

Opera Omnia, Tomus Duodecimus Complectens  
Commentaria in Secundam Secundae Divi Thomae,  
Scilicet, Viginti Quatuor De Fide, Duas De Spe, Tredecim  
De Charitate Disputationes, Cum Indicibus Necessariis  
(*Complete Works, Volume Twelve Containing  
Commentaries on the Second Part of Thomas Aquinas’  
Second Part, Namely, Twenty-Four Disputations on Faith,  
Two on Hope, Thirteen on Charity, With Necessary  
Indexes*)

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## Tractatus Primus, Disputatio V, Sectio VIII

*Whether the Supreme Pontiff, even without a General Council, is an infallible rule of faith?*

**1. Distinction.** — *That Christ instituted the monarchy of the Church is a matter of faith.* — Concerning the Supreme Pontiff, there are two principal disputes: one regarding his dignity and primacy, whether these were instituted by Christ, and consequently whether they exist by divine law. But this matter should now be presupposed rather than disputed, because it is not properly within the scope of our present discussion<sup>1</sup>, nor does time permit its treatment. Therefore, one may read the cited authors, especially Torquemada, Cano, Bellarmine, and Cajetan, in their treatises on this matter. We therefore presuppose as a certainty of faith that Christ the Lord instituted His Church to be one spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> {org. 1} See Book 1 of Defense of the Faith, chapter 10, and below, disputation 10, section 3.

commonwealth, having a monarchical government, which Christ Himself established in Peter, so that it might endure perpetually in his successors. This is evident from Christ's promise in Matthew 16: "*Upon this rock I will build my Church*"; for it is morally evident that by the article "*this*", He designated Peter; for He had premised: "*You are Peter*"; and immediately adds: "*And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*", signifying the perpetuity of the edifice founded on that rock, and consequently that this rock would be perpetual, not in person, but in the chair and succession. And to him in the same manner He immediately promised, with particular and singular excellence, the keys of the Church, saying: "*I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven*". Finally, Christ fulfilled this promise near the time of His ascension, John 21, saying to Peter: "*Feed my lambs*", and: "*Feed my sheep*", that is, rule and govern (for this is what the verb "*to feed*" signifies in Scripture in similar passages, according to the Hebrew idiom) my entire flock, from the least to the greatest, which is signified by the lambs and sheep. Thus, from the harmony of these passages, and the propriety of the words, and from the necessity of the matter, and the gravity of the subject, and from the common understanding and tradition of the Church and all the Fathers, it is established that Christ there instituted the primacy of the Church in the person of Peter, so that it might endure perpetually in his successors. And so this article must be held not only as a matter of faith, but as one of the principal foundations of faith, and most necessary for the elimination of heresies and schisms, as the cited authors most extensively pursue, referencing the Fathers whom Maldonatus briefly and eruditely collects in his commentaries on both passages of Matthew and John, explaining them quite accurately.

**2. Various powers of the Pontiff are enumerated. - The present question concerns only the power of defining.** — The second part of this disputation concerns the power of the Pontiff, which comprises several components pertaining to various matters; for he has supreme power of jurisdiction in the sacramental forum, which was discussed in the material on Penance, disputation 16; he then has supreme jurisdiction in the external spiritual and ecclesiastical forum, which is legislative, or directive, and consequently is also dispensative, and we treated this in the material on Laws, book 4, from the beginning, and in book 3 of the Defense of the Faith, from chapter 6, and many things in the treatise on Vows, book six, chapter nine, and on Oaths, book two, chapter thirty; there is also coercive power, which was discussed in the volume on Censures, disputation one, section 2. It also extends to dispensing the treasury of indulgences, as was explained in the volume on Penance, disputation 39. Therefore, it only remains to speak about the power of defining, or teaching the Church with infallibility, which is proper to this place; and since we have already spoken about the Pontiff as defining together with a General Council, it only remains to inquire whether, if he defines alone without a General Council, he has the same infallibility and is a rule of faith, or whether he can err; because not only do heretics affirm that he can err, which is not surprising since they deny his primacy; but even some Catholics are doubtful; because, although they acknowledge his primacy over individuals in the Church, they do not acknowledge it over the whole Church collectively and gathered in a General Council, which is also a false foundation, and therefore setting that aside,

**3. First argument for the negative position. — Second. — Third. —** The reason for doubting may be, first, because one living rule suffices for the Church, and this has already been designated, namely, a legitimate and approved General Council: therefore, the Pontiff by himself is not a rule. The consequence is proven, both because in a power so singular and excellent, a multiplicity ought not to be given, and especially because in a matter so grave, it was not expedient for the Church that the Pontiff alone, without supreme examination such as occurs in a General Council, should be able to define matters. Whence I argue secondly, that otherwise, whatever the Pontiff might define, even if he did so rashly and without due Council, would have to be believed as a matter of faith, which is most severe. Third is the common difficulty, because definition is always made by a particular person, as is evident; but it is never a matter of faith that this person who speaks is the true Pontiff: therefore, what he defines can never be a matter of faith.

**4. Catholic Affirmative Assertion. — Proved first from Scripture. —** Nevertheless, it is Catholic truth that the Pontiff defining *ex cathedra* is a rule of faith which cannot err when he authentically proposes something to the universal Church as to be believed with divine faith. This is taught in our time by all Catholic Doctors, and I judge it to be a matter certain by faith, which can first be proven from the testimonies just cited. For Christ gave to Peter and his successors the authority of shepherding the Church, especially in doctrine, and in a singular manner—that is, not only through the authority of preaching, which He granted indifferently to all the Apostles when He said: *Go, teach all nations, and preach the Gospel to every creature*; but through the power of jurisdiction, of interpreting, or proposing truths to be believed, and under the obligation of believing them. Therefore this power necessarily has joined to it infallibility and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that it may not err. The consequent is proven because this is necessary on account of the infallibility of the Church in believing, which we demonstrated above; for if the Pontiff, teaching in that manner, could deceive the Church, the Church itself could be deceived; indeed, it would be compelled to error, because it would be bound to believe. The antecedent, moreover, is clear from the words of Christ considered above, and from the tradition of the Pontiffs and Fathers: for by this reasoning they teach that the Roman Church is the mother and teacher of all Churches. Hence Pope Damasus, in his epistle to Stephen, calls the Pontiff the teacher of Orthodox and immaculate faith, which Jerome also acknowledges in his Epistle to the same Damasus, concerning the name *hypostasis*. And thus the other passage proves the same regarding the foundation and building of the Church upon Peter; for if Peter or his successor could deceive the Church, the edifice would not be firm and stable, since it depends on faith, and faith itself, with respect to the Church, also depends on this foundation. From this it is also concluded that Christ's other promise in Luke 22 is to be understood in this way: *I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not*; for it is understood concerning Peter, not for him alone, but as he was to be the rock and perpetual foundation of the Church, and thus it endures in his successors, at least insofar as they are Pontiffs, as Pope Leo explained in his 1st and 2nd sermons on his Assumption [to the papacy], and Innocent III in the chapter *Majores*, on Baptism; and many other Pontiffs in their decretal Epistles.

**5. *It is proven secondly from the consensus and tradition of the Church.*** Secondly and principally, the assertion is proven from the consensus and tradition of the Church; for in the first place, as I was saying, the Pontiffs from the beginning recognized this power in themselves, and made use of it, and it is not likely that they usurped it, both because of their great number and significant holiness, and because of the consensus and obedience of the Church. Furthermore, the approved general Councils themselves recognize this power in the Pontiff, as is evident from the Council of Vienne, in the single Clementine [constitution] on the Most Holy Trinity, and from the Council of Florence, session 25, at the end; and from the Lateran [Council], under Leo X, which condemned as heretical the twenty-fourth article of Luther that denied this truth. Likewise, provincial Councils confirmed by the Pontiffs are received by the Church as an infallible rule of faith, as is evident from the Council of Milevis and the Council of Orange, and from many Councils of Toledo and Carthage, and especially concerning the Roman or Lateran [Councils], about which all Catholic Doctors hold this opinion; therefore it is a sign that the Pontiff without a general Council can establish something concerning the faith, and consequently without a provincial Council; for there is the same or greater reason, because he can apply sufficient diligence in another manner. Finally, this was also the opinion of all the ancient Fathers cited by Waldensis, in book 3 of the *Doctrinale*; Hosius, in the *Confession of Faith*, chapter 53; Cano, in books 5 and 7 on *Theological Loci*; Torquemada, in book 2 of the *Summa*, chapter 109, and the following [chapters]; and Bellarmine, in book 3 on the Pontiff; Salmeron, on Matthew 16, and on the other testimonies cited; and there the modern expositors: and one may also see the *Directory of Inquisitors*, second part, questions 2 and 7 up to 17; and Peña, in the scholia to those [questions].

**6. *Third argument, that it is not expedient for the Church to bind the power of the head to a Council. This is demonstrated first.***—Thirdly, we can explain this truth by reason, because primarily it was not expedient for the Church, for whose sake this power was given to the Pontiff, that it should be given as if bound to and dependent upon a General Council; therefore it is not plausible that it was given in such a manner, and consequently the Pontiff can define truth without such a Council, without danger of error. The antecedent is demonstrated first, because it is most difficult to convene a General Council, and ordinarily it cannot be done without great labor and expense to the Church, and sometimes it can be morally impossible, due to persecutions, wars, or other impediments. On the other hand, the necessity of condemning a newly arising heresy, or of declaring some necessary truth which is called into doubt, can often be urgent; therefore it was necessary that the Supreme Pontiff have this power independent of a General Council. Secondly, because it was more useful for the greater unity of the Church, since unless the head of the Church had superior power in all matters, schisms could easily arise. Thirdly, we never read that this power was given to the Pontiff dependently on a Council; but rather, conversely, that it was given to the Council dependently on the Pope. Hence by reason of him it [the Council] has infallibility, and therefore before his confirmation it does not have the said authority; therefore the Pontiff has it by himself, whence in fact General Councils are accustomed to follow his judgment, as may be seen in the First Ephesine, and

in the Chalcedonian, and in the Second Nicene [Councils]. And one may also see Innocent I, epistle 26; and Gregory, book 4, epistle 32; and Gelasius in his epistle to Faustus.

**7. First Corollary concerning moral precepts.** — *This is believed to be a matter of faith by Antoninus and Cano.* — From this general assertion, it follows first that the Pontiff cannot err in precepts or moral matters which he delivers or approves for the universal Church. This is to be understood with respect to substance or with respect to the moral integrity; for as regards circumstances, or the multiplication of precepts, or severity or excessive penalties, it is not inappropriate that he might sometimes commit some human failing, because this is not contrary to the holiness of the Church; however, to approve shameful things as honorable, or conversely, to condemn honorable things as iniquitous, contradicts the truth and holiness of the Church; and therefore in these matters the Pontiff cannot err. Antoninus, in Part 3, title 12, chapter 8, § 2, stated this to be a matter of faith; Cano, however, in book 5 of *De Locis*, chapter 5, said it differs little [from a matter of faith]. Other more recent authors somewhat less exaggerate this matter: Molina, in *De Justitia*, disputation 325; Bellarmine, in book 5 of *De Romano Pontifice*, chapter 5. This is explained by example. For the Church has approved communion for the laity under one species, as sufficient for salvation, and therefore this is held as certain of faith, according to the Council of Trent, session 22, chapter 1; but in this and similar matters, for the Church to hold this, the approval of the Pontiff is sufficient, indeed the Church is bound to follow it; therefore, so that the Church may not err, it is necessary that the Pontiff cannot err in such a matter; and thus Innocent III also understood it, in the chapter *Per venerabilem*, *Qui filii sint legitimi*. Finally, all things brought forward in the assertion confirm this corollary; especially because, as I was saying above, decrees concerning morals include moral doctrine, no less necessary for salvation than other truths of faith.

**8. Second Corollary, concerning the canonization of Saints.** — *Its reasoning.* — *It is temerarious to hold an opinion contrary to the preceding corollary.* — Secondly, it is inferred that the Pontiff cannot err in the canonization of Saints <sup>2</sup>, as St. Thomas correctly taught in *Quodlibet* 9, final article; Antoninus and Cano, cited above; and Bellarmine, book 1 on the beatitude of Saints, chapter 5; Azor, volume 2, book 5, chapter 6, question 5; Valencia, volume 3, distinction 1, question 1, point 7, § 40, verse *Thus as regards*; Sylvester, under the word *Canonizat.*, question 3, where he references John of Naples who absolutely condemns the contrary opinion as heresy; Torquemada, *Summa*, book 2, chapter 110. Our corollary is derived from Gregory, in chapter *Sicut*, distinction 15; and Bernard, epistle 174 to the people of Lyons. The reason indeed is that this is a certain part of moral doctrine, and highly necessary so that the Church does not err in worship and religious adoration, otherwise it could happen that she might venerate a damned man and pour out prayers to him, which is also contrary to the purity and sanctity of the Church. Likewise, the faithful are not permitted to doubt the glory of a canonized Saint; for the Pontiffs command this under precise obligation in the canonization itself; therefore it is

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<sup>2</sup> {org. 1} Concerning which some matters [are discussed] in *Defense of the Faith*, book 2, chapter 8.

necessary that error cannot underlie that precept, otherwise God would be deficient in a matter most necessary to the Church, which is contrary to His providence and promises; and therefore, although this inference is not of faith, I judge it to be sufficiently certain, and the contrary to be impious and temerarious (Read, if you please, Waldensis, volume 3 of Doctrine, title 14, chapter 22 and following; Castro, book 1 on the Just Punishment of Heretics, chapter 6; Anconitanus, question 14 and following).

**9. Third Corollary concerning the approval of religious orders. – Cano's error regarding this corollary. – Argument for the same corollary.** – Thirdly, I infer that the Pontiff cannot err in the approval of a religious order; we also teach this more extensively in Volume 3 on Religion, Book 2, Chapter 17, and more recent authors commonly embrace this view: Azor, Volume 2, Book 5, Chapter 7, Question 2; Valentia above, and those whom we cite in the aforementioned place. This should be understood regarding the substance of the matter, whatever may be said about circumstances, such as might exist either in the approval of a non-necessary religious order, or in an excessive multitude of them, although even in these matters judgment should not be rashly pronounced. By substance, I mean that the approved religious order is not only not harmful or useless, but is also simply a path to perfection. On this point, Cano gravely erred in the aforementioned Book 5, Chapter 5, holding the contrary opinion; for St. Thomas deemed that view rash, in his Opusculum 19, Chapter 4. And the said assertion is very much in agreement with the Council of Trent, Session 25, Chapter 16 on Regulars, and with the Council of Constance, which condemned Wycliffe and John Huss because they held wrong views concerning religious orders approved by the Apostolic See. Walden refutes them above, in Title 9, especially from Chapter 83 onwards; as do Bellarmine in his book on Monks, and others writing against heretics. Finally, the common sense of the Church favors this view, judging thus concerning approved religious orders, and condemning the contrary opinion as scandalous and impious. The reason indeed is that this also forms a great part of moral matter; for it is necessary that the Church have security and certainty, not only in precepts, but also in counsels and in the way of perfection. Likewise, because to approve a religious order is, as it were, to canonize such an institute as holy; therefore, it pertains to the providence of the Holy Spirit not to permit the Church, which He specifically governs, to err in this matter. The Church would err if the Pontiff could err; therefore, it must not be believed that this can happen.

**10. To the first argument in number three.** — The first argument has been resolved by what has been said: for truly in the Church there are not two living infallible rules, but only one, which is the Supreme Pontiff, who can use his power to define in various ways, as opportunity may present itself and as may be expedient for the Church. And therefore one of these ways is to define with a General Council, since at times it is expedient for the greater satisfaction of the Church, and so that its common consensus may be more evident, and for the greater confusion of heretics or of any who contradict, as the Apostles rightly declared to us by their example in Acts 15 and in Galatians 2.

**11. Ad secundum.** — To the second argument. — In the second argument, it is asked what diligence the Pontiff must exercise when defining [matters of faith] when a general Council

is not convened; to which I briefly respond that some diligence is undoubtedly necessary, because God does not wish men to judge or govern rashly. How much diligence is required, however, has not been defined by any law, at least divine law, but is left to the prudence of the Pontiff himself. It is customarily asked what would happen if the Pontiff were to define something without exercising preliminary diligence: some say that in such a case the Pontiff could err, and the Church could then withhold its assent. But this position is dangerous, because the Church would have no way of knowing whether the Pontiff had employed sufficient diligence or not, or it would be left to the judgment of individuals to decide whether the diligence was sufficient. Therefore, I believe it is better to respond by not admitting such a case as possible; for the Holy Spirit, who governs the Church, will not permit the Pontiff to define matters so imprudently. And therefore, whenever he defines something absolutely, it should be believed that he has exercised sufficient preliminary diligence.

**12. On the third point.** — In the final argument, a question is raised that was highly controversial in previous years: whether it is a matter of faith that this Pontiff is the true Pontiff. I cannot now discuss this with the thoroughness it deserves; briefly, however, many believe this is not a matter of faith, but they can scarcely maintain the certainty of faith in matters defined by the Pontiff unless they consequently say that not only a true Pontiff, but also one who is merely recognized as such by the Church, cannot err in defining, which Bellarmine affirms above. I myself, however, nearly thirty years ago, that is, in the year of our Lord 1585, taught in Rome that it is a matter of faith that this Pontiff is the true Pontiff, after he has been received by sufficient consensus of the whole Church and so approved that all are bound to obey him, even in definitions of faith, because this obligation necessarily presupposes that certain faith, and that particular truth is sufficiently contained in the universal dogma of faith, *that the successor of Peter is the true Pontiff*; and then it is sufficiently applied and proposed to the faithful. This opinion was subsequently defended by our scholars either in public disputations or some even committed it to print. Among these, one may consult Alphonsus Salmeron, book 4 on the Epistles of Paul, second part, disputation on the Church, well before the middle, from the section *The angels also*; Albertinus, volume 1, corollary 3 Theological, from the third philosophical principle, question 3, from number 10; Valentia, above, in § 38, verse *Second reason*, although his proof is not very conclusive. The remaining points can be seen in the authors cited above.

## Tractatus Primus, Disputatio X, Sectio V

*Whether it can be known with certainty of faith that this particular man is the true Pontiff and head of the Church.*

**1.** The meaning of the question.—The negative position is supported first.—Second.—Third.—Fourth.— Just as in our previous disputation concerning the Church, section 9, we stated that for it to be a useful and infallible rule of faith, it must not only be believed in general terms, but also specifically and individually as this or that Church which we see with our eyes, and in this sense is called *visible*; so now we ask whether in a similar way the

true Pontiff is visible individually and specifically, such that we not only believe there is in the Church one supreme head who has his seat in Rome, but also that it is this particular man whom we see with our eyes. It seems, therefore, that this cannot be known with certainty, first, because God has never revealed this. Second, because it is a human and contingent matter, depending on the testimony of a few men and on many highly dubious circumstances, such as whether he was baptized, whether he was properly ordained, etc. Third, because it is a matter in which falsehood may be present; for it has sometimes happened that someone was considered to be Pontiff who in fact was not. Fourth, by the practice of the Church it is established that those who deny a particular individual to be the true Pontiff are not considered heretics; hence the Fathers say that such persons do not err against faith, but against charity, by causing division in unity.

**2. His followers Cano, Vega and others.—The truer assertion.—Demonstrated first, from Councils.—Second, from reason, by inconvenience.—Third, from papal power itself.** — Because of these arguments, some among Catholics deny that it can be held immediately by faith that this particular person is the true Pontiff, but only with a certain moral certainty, which they say is sufficient to obligate us to obey him in all things, even in believing matters which he has defined to be of faith. These are Turrecremata, in book 4 of his Summa, part 2, ch. 9, at the end; Albertinus, in De Agnoscendis assertionibus, etc., question 3, at the end; Cajetan in II-II, question 1, art. 3, in response to the 4th; Bannez, II-II, question 1, art. 10, in his earlier commentaries, doubt 2, to the 2nd; Cano and Vega, whom I cited, disputation 6, section 4, n. 3; Corduba, book 1, question 17, § 2; Castro, book 1 against Heresies, ch. 9, near the middle, from Christian Axiomata, book 2, art. 6, ch. 11, and others. There is, however, among these authors some difference, at least in their manner of speaking. For some<sup>3</sup>, although they deny that it is immediately of faith that this Pontiff, for example, Gregory XIII, is the true Pontiff, nevertheless maintain that it is mediately of faith, because from one premise of faith, that he who is rightly elected is the true Pontiff, and another naturally known, that this man has been rightly elected, the conclusion follows. But we have elsewhere refuted this distinction. Others say that this conclusion savors of faith from the same foundation, because it is deduced from one premise of faith and another naturally knowable. Thus in a word they could call it Theological. Others finally simply pronounce that it does not pertain to faith. I, however, prefer the contrary opinion; and I say that, just as Christ's visible Church is this particular one, so it can have this particular visible head, and therefore it is of faith that this man, who has been accepted by the common consensus of the Church as the head of the Church, whom the Church herself is bound to obey, is the true Pontiff, the successor of Peter. This is proven first from Councils, and above all in the Bull of Martin V, at the Council of Constance, it is ordered that from heretics who wish to be reconciled to the Catholic Church, it should first of all be demanded whether they believe that the canonically elected Pope, whoever he may be at the time (his name being expressly stated), is the

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<sup>3</sup> See above disputation 3, section 11; disputation 6, section 5, number 10, and section 4, numbers 5 and 7; Azor, tome 2, book 5, chapter 5, question 4, and chapter 21, § Objicies.



successor of Peter, and has supreme power in the Church of God; this therefore, as the Pontiff supposes, is to be believed by faith, nor is anything proposed by Pontiffs for immediate belief with less than the certainty of faith. Moreover, Councils do not distinguish between the true Pontiff in general and this one who now sits with the full consensus of the Church, but embrace them with the same veneration and faith; thus certainly the Council of Chalcedon received Leo the Pope by name; the Sixth Synod, Agatho; the Council of Milevis, Innocent I; and so for the rest. Secondly, if it can never be established by Catholic faith that this is the true Pontiff, consequently it cannot be established that this is a true Council, which would be no less heretical than to deny that the four Gospels are true, as Gregory the Great said; since a true Council formally includes a true Pontiff, and because of such inclusion we say that it is just as immediately of faith that Christ is an animal, a living substance, as it is that He is a man; wherefore if it were never of Catholic faith that this is the true Pontiff, neither would his decrees ever be of such faith, which is heretical. See the decree of Pope Leo, chapter *De libellis*, distinction 20. Indeed, not even the Catholic truth and certainty of this particular Church could properly stand, because this depends greatly on connection with the true head, and requires true and legitimate priests, pastors, and ecclesiastical hierarchy; but all these things depend on the fact that the true and legitimate Pontiff in the individual case is certain, and by whatever reasoning I could doubt about this Pontiff, I could also doubt about his predecessor, and thus about the whole series going back; therefore about the truth of the Bishops and Cardinals who have been created by these; and thus the whole certainty of the true Church and hierarchical order would collapse: as heretics argue, contending that at least from the time of Pope Urban the true succession has failed; for from this they think they sufficiently infer that it can no longer be certain whether one truly succeeds the Supreme Pontiff, or where in the world the true visible Church exists. From which, furthermore, I argue, thirdly, from the power of defining matters of faith, and of obligating to believe what has been defined; for it is impossible that I am bound to believe those things which this man defines as spoken by God, unless I am also bound to believe by faith that this man has from God the power of defining, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and the power to oblige me to believe what he himself defines; but this is plainly to believe that this man is the Supreme Pontiff.

**3. The Evasion of Adversaries. — It is Rejected. —** Nor indeed can we accept what some respond, that it is sufficient to believe with moral certainty that this person is the true Pontiff, since the Pontiff merely serves as one who applies and proposes the faith, and we have said in previous discussions that, on the part of the one proposing, moral certainty is sufficient for belief. That statement is true when considering matters proposed as objects of belief, and insofar as they are proclaimed by the proximate proposer or minister of the Gospel as matters already defined and certain elsewhere. But the case is different regarding the person whom I must embrace as the infallible rule of faith, that is, the one who defines the matters of faith. This is illustrated by an analogy: for in order to believe by divine faith what is contained in Scripture, it is not enough to believe with moral certainty, but one must believe with Catholic faith that Scripture itself is divine. The Pontiff, however, is as much a rule of faith as Scripture, as is evident from disputation 5, section 5. The

reason is that the things contained in Scripture or defined by the Pontiff, in order to be true, do not depend merely on the fact that it is credible, even evidently so, that this is Scripture or that this is the Supreme Pontiff, but on the fact that it is truly and infallibly so. Therefore, one must believe with as much certainty that this is truly the case as one believes those things which the Pontiff himself defines.

**4.** The first evasive argument of others. — Refuted. — Because of these [difficulties], therefore, others who also deny that it is a matter of faith that this man is the true Pontiff, nevertheless wish to maintain that it is a matter of faith that this man, who with a certain moral certainty is held throughout the whole Church to be the true Pontiff, truly and validly performs all that a true Pontiff performs, and enjoys all the privileges and the assistance of the Holy Spirit promised to Peter and his legitimate successors. But this opinion falls into the same difficulties it attempts to avoid. And furthermore, as it seems to me, it is unaware of its own meaning and states contradictions. I explain each point: first, I ask, whence is it more certain that this man, whom we consider the Pontiff, enjoys in reality the privileges of the Supreme Pontiff, than that he is truly the Supreme Pontiff? For one is not said to be more revealed than the other, and both depend on a certain moral judgment of men. Indeed, this opinion involves something not only unrevealed, but even false, namely, that all privileges of the Supreme Pontiff and his power are given to someone who is not the true Pontiff; for Christ the Lord did not say to just anyone, but to Peter and his legitimate successors: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind," etc. Then, as this same opinion supposes, there can be a merely presumed Pontiff; but let us grant this to be so, could he then also be not a Priest? Would he therefore, if he attempted to absolve sacramentally or to consecrate, accomplish this? By no means: for to maintain the contrary would be heretical; he does not, therefore, have all the power which Peter had through those words: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind," etc.

**5.** *The other escape is precluded in multiple ways.* Perhaps they will say that [the Pope] has all power with respect to acts of jurisdiction alone, but not of orders. But this is opposed, first, because the plenary power of jurisdiction is founded in some manner on the power of orders, such that it necessarily presupposes it, nor can the full power of the Supreme Pontiff, which pertains to the governance of the Church, exist separated from the interior power and in the forum of penance; indeed, in the Pontiff there are not properly two powers, but a single eminent one, comprehending both. Whence I finally conclude that it involves a contradiction to assert that this man has supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole Church, while denying that it is held by faith that he is the Supreme Pontiff; because one would already be affirming that the definition, so to speak, applies to this man, but not the thing defined; and I pronounce the same concerning belief that this man has the power of defining, or has truly defined in act with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, for all these things pertain to jurisdiction inseparable from the true Pontiff. From this it is also understood how those who deny that it is held by faith that this man is the true Pontiff can nevertheless believe by faith what is defined by him, for in reality and in fact they believe him to be the Pontiff, since they believe he has the power and privilege of the Supreme Pontiff: yet from a certain ignorance they think they do not believe. Whence from ignorance they fall into a kind of contradiction.

**6. *To the first argument in number 1.*** To the first argument made at the beginning, we respond that it is revealed by God in the same way that it is revealed that this is the true Church; wherefore when He revealed that Peter is the head of the Church, He likewise revealed generally concerning all of Peter's successors, and all that is lacking is a sufficient proposition about this or that person contained under that revelation. Such a proposition, however, is provided through the universal testimony and approval of the Church. This is clearly explained and confirmed by a similar case: for God never seems to have revealed that the Bishop of Rome rather than the Bishop of Alexandria is the Supreme Pontiff, because God never expressly stated this, but only stated it in a general way when He revealed to Peter his dignity and succession. For this revelation manifests itself and falls upon those Bishops, or upon their episcopate, in which Peter is succeeded, after that succession has been sufficiently proposed to the Church through tradition or universal consensus.

When, however, it should be understood that a sufficient proposition is given, such that it obliges all, it seems to some that it is given when one who is duly and truly elected, and therefore the true Pontiff, is proposed. And this indeed is sufficient so that we are bound by the precept of obedience and charity to obey such a Pontiff, and so that no one can rightfully separate from him without schism. Nevertheless, speaking, as we are in reality speaking, of assent through faith, perhaps the proposition will not be sufficient until it is morally certain that he has been accepted by the whole Church and peacefully possesses his primacy, and thus can oblige all the faithful to believe whatever he may define. For then it is most certainly to be believed that an error cannot occur in the universal Church in a matter so grave as deception in the living rule of faith itself that is to be believed, for such an error would be equivalent to an error in faith. For if the rule could be false, so also could that which is ruled, and if it would be an intolerable error in the Church when the whole Church believed some book to be canonical which truly was not, since that book would be a certain inanimate rule of faith, much more intolerable would be an error in the living rule. Indeed, if concerning this there could once be given an error in the universal Church, it would never be true that it has a certain and infallible living rule of faith speaking to it in the name of Christ.

**7. *To the second argument in the same place.*** — To the second, it is answered that this truth depends on human testimony just as faith depends on the one who proposes it, and therefore nothing detracts from the certainty of faith. Concerning the other required conditions, it must be said that they do not per se primarily pertain to faith, but are, as it were, theological conclusions which are inferred by a certain logical sequence. For just as means follow from ends, so from the fact that God has granted to the Church that she may never err and that she may always use a true rule in matters of faith to be believed, He consequently, by special care, arranges that he who is elected to such a dignity should have all those conditions which are necessary for truly assuming it.

**8. *To the third point ibid.*** — To the third, the antecedent is denied, for there exists no history worthy of faith concerning this matter. It has indeed sometimes happened that the Church did not recognize a true and certain pastor for some time; but that the entire Church

conspired in favor of one false head, specifically believing to be a true Pope one who was not true, has never happened. Nor can an argument be drawn from the former inconvenience to the latter, for they are not equivalent. That the Church might not recognize a certain pastor for some time is indeed no small detriment to the Church; however, it does not expose her to the danger of false dogmas and of some perpetual and, as it were, irreparable damage, because all those things which are enacted during that time by doubtful Pontiffs cannot be valid without true pontifical authority. Hence, they are not considered certain until they are established by an undoubted Pope. But if a false Pontiff were held to be undoubted, all things defined and done by him would be considered most certain, when they would not, in fact, be infallible.

**9.** *To the fourth point *ibid.** — To the fourth, it is answered that this perhaps occurs because this opinion of ours is not a matter of faith. Secondly, it is said that all schisms almost always arise before a true Pontiff is received without controversy by the universal Church. However, if some person or particular Church now denied obedience to, for example, Gregory XIII, while simultaneously denying that he is the true Pontiff and successor of Peter, I do not see how such a one could be excused from heresy any more than if they denied that the Roman Bishop is the successor of Peter.