judgment, has either put forward or accepted against the Apostles?

2. If it is concluded from this that, according to the opinion of the Fathers, not everything necessary for salvation is contained in the Scriptures, it follows that the Fathers fight with themselves. For, as we have cited passages above, they everywhere teach that all things pertaining to Christian piety are so contained in the Scriptures that nothing may be added which does not have testimony from the Scriptures. And indeed Tertullian himself, in his book *On the Flesh of Christ*, rejects the sayings of heretics thus: “I do not accept,” he says, “what you bring forward from your own mind outside of Scripture.” Let the Papists, therefore, reconcile these Fathers among themselves, since they rely on their authority. Nor should it be said that the Fathers erred in that first axiom concerning the perfection of the Scriptures, because it is consistent with the Scriptures themselves—and so consistent that if the Fathers held the contrary opinion, they would have to be entirely rejected. However, it is not likely that the Fathers contradict themselves in these two axioms. Therefore, it cannot be concluded from what they write about traditions that not everything necessary for salvation is contained in the Sacred Writings, even according to the opinion of the Fathers. I will make this plain later when I explain the sayings of these Fathers.

2. Let these Fathers prove that all these traditions which they mention are Apostolic traditions, and we will accept them.

3. All traditions, whether read in the Fathers or imposed by others, must be examined by the touchstone of the Sacred Scriptures; thus also the Fathers teach that it must be done. Let at least Augustine’s Epistle 19 to Jerome be read: “I think,” etc., and it is cited in the Decretals, Distinction 9. Then we will find these traditions either in agreement with the Canonical Scriptures, or in disagreement, or neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

If they are in agreement, we will admit them as Apostolic, pious, and good; but then it will be clear that they are not outside the Scriptures. For whatever agrees with the Sacred Scriptures certainly has testimonies in the Scriptures. Hence it cannot be said that something necessary for salvation is found outside the Scriptures. And such were all the traditions of the Apostles.

If they are in disagreement: no one will say that they are Apostolic and necessary or useful for salvation, but rather contrary to salvation. For whatever conflicts with the Sacred Writings also opposes our salvation and therefore cannot be Apostolic; and so it must be rejected as poisonous and pernicious. And such are many traditions in the Papacy. Therefore, concerning these also it cannot be said that something necessary for salvation is found outside Scripture.

If they are neither agreeing nor disagreeing: then they are not necessary for salvation. For whatever neither disagrees with Scripture nor agrees with it is indifferent (ἀδιάφορον), and therefore neither necessary for salvation nor contrary to salvation. Indeed, if these things, which are by nature indifferent, are joined with superstition or obligation of conscience, they become pernicious and conflicting with the Sacred Writings. Therefore, concerning these also it cannot be said that something necessary for salvation is found outside the Scriptures.

Hence the position stands: Nothing can be found outside Scripture that is necessary for our salvation—whether to be believed or to be done—and therefore what the Fathers hand down about traditions does not at all conflict with our proposition: Whatever things are necessary for our salvation are all abundantly and clearly contained in the Canonical Scriptures. And let this be a brief response to all the sayings and writings of the Fathers concerning Apostolic Traditions.

Moreover, so that those things which the Fathers write about unwritten traditions may be better understood, and so that we may grasp what the ancient Church thought about those traditions and thus derive some fruit from their writings, three things must be done by us:

First, we must explain how many and what kinds of traditions are read in the Fathers, and which ones they proposed to the faithful as necessary to observe and which as not necessary.

Next, rules must be handed down by which we can become more certain which of them are true Apostolic traditions and which are less so—but rather human or

diabolical.

Lastly, we must respond to certain principal sayings of the Fathers, especially Irenaeus and Tertullian, so that how those are to be understood and what their true meaning is may become clear.

ON THE FIRST POINT

If the passages of the Fathers where they speak about traditions are carefully examined, we will clearly see these distinctions, of which the first is:

1. Of the traditions which are read in the Fathers, some concern the doctrine of faith, others concern ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies, and others concern morals and precepts of life.
2. Among these traditions, some are proposed as necessary for belief and practice, while others are not. I will now explain with specific examples, beginning first with traditions concerning doctrine.

Among the traditions of doctrine that the Fathers propose as necessary are the following:

First, concerning the canonical and apocryphal books of both the Old and New Testaments: which are canonical and which are not. All the Fathers hold that we have this solely from the tradition of the ancients—namely, the Apostles and Apostolic men—that is (I interpret), regarding the names of the authors and the foundation of faith.

Second, concerning the summary of the canonical books and the rule of faith. The summary of Christian doctrine and the rule of our faith is the Creed, which is called the Apostles' Creed. For we do not have it from written sources that this was composed by the Apostles, but only from tradition. Moreover, the Fathers uphold this summary of faith—this rule—as an Apostolic tradition communicated to all churches, especially when disputing against heretics. And they insist on this tradition so strongly that they say those who refuse to accept it should not even be admitted into debate, even if they wish to press the Scriptures. See Tertullian, *On Prescriptions*.

Third, concerning the sense of Scripture. Holy Scripture is to be understood and explained according to the sense we confess in the common Creed, so that nothing

conflicts with the sense we simply hold in the Creed. This too is an Apostolic tradition.

These three general traditions concerning doctrine are observed as necessary, for they are consistent with the Sacred Scriptures. For we acknowledge, first, from the Sacred Scriptures themselves—opened and explained to us by the Holy Spirit—that these are truly from God. Second, we acknowledge that the doctrine contained in the Creed is truly Apostolic and drawn from the Sacred Scriptures, and that it is the true rule of faith. Third, we acknowledge that the Scriptures are to be interpreted and understood according to the simple sense we have in this Creed, which is the rule of faith. For thus also the Apostle teaches in Romans 12.

From these three general traditions, the Fathers later gather other particular traditions concerning individual articles of faith. For example, Irenaeus and Tertullian, against heretics in *On Prescriptions* and elsewhere, uphold this doctrine as an Apostolic tradition deposited in all churches: that there is only one God, and this is He who created heaven and earth; and that there is one Mediator, Jesus Christ. This doctrine was held most firmly in all churches. Therefore, not without reason did the Fathers insist on this tradition and challenge the heretics themselves—Marcion, Valentinus, and others—to the Apostolic churches. When these heretics were refuted by the Scriptures, they either denied them or perverted them by adding or subtracting, or they contended that not everything is contained in them or not everything is well expressed, as Tertullian teaches.

I. There are also other traditions pertaining to doctrine and to the interpretation of the Scriptures among the Fathers, but which are not proposed as necessary. And if some propose them as necessary, they are nevertheless not to be admitted. For they are neither proposed by all as Apostolic, nor are they truly Apostolic. Examples: as when Epiphanius writes that when Lazarus died the first time, he was thirty years old. We do not have this from the Scriptures; he wished it to be from tradition, but not as necessary. Likewise, when Basil held that Zechariah, who was killed between the temple and the altar, was the father of John the Baptist, and similar things. These certainly were not received from the Apostles but were opinions of ancient men. Therefore, if the Fathers imposed these as Apostolic traditions, they were mistaken.

II. Concerning traditions that are about ecclesiastical ceremonies, this must be noted: that the ancient Fathers never proposed other sacraments besides Baptism and the Lord's Supper to the churches, nor did they leave them in their writings as coming from traditions of the Apostles or other ancients. And this must be observed against the Papists.

But as for other rites and ecclesiastical ceremonies, they hand down many; yet some of these they propose as universal and necessary to observe, others not so.

Examples of the former:

Universal and necessary are:

1. That the faithful hold ecclesiastical assemblies in a certain place, and in them read the Scriptures, solemnly administer the sacraments, have public prayers—even for impious kings.
2. Likewise, that in Baptism the one to be baptized renounce the world and the devil and profess his faith in Christ; likewise...

No one is to be admitted to Communion unless they first profess the faith. And so forth.

These traditions, because they were both universal and consistent with the Holy Scriptures, were therefore set forth as necessary to be observed—and indeed they ought to be observed.

An example of the second kind—that is, those which concerned ecclesiastical rites but were not universal, and therefore not necessary to be observed—are many found in Tertullian's *De Corona Militis*:

For instance:

1. That the baptized formerly used to eat milk and honey after receiving baptism.
2. That a Christian, whatever he undertakes, should fortify his forehead with the sign of the cross.
3. That he ought to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

And many other such, about which Basil speaks at length in *On the Holy Spirit*, chapter 27.

However, not all that he lists there were universal; moreover, not all are consistent with the Word of God. Therefore, they were not and are not necessary to be observed.

III. As for traditions concerning morals and rules of life, these are for the most part in agreement with the law of God, except for certain ones regarding the conduct and life of the clergy. Some of these are human and have no foundation in the Word of God; others are contradictory and therefore impious, such as those concerning vows and celibacy.

Epiphanius, in his refutation of the Apostolics, says that this is an Apostolic tradition: "Those who have vowed celibacy, if afterward they take wives, sin and bring judgment upon themselves." But this conflicts with the teaching of Paul in 1

Corinthians 7, where he says concerning all: “If they cannot control themselves, they should marry.” Indeed, even Epiphanius himself in the same passage shows that it is much better for such persons who have made a vow of celibacy to act against their vow by taking wives, than to be continually troubled by crimes and passions. How can this be better if the former is condemned and is against God? On what testimony does he rely? Surely on that of the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 7: “It is better to marry than to burn.” Therefore, even among traditions concerning rules of life, some are in conflict with the Word of God. And let this suffice for the first chapter.

II. Let us now come to the second chapter: by what rules we can recognize which traditions are Apostolic and which are not.

Augustine, in Volume 7, *Against the Donatists*, Book 4, chapter 24, gives this rule: “What the whole Church holds, and what was not instituted by a council but has always been retained, is most rightly believed to have been handed down by Apostolic authority.” He repeats much the same in Epistle 118 to Januarius.

I do not reject this rule but embrace it—namely, if something has been retained in the Church (that is, everywhere and by all) and always (that is, from the very times of the Apostles without any interruption), then it comes from Apostolic tradition. But to prove this—here is the task, here the labor. Therefore, we will bring forward a more certain rule, which is this:

If these traditions on the one hand have some foundation in the Scriptures—that is, if they can be necessarily concluded from Scripture—and on the other hand serve to promote piety—that is, both to stir up, preserve, and advance the internal worship which consists in faith, hope, charity, and a good conscience; and to exercise external worship, which consists in the reverent reception of the sacraments and public prayers—these we say are Apostolic, and as pious and salutary are to be received and observed.

The reason for this rule is that all Apostolic traditions—about which no one doubts that they were from the Apostles—had these two characteristics: first, a foundation in the Word of God; second, usefulness for promoting piety and edification.

1. This is clear from the general rule which the Apostle prescribes concerning these matters in 1 Corinthians 14: “Let all things be done for edification,” and further: “But all things should be done decently and in order.” Therefore, the Apostles also kept this rule in their traditions.

2. In passages where we read the constitutions of the Apostles, in all these places you will see these two things: first, that all those Apostolic constitutions have a foundation in the Word of God—that is, in the teaching of the Prophets and of Christ;

second, that they have as their end the edification of the Church, so that they serve divine worship—whether spiritual and internal or bodily and external (which nevertheless is instituted for the sake of the internal).

A few examples:

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul institutes that in church women should pray with their heads covered, men with heads uncovered. First, see how many reasons he uses drawn from Scripture to show that this constitution is to be received and is according to the will of God. Indeed he prefaces it by saying: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” Second, see that the end of this constitution is honorableness—that decorum be maintained in the church—and thus the edification of the Church; that is, so that external worship—such as the hearing of the Word and

So that the perception of the sacraments may be exercised with greater honor and decorum. Another purpose is that each person may be reminded of their duty by these ceremonies—that is, that the man may recognize that he is the head of the woman, and the woman may recognize her own submission, by which she is subject to the man. These things are useful for internal worship.

Likewise, in the same place, it is established how the Lord’s Supper should be celebrated: namely, that all should come together at the same time and observe one another. First, it is shown from the Word of God—that is, from the institution of Christ—that this ought to be done. The purpose is their salvation, so that they may not become guilty of the body of Christ; also, that the Supper may be taken with greater reverence; and that this external ceremony of gathering together may serve internal worship—namely, faith and love, and the unity of souls.

In 1 Corinthians 14, it is instituted how tongues should be used in the church: namely, that they should not speak in tongues without explanation and interpretation. He uses several reasons, also drawn from Scripture, to prove that this is in accordance with the will of God—good and honorable. For after many reasons, he also brings forward Scripture, saying: “In the law it is written, ‘By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people (unbelieving), and even then they will not listen to me.’” As if the Apostle says: “Do not allow such men to speak in the church who speak in foreign tongues without explanation.” For this would be a sign that God does not love you, since He usually sends such prophets to an unbelieving people whom He does not wish to understand the truth or know the Holy Scriptures.

He clearly states that the purpose of this institution is the edification of the church,

so that they may have consolation and exhortation, etc.—that is, so that it may serve internal worship: faith, love, and spiritual consolation.

In Ephesians 4, when he speaks about the purpose for which Christ instituted the ministry in the church, he teaches that it is for the building up of the body of Christ. From this we gather that the purpose of all ceremonies and whatever is instituted and done in the assembly of believers ought to be the edification of the church. If this is lacking, they are not good and are not institutions or ecclesiastical traditions according to Christ's will.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, where he says, "Hold to the traditions which you have learned," he first states these words: "We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit." See the rest. By these words he teaches what kind of traditions he commends to them—those which they had received from the Apostle: namely, such as could move them to obey God more fully, to progress in sanctification of spirit, in faith of the truth, and in obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the purpose of traditions is to serve for progress in sanctification of spirit, in faith of the truth, and in obtaining the glory of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 5, where he institutes how excommunication should be exercised against that incestuous man, he immediately shows the reason and purpose: namely, so that he, being put to shame in the flesh, may be more strongly provoked to repentance, and so his spirit may be saved. Therefore, those traditions by which people are more provoked to true repentance are apostolic and good.

The same is proven in 2 Corinthians 7 concerning those sorrows which stir up repentance. For he says: "Even if I made you sorrowful with my letter, I do not regret it. For I rejoice that you were made sorrowful unto repentance."

In 1 Timothy 5, that tradition—that younger widows should not be admitted to that ministry of the church by which service was rendered to the saints and other exercises of piety were performed (this class of persons was supported at the expense of the church)—was instituted by the Apostle because it was useful for the church and also contributed to the edification of those widows themselves, as is clear from the context.

Likewise, what he writes in Ephesians 5 and 6 concerning the duty of parents toward children, children toward parents, servants toward masters, and masters toward servants. Also in 1 Timothy 6 concerning the duty of servants toward

masters. Also in 1 Timothy 5 concerning how elders, women, etc., should be admonished and corrected. And what is in 1 Peter 2 concerning the duty of subjects toward their magistrates—even impious ones. Also what is said about the adornment and clothing of women in 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Peter 3.

And if any other traditions are found in the apostolic writings, you see in them these two things: first, that they have a foundation in the Word of God, in the law of the Lord; second, that their purpose is edification—that each may more diligently attend to his own calling and promote spiritual worship.

From this, therefore, a rule is gathered concerning all other traditions which are not contained in Scripture: How can it be recognized whether they are apostolic or not?

1. If they have a foundation in the Word of God.
2. If they contribute to promoting piety, to stirring up repentance and faith; finally, if they serve so that the faithful may hear, perceive, more fully believe, and observe throughout their whole life with greater zeal and greater fruit—the doctrine which sacraments and God’s commandments convey.

Those which do not have this foundation or tend toward this end are useless and vain.

They are: therefore not Apostolic, but merely human. But if they either conflict with the word of God, or cause people to place their confidence and hope of the remission of sins and salvation in them and their own works, they are diabolical. And this is enough concerning the second point.

Since these things are so, now the individual traditions which are read in the Fathers ought to be examined according to these rules, and it should be seen which ones have a foundation in the Scriptures and which do not; likewise, which serve to promote piety and to participate reverently in the sacraments, and which do not; and thus it should be concluded which are Apostolic and therefore to be received, and which are not and therefore to be rejected. But because this matter would be too lengthy, therefore let it suffice for the present if I briefly encompass in a few propositions those things which will be more fully explained elsewhere concerning all these traditions.

In general, therefore, and universally concerning the traditions which are read in the Fathers, these propositions are to be retained:

First: There are some which not only have a foundation in the word of God, but also always effectively contribute to exercising, promoting, and preserving piety, and therefore are Apostolic and to be kept by all Christians, and which cannot be omitted with a good conscience: such as the summary of Christian doctrine contained in the Creed; such as having public prayers in the Church on certain days for all people; such as the public administration of the sacraments, not private, both of Baptism and of the Supper; such as the solemn exercise of discipline and excommunication. For all these, and other similar ones, have clear testimony in the word of God and greatly contribute to piety and to the edification of the Church; and they have been received by all churches; and therefore they are also called Catholic and Apostolic.

Second: There are others which indeed have a foundation in the word of God and at times also benefited piety, but now no longer do so; and therefore they are indeed Apostolic, but because they are no longer useful, it is not necessary that they be observed. Such as that tradition concerning abstaining from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, and from what is strangled. And therefore even if these were Apostolic, they are not Catholic.

Third: Some do not have a foundation in the word of God, yet could contribute to piety and edification if exercised without superstition. Therefore they are indeed not Apostolic, but Ecclesiastical. And of these Ecclesiastical traditions, some are universal and have been admitted by all churches always, and therefore are called Catholic: such as that the day of the Lord's Nativity, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and others of that kind are celebrated. Therefore these are not to be despised but kept, provided all superstition is absent.

Fourth: Some are particular, instituted by particular bishops in their own churches, and for this reason are to be called Episcopal; and these therefore are free and ought to be free for all churches: such as concerning the time of celebrating Easter—one time was observed by churches in Asia, another by churches in the West. So also concerning traditions of celebrating the Supper—more frequently in one place, more rarely in another.

Fifth: Some indeed have no foundation in the Scriptures and do nothing for piety or for edification; yet they do not conflict with the word of God nor are they contrary to piety by their own nature. Therefore they cannot be Apostolic, but merely human. And very many such empty and trivial ones are retained in the Papacy: such as that in the Lord's Supper some water is put into the wine.

Sixth: Some, however, conflict with the word of God and also harm piety; and therefore they are neither Apostolic, nor Ecclesiastical, nor merely human, but diabolical; and so they are not free, but to be condemned and avoided: such as what Epiphanius relates—that those who after a vow of virginity or celibacy take wives, sin; such as the tradition concerning retaining images, concerning invoking the dead.

But they are saints who left these writings.

Reply: They were also men; therefore they could both err and deceive.

Moreover, from all these things which we have said about these traditions, it cannot be gathered that anything is necessary for salvation and pertains to piety which is not contained in the sacred writings. Not all good traditions, such as Apostolic ones, have a foundation in the word of God; but those which are only Ecclesiastical are free for all churches.

From these general propositions it is clear what must be answered to certain special sayings of the Fathers concerning Traditions.

And first to that which they write—that the Church received from the Apostles not only written things but also unwritten ones: Basil on the Holy Spirit, Epiphanius.

Reply: We easily grant this, as is clear concerning the Apostles' Creed, which nevertheless is not found in the Scriptures according to that form of words.

And it is not contained in the order: And we say this to be the first and principal tradition of the Apostles: And as there is tradition concerning the Canonical and Apocryphal books. Likewise, many things which pertain to ecclesiastical discipline and rites: concerning synods to be held; concerning fasts to be appointed in a time of calamity; and many other things of this kind, we confess the Church received from the Apostles without writing: But we add, all these things have their foundation in the Scriptures, and then that nothing was instituted by the Apostles which did not make for piety and the edification of the Church. Nothing trivial, nothing ludicrous, nothing superstitious. Likewise, we add, as to doctrine, they taught nothing different by word from what they left in writing. As to the sacraments, they added no sacrament to the two instituted by Christ.

Second: That which the Church received through tradition and dogma has equal force for piety and is of equal authority with those things which were received in writing, as Basil says in *On the Holy Spirit*.

Response: We admit this in those traditions which have clear testimonies in the

Scriptures, and which are not only useful for piety but also necessary, and therefore have always been admitted by all Churches, and are Apostolic and Catholic: such as the tradition concerning the Creed, the Canonical books, and certain others. But we do not admit it, nor should it be admitted, in all things.

Third: Traditions are to be observed with equal religious reverence as those things which we have in the Scriptures.

Response: We grant this concerning those Catholic traditions about which we have spoken before; not concerning all, even if they have testimony in the Scriptures and at one time made for piety: such as the tradition concerning abstaining from things strangled and from blood, which had testimony in the Scriptures; likewise, it made for piety for a certain time, but now it does not. Therefore it is not to be observed with equal religious reverence. Accordingly, we say that those are necessary to be observed which are first clearly conformable to the Holy Scriptures, and secondly have always been observed in all Churches from the time of the Apostles. Therefore, those which are not of this kind we are not compelled to admit; but the rule of the Apostle must be followed: "Test all things; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Fourth: In Epiphanius, in the refutation of the Apostolics: "Where there exists a tradition of the Church, nothing is to be inquired into." Likewise that saying of Augustine to Januarius: "To dispute about that which the Church throughout the whole world observes is the most insolent madness."

Response: These sayings are understood concerning Catholic and Apostolic traditions, founded on the Word of God and necessary to be observed, about which we have spoken above. But many abuses have been introduced into the Church, about which Augustine writes to Januarius. Certainly Augustine and other Fathers are not speaking about these.

Fifth: Irenaeus and Tertullian said that the truth of the Christian religion is to be sought in the Apostolic Churches, among which they especially place the Roman Church. Likewise, that from the faith and authority of these Churches a prescription is to be made against heretics: so that with those who reject the authority of these Churches, there is no dealing by means of the Scriptures.

Response: That these sayings of the Fathers may be explained and understood with profit, four things in these sayings are to be noted:

1. What kind those Churches were to which they wished recourse to be had, and whose authority they so magnified that if anyone rejected them and the traditions which were among them, they denied that there should be disputation from the

Scriptures.

2. Concerning what truth the Fathers were speaking when they wrote that the truth is to be inquired into in the Apostolic Churches.
3. When at length they appealed to those Churches.
4. For what reason.

1. As to the first: Those Churches, and especially the Roman Church, were true Apostolic and Christian Churches, not only in name but in reality—in purity of doctrine, integrity of sacraments, severity of discipline, constancy in faith, fortitude of soul in enduring all kinds of torments for Christ, charity toward brothers, mortification of the flesh, honesty of life, contempt of the world—in short, in sanctification and Apostolic Christian morals. They were Churches recently planted by the Apostles, instituted in the purest doctrine and severe discipline, adulterated by no one as yet, corrupted by no one—like most chaste and uncontaminated virgins, on whose lips the recent milk of the Apostles still clung and most sweetly smelled. And especially, as I said, the Roman Church, as all those most ancient Fathers testify; to which nothing could justly be objected even by the heretics themselves. Therefore, to this Church and similar ones—as to those among whom the purest doctrine remained—the Fathers appealed and wished them to be judges of controversies; and they upheld their authority and contended that with those who rejected their authority there should no longer be disputation from the Scriptures.

But what dissimilarity there is between that...

And this? Which is between a chaste virgin and the most shameless harlot. And therefore, what impudence is it that the Fathers write concerning that most holy and chaste virgin, to turn it back upon this most foul, unchaste, and shameless harlot? That is, upon the present Roman Babylon, which retains nothing or little more of Apostolic doctrine, piety, or discipline; but in which the devil reigns, in which Antichrist, now revealed to the whole world, sits enthroned. Let them read, I pray, what is written in Ezekiel concerning the Church of Israel, chapter 16. First, after he shows her origin, from where she was brought forth, he explains with what great care she was commanded by God to be cleansed from every stain, purified, well-nourished, most holily educated, beautifully adorned, most splendidly clothed, and adorned with every kind of ornament; and so he compares her to a most chaste and beautiful bride. Then he explains what she afterward became, trusting in her beauty. He says she became a most obscene and shameless harlot. Let the passage be read. Here I ask the Romans: if someone were to apply the same things that the Prophet there foretells about the Church before she became a harlot, even after she

had become a harlot, would he not be called impudent? Such are you, when you interpret what the Fathers declare about that first Roman Church and its authority as applying also to the present one. For what Ezekiel writes about the twofold state of the Israelite Church were prophecies concerning the twofold state of the Roman Church. She was a beautiful virgin; now she is a most foul harlot. Therefore, what Irenaeus and Tertullian left written about that first Roman Church and its authority pertains nothing to you. But if such a Church were given to us as that first one was, we too would gladly grant you that authority.

As to the second point: What was that truth which the Fathers said was to be inquired of in the Apostolic Churches, and especially in the Roman one? The truth was of the first and principal articles of the Christian religion: concerning God the Creator and Governor of all things; concerning Christ the Son of God and true God; concerning His true death and resurrection. This truth had first been preached by the Apostles, then committed to writing; thus it was deposited with all the Churches partly through traditions, partly in writings. It was therefore a truth about which no Church doubted—certain, known, evident—which was daily preached, read in the Scriptures, explained in the schools. Who then would not rightly appeal to those Churches for this truth so faithfully preserved and so certain? But what has this to do with those things which are now disputed between us and the Roman Church? For these were never received by all the Churches; they are not expressed in the Scriptures, nor can they be deduced from the Scriptures; but were devised by the Roman Church itself against the Scriptures: concerning the primacy of the Pope—this the Eastern Churches never conceded to you. Concerning purgatorial fire—about this also there was dispute between the Eastern and Western Churches. Concerning images in the temple—how many disagreements and even wars between Eastern and Western? Indeed, even among the Easterners themselves, while some condemned them, others approved? I could demonstrate the same concerning other controversies. But who does not know these things? That this doctrine concerning these controversies, which the Roman Church now holds and professes, was not received by all the Churches; indeed, that it did not always have a place even in the Roman Church; it is certain that it is not contained in the Creed; it is certain that it cannot be proved by clear testimonies of Scripture; and therefore they flee to traditions; it is also certain that these traditions which now prevail concerning this doctrine are not found among the ancient Fathers. What then does that truth—about which Irenaeus and Tertullianus spoke, which was and is expressed in the Scriptures, explained in the Apostolic and all other creeds, received and preserved by all Christian Churches without exception, most true and beyond all controversy—what, I say, does this truth have to do with these falsehoods of the present Roman Church? Indeed, concerning that truth about which Irenaeus and

Tertullianus disputed with those heretics—about the one God Creator of all, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—we are still willing with those Fathers to appeal to the Roman Church. See how much we grant them! Why then do they complain? What therefore those Fathers write about inquiring after that truth pertains nothing to our present controversies.

As to the third point: When did those Fathers appeal to the Churches for that truth? After they had first proved it from the Scriptures, then also by tradition—that is, by the Creed. But those heretics either rejected the Scriptures or denied the meaning which the Fathers brought forward; they also did not admit tradition—that is, the Creed. Then at last the Fathers, when they saw that they had no further weapons left with which to confute those heretics and defend the truth except by

The testimonies of the churches were appealed to the churches—not to one, but to all: to those churches in which there were such persons as we have previously described. For these would give the first testimony: whether those books which the heretics rejected as apocryphal were canonical or not; next, whether the sense of Scripture which they drew from the plain words was the true and genuine meaning or not; third, whether the tradition of the creed which they upheld was the true apostolic tradition or not; and consequently, whether the doctrine they defended concerning the one God and the one Son of God, Christ, was true or not.

Now, these churches could give a certain testimony concerning these matters because, having been instituted by the apostles not long before, they retained in all doctrine—not so much in writings as by oral teaching—the same doctrine and understanding of Scripture which they had received from the apostles by word of mouth. This the early Fathers proved because, from the time those churches were planted and taught by the apostles, they had never varied in doctrine. Therefore, their testimony ought to be admitted as most certain and true. But if anyone should reject this and despise the authority of these churches, they declared that they could no longer dispute with such people.

Did they not then rightly appeal to the churches—and to such churches? Did they not then rightly say that with these heretics one should no longer dispute by Scripture alone?

Fourthly: Why did those Fathers refer those people to the churches for the understanding of Scripture and for the truth? Because, namely, the truth and the true understanding of Scripture remained among them, just as it had been left there by the apostles. Tertullian openly asserts this cause when he says: “For where the

truth of Christian discipline and faith appears, there will also be the truth of the Scriptures, of expositions, and of all Christian traditions.”

But how do these sayings of the Fathers help the Papists against us? Let the Papists deal with us as those Fathers dealt with those heretics: let them prove their doctrines by clear Scriptures; let them prove them by the tradition received among all—namely, the Apostles’ Creed—indeed, even by other traditions, that is, the creeds of the ancient churches; let them bring forward that sense of Scripture which does not conflict with Scripture and the creeds. Then at last, if we do not agree, let them appeal to all the churches which, having been planted and taught by the apostles, have always retained and still retain the same doctrine which they received from the apostles. Let them also appeal to the Roman Church—but only on condition that, as the Fathers did, they show that no change in doctrine and divine worship has been made in this church from the time it was instituted by the apostles. And then at last, if we do not agree, let them declare that there is no more disputing with us.

We see, therefore, how that fifth saying—that is, the words of Irenaeus and Tertullian which we quoted above—is to be understood, and how rightly they spoke and wrote it against such heretics who would admit neither the Scriptures which testified against them, nor the true and simple sense of other Scriptures, nor the tradition received by all (that is, the doctrine of the creed), nor finally the testimony of all the churches which never departed from that doctrine from the time they were taught and instituted by the apostles.

And so it is clear that these sayings of the Fathers do nothing against us, who embrace all canonical Scriptures and their simple sense, as well as the common tradition of the creed; and if they also bring forward testimonies of truly apostolic churches which are known never to have varied in doctrine, we are most willing to embrace them.

The sum is this: Because among those churches remained the truth of apostolic doctrine and remained the whole sense of Scripture which the apostles had left among them—which was evident because no change of doctrine had ever occurred among them—therefore the Fathers rightly magnified their authority and prescribed it to heretics. And if these rejected it, they denied that one should dispute with them. And this they said only after they had proved their case by Scripture and by commonly received tradition—whereas the heretics were unwilling to admit either.

Moreover, the Fathers never bound apostolic faith to any particular places or persons. Hence Tertullian says in *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, page 96: "Truth is not to be judged from persons, but persons from truth." Likewise, page 109: "Whence are heretics strangers and enemies to the apostles except from the diversity of doctrine which each one has brought forward or accepted on his own authority against the apostles?"

They wanted everything to be proved by Scripture—that is clear. But they wanted the sense of Scripture in the chief points of religion to be taken from the creed and from those churches among whom it was certain that the truth of Christian faith remained—not from those among whom this truth did not remain. Therefore he says on page 109: "There, therefore, both scriptural and expository adulteration will be detected."

QUESTION IX: On the reading of the Scriptures by every person.

After the question concerning the usefulness and perfection of the Scriptures, there follows in due order the question concerning the reading and hearing of the Scriptures. For when the Apostle says in 2 Timothy 3, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching," etc., and likewise that it is able to make one wise for salvation, it must be seen whom it can make wise and for whom it is useful for teaching. Certainly not for those who keep this Scripture only in books, chests, and libraries, and never read it, never hear it; but rather for those who read it, hear it, understand it, and receive it by faith. Therefore, the Apostle adds, saying: "Which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Likewise, in Romans 1: "The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." But faith comes from hearing, as in Romans 10. This question is therefore proposed: Is it the duty of every Christian—indeed, of every person—to devote effort to the sacred Scriptures, not only by hearing them when they are explained in the church and in school, but also by reading and examining them at home, or not?

Many Papists, especially in this time, deny that it should be permitted to everyone to read the Scriptures: such as women, laypeople, the unlearned, children, soldiers, and common people. They say this is the duty only of ecclesiastics, theologians, and learned men. The reasons they bring forward I will briefly recite and refute at the end. Our position is contained in this THESIS:

It is the duty of every Christian to devote effort to the sacred Scriptures, not only by hearing them when they are explained either in the church or in school, but also by

reading and examining them at home.

Confirmation:

1. It is a command of God, pertaining to each individual person, that we should hear both ourselves and Christ speaking to us—namely, whenever He addresses us and we are able to hear Him. The testimonies of the prophets repeatedly urge, "Hear the word of the Lord." Concerning Christ, the Father says in Matthew 17: "Hear Him." Yet He speaks to us not only from the pulpit and from the chair through doctors and pastors, but also in the sacred Scriptures. For there He teaches, commands, promises, and threatens. Therefore, it is the duty of every Christian, when at leisure, to hear Christ speaking in the Scriptures—which is done by reading.

2. It is a command of Christ pertaining to each individual, in John 5: "Search the Scriptures." Therefore, all Jews were accustomed to read the sacred books.

3. In Colossians 3, the Apostle commands the whole church and each of the faithful who were at Colossae that even in their own private homes the word of Christ—that is, the doctrine of the Gospel and of the sacred Scriptures—should dwell abundantly, teaching and admonishing one another in their respective duties, namely from the Scriptures. He says: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another." There that word "dwell" must be carefully considered. For it signifies a domestic habitation.

4. Each person is bound not only to profess their faith when necessary, but also to give a reason for why they so believe, hope, and live, as in 1 Peter 3: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you." But how shall a Christian do this unless he exercises himself in the sacred Scriptures? For the reason for our faith and hope is to be sought from no other source than from the Scriptures, upon which alone it rests. And deservedly does the Apostle require this of each Christian: since it is most shameful that one who is called a Christian should not know how to give a reason from the Scriptures for what he professes and does; just as it is shameful in every other profession, both of disciplines and of arts—namely, that someone should profess to be a philosopher or a physician who does not know how to give a reason for the art he professes. Certainly such men among us are hissed at and laughed at: how much more shameful would it be for a Christian?

5. In Deuteronomy 6, the Lord thus commands all His people: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them

diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." The same is repeated in Deuteronomy 11. Hence it is clear that God willed that in every house the law of the Lord should be kept and written—certainly not that it should lie there idle, but that it should be read by all, heard by all, and so heavenly doctrine might be preserved uncorrupted and propagated through all ages by perpetual succession. And indeed the Jews observed that command and still observe it.

For among the Jews, there is no house in which the sacred books are not kept, and at set times, with the whole family listening, they are read. Moreover, children from a tender age are accustomed to reading the Bible; even women devote themselves to the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures. (2 Timothy 1:5) Is it not then fitting for Christians to do the same? For that command of God concerning reading the Scriptures at home pertains not only to the Jews, but also to Christians—indeed, especially to Christians, who are now the true people of God. That precept is not judicial or ceremonial, but moral, belonging to the first table of the law, so that no one can evade it by claiming it has been abolished along with the other ceremonial and judicial laws by Christ. On the contrary, when Christ said, "Search the Scriptures," and when He rebuked the Pharisees for not reading the Scriptures, He fully confirmed it. And universally, whatever is found in the Old Testament pertaining to love for God, love for neighbor, and living a holy life is clearly confirmed by Christ. (2 Peter 1:19)

Writing to all Christians, and not only to priests, he says: "We have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." By these words, he teaches not only that all Christians at that time were accustomed to diligently reading the Scriptures of the prophets, but also that whoever does the same does well. Therefore, those who neglect this do wrong. (Proverbs 2:1–5)

God through Solomon urges each one to lay up His words and commandments with them and to incline their ear to wisdom. Let also what he writes in chapter 4 on the same matter be read: where there is both a command pertaining to each individual concerning the study of the Lord's law and a magnificent promise touching those who devote themselves to this study. What then do the impious gain by saying that the reading of the Scriptures does not pertain to all?

What indeed does the Lord threaten against those who neglect to hear His law but cast it away? Let Jeremiah chapter 9 be read. Do they not also cast it away who refuse to read the Scriptures when they can?

In Acts 17 concerning the Bereans, who were more noble than those in Thessalonica, it is recorded that when they heard the Apostle, they examined the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so as they heard from the Apostle preached. What does this example teach, except that in the time of the Apostles, even the devout were accustomed to reading and searching the Holy Scriptures most diligently at home? And therefore, we ought to do the same if we truly wish to be numbered among the godly and to become more certain about our religion? From this passage it is also easy to gather that Christian people should admit nothing concerning religion unless they find it consistent with the Holy Scriptures.

In 1 Corinthians 14, the Apostle shows that this was the custom received in the Church of Christ: that all the faithful should come together and judge between doctrines, which are sound and which are less so. "When you come together, each one has a hymn, a teaching," etc. Also, "Let the others judge." But how could those who were not trained in the Holy Scriptures rightly make this judgment? And how would they be trained unless they also occupied themselves at home in reading and meditating on them? Since, therefore, it is the duty of each Christian to make a judgment about doctrines, it is also the duty of each to read and search the Holy Scriptures.

Also in 1 Corinthians 14, when he instructs that if women wish to learn anything, they should ask their own husbands at home, does he not imply that each man ought to be so trained in the Holy Scriptures that he can abundantly satisfy his wife from the Scriptures in all things she asks about piety? But how will this happen unless they read something in the Scriptures daily and diligently examine it?

In 1 Timothy 3:14–15, "Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings." And who taught Timothy the Holy Scriptures while he was still a boy if not his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois? For he did not learn from his father, who was a Gentile and unbeliever. Moreover, 2 Timothy 1:5 testifies to the piety and faith of his mother and grandmother. This passage also teaches that it was customary among Christians and truly godly people for parents—even mothers themselves—to teach their children the Holy Scriptures at home.

In Acts 8, the eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, a Gentile man, while traveling and riding in his chariot, did not lie there idle but was reading the prophet Isaiah. Is it not then likely that at home he was accustomed to set aside some portion of time to read something in the Scriptures? And how pleasing to God was this diligence and assiduity of the Gentile eunuch in reading

From these readings, it becomes clear what follows in the history. For the Lord sent Philip to him, to explain the passages of Isaiah which he was reading but did not understand, to instruct him in Christian piety, and finally to baptize him. Why then should we not say that God approves the zeal of those Christians, whoever they may be, who, even if they do not understand everything, do not grow weary of reading the Scriptures? Why should we not say that God will send someone to explain them to them, if not others, at least the Holy Spirit?

Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." How could fathers do this without the reading of the Scriptures?

Romans and elsewhere: He addresses private households and calls them churches. Why does he call them so? Because they prayed privately in their homes, just as was also done publicly in the church. For prayers were offered together by the whole family, and the Scriptures were read and explained.

1 Thessalonians 5:11: Writing to all and each of the faithful, he says: "Encourage one another and build one another up." Therefore, the Apostle intended that each should be a teacher and pastor to one another. But how could they have fulfilled this duty without constant reading and knowledge of the Scriptures?

1 Timothy 2:4: "God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Therefore, it is everyone's duty to devote effort to reading the Holy Bible, so that through it they may come to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Timothy 2:2: "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Therefore, the Apostle wishes not only priests but also laypeople to advance so much in the Scriptures that they themselves may be able to teach others.

And to descend specifically to many ranks of laypeople: Deuteronomy 17 commands kings to have a copy of the Law of the Lord written for themselves and to read in that book all the days of their life. Let these passages also be read: 1 Samuel 8:12; 1

Kings 5:8–10; 2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 1:9; Proverbs 20:21; 25:29; 31; Ecclesiastes 10; Psalm 20:101; 11:106:1: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth."

That everyone is bound, if they have leisure, to read the Holy Scripture—
testimonies from the Fathers:

Jerome, Volume 9, to Paula and Eustochium, in the preface to his exposition on Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, page 201, draws a reason from the duty of a human being, who is endowed with reason and can speak. The passage begins: "For since from other living creatures," etc.

Volume 6, at the beginning: "Whoever does not know the Scriptures does not know God's truth or his wisdom."

The same, in the preface to the first book of his Commentaries on Joshua, says: "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."

Let his letter to Paulinus be read especially, which is prefixed to Bibles and is about the reading of the Holy Scriptures.

The same, Volume 1, page 66, in his letter to Demetrias on preserving virginity, urges her especially to occupy her mind with the love of sacred reading; and among other things he says: "Love the Holy Scriptures, and wisdom will love you; cherish her, and she will guard you; honor her, and she will embrace you."

In his letter to Salvina, which is on page 73 concerning preserving widowhood, he exhorts her to the same study: "Let divine reading always be in your hands," page 76.

The same, in his letter to Furia, a widow, which is on page 79, performs this duty.

Moreover, he wrote to many women and dedicated several books to some. All these are evidence that Jerome wanted everyone, even women, to be occupied in reading holy literature.

It should be noted what he says at the end of his Commentaries on Nahum: He says that it will come to pass at Christ's advent for exercising judgment that people from everywhere will gather to learn the sacred letters. Is not now that time?

Chrysostom, Volume 1, Homily 35 on Genesis, which begins thus: "Great is the good of knowing the divine Scriptures," writes this at the beginning of the homily: It cannot be that those who devote themselves with great zeal and burning desire to the divine Scriptures should always be neglected; since even if human instruction is lacking to us, yet the Lord himself, entering our hearts from above, enlightens the mind, pours his light into reason, reveals hidden things, and becomes the teacher of what we do not know.

"Do not call..." Very often the Fathers exhorted their people to read the Scriptures even at home.

Let Origen be read, Volume 1, Homily 13 on Exodus. He exhorts all the people to this study.

The same, Volume 1, Homily 9 on Leviticus, page 169, persuades the people...

Not only should one take care to hear the word of God in the Church, but also to be exercised and meditate in the law of the Lord day and night in their own homes: because Christ is there also, and is present everywhere to those who seek Him.

In his homily on Joshua, Homily 20, page 364, he demonstrates to many that it is approved by both God and the angels, and indeed useful for us, if we read the Scriptures even if we do not fully understand them. He shows how he himself was trained at home by his parent in the sacred writings. (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 6, Chapter 20.)

Moreover, Chrysostom's books, and especially his homilies, testify how frequent and fervent he was in exhorting people of every rank to the reading of the sacred Scriptures. Read in his homily on the Epistle to the Colossians, Chapter 3, Homily 9, on the words, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." He compels heads of households and orders them to buy Bibles for themselves, and to read and meditate on them at home, because no one can teach them better than the Scriptures themselves. Among other things, he also says these words: "This, indeed, is the cause of all evils: that Scripture is ignored." (Col. 1:91? C.)

The same author, in his Homily 21 on Genesis, exhorts all the people to the study of sacred Scripture. Likewise, in Homily 29: "For in the Scriptures are found remedies for every spiritual disease." Also in Volume 3, on John, Chapter 8, Homily 52: "He wishes the sacred books to be at home for everyone; and although we may be slow, yet by continuing the reading of Scripture, we shall obtain some benefit. Similarly,

one who sits near a perfumer's shop, even unwillingly, will receive the scent."

Augustine, in Volume 2, Epistle 3 to Volusianus, writes that the Scriptures are to be read not only by the learned but also by the unlearned, and indeed by people of every kind. For God speaks to the heart of both the untaught and the taught. This Father also wrote many letters to various matrons, widows, and young women: to Paulina, Proba, Ecdicia, Juliana, Fabiola, Felicia, the young girl Florentina, Italica, Maxima. And among his sermons there is also one entitled "On the Study of Wisdom and Meditation on the Law of God." (Augustine, Volume 10, On the Words of the Lord, Sermon 45, at the beginning.)

He contends that Christ's precept, "Search the Scriptures," was given not only to the Jews but pertains to every Christian.

Ambrose, in Volume 3, page 321: Read Sermon 35 on the Lord's Fast, toward the end an exhortation that all should take the bread of the Scriptures and be exercised in them. Also in Volume 4, on Psalm 118, Sermon 21, which is page 581: He exhorts all the faithful to the reading of Scripture. The same author in On Duties, Book 4, Chapter 22: "Therefore, let speech be especially from the Scriptures."

Leo I, in his letter to the clergy and people of Constantinople, hands down the same teaching. What do these things show except that even then laypeople so applied themselves to sacred literature that they could dispute with philosophers and refute them?

Reasons why Scripture should be read by everyone:

1. God willed that sacred Scripture be handed down to the Hebrew people in the Hebrew language—and indeed in one very well known to all. I ask: for what purpose except that it might be read and understood by all? The Apostle teaches this reason when he also commands that in the Church a language known to all be used. Why? So that it may be understood by all and so that one may not become a barbarian to another. Much less did God wish to speak with us in such a way that He could not be understood by us.

For the same reason, when He willed that His law should no longer be confined among the Jews but be propagated to all nations as well, He put it into the mind of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, to take care that through 72 teachers—very skilled in both Hebrew and Greek—it should be translated into the Greek language in the manner that Aristeas narrates, so that it could be read and understood by all

nations. For at that time the Greek language was known to almost all peoples and nations in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

But when this language had almost perished in Africa and Europe along with its empire, and Latin began to be spread more widely and broadly, He willed that this sacred Scripture should also become Latin. For what reason? Truly so that it could be read, grasped, and committed to memory by all. Finally, He willed that all nations—Germans, Italians, Gauls, Spaniards, Dalmatians, English, Poles—should each have it in their own language.

2. Why is it that in the sermons of the Fathers, even if the Scriptures are urged upon them, nevertheless the authors of books and chapters are not cited as they are now? Because the people were so well exercised in the sacred Bible that when they heard a certain passage they immediately understood

From what source and from which chapter it was taken, he argued that even at home they had devoted time to the reading of sacred literature.

3. Sacred Scripture is a most precious treasure, given by God to all and to each individual, that they may enjoy it and be directed by it, as the Apostle also says in 1 Corinthians 2. Is it not, therefore, a great tyranny to forbid people from enjoying their own treasure?

4. Are all the Gentiles permitted to read the Scriptures, and are Christians forbidden?

5. God made His covenant not only with priests and monks, but with all people—even commoners, women, and children. Why, then, should it not be permitted for each one to read the terms of the covenant, so that they may know what God promises them and what He in turn requires of them?

6. Our life on earth is a perpetual warfare, as in Job 7. Scripture, however, is made our weapon against these enemies, as in Ephesians 6. Why, then, should the common and unlearned not be armed with these weapons so that they may fight? How else but by reading and studying the Bible? Is it not more than hostile to disarm those who ought always to be armed?

Responses to Objections

1. All who read the Scriptures become heretics. See Tertullian, *De Praescriptione*

Haereticorum.

Response: O wicked statement! What else is this but to say that what God gave as medicine for souls is poison? And that what was given against disease actually causes it? The contrary is taught in John 5 and 2 Timothy 3: Scripture is useful for refutation, namely, for convicting all heretics. The contrary is stated in Psalm 1: “Blessed is the man,” etc. The Fathers also taught the contrary—especially Chrysostom in his third homily on Lazarus, where he says that ignorance of Scripture is the cause of heresy. And other Fathers: when heretics greatly disturbed the Church—Arians, Manichaeans, Valentinians, Marcionites, Sabellians—and many fell away to paganism, then above all they urged everyone to devote themselves to reading the Scriptures. Indeed, if we wish to resist heresies, it is necessary to read the Scriptures. For thus says the Apostle: “Take the sword...” Hear also Chrysostom on Matthew 24, exposition 2, homily 49. See Cyprian, page 177. Indeed, this is the cause of heresies: ignorance and neglect of the Scriptures—Chrysostom on Lazarus, homily 3, as we have said.

But who are those who write and say these things? Papists. What is heresy to them? A doctrine that conflicts with their own concerning justification, faith, and the sacraments. Therefore, they speak truly: for the doctrine handed down by Holy Scripture conflicts with theirs. Yet if some misuse Scripture for heresies, this happens accidentally—that is, by their own fault, not that of Scripture. So Peter writes concerning Paul’s epistles: “Which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction.” How many also misuse wine to their own ruin? In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul preaches Christ—certainly in His nature wisdom and power—yet He was not to all power and wisdom, but to some foolishness and to others a stumbling block. Likewise, the Apostles were by their doctrine to some a fragrance of death to those who are perishing.

Against this diabolical statement, I set Christ in John 8: “He who is of God hears God’s words; for this reason you do not hear, because you are not of God.” And a little before this He said they were born of the father, the devil. Let us therefore judge according to this infallible rule of Christ: those who delight in hearing, reading, and meditating on the word of God, and who exhort others to do the same—these give testimony that they are of God. On the contrary, those who do not delight in it and even discourage others from reading it are truly of the devil.

2. Scripture is nothing but a matter of strife and quarrels. (From the Colloquy of Worms, Year ’57.)

Response: This is a diabolical blasphemy; rather, it is the norm and cause of peace and the settling of disputes.

3. No one can understand Scripture by himself.

Response: As if the Holy Spirit were not present to those who call upon Him! As if also anyone could not ask someone more learned than himself. See Jerome at the end of Nahum.

Leviticus 10: God commands the Levites to faithfully teach the people the law and statutes delivered by Him.

Malachi 2: The lips of the priest shall guard knowledge, and they shall seek the law from his mouth.

Hosea 4: Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from serving as my priest.

Matthew 5: You are the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

1 Timothy 3: It is necessary for a bishop to be didactic.

2 Timothy 1 and 2: That he may know.

Titus 1: He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Acts 23: He calls the ministers of the churches, who impose their own dreams on the people while ignorant of the word of God, burdens that ought to be cast away from the presence of the Lord.

Ezekiel 22:24: The Lord desires that such ministers of the Temple be chosen who, among other things, can also teach the people to distinguish between the holy and the profane. Those who cannot do this, He excludes and wishes them to be marked with perpetual disgrace.

What do these passages teach, except that pastors ought to be trained above all others in the sacred Scriptures so that they may instruct the people? And if they are unable to do so, they should be removed from their office and position.

There also exist ancient canons and opinions of the Church Fathers on this matter. Distinctions 36, 37, and 38 in the Decretals concerning election, age, and qualifications of those to be ordained.

The Bishop of Catanzaro was deposed from office by Honorius III on account of his ignorance of the Scriptures (Decretals, Chapter *Quamvis multos*). And deservedly so.

For the ecclesiastical ministry does not consist in cold ceremonies and chants, but

primarily in the diligent explanation of the Scriptures. How, then, can those ignorant of the Scriptures perform this duty? How can they refute false doctrines? How can they prudently rebuke vices? How can they console the afflicted? For all these things must be drawn from the Scriptures.

We therefore freely acknowledge that it is the primary duty of ministers of the Church, and of those who are to be promoted to the ecclesiastical ministry, to devote themselves to the sacred Scriptures so that they may be thoroughly trained in them above all. And for this reason, the Apostle here specifically admonishes Timothy to pay attention to the sacred Scriptures.

But it does not follow from this: Therefore, only these should study the Bible, while the same duty is not at all required of the laity.

For in 1 Timothy 3, it is also required of a bishop that he be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, not given to drunkenness. Does it follow, therefore, that these qualities are not required of others who are not bishops? By no means. But it rightly follows: Therefore, although these are required of all the faithful, they are especially required of bishops, who ought to be examples of all virtues in the Church.

The same must be said about the reading and study of the Scriptures. And this is confirmed by an example from the Old Testament: The Levites were primarily commanded to explain the word of the Lord to the people; yet others who were not from the tribe of Levi were not excluded from this duty—as many prophets, and Christ Himself, who was from the tribe of Judah, performed this duty.