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Disputatio I, Quaestio I, De Obiecto Fidei, Punct. VII, Quaestio V, Sectio 37

§. 37: *That the Roman Pontiff, existing for the time being, is the SUCCESSOR of St. Peter.*

IN order that we may prove this, it must first be demonstrated what it properly is for someone to be the successor of Saint Peter in the primacy of the Church. For although he who succeeds Saint Peter most certainly receives from Christ Himself that authority in the Church which Saint Peter possessed, nevertheless, if we consider *properly* the very meanings of the words themselves, and indeed also of the things signified, we do not signify the same thing when we say that this man is the successor of Saint Peter, and when we say that this man receives from Christ the same authority which Peter possessed. This is evident: for the latter is rightly concluded from the former, as from that which is clearer. And so, in order that we might establish that the Roman Pontiff holds in the Church the primary power from Christ which Peter possessed, we assumed, without any defect in argumentation, that he is Peter's successor: so that from this we might finally demonstrate his primacy in the Church.

Therefore, just as in civil matters one thing is *properly* that John, for example, is the successor of Peter; and another thing that John legitimately possesses the patrimony left by Peter (for the latter is customarily proved from the former), so in the matter at hand, one thing *properly* is that someone is the successor of Blessed Peter; and another thing is that he has from Christ that power which Blessed Peter had. Therefore the proper nature of this succession must rightly be explained, so that by it we may finally demonstrate that it belongs to the Roman Pontiff, existing for the time being, to possess it: whence finally there follows that which we concluded above in §. 27; that the Roman Pontiff holds in the Church the primacy of Peter, as a certain patrimony established by Christ.

We therefore affirm that for someone to be the successor of Blessed Peter is nothing other than for him to be received by the Church in the place of Blessed Peter in a legitimate manner, and as it were offered to Christ, so that He may confer upon him the supreme authority which Peter had, that is, so that He may establish by a certain law that He will concur with him by a certain

particular assistance in rightly establishing those things in doctrine and morals which pertain to the good estate of the Church. For this is what it means for someone to have that supreme power and primacy in the Church which Peter had. Moreover, the legitimate mode of receiving someone into the place of Peter is entirely that which the Church herself prescribes and employs according to the circumstances of each time and all other conditions.

That we may better understand this, the force of those promises must be carefully weighed: *I am with you even unto the consummation of the world*, Matthew [28:20]. And, *That he may abide with you forever, &c.* John 14[:16]. For from these and similar passages it is understood that the care and charity of Christ toward His spouse the Church is perpetually of such a nature as is most suitably and fittingly accommodated to human nature for preserving the state of the Church. Now it can scarcely be doubted that, considering the nature and condition of men, it is expedient that he who is to govern the universal Church with authority received from Christ should be received and approved by that same Church for this office. Therefore, since Christ the Lord willed that there be perpetually in the Church (as was proved in the preceding section) successors of Peter, to whom He might assign the supreme authority on earth which He had conferred upon Peter, it was necessary that He grant this to His Church: that she herself might choose for such a Pastor the one whom, according to the circumstances of the times, she judged to be most suitable for this office. This very point is confirmed by the perpetual custom of the Church concerning succession in the see both of Peter and of the other Bishops. For he has always been held to be the legitimate successor of any Bishop whom the Church has received in his place in that form and manner which, according to the circumstances, has been deemed most fitting in each particular place.

Now since this is so, it is easily understood by what reasoning it must be proved that the Roman Pontiff existing for the time being is the successor of Saint Peter. Clearly, there is no need here for arguments drawn from reason, as when matters are dealt with that are not posited in fact; but we prove it more than sufficiently by the most abundant testimonies of all ages, from which it is plainly established that the Roman Pontiffs in continuous series of succession have been received by the Church in the place of Saint Peter (without any restriction of power), and that to them, as to the successors of Peter in the same power, the major causes of the Church have been referred throughout all the ages of the Church, as Juan de Torquemada diligently pursues in book 2 of *On the Church*, chapters 36, 37, and 38; and Cajetan in *On the Institution of the Roman Pontiff*, chapter 13; and Melchor Cano in book 6 of *On Theological Sources*, chapters 4, 5, and 6; and most copiously and lucidly Nicholas Sanders in his work *On the Visible Monarchy of the Church*, book 7—to omit others for now.

Concerning this matter, let these testimonies of antiquity be noted in particular. IRENAEUS lib. 3, c. 3, EPIPHANIUS haeresi 27, AUGUSTINE epist. 165, to the letter of a certain Donatist, OPTATUS lib. 2, contra Parmen., trace the Roman Pontiffs of their own time (of whom it is established that subsequent Pontiffs were successors) back to Peter himself in a continuous series of succession in order. INNOCENT I in his letter to the Council of Milevis, which is the 93rd among the letters of St. Augustine, EULOGIUS in St. Gregory, epist. 37, II. 6 of the Register, Peter CHRYSOLOGUS in his letter to Eutyches, which is found among other letters at the beginning of the Council of Chalcedon, tome 1 of the Councils, fol. 227, LEO in sermon 2 on the anniversary day of his assumption [to the pontificate], and others, asserted that Peter still *presides* in his chair (through the ministry of the Roman Pontiffs, his own successors). TERTULLIAN in the book de praescript., AUGUSTINE contra epistolam fundamenti, c. 4, and

elsewhere, JEROME to Damasus, GREGORY lib. 6 of the Register, epist. 37, EUSEBIUS lib. 3, hist. c. 4, and countless others, openly assert that these same Roman Pontiffs are the successors of St. Peter. ANACLETUS epist. 3, MARCELLUS epist. 1 to the Antiochenes, SOZOMEN lib. 4, histor. c. 14, THEODORET in his letter to Leo, CYPRIAN lib. 4, epist. 2, AUGUSTINE epist. 57 and lib. 2, contra literas Petiliani, c. 51, etc., and other Fathers, also for this reason call the Roman See *the place and chair of Peter*, or *the Apostolic See*. Wherefore, all antiquity, the Councils, the Patriarchs, and all the Fathers universally attribute to the Roman Pontiff the primacy of authority in the Church, but only as the legitimate successor of Peter.

In the First Council of Nicaea, JULIUS I, in epistle 1 and 3 (concerning whom see Melchior Cano, book 6, *On Theological Sources*, chapter 4, and Alan Cope in his *Dialogues*, first dialogue) attests that it was decreed that Councils should not be celebrated without the approval of the Roman Pontiff, and likewise that it should be permitted for Bishops from throughout the entire world to appeal to him, and he confirms by solemn oath that those Canons were preserved in the sacred archive of the Apostolic See. That it was likewise thus established in that Council of Nicaea is attested by Saint Athanasius and other Bishops of Thebaid and Libya (who were present at that Council of Nicaea) in their epistle to Pope Felix II, which Pontiff in his rescript to those same Bishops complains that very many decrees of the Council of Nicaea had been suppressed by heretics. This epistle exists in tome 1 of the *Councils*, among the decrees of Felix III. Moreover, the epistles of this Julius were received in the Council of Ephesus, as Vincent of Lérins attested in his book *Against the Novelties of Heresies*, near the end, a thousand years ago. Likewise, Saint Athanasius recites his first epistle in his second *Apology*.

Nor indeed does it pose an obstacle that the African bishops, in their letter to Pope Celestine, which is found in tome 1 of the *Councils*, folio 520, number 1, deny that such a Canon concerning appeals to the Roman Pontiff is to be found among the Canons of the Council of Nicaea, which they had requested from the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch. For it is certain that there were far more Canons of the Council of Nicaea than those twenty-one which those Patriarchs sent to the Africans, as has been demonstrated by some with the most lucid testimonies of the ancients. Read Alphonsus of Pisa on the Council of Nicaea, and Sander on the Monarchy of the Church, book 7, chapter 1. Moreover, from those Canons of the Council of Nicaea which are missing, and which perished through the fraud of heretics (as Pope Felix II also laments), without doubt there were also those which we have said were commemorated by Julius I and by Athanasius.

And although those African Fathers petitioned the same Pontiff Celestine that he not admit any appeals made by Africans to the Apostolic See, nor that he himself or through his legates make determinations concerning causes of that kind, but rather that he leave all judgment to the provincial Bishops, so that the cause being more rightly known in that very place where the accusation of the crime was instituted, they themselves might end the dispute: nevertheless, those Fathers in no way denied that supreme power in the Church, and indeed authority even in the judgment of any ecclesiastical causes whatsoever, belongs to the Roman See: but they certainly thought it not expedient that the Roman Pontiff should wish to exercise such authority in litigious controversies which might arise in those overseas provinces: since they judged that causes of this kind concerning persons and crimes could be better known and determined in their proper place.

Otherwise, how greatly those African Fathers acknowledged and revered the primacy of the Roman See can be most clearly understood from just one letter of the Council of Milevis to Innocent I, which is epistle 92 among the letters of St. Augustine (to which Council very many of those same Fathers of the African Council had participated a little earlier): “Because,” they say, “the Lord by His grace has placed you in the Apostolic See with a special gift, and has provided such a one for our times, that it may rather count to the fault of negligence on our part, if we remain silent before your veneration concerning those things which ought to be brought forward for the Church, than that you could receive them either disdainfully or negligently; we beseech you to deign to apply PASTORAL diligence to the great dangers of the weak members of Christ. For a new heresy (of the Pelagians) has begun to arise, &c.” And after some things: “In making these things known to your Apostolic heart, we have no need to exaggerate so great an impiety with words, since without doubt they so move you, that you absolutely cannot dissimulate concerning CORRECTING them, lest they spread more widely and contaminate, or rather destroy, many.” And near the end of the letter: “These things we have sent written to your holiness from the Council of Numidia, imitating our fellow bishops of the Carthaginian province, whom we have learned to have written to the Apostolic See, which you graciously adorn, concerning this cause.”

Certainly, this passage demonstrates with clarity greater than light that the Roman Pontiff was recognized by the African Bishops both as the supreme pastor of the Church, upon whom the pastoral care and solicitude for other Churches besides the Roman falls, and as the judge of causes pertaining to religion and faith.

Moreover, the Bishops of the province of Carthage, who were mentioned in that letter, had written in the following manner to the same Innocent [I] regarding that cause, in epistle 90 among the letters of Saint Augustine: *We have deemed it necessary to make known to your charity what has been done, so that to the decrees of our mediocrity, the authority of the Apostolic See may also be added for the protection of the salvation of many, and also for correcting the perversity of certain persons.* And below: *That error and impiety itself, which has so many assertors, must also be anathematized by the authority of the Apostolic See. Therefore, let your holiness trust and show compassion for us with pastoral affection, etc.*

And certainly from certain letters of Saint Cyprian to Pontiff Cornelius, book 1, epistle 3, and book 4, epistle 8, it appears that it was also an ancient custom of the Africans to appeal to the Apostolic See: so that it is a wonder that this had not been considered by those African Fathers; just as also in the ancient Synod of Sardica, canons 3, 4, and 7, such appeals from every place to the Apostolic See had been both granted and approved in the most explicit words, as we shall say a little later.

Thus likewise neither do the Sectarians in any way detract authority from that testimony of the Council of Nicaea, which we have recalled from Julius I and Athanasius in favor of the primacy of the Roman See, when they throw in our face these words from the sixth Canon of that same Council (as Rufinus relates them in book 10 of his History, chapter 6): *At Alexandria and in the city of Rome, let the ancient custom be preserved, that the one (the Bishop of Alexandria) should have charge of Egypt, and the other (the Bishop of Rome) of the suburbicarian Churches.* For first, this sixth Canon, in the copy sent by the three Patriarchs (as I have mentioned earlier) to the African Bishops, does not read entirely as Rufinus reports it: but certain words are added there, from which it appears more clearly that nothing less is denied there than the supreme authority of

the Roman Pontiff over all. For thus it is stated in the sixth Council of Carthage, where those Nicene Canons are recited: *Let the more ancient (Bishops) prevail (that is, let them take precedence in honor, as is gathered from Canon 8 of Nicaea in Rufinus, where cited above) who are over Egypt, and Libya, and Pentapolis: in such manner, however, that the Bishop of Alexandria should have charge of all these, because a similar custom exists for the Bishop of the city of Rome as well. Similarly also, with regard to Antioch, and in the other provinces, let the proper privileges be preserved* TO THE METROPOLITAN CHURCHES.

Therefore, this Canon does not deny to the Roman Pontiff the authority of primacy which he otherwise possesses as successor of St. Peter over all the Churches, but it certainly signifies that he also has a certain special authority as METROPOLITAN over the Churches of the dioceses adjacent to the Roman Church; which authority, similarly, the Council of Nicaea wished to be established for other Archbishops Metropolitan as well, each in his own province.

There is added moreover the fact that in the Council of Chalcedon, act. 16, this Canon 6 of the Nicene Synod (being recited by Paschasinus, and with absolutely no one contradicting) begins thus: *The Roman Church has always had the primacy, etc.* But then the remaining matters concerning the authority of Metropolitans are subjoined, which from that Canon have already been expounded by us.

Finally, in the same session of the Council of Chalcedon, after that Nicene Canon had been recited and the opinions of all had been heard, the Judges spoke thus: *From those things which have been done, or deposited by each one, we determine that all primacy indeed and preeminent honor according to the Canons (namely, according to that Nicene one as well) is to be preserved for the most God-loving Archbishop of ancient Rome.* And then the Fathers of the Council themselves said: *This is a just sentence, we all say this, etc.* But enough concerning the Canon of the Nicene Council.

Likewise in the Council of Sardica, (which Socrates, book 2 of his *History*, chapter 16, and Athanasius—who calls that Council *great*, and through whom it was said that [heretics] were cast out from the Church, in Oration 1 against the Arians—attest to have been also an ecumenical council,) appeals made from the whole world to the Roman Pontiff are approved. And that Pope Julius possessed the right to summon other Bishops with authority is not obscurely acknowledged in Theodoret, book 2 of his *History*, chapter 8.

Likewise in Constantinople I, canon 5 (the second ecumenical council), after the Roman Pontiff, the honor of primacy is attributed to the Patriarch of Constantinople. And also the Fathers of that Council testify that they assembled at Constantinople having been admonished by the letters of Damasus, the Roman Pontiff, in their epistle to the same Damasus, which Theodoret mentions in book 5, chapter 9. And in turn, Damasus, in the same Theodoret, in the same book, chapter 10, praises the reverence shown by them to the Apostolic See in that matter.

Likewise in Ephesus (the third ecumenical council), Cyril, as Evagrius witnesses in book 1 of his *History*, chapter 4, holding the place of Celestine, the Roman Pontiff, declares by his mandate that he (together with the other Fathers) was compelled to condemn Nestorius. And likewise the Fathers of that same Council write to the same Celestine in this manner: *We have refuted the temerity of John of Antioch (because he had deposed Cyril) by the judgment of your holiness.*

Likewise, moreover, in the Council of Chalcedon (the fourth general council), act 16, the judgment of that Synod of Constantinople is similarly approved, whereby second honors are granted to the Patriarch of Constantinople after the Roman Pontiff. And again there, in act 1, with the Emperor Marcian present, without any controversy, *the Roman Church was called the head of all Churches*. And also the Emperor Marcian himself declared in that same place that Leo, then Roman Pontiff, governed the Apostolic throne. And likewise the Fathers of the Council address the same Pontiff in these terms, act 3, in the report made to the same Pontiff by the Synod itself: “You preside over the members as the head. Dioscorus has extended his madness against you, to whom the custody of the vineyard has been committed by the Savior. Honor our judgment with your decrees: and let your firmness supply what is lacking to its own.” And so in that Council, Paschasinus with Lucentius and Boniface presided in the place of Leo in such a way that, among other things which he conducted there with authority, he even prohibited—as Evagrius testifies in book 2, chapter 4—that Dioscorus should sit with the remaining Orthodox Bishops.

Likewise in the Second Council of Constantinople (the Fifth General Council), action 4, in the sentence of the Synod against Anthimus, the Fathers profess that they wish to follow in all things the judgment of the Supreme Pontiff Agapetus in the case of the heretic Anthimus, whom the same Agapetus had expelled from the see of Constantinople and from communion with the faithful: as is evident from the place cited; and likewise from the constitution of the Emperor Justinian against the same heretic, which is extant in the same Synod. By the force of this same sentence, the Synod also expelled him from the see of Trapezus.

Likewise in Constantinople III (the Sixth General Council), action 18, toward the end, it is stated: *Through Agathon, the Roman Pontiff, Peter the Prince of the Apostles spoke, whose imitator and successor he assuredly was*.

Likewise in Constantinople IV (the Eighth General Council), canon 21: all Patriarchs are to be honored, but especially the most holy Pope of elder Rome.

Likewise in Nicaea II (which was the seventh general council), action 2: the Roman see holds the primacy throughout the whole world, and is the head of all the Churches of Christ, etc.

Similar [provisions exist] in the Lateran Council under Alexander III, title 2, chapters 3 and 4; and [in the] Lateran [Council] likewise under Innocent III, chapter 5; [in the Council of] Lyon II, as is evident in book 6 of the Decretals, chapter “Ubi periculum,” concerning election and the power of the one elected; and [in the Council of] Vienne, as is evident from Clementine [constitution] 1, “De Sacrosancta Trinitate”; and [in the Council of] Constance, sessions 8 and 15; and [in the] Lateran [Council] under Julius II and Leo X, sessions 2 and 3; and [in the Council of] Trent, session 14, chapter 3. To these add the provincial [councils]: [the Council of] Arles, canon 1; [the Council of] Orleans IV, canon 1; [the Council of] Toledo I, in the assertion of faith at the end; [the Council of] Africa, chapter 35; [the Council of] Milevis [as found] in Augustine, epistles 92 and 93, etc.

Nor less clearly do the four PATRIARCHS [testify to this]. Certainly ATHANASIUS, Patriarch of Alexandria, appealed to Julius I, Roman Pontiff, in his cause against the Arians, as is evident from Sozomen, book 3, chapter 7, and from Athanasius himself in his Apology to Constantius. Likewise in the letter sent to Pope Felix II by Athanasius and others from the Alexandrian Synod, thus does Athanasius with those Bishops address Felix: *You and your predecessors*,

namely the Apostolic prelates, God has established on the summit's heights: and He has commanded [you] to have care of all the Churches. Likewise in the letter to those leading the solitary life, the same Athanasius [writes]: *The Roman*, he says, *Bishop Julius ordered a Synod to be held, so that they might safely both bring charges and refute the charges brought against one another.*

Likewise Saint CYRIL, himself also Patriarch of ALEXANDRIA, writing to Celestine, Roman Pontiff, in the cause of Nestorius, epistle 18 (he speaks similarly also in epistles 10 and 11): *We have not*, he says, *exempted ourselves from communion with him with confidence, until we might communicate these matters to your holiness. Wherefore, deign to express what seems [best to you], whether we ought ever to communicate with him.*

Likewise CALANDIO, Patriarch of Antioch, as witnessed by Liberatus in his *Breviarium*, chapter 18, persuaded John Talaia, Patriarch of Alexandria, to appeal to Simplicius, the Roman Pontiff, against Peter Mongus, whom Acacius had intruded. Likewise Flavian, as may be seen in Theodoret, book 5 of his *History*, chapter 23, Patriarch of the same see, is summoned by the Roman Pontiff to plead his cause, and on his behalf, as witnessed by Sozomen in book 8 of his *History*, chapter 3, and Socrates in book 5, chapter 15, John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, and Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, intercede with Damasus.

Likewise Peter, Patriarch of JERUSALEM, in the Fifth Synod, session 4, in the sentence of the same Peter of Jerusalem, affirms that Pope Agapetus acted by divine ordinance when he cast down Anthimus, formerly Patriarch of Constantinople, from his see.

Finally, St. John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, in his epistle to Pope Innocent, tome 5, appealed to the Roman Pontiff. Likewise Macedonius, Patriarch of the same see, as Theodoretus Lector relates in book 2 of his *Collectanea*, about the middle (which books are extant after the history of Sozomen), when the Emperor Anastasius was vehemently pressing and commanding him to convoke the bishops subject to him for a Synod, responded that he would do absolutely nothing in that matter without a universal Synod, over which *the Bishop of great Rome would preside*. Similarly, Menas in the Fifth Synod, first session, reproached Severus, Peter, and Zooras for the fault that they had shown contempt for the Roman Church, which, he said, *succeeding the Apostles*, pronounced sentence against them.

But it would be lengthy to recount the opinions of the other FATHERS. IRENAEUS, book 3, chapter 3, *affirms that on account of its more powerful primacy, it is necessary for every other Church to agree with the Roman Church.* CYPRIAN, book 4, epistle 8, to Pope Cornelius, calls the same Church *the mother Church*. Ambrose, book 10, epistle 81, at the beginning, states that Pope Siricius *guards the fold of Christ, and is worthy that the sheep of the Lord should hear him.* JEROME, epistle 57, to Damasus, says that he is *the successor of the fisherman*, that is, of Saint Peter, *in the same chair of faith upon which the Church is built.* AUGUSTINE, epistle 162, states that *in the Roman Church the primacy of the Apostolic chair has always flourished.* The same Augustine beseeches Innocent I in epistle 92, sent to him by Augustine and the other Fathers of the Council of Milevis, that *he apply his pastoral diligence to the great dangers threatening the weak in Africa on account of the Pelagian heresy.* Innocent himself praises this zealous effort in epistle 93, among the epistles of Saint Augustine, because *following the form of the ancient rule, he sought help from that see to which remains the care of all the Churches.* ISIDORE, in the preface to his work on the Council, states that he found no Synod *unless it had been either*

convoked or supported by the authority of the Roman See. PROSPER, in his book *De Ingratis*, against the Pelagians, states that *Rome was made the head of the world by pastoral honor.* Vincent of Lérins, in his book against heresies, states that *the Roman Pontiff is the head of the world.* BEDE, book 2 of his History of the English, states that Gregory *exercises the Pontificate over the entire world.* ORIGEN, according to the testimony of Saint Jerome in his epistle to Pammachius and Oceanus, offers booklets of penance for his errors to Pope Fabian. BASIL, in epistle 52 to Athanasius, judges that the matter should be referred to the Roman Pontiff, so that he may interpose the decree of his judgment. Chrysostom requests of Innocent in his epistle to him, tome 5, that the decrees of Theophilus be rescinded, and that those who act unjustly be restrained by ecclesiastical penalties. Theodoret, in his epistle to Leo at the end of tome 2, appeals to the Roman See, and says that he *awaits its judgment.* Socrates, book 2 of his History, chapter 11, states that *the Roman Church holds a privilege above the others.* And why should I commemorate all, whether Latin or Greek?

Now truly, the ROMAN PONTIFFS themselves, most holy and most ancient, have openly declared in those same places that they are the successors of St. Peter in the care of the universal Church—places which we have previously cited in great number on behalf of the primacy of St. Peter himself. I have set forth above the reasons why their testimonies ought not to be regarded as in the least suspect in this question and cause. Most clear and most weighty in this regard are those words of JULIUS I in his first epistle to the Orientals, concerning the cause of Athanasius: “Always,” he says, “the greater causes of the Church have been prescribed by many authorities to be referred to the Apostolic See; for that Church has been preferred above all others, which obtained a singular principate not only by the decrees of the canons and of the holy Fathers, but by the voice of the Lord, when He said: ‘Thou art Peter,’” etc. And likewise those words of Innocent I to the Fathers of the Council of Milevis, epistle 93 among the letters of St. Augustine: “Through all provinces,” he says, “responses have always flowed forth from the Apostolic fount to those seeking them. Especially whenever a question of faith is examined, I judge that all our brethren and fellow bishops ought to refer the matter to none other than Peter—that is, to the author of their name and honor—just as your love has now referred it, because what is determined may benefit all the Churches throughout the entire world in common.” Likewise in the same place: “You consult diligently and fittingly the Apostolic honor—the honor, I say, of him upon whom rests the care of all the Churches—as to what opinion should be held concerning anxious matters: following, to be sure, the ancient rule and form which you know has always been observed by me along with the entire world.” And Leo to Anastasius, Bishop of Thessalonica, epistle 84: “Just as my predecessors did with your predecessors,” he says, “so also I have delegated to your love the functions of my authority, so that you, having been made an imitator of our gentleness, might assist in the care which we owe principally by divine institution to all the Churches.”

But there exist many similar testimonies of the Pontiffs in the places cited above. Whose primacy in the Church, as successors of Peter, was acknowledged not only by the Fathers, but even by the greatest EMPERORS themselves, and they protested this in the most varied terms. Valentinian, in his letter to Theodosius before the Council of Chalcedon, affirms that the primacy of the priesthood was conferred upon the Roman Pontiff. Marcian, in his letter to Leo, [affirms that he] holds the primacy in the episcopate of the faith. Justinian, in Novel Constitution 131, [declares him] to be the first of all priests according to the definition of the four Synods. After these emperors came Phocas, from whom, however, Calvin most ineptly prattled in Book 4 of the

Institutes, Chapter 7, that the Roman Pontiff received his primacy. Charlemagne, as witnessed by Crantzius in his *History of the Church of the Saxon Metropolis*, Book 1, Chapter 7, addresses the Roman Pontiff as the universal Pope.

But also heretics, when they understood full well that the primacy of the Roman Pontiff could be ignored by no one, craftily pretended that they held the same opinion as he did concerning matters of faith, so that they might more easily remain hidden: Caelestinus the Pelagian with Innocent, as Augustine relates in Book 2 of *On Original Sin*, Chapter 7; Meletius and Vitalis with Damasus, as found in Jerome's Second Epistle to Damasus.

To this is added that the Roman Pontiff has been perpetually acknowledged in the Church as the judge of those controversies which pertain to the faith. Many testimonies and examples of this matter may be drawn from Eusebius, book 4 of his History, chapters 13 and 22, and book 5, chapter 27, and book 6, chapter 35, and book 7, chapter 8; and from Augustine, epistles 90 and 92, and book 1 against the two epistles of Pelagius, chapter 1; and from Optatus, book 3, chapter 3, etc., and throughout book 1 against Parmenianus; and from Irenaeus, book 3, chapter 3, etc., and throughout the acts of Councils: that he himself condemned heresies, as may be seen in Eusebius, book 5, chapter 27, and book 6, chapter 35; Cyril, epistles 10 and 11; Tertullian, in his book against Praxeas, etc.; that he established laws with authority, as may be seen in Eusebius in his Chronicles, concerning Telesphorus and Pius I, and in book 5 of his History, chapter 24, and throughout the decrees of even the most ancient Pontiffs; that he presided over general Councils and confirmed the same, as will be shown below in the place concerning Councils; that appeal was made to him from all quarters in the gravest ecclesiastical causes, as may be seen in Sozomen, book 3, chapters 7 and 9; Evagrius, book 3, chapter 15; Athanasius, in his epistle to those leading the solitary life; Basil, epistle 74; Chrysostom, in his epistle to Innocent in tome 5; Epiphanius, heresy 68; that he sent other bishops by his authority into various parts of the world, as appears from Augustine, epistle 157, and Possidius in the life of the same Augustine, chapter 14, and Bede, book 1 of the lives of the holy Fathers; that he constituted them as his vicars, as appears from Saint Leo, epistle 84, and Saint Gregory, book 4, epistles 51, 52, 53; that he created them, as found in Socrates, book 7 of his History, chapter 35, and Metaphrastes in the life of Gregory of Agrigentum; that he confirmed them, as appears from the Council of Chalcedon, session 7, and from Saint Gregory, book 4, epistle 9, and from Cedrenus in his Compendium of Histories concerning Irenaeus, folio 387, etc.; that he invested them with the pallium, as may be seen in Saint Gregory, book 4, epistle 15 and 55, and Bede, book 2 of the History of the English, etc.; that he deposed them, as is evident from the Fifth Synod, session 4, Gregory, book 4, epistle 55, and in the acts of Sixtus III in tome 1 of the Councils, etc.; that he restored them, as appears from Sozomen, book 3, chapter 7, Basil, epistle 74, etc. Who does not see that this exercise of authority so varied and so widely extended, and the same remaining always complete and free to the Roman Pontiff throughout all who think rightly in the Church, is the most abundant indication and witness that the Roman Pontiffs succeed Saint Peter in the universal care of the Church, to decide concerning those matters which pertain to faith and salvation?

Since, therefore, it has been proven both that the primary power in the Church, and thus the infallible authority of judging all controversies concerning matters of faith, was given to St. Peter; and that it was given not to him alone, but also to his successors; and that his successor in that capacity is the Roman Pontiff existing at any given time; we truly and correctly concluded and established in §. 27 that the Roman Pontiff is he in whom that primary authority of infallibly determining all questions of faith resides.

§. 38: *WHETHER by divine or ecclesiastical law the same person is the successor of St. Peter who is the Bishop of Rome.*

BUT when we say that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of St. Peter in the care of the universal Church, someone will inquire by what law such a successor of St. Peter is he who is the Roman Pontiff? Whether, namely, by divine law—such that Christ the Lord not only willed that there be perpetually in the Church such a successor of Peter, to whom He Himself would confer the supreme authority which St. Peter possessed, but also established that this successor should perpetually be the Bishop of Rome? Or whether this has obtained in the Church only by human law, that is, by the institution of the Church itself, which deemed that none but the Bishops of Rome should be received into the place of the divine Peter, insofar as the care of the universal Church is concerned?

Moreover, it is of no small importance to know this. For if only by human Ecclesiastical law is this principle of succession joined with the Episcopate of the Roman diocese, it could happen, by the authority of that same Church, and therefore also by the authority of the Pontiff himself, that at some time he who is Pastor of the universal Church might not be the same person as the Bishop of the Roman diocese, but rather [Bishop] of another diocese; just as when Peter sat at Antioch, he was not the Roman Bishop, but the Antiochene; or even of no particular [diocese] specifically; just as in that time when Saint Peter did not yet sit at Antioch, when nevertheless he was at that time Pastor of the universal Church, appointed by Christ.

But if it has been established by divine law that none other than the Roman Pontiff is the successor of Peter, it will not be in the power of the Church to change that institution. Likewise, upon this question also depends, as will become clear later, how that privilege of the Roman Church is to be understood, when it is customarily said that the true and Apostolic faith cannot defect from the Roman Church: just as it has already defected, for example, from the Church of Constantinople.

I, however, find various opinions of the Doctors on this matter. For Melchior Canus in book 6 of *On Theological Sources* [*De locis Theologicis*], chapters 5 and 6, and Johannes Driedo in book 4 of *On Various Dogmas* [*De variis dogmatibus*], chapter 4, part 3, and Juan de Torquemada in book 2 of *On the Church* [*De Ecclesia*], chapter 40, and others commonly affirm without hesitation that by the institution of CHRIST the Lord, the Roman Bishop has been, and will always be, the successor of the divine Peter in the universal care of the Church. Their principal foundation lies in the manner of speaking used by the Fathers and Councils, when they assert everywhere that the Roman Pontiff obtains his power from CHRIST the Lord Himself. Likewise, that the Roman see holds the privilege from Christ the Lord that it is peculiarly Apostolic, from which the right faith cannot fail. Finally, that certain definition in controversies of faith must be sought from the Roman see, and that those who follow its doctrine are Catholics; those who reject it, on the contrary, are heretics. From these and other similar encomia of the Roman Church, which we have recited in great number above, it seems to be gathered that it is the institution of Christ that he who is to be the successor of Peter should be the Roman Bishop.

It may be added that Saint Ambrose in his oration to Auxentius, which is found in book 5 of his letters, after letter 32, and Hegesippus in book 3 of the destruction of Jerusalem, chapter 2, relate that Christ the Lord met Peter as he was departing from the city, and when Peter asked where He was going, He responded: “I am going to Rome again, to be crucified.” From this account it can

be inferred that Peter returned to Rome by the will and command of Christ, and that dying there he left the Roman Bishop as his successor.

The other opinion is that of Dominic de Soto, in book 4 of the *Sentences*, distinction 24, question 2, article 5, who on the contrary holds that the Apostolic See, that is, the principle of the said succession, is attached to the Roman Episcopate by ecclesiastical law only; and therefore it could happen by the authority of the Church that Peter's successor might not be the Roman Bishop, but either the Bishop of another diocese, or of none specifically, but only the universal Pastor. The foundation of this author's position is that Christ the Lord, in instituting Peter as universal Pastor, did not assign him to any particular Church, nor is Christ's institution sufficiently established concerning this matter from any other source; wherefore it seems rather that Christ left this entire matter to the disposition of the Church, so that she might variously determine, according to the circumstances and times, concerning the condition of the person to be elected, whatever would seem most expedient; just as it is established, as we shall see later, that she has sometimes changed the circumstances of the electors of the Supreme Pontiff, and the very manner of electing him.

But in order that Sotus might defend this opinion, it was certainly necessary for him to say in the first place that the Councils and Fathers had not openly enough determined either side of this question. For what they say—that the Roman Pontiff holds power from Christ and obtains the primacy by His institution—was said by them only from a certain hypothesis, namely, that this is to be understood as long as the Roman Bishop is he whom the Church herself has established as Peter's successor, whether she does this by her own authority or by Christ's institution. But the Councils or Fathers determine nothing concerning this hypothesis, namely, whether it is from Christ's institution or only from ecclesiastical tradition. For whatever of these is said, there remains certain from the faith that which they assert, namely, that the Roman Pontiff, as long as he is elected (as he is) as Peter's successor, receives from Christ Himself the authority of universal Pastor. But as regards that account from Hegesippus: although Christ the Lord then commanded Peter that he should remain in Rome until his death, it does not necessarily follow from this that He also commanded that his successor in the care of the universal Church should perpetually be the Roman Pontiff; but it does indeed follow from this that the institution of Peter himself and of the Church, by which it was provided that the Roman Pontiff should be Peter's successor, had its foundation in the will of Christ establishing that Peter should remain in Rome and adorn that Church with his martyrdom. Unless this had happened, it would not have been arranged that the Roman Bishop should succeed blessed Peter in the universal care of the Church. This same thing Cardinal Cajetan also seems to have wished to assert in treatise 2 on the comparison of the Pontiff and the Council, chapter 22, and in the small work on the institution of the Roman Pontiff, chapter 13, when he says that the reason why the Roman Pontiff is he who succeeds Peter was (as he states) the appropriation of the Roman Church to Peter's universal pontificate, confirmed by the authority of Christ willing that Peter should remain in Rome and die there—not, however, by evangelical institution.

Nevertheless, however subtly these things may be argued in favor of Soto's opinion, it certainly seems to me that this opinion is far too singular in so grave a matter, and indeed not sufficiently safe. For those testimonies of the Fathers and Councils which can be alleged in favor of the contrary opinion of Driedo, Cano, and Torquemada have altogether greater weight than to be evaded by such subtle distinctions. Indeed, I firmly believe that when the Fathers asserted in so many ways that the Roman See obtained from Christ the primacy of authority in the Church,

they contemplated no other institution than that of Christ Himself, from whom the entire privilege of the Roman See depends. Moreover, this privilege would depend even upon the human institution of the Church itself, if it were supposed only that the Church by its own authority wished the Roman Pontiff to be elected as the successor of Peter, and the Roman See were thereby said to have the primacy from Christ. But the Fathers did not think this at all: rather, they affirm absolutely that to the Roman Church by divine institution is entrusted the care of all other Churches, as Saint LEO says in epistle 84. Likewise, to the Roman Church, whose faith was praised by the Apostle Paul, perfidy cannot gain access, says Saint CYPRIAN to Cornelius, book 1, epistle 3, past the middle. Likewise, that all other Churches ought to come together with the Roman Church on account of its more powerful primacy, Irenaeus judges in book 3, chapter 3. Which [Church] (says Jerome against Rufinus) has always remained immaculate, and by the Lord's providence and the Blessed Apostle's assistance, will remain so in the future. And most clearly Saint Anacletus in epistle three (as also Sixtus II in epistle 1): This (he says) most holy Roman and Apostolic Church has obtained the primacy not from the Apostles, but from the Lord our Savior Himself, and has attained eminence of power over all Churches and the entire flock of the Christian people, just as He Himself said to Blessed Peter the Apostle: "Thou art Peter," etc. And JULIUS the First of this name, in his epistle to the Bishops gathered at Antioch, says: The Lord Himself addressed the holy Roman Church, saying: "Thou art Peter," etc. And to pass over other testimonies of antiquity (which have been collected in great number, even by Cano in the sixth book of his theological *Loci*, chapters four, five, and six), certainly in the great Lateran Council, concerning the most holy Trinity, chapter *Damnamus*, from the most certain judgment of the Church, the Roman Church is said in express words to be, by God Himself disposing, the mother and teacher of all Churches.

Therefore, the ancient tradition of the Fathers seems to indicate that it is also by Christ's institution that he who is to succeed Peter, and who is therefore to receive the primacy from Christ, is none other than the Bishop of Rome; so that whoever shall follow the faith of him who shall be and shall remain the legitimate Bishop of the Roman diocese, whether he shall dwell in the place of that diocese or elsewhere, shall never at all fall away from the right faith. For by Christ's institution, that same person will be Peter's successor in the care of the universal Church, and consequently will be entirely unable to err in proposing the doctrine of the faith, as will also be proved more fully hereafter. For now it will have been sufficient to have thus briefly explained what has been proved by us in the third place: namely, that the Roman Pontiff succeeds the blessed Peter in the care of the universal Church. Let us now see what heretics are accustomed or are even able to object against this.

§. 39: Refutation of the arguments by which Sectarians contend that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of the blessed Peter.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, a certain Velenus, and Sebastian Francus, and other heretics of the same sort deny that Peter was in Rome, much less that he died in Rome: indeed, Calvin also doubts this matter. Therefore it is false, or at least insufficiently established, that the Roman Pontiff succeeds the deceased Peter.

I RESPOND that for those men to deny this or to call it into doubt is for them to act most foolishly and childishly, since the matter is confirmed by the testimony of all the histories and Fathers, and by the traces of Peter himself in the City. For this is affirmed by Eusebius in book 2,

chapters 14 and 15 and 25, and book 3, chapters 2 and 25; Hegesippus in book 3 of *On the Destruction of Jerusalem*, chapter 2; Sulpicius in book 2 of his *History*; Orosius in book 7 of his *History*, chapter 6; Eutropius likewise in his book of *History*; Irenaeus in book 3, chapter 3; Tertullian in book 4 *Against Marcion* and in his book *On Prescriptions*; Epiphanius in heresy 27; Ambrose in his oration against Auxentius, which is found in book 5 of his letters, after letter 32; Augustine in book 1 *Against Julian*, chapter 2, and elsewhere throughout his works; Jerome in his *Catalogue*, where he treats of Saint Peter; and innumerable others. Since concerning this matter those Sectaries bring forward nothing but the most trivial little arguments for their dreams, which persuade no prudent person, I judge that there is no need for me to repeat now what has been sufficiently—or rather, I should say, almost superfluously (for what sane person doubts this?)—treated by others. Read especially Nicholas Sanders, *On the Visible Monarchy of the Church*, book 6, chapter 10; Horace Lindanus, book 4 of the *Panoplia*, book 6 of *Catholic Loci*, chapters 12 and 82.

To this is added that even if one could maximally doubt whether Saint Peter had been at Rome (which doubt, however, would itself differ in no way from insanity), still the Sectarians would not thereby have what they want. For from this it would only follow that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of Saint Peter also in the care of the Roman diocese (as is now established by the tradition of all); nevertheless, he could still succeed Saint Peter in the care of the universal Church, which Peter could have annexed to the Roman See, even if he had been a Bishop elsewhere, or even if he had been Bishop of no particular Church. Just as also, while remaining at Rome, he could have entrusted the universal care of the Church to the Bishop of another diocese, if indeed that conjunction of the Roman See with succession to Saint Peter in the care of the universal Church were not of divine law.

THE SECOND argument of the Sectarians is that the Councils and ancient Fathers, whose authority we employ, do not speak of the Pontiffs of this age when they affirm that they are the legitimate successors of Peter, and consequently hold the primacy in the Church, but of those who presided over the Roman Church in ancient times. Therefore, the authority of those Fathers seems to support nothing for the present Roman Pontiff and others who will exist in due time in the future.

I RESPOND that the testimonies of the ancient Fathers and Councils pertain entirely also to this present Roman Pontiff and to others who, for the time being, shall be received by the Church as successors of Peter. For the reason on account of which those Fathers acknowledged the Roman Pontiffs of their times to be successors of Peter was properly none other than this: that those men were legitimately received by the Catholic Church in the place of Peter in the manner then current, in which matter (as we said above in §. 36) consists this principle of succession. But this Pontiff also, who now is, has likewise been legitimately received by that same Church in the place of Saint Peter, and others also who shall succeed will similarly (as I posit) be received. Therefore to this Pontiff also and to future ones, those ancient Fathers bore testimony of legitimate succession. Just as by similar reasoning we also concluded above that the testimonies of the ancient Fathers, who asserted that the congregation adhering to the Roman Pontiffs in those their times was the legitimate Church, pertain also to this present congregation in its numerical identity, which today obeys the Supreme Pontiff.

THE THIRD argument is properly against this very point which we were now setting forth, namely that those Roman Pontiffs who have preceded up to the present one have been

legitimately received by the Church. For from the time of Urban VI, who was elected in the month of April in the year 1378 after the death of Gregory XI, up to the present Pontiff, none appears to have succeeded legitimately. For, as may be seen in Saint Antoninus in the third part of his history, title 22, chapter 2, and at the beginning of the Council of Constance, in that same year 1378 in the month of July, certain of the Cardinals, because they could not bear the difficult character of the elected Pontiff, departed from Rome, and in the following month of September elected another Pontiff, who was named Clement VII. Moreover, Urban remained in Rome, Clement in Avignon. And each had his own adherents. This schism continued with such unbroken succession of each Pontiff and of the Cardinals created by them, until the year 1417, when on the eleventh day of the month of November Martin V was elected, such that it could not be sufficiently discerned which of them was the true Pontiff. Indeed, even a third Pontiff came forward in the year 1408, called John XXIII, whom certain Cardinals designated from each faction for this purpose created, as Turrecremata [Juan de Torquemada] relates in the fourth book, ninth chapter. Finally, Martin V was created by many Cardinals from those doubtful and schismatic ones in the year, as has been said, 1417, in the Council of Constance. And so neither the preceding Pontiffs, nor Martin V himself, and consequently neither the other subsequent Pontiffs who thereafter succeeded Martin, appear to have been received by the Church in a legitimate manner. THERE IS ADDED also the fact that after Martin V, in the time of Eugene IV, there was another schism. For a certain Amadeus was elected by some in the Council of Basel and called Felix; he later yielded to Nicholas V, by whom he was also created Cardinal. Yet it does not seem sufficiently established which of these had the greater right to the Pontificate: and thus on account of this schism also, all those Pontiffs who succeeded Nicholas up to the present Pontiff appear doubtful.

I RESPOND that, during that period which elapsed from Urban VI up to Martin V, those Pontiffs can indeed be considered to have been legitimately received who were received in succession to the position of this Urban; whereas the others were schismatics. For concerning the election of Urban himself, there seems no reason to doubt that it was legitimate. He therefore, concerning the manner and method of electing his successors, was able to establish that which, in that difficulty of schisms, he judged more expedient, until something else, after his death, the Church might deem should be decreed in that matter. But whether these or those, during that schism, were legitimate Pontiffs, or whether none of those who were elected in the schism [were legitimate], but rather the see was then, as it were, vacant—this indeed makes no difference, provided it is established that Martin V himself was at length received in the later Council of Constance in a legitimate manner in the place of that Urban, and of [his] predecessors, and thus also in the place of St. Peter himself.

That this is indeed the case, we prove in this manner: for, as was stated above in §36, the legitimate mode of receiving someone as Peter's successor is rather that which the Church prescribes according to the circumstances of the times and other conditions, and which she judges to be correct; whether that mode be prescribed by the Pontiff himself (in whom, as in the head, resides the primary authority of the Church, and therefore also the right of establishing the mode in the election of a Pontiff, as is gathered from many Canons in the seventy-ninth distinction, and as Cajetan rightly demonstrates among others in his *Apologia de auctoritate Pontificum et Conciliorum*, part two, chapter 22), or whether it be prescribed by the Church decreeing in Council or otherwise, when the Apostolic See is indeed vacant, or when its possession is not entirely certain, and grave circumstances demand some extraordinary mode of

election; as can be understood from what Torquemada learnedly wrote in book 4 of *De Ecclesia*, chapter 10, concerning the ten ways of resolving schisms in papal elections. For Christ never abandons His Church, so that in every case she may emerge from the difficulties of schisms, receiving an undoubted and certain Pontiff peacefully and without scandal in the place of St. Peter. Now it is certain that Martin V was elected in the Council of Constance by that mode which, considering all the circumstances of those times, was judged by the Church then assembled in Council to be the best. For Gregory XII, who was then the successor of Urban, having ceded his right (for the sake of the Church's peace and good), and the other two Antipopes, namely Benedict XIII and John XXIII, having been deposed; and all the Cardinals who attended the Council, whether they were true or false, and six moreover from each nation who were present at the Council, having been chosen, the right of active and passive suffrage was given to them, and by their votes Martin V was finally elected. By this arrangement nothing more prudent could have been established at that time to settle such great difficulties of schisms and scandals. Therefore it is clearly certain that Martin V was the legitimate successor of Peter, and consequently also the other subsequent Pontiffs, because all were received in the same mode which the Church lawfully prescribed having regard to the circumstances of the time: although in view of the circumstances of the time, that mode by which Martin was elected was indeed different from the customary one. But ordinarily now that rule is observed, that he who is elected by two parts of the Cardinals is held to be the legitimate Pontiff, as is evident in the Decretals, *de electione*, chapter *licet de euitanda*.

From which it is understood how shamefully Wycliffe, whom other heretics also follow, erred when in his ninth condemned proposition at the Council of Constance he asserted that from the time of Urban VI no one should be received as Pontiff, but rather one should live according to one's own laws in the manner of the Greeks. These men err most shamefully: because there was, and always will be, a way and method in the Church of Christ whereby, once schism has been settled, one unique, true, and undoubted Pontiff is acknowledged by all. For that schism was not the first in the Church, but rather twenty schisms altogether preceded it, as Turrecremata also recalls in book 4 of *De Ecclesia*, chapter 9. Nor, however, was there therefore no true Pontiff in the Church before Urban VI.

Now, as to that which was added in confirmation of that argument concerning the schism of Amadeus, the response is easy. For in no such case is the succession of the Pontiff rendered doubtful, since it is established that that Amadeus with his electors was openly schismatic, with the greater part of the Church recognizing Eugene IV (the legitimate successor of Martin V without controversy) and the successor of Eugene, Nicholas V, as legitimate Pontiffs.

A FOURTH argument can be made against what has now been stated, namely, that he is the legitimate successor of Peter whom the Church receives in the manner which it judges most fitting. For he who is the legitimate successor of Peter certainly and infallibly receives from Christ the Lord supreme power on earth, such as Peter had, as has been proven above. But not always does he who is received by the Church in a legitimate manner in the place of Peter receive that power from Christ the Lord: Therefore, he is not immediately the legitimate successor of Peter who is received by the Church in a legitimate manner. This is evident in the case where a woman would be elected through error, which certain persons seem not to doubt greatly could at least happen, even though that story about Pope Joan is otherwise completely false and fabricated, as Onuphrius [Onofrio Panvinio] in his annotations to Platina, and also Alanus Copus [Alan Cope] in his first dialogue, chapter eight, and others have demonstrated.

Moreover, the same thing is evident if through error some baptized unbeliever were elected. For such a person would not truly receive from Christ the primary power, nor would he truly be Pontiff, as Turrecremata [Juan de Torquemada] sets forth from the common opinion of the orthodox, book 4 *de Ecclesia*, part 2, chapter 20.

I RESPOND. What has been said—namely, that he is the legitimate successor of blessed Peter, and thus receives the primary authority from Christ, whom the Church receives in the place of blessed Peter in a legitimate manner—this is not to be understood otherwise than on the presupposition that the Church elects and receives in a legitimate manner someone who is otherwise capable of the pontificate. But a woman and an infidel are minimally capable of the pontificate. Wherefore this argument does not overthrow those things which have been said.

But hence another difficulty arises in turn, concerning which it is customarily treated not unprofitably by Catholic Theologians in the schools. For if those cases in which persons incapable of the Pontificate are elected are possible, it follows that we cannot be entirely certain whether this or that person elected is the true Pontiff. For although we may be altogether certain that the true Church, in a suitable manner, both on the part of the electors and on the part of the manner of electing, has legitimately received this or that person: yet we could doubt whether he has been baptized, and thus whether he is capable of the Pontificate. And so neither shall we be able to be altogether certain concerning those things which he as Pontiff has defined as pertaining to the faith. And the matter will come to the same thing as if it were permitted to doubt whether God has willed that there be any successor of Peter at all in the Church perpetually, who is the infallible rule of faith and morals. For the same inconvenience which would follow from this doubt—namely, the uncertainty of those things which the Roman Pontiff would decree—would likewise follow from that doubt also, namely whether this person is the true successor of Peter or not.

To resolve this difficulty, I would willingly reply with that alone which many learned and pious men rightly believe, and which I myself am persuaded of: namely, that it will never come to pass that an incapable person be elected; with God easily preventing this (as He can), in order to avert danger from His Church. Nor do I judge that this has ever truly happened, or that it can happen according to the ordinary law: since a decree of divine providence of this kind clearly stands in the way. But because even grave Doctors admit such a case as possible, it must consequently be conceded by them that not from this fact alone—that someone has been elected by the Church to the place of Saint Peter—is it certain with infallible faith that he is the true Pontiff; since one incapable of that office could be elected, as they admit. However, that inconvenience which was objected does not follow from this; namely, that it be necessary to doubt the certitude of the definitions or decrees of an elected Pontiff. This inconvenience, I say, does not follow, and we demonstrate this by a twofold argument.

FIRST, because it is established with certain faith as firm and ratified that whatever he who is regarded by all the faithful as Pastor of the universal Church establishes concerning the universal Church is firm and ratified; for the whole Church, which cannot be deceived, is bound to receive that, as will be proven shortly hereafter. Moreover, he who has been legitimately received by the Church in the place of Saint Peter is regarded by all the faithful as the universal Pastor:

Therefore, if he should decree anything with respect to the universal Church, no one can doubt that it is ratified and firm: whether indeed he decrees it infallibly as the true Pontiff, whose ministry God uses as an instrument according to a certain and ordinary law in governing the

Church, or whether it be only that God, in a particular case, does not permit him to err and thereby lead into error the universal Church, to which God has promised He will never be wanting. For this first argument proceeds equally, whether we concede that it can also happen that a false Pontiff establishes something concerning the universal Church, or whether we do not concede this, as indeed it ought not to be conceded, as we shall see presently.

THE SECOND reason why that inconvenience which was objected does not follow is this: because as soon as he who has been elected Pontiff establishes something concerning faith or morals that pertains to the universal Church, by that very fact it is certain to us as a matter of faith that he is a legitimate Pontiff, who has indeed received from God that primary power of jurisdiction. But you may ask: whence is this certitude of faith then drawn? I answer: from two propositions of faith, in this manner: He whom Christ the Lord wishes to be heard by the universal Church in those matters which pertain either to faith or to morals is the true and legitimate pastor of the universal Church. But when a Pontiff elected by the Church in a legitimate manner establishes something pertaining to the universal Church in matters of faith or morals, Christ the Lord wishes him to be heard by the universal Church: Therefore, he is the true Pastor of the universal Church.

The prior proposition is evident from those testimonies of Scripture by which above in §. 27 we proved that Christ the Lord willed that the entire edifice of the Church should rise upon Peter specifically and his successors (each one of whom, indeed by communion of the same authority, was to be in the Church as if another Peter). For He says in Matthew 16: "Upon thee I will build my Church." And in John 21: "Feed (thou, Peter) my sheep." And in Luke 22: "Thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." The force of these sentences is certainly such that we must understand that through no other singular man, except one who by communion of the same authority truly is as Peter himself, does anyone have that precept of feeding all the sheep of Christ, of governing the Church, and consequently of being obliged to receive the institutions of faith and morals by which the edifice of the Church is held together. For this reason, indeed, passing over the other Apostles, Christ addressed Peter alone by name so often and so singularly when He either promised or conferred that authority upon him, so that by this He might clearly signify that through no other singular man does He will to instruct the Church by His Holy Spirit in this manner, except through Peter and those who would be in the same authority as Peter himself, as has been argued above.

Now is proved that other latter proposition: namely, that Christ wills that he who has been legitimately elected by the Church as Pontiff should be heard by the universal Church in matters of faith and morals. For since in Scripture a precept is given to subjects, in Hebrews 13, that they should obey their Superiors, the discourse is entirely about those Superiors whom the subjects acknowledge to be their Superiors, and regard as such; otherwise that precept would be given utterly in vain. Wherefore it is certain from the faith that Christ wills that the universal Church should hear him teaching concerning matters of faith and morals whom she acknowledges to be her Pastor. But she entirely acknowledges him to be her Pastor whom she herself has legitimately elected and received. Him, therefore, by Christ's will she is bound to hear. Therefore, that latter proposition is also certain from the faith. And thus it is evident that the conclusion also, which we have deduced from both propositions, is certain from the faith: namely, that he who has been legitimately elected as Pontiff, and who afterwards defines something for the universal Church, is truly Pontiff; and consequently there is no reason whatsoever to doubt the certainty of his decrees.

From these matters it follows that, if by chance someone incapable of this authority should be elected to the Pontificate (which I minimally fear will happen), nevertheless it would never come to pass that he would decree anything affecting the universal Church, but either he would depart from life before it came to that point, or certainly his defect and incapacity would be detected by Divine Providence. Nor indeed would this be any miracle, but something entirely consequent from that ordinary law of Christ, by which He willed to govern His universal Church not through the ministry of any other individual man, except the legitimate Pastor.

However, regarding some particular Church, or even certain persons, it would not be so inconvenient to concede that he who was not the true Pontiff could establish something. In which case God Himself (as in similar cases can piously be believed, as Turrecremata notes from the opinion of Saint Thomas and other Theologians, in the fourth book *De Ecclesia*, part 2, chapter 20) would supply for the necessary benefits of others the ministry of the true Pastor: as by confirming through Himself (for example) those Bishops whom that Pontiff was truly thought to have confirmed.

But SOMEONE WILL ASK here: of what kind ought that thing to be, pertaining to the universal Church, which when the Pontiff establishes it, he is most certainly understood according to faith to be the true Pontiff? For if it is necessary that he define something concerning the faith; since definitions of this kind are made by few Pontiffs and rarely; it will also rarely be established from faith that someone is a true Pontiff.

I RESPOND first, that as long as the Pontiff indeed establishes nothing with regard to the universal Church, little or almost no danger is imminent if for a long time or even not at all it were established from faith that he is the true Pontiff, but only with moral certainty. For it is something more for the Apostolic See to be entirely vacant than for it not to be entirely established from faith whether he who presides in it presides legitimately and truly. And yet the Apostolic See is sometimes vacant for some time without great inconvenience to the Church. Therefore it will be less of an inconvenience if he who presides in it is considered to preside rightly with only moral certainty, but not with infallible faith.

Next, we say that not only from a definition of faith, but also from some institution concerning morals pertaining to the universal Church (such as are frequently made by the Pontiffs), it can be gathered as a matter of faith that someone is the true Pontiff. Indeed, even from the dispensation of the Treasury of the Church through a general indulgence or jubilee. For by these means also Christ provides for His Church through the ministry of no other than the true Pastor. Wherefore it happens not so rarely that the true Pontiff is established as certain through faith.

FINALLY, we must briefly refute that which vain-speaking heretics object: namely, that certain Roman Pontiffs were sometimes very vehemently reproved by a number of princes, or even by other grave men, and were even held in such regard as if they were not the successors of Peter and Vicars of Christ, but of Antichrist. In this kind of calumny our Adversaries have proceeded even to such a degree of impudence that certain ones most vainly and most mendaciously attempt to persuade us that this was the common estimation of the Church concerning the Roman Pontiffs. BUT this contumely concerning Antichrist various Theologians, and not so long ago, have most sufficiently and most learnedly refuted: as [Nicholas] Sanders [does] throughout the whole of book 8 of *De visibili Monarchia Ecclesiae*. And [Robert] Bellarmine [in] book 3 of *De Romano Pontifice*. And in what place the Roman Pontiff has always been held in the Church is

already abundantly established from the testimonies brought forward above in §. 26 against their vanity.

Therefore, now briefly according to our purpose WE RESPOND: If any among the orthodox have at some time inveighed somewhat sharply against a Roman Pontiff, they did not look to the office and authority, but to the private vices of the person, whether fabricated or true. Which indeed poses no obstacle to us. For in order that the authority of that See may be established, it is not necessary to defend that each and every one who has sat in it was most innocent.

Indeed, to these schismatic detractors of the Roman Pontiffs—who, with lies hurled almost by the voice of the devil against the priests of God (as Cyprian wrote in the most serious terms about the heretics of his own time), strive to rupture the concord of Catholic unity—we confidently respond the same thing that St. AUGUSTINE once responded to the Donatist heretics in answer to similar accusations (for all heretics are similar when it comes to hatred of the Apostolic See), in Book 2 against the Letters of Petilian, chapter 51: “What wrong,” he asks, “has the Chair of the Roman Church done to you? In which Peter sat, and in which today Anastasius sits” (let us say Clement), “to which we are joined in Catholic unity, and from which you have separated yourselves by wicked madness? Why do you call the Apostolic Chair a ‘chair of pestilence’? If it is because of men whom you think speak but do not act: did the Lord Jesus Christ, on account of the Pharisees—of whom He said in Matthew 23, ‘For they say and do not do’—do any injury to the chair in which they sat? Did He not commend that chair of Moses, and yet, preserving honor for the chair, rebuke them? For He said: ‘The Scribes and Pharisees sit upon the chair of Moses: what they say, do; but what they do, do not do. For they say and do not do.’ If you would consider these things” (does he not seem to be addressing even the Sectarians of today?), “you would not, on account of the men whom you defame, blaspheme the Apostolic Chair, with which you have no communion.” Then also the same Augustine, in Book 2 against the Letters of Petilian, chapter 72: “When such men” (the Pharisees) “sat upon the chair of Moses, to which the Lord preserved honor: why do you, on account of those to whom you compare them—whether justly or unjustly—blaspheme the Apostolic Chair?” Thus Augustine. These words are most rightly employed by us in this present time, similarly against the curses of the Sectarians directed at the Roman Pontiffs.

From this it can also be understood in what manner that statement ought to be interpreted which we read that St. Gregory wrote in Book 4 of the Register, Letter 32: that he is a precursor of Antichrist whosoever, despising the other bishops, dares to call himself universal. For Gregory does not attack the office itself and the dignity of universal bishop; but rather the pride and arrogance in rashly usurping that title, as though no other bishop existed. This vice Gregory could most justly reprove in that John of Constantinople, who was schismatically seeking the primacy, against whom he was writing in that passage.

And indeed, that the vanity of the sectarians is exceedingly great is evident from the fact that they are accustomed to hurl even that saying of Gregory against the primacy of the Roman Pontiff, since in that very place where Gregory condemns that title, he simultaneously also acknowledges and clearly asserts the primacy of Peter, whose successor he professes himself to be; namely in book 4, epistle 32: *It is clear, he says, to all who know the Gospel, that by the voice of the Lord, to the holy Peter, prince of all the Apostles, the care of the entire Church was committed, etc.* And below he also recalls that the very title of Universal Bishop was offered to the Roman Pontiff by the Chalcedonian Synod; although the Pontiff modestly declined it:

Certainly, he says, on account of the honor of the blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, the name of Universal was offered to the Roman Pontiff by the venerable Chalcedonian Synod. The same Gregory, in book 4, epistle 38, writing to that same John, says: Has not, as your holiness knows, the venerable Council of Chalcedon called the prelates of this Apostolic See, to which I serve by God's disposition, Universal, this honor having been offered?

Three things, therefore, have been proven and defended by us thus far, from which we most certainly conclude that the Roman Pontiff is endowed with supreme authority in the Church to determine infallibly concerning matters of faith and morals. FIRST, that such authority was bestowed upon Saint Peter by Christ. SECOND, that this authority was bestowed by Christ not upon Peter alone, but also upon his legitimate successors until the end of the age. THIRD, that the Roman Pontiffs are altogether the legitimate successors of Saint Peter in this respect. Wherefore it undoubtedly remains that the Roman Pontiff, existing for the time being, is he to whom as successor of Saint Peter the care of the universal Church, with respect to what pertains to faith and morals, has been committed, and in whom accordingly resides the authority to decide concerning all questions of faith.