

# Tractatus Theologicus De Virtutibus Theologicalibus Fide, Spe, Charitate (*Theological Treatise on the Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity*)

by Leopold Kirsch, S.J., 1767

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## Pars I, De Fide Divina, Quaes. IV

*Whether among the material objects of Divine faith is the fact that this or that person, e.g., Clement XIII, is the true Pontiff?*

### §. I.

Having established in the preceding Question the general Propositions concerning the material objects of faith, the present controversy, which is debated among Scholastic Theologians, will be expeditiously resolved. For the question asked here is: whether from one or two revealed premises, through legitimate reasoning, this proposition can be deduced and inferred: therefore this individual man, e.g., Clement XIII, is the legitimate Pontiff. For if so, then according to the prior propositions, by this very fact that proposition, at least with respect to those who comprehend the force of the reasoning, will be an object proximately credible. Wherefore

I first suppose: That the supreme dignity, power, and pontificate in the Church, through those words in Matthew, chapter 16, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church,” was entrusted not only to the individual man Peter, but to all his legitimate Successors. Therefore, the said proposition “You are Peter,” etc., is equivalent to this proposition: Every legitimately elected and Church-accepted Successor of Peter is the Vicar of Christ, the visible Head, and the universal Pastor of the Church, just as Peter was. For although the first proposition in its terms seems to be particular: “You are Peter. I will give you the keys. Feed my lambs.” Nevertheless, from Christ’s intention, and from the sense of the words, and from their meaning both doctrinal and political, it is equivalent to the other universal proposition. The reason is that authority and supreme dignity in the

Church were not given to Peter for his own private good, but for the good of the entire Church. Therefore, just as the Church is to endure until the consummation of the age, so also the primacy, the vicariate, and the office of Supreme Pastor must always endure in someone; otherwise Christ's promise would have been of little importance. Even less would He have provided for the stability and firmness of the Church if He had founded it upon Peter's individual person alone; for with Peter's death, the entire edifice of the Church would have collapsed.

Nor would it appear how that promise of Christ in Matthew 28, given to the Apostles, would be fulfilled: *I am with you always, until the end of the age*. Hence Pope St. Leo, concerning his elevation to the supreme pontificate, most truly declared: *The solidity of that faith which was praised in the Prince of the Apostles is perpetual. And just as what Peter believed in Christ endures, so too what Christ instituted in Peter endures. Therefore, the disposition of truth remains, and Blessed Peter, persevering in the strength of the rock received, does not abandon the governance of the Church he undertook*. These words of St. Leo clearly assert that the supreme power of governing the Church did not perish with Peter, but perseveres in his legitimate Successors.

**N. II. I suppose secondly.** For it to be established that this or that individual man is the true Pontiff, there must precede, according to the custom of the Church, a canonical election of that same individual man to the pontificate; not indeed because by virtue of the election the supreme power of the Church is conferred upon the elect—for by the consensus of all Catholics, the elect receives this immediately from GOD—but because such an election is the condition upon which the power is conferred by GOD. Some parallel to this matter is found in one who is instituted to a benefice after being presented; for before he is authentically instituted, the presentation or nomination of the Patron to such a benefice is required, through which ecclesiastical and spiritual jurisdiction is by no means conferred upon him, but it is only the condition upon which the Bishop confers the same to the one presented.

The Scholastic Theologians distinguish two types of election in the selection of a Pontiff: first, one which is conducted here and now by the Sacred College of Cardinals alone, by which the one upon whom two-thirds of the votes are conferred is considered canonically elected as Pontiff; and this they call the primary election. Second, one which is conducted as if by the universal Church, and through this, the one whom the greater part of the faithful acknowledges and accepts without dissension or schism as such, and to whom they render obedience in decisions on faith and morals, is declared legitimately elected as Pontiff: this they call the secondary election.

**N. III. I note, thirdly:** That for one to believe with Divine faith that this particular man is the true Pontiff, it is not sufficient to have the highest moral certainty that this particular man was elevated to the Pontificate by a *primary* election, because falsehood can underlie this, and perhaps often does. The Sacred College does not have an infallible promise of assistance from the Holy Spirit directing them to avoid error in election, since such a College of electors does not represent the whole Church. Therefore, it is required that one

have moral certainty about a *secondary* election having taken place, that is, the acceptance by the whole, or the greater part of the Church, of such an individual man as Pontiff. For falsehood cannot underlie this secondary election, which is nothing other than the acceptance of an individual person as Pontiff. For if the true assembly of the faithful and right believers were to err in accepting a visible Head, and were to recognize as Pontiff that individual man who in reality is not the Pontiff, it would certainly err in a most grave matter, namely in discerning the living rule of faith, which error would be equivalent to an error in faith itself. For if the rule could be false, so too could that which is regulated by it; if it would be an intolerable error in the Church for all to believe that some book is canonical which truly is not, it would be much more intolerable to err in discerning the living rule of faith. Wherefore, having established these premises, let it be.

## §. II. PROPOSITION.

**No. IV. That this or that person, e.g., Clement XIII, gloriously reigning today as Roman Pontiff, who has been accepted by the universal Church as the true and legitimate Pontiff, is credible by Divine faith in the proximate sense.**

This Proposition is demonstrated from the premises established in the previous Question's propositions: in which we asserted that a Theological conclusion is proximately believable by Divine faith when it is deduced either from two explicitly revealed premises, or at least from a universal major premise that is explicitly revealed, and a minor premise evident through physical or highest moral certainty; but such a conclusion is this proposition: *This specific man, e.g., Clement XIII, accepted by the universal Church, is the true Pontiff*; therefore, I prove the minor premise. This proposition: *Every legitimately elected person who is accepted by the Church as Peter's Successor is true and legitimate, just as Peter himself was Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, visible Head, and universal Pastor of the Church*, is explicitly revealed in that statement in Matthew 16: *You are Peter, and upon this Rock, etc.*, to which it is equivalent in meaning. And this minor proposition: But this individual man Clement XIII is legitimately elected and accepted by the Church, is certain either with the certainty of faith, as some affirm, because the universal acceptance of the Church functions like Divine revelation according to the saying: The voice of the people is the voice of GOD; nor can the Church err in accepting its Head. Or certainly this minor proposition is established through natural evidence and highest moral certainty, since the universal consensus of the Church in accepting this individual man, Clement XIII, as Pontiff is known to all with a certain sensory evidence: therefore the objective conclusion: therefore this individual man, Clement XIII, gloriously reigning, is the true and legitimate Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, visible Head, and universal Pastor of the Church, etc., etc., is an object proximately believable by Divine faith.

**Furthermore, Proposition I is proven.** The definitions in matters of faith or morals, which this individual man, Clement XIII, proposes to the universal Church, are to be believed with faith, for whoever would contradict them would be a heretic: therefore it is also a matter of faith that this particular man who makes the definition is the true Pontiff, the Successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ, etc. The *antecedent* is certain. The *consequence is proved* thus:

If it is not a matter of faith that this individual man is the true and legitimate Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ, etc., then it is also not a matter of faith that this individual man, Clement XIII, is the instrument of the Holy Spirit, through whom God directs the Church lest it err in faith; but if it is not a matter of faith that this individual man is the instrument of the Holy Spirit directing the Church, then the propositions and definitions of this individual man are not matters of faith either: thus the argument stands. The *major premise* is manifest, because if I do not believe with Divine faith that this man is the true Pontiff, neither do I believe him to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit directing the Church; for it is, as it were, the essential character of the Pontiff to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit directing the Church. The *minor premise* likewise seems certain. For how shall I reverence with obedient faith the propositions of this individual man, Clement XIII, as Divine truths, and give my assent to them, unless I believe with the same Divine faith that this very man is the instrument of the Holy Spirit directing me, that he is the living rule of faith, that he possesses the infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit in defining what is or is not of faith? For just as one must first believe with Divine faith that Scripture is the word of God in order to believe with Divine faith these or those things which are contained in Holy Scripture, so too, for one to believe that these or those definitions of this man are revealed by God, one must believe with Divine faith that this man is the Pontiff, the Successor of Peter, who confirms his brethren in the faith, and who infallibly proposes to them what is to be believed or not believed.

**Proposed Problem II.** We are bound by Divine faith to believe that this visible Church, over which this particular Roman Pontiff Clement XIII presides, is the true Catholic and Apostolic Church. Therefore, we are also bound to believe that this very man, who has been peacefully accepted by the Church as its Head, is the true Pontiff, the visible Head of the same Church: because the true Church is most properly named from its true visible Head, and manifests itself most fully through him.

**Problem III.** Unless we were to hold with Divine faith the certainty that this particular individual—for example, Clement XIII—is the true Pontiff, whatever is believed as certain regarding the Judge of controversies in the Church would be entirely ridiculous. For how am I obliged to believe by faith that there exists a Judge of controversies, if I do not hold with the certainty of faith who that Judge is? Of what use would be an assent of faith to the existence of some vague, personally undetermined Judge of controversies? Indeed, if I do not believe this specific individual to be the Judge of controversies, I will not be bound to consult him in matters of doubtful faith, nor to abide by his decisions. This principle applies equally to other objects that we believe by Divine faith, which nevertheless we cannot properly believe unless we simultaneously hold with Divine faith the certainty that this individual person, legitimately elected and accepted by the Church, is the true Pontiff, Successor of Peter, etc. Thus, for example, I will not be bound to believe by Divine faith that the Council of Trent, or any other ecumenical Council, is legitimate, unless I believe that this specific individual, who presided over the Council either personally or through his legates, and confirmed it by his authority, was the true Pontiff; because it is indeed from his authority that true Councils derive their legitimacy.

**Problem IV.** This truth [is established] from the Councils, and specifically from the Council of Constance, where in the Bull of Martin V, a constitution is expressly read, that heretics wishing to be reconciled to the Church should first of all be asked: whether they believe that the canonically elected Pope, whoever he may be at the time, expressing his name, is the Successor of Peter, and has supreme power in the Church of GOD? This very thing is therefore to be believed by faith, otherwise the Pontiff would not justly ask whether they believe it by Divine faith. Many other Councils have also explicitly acknowledged in this regard the Vicar of Christ by name, and have proposed him as such to be believed by the faithful: As the Council of Chalcedon [acknowledged] Leo, the Sixth Synod [acknowledged] Agatho, and the Council of Milevis [acknowledged] Innocent III.

### §. III.

#### Responds to Opposing Arguments.

**Objection I.** In order for something to be the material object of faith, it must be revealed either explicitly in itself, or implicitly in another, whether formally or virtually. But this particular man, e.g., *Clement XIII*, being the true Pontiff has not been revealed in any way: therefore, etc. The *major premise* is certain, for we believe nothing by Divine faith that God has not spoken. I prove the *minor premise, first*: If the stated proposition is implicitly revealed in another, according to the proponents of the opposing view, it is revealed in this proposition: *Every legitimately elected pontiff who is accepted by the universal Church is a true Pontiff*. But this proposition itself is nowhere explicitly revealed. For where has it been revealed, either in Sacred Scripture or even in tradition, that those elected and accepted by the Church are always true Successors of Peter? This is especially questionable since the Roman Pontiffs themselves established the electors and the form of election not by Divine inspiration, but according to the laws of human prudence at their discretion and according to the opportuneness of the times. Such an election could also be invalid, and from this very invalid election, however much the Pontiff may be believed and accepted by the Church as true, he is not actually true, but only putative and presumed. *I prove the same minor premise, secondly*: Even granting that this universal proposition—*Every legitimately elected pontiff who is accepted by the universal Church as such is the true Pontiff, Successor of Peter, etc.*—is explicitly revealed in equivalent terms, it is still not a matter of faith that this particular man is legitimately elected and approved by the universal Church. Therefore, it is also not a matter of faith that he is the legitimate Pontiff.

**Response to the argument C. M. N. m. To the first proof C. M. D. m.** This very proposition in precisely these same words is not explicitly revealed C. It is not revealed in other words equivalent in meaning to this proposition N. m. *To confirm, I say*: This universal proposition seems clearly enough revealed in this statement: *You are Peter, and upon this rock, etc.* Although this was pronounced in singular terms, in reality and according to the meaning intended by Christ, it is equivalent to the said universal proposition; otherwise, this particular promise would not have sufficiently provided for the Church if it had been restricted to Peter's person alone, because after Peter's subsequent death, the Church would not have recognized any certain visible Head. Finally, to that which the objection

adds—that it is not to be believed by Divine faith that a legitimately elected Pontiff is the true Pontiff to whom GOD has conferred, as to Peter, the supreme power of governing the Church—because the election depends on the Electors and on the form of election, which was instituted not by the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit but by the judgment of Roman Pontiffs, and therefore can be invalid, *I respond* that the *first* election, as we explained in the preliminary remarks, does indeed depend on these human institutions and can be invalid, but not the *second* election: which is the acceptance by the universal Church of this individual man as Pontiff, because this election depends on the direction of the Holy Spirit, who does not permit the universal Church to err in accepting as Pontiff one who is not truly such before GOD. For just as it pertains to the direction of the Holy Spirit, who according to Christ’s promise in *Matthew 28* will be with the Church of right believers until the consummation of the age, not to permit the entire Church to fall into believing some false article as revealed when it has not been revealed: so also, and indeed much more so, it pertains to the assistance of the same Holy Spirit to direct His Bride, the Church, so that she never accepts a false Pontiff as true; for this latter error would be in a certain way more dangerous than the former, because one article of faith does not depend on another, and such an error could easily be corrected by the visible rule—namely, the true Pontiff; but indeed all articles of faith depend on the truth and legitimacy of the Pontiff, who is the living rule of faith: it would therefore be more dangerous for the Church to err in accepting a non-true Pontiff than in admitting an erroneous dogma. Just as, therefore, the Church, because it is the pillar and foundation of truth according to the Apostle in *1 Timothy, ch. 3, v. 25*, cannot err in admitting a false dogma: so neither can it err in accepting an illegitimate Pontiff. Moreover, the public acceptance by the whole Church of this or that individual as its visible Head is a certain testimony from GOD that this is the true Pontiff.

**If you say:** The Church without a Pope has not been promised infallibility: therefore it can err in accepting a Pope; although it cannot err in admitting false dogma, which it always determines together with the Head. *I respond* thus: I distinguish the antecedent. Infallibility has not been promised in deciding controversies of faith, I concede the antecedent. In accepting a Pope, I deny the antecedent, and the consequence. For at all times, provision must be made for the Church, lest it should fall into such an error from which an error in faith would follow. One can respond secondly: that the Church accepting the Vicar of Christ does not act without a Head, or Pope: precisely because he who has been elected and accepted by the Church as Pope, after he has given his consent to the election and acceptance made of him, also recognizes himself to be the true Pope.

**To the second proof of the minor premise, I respond.** Let it be, that the assumed proposition: that *this particular man, e.g., Clement XIII, is legitimately elected and accepted by the universal Church*, is not to be believed by Divine faith, nevertheless moral evidence concerning this very proposition makes us so certain that we cannot prudently doubt it, and we cannot deny it without simultaneously denying another proposition certain by faith: *Every legitimately elected and approved Pontiff, etc.*

**N. VI. Opp. II.** It sometimes happens that there is a legitimate election of a Pontiff and peaceful acceptance by the entire Church with respect to a person incapable of the

Pontificate: therefore, from a legitimate election and the acceptance of the universal Church, we do not have sufficient reason to believe with Divine Faith that this particular man is the true Pontiff. The antecedent is proved: In the ninth century, the Church accepted as Supreme Pontiff JOHN VIII and FORMOSUS, who nevertheless were in no way true Pontiffs, since John was a woman, as reported by Marianus Scotus in the year of Christ 853, Martin of Poland, Archbishop of Gniezno, Sigebert of Gembloux, a monk, Platina in his Italian history, the Magdeburg Centuriators in Century 9, chapter 20, and among the followers of John Wolf, several historians of the Lutheran and Calvinist sect. That FORMOSUS was not a true Pontiff was declared by the very act of STEPHEN, FORMOSUS's successor, who, as recorded in ecclesiastical history in Kolb's Book, The Series of Roman Pontiffs in the Ninth Century, and in other sources, had his predecessor dug up from the tomb, dressed in pontifical insignia, and placed upon the throne. He first reprimanded him most severely with words, feigning that the dead man could hear him, and then, having stripped him of the sacred ornaments and mutilated three of his fingers, ordered him to be thrown into the Tiber. Therefore, it follows that either it does not pertain to the faith that FORMOSUS, however much accepted by the universal Church, was a true Pontiff, or that STEPHEN, his successor, erred; especially since, beyond this reckless act, STEPHEN struck FORMOSUS from the catalog of Roman Bishops, and ordered those previously ordained by FORMOSUS to be ordained again, and confirmed all these things by the authority of a Roman Synod.

**II.** From ecclesiastical history we have proof that sometimes multiple Pontiffs sat simultaneously on the Chair of Peter, and that they were accepted by the Church. Thus in the 14th century, Urban VI and Clement VII both held office, and in the 15th century, besides John XXI (called XXIII), Benedict, Gregory, and another John held office. Therefore, in accepting one or the other, the Church erred, since there cannot be two true Heads of the Church.

**III.** Paul IV, in Bull XIX of the Roman Bullarium, decreed: *"If at any time it should appear that someone, before his elevation to the Pontificate, had deviated from the Catholic faith, or fallen into any heresy, etc., his promotion or elevation, even if made in concord and by the unanimous consent of all Cardinals, shall be null, void, and without force, nor can it be said to have become valid or to become valid through the enthronization of the Roman Pontiff himself, or through his adoration, or through the obedience rendered to him NOTE WELL: by all, or through the passage of any amount of time in the aforementioned matters."* Therefore, it is possible that someone may peacefully occupy the seat of Peter, be venerated as such even by all the faithful, and receive obedience for a long time, and consequently be accepted as Pontiff by the universal Church, while in reality not being such; namely, when he is discovered to have been previously infected with heresy. And so, even supposing the acceptance by the universal Church, it is not a matter of Divine faith that this particular man is the true Pontiff.

**Response to I. N. A.** As for its proof, derived from JOHN VIII, it rests not on history, but on fable. Indeed, whatever notable things Martin Polonus and those who followed him wrote about the female sex of the aforementioned Pontiff are delusions, as demonstrated by

Cardinal Baronius in volume 10 of his Ecclesiastical Annals for the year 853, and by another Cardinal, Bellarmine, in Book 3 on the Supreme Pontiff, chapter 24, as well as by the Calvinist writer Daniel Blondel himself. And indeed, Bellarmine in the cited location proves that ecclesiastical writers contemporary with this Pontiff, both Latin writers—such as Anastasius the Librarian, a Roman Abbot who lived in the 9th century, Ado, Lambert, etc.—and Greek writers—among whom are Zonaras, Cedrenus, Curopalates, and others—never mentioned this kind of history. Nor does it help to say that earlier writers shrouded such a deformed matter in silence out of reverence for the Roman See; because, although this remarkable conspiracy of silence across several centuries may have compelled the Latins to silence, certainly the Greeks, with their hatred and envy toward the Roman See, would not have concealed the truth of the matter. This famous falsehood is especially refuted by Leo IV's letter to Michael, Bishop of Constantinople, chapter 23, where he relates that something similar happened in the Constantinopolitan Church; for there it occurred that they elected eunuchs, among whom a woman was elected. Pope Leo would certainly not have dared to object this to the Greeks if something similar had happened in the Roman Church during the election of a Roman Pontiff; for the Greeks could very easily have turned the objection back on him. This monster at Constantinople, therefore, perhaps gave occasion for calumny against the Roman Church. Although Baronius, for the year 899, thinks that JOHN's effeminate character and excessive leniency, with which he admitted Photius—condemned by the Third Ecumenical Council of Constantinople—to the See of Constantinople, gave rise to this fable.

**Concerning Stephen's action against Formosus,** I assert that it is a matter of faith that Formosus was a true Pontiff, just as were the other true Pontiffs who preceded him. And although Stephen's action against Formosus is reported as true by even Catholic historians, such as Baronius and others, it does not follow either that Formosus was not a true Pontiff, or that Stephen erred in defining some doctrine which he would have proposed to the whole Church to be believed as Pontiff. Rather, he erred only as a private individual in a question of fact and by bad example, not by false doctrine. For the cause of this deed and such great hatred for Stephen was, as Panvinus notes in Kolb, that Formosus had at one time opposed Stephen in his pursuit of the Pontificate. But neither from the fact that Stephen removed his predecessor from the Catalog of Roman Pontiffs does it follow that it simply does not pertain to Divine Faith, even theological faith, that Formosus was a true Pontiff, but only that it cannot be counted among the material objects that are proposed to the whole Church, since such an object has not been proposed for belief through any rule of faith.

**To the second question, I respond:** If at any time two or more have invaded the same Chair of Peter, either the universal Church accepted none of them, although some of the faithful adhered to each one individually—and thus during the time of an actual Schism, the Church was without a Pontiff; or if the entire Church, or its most significant part, accepted someone, as in the 14th century it accepted Urban VI, and in the 15th century John XXI and after him Martin III (called Martin V), then only to that one so accepted did the dignity of true Pontificate belong, and all the rest were in reality Pseudo-Pontiffs. Nor even during a Schism was it proximately credible by Divine Faith that this or that particular man



was the true Pontiff, since the universal revelation, due to the lack of peaceful acceptance, was not sufficiently applied to this or that individual.

**To the Third Question, I respond:** The entire decree of Paul IV concerns the *first* election of Cardinals customarily conducted in the human manner, but not the *second* election, which derives from the acceptance of the universal Church. The first, which is carried out by Cardinals through the required votes in a human manner, is entirely subject to doubts, errors, and defects, and thus, if an impediment of the Elect is established, it is voidable. To this first election also pertains, as an external ceremony and solemnity, the placement of the Newly-elected upon the Pontifical throne, His so-called adoration, and the oath of obedience rendered by the Cardinal Electors. But the second election is not equally subject to doubts, errors, and defects as the first; indeed, it removes all defects of human law that might have occurred in the first election, and is therefore irrevocable. For the recognition, approval, and acceptance of the same individual person as Pontiff, made by the whole Church or its greater part, is a certain public testimony of GOD that this particular man is the true Pontiff. Hence, more is inferred as a consequence than the Bull of Paul IV establishes.

**N. VII. Opp. III.** In order for the faithful to give assent to the definitions of the Pontiff in matters of faith, it is not necessary that they believe with theological faith that this particular man, deciding matters of faith, is the true Pontiff, but it is sufficient if they have a certain moral evidence of the truth of his Pontificate, because with such moral evidence no one among the faithful can, without grave fault, withhold due reverence to the Pontiff and the firmest assent to his definitions in matters of faith. *This is illustrated by a parallel case:* thus, although we may not believe with Divine faith that this or that man is a true Parent, legitimate Bishop, or King, nevertheless, because we recognize them as such from moral evidence, we owe them and their precepts the reverence, obedience, and compliance required by Divine law: therefore, by the same reasoning, we are bound to give obedience to the faith decisions of even a putative Pontiff. II. Even if the Church were to accept as the true Pontiff, visible Head, and living rule of faith a man who in reality is not such, nevertheless there would be no fear that this supposed Pontiff would define something erroneous in faith: therefore, the argument for the aforementioned proposition does not stand. The answer is proven: In such a case, it would pertain to Divine providence to so govern His Church that even through a supposed Pontiff, what is true and revealed by GOD is always proposed, and GOD, according to His promise: *I am with you, etc.*, must equally assist such a supposed Pontiff in defining dogmas of faith and morals, just as He would a true one, and supply all the jurisdiction of a true Pontiff. *This argument is again clarified by a parallel:* for if by the favor of a human Ecclesiastical or civil Prince, jurisdiction is granted to a merely supposed judge, when there exists common error and a colorable title, which are supported by good faith, according to the common opinion of Jurists and Theologians, drawing their argument from the law *Barbarius ff. de officio praetoris*; why cannot it be reasonably presumed that, when the common error of the Church in accepting someone who is not a true Pontiff intervenes, and when there is also a colorable title of election made, Christ, whose benevolence is greater than that of any human Prince, gives jurisdiction regarding matters of Divine law to such a supposed Pontiff. Therefore, in order

for us to believe the definitions of the Pontiff, it is not necessary that we also believe this particular man is the true Pontiff. Hence, many defenders of the opposite opinion indeed admit that the conditional proposition is a matter of faith: *In the hypothesis that the Pontiff in reality were not the true Pontiff, whatever he would define would nevertheless be truly of faith, with GOD supplying such jurisdiction for the good of the Church*; but not this absolute proposition: *This particular man is the true Pontiff*.

**III.** He who denies that this particular individual is the true Pontiff is not considered to be a heretic, but only a Schismatic dividing the union of the Church against charity, not however denying a revealed truth: therefore, etc.

**IV.** If it is implicitly revealed that Clement XIII, gloriously reigning today, legitimately elected and accepted, is the true Vicar of Christ, it would also be implicitly revealed somewhere regarding all his Successors; but this is not so, for we do not know whether some are yet to come, since the day of judgment has not been revealed anywhere.

**V.** It is not a matter of faith that this particular man is the true Bishop of this diocese: therefore, neither is it a matter of faith that this particular man is the Bishop and Pastor of the entire Church.

**Response to the First Question. The Negative Answer** is given with Suarez, who states that it is impossible for me to be obliged to believe those things which this man defines as spoken by GOD, unless I simultaneously believe that this individual man has from GOD the power of defining and the assistance of the Holy Spirit: which is itself to believe that this man is the true Pontiff; just as it is impossible for me to believe by Divine faith the truths proposed in Holy Scripture, unless I simultaneously believe that this very Scripture is the true and legitimate word of GOD, and the inanimate rule of faith. Therefore, moral evidence concerning the truth of this Pontiff as the living rule of faith is not sufficient, but the assent of faith is required; for I cannot adhere to the truth of that which is regulated with greater firmness of assent than to the truth of the rule itself. If, therefore, it is only morally certain that, for example, Clement XIII is the true and legitimate Pontiff, it will also be only morally certain that he has the assistance of the Holy Spirit in defining controversies; and if this is so, the defined truth itself is for me only morally certain: but not by Divine faith. Something can indeed be believed by Divine faith, if a Divine revelation concerning such an object is applied to us, even if only with moral certainty, as we have taught elsewhere; but when something is proposed to us as revealed by GOD through the rule of faith itself, then not only must the object, the revelation of which is applied, be believed by Divine faith, but also the rule of faith itself, whether inanimate, as is Scripture, or living, as is the Pontiff. Wherefore, the definition of the Pontiff is not only an application of revelation to the thing revealed, as is metaphysical, physical, or moral certainty, through which I clearly perceive that what is not revealed is evidently connected with what is revealed, but it is simultaneously the infallible rule of faith, and the speech of the Holy Spirit directing the Pontiff.

**To the Case.** I say: that having moral certainty about the truth of this Pontiff, no one can, without fault, withdraw the reverence due to this Pontiff as Superior, nor withdraw from his

pronouncements precisely as those of a Superior; however, one could withhold the firmest assent of faith from the definitions of a Pontiff whom one does not believe to be the rule of faith. In the parallel case proposed, the reasoning differs: because that act by which I offer obedience and deference to Parents, Ecclesiastical Superiors, or civil ones, and to their precepts, is an act of moral virtue, which does not by its essence require conformity of the act with the object, but conformity of the act with prudent judgment. This conformity can be maintained even with only moral certainty about the status of the object, because it is equally conformable to prudent judgment to render obedience to those individual persons who, for serious reasons, are proven to me to be true Parents, even if in reality they are not, as to those who truly are. But indeed, the act of Divine faith, by which we assent to the definitions of the Pontiff, essentially requires the highest certainty about the conformity of the act with the object which is believed through the definition of the Pontiff. Now truly, if I do not have the highest certainty, such as belongs to Divine faith, that this man who proposes matters to be believed possesses from GOD the infallible authority to declare what must be believed, I cannot have the certainty of faith that such a believed object is revealed and exists in the manner proposed for belief.

**To the Second [Question]. N. A. To the Proof I say firstly:** It pertains more to the providence of GOD, who governs His Church for all time, to direct it in such a way that it does not err in accepting a Pontiff, than to subsequently provide that a putative and presumed Pontiff proposes true teachings; or to supply his jurisdiction. Nowhere do we have a revelation that GOD infallibly directs His Church through Pseudo-Popes, lest it should fall into errors of faith. Even this revealed proposition: *I am with you until the end of the age*, cannot be extended to Pseudo-Popes, as if He were with us by speaking through them: for authority to rule and govern the true Church was given to none other than Peter, of whom it is certain by faith that he was the true Pontiff and Vicar of Christ, and in him to his legitimate successors. This is clearly evident from the profession of faith which, by mandate of Gregory XIII, is proposed to the Greeks before they are received into the Catholic Church, and which states: *Likewise [I believe] that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff hold primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff himself is the successor of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and the true Vicar of Christ, and the Head of the whole Church, and the Father and Teacher of all Christians, and that to him in Blessed Peter has been delivered by Our Lord Jesus Christ full power to rule and govern the whole Church.* Therefore, it is not to be asserted without foundation that in whatever case GOD imparts supreme jurisdiction to anyone other than the legitimate Pontiff, or that Christ Himself supplies this jurisdiction because of the Church's common error.

**In response to the declaration of the same argument, I answer firstly:** That the indulgence and favor of a human Prince, whether Ecclesiastical or civil, grants jurisdiction to a judge presumed to be legitimate in a case of common error, we have this expressly stated in civil and canonical laws, without which we could scarcely presume this correctly. However, we have nothing expressly stated in the Sacred Scriptures that in any case the Holy Spirit assists a putative Pontiff in defining matters of faith, or that jurisdiction over the universal Church is conferred upon him by Christ, or that at minimum, defects are supplied in his acts which are directed to the whole Church. Therefore, it should not be

rashly presumed that defects in Divine matters are supplied by GOD in a Pseudo-Pope. From this liberty of opinion, one could also defend that GOD supplies the defect in case there were not a true Church, but only one presumed to be such; indeed, even if the Pontiff were a woman, or were not baptized and legitimately ordained—which are absurdities. Hence that divination, that in the hypothesis of a non-true Pontiff GOD supplies jurisdiction for the good of the Church, is vain.

**I respond secondly to the comparison:** Since the power of a human Prince is finite, the great inconvenience against the common good cannot otherwise be avoided if, in a case of common error, he did not grant or supply such jurisdiction, nor can he himself prevent the common error. But truly GOD, who is of unlimited power, can avoid these inconveniences by preventing the common error of the universal Church, directing it, namely, so that it does not err in accepting a legitimate Pontiff.

**To the Third Question, I say:** If someone sufficiently recognizes this proposition: *Every Pope legitimately elected and accepted by the universal Church is a true Pope*, to be formally and implicitly revealed, and simultaneously perceives with moral certainty that this particular individual, e.g., Clement XIII, has been legitimately elected and accepted by the universal Church, and yet pertinaciously denies that He is the true Pontiff, I judge such a person to be not only Schismatic and sinning against charity, but also unfaithful and sinning against the virtue of theological faith, because he is presumed to deny something implicitly revealed in the Scriptures. However, saving the opinion of others, I dare not call him properly heretical, since in the rigorous sense one should be called a heretic who obstinately denies or rejects some article or dogma proposed by the Pope or by the Church in an ecumenical council as rules of faith for all the faithful, or certainly denies what is explicitly revealed in Holy Scripture: thus one who sins not merely against any faith, even if only theological, but against Catholic faith. The aforementioned proposition, however, has not been proposed either by the Pope alone or by the universal Church in any general council as an article or dogma to be believed by all the faithful. Therefore, one who denies it should not be called a heretic in the proper sense. Nor does our proposition state that this proposition: *Clement XIII is the true Pope*, is an article or dogma of Catholic faith, but only that it is an object proximately credible with respect to one who perceives it to be connected with something revealed.

**To the Fourth Question:** We must distinguish: if this were revealed somewhere remotely, indeterminately, and conditionally, I concede; if proximately, determinately, and absolutely, I deny. The truth concerning future Pontiffs is a matter of faith remotely and conditionally, and as if in general: because it has been revealed that: “Whoever shall be legitimately elected and accepted by the universal Church as the Successor of Peter is the true Pontiff.” However, the truth concerning the present Pontiff is determinately and absolutely a matter of faith, because he has already been elected and accepted.

**To the Fifth Question:** I concede the antecedent but deny the consequent. For clarification: The disparity is readily apparent: because a Bishop can be simoniacally elected through his own fault; such a one, therefore, although validly ordained, will

nevertheless be suspended from conferring all orders, and his institution will be null. Nor is this null election remedied through the acceptance of a particular Church, to which—just as in deciding dogmas of faith—no assistance of the Holy Spirit is promised in accepting a diocesan Bishop. The situation is different regarding the Pontiff: for even if his initial election by two-thirds of the votes could be null and void, nevertheless, the acceptance of the entire Church, which occurs under the direction of the Holy Spirit, supplies all defects, at least those of human law; because if a defect were to intervene, e.g., if the elected were not male or not baptized, the Holy Spirit would by that very fact direct the universal Church not to accept such a person. Such acceptance is also an infallible testimony of GOD that the power of feeding Christ's sheep and ruling His Church has been given by GOD to this particular individual.