

Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica, Iuridica, Moralis, Theologica, Tomus Sextus P-R (*Concise Canonical, Juridical, Moral, and Theological Library, Volume 6 Letters P-R*)

by Rev. Louis Farris Ferraris, 1772

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- OCR of the original text by AI (*claude-3-7-sonnet-20250219*).
- Translation of the original text performed by AI (*claude-3-7-sonnet-20250219*).
- Last Edit: April 2, 2025.
- Version: 1.0
- Selection pages: 36-41

“Papa” A. 2 n. 63–88

63 Our Conclusion is proven from the words spoken by Christ to Saint Peter in Luke 22, where He says: “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.” These words, as we have shown above from number 44, do not pertain personally to Peter alone, but to all his Successors in his Chair. Since it is established that Peter was thus confirmed by God, so that even his personal Faith could in no way fail, as is clearly denoted by those particles “for thee” and “thy,” which we examined above in number 43, the same must also be said concerning the other Roman Pontiffs, his Successors. Indeed, this privilege was obtained for them for this reason: that they might confirm their brethren in the Faith. But how will they confirm others if they themselves are either Heretics or Infidels? Will they establish in others that Faith which they themselves execrate and attack in their own minds? Furthermore, since the Pontiff is the living Rule whom all the Faithful must follow and always keep before their eyes, he ought to be fortified by some singular privilege, by which not only the See itself, but also the person holding it, is preserved from error in matters of Faith. Otherwise, if we admit that the Pope himself can fall into Heresy and defect from the Faith, what else could be expected but that he, being blind, would draw us who are also blind into the pit with him? This accords with Matthew 15, number 14, where it states: “And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the pit”; and Luke 6, number 39: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?”; and chapter “Cum sit ars artium” (On age and quality), where it says: “For if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the pit.”

64 Hence, concerning the Roman Church above all others, this unique excellence and singular prerogative is proclaimed: that all other principal and more ancient Churches had not only heretics but even heresiarchs as Bishops—namely, the Antiochene Church had

Paul of Samosata; the Alexandrian Church had Dioscorus; the Constantinopolitan Church had Dioscorus and Macedonius, and so with the rest—as Mendoza pursues *in question 4, Scholastic, § 4, argument 7*. The Roman Church, however, never had such. For among so many Roman Pontiffs, although some occasionally had somewhat questionable morals, no one was ever found who fell into heresy or apostasy, as thoroughly demonstrated by Bellarmine *in On the Pontiff, book 4, chapter 8 and following*, Laurea *on Faith, disputation 8, article 5, up to § 11*, Albertus Pighius *on Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, book 4, chapter 7*, Barbosa *book 1 of Universal Ecclesiastical Law, chapter 2, from number 52*, Mattheucci *in the cited location, Controversy 6, chapter 4, and Controversy 7, chapter 1*, and all others acknowledge this, as witnessed by Fagnani *in chapter “Significasti” 4, on election, number 69*. And Pope Agatho expressly testifies to this in his Epistle to Emperor Constantine, which was read *in the Sixth Synod, act 4*, and afterwards *in act 8* approved by all. *This, he says, is the rule of true Faith, which the Apostolic Church of Christ has vigorously maintained both in prosperity and in adversity, which by God’s grace is proven never to have strayed from the path of Apostolic tradition, nor has it ever succumbed to heretical innovations, because it was said to Peter: “Simon, Simon, behold Satan has desired to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” Here the Lord promised that Peter’s faith would not fail, and admonished him to strengthen his brothers, which, as is known to all, the Apostolic Pontiffs, predecessors of my unworthiness, have confidently done; See also what was said above in number 48.*

Nor does it avail to object that if every Pope, 65 like St. Peter, could not even as a private person fall into Heresy and defect from the Faith, this would be a matter of Faith, and consequently those holding the contrary opinion would be Heretics—which cannot be maintained, since this opinion is held by most distinguished Doctors, both Canonists and Theologians, as is evident from those cited above in n. 62, and as Fagnani notes in the cited chapter *Significasti 4. de election. num. 68*. This objection, I say, is not valid, because even if it were said to be a matter of Faith, as some maintain, among whom is Matthaeuccius *l. c. Controversia 7. c. 1. n. 7.*, as being revealed at least implicitly and virtually in that proposition, *I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail*, nevertheless those holding the contrary opinion would not be Heretics, because they do not maintain their own opinion with pertinacity, as would be required for Heresy, but are prepared to submit to the definition of the Church¹.

¹ **Note of a Roman Theologian.** When our Author asserts that the Pope cannot fall into heresy even as a private person, and that this is a matter of Faith, it should not be understood in the way Ferraris explains it, namely that those holding the contrary opinion are to be considered heretics and should abandon their persuasion. For this is a Scholastic question, not yet defined by the judgment of the Church, and it is permissible for anyone, while preserving the faith, to believe not only that it is not a matter of faith that the Roman Pontiff as a private person cannot fall into heresy (which is entirely true), but also that he can err. Likewise, when Theologians, along with our Author, state that it is a matter of faith that the Roman Pontiff cannot err in the Canonization of Saints, and that it is a matter of

faith that this particular Roman Pontiff is the legitimate Successor of Peter; these statements should not be understood as if they must be embraced as dogmas of faith by everyone. Since these matters have not been defined by the judgment of the Church, they cannot be proposed as dogmas of faith. But these assertions should be readily understood to mean that private Doctors contend to deduce from revealed principles that these matters are so certain as to pertain to the faith. However, others may, without harm to dogma, hold the contrary opinion; as indeed Ludovicus Antonius Muratorius does in his work on the Moderation of Intellects, along with others who contend that the privilege of inerrancy granted to the Church for establishing dogmas of faith pertains to those things that are revealed by God, but not to human affairs. Therefore, since the Roman Pontiff, in rendering judgment in the Canonization of Saints, relies on the testimony of men who attest to the Sanctity of a person and to the miracles performed in confirmation of that sanctity; and since judgment concerning a legitimate Pontiff depends on his baptism, valid ordination, and legitimate election, which matters depend on human actions, these Authors believe that the Canonization of Saints does not pertain to the dogma of faith, nor is it a dogma of faith that this Roman Pontiff is the legitimate Successor of St. Peter, although we are certain of these matters with moral certainty, and we cannot call them into doubt except through the greatest temerity. It should also be added that when we pronounce that it is a matter of faith that the Roman Pontiff is infallible, we should not maintain our opinion in such a way as to declare as heretics those French Theologians who say that the decrees of Roman Pontiffs are not infallible unless the consent of the majority of Bishops is added; for heretics are only those who obstinately resist a dogma proposed by the Church. The Church, however, has not thus far condemned French Theologians, and tolerates their opinion. **Response of the Author:** What I assert, that the Pope cannot fall into heresy even as a private person, and that this is a matter of faith, etc., should be understood as I explain in the passage cited, where I expressly say: nevertheless, those who think the contrary do not become heretics, because they do not maintain their own opinion with the pertinacity required for heresy, but are ready to obey the definition of the Church. And the pertinacity of which I speak is pertinacity that is not prepared to obey the definition of the Church, should such be explicitly given. But I also say that this is a scholastic question, therefore I do not resolve it as certain, but only as more probable, as I expressly state in my conclusion there, number 62: "The Pope, more probably, even as a private person, cannot fall into heresy, and cannot fail in faith"; according to those classical Authors cited there, among whom is our most learned Matthaeuccius in his dogmatic work first published in Rome, and then in Venice, controversy 7, chapter 1, number 3, where he states: "It must be said that the Roman Pontiff, as a private person, cannot fall into heresy, and cannot fail in faith." And in the same sense should be understood what I have handed down concerning the infallibility of the Pope in the Canonization of Saints, and that this Roman Pontiff, Clement XIII for example, legitimately elected, and accepted as such by the Church, is the true Pope, and legitimate successor of Peter.

66 Nor is it valid to say that the Sacred Canons suppose that the Pope as a private person can defect from the Faith, as is indeed supposed in the Canon *Si Papa d. dist. 40*, where it is established that the Pope cannot be judged by anyone for any crime whatsoever, unless he is caught deviating from the Faith, and thus the Pope, as regards himself and as a private person, can fall into Heresy and defect from the Faith. This is not valid, I say, because that text is not from any Pontiff or General Council, but from a certain Boniface the Martyr, Bishop of Mainz, who could have held that opinion, as many others have held and still hold. Therefore, it carries no force for us as coming from a private Doctor, since our position is supported by greater authorities and reasons, to the extent that if it is not a matter of Faith, it is nevertheless certain with an infallible certainty just short of Faith.

67. It is a matter of Faith that Benedict XIV, for example, legitimately elected and accepted as such by the Church, is the true Pope. *This is common teaching among Catholics.*

68. This is proven firstly from the Council of Constance, *final session*, where Martin V in his Constitution beginning *Inter cunctos decrees* that among other things, those who return to the Faith from Heresy should be asked: “*Whether they believe that the canonically elected Pope, whoever he may be at the time, with his proper name expressed, is the Successor of Blessed Peter, having supreme authority in the Church of God?*” Thus, it supposes this to be an article of Faith, since those abjuring Heresy are questioned only about the truths of Faith. Furthermore, it is a Heresy of Luther that the Pope is not the Vicar of Christ, whose 25th error was condemned along with others by Leo X in his Constitution beginning *Exurge*, wherein it states: “*The Roman Pontiff, Successor of Peter, is not the Vicar of Christ instituted by Christ himself in Blessed Peter over all the churches of the entire world.*”

69. It is proven secondly. That conclusion is of Faith, whose two premises are of Faith; but this conclusion: *Benedict XIV is the true Pope* follows from two premises of Faith, therefore it is of Faith. The major premise is most certain; The minor is proven, because these two premises (from which the said conclusion follows) *everyone legitimately elected as Pope, and as such accepted by the Church, is the true Pope; but Benedict XIV is such*, are of Faith, and indeed concerning the Major no Catholics doubt, otherwise it would not be of Faith that the legitimate Successor of Peter is the true Pope. The Minor is also certain, because by the very fact that the Church receives him as legitimately elected, God reveals that his election is legitimate, since Christ has promised that His Church would never err in matters of Faith, as is evident from the Gospel texts adduced above *from n. 42 to 44*. But the Church would err in such a matter of Faith if the conclusion did not stand; Since the Church, acknowledging the elect as the legitimate Pope, acknowledges him as the infallible Rule of Faith, who would then be fallible, and therefore, etc. Furthermore, because the Definitions of Benedict XIV speaking *ex Cathedra* are of Faith, but they would not be of Faith unless it were of Faith that Benedict XIV is the true Pope, therefore, etc.

70. Nor is it valid to object that it is not a matter of Faith that Benedict XIV was validly baptized and canonically elected, since this has not been revealed, and therefore it is not a matter of Faith that he is the true Pope. This objection, I say, is invalid, because although it has not been explicitly revealed, it is nevertheless implicitly revealed through the peaceful

acceptance of the universal Church: for by the very fact that God reveals someone to be the legitimate Pope, He also implicitly reveals that this person possesses all the necessary requirements for the Papacy.

71. Nor is it valid to object that although it is a matter of Faith that Christ is present in the Eucharist, it is not a matter of Faith that He is present in this particular Host, and therefore, although it is a matter of Faith that the true Successor of Peter is the Pope, it is not a matter of Faith that this particular man is the Pope. This objection, I say, is invalid, because the consequence and the parity are denied, and the disparity exists because it is not certain that this particular Host has been validly consecrated. But the case is different regarding the acceptance of the Pope, since it has been revealed that this man is the Pope by the very fact that he is acknowledged and received as such by the indefectible Church.

72. The primacy of the Universal Church, or the Papacy, is annexed to the Roman Episcopate by Divine Law. This position is held by Abbas *in chapter Per venerabilem* 13. [*On those*] *Who are legitimate children*; Johannes Andreas *in chapter Fundamenta, on election in [Book] 6* where Ancharanus *number 12*; Cardinal Tuscus *Practical conclusions of Law, volume 3, conclusion 3, number 10, and volume 7, letter R, conclusion 373*; Bellarmine *volume 1, on the Roman Pontiff, book 2, from the beginning*; St. Antoninus *part 3, title 23, chapter 5, §7*; Cajetan *volume 1, Opuscula, treatise 3, on the Institution of the Pontificate, chapter 13*; Cano *book 6, on Theological Places, chapter 4*; Torquemada *on Ecclesiastical Power, book 2, chapter 10, with what follows*; Jacobatius *on Councils, book 8, article 6 and 7*; Alvarus Pelagius *on the Lamentation of the Church, book 1, chapter 24*; Valencia *on Faith, disputation 1, question 1, point 7, §36*; Guarnieti *on the Head of the Church Militant, discussion 5, section 4, number 409*; Baronius *in additions to the Roman Martyrology, January 18, page 130*; Tirinus *in the 2nd Commentary on Scripture, in the Summary of Controversies, Controversy 6, number 11*; Leytan *Synopsis on the Church Militant, discussion 5, section 4, number 409, with many others referenced there*; Azorius *Moral Institutions, part 2, book 4, chapter 11, question 2*; Corduba *in question 1, 4, question 2, proposition 8*; Alphonsus Mendoza *in Quodlibetal Questions, question 4, Scholastic, throughout*; Matthaeuccius *in the place cited, controversy 6, chapter 2, number 2*; Barbosa *on the Office and Power of Bishops, part 1, title 3, chapter 2, number 12, and book 1, Universal Ecclesiastical Law, chapter 1, numbers 31 and 32*; and others everywhere.

73. Our Conclusion is proven from the Sacred Canons and Councils. For indeed, Pope Pelagius in *Chapter "Quamvis" 3, distinction 21*, writing to all the Orthodox, expressly states: "Although throughout the world all Catholic Churches are one bridal chamber of Christ; nevertheless, the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church was placed above other Churches not by the decrees of any Synods, but obtained the primacy by the Gospel words of our Lord and Savior." Nicholas II, in *Chapter "Omnes" 1, distinction 22*, writes to the Milanese: "Whoever attempts to take away the privilege of the Roman Church handed down by the Supreme Head of all Churches Himself, without doubt falls into Heresy." St. Anacletus, Pope, in *Chapter "Sacrosancta" 2, distinction 22*, precisely states: "The Sacred Roman and Apostolic Church obtained primacy not from the Apostles, but from the

Lord our Savior Himself, and has been granted eminence of power over all churches and the entire flock of the people.” St. Marcellus, Pope, in Chapter “Rogamus” 15, cause 25, question 1, writes to the Bishops established in the Province of Antioch: “For his (Peter’s) See was first among you, which was afterward, by the Lord’s command, transferred to Rome, over which, by the administration of Divine grace, we preside today.” Innocent III, in Chapter “Per venerabilem” 13, “Which sons are legitimate,” states: “For the place which the Lord has chosen is recognized to be the Apostolic See; for when Peter was leaving the City in flight, the Lord, wishing to recall him to the place which He had chosen, was asked by him, ‘Lord, where are you going?’ He replied, ‘I am coming to Rome to be crucified again.’ Understanding this to be spoken for him, he immediately returned to that place.” Boniface VIII, in Chapter “Unam Sanctam” 1, “On majority and obedience” among the Common [Extravagantes], precisely defined: “By urgent Faith we are compelled to believe and hold One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church; and we firmly believe and simply confess this; outside of which there is neither salvation nor remission of sins,” and there the discourse is about the Roman Catholic Church alone, as is declared in express words in the same place in the final section: “Moreover, we declare, state, define, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary for salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.” The Council of Constance condemned the following error of Wycliffe, number 41 in order: “It is not necessary for salvation to believe that the Roman Church is supreme among other Churches.” The Council of Florence under Eugene IV, in the Letters of union, expressly defined thus: “We define that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff hold the primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff himself is the successor of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and the true Vicar of Christ, and the Head of the whole Church, and the Father and Teacher of all Christians, and that to him, in Blessed Peter, was given by our Lord Jesus Christ the full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the Universal Church.” All of which most clearly show that the Primacy of the universal Church is annexed to the Roman Episcopate by the institution and disposition of Christ, and thus by Divine Law.

74. Nor is it valid to object that the Primacy of the Church, from its first institution by Christ, was personal, that is, annexed and connected to the person of Peter—as in Matthew 16: “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church. And I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, etc.” and in John 21: “Feed my sheep”—and was not affixed to a particular place or determined episcopate. For Christ constituted Peter as the first General Bishop of the entire Church and supreme Pastor; consequently, that the Primacy of the Church is annexed to the Roman Episcopate rather than to the Viennese, Parisian, Toledan, Milanese, Neapolitan, or Turinese See is not from Christ’s institution, but because Peter established his seat in Rome, or because it was thus annexed to it by the Nicene Synod, and consequently not annexed to it by Divine Law.

75. It is not valid, I say, because although the Primacy of the Church from Christ’s original institution was personal, that is, attached to the person of Peter, nevertheless it was not conferred upon Peter as a private person, but as a public figure, and in him to all his legitimate Successors. From that moment, by Christ’s command, it was also made local, that is, affixed to a certain place, namely to the City of Rome, not immediately at that time,

but for the subsequent period indicated to Peter by Christ, as stated above. Therefore, the Primacy of the Church was annexed to the Roman Episcopate not by the will of Peter, but by the will and command of Christ. And even less can it be said that the Primacy of the Church was united to the Roman Episcopate by the Council of Nicaea in Canon 6, as the Greek Schismatics falsely claim, because the Sixth Canon of the Nicene Council expressly states: "The Roman Church has always held the Primacy," as Bail notes in *Summa Conciliorum*, tome 1, on the Council of Chalcedon, Canon 37; Cabassutius in *Notitia Ecclesiastica* on the said Canon 6 of Nicaea; and others commonly observe. Indeed, in the preface of the said Nicene Council, according to Bail in the cited place, it is expressly stated that the Roman Church was not elevated above other Churches by any Synodical decrees, but obtained the Primacy by the Evangelical voice of our Lord and Savior.

76. Nor does it avail to insist that, given this, it must be held as a matter of Faith that the Primacy of the universal Church is annexed to the Roman Episcopate, and therefore the contrary opinion would be heretical, and thus could not be defended by Catholic Doctors, as it is defended by many. This objection, I say, is not valid, because even granting that this should be held as a matter of Faith, as some Doctors maintain (among whom is Mattheucci, in the cited place, *Controversy 6, chapter 2, number 19*), nevertheless, the Doctors who advocate the contrary opinion would not be Heretics, because they are not contumacious, and do not sustain their own opinion with pertinacity, as is required for Heresy, but are prepared to obey the definition of the Church.

77. Nor does it avail to insist that if the Primacy of the Church were annexed to the Roman Episcopate by Divine Law, they could not be separated from one another, which is manifestly false, since Pontiffs can transfer the Pontifical seat to another City, as in fact it was transferred to Avignon, and remained there for a considerable time; or Rome could be utterly destroyed, and thus the Roman Episcopate would cease to exist.

78. It is not valid, I say, because truly the Primacy of the Church cannot be separated from the Roman Episcopate by any human power; since, as Barbosa correctly notes along with many others in *Book 1 of Universal Ecclesiastical Law, ch. 1, n. 32*, the Pontifical See must remain in Rome by necessity of Divine precept, and therefore cannot be transferred elsewhere from Rome against the Lord's command, as also seems to be gathered from the Sacred Canons adduced above in *number 73*, and other legal authorities cited by Abbate [Abbas Panormitanus] in *chapter Per venerabilem 14, Which children are legitimate, number 18*, by Jacobatius *On Councils, book 8, art. 9*, by Alfonso Mendoza in *Quodlibetal Questions, question 4, Scholastic, throughout*, by Cardinal Tuschus *volume 6, letter P, conclusion 50, numbers 30 and 31*, by Cardinal Bellarmine *volume 1, On the Roman Pontiff, book 4, chapter 4*, and by many others.

79. And although some Pontiffs remained at Avignon, nevertheless they always held the Roman Episcopate, and were called Roman Pontiffs, as their Bulls most clearly demonstrate. And even if the City of Rome were to be completely destroyed (which case, however, is believed to be impossible, and it is hoped from Divine Providence that Rome will be preserved until the end of the world), still the Roman Episcopate would not be

extinguished, since for it to endure forever, it suffices that it once existed in connection to those material boundaries of the City, as correctly noted by Guarnieri in *On the Head of the Church Militant*, book 2, chapter 8, number 6, Mattheucci in the cited place, *Controversy* 6, chapter 2, number 20, and others. And at that time, just as in the case where the Pope transfers himself elsewhere to reside, that common adage would hold true, that “Where the Pope is, there is Rome”; as, in terms of the Eugenic Constitution “Divina totius,” issued by Eugene IV on the eighth day before the Ides of March 1432, stated Marchesan in *On the Commissions of Eugene*, part 3, chapter 11, number 28, Ridolphinus in *Praxis*, part 3, chapter 4, number 164, Cardinal Petra in volume 4, *Commentary on Constitution 4 of Eugene IV*, number 6, and others.

[Note: 80 is missing from the original. It seems that it was skipped.]

81. The Pope, even if by his Apostolic Letters he [communicates with] someone falsely excommunicated; indeed, even if he knowingly participates with the Excommunicated person himself, through Letters, Words, a Kiss, or in any other manner, is not thereby deemed to absolve him, unless he expressly declares that he wishes through this very act to absolve him. This is the common opinion, expressly stated in chapter *Si aliquando* 41, on the Sentence of Excommunication; and in the Clementine [Constitution]: “If the Supreme Pontiff knowingly participates with an excommunicated person through letters, word, or kiss, or in any other manner whatsoever, he is by no means deemed to absolve him through this act, unless he explicitly expresses his wish that the person be considered absolved by this action”; Together with its Summary thus expressly stating: “If the Pope, even knowingly, participates with an Excommunicated person, he does not absolve him by this act, unless he expresses that this is his wish.” See the word *Probatio* from number 37 to 39.

82. The primacy of the Pope must be acknowledged by the Greeks. Benedict XIV, volume 1, Constitution 57, beginning with “Etsi Pastoralis,” § 8.

83. Commemoration of the Pope in the Mass must be made by the Greeks of Italy and the Islands. The same source, *ibid.*, § 9.

84. The Pope, from his absolute power, even without consulting the Bishop of the Diocese, can grant exemption from Ordinary jurisdiction. The same author, volume 2, Constitution 40, beginning with “Causarum Palatii.”

85. The Pope, but not any inferior Prelate, can dispense in matters pertaining to the common Canon Law. The same in Constitution 51, beginning with “Magno Nobis” [Of Great Importance to Us].

86. The Pope is the supreme dispenser of the goods of the Church; indeed, Canonists commonly acknowledge him as Lord by their assent. Benedict XIV, Constitution beginning “Cum Encyclicas litteras” [When Encyclical Letters], §. 4.

87. The Pope can concede goods of the Church to unjust possessors, whenever the utility of Religion and the salvation of the possessors seem to require it. The same, *ibid.* §. 5 & 6,

where he adduces examples of predecessor Pontiffs for this purpose; Moreover, the Pontiff can rightfully do this not only when it concerns recalling Heretics to the Church, but also when the faithful are recalled from a probable danger of apostasy. The same, *ibid.* §. 6 & 9.

88. The Pope can consecrate Churches situated in any diocese whatsoever, either personally or, insofar as he may not wish or be unable, through his Delegate, without requiring permission from the local Ordinaries. Benedict XIV, Constitution beginning “Jam inde” [Already from that time], §. 75 & 28. Indeed, formerly the authority to consecrate Churches was exclusively his. The same, *ibid.*

Several less precise statements about the Pope made here are corrected in the new article “Romanus Pontifex” [Roman Pontiff] added by the Roman editors near the end of this sixth Volume.

PAPAL BLESSING.

What Clement XIII has most recently decreed concerning the Blessing, which they call Papal, the faculty of imparting which several times throughout the year he grants to Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, etc. (while removing it from all other Ecclesiastics), with a prescription of the rite to be observed in this case; see volume 1, under the word Blessing, Blessing article 5, number 65, where the Apostolic Letters issued by the praised Pontiff on this matter are presented verbatim.